Artist’s Statement:
Robert Capa once said “If your pictures aren’t good enough, you’re not close enough”. I have been drawn to the inspiration, hope, despair, joy, sorrow, contemplation, and determination I see in the human face, particularly in the faces of women and girls. I have tried to capture those emotions in my photographs. It’s important to get close enough without invading the privacy of the moment I see in the eyes or facial features of my subjects. It takes patience and luck to capture that moment.

My environmental portraits of people are my attempt to allow myself to be transformed just enough to permit me to enter their subjectivity. For me, it gives rise to a feeling of kinship. This is especially how I feel about photographing the female face. When you look at my photos, ask yourselves “What is that person thinking? Feeling? Can I identify with that emotion?”

About the Artist:
Jean Merrill is a retired neuroscientist whose lifelong interest in photography became more serious about 10 years ago. Her travels around the world intensified her focus on taking photographs of women. She writes “I think what draws me to the female face, young and old, is both a kinship between me and my subject and my desire to share their captured emotions with others, hoping the viewer will feel and identify with something they see in each face...pain, strength, determination.” Awards for two of her photographs in “EXPOSURE”, an annual international juried photography competition and exhibition in the Durango, Colorado Open Shutter Gallery, as well as a recent solo exhibition "The Female Face" highlighted these environmental portraits of women and children.

All the photographs displayed here and other images can be seen in her online portfolios at www.jeanjmerrill.smugmug.com.

Photographic Exhibits and Awards:
- Bernardsville Library, Bernardsville, NJ, Solo exhibit of 40 photographs of women and girls from around the world, entitled “The Female Face”, January 4-31, 2017.
- Philadelphia Photo Arts Center, Philadelphia, PA, Annual Members’ Exhibition, September 6-29, 2018.
- Artexpo [FOTO SOLO], Pier 92, NYC, NY, Selected environmental portraits of women. April 4-7, 2019.
- Zufall Health Center, “Friends and Family” art exhibit, Dover, NJ, August 7-September 13, 2019.
- Gallery Steiner, Vienna, Austria, selected environmental portraits and wall art, March 29-April 24, 2021.