



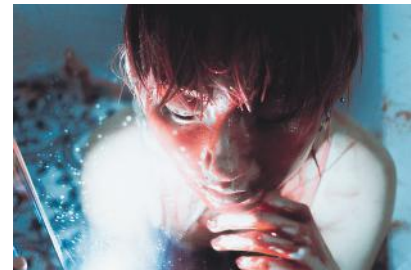
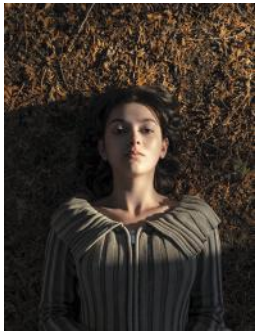


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Function Magazine 2023 - 2024
School of Image Arts
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Land Acknowledgement

It is important to understand the longstanding history that has brought us to reside on this land known as Tkaronto and understand our place within its history.

We acknowledge the original custodians of the land upon which we work and live. Toronto/Tkronto is in the 'Dish With One Spoon Territory'. The Dish With One Spoon is a treaty between the Anishinaabe, Mississaugas and Haudenosaunee that bound them to share the territory and protect the land.

This is and always will be Indigenous land.

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Inside Cover: Adriana Pérez Figuereo

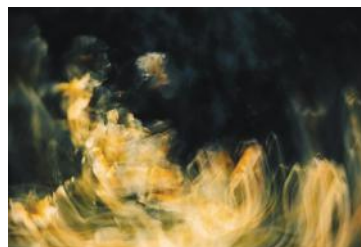
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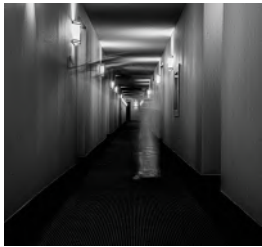
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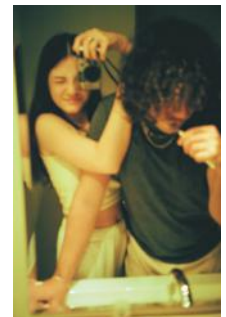


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TRANSCENDENCE

EDITOR'S NOTE / SIDE B

Transcendence. – A call to artists to push boundaries, erase limits, and elevate the artistic form. Acting as a mirror, the theme reflects a zeitgeist of the digital era. Serving as a reminder that the evolution of photography is intertwined with technological advancements, the imagery within Function 25 pushes the medium to adapt and redefine itself continually. We hope to invite readers on this transcendent voyage, where art becomes a bridge to the extraordinary and the retrospective gaze is not a nostalgic longing for the past but a springboard to the present.

Through a variety of lens-based and mixed-media works, the content within is a testament to the endless possibilities that arise when artists dare to dream beyond the constraints of the expected. The theme urges artists to surpass the boundaries of traditional artistry, fostering a platform where creativity knows no bounds. In a world with new methods of creation appearing each day, Transcendence challenges creators to break free from the ordinary, inventing new boundaries of medium and form, together as individuals.

As the 25 anniversary of Function Magazine is upon us, we would like to extend our thanks to those who have supported Function, continuing the tradition of producing a physical publication that showcases the work of the Image Arts community. Function would not be possible without the support of our readers, contributors, and the gracious patrons, who continue to inspire our efforts.

Side B (conceptual): Welcome to Side B, where traditional photography shines in its purest form. In this section, we celebrate the timeless beauty and artistry of photography's classic medium. Each image offers a glimpse into life's essence, showcasing masterful compositions and evocative storytelling. Join us in honoring image-makers who use traditional photography to continue to inspire and captivate the world's moments with timeless allure.

- Function 25 Team







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SABRINA DEWES

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

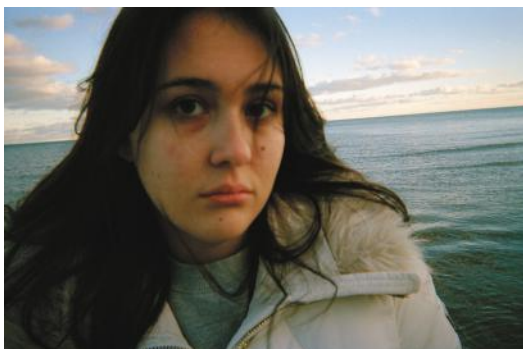
Interviewed by the Function Team











ARTIST STATEMENT

Minha Querida, 2023

The bond between a mother and her daughter is one of the most profound human connections to exist. They understand each other's emotions better than anybody else. Mothers and Daughters exist as oblique mirrors of each other. *Minha Querida* depicts the powerful bond created between a mother and her daughter and the impact they have on each other. I cannot think of anyone who I relate to more closely; my mom is a part of me and who I am. All my life, I have been told that I am just like my Mom but to me, we have many differences that make us the individuals we are. This series celebrates the ways in which my Mom influences my life while still exploring what makes us unique. "Minha Querida" means "My Dear" in Portuguese using the feminine

conjugation that the English language does not have. The title captures the essence of womanhood within the title itself, a prominent theme carried throughout the series. *Minha Querida* captures the dynamic within a Mother-Daughter relationship that speaks to womanhood on an intimate and generational level. *Minha Querida* is meant to highlight the importance of those relationships you share unconditional love with. Unconditional love is like an infallible trust and sense of safety that is a powerful and precious thing to share with another person. It is these types of relationships that ground us in the times when we are lost. This series is an appreciation of these relationships where love is being offered freely.







I understand that the relationship you have with your mother is very strong. Can you talk about how it changed or developed throughout your life?

When I was little, my mom was my teacher and caretaker. I looked up to her as an all-knowing person who had the answers to everything. As we get older, we evolve more and more in our independence until we don't need them anymore, but the bond with my mom has only gotten stronger over the years.

Now that I am older and have become more independent, my mom is still my teacher, but also my best friend. She understands me better than anyone; she is my rock. What is different now is that both of us are learning from one another and we both have grown in ways that were only achievable by having each other in our lives.

The relationship I have with her now is undoubtedly different from when I was a kid, but it is because we went through so many phases in our lives that this bond has changed and strengthened. I'm sure it will continue to change as more time passes.

What choices were you making with your very intimate and raw aesthetic choices?

Considering the nature of this project, I knew



I wanted it to include self-portraiture in the early stages of the process. I knew that by using my relationship with my mom to create this idea, I would allow myself to do it in the most meaningful way possible.

I wanted our closeness to translate into the images. I also wanted it to be clear that the series was portraying a strong bond between a mother and daughter. I started by making a long list of keywords such as vulnerability, connection, family, etc., and then used them to inspire me on how and what I would photograph.

I kept the tones of each image warm and bright so that it could maintain that sense of home and comfort. I paid close attention to how I would interact with my mom in the images and what we did when we were individually photographed. To me, the small decisions influence the potential of a photographic series.

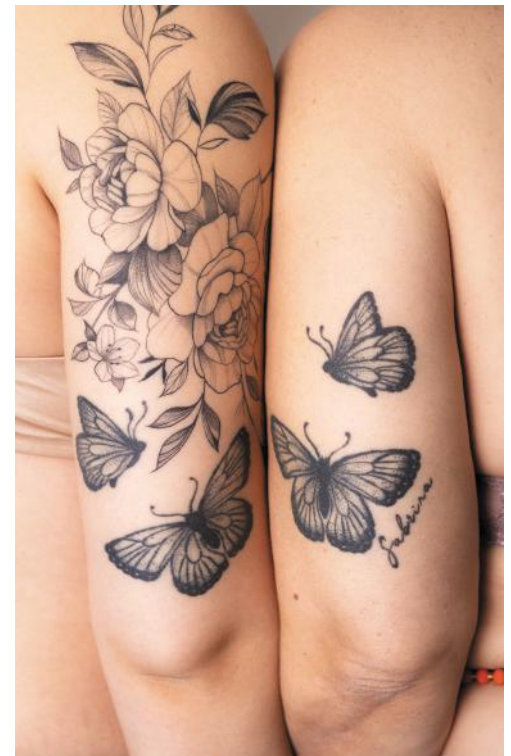
Which images were the hardest to take in terms of how personal they felt?

Thankfully, both my mom and I are comfortable in front of the camera so that allows for flexibility with my creative decisions. However, the hardest and most personal image to take would have to be the one where my mom is holding me in her arms like a baby. Although we have no issue with physical touch, I have never been held like that by her, at least not in many years. I'm an adult now, so it felt awkward. My mom didn't care at all, she was totally fine.

I needed that photo to not feel rushed and stiff. So what we did was we slowed down, took our time, and laughed a little, which ultimately allowed me to relax and accept that it is for the sake of art. It's funny now because that image ended up being very important to me in its representation and contribution to the rest of the series.

How long have you been exploring this specific narrative?

This project is sort of a continuation of another series I created in my second year that related to the theme of family. In the last semester of my third year, I began to



consider this concept as a potential topic for my fourth-year thesis. I wanted it to be about something not only that I'm passionate about but also that is a part of who I am. Because of this, I ultimately picked the most personal, significant topic I could choose; my relationship with my mom.

Where do you see this project going moving forward? Will it inspire new ones or is it something you will continue to explore over time?

I am happy with the state in which the series is in right now. But considering its topic, it could certainly grow with me as time goes on. Right now, it is about unconditional love and the bond between a mother and a daughter. But as time progresses, we will get older, and gain new experiences, and my relationship with her will continue to change. Who knows! Maybe one day, I will be a mother. Because of this, how I perceive this topic will also change meaning it could one hundred percent evolve with me as I go through life. That is exactly what I plan to do with it, too. If I feel inspired to continue it, I will, but for now, with the form it holds as of today, I am satisfied with where it is at.





























Spicy
Pure Imported
Ginger
Spicy Ginger is
Finely Ground
SINCE
1895

NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
RE 151
CANADA 1981





NADYA KWANDIBENS

INDUSTRY INSIGHT

Interviewed by Olga Bergmans



'Concrete Indians', Tee Lyn Duke (née Copenace), Toronto, ON, March 2010 47B









ARTIST BIO

Nadya Kwandibens is Anishinaabe (Ojibwe) from the Animakee Wa Zhing #37 First Nation in northwestern Ontario. She is an award-winning photographer, a Canon Ambassador, and the current Photo Laureate for the City of Toronto. In 2008 she founded Red Works Photography. Red Works is a dynamic photography company specializing in natural light portraiture, headshots sessions, plus event and concert photography. Red Works also provides image licensing, workshops, presentations, and print products. Nadya's photography has been exhibited in group and solo shows across Canada and the United States.



'The Red Chair Sessions',
Waawaate, Anishinaabe from
Asubpeeschoseewagong First Nation,
photographed on Stoney Nakoda,
Blackfoot & Tsuut'ina of the Dene
Nations, Treaty 7 Territory, June 2019.



Can you talk about how your vision for Red Works photography has progressed over the years?

"I formally named my practice in 2008. I recall that when you dedicate your mind, talent, and creativity to something that ignites passion in people, it naturally earns a name. Before that time, I had been engaged in a variety of endeavours and projects. I had been an independent artist for the majority of my life. I picked up the camera for the first time in 2000 when I was going to a film production school in Thunder Bay. That program is no longer there but I'm so glad I went through it. Now, a lot of the work that I do derives from a place within myself and a need to reconnect with my culture, because I didn't get to grow up with my people. I wasn't brought up with my biological parents, but instead within the foster care system. That reconnection with the Indigenous community made me able to use my talents to accurately portray them in a more positive light than what mainstream media had been doing for so long. That narrative was never fully in our control. It was never in our hands to tell our own stories. I mean I wouldn't say never there are so many artists picking up that narrative and artists before us that have forged that path. Walking

that path, and making it easier for the next generations of artists to wear that path down is something that is significant and instills a lot of meaning in what I do. I think overall my work educates. It empowers, and advocates. It's political. I would say that even just being Indigenous today, alive and thriving is a political act. That's sort of what Red Works is about. I've toured all over the place, I'm so lucky but I worked hard for it. I work hard and I'm very proud and I give that same pride into the work I do."

Did you have a defining moment where you realized Photography was more than a hobby for you?

"There definitely comes a time as an artist where you have to throw caution to the wind and just go for it. You only have one life, and it's very short. You can feel so small and the contribution that I want to make to society is showing the beauty of the Indigenous people. It's the basis of how I create different series or approach different sessions. I remember that moment specifically; It was the spring of 2006 when I was still living in Arizona at the time. Up until that point, I was only taking street photography and a lot of still life. I was just a sponge, really looking closely at the quality of

light and what it does at different times of the day on different angles, and buildings. I've always been the type to just go out and shoot. Although I did have formal education, I taught myself a large part of the practice myself. My partner at the time encouraged me to take it to the next level and I felt like I wanted to push myself to keep taking those steps forward and never stay stagnant because it can almost stunt your growth creatively. I'm always going for it you know, just leaping, bounding, sometimes I don't even know what I'm doing but I do it anyway. The simple act of holding a camera is something so intimate. People are seeing the way I see the world through my eyes. They're seeing my vision and that's something I don't take lightly. It's not just about sharing a photo, it comes with a story, and learning so much about different people from all over the place. During the tour, I would be on the road for nine months of the year which I did for 14 years. Photography has given me that and has also taught me so much. Not just about the art form, but also about myself."





[Top] 'The Red Chair Sessions', Miskobinessik from Sagkeeng First Nation, photographed at Bwaan Odaazhewe'onaaning on Anishinaabe Aki, Treaty 3 Territory, October 2020

[Bottom] 'The Red Chair Sessions', Melaw Nakehk'o, Dene and Dēnesyliné Liidlíi Kue from Denendeh, photographed at Animikii Wiikwedong on Robinson-Superior Treaty Territory, February 2020

A lot of your work is centred around amplifying Indigenous voices. In regards to photography as a means of storytelling, how do you think it can connect people?

"I think I want people to be able to understand and appreciate humanity, and that basic need to want to be understood and relate. I think that's at the core of what photography means to me. There's so much power in that simple act of picking up a camera because years from now people will look back at imagery of what happened within the Indigenous community in this time and space. They'll look back and see so many artists doing so much beautiful, and powerful work, I consider myself honoured to be a part of that circle. So when people can look back and see all this resurgence and abundance, of Indigenous creativity, and our lifestyle, our people, our cultures, our languages, our lands, elders, our youth it's the whole scope of everything. I want people to understand what the Indigenous realities are about today. So that's what it's about for me. You know what, I'm just gonna say it. Despite what Canada tried to do to us, we're still here. But

the responsibility is not on us to teach. If true reconciliation were to happen there are a lot of recommendations from various federally commissioned reports over the decades that should be implemented, but haven't yet. We are not just our trauma. But I feel like this generation and the older generations are still in the process of picking up those fragmented pieces, and making that path like what I was talking about before even easier to walk through."

We have one of your works here at TMU. Can you talk about that photograph, and what your hope is for students to take away from it?

"That image was photographed in the subway, I believe in the Spadina station. The series itself was about Indigenous identity and decolonization. It's asking specifically how Indigenous people feel living in an urban centre. It asks participants, "Who are you and what do you do to hold on to your culture, traditions, and values and what would that look like?" A lot of portraits in this series are of people in partial or full Regalia. The woman

in the photograph is a dear friend from back home in Northwestern Ontario. She wanted to be a part of this series. When I launched this series, I got all these emails back for the open call, and she emailed and I thought it would be so powerful. It worked out at that TTC station. It's a long exposure shot and I can't remember the specifics but I believe it was a 3 second exposure so she had to hold very still. Meanwhile, there was wind gushing in the corridor and you can even see some of the feathers sort of blur from the length of the exposure shot. But she's perfectly still. Her eyes are in sharp focus, there's such a demanding and powerful presence to it. All the people around her look like spirits of some sort, or as if they don't belong. It's almost an otherworldly sort of look to it. She's surrounded by commuters who are spirits and she's perfectly still. Her idea was that she wanted to be photographed as she was heading to her Pow-wow dance troupe, which she was a part of at the time. That was the main idea of the portrait. I heard her jingle dress before I saw her. It was so beautiful."











60B Kennedy Soong Bouchard, My Scars are Fading, 2023.











Olivia Gentil, Hallway, 2023.













ADRIANA PÉREZ

FIGUERO

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

Interviewed by the Function Team







ARTIST STATEMENT

Candid Compositions, 2023

Delving into the chaotic preparations backstage, exposing the organic interplay between creativity and chaos. The images within this collection embody the palpable energy and anticipation that precede each show, offering a unique perspective on the moments that pave the way to the polished façade of the runway.

Portraits, both posed and spontaneous, I offer glimpses into the personalities that mold the fabric of the fashion landscape. By capturing the unfiltered exchanges between designers and models, the collaborative spirit that breathes life into the designs is illuminated. Each frame becomes a testament to the

symbiotic relationship between the creators and their creations. This body of work is an invitation to peel back the layers of glamour and spectacle, offering a nuanced exploration of the human side of the fashion industry. By presenting the candid and unscripted moments that transpire off the runway, I aim to provide viewers with an authentic glimpse into the multifaceted tapestry of emotions, relationships, and artistry that defines these four days. Each photograph encapsulates a fragment of the collective narrative, inviting viewers to contemplate the untold stories that exist beyond the curated glamour of the fashion week stage.









FN: What do you look for when shooting behind the scenes? How does shooting for fashion week differ from your other work?

Adriana: When shooting behind the scenes, I am drawn to capturing raw energy, candid moments, and the organized chaos that unfolds backstage. I look for authentic emotions, interactions, and a high-paced environment juxtaposed with moments of calmness. Backstage at Fashion Art Toronto (FAT), the atmosphere is charged with creativity and a constant flux of last-minute ideas. One of the things that I found myself catching the most was the energy of the models, always obvious and present, getting their makeup done, rehearsing their walk, or simply waiting for their turn. Whether it was by turning their head, parting their lips or just looking at the camera, their presence was tangible in every shot. This added a layer of dynamism to the backstage environment, I aimed to capture not just the final polished looks, but also the creation of the moments that contribute to the overall spectacle.

FN: Were there any challenges you faced when completing this project? How did you overcome them?

Adriana: Several. Primarily navigating the dynamic and fast-paced nature of fashion week. The crowded space, dealing with various light conditions, and capturing fleeting moments amidst the hustle were significant hurdles. However, as difficult as it was at first, I quickly realized the excitement and the energy of the area was contagious, so I learned to embrace the unpredictability and fast pace of the environment. This newfound appreciation allowed me to overcome the initial challenges with a sense of excitement and determination.

FN: Describe any interactions you had with the people you photographed during fashion week. Did they react differently in the presence of the camera?

Adriana: Interacting with people was different every time, there was such a diverse range of reactions and personalities, which was one of the best parts of it because it meant I could never get the same image twice. Some of the models were seasoned pros, exuding confidence and ease in front of the camera. Their familiarity with the spotlight was evident in their relaxed demeanour, showcasing a natural comfort that comes with experience.

On the other hand, I also had the privilege of photographing people who were relatively new to modelling or had limited experience. From them, the presence of the camera elicited a different response. Some were visibly conscious of being photographed, their movements more deliberate as they navigated backstage.

Throughout the process, I observed a stark contrast in reactions, which provided insight into the different levels of comfort and confidence among the models. Regardless of experience, each interaction was an opportunity to capture authentic moments and emotions, this diversity added to the backstage energy and highlighted the range of experiences and perspectives within the fashion world. At the end of the day, this project is a testament to the people behind the scenes; it's not about garments, but about the human narratives that animate the fashion landscape.

FN: How do your images speak to the fashion landscape? What commentary do you think your images are making in terms of the spectacle/glamour vs. authenticity?

Adriana: My images offer a commentary on the duality of the fashion landscape, exploring the intersection between both ends, the stereotypical glamour, and its vibrant reality. By capturing the behind-the-scenes chaos, creativity, and authentic moments I aim to challenge conventional

perceptions and celebrate the diversity within the industry.

FN: What are you most proud of about this project? Do you see yourself expanding this project in the future?

Adriana: What I am most proud of about this project is the personal growth it represents for me. It's not just about capturing the collections per season, but also about challenging myself to work in demanding environments like this, pushing my boundaries, and discovering new capabilities. Looking forward, I envision expanding this project further. I discovered a newfound passion for capturing scenes like these and the limitless variations and narratives that unfold with each person. Throughout this ongoing journey, I hope to continue uncovering the beauty, diversity, and authenticity that live within the threads of the industry, inviting viewers to see beyond the glamour and embrace the humanity behind the runway.

















Chip Lei, Karolina, 2032.

88B [Previous Spread] Joy Xing, I looked Inside and I Didn't Find Much, 2023.





















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