



WE SEE

Photo by **Evanglo Sipsas**
femLENS workshops 2017, Gdynia, Poland





Photo by **Thomas Mukoya**
femLENS Exhibition 2017, Gdynia, Poland







Photos by Halima al-Haj
femLENS workshops 2017, Shatila Camp, Beirut, Lebanon

WE SEE

This first issue of the We See magazine is dedicated to femLENS, to women and to their eyes. We are starting a long walk to tell women through women, and to encourage women to tell stories and their viewpoints.

Thanks to technological developments, today photography is easily accessible and can be used by a large group of people who have never had access to large audiences, or any audience.

It's a strong tool to challenge injustice and oppression by exposing instances of wrongdoings, and homogeneity by showing just how diverse our world really is.

We think that photography should be the eyes and the voice for the people who don't know and cannot see.

Photos have a double power, inspiring people to think about things and, negatively, distorting reality. It is extremely important to be aware of both the limits of photography and its potential in order to think of new models of storytelling.

In her great 'On Photography' Susan Sontag writes: "In deciding how a picture should look, in preferring one exposure to another, photographers are always imposing standards on their subjects. Although there is a sense in which the camera does indeed capture reality, not just interpret it, photographs are as much an interpretation of the world as paintings and drawings are."

And she adds in the same essay: "From its start, photography implied the capture of the largest possible number of subjects. Painting never had so imperial a scope. The subsequent industrialization of camera technology only carried out a promise inherent in photography from its very beginning: to democratize all experiences by translating them into images."

femLENS, as a wide-angle lens, is designed to support women's voices in being more included in the cultural and media representation.

femLENS is an open laboratory of shared thoughts, and the darkroom where women have a chance to discuss to develop their own vision and become change agents themselves.

All photographs you are about to see in this magazine have been made with different kinds of mobile phones and disposable film cameras.

Jekaterina Saveljeva, Founder of femLENS and Workshop Facilitator

Rita Plantera, femLENS Chief of Growth

Gdynia, March 2018

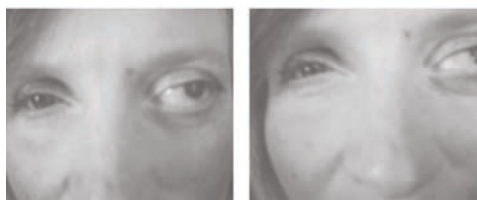


Photo by Halima al-Haj
femLENS workshops 2017, Shatila Camp, Beirut, Lebanon



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by Rita Plantera



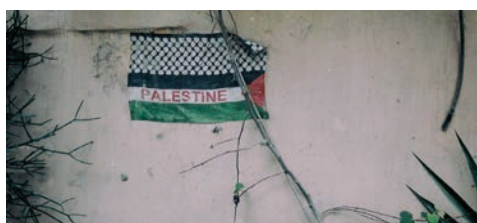
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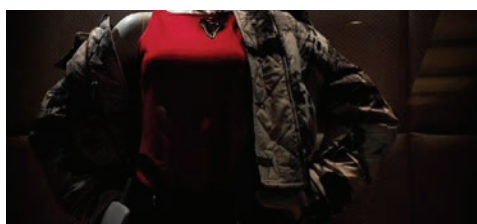
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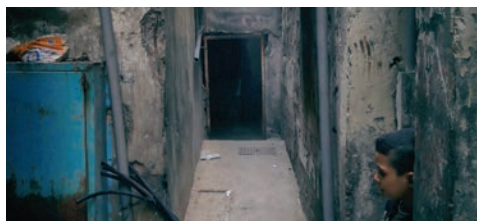
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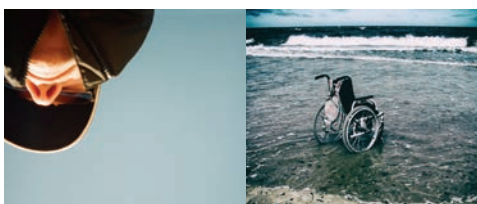
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THE POWER
AND THE
RIGHT OF
CHOOSING.
● OR NOT?

by Rita Plantera



Photo by Halima al-Haj
femLENS workshops 2017, Shatila Camp, Beirut, Lebanon

THE POWER AND THE RIGHT OF CHOOSING. OR NOT?

by Rita Plantera, femLENS Chief of Growth

Despite the fact that in 1918 (some) women gained the right to vote, a century later, the majority of women still struggle to gain the right to choose. The right to choose to be or not to be a wife, a prostitute, a soldier; the right to choose to speak up, the right to choose to say “no” and “enough is enough”, the right to choose to have or not to have an abortion, the right to choose to attend school.

When they choose, they lose other rights, they lose or do not obtain a job, they are killed, they are raped, they are jailed. We think that choosing is a human right and that the denial of the right to choose is a gender-related issue probably originated from stereotyping women. Women are victims of gender stereotypical expectations, gender-biased evaluations and gender standards that come from cultural traditions and social customs, and are nourished by media.

Today’s cultural and media representation of women is not inclusive nor diverse.

Women are misrepresented and underrepresented. Women and men are portrayed in stereotypical ways that reflect and strengthen views of gender enforced by tradition, community and society.

“The bastard form of mass culture” writes Roland Barthes in *The Pleasure of the Text* (1975) “is humiliated repetition: content, ideological schema, the blurring of contradictions - these are repeated, but the superficial forms are varied: always new books, new programs, new films, news items, but always the same meaning”.

And, we add, always the same stereotypes and their repetition that results in the empowerment of the stereotypical mass culture and media.

In the opening pages of her essay “A photograph is not an opinion. Or is it?” - which appears in “Women” (1999) by

Annie Leibovitz - Susan Sontag writes: “Any large-scale picturing of women belongs to the ongoing story of how women are presented, and how they are invited to think of themselves. A book of photographs of women must, whether it intends to or not, raise the question of women --there is no equivalent “question of men.” [...] The traditions [...] of

regarding an individual man as an instance of humankind and an individual woman as an instance of . . . women, are still largely intact, deeply rooted in language, narrative, group arrangements, and family customs.”

We think that the question of women and its resolution in terms of social change and media representation is raised each time a woman is denied to feel free to choose to act and be, while men do. Moreover, the question of women passes through the story of each woman, wherever in the world, and their willingness or unwillingness to act for a change. Women

“see”, most of them are not empowered to tell what and how they see though. Furthermore, society gender stereotyping and media misrepresentation of women is so pervasive that among women, some of them are not able to “see” the issue.

We think it is time for a paradigm shift: from viewing the question of women as a question of women to one viewing the question of women as a question of women and men, a question of humankind. We think that awareness of gender issues, and accountability for promoting a culture of gender equality and its representation within the media industry and the culture, are crucial to determine any change.

As femLENS, our growth starts from here, by promoting gender issues awareness and accountability for a change, by sustaining women in advocating for themselves. ■

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AS A QUESTION OF WOMEN
AND MEN, A QUESTION OF
HUMANKIND



Photos by Ewa Drewna
femLENS workshops 2017, Gdynia, Poland



THE CHALLENGE OF NEW FEMINISM TO THE MEDIA GENDER-STEREOTYPES

JEKATERINA SAVELJEVA

Interview with the Founder and Workshop Facilitator of femLENS

by Rita Plantera, femLENS Chief of Growth

Jekaterina Saveljeva is a photographer, editor and the Founder of femLENS and Workshop Facilitator. We asked her to introduce us to femLENS and its vision.

You founded femLENS in 2015. How did you come up with femLENS? How did it all start?

I had been thinking about women and the lack of diversity in documentary photography for some years before starting femLENS.

There were ideas of a photo agency for women from the East and South of the world, as they are often not included in the “best of” lists, nor do they work much internationally. But as time went on, I didn’t feel that it was enough.

That year, as I worked on a story in Mexico, I started to feel that not only were the women from the East and the South not being offered the work, but that there weren’t many whom the work could be offered to, either.

I saw that there was a gap not only in the gender of those who create photographs, but also in the cultural and economic backgrounds of those who do.

A lot of what we see is interpretations of people’s cultures, upbringing, backgrounds, neighbourhoods, traditions and so on.

At the time I was brooding over all of this, World Press Photo, the biggest photojournalism contest, released a study of the field. It showed that in 2015, women made up less than 15% of more than fifteen hundred participants from one hundred different countries, (in 2017, it was 18%). The study also showed that female photographers often earn less

than male photographers, as well as that photographers are often people with a certain degree of education and income, which to me greatly determines how the reality is going to be presented to us. This last piece of information was what made me think about creating workshops rather than organising into an agency.

But there was another factor in my decision to do that first workshop in Dublin. I had spent a month in a small Mexican village, where the people had organised into a community police group and had fought off the local narco cartel and had expelled the corrupt state police. It was very early on for them and there was a lot of optimism and enthusiasm.

They didn’t have many resources, but the activities were very idealistic, like giving free literacy classes to the elderly, or organising a community radio with education programs for people of all ages on topics ranging from science to health. When I returned to Europe, I was very sensitive to the prevailing attitudes that to do anything at all, one needs a lot of money, and connections and education. It felt paralysing, but also no longer true. At the time, I didn’t have much money, as freelance work wasn’t paying, and I was sleeping on my friends’ floor

But I reached out to some old contacts, took an almost two-hour bus journey across Dublin, and started the first workshop in Balgaddy, a social housing project. Instead of going there to see





Photo by Halima al-Haj
femLENS workshops 2017, Shatila Camp, Beirut, Lebanon

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what I'd understand, I wanted to work with some women there on using the tools they probably already had—mobile phone cameras, and see what they could show us. That was the start.

What and who are femLENS?

femLENS is many things. It's workshops, and an association of people who are interested in photography, media and culture, and who have the energy to contribute to the development of society. I also hope that it's a disrupter.

There have been many different people involved in different capacities and at different stages, starting with those who gave me a mattress when I was working on something new, to those who have contributed ideas, contacts, finances, premises, translations, and much more.

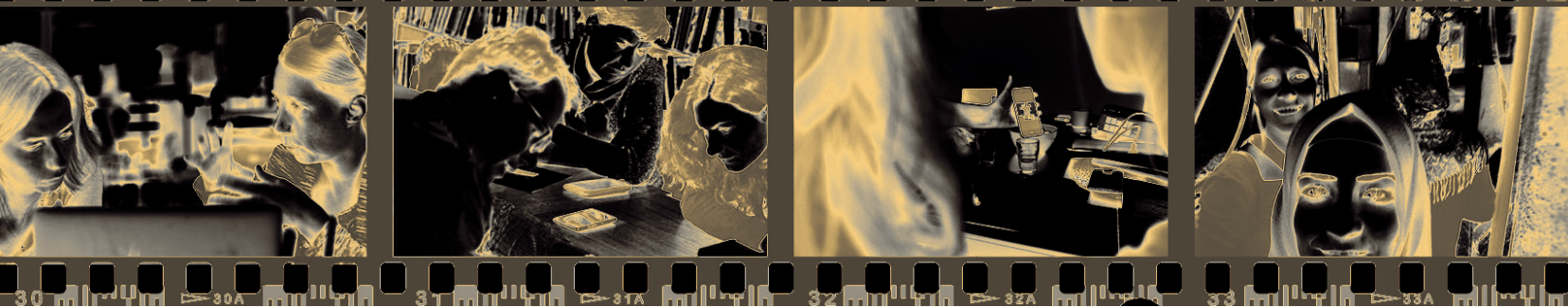
But now I have a stable core team of three people, which is something unexpected because part of the motivation behind starting femLENS was some kind of anger.

I didn't think that anyone would pay any attention to it, other than the people who might be glad to get a free photography class off me. Today we have a lot of support from the most unexpected places—private, NGO and corporate organisations, and we are very grateful for it.

Our core team has a background in media: photography, print journalism and radio. Seems right.

Is femLENS a feminist movement? Is it a women's organisation supporting or promoting the ideology behind feminism?

When starting femLENS I didn't think I was starting a feminist movement or organisation. But considering that we focus on photography education only for women and on promoting their vision and voices, I would safely say that yes, femLENS is part of the feminist movement. We would like for the media to offer their clients a balanced representation of women, to represent their interests to the same extent as they do men's, and to look at subjects not through the eyes of a selected few, but through a diverse lens. For that to happen, more women need to meet photography first



Once they do, they need to get access to education and a support network. They need mentoring and development, as well as time to understand how to use technology. Maybe they already know some part of this technology, like smart phones, but have never used it with photography in mind.

During the workshops, I explain to the participants why I offer these workshops and why they are free. I explain that I believe more women need to document their communities because they often know so much about them, but we get to hear or see these stories only through translators. I also explain that photography is a way to get to know something even better, that it can reveal that which used to be hidden, and that it offers behaviour models and examples to the younger generation in a given community. Women need to be role models. They need to hack the technology they already have, get to know it better and use it better to make themselves heard so their rights and needs are not an afterthought.

There are many organisations around the world that help women to develop their voices, supporting them in standing up for their rights, and we hope to contribute to this in our own way.

What kind of technology and tools are used or provided by femLENS to teach photography?

We are very low tech, usually using the smart phones that most participants already own. However we have organised collections of cameras that people don't use anymore, and I give them out to those who seem to have a deeper interest, who need more control over how they photograph.

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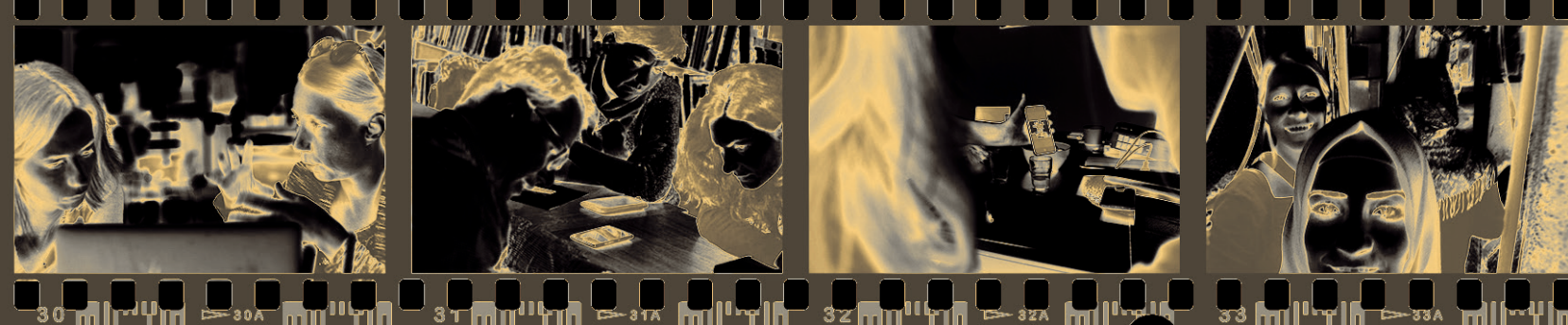
What is photography to you?

To me, photography is light, an illusion (of a captured form), but also something very real and enduring, in its printed form. Out of all forms of expression and documentation, I find photography most lasting and powerful at this time. It's a language that most people, across time and space, will understand, and a print or a book can last through centuries without needing special technology, which I find kind of magical.

On a less poetical note, today photography is very important, as the world is becoming more and more visual. It's a strong tool to challenge injustice and oppression by exposing instances of wrongdoings, and homogeneity by showing just how diverse our world really is. I think it still has the power to inspire people, even if only a few individuals. Also, making a photograph is an act, and I would rather more people tried to take documentary photographs and thought about the story and editing than sat around watching mass-produced culture.

How can documentary photography be a tool of social change?

Thanks to technological developments photography is so accessible and immediate these days that it can expose wrongdoings to the world in an instant, and it can be used by a large group of people who have never had access to large audiences, or any audience for that matter. To some it may feel tired or overused (there are concepts like "compassion fatigue" or "photography clichés"), but to some



people photography is just revealing itself, and it is only now that they are discovering the world of visual storytelling, the power of sharing their vision, and the joy of having a way to express themselves.

As I said earlier, photography is an action to me, and I believe that it should be the eyes and the voice for the people who don't know and cannot see. Photos have a double power, inspiring people to think about things and, negatively, distorting reality. It is extremely important to be aware of both the limits of photography and its potential in order to think of new models of storytelling.

How does femLENS decide which countries to operate in?

So far we've worked through word of mouth or recommendations, interest through people we know, in the place where I'm based at a given moment. Otherwise, if I'm travelling somewhere, I try to make time to organise a workshop there.

Out of all the femLENS workshops you have held so far, which is your favourite one and why?

I've enjoyed all of them, because of the people I was able to meet, and because as I keep doing the workshops there comes a time when a participant starts to develop her stories and her vision, after initial shyness and lack of confidence, and everything starts happening, I love that moment every time.

What are the specific challenges of promoting femLENS, of spreading its message and building a general consensus?

One of the goals behind femLENS activities is to put unusual photographs in unusual places and contexts. Last year we organised an exhibition in an underground passage in Gdynia, Poland. The pictures were torn off or just damaged. People aren't used to that. Those walls had never seen anything before, and suddenly there were photos of people in wheelchairs and portraits of women. The challenge is also to keep coming up with interesting ways of getting the photos seen. Our goal isn't to rival

with mainstream media, but to diversify the local voices and to make photography available to more people.

Another challenge is, of course, funding. While it's fairly easy to organise a workshop locally, where I'm based at a given moment, it's much harder to do it abroad. And it's harder still to source funding for the exhibitions after the work is done. I think it is very important that the photographers' work is printed and can be seen off the screen. So we do our best to be creative with what we have and to put on a great show.

What are femLENS goals by the end of 2018?

Every year the first goal is to do at least one or two workshops, and then to have an event at which the resulting photo stories can be shared with the community they were made in. But this year, we also hope to have a big party to celebrate the fact that last year we officially registered as a non-profit association, and to launch femLENS magazine. We also hope to put together a second issue before the year is out and to keep that going.

What about the long-term goals?

Long-term goals are similar to short-term ones, that are, more workshops in more diverse places with women and girls. As for the magazine, it would be great if we could have two issues a year published at regular times. Also, we would like to establish a relationship with some bigger media organisations. For example one vision is to have something like a regular femLENS column on a large media website where our different participants could regularly contribute photo stories.

We would also like for the website to be used at some point as a kind of directory of local photographers in a geographic area of interest, to be used by media publications or other industries needing a photographer, to shoot, say, an advertising campaign. In 2017 we did a workshop with women with disabilities. A great example of the kind of collaboration we are after is if a wheelchair manufacturer wanting to shoot a promotion campaign to show their production plants, workplace diversity, and products, reached out to one of the femLENS photographers. ■



Kodak



DOCUMENTARY PHOTOGRAPHY DEBUNKING THE MYTH

by Bogdan-Sorin Popescu, femLENS Director of Communications

Documentary photography tends to be associated with the image painted by glossy-format magazines like National Geographic or Time, which contain outsiders' accounts of costly ventures to distant locations. But the problem with this image is that it's a gross misrepresentation, a myth we should stop believing.

This is the great challenge so discreetly taken on by femLENS, yet so important. In the time of selfies and tourists mindlessly taking hundreds of snapshots, femLENS aims at further democratising documentary photography, by enabling groups of ordinary and often underrepresented women to learn to take photos using raw tools.

The pictures you are about to see are raw fruit of work done by women who had very little, if any, experience taking photos. And yet, once our participants were immersed in the basics of the visual alphabet and provided with simple tools, rather than state-of-the-art cameras, they started displaying amazing photographic skills, proving the point already recognised by many: what gives rise to quality photography goes way beyond advanced equipment or a limitless budget. And it wasn't easy. Faced with various social and cultural conditions, some of us may never be able to understand, these are the simple yet surprising stories of women from Ireland, Poland and Lebanon, women who dared to take more than just snapshots. They decided to be brave and confront their fears, inhibitions and limitations, in order to lend to others their eyes, by documenting intimately their life, themselves and the stories they share. To us, professional photographers and photo editors, photography is already at the core of our work, but to our participants, it is a delicate flower still in bloom that needs cultivating. And so our mission at femLENS is to keep these newly acquired skills, passion and courage alive, and to raise awareness of the often untold stories.

Most importantly, however, it is to help our fellow colleagues spread our love for documentary photography in its purest and complete form. By undertaking this mission, femLENS has the privilege of being part of and witnessing history in the making. ■



Photo by Halima al-Haj
femLENS workshops 2017, Shatila Camp, Beirut, Lebanon

SHATILA PALESTINIAN REFUGEES CAMP, BEIRUT, LEBANON

According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) report from February 2016 (The Situation of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon) there are 12 recognised Palestine refugee camps in Lebanon, including Nahr El-Bared, Rashidieh, Ein El-Hilweh and Shatila.

In October 2017 femLENS organised a series of workshops in Shatila camp, that is located in southern Beirut and was established in 1949 by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to accommodate hundreds of refugees who fled from northern Palestine after 1948.

Covering an area of 0.4 km², the camp has grown to host about 18,000 persons, of which the majority, over 11,600, are Palestine refugees registered with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), including some 1,600 Palestine refugees from Syria.

During the Lebanese civil war, Shatila camp was reportedly the scene of frequent clashes. “During the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon, Shatila and the neighbouring Sabra area were targeted in what the United Nations General Assembly acknowledged as a massacre.”


According to UNRWA, “environmental health conditions in Shatila are extremely bad. Shelters are damp and overcrowded, and many have open drains.”

UNHCR (February 2016) reports that “One of the perils of the camp environment is an extensive network of criss-crossing electricity wires, which hang low between the narrow alleys of the camp and intertwine with water pipes. A number of deaths in the camp are reported every year from electrocution.”

This and other scenarios are what Faten and Halima from Shatila camp see daily. These are the scenarios depicted in their photos and that you will “see” through their eyes.

The femLENS workshops in Shatila camp were organised in partnership with Reuters Pictures, Thomson Reuters Poland and Basmeh & Zeitooneh.





FLOWERS AND SILENCE OF SHATILA

WORDS AND PHOTOS
BY FATEN ANBAR

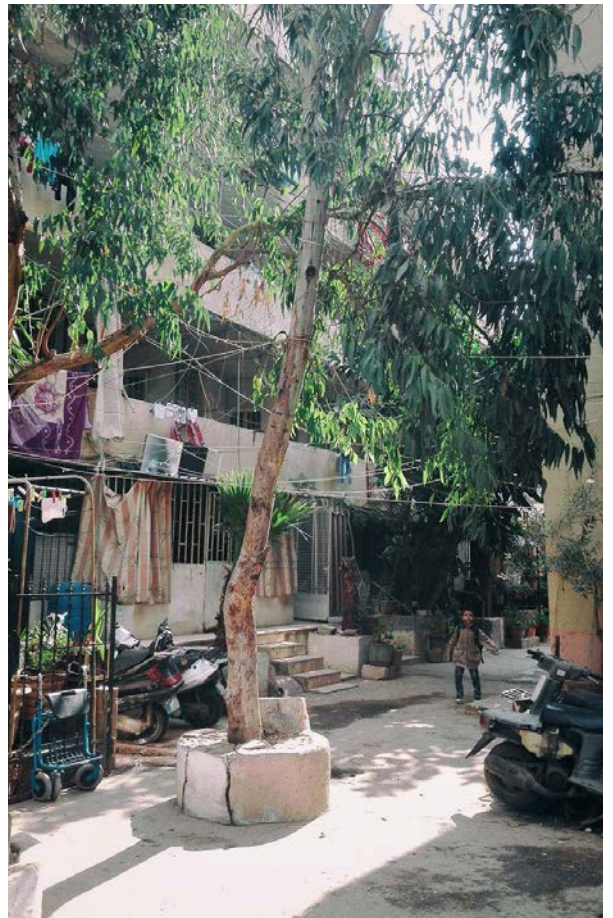
Faten Anbar is a thirty year old Palestinian-Lebanese woman, who has lived in Shatila for over 20 years. She was one of the femLENS documentary photography workshop participants, in October 2017.





بهاء للاقتصاد
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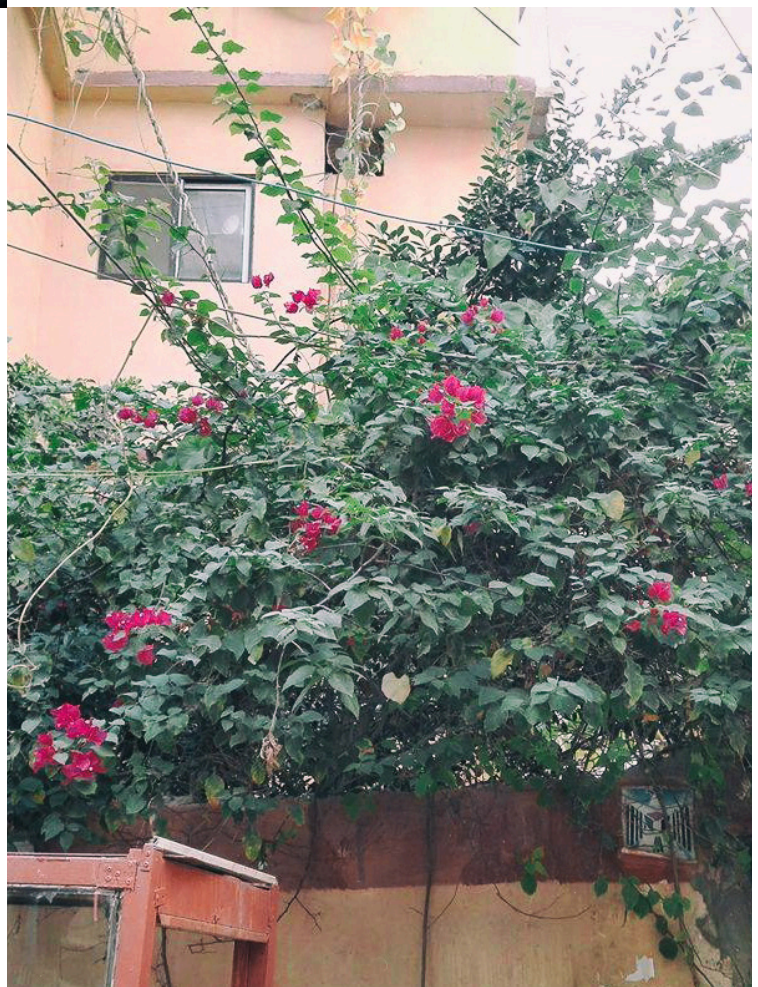


هو عن الورد والمساحات الضيقة داخل المخيم.

انا احب الورد كثيرا قمت بجولة داخل ازقة وزوارب مخيمي ولكن للأسف لم أجد ورود ولا زهور لقد عثرت فقط ع وردة واحدة وهي عبارة عن النبتة الوحيدة التي وجدتها، لقد خاب ظني كنت حزينة ان مخيمي يفقده إلى الطبيعة والورود والزهور التي تزين المكان بشكلها ورائحتها العطرة نعم كنت احاول ان التقط بعض من النباتات بجانب أحد البنايات داخل المخيم عندها كنت سعيدة بعض الشيء لعثوري عليها. كان مخيم شاتيللا يكتظ بالناس والابينة والمساحات والملاعب الضيقة الا انه كان وما زال ينبض بحياة أهله له كل شي تغير وبالرغم من المعيشة الصعبة وكل التغيرات نجد ان الخير والصمود مازالوا على قيد الحياة داخل المخيم..

Roses and the narrow spaces inside the camp.

I love roses so much, I toured the alleys of my camp, but unfortunately I could not find any rose or flowers, I found only one rose. The only plan I found I was disappointed, I was sad, my camp lacks any kind of nature and roses and flowers that adorn the place in its shape and fragrant scent. Yes, I was trying to pick up some of the plants next to one of the buildings inside the camp, so I was a little happy to have them. Yes, the camp of "Shatila" was crowded with people, houses, spaces and narrow playgrounds, but it was still beating with the love of its people. Everything changed. Despite the difficult living and all the changes, we find that the good and the steadfast are still alive inside the camp.













MANIKAN

BY FATEN ANBAR







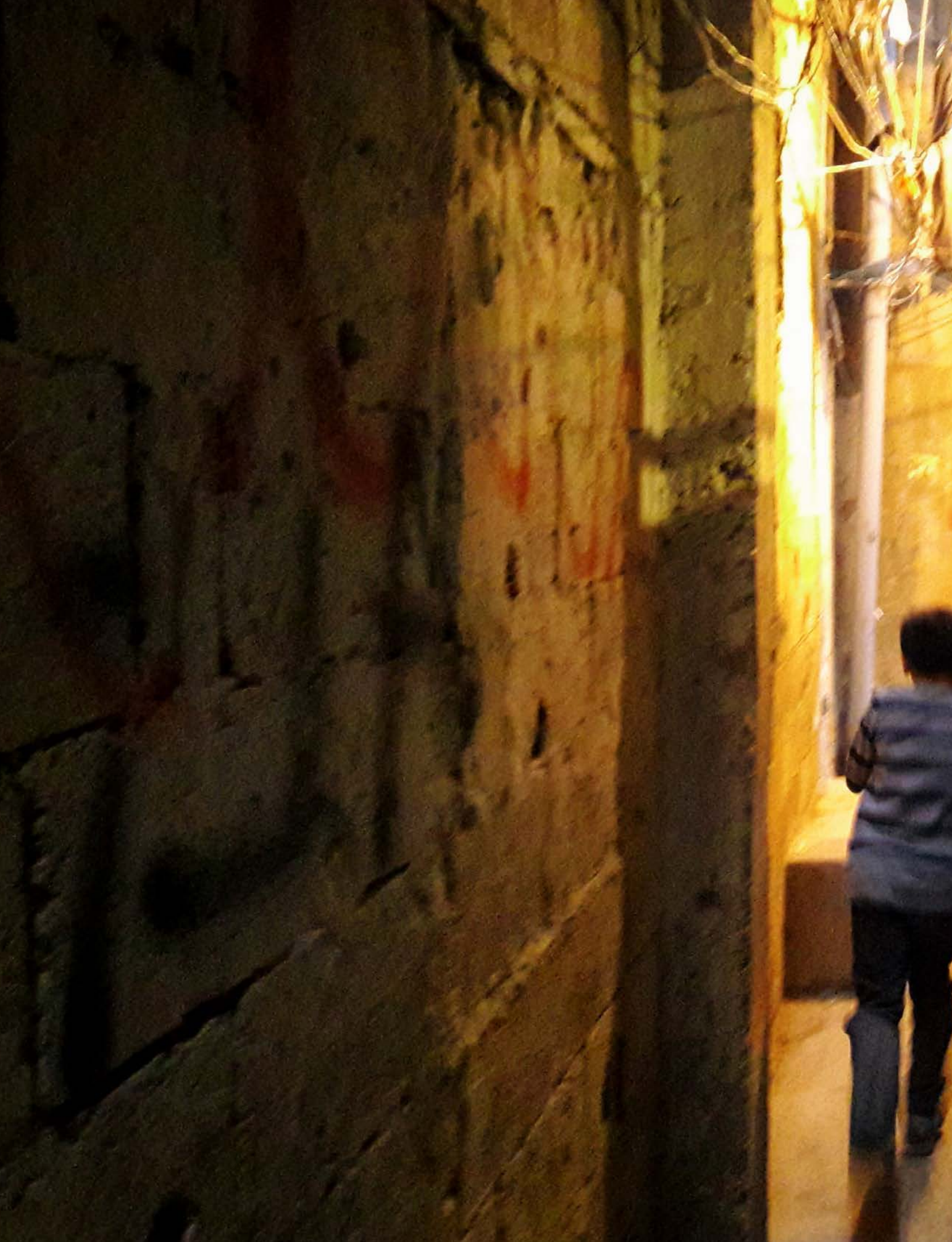
هو تصوير (المنيكان) هنا العبارة تهدف الى الصمت والجماد ولغتهما الخاصة بهما. إذ ان المنيكان بالرغم من انها جماد صامت الكثير لا يعرفون قيمتها الا انها تتكلم لغة ولكن دون ان تنطق بحرف، المغزى هنا ان ليس كل شي جامد وصامت لا اهمية له وتعتبر لغتها من اقوى اللغات الصامتة اذ إنها تتكلم بطريقتها الخاصة وهي جذب المارة لها. وتلفت لها الأنظار دون نطق اي كلام ودون استأذان. كنت سعيدة جدا بقيامي في مثل هذا العمل لكي أوصل قصة مؤثرة عن طريق النقاط الصور



This subject means silence. The “Manikan”, though it is silent, many do not know its value, but it speaks a language without saying the meaning of the word, meaning that not everything is rigid and silent is not important and the language is one of the strongest silent languages, it speaks its own way, to attract passers-by. And draws the attention without uttering any words and without asking. I was so happy to have this work done so that I could tell a story by taking pictures.







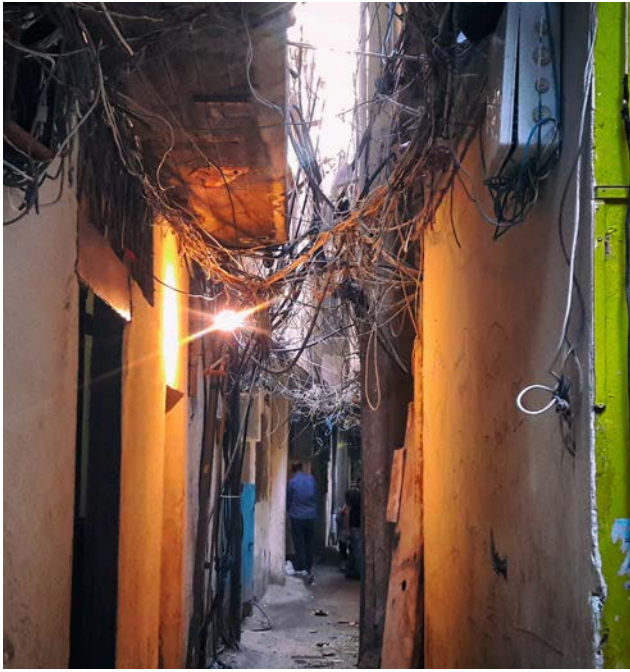


ALLEYS AND WIRES

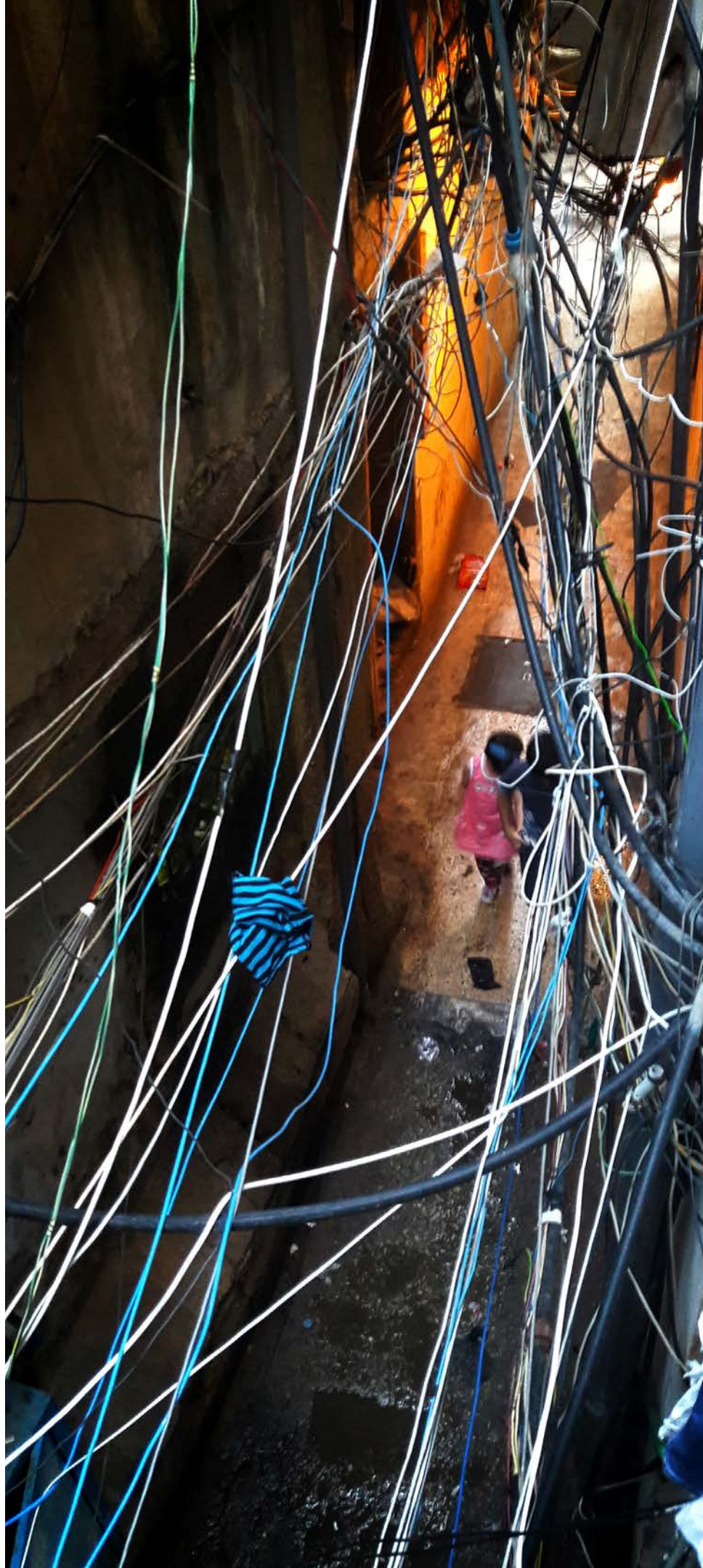
Words and Photos
by Halima al-Haj

HALIMA'S DIARY





Halima al-Haj is a thirty year old woman, who has been in the camp for five years having fled Syria as a refugee. She first became interested in photography by taking photos of her family. Halima was one of the femLENS documentary photography workshop participants, in October 2017.



(مشروع حليلة)

- الأسلاك الكهربائية تجعلني أشعر بالخوف و الموت
إنَّ كثيراً من الشباب في مخيم شاتيلة ماتوا و هم يقومون بعملية تصليح الكهرباء
بيوم من الأيام أحترق الغسيل و الذي نشرته صباحاً بسبب الأسلاك الكهربائية
و قد تقطع الكهرباء من أول حبة مطر عندما يأتي الشتاء

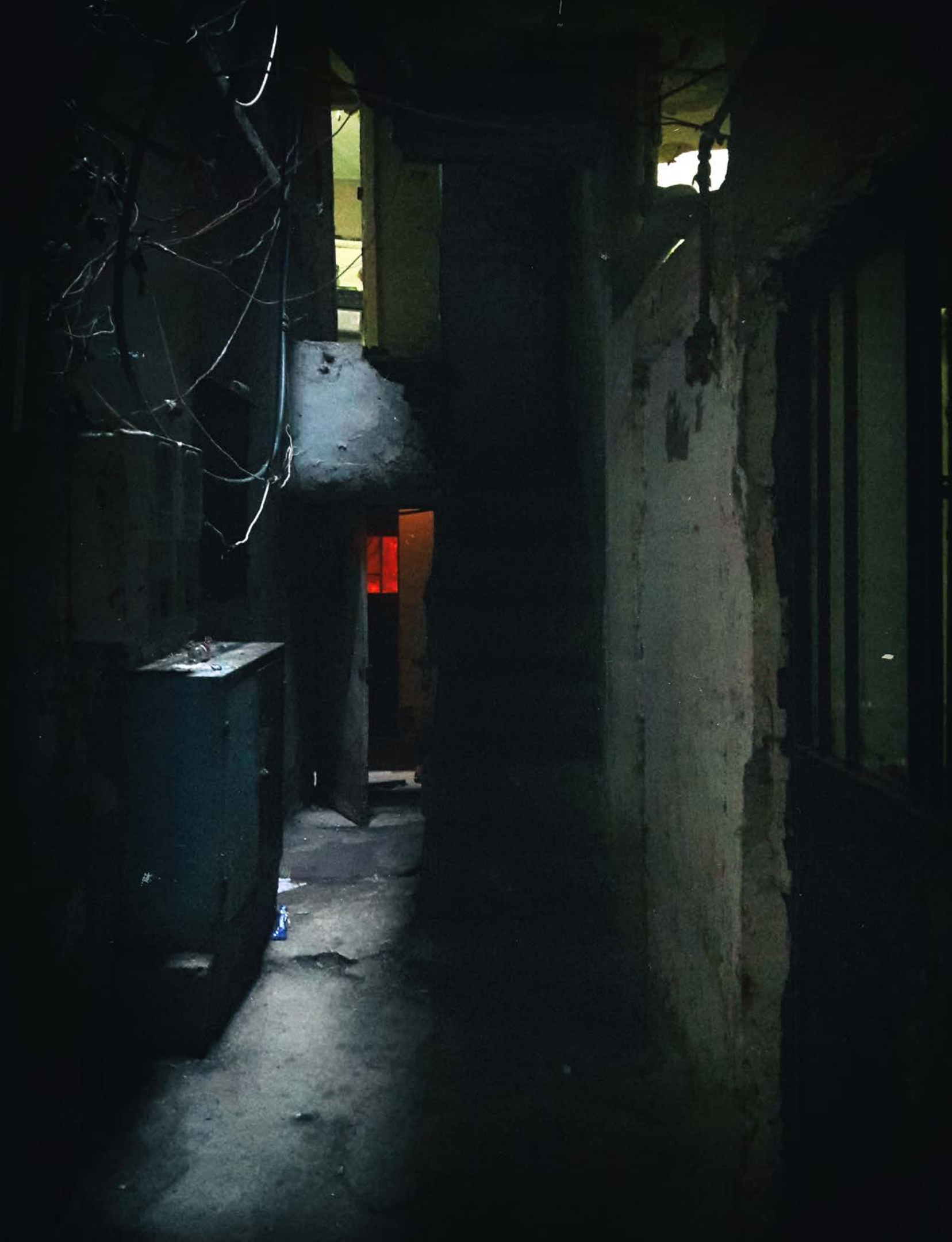
Electric wires make me feel scared and many young people in Shatila camp have died while repairing electricity. One day, my laundry was burned by electric wires. Electricity may be cut off from the first drop of rain when winter comes.

(مشروع الزواريب)

- أشعرُ بالخوف عندما أكون داخل الزواريب
أخاف أن يظهر أمامي شخص سكران , أو محشش
لأن الزواريب ضيقة كثيراً و لا يستطيع المارون إن يسيروا بجانب بعضهم بسهولة
أخاف أن أدخل بزاروبة و تكون نهايتها مسدودة
الزاروبة.. أشعر أنها كالقبر عندما تكون الكهرباء مقطوعة و مظلمة جداً.

I feel scared when I'm inside the alleys, I am afraid to meet someone who is drunk, or stoned. For the ally is very narrow, people cannot walk easily beside each other. I am afraid to enter the narrow streets when the end is blocked, I feel like the grave when the electricity is cut and very dark.













THE SCARVES

BY HALIMA AL-HAJ

(تصوير النساء و الأوشحة)

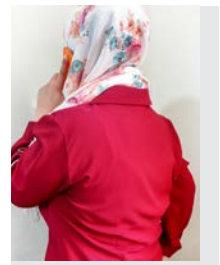
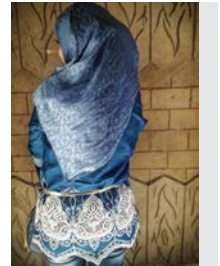
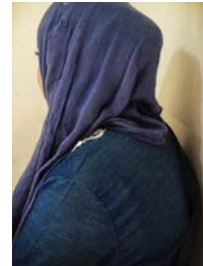
أحب أن أصوّر الملابس و الأوشحة من الخلف
 لأن بعض السيدات في مجتمعنا العربي بشكل عام لا يحبون نشر صورهم عبر وسائل التواصل الإجتماعي و
 لأسباب شخصية بشكل عام
 أو لمنع الأهل و الأزواج من ذلك
 لذلك, اخترت أن أصور السيدات و الأوشحة من وراء بالألوان الجميلة و الزاهية التي تعبّر عن شخصيتهم من
 شكل و ألوان ملابسهم
 الألوان الزاهية و الجميلة تجعلني أشعر بالفرح و السرور, أما الألوان الداكنة تشعرني بالحزن و الكآبة.

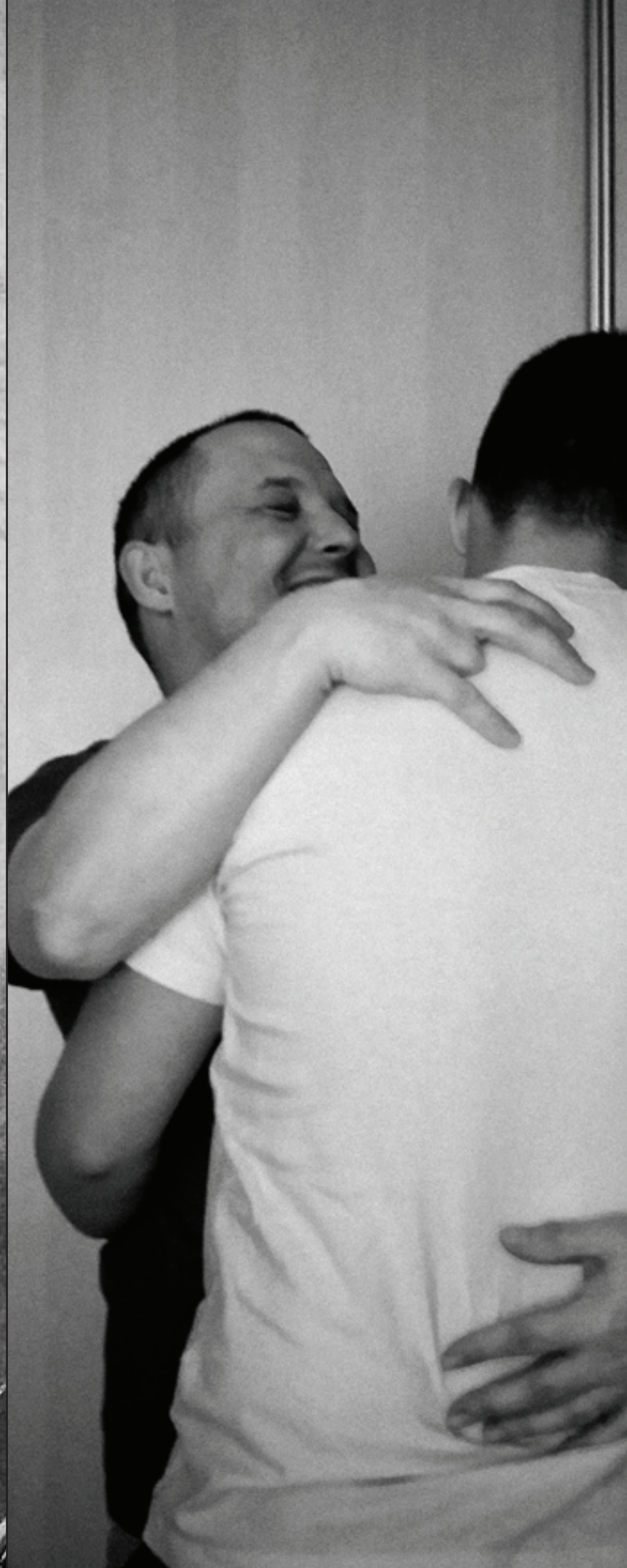
I like to shoot clothes and scarves from behind, because some women in our Arab society in general do not like to publish their images through social media, for personal reasons related to norms and culture. Therefore, I chose to portray ladies and scarves from the back with beautiful colors that express their personality from the shape and colors of their clothes. The bright and beautiful colors make me feel happy, while the dark colors make me feel sad and depressed.

(مشروع عن حياتي)

حبّي لأطفالي يجعلني أصورهم بأجمل تفاصيل حياتهم
 هم سبب دخولي لورشة التصوير
 لكي أتعلم كيف أصورهم بطريقة جيدة و احترافية

My love for my children makes me like to take pictures for them with the most beautiful details of their lives. They are the reason I entered the photography workshop, In order to learn how to photograph them in a good and professional way.





In April 2017, femLENS organised a series of workshops in Gdynia, Poland, in partnership with the Center for Youth Co-operation and Mobility (Centrum Współpracy Młodzieży), the Gdynia Public Library (Biblioteka Gdynia), Reuters Pictures and Thomson Reuters Poland. The documentary photography exhibition that resulted from the workshops - "Transcending Obstacles" - focused on the photographs of two women with disabilities living and working in Gdynia: Ewa Drewa and Magdalena Kostrzewska.

Their photos were showcased at Gdynia Wzgórze Św. Maksymiliana underground crossing, where, every day, hundreds of people commute to work, their homes or just pass by.

The first ever series of workshops had been organised in Balgaddy, Dublin, Ireland in August 2015 without any external partnership and financial support.

The exhibition in Balgaddy was an interactive "photo-hunt". The photographs by Paula Haverty, our workshop participant, were spread throughout Balgaddy and visitors, who were from the local community and from other parts of Dublin, were invited to use maps to find the photos.

The photographers had been present at the opening of both of the exhibitions to talk with the guests and enjoy seeing their work displayed for the public.

What makes the two experiences, the one in Balgaddy and the one in Gdynia, valuable is the fact that in both cases the local community was documented by local women.

Both experiences have been a chance for our photographers to meet documentary photography and tell stories from their perspective about their community. With the support and involvement of their local communities.

Jekaterina Saveljeva, Founder of femLENS and Workshop Facilitator
Rita Plantera, femLENS Chief of Growth
Gdynia, March 2018



BY PAULA HAVERTY | GARDEN

Paula Haverty is a mom of two, an active participant in her community, and an aspiring photographer. Paula participated in the femLENS documentary photography workshops in the summer of 2015. Her photographs were later exhibited around her neighbourhood, where she had taken the photos.





The “Garden and Bush Centre” is a common green space where the residents of Balgaddy often come together to have social events, the children can get their hands dirty and experiment with growing their own fruits and vegetables, as well as a safe space to play. The space has been under threat, as the nearby church claims that the land belongs to it, and wants it to be turned into a parking lot. This series shows the use the community has made of a rare public-access green space.



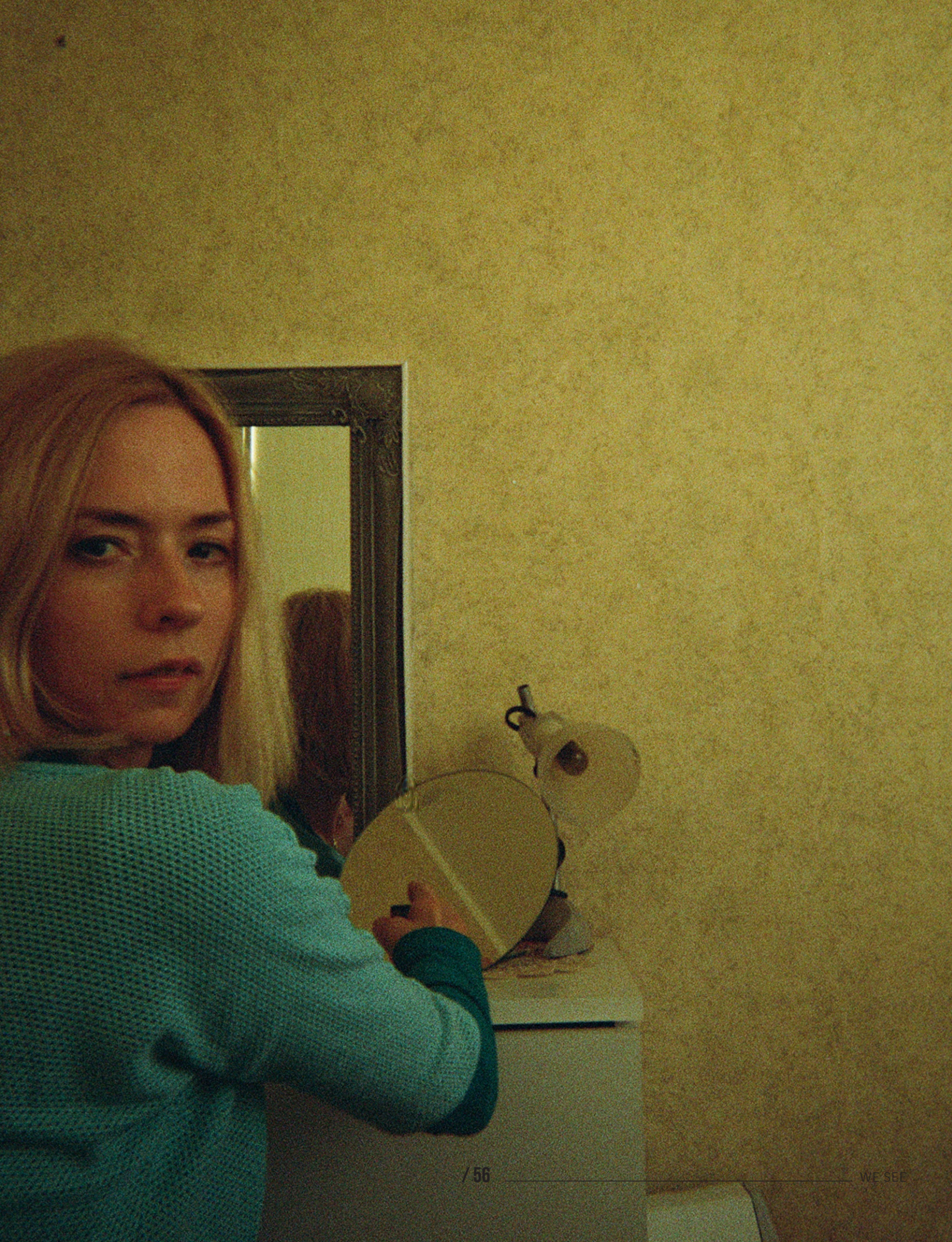


BY MAGDALENA KOSTRZEWSKA

Magdalena Kostrzevska works in the Centre for Youth Cooperation and Mobility in Gdynia, Poland. Her work gives her the opportunity to meet extraordinary people from all over Europe. In her free time, she likes making jewellery and learning Spanish.

She loves music and dance. She decided to participate in the femLENS documentary photography workshops to rediscover photography in the era of endless selfies. Magdalena attended the workshops in the spring of 2017.

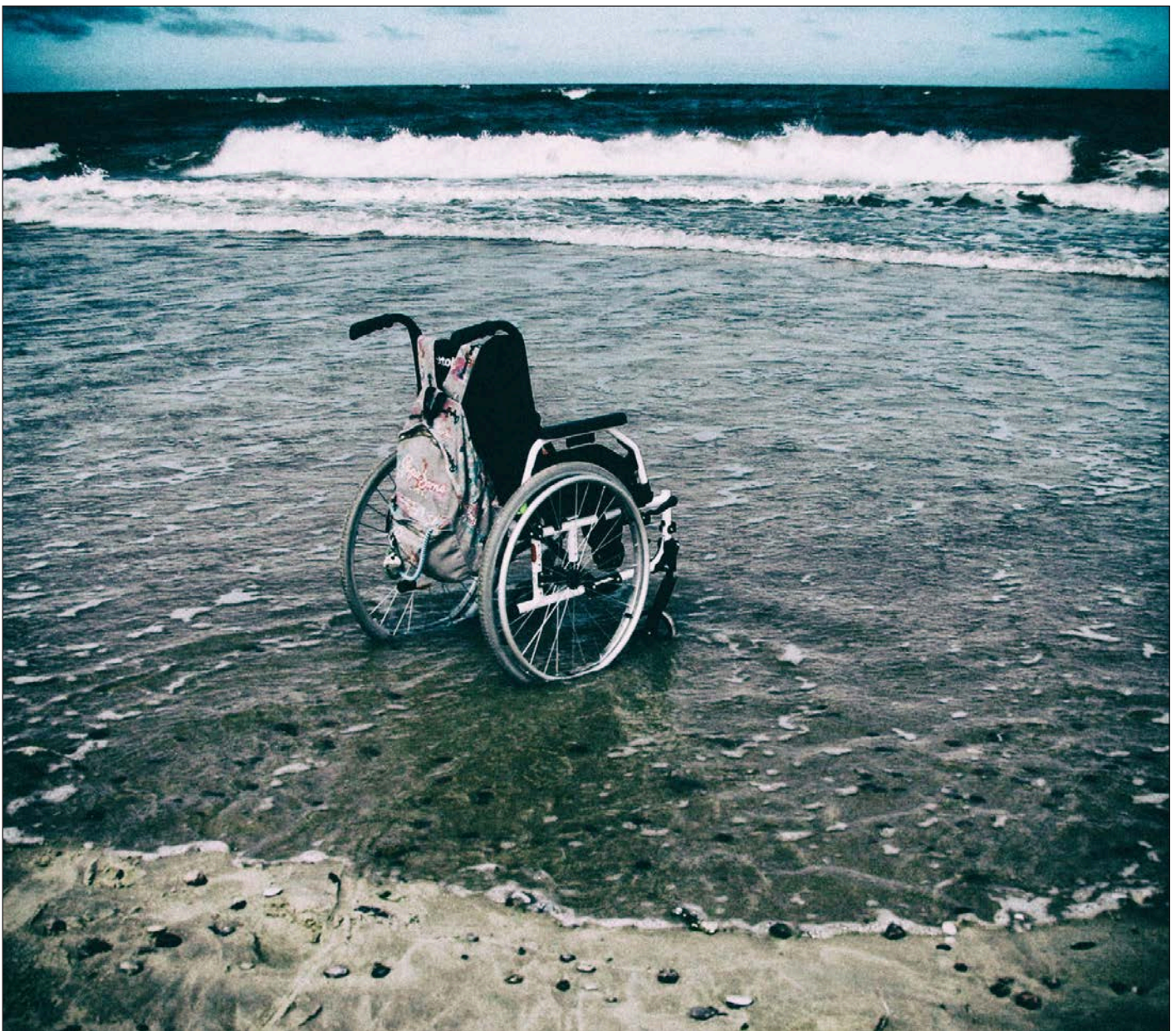




BY EWA DREWA

Ewa Drowa a thirty-seven year-old woman. She works as a therapist in a social welfare centre in Gdynia, Poland. Despite her innate physical disability, she is engaged in a lot of social activities.

She has many passions, including dance and literature. In private life, she is an animal lover and a dog owner. She participated in the femLENS documentary photography workshops to deepen her knowledge in photography in the spring of 2017.







Photos by Halima al-Haj
femLENS workshops 2017, Shatila Camp, Beirut, Lebanon

Many people and organisations have been with us since we started this work and we would like to acknowledge them for the time, work and money that they have invested into promoting the goals of femLENS.

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Thomson Reuters in Poland
Centrum Współpracy Młodzieży
Basmeh & Zeitooneh

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BY femLENS IN BALGADDY, DUBLIN,
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