

**GEN Z
SHAPING A NEW GAZE
19.09.2025 – 01.02.2026**

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INTRODUCTION

Twenty years after opening its doors to emerging photographers with the landmark exhibition *reGeneration: 50 Photographers of Tomorrow*, Photo Elysée reaffirms its commitment to supporting young talent with *Gen Z: Shaping a New Gaze*. This new exhibition brings together the work of 66 international artists, primarily from Generation Z – broadly defined as those born between the mid-1990s and 2010 – to explore the concerns of this generation.

Employing a wide range of visual languages, these young artists delve into themes of belonging: the transformation of home and family ties, the representation of body and gender, and the coexistence of multiple identities. At the heart of the exhibition is the idea of intersectionality, foregrounding the ways in which overlapping identities – such as race, gender, sexuality, and class – shape lived experiences.

These works reflect an urgent need for representation and a deep desire to tell personal stories in a world in constant flux. In response, we amplify the voices of this generation, inviting the artists to situate their work in their own words.

Personal narratives intertwine to create a vibrant collective energy – a rich tapestry of experiences, cultures, and perspectives, where the personal becomes political. The exhibition offers an intimate glimpse into a generation questioning the world around them while striving to define their place within it.

We invite you to take this journey with them – to listen, to reflect, and to engage with the world through their eyes.

Sara Messinger 1998 US

based in New York (United States of America)

“Growing up, I always felt this pressure to conform and act like those around me. I lacked the confidence to be myself, and I was too full of fear to pave my own way. We are all on our own path just trying to find out what it means to be ourselves and where we fit into this complex world. I hope my work can inspire others to explore their own individuality, and to be more accepting of others who may be different from themselves.

I have spent countless weekends shadowing this group of Gen Z teenagers, documenting their lives and the dynamic world they inhabit. In a world increasingly defined by rigid gender binaries, the youth of today are breaking these constraints and redefining identity on their own terms. Through their stories, I witness a radical shift: these teenagers are not bound by conventional definitions of girlhood or boyhood. They approach identity with a fluidity that challenges the binary expectations often imposed on them. Their willingness to express themselves authentically resonates deeply with my own quest for acceptance in a landscape that frequently favors conformity.”

Noah Noyan Wenziger 1999 CH/TR

based in Zürich (Switzerland)

“Pictures have to speak for themselves. If a picture is already fly, then you don’t need any explanation at all. An explanation can still complement a picture, but the picture mustn’t depend on it.

We’re drowning in pictures, which anyone can snap on their cell phone whenever they feel like it, especially party pics, many of which don’t have any real meaning anymore. But I’ve noticed that some people want something else out of their photographs, though they’ve no idea what. They want a bit of real raw vibes, and they think you can force it, but you can’t.

My aim, since the beginning, has been to create this illusion and bring out the soul – or should I say, essence – of a picture in my own unique way.”

1. MAPPING BELONGING

For many, a sense of belonging begins at home. Whether understood as family, a physical dwelling, or a chosen community, our notion of home is shaped by our experiences and the people with whom we build it. These foundations often carry pride and comfort but can also hold pain. The very spaces and structures meant to ground us can at times fracture and fall apart, becoming sites of vulnerability, anguish, and exclusion. As these relationships shift or erode over time, so too can our understanding of what home means.

The works in this section give form to these evolving notions of home and belonging. Through archives, childhood memories, intergenerational trauma, and new models of living together, these artists explore how personal and collective identities are constructed, challenged, and reimagined. Together, they invite us to reflect on what it means to belong.

Francesca Hummler

1997

US/DE

based in London (United Kingdom) and San Diego (United States of America)

“Drawing from my experience as the daughter of German immigrants in the United States, I use my work to investigate the psychological reception of social labels, postmemory, and the ways trauma is passed down through generations, not just through the archive, but within the body itself.

Unsere Puppenstube [Our Dollhouse] reflects on the complexities of identity and belonging, especially for those with multiple histories. My sister and I use the dollhouse, a family heirloom, as a symbol of her rightful place within our family’s generational memory, despite external challenges. The series explores themes of adoption, racial identity, and emotional connection, inviting viewers to reflect on how we navigate the labels we ascribe to relationships and identities in social settings.

To me, belonging means feeling safe enough to explore what brings you joy and fuels your curiosity. It’s the freedom to express your emotions and have someone respond with, ‘I see you.’ It’s about being accepted in your entirety, without judgment, without conditions.

Through my photography, I explore self and identity, capturing the complexities of those with fractured identities, whether cultural or otherwise, and the ways they navigate belonging in the spaces between. My photography itself is the space where I belong, the place I go when I feel disjointed from reality. It anchors me, helping me avoid disassociation and reconnect with myself and those around me.”

Vuyo Mabheka**1999****ZA**

based in Alberton (South Africa)

“Popihuse (from the Afrikaans ‘Pophuis,’ meaning dollhouse) is an ongoing project, which explores childhood memories and experiences of growing up in the absence of a father figure and the dysfunctional dynamics of not having a stable home.

My family used to move around a lot. My Mom assumed the role of a provider, and as a result I hardly saw her at home, so I had to look after my younger sibling on a daily basis. To adapt, I began to build new relationships for however long my stay was going to be. As part of the process, I adopted chameleon tendencies and perhaps lost the ‘self.’ This work confronts the past and present through an ongoing search of home in a sense of belonging and personal identity, by means of establishing a sense of ‘true self,’ if such a thing exists.”

Varvara Uhlik**1997****UA**

based in London (United Kingdom)

“Drawing from my experiences of growing up in eastern Ukraine, my practice explores the personal and social complexities inherited by the post-Soviet generation. I reflect on the lasting effects of generational trauma and Russian imperialism on individual and collective identities, as well as their ongoing influence on the contemporary sociocultural landscapes of Eastern Europe.

My practice is driven by a need to process and understand my own history, personal and collective. I’ve always been surrounded by remnants of the Soviet past and its quiet traumas. I’m inspired by the relationship between nostalgia and disillusionment, between memory and forgetting. I find a lot of motivation in digital culture – how images circulate, mutate, and shape our perceptions of reality. These layers of influence push me to explore how visual language can hold space for ambiguity, vulnerability, and resistance.

My goal is to create images that linger, inviting viewers to question what is remembered, what is forgotten, and how both are shaped by history, memory, and technology. This feels especially prescient in an age where even memories can be simulated by AI, blurring the boundaries between truth and fabrication. Through my work, I hope to share a more nuanced understanding of Ukrainian culture, one that goes beyond narratives of war and suffering.”

Andong Zheng**1992****CN**

based in Rotterdam (Netherlands)

“My work often begins with small traces: a shadow, a marginal detail in an archive, or an unusual flower. These elements serve as points of departure for unraveling broader systems and confronting the power dynamics they sustain. To me, lens-based media are not tools for mirroring objective truth, but instruments for a contemplative act of observing. Through this practice, I seek to open up new ways of knowing that move beyond rational understanding.

A Push, and A Pull reflects on the relationship between the individual and their cultural homeland, framed within East Asia’s deep patriarchal traditions. These domestic performances were my way of trying to understand not only my father, but also the larger societal realities that weigh on both of us. On a makeshift stage I set up in his living room, spontaneous physical interactions took place in front of a large format camera, where our bodies and forces became vessels of dialogue. Our limbs and torsos kept us honest by bearing each other’s weight. In every moment, we took turns pressing the shutter, the invisible force of blood ties revealed itself on the surface of our skin, projecting something as heavy as fate.”

Lorane Hochstätter**2001****CH**

based in London (United Kingdom)

“My work examines ideas of identity and femininity. It’s an exploration of my experience being socialized as a woman and being subjected to the expectation to perform the male defined ideas of what makes a woman. Growing up, this idea was represented by my mother, who was a beautiful model when she was young. My images navigate the complicated nature of my relationship with her, which is warm and full of love, but also defined by my own desire to reject traditional feminine norms and construct my own identity separately from her.

Every day, I question where I belong, what truly comes from me, and what has been shaped by others. I reflect on what I have consciously created for myself versus what has been imposed upon me. To me, belonging is at the heart of identity, and identity itself is an endless quest – an evolving, ever present question that continues to challenge and shape me.”

Agate Tūna**1996****LV**

based in Riga (Latvia)

“In my work, I explore the intersection of spirituality and technology from a woman’s perspective, focusing on how historical narratives, personal stories, and the role of technology shape our understanding of the unseen. I follow a web like research process, where one idea branches into another, creating a network of themes related to photography. It starts with my family’s connection to spiritualism and expands into research on hauntology and quartz crystals, uncovering how esoteric practices and technological progress have shaped each other. I seek answers from the ghosts captured in spirit photographs to modern techno specters, and the human desire to communicate beyond visible reality.

Through the lens of analogue and experimental photography, playfulness is essential to my practice, as it allows me to approach my work with curiosity and experimentation. I’m motivated by the process itself, whether it’s self portraits or staged scenes, I create photographic images from the ground up, building sets, making objects, and working directly with materials. This process sparks new ideas and frequently leads to unexpected directions, even before the final concept fully emerges.”

Phường Nguyễn Lê**2002****VN**

based in Hồ Chí Minh City (Vietnam)

“In 1985, my father, then a professional volleyball player for the Vietnamese military, went to Siem Reap with his team as part of a training camp. This was his first time in a foreign land. A year later, he was sent back to Siem Reap, not as an athlete, but as a soldier. The battle he participated in was part of a secret border war dealing with the Khmer Rouge’s aftermath. The Vietnamese government has never justified their invasion of Cambodia after this regime ended and refused to officially acknowledge this history. As such, my father was never considered a veteran by the Vietnamese government. In 2024, I traveled to Siem Reap with my father. We visited sites of his battle, shared a motel room, played volleyball, and made photographs of each other. I could no longer place my father’s stories on the periphery. I needed to be nearby.

I hope people can see another affective dimension to how collaborative methods can unfold in a photographic practice. I hope they can see how intergenerational storytelling matters to many of the previously colonized communities. I hope to reframe ‘war’ as an ongoing structure, that even when the invaders have left, there is still so much to grapple with in everyday lives.”

Cheryl Mukherji**1995****IN**

based in New York (United States of America)

“My work is an exploration of my origin and inheritance, which is embedded in the figure of my mother. It deals with memory, transgenerational trauma, personal and collective histories, and how they inform identity. Using interdisciplinary mediums – including photography, installations, printmaking, writing, and video – I center and engage with women’s presence and experiences in the family albums that I brought with me from India to the United States when I immigrated.

Overall, my practice is inspired by family albums as an archive, and very specifically by my relationship with my mother. A primary instrument of self-knowledge and representation, these albums celebrate success, leaving out depictions of trauma, grief, and mourning from its pages to perpetuate the myth of an Ideal Family. Like a manifesto, they declare their intentions and motives through candid or staged photographs. In my practice, family albums are an entry into domestic labor: not the washing of dishes or the house cleaning, but the work it takes to stay related to someone, even my mother.”

Tianyu Wang**1997****CN**

based in Renens (Switzerland) and Paris (France)

“My work primarily stems from personal experiences with religious rituals and bodily perception. After leaving my home country, I gradually distanced myself from the mindset shaped by a specific cultural framework and began to reinterpret my cultural background in a broader and more critical way. I also became increasingly interested in how individual consciousness is shaped by social structures.

In *Hiding and Seeking*, I hope to draw attention to the forms of violence that exist within everyday family environments – especially those rooted in discipline, difficult to define, and invisible. These forms of violence are often normalized, overlooked, or even justified, yet they profoundly shape an individual’s bodily perception, emotional experience, and sense of self. I want my work to evoke a sense of unease and displacement within familiar daily scenes, prompting viewers to reexamine the underlying power structures that remain hidden.

I attempt to disrupt and dissolve the inherent properties and functions of things from both visual and narrative perspectives, using the mundane to confront the mundane, creating a sense of estrangement and 'gaps' within the familiar world, leading the viewer into an uncertain perceptual experience."

Thembinkosi Hlatshwawo

1993

ZA

based in Lawley (South Africa)

"Growing up in a home with a tavern, I have been confronted with realities that made me want to escape the space. My home should have been a place of refuge or safe haven, but it couldn't be, because it was the extension of the tavern. Maybe my mind was too violated. It became a tricky escape. The violence and schizophrenia of a society would be enveloped in this one space. It was 'my bread and butter' – its infamy had it dubbed 'Slaghuis' – slaughterhouse.

Loudest in their silence, I confront the unresolved issues I have with the tavern. I confront my violated or perhaps traumatized mind. I confront the memory."

Emma Sarpaniemi

1993

FI

based in Helsinki (Finland)

"In my practice, I explore womanhood and definitions of femininity through performative self portraits. For me, self portraiture is a playground, a realm for exploring representation and resisting conventions of the gaze. The portrayed characters offer the possibility to continuously reconstruct oneself. I am not creating an alter ego, but instead, presenting an honest representation, in which I can recognize myself. Collaboration and collectivity hold an important role in my work. Traces of the presence of friends appear in individual portraits for example, through a painted house, or a friend focusing behind the camera.

My forever source of inspiration comes from colors and how they affect our emotions. Being curious about everyday observations and aesthetics, I find it important to surround myself with different objects that I can look at. In my work, I strive to bring joy, hope, and curiosity."

Nur Aishah Kenton**1998****SG/GB**

based in Melbourne (Australia)

“I’m driven by the idea that photography can be a shared experience rather than a solitary act, creating a space where different voices come together, where personal and collective narratives intersect, and in which storytelling fosters deeper connections.

Home for a Time is about more than just the realities of share house living – it’s about human connection, resilience, and the creative ways people create a sense of home in uncertain circumstances. As housing becomes less affordable, many young Australians are finding themselves in share houses not just as a rite of passage, but as a long-term reality. Yet, despite the challenges, these spaces can foster deep bonds, support systems, and chosen families, especially for those who are marginalized and seeking community.

Through a collaborative process that includes the voices of those depicted, this project goes beyond just documenting their living spaces – it captures their hopes, fears, and the ways they navigate community and belonging. I want the audience to not only see these homes but to feel the connections within them, to recognize the importance of shared living as more than just necessity, but as a way of finding solidarity and meaning in an increasingly isolating world. I also want my audience to listen to more young voices – to understand their struggles, their resilience, and their perspectives on the future of housing, community, and belonging.”

Suwa Shin**2000****KR**

based in Seoul (South Korea)

“For me, art and the artist’s role serve as a plausible alibi – a strategic means to engage with others while dealing with social and political issues. As I believe art is a medium through which hundreds of strangers engage, pass through, and connect, I actively construct new relational dynamics and try to offer a critical lens on the ways we negotiate space, trust, and intimacy in contemporary society.

I want my audience to imagine how they would respond if an artist suddenly approached them in their daily lives in the name of Art. Would they let a woman into their home simply because she asked to take a shower? I see these questions as a way for modern individuals to reflect on their own boundaries when it comes to ‘art’ and ‘relationships.’ Additionally, it would be even more interesting if they also considered why this woman has become someone who longs so deeply for connection.

I believe that belonging is, on the one hand, fluid and always an object of desire, yet on the other hand, it carries a sense of permanence that can be oppressive. It exists in a space where listening and silence coexist, and I think humans spend their entire lives searching for that balance. In particular, relationships are the most crucial factor in determining the quality of one's sense of belonging."

Sara De Brito Faustino 1999 PT/NL

based in Lausanne (Switzerland)

"This project is about the home where I grew up, a place where strangeness and the familiarity of the ordinary existed alongside each other. Being an intimate space, it should have been nurturing and reassuring. And yet it was the site of painful scenes. Today, I see this space as threatening. Uncomfortable, dysfunctional, my home is the witness to scars from the past.

In my photographs, I revisit my memories and reclaim the power over my own body. My tiny models express the identity of a young girl under construction, growing up with imbalance and wounds. Deconstructing, reconstructing, objects become bodies, bodies become objects: I feel deformed and petrified.

A Home With No Roof creates an antagonistic tension between seductive aesthetics and disquieting details. Miniatures enable me to regain control, distancing myself from the past and releasing new strengths to properly become an adult."

Lisa Karnadi 1997 ID

based in Zurich (Switzerland)

"The spaces that we often take for granted are very important in shaping us and our lives. When our familiar and lived in spaces are taken away from us, it can be a great loss of a part of ourselves. The notions of home and belonging are perhaps difficult to physically pinpoint, especially for those who have migrated.

To belong, I believe, means not only to places that have shaped us historically, but also to an environment or social group in which we feel physically and emotionally safe. We belong where there is a state of equilibrium between identities and societal expectations in the place we live and within our communities. A place where we can be ourselves and are able to respect the diverse values of others.

Homebeing is a retrospective work that seeks to preserve the memories of my soon to be gone, two generation childhood home in Indonesia. I hope it invites the viewer to reflect on how lived spaces, past and present, shape our histories, identities, and sense of belonging.”

2. SHIFTING REALITIES

For centuries, war, forced migration, and political unrest have shaped – and often shattered – how people experience belonging and their sense of home. Today, the collapse of our climate adds a new and urgent layer to this long history of displacement. These forces blur the boundaries between safety and threat, home and exile. As states falter and ecosystems break down, home becomes unstable – a place to flee from, to defend, or to mourn.

This section brings together works that explore instability, displacement, and resilience. They consider how both humans and the natural environment must adapt to a world that is constantly changing. What future can we imagine when everything is shifting – and what does it take to hold your ground?

Alice Pallot

1995

FR

based in Paris (France) and Brussels (Belgium)

“I use photography to question the impact of human activities on the environment. Imbued with a science fiction imagination, my images reveal overlooked issues. I conduct speculative investigations on the territories I explore, alongside scientists and activist ecologists; I question a near future by capturing the materiality of reality. I aim to adopt a deanthropocentric perspective where humans are no longer at the center of the biosphere. Science, of course, tells stories, and I reclaim them through the narrative power of photography. I want to project a world of possibilities that allows us to act.

The series *Algues maudites* [Cursed algae], conceived in three chapters, focuses on the proliferation of toxic algae in the coastal waters of Brittany. An environmental and public health issue, this algae causes multiple forms of pollution – visual, olfactory, and toxic. Its growth, driven both by climate change and the impact of intensive agriculture, transforms the landscape into frozen zones devoid of organic life.

With this work, I aim to confront viewers with the fragility and unpredictability of a natural world under immense pressure, while evoking the gradual collapse of biodiversity and its ecosystems. *Algues maudites* also questions the future habitability of Earth by shedding light on resilient life forms capable of surviving in anoxic environments – that is, without oxygen.”

Valerie Geissbühler Pacheco**1999****CH/PE**

based in Zurich (Switzerland)

“At its core, *rooting for you* is an act of reconnection. Raised in urban environments, I was disconnected from the agricultural and herbal knowledge of my ancestors. Working with organic materials is a way of bridging that gap, of remembering through making.

By tending to living materials, I revisit those histories through touch, patience, and collaboration. The resulting installation is not a static archive but an evolving ecology of images, time, and organic matter, an exploration of what it means to create with nature rather than about it.”

Toma Gerzha**2003****RU**

Based in Amsterdam (Netherlands)

“Through my art, I delve into themes such as an Eastern European mindset, the feeling of not belonging, and the insider–outsider perspective. I’m motivated by different stories and different perspectives on life.

Control Refresh tells the story of a generation at a time of war, even if war fades into the background. War has many effects on society, including on the younger generation who are passively involved in the conflict. Over the past three years, I’ve visited teenagers in remote cities in Russia and neighboring Eastern European countries, including Georgia, Armenia, Lithuania, and Latvia, creating an extensive collection of photos of young people. They shared their vulnerability with me, brought me their boredom and told me about their dreams. Their lives are strongly influenced by traditions, social media, and politics.

By the end of 2023, I had built up a collection of stories of young people in Eastern Europe, recording how their lives and choices are affected by political decisions in their countries. Without realizing it, I created my own time capsule. In it, I record how a free country closes itself off from the world within a short time and how its inhabitants try to adapt to the changes.”

Daniel Obasi**1993****NG**

Based in Lagos (Nigeria)

"Beautiful Resistance is a beautiful way to protest against the systems of power that continue to oppress and make life difficult for young Nigerians, especially minority groups. For the first time in a long time, in October 2020, this generation experienced a unified outcry against the government and its oppressive systems. Everyone put aside their differences and we all bonded over our shared vision of an ideal Nigeria. It was remarkably beautiful yet sorrowful to experience, because of all the lives lost fighting for that dream."

Thaddé Comar**1993****FR/CH**

based in Saint-Ouen-sur-Seine (France)

"How Was Your Dream?" is a photographic project realized during the Hong Kong protests between June and October 2019. This work deals with new forms of demonstration and insurrection in our postcontemporary era dominated by seamless control societies.

Five years before, in Hong Kong, the Umbrella Movement was quickly repressed by state and police violence. In 2019, the democratic uprising that began in May resolved to take whatever measures necessary to continue their resistance. Faced with a sophisticated arsenal of control (facial recognition, geolocation, carding, eavesdropping, infiltration, water cannons, tear gas, helicopter, sonic weapons, nonlethal rifles), the Hong Kong demonstrators have developed a repertoire of techniques based on principles of invisibility and untraceability (anonymity, blinding lasers, faraday pockets, drone footage, masks of all kinds, encrypted communication, etc.), allowing them to mitigate the effects of repression.

These new devices – which contribute to the transformation of the forms struggle and resistance take – push, however, for the gradual erasure of individual singularities. In the future, will societies and sophisticated systems of control force us to make our human singularities disappear? Will this be done in favor of a new common identity?"

Claudia Fuggetti**1993****IT**

based in Taranto (Italy)

“For me, belonging is a complex and fluid concept. It is not just about physical places but also about emotional and intellectual connections. Through my work, I seek to explore these dynamics, questioning the idea of identity and how we position ourselves in the world. I aim to transcend the objectivity of the visible, creating alternative worlds that reflect human aspirations toward the future and technology. Through photography, video, and digital painting, I offer new perspectives and scenarios that invite viewers to reflect on the intersections between humanity and technology.

The theme of environmental and climate change is particularly close to my heart – I come from a highly polluted city and have always been interested in representing landscapes and nature. *Metamorphosis* reflects on a historical phase of transformation that affects both humanity and nature. The work explores how our perception of the environment is changing, inviting a renewed connection with the natural world.”

Ahmed Khirelsid**2001****SD**

based in Abidjan (Côte d’Ivoire)

“In 2019, a major youth revolution was sparked in Sudan, demanding civil rule after thirty years of military dictatorship. Witnessing these transformations in my environment, society, and city, I felt a deep need to document them. Photography became my way of capturing history as it unfolded around me, as well as a tool for self-discovery and healing.

I hope my work encourages people to reflect on the resilience of individuals amidst upheaval and the profound effects of war on personal and collective identities. By sharing these visual narratives, I want to create a space for empathy and awareness.”

Lea Greub**1998****DE**

based in Berlin (Germany) and Tbilisi (Georgia)

“Photography became my way of exploring the world, questioning power structures, and amplifying voices that are often overlooked. I use it to reflect on my own privileges, which stand in stark contrast, especially at Europe’s external borders. On the one hand, I want to raise awareness of the role and responsibility of the EU and critically question how political decisions shape the lives and rights of individuals.

On the other, I document the realities of life and the fight for equality of queer people, challenging patriarchal and heteronormative norms. Through my images and stories, I strive to amplify queer-feminist issues and contribute to shaping sociopolitical discourse. It's important to me that my protagonists feel seen and have a platform for their voices.

I have a contradictory relationship with the word 'belonging.' My roots are in Germany, and I feel connected to the place, my loved ones there, and also partially to the culture. At the same time, I condemn many of the political decisions that my homeland represents, the norms and values that are widespread, and the privileges that are exploited without reflection. Because of this, I often feel disconnected and find it hard to stay there."

Florian Gatzweiler
Sascha Levin

1998
2000

DE
DE

based in Berlin (Germany)

"After Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022, Anton fled to Poland, just four days before his eighteenth birthday. He ended up stranded in the small Polish town of Słubice, where we first met him among a group of other Ukrainians. We accompanied them as they were hanging out at Z'wirki, which had become part of their new reality. While everyone was trying to adjust to the situation, Anton continued to struggle with questions about his future, setting him apart from his friends. After a few months, he moved from Słubice to Hanover to Berlin. In January 2023, he made the decision to return to Ukraine and enlist in the army. In doing so, his uncertain journey came to an end, and he found a sense of community and belonging he had been missing.

Reflecting on the friendship with Anton and the other Ukrainians, a lot of common ground was established by internet culture. Despite growing up far away from each other, we felt a connection through the experiences we shared on different online platforms. We realized that we followed the same people, watched the same videos, and listened to the same music. When Anton returned to Ukraine, his Instagram stories became particularly interesting to us, and we started reflecting on this form of communication. For us, it became his digital diary and a mirror of his search for a new identity in the same way it is for many people of our generation."

3. BEYOND THE MIRROR

Long regarded as central to identity and a key part of how we experience belonging, the body serves as both a powerful medium and subject of self-expression. Artists in this section explore the body as a site where identity is formed, performed, and ever evolving. Their images challenge dominant narratives of rigid gender stereotypes and binaries, offering new ways of seeing the body and honoring its capacity to shift, feel, and express. They show that through the body, identity can be both multilayered and fluid.

Here, the body is considered in its most holistic sense, encompassing the mind and the full spectrum of human emotions – the interior life of the self. We see how artists use photography to trace the contours of emotions and mental health.

Alina Frieske

1994

DE

based in Berlin (Germany)

“My work explores the nature of reproducible, circulating photographs and their impact on identity and the forming of opinions. I engage with preexisting images – photographs already embedded in our digital surroundings – and examine the digital photo as something unfixed, endlessly multipliable. Drawing from a growing archive of everyday images shared on social networks, I dissect and reassemble fragments of these photos. These isolated elements become my brushstrokes and color palette, forming the basis of my compositions. I’m drawn to assembled imagery – works that take shape gradually, over time – where repeated gestures and recurring colors build new visual patterns. Alongside this process, I investigate the materiality of the image itself, questioning how notions of touch and connection shift between the physical and digital realms.

Tile (Four) is a reflection on our online identities and the paradoxical relationship of opacity and visibility in social media. The figure shown, wearing a mask, is about to either reveal their face or hide it from the viewer.”

Matthieu Croizier

1994

FR/CH

based in Lausanne (Switzerland)

“I am very interested in representing things and people in my own personal way. We see thousands of pictures everywhere every day, and I feel a need to share my own point of view, my own gaze, which is a gay and queer gaze. That’s why I’m particularly interested in representing queer people and showing how beautiful they are, and in doing so, challenge the conventional ideas of beauty and normality.

Everything Goes Dark a Little Further Down is a personal exploration of the concept of monstrosity, as well as an exploration of my own queerness. Through selfrepresentation, using my body as a raw material, I seek to fabricate monstrosity out of simple things surrounding me, to embrace it rather than to reject it. I became fascinated by the reappropriation of certain stigmatizing terms such as 'freak,' 'queer,' and 'faggot' as a form of resistance, and by turning perceived weaknesses into strength. It is a love letter to the abnormal, a renunciation of being normal."

Mayssa Khoury

1997

LB/US

based in Hadath (Lebanon)

"My work explores accidental environments, fleeting moments, and isolated spaces that challenge conventional notions of time and narrative. In today's relentless flow of images, where one immediately overtakes the next, we no longer see; we merely look. I seek to create pauses, holding time still and allowing images to demand presence. By reclaiming the unnoticeable, my work resists this cycle, transforming the ephemeral into something enduring.

Eros is a series born from spontaneity, an intuitive game between friends in a garden and a pool, captured in the depth of night. It freezes bodies in motion with a flash, suspending them against the black void of sky or water and the textures of foliage. This darkness is not an absence but an active presence, enveloping and transforming the body, allowing it to morph, dissolve, or reemerge."

Fatimazohra Serri

1995

MA

based in Marrakesh (Morocco)

"I capture my feelings through the lens of a camera, using my work to explore themes of womanhood, femininity, and the relationships between men and women. I strive to shed light on the challenges women face in my society, particularly within its conservative sector. With each image, I aim to create a powerful narrative that speaks for itself.

I hope my audience feels something genuine when they experience my work – whether it's a sense of connection, curiosity, or even stillness. My goal isn't to give answers, but to invite reflection."

Mahalia Taje Giotto

1992

CH/IT

based in Lausanne (Switzerland)

"existential boner" is a personal work about obsessions related to the body, identity, and sexuality. I am and always have been a trans person; I chose to

identify as nonbinary and started gender-affirming hormone therapy in November 2020. I closely and compulsively monitored the changes I was undergoing, as a way of reappropriation of my own self. Through a compilation of images and texts, including collages, graffiti, vernacular photography, studio shoots, snapshots, and scans, this body of work evolved in parallel with my own body, developing in a direction that emphasized the urgent feelings crawling through my mind, ultimately telling a singular story that brings representation to many – representation that was lacking in my childhood.

Regarding the political context we are currently in, as a trans person I don't want to hide. And since I'm lucky to live in Switzerland, I want to take this opportunity to speak, create, represent whatever I can so people never forget we exist (we always have and always will)."

Margaret Liang

1998

CN

based in London (United Kingdom)

"My photographic practice challenges conventional representations of gender, power, and identity, particularly within the context of how Asian women are portrayed in Western societies. My recent, ongoing body of work, *Mountain of A?*, defies heteronormative narratives, offering an expansive view of self-expression that breaks free from restrictive social norms and challenging the reductive and hypersexualized depictions of women prevalent in historical art and contemporary media. Normative gestures traditionally linked to 'female' and 'male' are dismantled, presenting a nuanced balance of power that transcends body size and perceived strength. Through a collaborative process with several friends, ownership and control in the photographic experience is redefined, often blurring the line between who holds the titles of photographer and subject."

Rachel Seidu

1997

NG

based in Lagos (Nigeria)

"I explore themes of identity, queerness, masculinity, gender fluidity, and the everyday experiences of my people as an African living in Africa. My work challenges traditional narratives, moving beyond the white gaze to portray individuals in moments of joy, leisure, and liberation, not just through struggle, but through freedom and selfexpression. I document queer stories as a way to affirm our existence, creating a visual record for future generations. I'm also drawn to the complexities of masculinity, how it is performed, challenged, and redefined across different identities. Through my photography, I aim to create a space that is both reflective and liberating – a celebration of identity, freedom, and the beauty of simply being."

For me, photography is both a personal and communal act. It's about seeing and being seen, about creating space for my people to exist fully, without restraint. For those who see themselves in my images, I want them to feel affirmed, to know that their existence is valid, beautiful, and worthy of being seen. For those who don't share these experiences, I want them to engage with the stories being told, to listen, and to understand. At the core of it all, I'm inspired by freedom: the freedom to be, to love, to create, to take up space unapologetically."

Hidhir Badaruddin

1995

SG

based in London (United Kingdom)

"Growing up in Singapore, I often felt at odds with societal expectations. Photography became a way to explore and express my identity, particularly as a queer Asian man. My work delves into themes of representation, cultural identity, and the fluidity of masculinity, with a focus on reframing Asian masculinity beyond the usual stereotypes of passivity or invisibility.

I'm drawn to capturing moments of youth, tenderness, and quiet strength: stories that often go unseen. I aim to highlight the diversity within my communities, whether through race, gender expression, or personal history.

Having rarely seen images growing up that reflected my own world, my practice is about filling those gaps – celebrating individuality and creating space for nuanced narratives. Whether through fashion, portraiture, or documentary photography, I want my work to challenge assumptions and invite a deeper engagement with identity. By sharing the stories and people that move me, I hope to spark reflection and shift how we view beauty, masculinity, and belonging."

Isabella Madrid

1999

CO

based in Pereira (Colombia)

"In my work, I address identity, an identity that has been formed by many influences: an obsession with social media, growing up in a country plagued by violence and obsessed with external beauty and traditional values, pop culture, and by being a woman.

As a Colombian woman, I grew up with very specific expectations of the kind of woman I should be: sexy, joyful, warm and serviceable, maternal but in a hot way, strong but submissive, to a god, a man, or both. In this project, I reverse the codes that have been forced onto me, and immerse myself in the different symbols of how Colombian women exist and have been represented through self-portraits.

I am inspired by the women who have come before me, women that have used their minds, bodies, and souls to leave a mark on the world through their art.”

Jeremy Chih-Hao Chuang

1997

TW

based in London (United Kingdom)

“I think a lot about gaze – how people look at these photos, who gets to look and what it means to be the one being looked at.

This project, *Ephemeral Intimacy*, came out of my own experience navigating dating apps. Growing up in a conservative Southeast Asian family, I was expected to follow this very heteronormative path. But dating apps became a space where I could start exploring my identity – quietly, on my own terms. I began meeting men online and visiting their homes to take photos. In these shoots, they were nude and I was fully clothed, which naturally brought up this tension around power around who’s exposed, who’s in control. That dynamic felt even more charged because of my identity and the cultural context I carry, especially living in the Western world.

What I really want people to feel is the complexity of love today. There’s so much curation, so much deciding what to show, what to hide. And when you step into someone’s home, you see traces of a life. There’s vulnerability, contradiction, and something honest in that.

These photos are intimate, but there’s always a bit of distance too, something that feels close, but just out of reach. It’s this push and pull, a mix of connection and distance, that I want to linger with the viewer.”

Carla Rossi

1999

IT

based in Paris (France) and Milan (Italy)

“Images don’t just document identity; they actively construct it, functioning as performative and relational tools. Their impact lies not in the act of taking a photo, but in how images circulate, are received, and shape social belonging. In a networked society driven by algorithms, photography operates as a form of social currency, aligning individuals with movements, political ideas, and cultural identities, while simultaneously categorizing them within predefined digital frameworks. Yet, paradoxically, this very categorization reinforces a sense of belonging, as we define ourselves through the images we create, share, and engage with.

In *A Forensic Selfie*, I explore the shifting nature of authenticity in a networked visual culture, particularly within photography – a medium historically tied to truth – from forensic investigations to CCTV evidence. I was intrigued by this forensic reading of the camera compared to its dominant use today: social

media. As platforms blur the line between real and counterfeit, I question what it means to be authentic in an era of constant surveillance, and therefore, of constant performance. Using FotoForensics – a scientific opensource program designed to detect digital modifications – as a creative tool, the project explores the ambiguity between aestheticization and truth. By manipulating the ‘positive’ image to generate a visual outcome through the software, the forensic tool becomes an apparatus equal to the camera itself, used to cast bodies, create identities, and establish worlds. Combining closely cropped self-portraits with the gaze of the machine algorithm, the work questions the relationship between photography and authenticity in the digital age, framing manipulation as a pursuit of a ‘true self.’”

Soyeohang Rai

2001

IN

based in Delhi (India)

“Making and being with my photographs gives me a chance to understand myself as a social being – not to make statements but to revise, to go back and forth. Making beautiful photographs is easy, but it takes time and interrogation to understand their purpose. It’s safe to say that this purpose evolves every time I point my camera. My current inquiry revolves around the question: ‘What shifts in me when my address shifts?’

Sisnu [Nettle] is a series of self-portraits which came as a reflection on how what we wear influences how we are seen. At the age of twenty, I traced my ancestral roots and planned a pilgrimage, only to be othered. Of the many reasons, one was that I wear a nose ring. In our tribal community, we have a ritualistic practice called ‘Maruni’ where the masculine invites the feminine. Men adopt ‘feminine’ garments and dance. Irrespective of rituals engrained in communal practices of the past, we are always shaped by who is making the brighter future, in this case, the West. Before English infiltrated our villages, where were the queers? There was just us, our language, our rituals. I was made queer after the West entered our homes.”

Ziyu Wang

1998

CN

based in Shanghai (China)

“Throughout my upbringing – whether in family, society, or even in private settings among friends – there has always existed an invisible standard of masculinity. Failing to meet this standard would result in me being labeled as ‘special,’ though this designation carried no positive connotation.

My lingering questions about these norms persisted until I began engaging with gender studies. After I began my systematic study of photography, Claude Cahun and Cindy Sherman inspired me to begin a discussion of masculinity in the form of self-portraits.

Of course I want people to understand more about the situation of gay Asians through my work, but it's difficult, so as a first step I first want Asian men to be seen, and as I've studied and lived in the UK, I've realized that in many cases, Asian men are not visible. Whenever Asian men are juxtaposed with men from other regions, Asian masculinity is subconsciously ranked at the bottom."

Laurence Philomène

1993

CA

based in Montreal (Canada)

"I am a nonbinary artist who creates colorful autobiographical work informed by my lived experiences as a chronically ill transgender person. My practice celebrates trans existence and studies identity as a space in constant flux via highly saturated, cinematic, and vulnerable images. Using the camera as a process of mutual (and self) care, my work aims to humanize identities that have been historically marginalized, and act as a love letter to my community.

My practice is driven by a desire to contribute to the ever-growing archive of work by queer and trans artists reclaiming our own narrative and having autonomy over our bodies and stories.

I hope the audience feels a sense of shared humanity, and that they can see themselves in my images. My aim is to humanize trans existence and to create a feeling of comfort, hope and belonging. For me, belonging means caring and showing up for one another, regardless of our identities."

Maria Kniaginina-Ciszewska

1998

PL

based in Warsaw (Poland)

"As an independent visual artist, I explore sociocultural norms through representations of the female form, testing the boundary between taboo and icon. I unearth artifacts of Polishness, or, more broadly, Slavicness, and combine them with concepts of the body and interpersonal relationships.

I want my audience to temporarily forget about their own world and step into mine. That's why I aim for a balance between reality and fantasy, sometimes even clashing with absurdity. I want them to escape from the everyday and give them space to reflect.

I love referencing my roots, my childhood, growing up, and identity: I link it to the feeling of entering grandmother's home, sitting on the couch, thus moving beyond the typical photography framework. I also have a deep love for women, both romantically and platonically, and they are a constant source of inspiration and passion for me. I would like to give my audience the

opportunity to experience women both as icons and as subjects of taboo, creating my own symbols and attributes that redefine these roles.”

Pia-Paulina Guilmoth

1993

US

based in New Sharon (United States of America)

“I began *Flowers Drink the River* at the start of my medical gender transition. I photograph my friends, my trans/queer community, and my family. The only recurring theme in my work is the love of the landscape that surrounds me, and the chosen family that keeps me alive and in proximity to beauty, joy, and growth. I show my experience of being a trans woman in a small rural, predominately right-wing town. I want to make photographs that are imbued with the newfound magic, and love that I feel for myself, my friends, and my home since starting my transition.

Belonging for me is learning to love myself, and defying the expectations and limitations that family, culture, society project onto me. It is the slow process of destroying all of the destructive forces that hold me back from blossoming into the person I am.”

Devashish Gaur

1996

IN

based in Mumbai (India)

“In my photography, I like to explore contrasts within India’s environments, urban architecture, and domestic life, with a focus on quiet solitude. I am inspired by instances of softness, the meditative quality of light and colors, body language, gestures, and alternative ways of being.

Playbook for Masculinity is a collection of photographs that explore the varied nature and ideas of masculinity in diverse settings across India. With this work, I explore how societal constructs and expectations shape the performance of masculinity, while documenting moments of vulnerability, connection, tenderness, and introspection. Being in a hyper-masculine culture, for me, the word ‘masculinity’ boils down to how people interact with each other, how they function in different environments, and how they try to uphold standards that they think are necessary in order to fit in.”

Ben Hubert

2002

GB

based in London (United Kingdom)

Contextualized by the classical motifs of Renaissance period and antique sculptural depictions of the male form, I’m fascinated by the way audiences then and now react to these suggestive undertones. The project started as an exploration of vulnerability within men, their emotions and a push against

traditional roles and toxic expectations embedded within society. As time passed, and I began to see the world progressing outside of my control, I let the image-making lead the project's direction. This resulted in a body of work that displays interpretations of our current social state, offering room to explore and reflect on where we are at this point in history."

Zhidong Zhang

1996

CN

based in New York (United States of America)

"I am drawn to the emotional and psychological weight that a photograph can embody, revealing the multiplicity of identities while demanding a gaze that is both reflective and interrogative. In a cultural landscape fixated on the imperative to be seen, and where marginalized identities are often pressured to occupy center stage, can the deliberate choice to remain on the periphery transform absence into a rather dynamic, radical force? What renders a body desirable in the absence of conventional desire? Can the interplay of queerness and nonconformity create a narrative that is not about conforming to, but rather articulating one's own desire?"

For many queer immigrants, life in diaspora is a journey marked by dislocation, in which home is not defined by fixed borders but emerges through scattered memories and remembrances. In this shifting landscape, placelessness becomes a narrative of its own, echoed in the traces we leave behind. In some way, my work converges into a patchy and disorienting tableau, one where our ways of being are in constant flux, ceaselessly remade and reinvented, until they finally come home."

Yun Ping Li

1998

ES

based in Madrid (Spain)

"I started taking pictures when I was around thirteen. They were usually pictures of me, or me and my friends, and I would share them on social media. For me, it has a lot to do with the time I was growing up, with the 'selfie' and with the self-representation that originated from then. I like to say that I never stopped, and that my first approach developed into my actual practice, as I gained more awareness of it. Photography has grown alongside me (or vice versa). It is a way of transmuting my pain and making something beautiful and powerful out of it. It is particularly exciting, as it revolves around my gender transition process, and I am always guessing what the next image will be."

Matej Jurčević**1995****HU**

based in Tenja (Croatia)

"In my work, I start from personal experiences and explore stories that help me understand the world around me. I often address mental health, personal trauma, and transgenerational trauma. With the project *I Try to Take Care of Myself Now*, I walk a fine line between subconscious expressions and a pseudo-documentary approach, using photography as a language of connection and escapism.

I am inspired by the possibility of connection that photography holds; I want my work to make the viewer feel less alone in whatever experience they are going through. I hope my images raise more questions but also provide comfort to people that have gone through similar things."

Clara Belleville**1996****FR**

based in Paris (France)

"When I was thirteen, my brother gave me a small camera. It gave me a sense of control over time that I didn't know I could have. I started photographing everything around me – things I didn't want to see fade away. Every room in my home as I was moving out. Things, essentially, because I was too young to realize that people and moments are ephemeral too. In high school, I started photographing my day-to-day life, and it was then that I realized I wanted (and needed) to do this all the time.

And so, without realizing it, over more than ten years, I photographed people, my close surroundings, girlfriends, boyfriends, and lovers. I was especially attracted to the moments where nothing crucial was happening, because I felt this emptiness gave beings all their importance. These images are an extract of this search for beauty – intrinsically intimate, named *Entre nous* [Between Us]. It is a very personal work, which I hope could become personal to anyone who sees it, something that could be like a shared memory. It's one of the reasons for this title; reading the 'us' makes you a part of it."

Quil Lemons**1997****US**

based in New York (United States of America)

"I am deeply committed to illuminating the complexities, nuances, and everyday realities of Black American life. Through my work, I seek to render the beauty, vulnerability, and multiplicity of these lived experiences with honesty and care, foregrounding narratives that are often overlooked or misrepresented within dominant cultural frameworks. For me, photography is an act of witnessing and of remembering. It is a practice of inscribing both

the ephemeral and the enduring. It is a way to declare that we were here, that we mattered, and that our stories are worthy of being seen.

I began *To Say the Same Thing in Many Different Ways* in the spring of 2020, during the earliest, most uncertain days of the Covid-19 lockdown. As the world fell into stillness, I returned home to Philadelphia to reconnect with my roots and the people who shaped me. This body of work marks a turning point in my practice: a moment where my lens turned inward toward my first and most enduring muses – my family. My younger brothers, Khalil, Nasir, and Naleek, become living sculptures within the frame, compositions of tenderness and proximity, embodying the quiet complexities of brotherhood and Black familial intimacy. Though the relationships I document are specific to me, they gesture toward universal themes: the softness often overlooked in Black life, the beauty of connection, and the ways we hold one another through uncertainty.”

Marvel Harris

1995

NL

based in Zutphen (Netherlands)

“When I turn to my camera to make self-portraits, I often do so in moments when I struggle to deal with feelings such as anxiety, loneliness, or desperation about the future. In such moments, I can look at myself from a distance and stop my negative thoughts from spiraling out of control. Photography is therapeutic for me – it helps me manage my emotions, understand my identity, and connect with the world around me when I need it most. I am inspired by the power of vulnerability and the way art can foster meaningful connections between people.

My camera guides me on this ongoing journey of self-discovery: being a human with feelings, continuously developing, and finding ways to heal from within. I hope my work offers a sense of recognition, empathy, and connection. By sharing my personal journey with honesty, I want to create space for others to reflect on their own experiences and feel less alone in their struggles.”

D.M. Terblanche

1998

ZA

based in Bonn (Germany)

“In my practice I am looking for something beautiful; something satisfying. I have found it and unfound it and found it again. It is like trying to hold the way water glistens in the morning sun: impossible, but worthwhile in its attempt.

I am curious, I am playful, I am morose, I am angry: I am finding ways to talk with the world and myself. Then there is the habit, the act of creation itself, which is perhaps my favorite part. There is a great, indescribable joy in the

act of creation, as much as building a human day-to-day life around it can feel like an act of miscomprehension.

And, of course, community. I am creating in the context of others: my peers, and the people before us and after us. Whether physically present or not, creative work is not a lonely pursuit in the sense of all there is to love. There is so much work to love, and so many artists to engage with, alongside.

Holyday is a reckoning with pain and its aftermath. At twenty-three, I felt a part of me slip away, pale and brief. I picked up my grandfather's camera, having arrived upon my life as a foreigner. Photographed over nineteen months, *Holyday* is a documentary project that narrates the initial navigation of life and meaning in the first years recovering from post-traumatic stress disorder."

Charlie Tallott

2000

GB

based in London (United Kingdom)

"I use photography as a refuge, with the camera acting as a momentary window to a different world, capturing snapshots of daily life and the people around me. The complexity of life resonates throughout, with fleeting tender, violent, lonely, and rare moments all transported into a mystifying, flash-laden universe.

The title of the series, *At Least Until the World Stops Going Round*, was influenced by aphorisms my mum would say, such as, 'you've always got tomorrow' and 'the sun's always gonna come back up.' This embodies the idea that all things must pass, that the wind and tide all change, while serving as a reminder to exist within the moment. Making images offers permanent windows back into these temporary states."

Sophia Wilson

2000

US

based in New York (United States of America)

"My work often lives in that inbetween space where power and vulnerability coexist. In these images, I explore themes of adolescence, Black womanhood, and the experience of growing up as a Black girl. I'm also interested in the relationship between movement and identity, especially through the lens of sport, fashion, strength, and grace.

I draw a lot from my own life experiences, and a big part of what drives me is the need for greater representation. I want to see real people, real bodies, and especially real Black girls reflected in the media.

My practice is fueled by a deep desire to feel joy and have fun — it's about chasing a kind of eternal happiness that I'm always looking for. I hope the

colors, the subtle bits of irony or humor in some of my images can make someone smile or laugh. Ultimately, I want the work to connect with people in a real, emotional way.”

Jude Lartey

2000

GH

based in Accra (Ghana)

“My work is a creative performance exploring masculinity in its many forms. It’s an expression of the joy and freedom I’ve found in embracing masculinity, an interpretation of beauty, softness, fierceness, allure, bliss, and power. These elements come to life through cinematic scenes, each illustrating the evolving identities of my generation, our dreams, fashion, and transformations.

The vibrant scenes, moments, and lifestyles from diverse subcultures ignite my creativity and push me to see the world in new ways. Looking back at my past works fills me with a sense of purpose and joy, fueling my drive to create even more and continue evolving.

Through my work, I invite the audience to immerse themselves in my world, where photography, fashion, and color become powerful mediums for expressing my deepest emotions and experiences, evoking a sense of time travel, exploring different themes in my work, interpreted through fashion and color, as a tribute to identity and self-expression.”

Chloé Azzopardi

1994

FR

based in L’Île-Saint-Denis (France)

“I work on issues relating to the future and the ways in which we, as a society and as individuals, project ourselves into it. My projects are often about imagination, desire, ecology, and new technologies, with sensoriality and tenderness playing an important role in my practice.

‘Non-technological devices’ are composite tools made from gleaned natural elements, assembled to mimic the technological devices that populate our daily lives. Between rudimentary productions and science-fiction creations, these objects are as much prolongations of bodies as they are hindrances. Associated with invented artifacts whose use remains to be discovered, together they create a fictional universe that functions as a mirror held up to our fantasies of the future.”

4. MULTIPLYING THE GAZE

This section brings together diverse perspectives on identity and belonging, formed at the intersections of race, history, and culture. The diasporic gaze, for example, emerges from experiences of migration and displacement, navigating the complexities of belonging across multiple cultural contexts. Whereas the decolonial gaze challenges and dismantles narratives that have marginalized or erased non-Western ways of seeing and being.

Here, artists use photography not to observe from the outside but to speak from within. They represent their own communities and lived realities, reclaiming authorship over their experiences. Through their images, they reimagine history, challenge dominant representations, and construct new visual languages – iconographies that embrace fluidity, hybridity, and multiplicity. Photography thus becomes a powerful tool of resistance and transformation, inviting viewers to rethink and expand the ways in which identity is represented and how the world is seen.

Steven Molina Contreras

1999

US

based in New York (United States of America)

“*Adelante* – meaning ‘forward’ or ‘onward’ in Spanish – is an ongoing project I began in 2017. It reflects my family’s resilience and determination as we navigate the complexities of migration and my evolving relationship with the sacrifices made in pursuit of the so-called ‘American dream.’ Spanning El Salvador and the United States, *Adelante* brings together photographs that explore borders, memory, and belonging. Through a blend of performance, documentary aesthetics, still life, and landscape, I offer an intimate portrait of a culture and lineage suspended between two places.

The work echoes a familial tradition in which objects and spaces transcend fixed definitions: a bedroom becomes a studio, a water jug is repurposed into a planter, and a street becomes a theater. Even the markings on a wall speak to time’s passage – scars and symbols of endurance. At its core, *Adelante* is both a testament to my family’s life and a response to the political urgency surrounding migration. It resists a singular narrative, choosing instead to hold complexity, to linger in moments of beauty, improvisation, and cultural memory. At once personal and political, the work is both a love letter and a document: an offering toward a broader, more nuanced understanding of diasporic experience.”

Daveed Baptiste

1997

US

based in New York (United States of America)

“Black identity is a dynamic archive of knowledge, constructed from flesh, spirit, and memory. My practice commemorates this experience through

photographic reenactments, with each image chronicling the stages of existence for Haitian immigrants in America. In the *Haiti to Hood* series, I assembled sets that simulated the interior spaces of Haitian homes located in my hometown, Little Haiti, Miami. Each set incorporated decorative and functional objects (custom wallpaper, flooring, etc.), as well as the cultural ephemera typically found in Haitian homes. Many of these elements were printed on paper, creating a nuanced interplay between the real and the imagined, a duality inherent in the immigrant experience. Once completed, these sets become stages where community members reenact pivotal moments that have transformed their lives. Through the remixing of materials and the inclusion of cultural symbols, I aim to reveal the complexity of life for Haitian immigrants, descendants of the first independent Black nation in the West.

Through my work, I want the audience to feel the richness of Haitian culture, the resilience of its people, and the historical significance woven into textiles and garments. I want them to see the connections between history and the present: how migration, labor, and identity shape our lives. Most importantly, I hope my work sparks curiosity, empathy, and a more nuanced appreciation for stories that are often overlooked.”

River Claire**1997****BO**

based in Cochabamba (Bolivia)

“Some people say that my work questions dominant notions of cultural identity, and perhaps that’s true. But I’m drawn to many things, such as thinking about landscapes, or the way clouds appear in a bright blue sky in some of my photographs. I’m deeply stimulated by Christian iconography, and I’m interested in play dynamics as a way of generating knowledge. I would say I play a lot: I play professionally. I play in a kind of grand contemporary theater, blending everything: my family’s history, my Indigenous roots, my post-internet contradictions, fashion, literature, the Latin American colonial archive, foundational myths, and much more.

I try to express a nostalgia for the mystical, the epic, and the sacred in order to create rituals of my own invention. These rituals are my way of resisting the hegemony of what we call ‘capitalism.’ I want to create myths and question the ways in which values are constructed in times of transition.”

Delali Ayivi**1996****TG/DE**

based in Lomé (Togo) and London (United Kingdom)

“My work reflects the questions I ask myself and a search for community and a sense of belonging. My work addresses joy, power imbalances, and everything in between. When I started, I focused heavily on neocolonial

structures in Togo and Germany and how they affect the Togolese creative industry in Togo and its diaspora. I kept building on this interest, but my focus shifted more towards exploring a 'Togolese gaze' for the wider Togolese population throughout the world. At the moment, my work questions why we have the desire for a national collective imagination and, particularly within the diaspora, what shapes our sense of longing and belonging.

As global migration remains a politically charged issue, members of the Togolese diaspora often find themselves caught between an idealized notion of 'home' and the realities they encounter upon their return. At the same time, local Togolese communities view returnees through their own constructed perceptions of the West, sometimes reinforcing neocolonial hierarchies. This project explores those tensions by documenting the lived experiences of both groups, using visual storytelling as a tool to expose, challenge, and redefine narratives of belonging, identity, and cultural hybridity."

Salomé Gomis-Trezise

1999

FR/GB

based in Brussels (Belgium)

"At the core of my work is Blackness – Black love, family, and intimacy captured with depth, nuance, and authenticity. I aim to challenge narrow narratives, creating images that feel both intimate and otherworldly, rooted in storytelling and lived experience, whilst also tapping into nostalgic memories that are imagined. I have a strong desire to fill the gaps of things I wish I had seen growing up."

Dimakatso Mathopa

1995

ZA

based in Johannesburg (South Africa)

"I came to photography as a way of storytelling, one that moves beyond traditional documentation to engage with memory, materiality, and political realities in a way that words alone sometimes cannot. My work explores the intersection of personal and collective history, land dispossession, and the enduring impact of apartheid in South Africa.

Through Individual Beings Relocated (IBR), I engage with the themes of generational inheritance, loss, and the act of reclaiming erased histories. My practice is deeply rooted in the personal narrative passed down from my late grandmother about our family's land inheritance and subsequent displacement. I use alternative photographic processes such as cyanotype and gouache paint on acetate to create visual archives that challenge and reconstruct history. These processes not only serve as a means of truth-telling but also question the colonial legacy of photography and its historical role in objectifying Black subjects. By incorporating household products and tea –

items tied to my grandmother's memories – into my chemical processes, I infuse the work with the material presence of ancestral recollection.

Through my work, I want viewers to recognize the lingering effects of apartheid and colonial histories, not just in South Africa but in broader global contexts of land dispossession and identity. I want it to inspire dialogue about belonging, reclamation, and resilience, encouraging a deeper understanding of the ways history shapes the present and how art can be a tool for truth-telling and healing."

Farren van Wyk

1993

NL/ZA

based in Cape Town (South Africa) and Gelderland (Netherlands)

"My body of work is like a tree. The roots are based in my research, the trunk is the core concept from which every branch grows. Being born in South African apartheid as a person of color, racial classifications were forced upon us. The trunk is where I take back agency. I am moving forward with this history and creating images that represent my family's identity. The branches are the many ways in which we live our identity. Our curly African hair, Dutch clogs, overalls, and durags are the manifestation of our identity sitting in front of the camera.

These notions that you have one nationality, one identity, one place to call home, are not our reality. We are seen as not black or white enough, but we come from both. We live in a gray space and work with all the different tones that symbolize our mixed identity. This is where the magic happens.

Photography is an essential part of finding ways to visualize my sense of belonging. My research sometimes takes me to dark places, where pain, injustice, and rage reside. Dealing with feelings, healing from them, or confronting them alone and in community happens through photography. Creating a soft landing."

Luna Mahoux

1996

BE

based in Paris (France) and Brussels (Belgium)

"This installation was born from a need to make visible what has been left outside of the frame: the voices of Black women, stories of transmission, gestures that survive in collective memory without ever being named. The necklace — worn, inherited, reassembled — becomes an intimate archive, a point of connection from which the images begin to speak.

In the video, fragments circulate: screenshots, dances, bodies filmed in urgency or at a distance. These are what some call "poor images," but to me, they are precious — because they hold traces of those we tend to forget,

because they are still moving. I collect them, edit them, sometimes distort them — to make visible what persists despite erasure.

My practice is rooted in memory — personal, collective, diasporic. I'm interested in what flows between women, across generations and cultures: a rhythm, a piece of jewelry, a blurry YouTube video. I want these materials to be seen differently — as forms of knowledge, resistance, and care.

What I'm showing here is both a gesture of mourning and of reactivation. The necklace and the video don't tell a linear story. They open a space to listen differently, to see differently — to remember, together."

Sara Benabdallah

1995

MA

based in Marrakesh (Morocco)

"There is a lack of Moroccan perspectives in the books and art that tell our story, and I feel a deep responsibility to address this. I want to challenge how we are seen and help create a space where our own voices and experiences are at the core.

Dry Land is an invitation to reconsider the layers of meaning within the *labsa lekbira*, a traditional Fassi wedding garment, and to reflect on how it, so deeply woven into our heritage, has been historically seen through foreign eyes rather than our own. In doing so, I aim to bring new insight into the stories this garment tells, stories that are often left untold.

In *Dry Land*, I delve into the nuanced relationship between marriage – a revered institution in Moroccan society – and its role in shaping women's lives. The *labsa lekbira*, which plays a central role in my work, is not merely a piece of fabric. It serves as a symbol of the expectations imposed on women, reflecting the roles they are often expected to play. What should be moments of celebration sometimes transform into silent acts of conformity, as the weight of tradition settles on their shoulders."

Gabriela Marciniak

1996

PL

Based in Poznań (Poland)

"My practice explores fantasies of escaping monotony and the tension between reality and imagination. I'm drawn to experiencing the world through a more absurd and abstract lens. Through my work, I construct imagined, observed, and self-created environments that reflect personal and collective anxieties – the emotional weight we carry in everyday life.

Breezes of pleasure are the main inspiration behind my practice. I imagine what the greatest experience could be and try to bring that feeling into being. This is why I find inspiration in the care rituals and architecture of sanatoriums, and in the broader culture of rest.

Early Retirement is an exploration of our relationships with time, productivity, personal success, and social status. In Western societies, retirement is a reward; for younger generations, it's mostly a dream – surely a privilege. A stage when expectations have been fulfilled, and one is finally allowed to step back. But are we morally allowed to reclaim that time and be released from the rat race early?"