

Veronique Charlotte: The Face Behind 'Gender Project'

After photographing 100 people in Milan and London each, Gender Project has moved onto Berlin.

28 October 2022



Photography by Veronique Charlotte.

Creating a safe space for everyone but especially the LGBTQAI+, BiPoC communities, image maker Veronique Charlotte captures the beautiful differences of each person in their photo series 'Gender Project'. With the aim to capture interpersonal relationships in different cultural contexts, Veronique's photo journey started in London, where 100 people were photographed, already having moved onto Milan and Berlin. The concept of the project is to shoot 100 people in ten different cities, at the end accumulating 1000 photographs. After every one-hour photo session, both Veronique and the person being photographed indulge in an intimate conversation, to gain further insights of the lives behind each portrait.

With the current destination being Berlin, Veronique Charlotte displays their portraits at Soho House, with an accompanying program of music and talks from other creatives

and artists. SLEEK spoke to the photographer about the 'Gender Project' concept and the emotional process of taking deeply intimate portraits.



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SLEEK: Where did the wish derive from to start the Gender Project?

Veronique Charlotte: Gender Project was born from a cathartic moment in January 2019, when I had a simple shoot with a friend and he told me, "I like to wear wigs and women's dresses but I still don't know in which direction I'm going, for now I want to experience and understand who I am." After several hours we found ourselves talking about gender identity, and where our place in the world is, referring to terminologies, pronouns, and general culture. My interest in societal themes deepened, I started to do research and expanded my knowledge with the people I met, questioning them and me in open conversation; some really uncomfortable, some really inspiring.

And just like that, with an open conversation and a lot of vulnerability, Gender Project was born in the living room of my house in London.

S: Could you explain to us a little more about your concept of shooting in different cities and how your journey has been so far?

VC: When I decided to start shooting I faced the dilemma of if I chose 10 people, it would not be as inclusive as I had imagined. So I said to myself if I could do 50 people, why not 100 then and extend the project to different countries in Europe and in the world! If you dream, dream big.

I started in London where I have been living for 10 years, then Milan, my home, and Berlin which was my first chosen home. All of the three cities are cosmopolitan capitals, where people come from different countries to find themselves, in a community that welcomes them. Here they perhaps find a sense of family that they didn't have before.



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S: Since it's a deeply intimate and emotional project, how do you feel during the entire process as the photographer?

VC: This is where photography and art become therapy, it truly is a rollercoaster of emotions. During this process photographer and subject become vulnerable with each other, all social constraints dissolve through real, open conversations. It is really difficult today to find someone who really listens to you and it can be hard to open up. Gender Project brings people back to get naked in all senses. Sometimes I have spent days lying in bed without strength, overwhelmed by very difficult stories, energetically almost defeated. But these stories, along with those with a happy ending, are the ones that are worth fighting for.

S: Have you experienced strong outbursts of emotion during a shoot from either your side or the person being photographed?

VC: Constantly. We laugh, we cry, we hug, we get mad, sometimes we've had liberating screams together. It's all based on emotions. We have a super power, which is empathy – let's use it. Our stories and our traumas are certainly different, still there is an understanding of each other, a true connection of feeling the same level of pain.



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The private preview starts on October 27th featuring a performance by Alvin Collantes & Boto, music by DJ Feasting and an art installation by Marco Siciliano.

The public program starts on October 28th with a drag performance by Venus Boys hosted by Bala Bimbabum, music by VNCT 2.0, punk poetry by Ruco laPesto and a DJ set by Brad Alloc.

Followed by the program for October 29th featuring Meo, Plastic Family, Frederik Tiden, Nadi Nicoco, CNIDARIEL and New Ground Performance.

Premiering the video project by Antonio Miucci, Captain John, Jossy Jaycoff, Linea Deluz and Patricio.

The night will be accompanied by DJ sets from Bconscious, 131bpm and Vani Vachi.

Sunday, October 30th, will be filled with workshops by That Gay Creation, Therapy Berlin, Stray Kidz Workshop and a roundtable with Vivienne Lovecraft, Joseph & Gialu, moderated by Blue Alien.

Find out more about Gender Project [here](#).

By *sleek*

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