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GEN Z

Shaping a New Gaze

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INTRODUCTION

How does a generation perceive and reflect on the world it lives in? What challenges and opportunities does it face? This exhibition brings together the work of over 40 international artists from Generation Z – broadly defined as those born between the mid-1990s and 2010 – who explore the concerns of their 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. By inviting the artists to reflect in their own words, the voices of this generation are amplified.

The exhibition is divided into four sections. *Mapping Belonging* presents the home as a complex site of identity, shaped by both refuge and tension. The artistic positions in *Shifting Realities* address exile, instability, and resilience in a world marked by political, climatic, and social upheaval. *Beyond the Mirror* places the body at the

centre as a space of transformation, challenging gender norms and stereotypes. *Multiplying the Gaze* explores intersections of race, history, and culture, using photography as a tool of resistance.

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.

The exhibition **GEN Z: SHAPING A NEW GAZE** is accompanied by a catalogue which brings together the work of the entire 66 artists presented at Photo Elysée in Lausanne. Originally produced and curated at the Photo Elysée by Nathalie Herschdorfer, Hannah Pröbsting and Julie Dayer, the exhibition has been adapted for the Fotografie Forum Frankfurt by Celina Lunsford and Andrea Horvay. Through such collaborations the Photo Elysée and Fotografie Forum Frankfurt continue their commitment to emerging photographers.

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.

Emma Sarpaniemi *1993 FI

based in Helsinki (Finland)

Delivering Cake to Hilma, 2024

from the series "Two Ways to Carry a Cauliflower"

Meyer Lemons, 2021

Citron Lemons, 2022

Pink Lemonade Lemons, 2019

from the series "When the Sun goes down We see Lemons"

"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."

Noyan *1999 CH/TR

based in Zürich (Switzerland)

Images from the series "NOYAN", 2015–2022

Video, 5'35"

"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."

Francesca Hummler *1997 US/DE

based in London (United Kingdom) and San Diego (USA)

Das Badezimmer, 2021

Victory, 2021

Der Stammbaum, 2021

from the series "Unsere Puppenstube"

"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."

Lorane Hochstätter *2001 CH

based in London (United Kingdom)

2 untitled works, 2024 from the series "24"

"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."

Varvara Uhlik *1997 UA

based in London (United Kingdom)

Soviet Playground in Dnipro, 2021

Visiting Aunt in Crimea, 2023

In the Black Sea with Auntie and Mom, 2024

from the series "Sunshine, How Are You?"

"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."

Cheryl Mukherji *1995 IN

based in New York (USA)

Promise Me, 2020

Video, 7'37"

Self-Portrait with Maa (2), 2020

from the series "Ghorer Bairer Aalo"

"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."

Phương Nguyễn Lê *2002 VN

based in Hồ Chí Minh City (Vietnam)

4 untitled works, 2024

from the series "Giao Điểm"

7 untitled works, 2024

from the series "Vỡ ôly"

"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."

Sara De Brito Faustino *1999 PT/NL

based in Lausanne (Switzerland)

5 untitled works, 2023 and 2024
from the series "A Home with No Roof"

"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."

Thembinkosi Hlatshwaho *1993 ZA

based in Lawley (South Africa)

Slaghuis, 2018

Untitled, 2018

Sdakwa, 2018

from the series "Slaghuis I"

"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."

Nur Aishah Kenton *1998 SG/UK

based in Melbourne (Australia)

Sahara Bailey sits on her bed in her share house in Brisbane, Australia. Sahara recently left her family home and is living in a share house for the first time. This rite of passage can often be a nervous one, living with strangers for the first time, but it can also be very rewarding, being able to find new things about yourself. “Over the past eight months this has dramatically changed. I've thrown myself into the deep end, gone from being a hermit crab, isolated and on my own, to moving into a share house with four others. This was a complete shift & one that came with a shock to my nervous system.”, 2024

During the process of making images for “Home for A Time”, some of the participating subjects were forced to vacate and move from their homes. Eviction has become a normalised experience for many young adults, with property owners and landlords free to increase rent amounts without restriction, something housing advocates are fighting to have changed by governments. Participant Sahara Bailey writes over the photograph “Property managers clearing us out”., 2024

Lia Ribeiro de Noronha and Myla Nicholas in Lia's bedroom. Both have found a safe community where they can explore their queerness., 2024

Bella Porras and her partner Jack Greer (l-r) photographed in their share house bedroom, Brisbane, Australia. Both are neurodivergent; they find solace in living in a community with other neurodivergent people, where they don't have to explain their habits, and way of living. Bella writes “Uncertain times all round, their support is endless”., 2024

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Anna Jourdant in her bedroom in Brisbane, Australia. Anna darned and used embroidery to convey her experiences of share housing. "I had a cute idea as a kid that I would live with my family on a horse farm and they would live in another house and everyone would live together.", 2024

"The share house experience, or just finding community, is so valuable to allowing yourself to be comfortable with who you are." – Myla Nicholas, 2024

William Bird, Maeve, Lia Ribeiro de Noronha, Myla Nicholas and Anna Jourdant (l-r) sit in their Brisbane, Australia share house. Everyone in this shared household identifies as neurodivergent or queer, and finds their place a safe space in which to express themselves. Lia Ribeiro de Noronha writes over the photograph "I feel happy and safe to be me", 2024

Rhett Kleine (r) wrote over this photograph of a communal fire in the backyard of his share house, "The share house is a seedling in a field set to be sown". As a young adult who first leaves home, share housing can be a place where you find yourself as a young adult, as well as your community., 2024

Rhett Kleine (r) wrote over this photograph of a communal fire in the backyard of his share house, "The share house is a seedling in a field set to be sown". As a young adult who first leaves home, share housing can be a place where you find yourself as a young adult, as well as your community., 2024

Photographs in collaboration with Sahara Bailey, Myla Nicholas, Bella Porras, Anna Jourdant, Lia Ribeiro de Noronha, Sahara Bailey, Rhett Kleine

from the series "Home for a Time"

"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)

Asking Woman, 2024

Waiting Woman, 2024

Last Shower, 2024

Third Flowered Neighbor, 2024

Second Shower, 2024

Eighth Shower, 2024

Third Shower, 2024

301-1, 2024

Harming someone who has abetted the act of art,
Hmm ... Infringement of privacy, violation of self-determination, etc.
There's room for a lot of legal problems.

403, 2024

You know it's a ridiculous request, right?

501-2, 2024

We have a baby.

502, 2024

I'm a bit shy. Originally introvert.

504, 2024

Is there a house that opened the door?
I'm a little ... I don't have the courage ... I'm sorry.
It's really because I don't have the courage ...

603, 2024

The world is very, scary.
I'm not saying you're like that, the world is just ...
Yes, in the past, everyone used to just live with the door opened ...

702-2, 2024

I don't know. I just... ooh... Our situation is just bad.

801, 2024

Well, I think that's a little rude. Yeah, good luck.

803, 2024

I don't think it's right to do in this way.

How did you get in here?

If you're a local, you should live quieter.

What building and number do you live in?

1102, 2024

It's your opinion. It repulses me.

I'm not ready, no. We didn't even talk about it..

1103, 2024

I just moved in, so my house is not organised...

No, it's too dirty...

1208, 2024

Come when I'm alone on weekdays. My grandson is here today.

1301-3, 2024

It is quite out of the question because I don't know you.

I'm sorry I couldn't help.

1302-2, 2024

No madam.

1501, 2024

There are a lot of psychotic people these days, so ... it's a bit too scary...

Um ... I'm sorry I'm not willing to open the door.

1503-1, 2024

Huh? No!

1506, 2024

Who are you?

1603, 2024

Oh no.

1901-1, 2024

We're just home.

2301, 2024

No, it's ok.

from the series "Be 누 (累) [Soap (Be an Inconvenience / Impoliteness)]"

This project received the support of the Gyeon-gi Cultural Foundation

"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."

Lisa Karnadi *1997 ID

based in Zurich (Switzerland)

Homebeing, 2024

Video, 10'56"

"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."

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)

Vue microscopique, cyanobactérie phormidium automnale, CNRS Occitanie Ouest, France, 2022

Bulle verte, Baie de Saint-Brieuc, France, 2022

Météorites rouges, Baie de Saint-Brieuc, France, 2024

Marées vertes, Baie de Saint-Brieuc, France, 2022

Pic solaire, Baie de Saint-Brieuc, France, 2024

Algues Maudites, Baie de Saint-Brieuc, France, 2022

Visages verts, Baie de Saint-Brieuc France, 2022

from the series "Algues Maudites, Red Bloom"

This project was supported by Résidence1+2

"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 de-anthropocentric 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."

Daniel Obasi *1993 NG

Based in Lagos (Nigeria)

4 untitled works, 2022

from the series "Beautiful Resistance"

"*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."

Toma Gerzha 2003 RU

based in Amsterdam (Netherlands)

5 untitled works

from the series "Control Refresh", 2021–2023

Book: **Control Refresh**, 2024

"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."

Ahmed Khirelsid *2001 SD

based in Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)

Untitled [Checking Point], 2023

Untitled [The Neighborhood], 2023

Untitled [Explosion], 2023

Untitled [Self-Portrait], 2023

Untitled [Left: A military plane flying over. Right: Since the start of this war I have said goodbye to many people. And now after 4 months of this war, I realize that these goodbyes may be the last goodbyes between us.], 2023

Untitled [Fleeing Khartoum to Ad-Damar], 2023

Untitled [On the way to Ad-Damar], 2023

Untitled [My Brother, Abdo], 2023

Untitled [Left: Family Album. Right: The first thing I thought of while leaving the house was the photo albums that contain the photos of my mother who passed away when I was a kid. These albums are the only thing that keep the image of my mother's face on my head.], 2023

Untitled [Self-Portrait], 2023

Untitled [My Sister, Woud], 2023

Untitled [Dates], 2023

Untitled [Self-Portrait, Ad-Damar], 2023

Untitled [Left: For months, I have been living inside my head and thoughts more than in the outside world. I often lie down and look at the ceiling for long hours without feeling the passage of time. Right: My Brother, Abdo], 2023

Untitled [I did not expect to feel alienated to this degree while I was inside my country and in a place considered far from home I began to believe that a person does not need to travel thousands of kilometres from his country and his family to feel alienated. For me, it is a psychological and mental state that is not strongly linked to the place, but rather to the extent of what is familiar and strange to each person.], 2023

from the series "Under Control"

"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."

Florian Gatzweiler *1998 DE

& Sascha Levin *2000 DE

based in Berlin (Germany)

Resting, 2022

Anton at Żwirki, 2022

T-Shirt, 2022

from the series "Żwirki"

Untitled, 2023–2025

Video, 4'17"

from the series "Lotosik"

"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 Stubice, where we first met him among a group of other Ukrainians. We accompanied them as they were hanging out at Żwirki, 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 Stubice 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."

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.

Carla Rossi *1999 IT

based in Paris (France) and Milan (Italy)

Untitled 03, 2023

from the series "A Forensic Selfie"

"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 open-source 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'."

Ziyu Wang *1998 CN
based in Shanghai (China)

Lads, 2023

With My Buddies, 2023

Untitled, 2022

Untitled, 2022

Diaper, 2022

from the series "Go Get 'Em Boy"

"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)

Paint Me Like One of Your Pre-Raphaelite Boy-Girls, 2019

Hallway Self-Portrait, 2020

Pastel Testosterone, 2020

Flower Picking, 2020

Nina's Vanity, 201

Blue Self-Portrait, 2020

Orange Bath, 2020

from the series "Puberty"

"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."

Fatimazohra Serri *1995 MA

based in Marrakesh (Morocco)

We Run This Mother, Nador, Morocco, 2019

L'origine du monde, 2018

Half Seen, Half Imagined, 2023

from the series "Shades of Black"

"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."

Ben Hubert *2002 UK

based in London (United Kingdom)

Untitled #1, 2023

Untitled, 2024

Contrapposto, 2023

from the series "Plinthos"

"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."

Isabella Madrid *1999 CO

based in Pereira (Colombia)

Self-Portrait Smiling, 2024

Self-Portrait with Faja as Myself During My First Communion, 2024

Self-Portrait as a Botero Muse, 2024

Self-Portrait with Horse, 2024

from the series "Buena, Bonita, y Barata"

"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."

Yunping Li *1998 ES

based in Madrid (Spain)

Self-Portrait with Sock as a Penis, 2019

Self-Portrait with Broken Glass, 2023

from the series "回家 (huí jiā) [Homecoming]"

"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."

Soyeohang Rai *2001 IN

based in Delhi (India)

8 untitled works, 2022

from the series "Sisnu"

"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."

Hidhir Badaruddin *1995 SG

based in London (United Kingdom)

Mazri & Erwin, 2020

Isaac, 2020

Jun, 2020

from the series "Younglawa"

"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."

Charlie Tallott 2000 UK

based in London (United Kingdom)

Ask For Love and You Won't Get It, 2023

LS15, 2024

Untitled, 2023

Untitled, 2024

Marseille, 2023

At Least Until the World Stops Going Round, 2024

Untitled, 2021

Behind You, 2021

Delirium, 2024

from the series "At Least Until the World Stops Going Round"

"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."

Marvel Harris *1995 NL

based in Zutphen (Netherlands)

Dancing in the Rain, 2019

from the series "Inner Journey"

Book: **Marvel, 2021**

"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."

Matej Jurčević *1995 HU

based in Tenja (Croatia)

Self-Portrait #2, 2022

Self-Portrait #1, 2022

Untitled #1, 2022

from the series "I Try to Take Care of Myself Now"

"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."

Sophia Wilson *2000 US

based in New York (USA)

Dolo, 2024

Growing Up, 2023

"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."

Gabriela Marciniak *1996 PL

based in Poznań (Poland)

Early Retirement, 2023

Video, 11'51"

"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?"

Mahalia Taje Giotto *1992 CH/IT

based in Lausanne (Switzerland)

monster, 2023

from the series "existential boner"

"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)."

Chloé Azzopardi *1994 FR
based in L'Île-Saint-Denis (France)

6 untitled works, 2023
from the series "Non-Technological Devices"

"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."

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 marginalised 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 re-imagine 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.

Salomé Gomis-Trezise *1999 FR/UK

based in Brussels (Belgium)

Dalia et ses copines, 2024

Dakar Dance, 2023

"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."

Daveed Baptiste *1997 US

based in New York (USA)

Mama's Home, 2018

Rood, 2019

Boy Dreams, 2018

from the series "Haiti to Hood"

"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."

Sara Benabdallah *1995 MA

based in Marrakesh (Morocco)

Labsa Lakkbira, 2024

Oujdia 05 Moon, 2024

from the series "Dry Land"

"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."

Farren van Wyk *1993 NL/ZA

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

Alexander's Ring, 2024

The Whole Picture, 2021

Home, 2021

Craniometry, 2024

Boycott Outspan Blood Orange, 2024

Anthropological Four, 2021

Alexander's Braids, 2021

"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."

River Claire *1997 BO

based in Cochabamba (Bolivia)

Villa Adela. El Alto, Bolivia, 2019

Yatiri. Puma Punku, Bolivia, 2019

Cisco. Titicaca Lake, Bolivia, 2019

800bs. Titicaca Lake, Bolivia, 2019

Mano. Puma Punku, Bolivia, 2019

Casco. Laguna Colorada, Bolivia, 2019

Botas. Animas Valley, Bolivia, 2019

Cactus. Pulacayo, Bolivia, 2019

Camion. El Alto, Bolivia, 2019

from the series "Warawar Wawa (Son of the Stars)"

"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."

Luna Mahoux *1996 BE

based in Paris (France) and Brussels (Belgium)

Untitled, 2024

Video, 5'36"

from the series "Never Broken Again"

"This work 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.

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 video doesn't tell a linear story. It opens a space to listen differently, to see differently – to remember, together."

IMPRINT

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www.fffrankfurt.org

EXHIBITION

GEN Z: Shaping a New Gaze

May 9– August 30, 2026

PUBLIC GUIDED TOURS

Wednesdays, 5–6 pm

SPECIAL EVENTS

SAT/SUN, 09./10.05., 10 am – 5 pm WORKSHOP

“MINDFUL SELF-PORTRAITURE: OBJECTS, ARCHIVES, AND IDENTITY”

with GEN Z artist **FRANCESCA HUMMLER**

SAT, 09.05., 3 pm GALLERY TALK

with present **GEN Z ARTISTS** and **DR. HANNAH PRÖBSTING**, Photo Elysée
and **CELINA LUNSFORD, ANDREA HORVAY**

FRI, 29.05., 6 pm PANEL DISCUSSION

“GEN Z: ART IN THE AGE OF AI” with **LORANE HOCHSTÄTTER** and **ALINA FRIESKE**
moderated by **ELINOR ZOË KARL**, FFF Academy-Assistant

TUE, 26.05., 23.06., 21.07., 18.08., 3 pm CURATOR'S TOURS

with **CELINA LUNSFORD** or **ANDREA HORVAY**

Other events see

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