

# Without a Trace

## Guided Reflection

This year has presented lots of challenges. Challenges that have caused us to change how we connect with our family and friends, how we balance everyday life, and even how we experience nature. As we look back on 2020, and look ahead to the new year, we invite you to take this time to reflect and connect.

Our most recent art show, *Without a Trace*, presents a selection of works by Zbigniew Bzdak, a photojournalist with the Chicago Tribune. The exhibition aims to provide a space for healing and reflection for everyone who has been impacted by the consequences of a worldwide health crisis. As we discover ourselves to be deeply fragile in this equilibrium that links us to nature, the images of an empty city of Chicago remind us how precarious our human condition can be.



Aerial view of empty State Street in Chicago on Monday, March 23, 2020. (Zbigniew Bzdak/Chicago Tribune)



Aerial view of empty N. Sheffield Ave at Wrigley Field in Chicago on Monday, March 23, 2020. (Zbigniew Bzdak/Chicago Tribune)

We sat down with Zbigniew Bzdak to discuss the incredible imagery of this exhibit and explore the larger themes and feelings that it evokes. **As you watch the interview and explore the photography, you can use this guided self-reflection to check on your feelings, past and present, and learn how photography can help you process them.**

**Interview:** [naturemuseum.org/WithoutATrace](https://naturemuseum.org/WithoutATrace)

Visual documentation of difficult moments of your life can be a great way to reflect on your experience and overcome hardships. You may notice that, even during times of distress and great discomfort, you were able to collect images of positivity, moments in your life that went unnoticed even though they represent powerful self-healing acts. At the same time, expressing your feelings through photography allows you to find an outlet to express them and channel both positive and negative energies.

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1. Using words or short sentences, try to **describe the way you felt when you first realized that the COVID-19 pandemic was going to affect your everyday life.** If you can reconnect this to a specific moment in time, think about where you were and what you saw around you.
2. Similarly, try to **assess your current feelings.** Don't worry about repeating words if that is what comes to mind.
3. Now look at what you wrote in the first two sections. **What changed between now and the beginning of your experience with the pandemic?** If anything changed in your feelings, think about what may have been the cause. Was it something specific, or a combination of multiple factors?
4. During this period of time, you may have taken photographs of different subject matters. **Take a look at the images you collected on your phone or camera.** What are the subjects you photographed the most and the least? What do those subjects make you feel? Why do you think you chose them at that moment?