

Alexis D. Lea





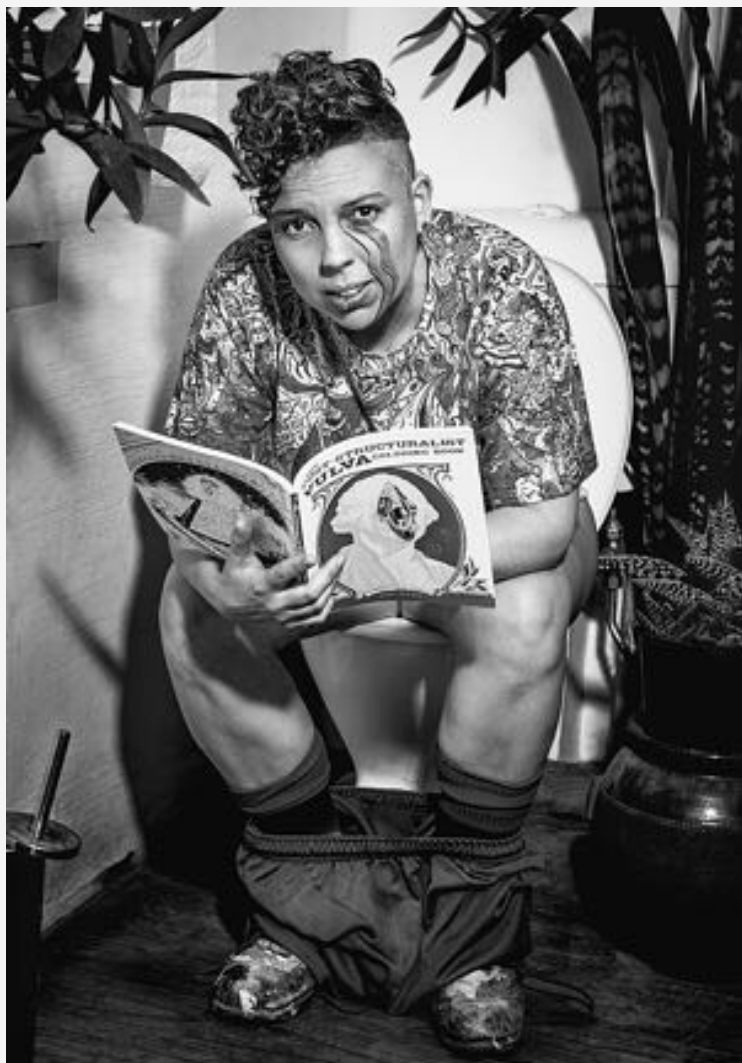
YOUNG & QUEER



Images from the published book *Young and Queer* in collaboration with *Minus 18*. Images taken at the inaugural *Minus18 Queer Ideas Festival 2019*, where *Minus18* youth were asked what it means to be young and queer in Australia today.



FUCK FABULOUS



A 2020 campaign for Sydney Mardi Gras for one of their feature festival events celebrating rebel punk grunge inspired queer identities through performance.



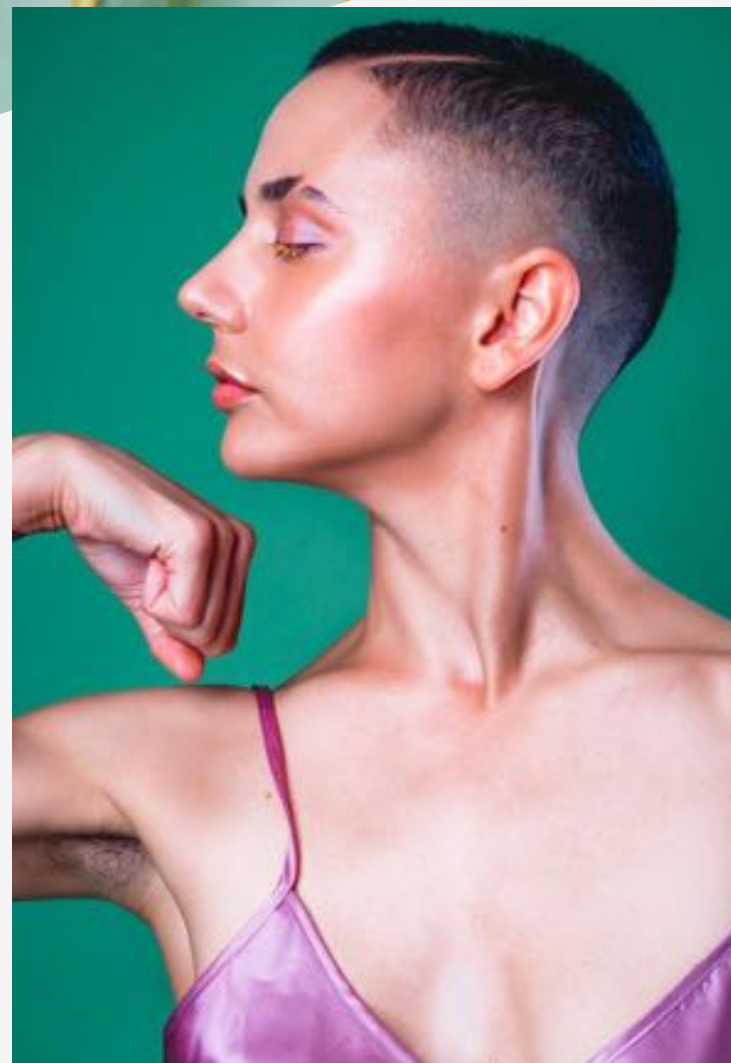
FAST FASHUN

A 2019 + 2020 event featuring campaign images + print/digital booklet for the International Melbourne Fashion Festival.

This event by artists Tenfingerz & Sebastian Berto encouraged attendees to make their own garments every hour on the hour from clothing that would otherwise be going to landfill. A runway would take place every hour to showcase attendee final garments and educate those about the global affects of the fast fashion industry.



GET HAIRY FEBRUARY



A 2018 campaign for charity to encourage conversation and challenge societal norms that exist around body hair and gender identity.

MIDSUMMA 2018

Sample of Midsumma Festival official printed
guide cover and promotional material for 2018
(not pictured) in collaboration with Matto Lucas.



MIDSUMMA 2017

Sample of Midsumma Festival official printed guide cover and promotional material for 2018 (not pictured) in collaboration with Helena Regina-Smyth + Dan Moore.



OPENING SPREAD SAMPLE



PHOTO ESSAY

WOMEN OF NEW YORK

Q: *Since Douchette Lee talks with Katrina Del Mar New York-based underground photographer, filmmaker and writer-filmmaker. Katrina's clients include major music companies, Time Out New York, People Magazine and more. She is currently working on a new web series called Intimate and is writing a series of new novels.*

Q: *Why do you mostly photograph women?*
A: *Many of the women I photograph are friends, or people I've had personal relationships with. I'm a lesbian. I'm attracted to women. And this often drives me to photograph people that are very close to me. There's an intimacy, a power, and a playfulness in the dynamic which creates a spectrum of femininity in my work.*

Q: *Your work is often described as erotic. Would you describe yourself as an erotic photographer?*
A: *I don't think of myself as an erotic photographer. I'm not interested in shooting Douchette photography. I don't shoot pictures of people looking, or in lingerie. Although my personal life does come in to my work, for example, at times I'm in a writing, where I'm ultimately involved with my subject and I pick up the camera for a second. Other images are much more staged and theatrical, and there's a completely different dynamic.*

Q: *There's a playful undertone and intimacy to your images that looks very authentic. How do you access that?*
A: *I don't see the people I photograph as subjecting to my*

game. They're participating, and that's important to me. A subject can happen between me and the subject when they don't feel subjected.

Q: *When you exhibited your work at PARTS: SPAN gallery in New York recently, what was the reaction?*
A: *I got a lot of people telling me that my work was joyful. They felt a sense of joy in themselves and in the room, and that they was not a point of view that people see in popular imagery. The feedback was coming from straight men and women, gay men, lesbians, bikers, trucker guys, gender queer kids... I have a good line for all these communities so the feedback was phenomenal.*

Q: *Tell us the story behind some of these photos.*
A: *Carol and her litter she was in a hard back in the day, but she also breeds cats with New York-themed names. One litter was named after the cast of Saturday Night Live.*
Other with her dog. Other was my neighbor when I was living in Brooklyn. She owned turtles and dogs and chickens. She had a tremendous menagerie over there. She runs a theatre club in New Orleans called The Backyard Ballroom.

Times in Berlin and with all its and hole keep. The kitchen image came first and the beds image came later. We made one image next to the other.

KATRINA DEL MAR

ARCHER MAGAZINE Q+A INTERVIEW + IMAGE ESSAY CURATION

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PHOTO ESSAY

PHOTOS FROM

JUST ME & ALLAH

Q&A with Aleva Desautiers-Lee

Q: Why did you choose photography as a medium for this project?

I wanted the images to be an entry point into a discussion around Islamophobia, gender, sexuality and race. I often feel there is a barrier when it comes to how the academic world talks about gender identity. The language that's used can be hard to grasp for a lot of people.

I think this project really speaks to the different kinds of discriminations queer Muslims experience depending on where they're from. At the end of the day the project's message is beyond just that of queer Muslims, it's speaking about classism, racism, gender discrimination... bigger issues.

Q: What has been your approach when reaching out to transgender Muslims?

I find all of the people I've photographed are really excited to be involved, however, transgender Muslims in particular have shown an overwhelming amount of excitement.

I think it's because they often have less visibility than others in the queer community, and they appreciate and long for a platform to tell their stories.

Q: Just Me and Allah has become a bit of a movement, especially online. Why do you think that is, and how do you remain personally connected to this project now that it has taken on a life of its own?

I'm pretty sure the first thing that comes up when you google 'queer Muslim' is my project - I think that's because there is so little content out there.

Now that this project has evolved into a bit of a movement, I'm trying to ensure I do it justice. I feel a sense of responsibility to this community now more than ever, especially when I get messages through my Tumblr page from kids in Egypt or Pakistan asking where they can find support or a community to connect to, because they are so isolated.

Q: How do you contend with Islamophobia and queerphobia personally?

I try to educate people whenever and wherever I can. Often I'm in spaces where I'm the only queer Muslim of colour. I don't feel it's an 'us versus them' situation. I understand this approach requires quite a bit of hand-holding, for example, I often have to explain why it's

really sexist to tell Muslim women to not wear the burka.

At the core of this approach, it's about humanising this group of people who are dehumanised by mainstream media. It's about showing others that queer Muslims are people, just like you. They're dealing with the same fears, and a lot of the same struggles in life.

Q: You are connected to the founders and the community at Unity Mosque in Toronto, can you tell us more about it?

Unity Mosque is amazing! I tend to go there now if I'm feeling fragile, and need a place filled with people that will understand my experiences as a queer Muslim person of colour.

It's not like a traditional mosque. Before and after prayer, a lot of us converse about what we want to pray for that day, and what's going on in our personal lives. It's really about connecting, offering support, and getting to know people on a more intimate level.

Q: How has your relationship with Islam evolved?

I am still working on my relationship with Islam. Growing up in a Muslim household, your experience with Islam can often be a list of rules that outline the ways in which you're supposed to be a good Muslim.

I'm still having to undo a lot of those, and learn how to not feel guilty about some of my personal choices. It has been such a spiritual process to realise I am still a good Muslim even if I don't look a certain way, or go about my day-to-day life adhering to all the rules.

Q: Can you recall a memory that was an impactful part of this process?

I came out to my mother a year ago, I'm 26 now. My siblings knew for a long time, but when I told my mother she passed for a minute, and then said: "Well, I still love you."

It was followed with questions about my relationships and other things, but I realised she wanted to know more about me. I felt coming out to my mother was really the first time I started to experience what unconditional love felt like.

How my mother applies the philosophies of Islam to her life is that you're supposed to accept and love everyone. Accepting people and not rejecting people is part of her Islamic beliefs. To reject people, to her, would be very un-Islamic. 🌟

PHOTOGRAPHER

SAMRA HABIB

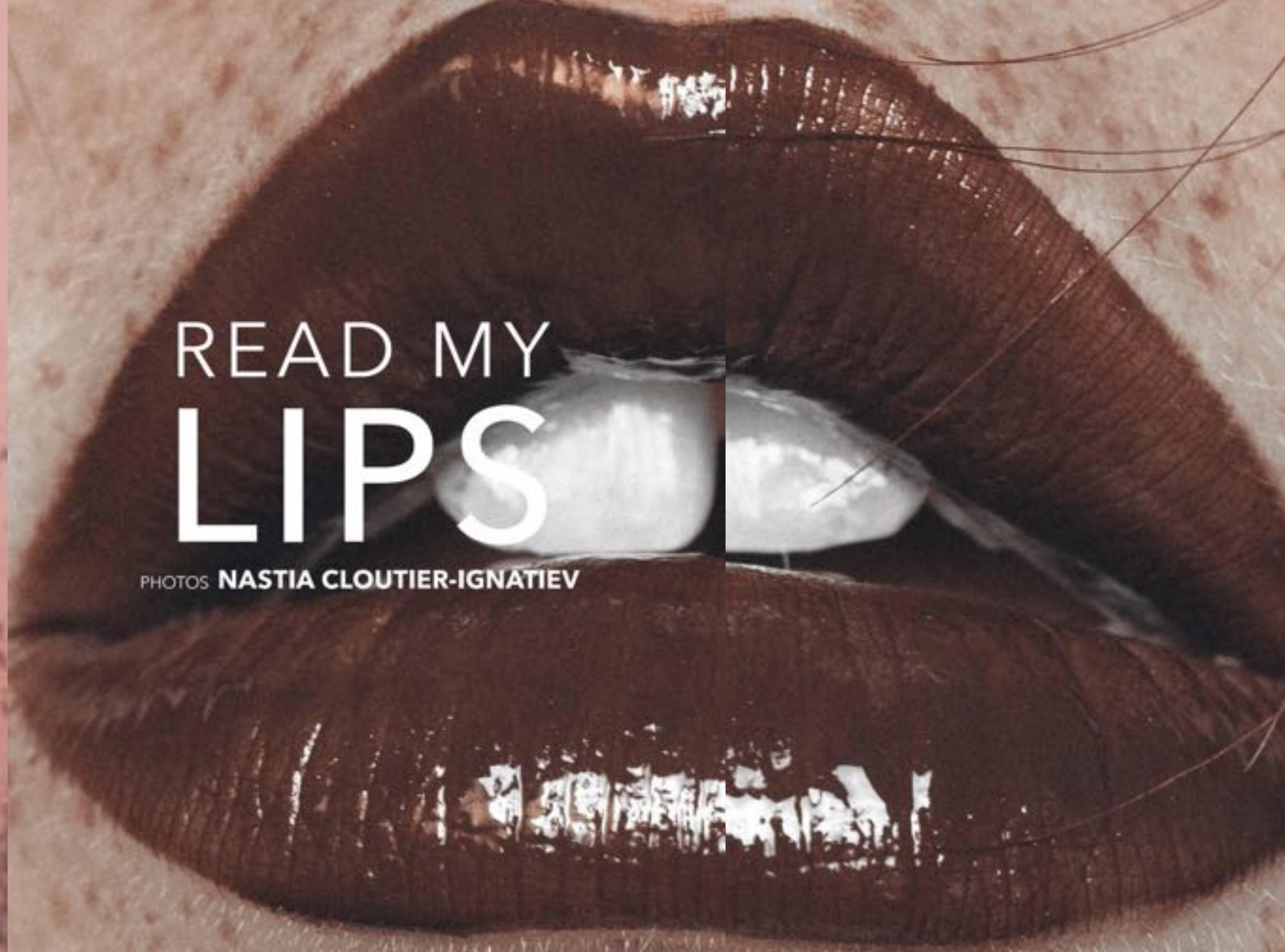


ARI
PARIS, FRANCE

At the age of 4, I arrived in France from Algeria with my family. When the civil war happened due to radical Islam, both of my parents had a fatwa issued against them because they are intellectuals. My parents are still traumatised by this experience. This is why my relationship with Islam is complicated. They're against women wearing the veil because it reminds them of women being asked to wear the hijab in Algeria, which led to radicalism.

I've never been against the hijab because I'm a feminist. I think the debate over Muslim women wearing the hijab in France is incredibly racist - you have old, white, bourgeois, cisgender men deciding what Muslim women should wear without consulting women about how they feel. It's a deeply rooted kind of racism here in France. This has made me reclaim my faith in Islam. I call myself Muslim because of solidarity.

OPENING SPREAD SAMPLE



ARCHER MAGAZINE Q+A INTERVIEW + IMAGE ESSAY CURATION



PHOTO ESSAY

FACES AND PHASES

Zanele Muholi is a South African photographer whose work explores the lives of Black lesbians, trans women, and gender-nonconforming individuals in South Africa. Her work is a powerful commentary on the challenges and resilience of the LGBTQ+ community in a country with a history of apartheid and homophobia.

I HEARDED CAPTIONING Faces and Phases eight years ago. The first person I photographed for the series was Busi Ngeza (1982-2007) at the old Women's Guild at Constitution Hill, Braamfontein, South Africa in 2008.

Busi was my friend and colleague. She was a poet, an activist and a survivor of the hate crime known as 'lunatic rape'. Eight months after the photo was taken, in March 2007, Busi Ngeza died at the age of 25.

Confronted by the realities of loss and pain, I began a long journey of photographing portraits of the mostly Black lesbians and trans men around me.

As I photographed friends, neighbours, the lovers of lovers, I asked questions and looked into the eyes of Black mothers, sisters, daughters, sons, wives and husbands. I was invited into their lives and I learned of their joys, hopes, scars, and endless love.

Faces and Phases was thus born, and grew from my own struggle with what I was privileged to hear and capture. I was torn apart by the outrageous stories shared with me just as often as I was built up by them.

Faces and Phases is both highly personal and deeply political, an act of watching, witnessing, transgressing the boundaries of oppressive racial, sexual, class and gender power structures.

When I was growing up in the 1970s and 1980s, many African countries were still fighting for their independence from European colonialism, and Black nationalism was at an all-time high. While Mozambique, Angola, Zimbabwe and Namibia were slowly winning independence, South Africa's fight for freedom against oppression was quashed with brutal force by the apartheid state.

In most countries that gained independence before

South Africa, homophobia, queerphobia and transphobia are deeply entrenched, with African leaders criminalising homosexuality and publicly propelling hate speech.

These decades were times of high alert, as wars and violence and killings spread throughout my country and my township of Umlazi. Parallel to these political wars, another kind of war was being waged, an internal war against our own Black, African beauty. Africans were bombarded with commercial images peddling the use of skin bleaching creams that promised to lighten and brighten our complexions, give us a sense of self-worth and satisfy a longing to be less-African even as we fought against white oppression.

Our current struggle, as we commemorate 20 years of democracy in South Africa, is that Black lesbian women and trans men continue to suffer 'lunatic rape' and the brutal murders of our lovers and friends. Resistance is never a linear process. Often, even before the organising starts, merely existing and living is the beginning of political consciousness, an act of resistance and transgression.

As Black lesbian, gay and transgender people today we are resisting homophobia, queerphobia and transphobia simply by living our lives. We put ourselves at risk in the township by coming out and being seen, but we refuse to deny our own beauty and existence.

I want to project publicly, without shame, that we are bold, Black, beautiful, hardworking, proud individuals. It heals me to know that I am paving the way for others who, in wanting to come out, are able to look at the photographs, read the captions and understand that they are not alone.

ZANELE MUHOLI



CAPTION
ZANELE MUHOLI
PHOTO
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A

PHOTO ESSAY

BUTCH

Q How did project BUTCH come to fruition?

I had been working in construction for 20 years before the recession hit and I lost my job. I've always had this love affair with my camera, and figured I could make money doing portraits, so I decided to start photographing my friends.

For a long time, I'd heard people say that butches were disappearing. I knew this wasn't the case; they just weren't wanting to be seen. Historically, this is part of who butches are: we could not be seen, because that usually meant we would be harassed.

Early in the project, I had a show at the Lexington Club in San Francisco. I hadn't seen that many butches fill a bar in over 10 years. After that, I began to understand that this project could really be something.

Q How your personal relationship to the butch identity changed over the project started?

At first I was only going to shoot female-identified people, but I realized fairly soon that my decision would actually exclude people who fell into the butch identity. I realized you can be butch and trans, simultaneously. I am of the mindset that there is always room at the table of queer identity for everyone.

Q There's a lot of stigma around butch women. Do you think this project has an impact on shifting that?

The sentiment of the project, for me, is about butch visibility and documentation. I wanted to give people a view into the internal landscape of butch women. Visibility helps promote understanding, which is the beginning of acceptance.

Through this body of work I'd love to completely de-stereotype and redefine butch — give it new meaning, while still making sure to pay tribute to its historical meaning.

Q How has the queer community's idea of 'butch' changed since you first became aligned with the identity?

Historically, being butch has always been the butt of

jokes — not just behind-closed doors, but also publicly. It made it difficult in the past to develop any sense of pride or uniqueness within the identity. Being a butch used to mean adhering to a certain toughness and certain style of dress, and you absolutely had to date femmes.

All of this has changed. The butch identity is far more fluid now. Younger generations are so fluid in their gender and it's awesome to see. This ability to be both masculine and feminine at the same time is much closer to the essence of who we are as people.

Q Do you identify as butch?

I was always very masculine as a child. I wanted to be Indiana Jones or something — I was going to be cool and strong, with so much style. But I didn't have language to describe myself growing up. Girl or boy were the only choices.

Later on, in my early teen years, there was a spike in drag visibility in the media. I remember KID Lang and Martina Navratilova specifically. I saw them out there in the world being successful and gay and butch.

As I got older and moved into the city, I began to see more lesbians around, particularly when I started going to the Lexington Club. The first time I walked into that place was such an incredible feeling. It was the first time that I had ever felt celebrated in my identity.

Although I do identify as butch now, when I describe my identity these days I'm more likely to say queer, because that word encompasses a broader meaning. It's more fluid generally, as well as sexually.

I feel like butch is this awesome umbrella term that has this great historical context among the gays. It's a more-specific version of queer.

Q There's vulnerability in presenting such a complex body of work. How do you deal with criticism?

This is my first major body of work so it's close to my heart, but I know to improve as a photographer I have to leave space for people to be critical. I feel grateful for

MEG ALLEN



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together.**

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