

Shahzad Hafeez - Field Notes
Bollywood Salon - 7609 Broadway Elmhurst, NY 11373
August 9, 2012

The interview was scheduled at 1pm but we (me and my assistant) arrived about forty-five minutes early. Bollywood Salon is located on a busy street in Queens, NY. We parked in front of the salon at a parking meter and unloaded the equipment. In the fifteen minutes I spent photographing the exterior of the salon, throngs of people walked by and almost everyone appeared to be from another country.

In the salon, there were two other stylists (one was the owner) and three people sitting on a bench along the window waiting for services. Shahzad escorted us downstairs to a small room with a chair and a mirror. Beyond that room was another room, which was a waxing area. Shahzad took a walk-in client and cut her hair. She appeared to be East Indian. I did not photograph her because we did not have prior permission, but we listened to Shahzad tell stories about doing Indian hair. He also showed us his book of hairstyles and bridal make-up.

Shahzad said that he had two models coming in later to be photographed. After his client left we went upstairs to do the interview since there was more space. It was more comfortable upstairs, but there were numerous interruptions so unfortunately it was very distracting.

Customers walked in asking for “eyebrow threading” which is a popular hair removal technique. Unwanted hair is removed from the face with a single thread that is twisted and pulled in a fast motion. During our interview Shahzad received a call notifying him that his models were not coming. We kept watch for potential customers so I could photograph him doing hair. About forty minutes into the interview a woman came to get her face “threaded” and she agreed to let me photograph her. This was something that I had never seen before, so we stopped the interview. After that, a young woman from Bangladesh came in and allowed me to photograph her while Shahzad did her hair. After his client left, I photographed Shahzad outside of the salon. We packed up the equipment and left around 4pm.