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Fine Art / Portraits

Ivana Desancic

<https://connect.getinspiredmagazine.com/members/ivanadesancic/>













Abstract

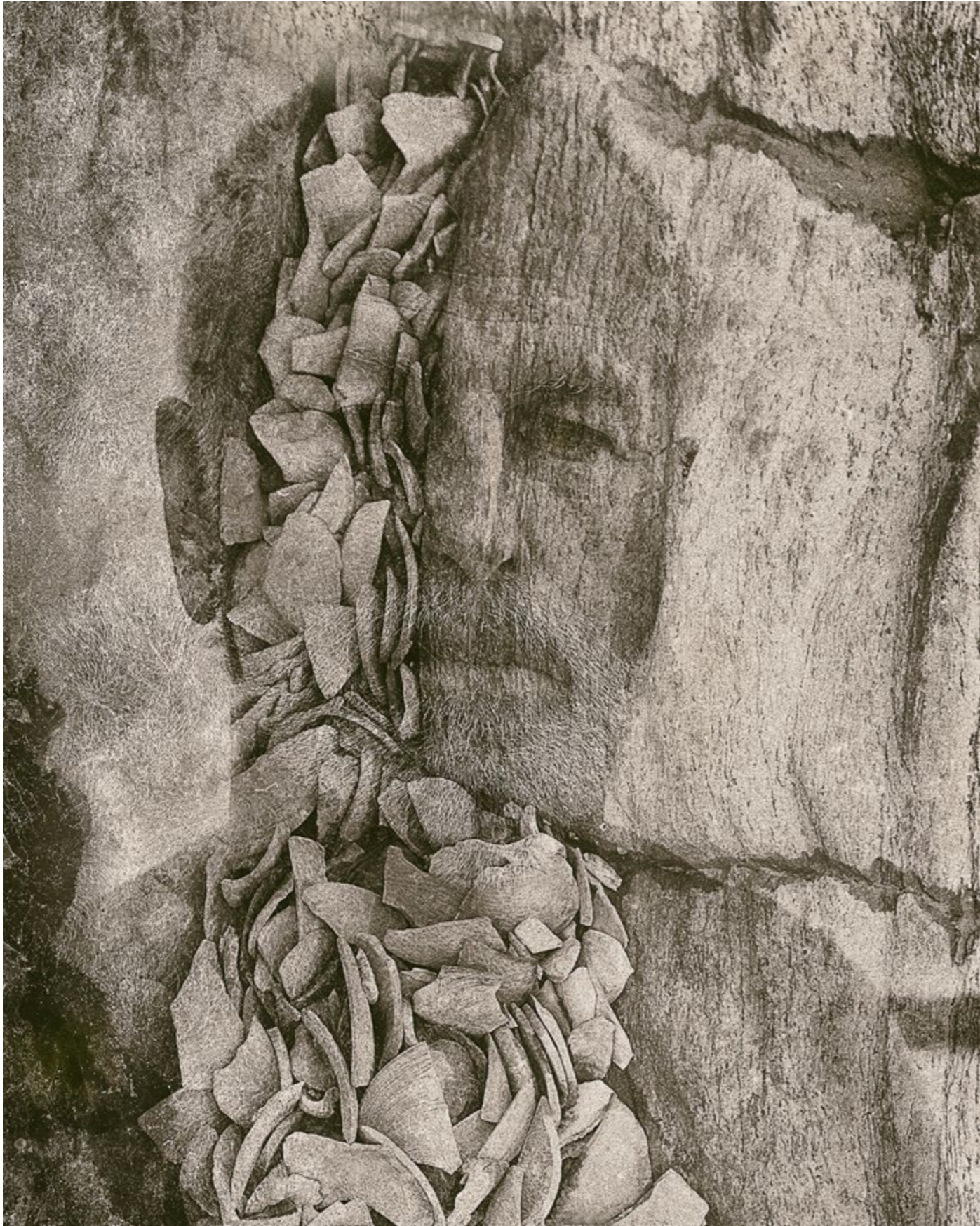
Olga Merrill

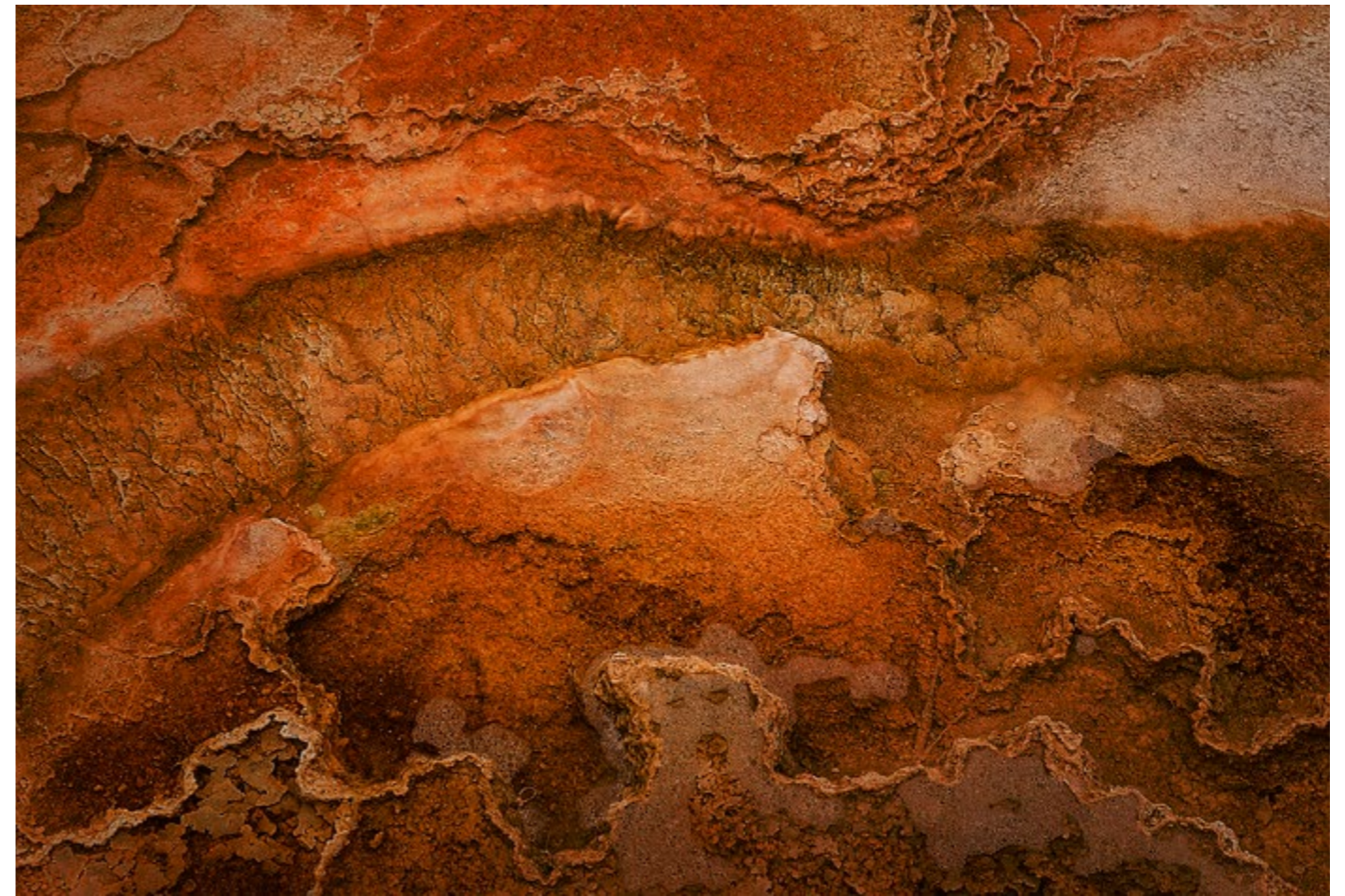
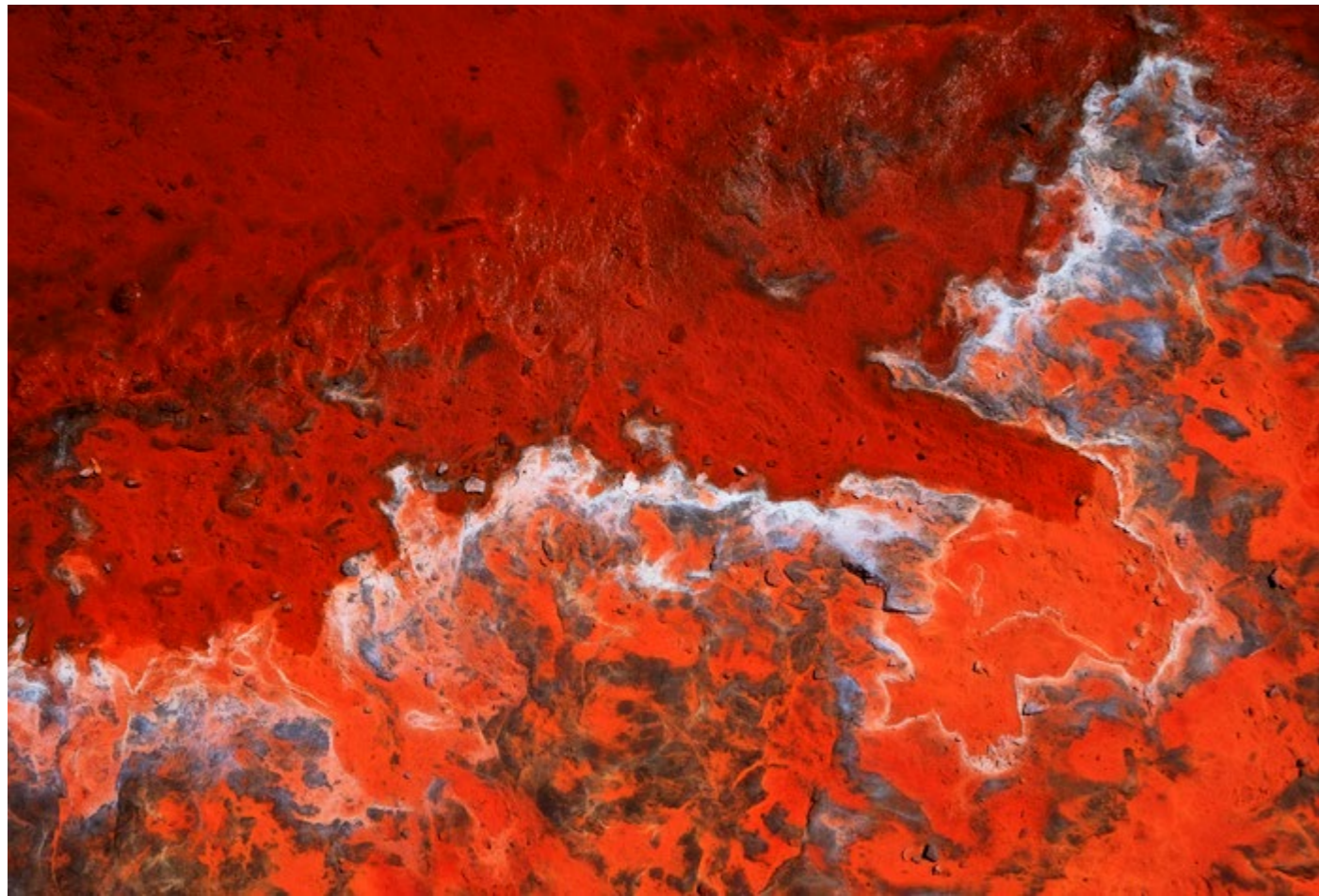
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Portraits

Juan Molina

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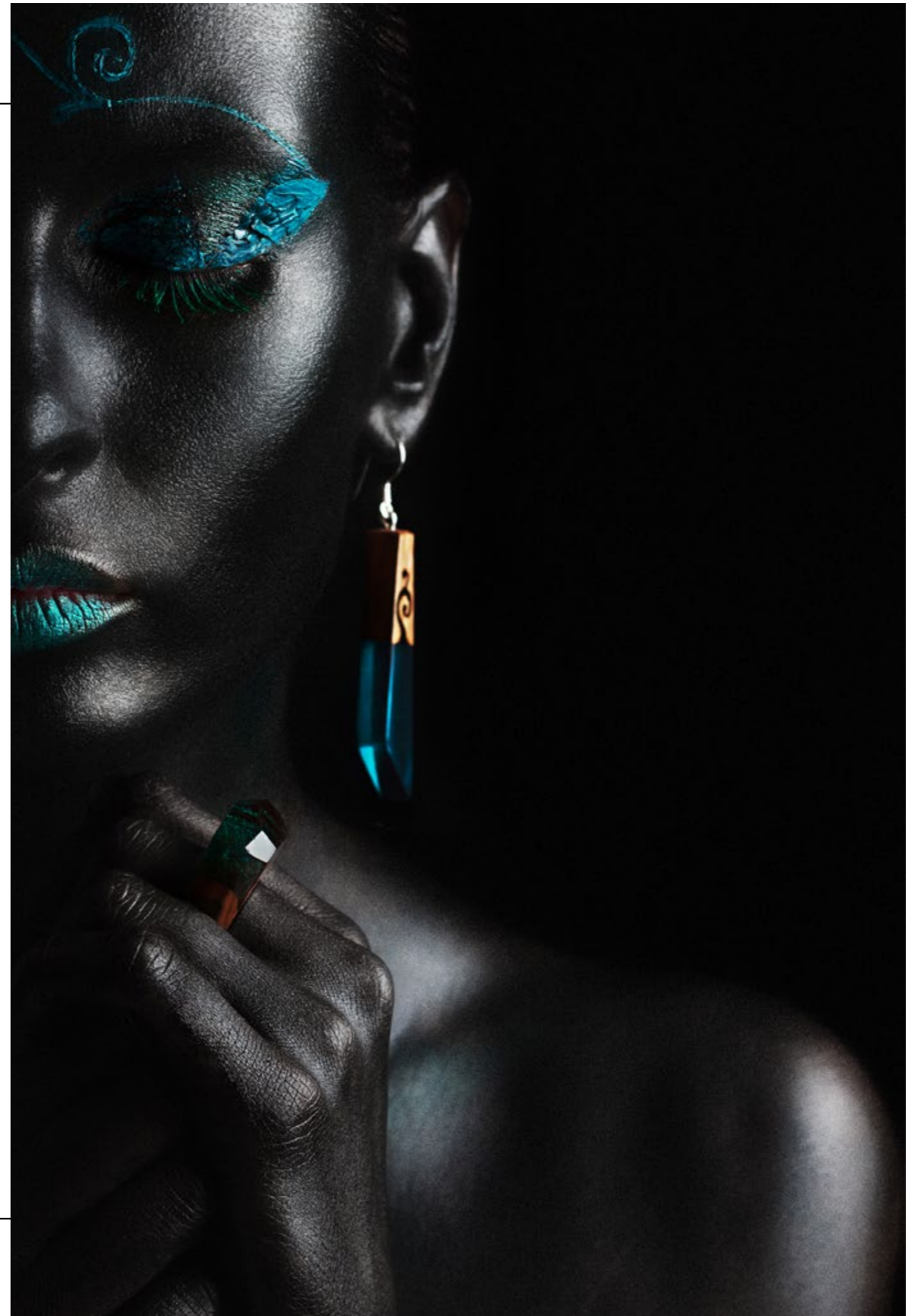




Portraits

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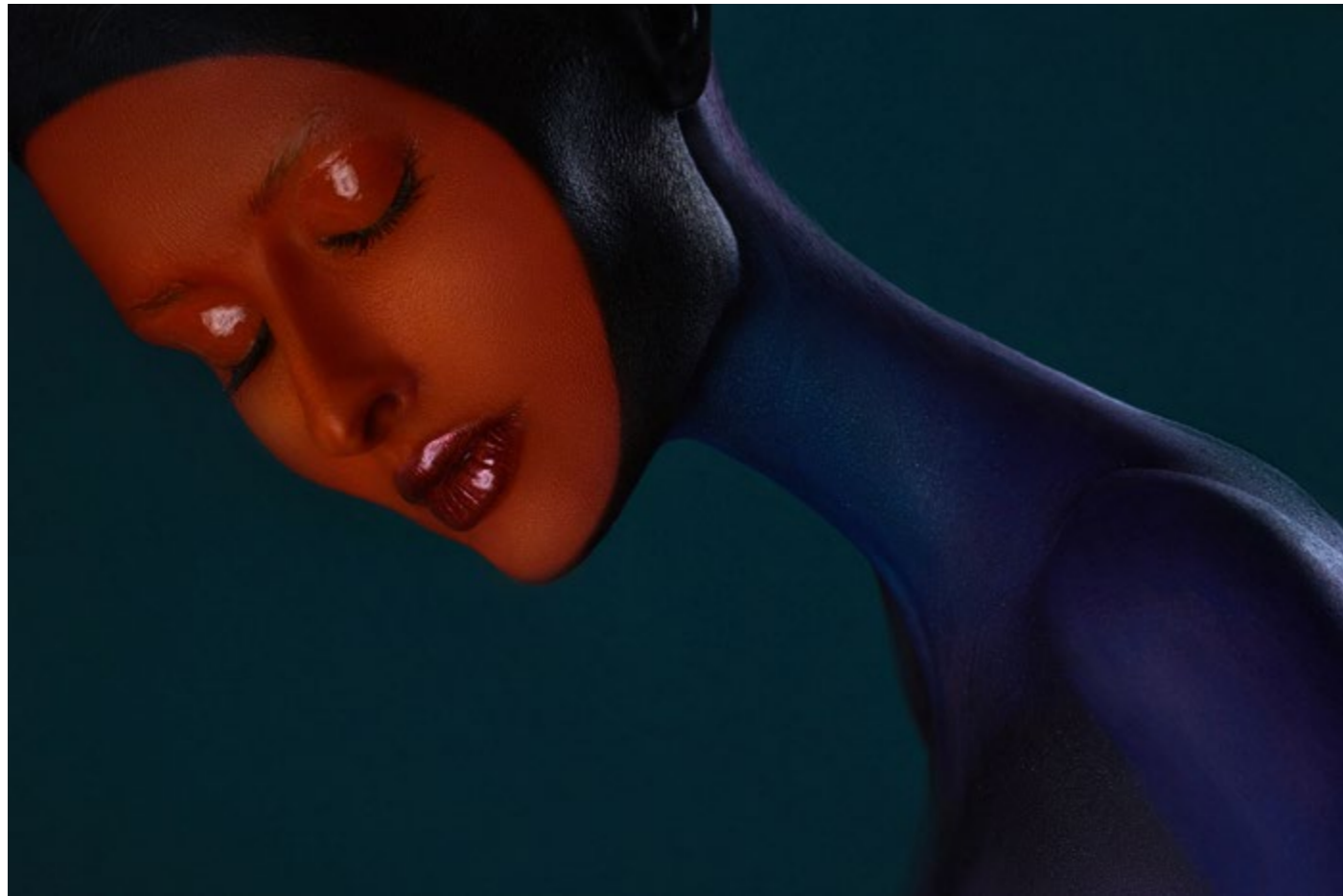








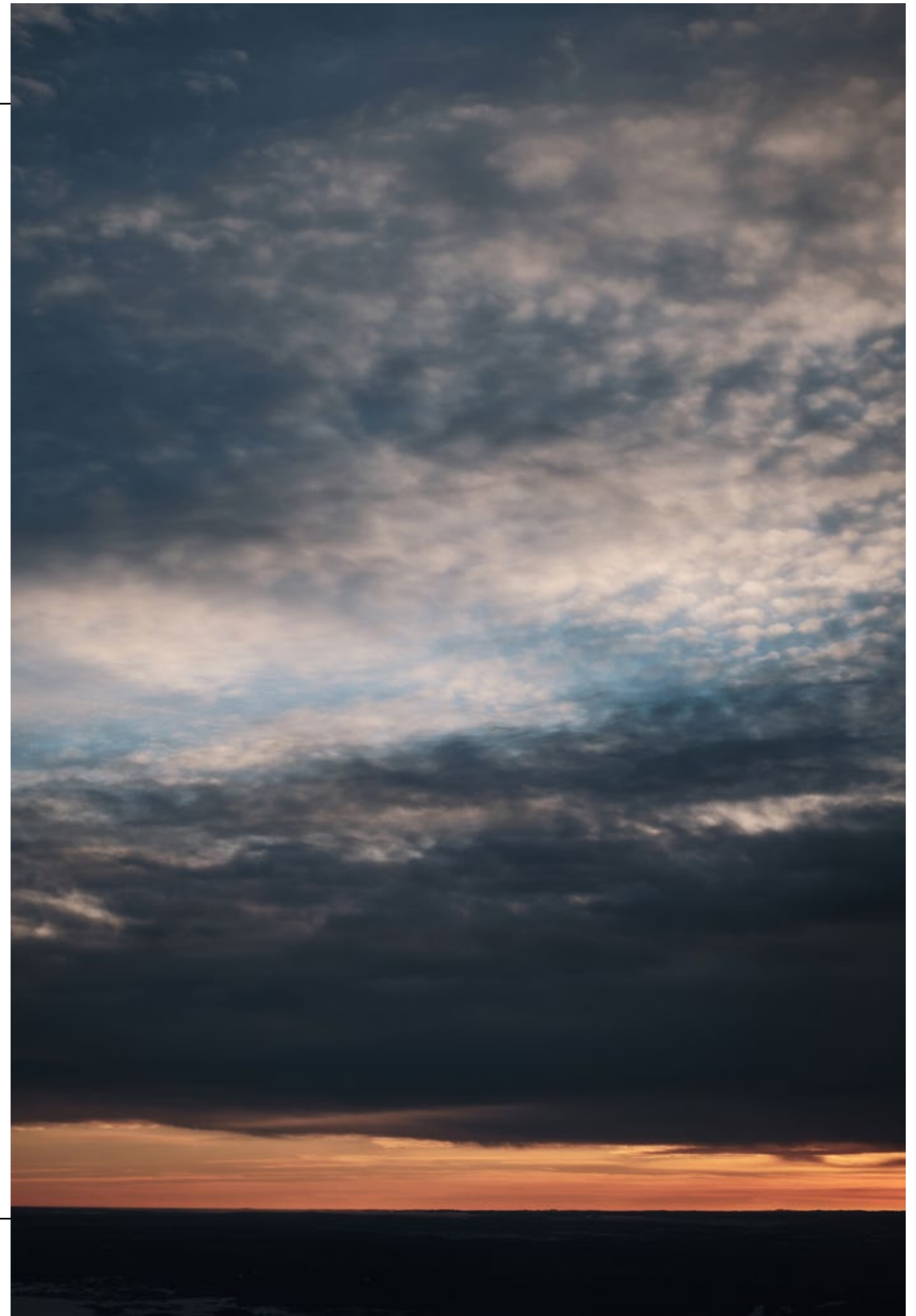




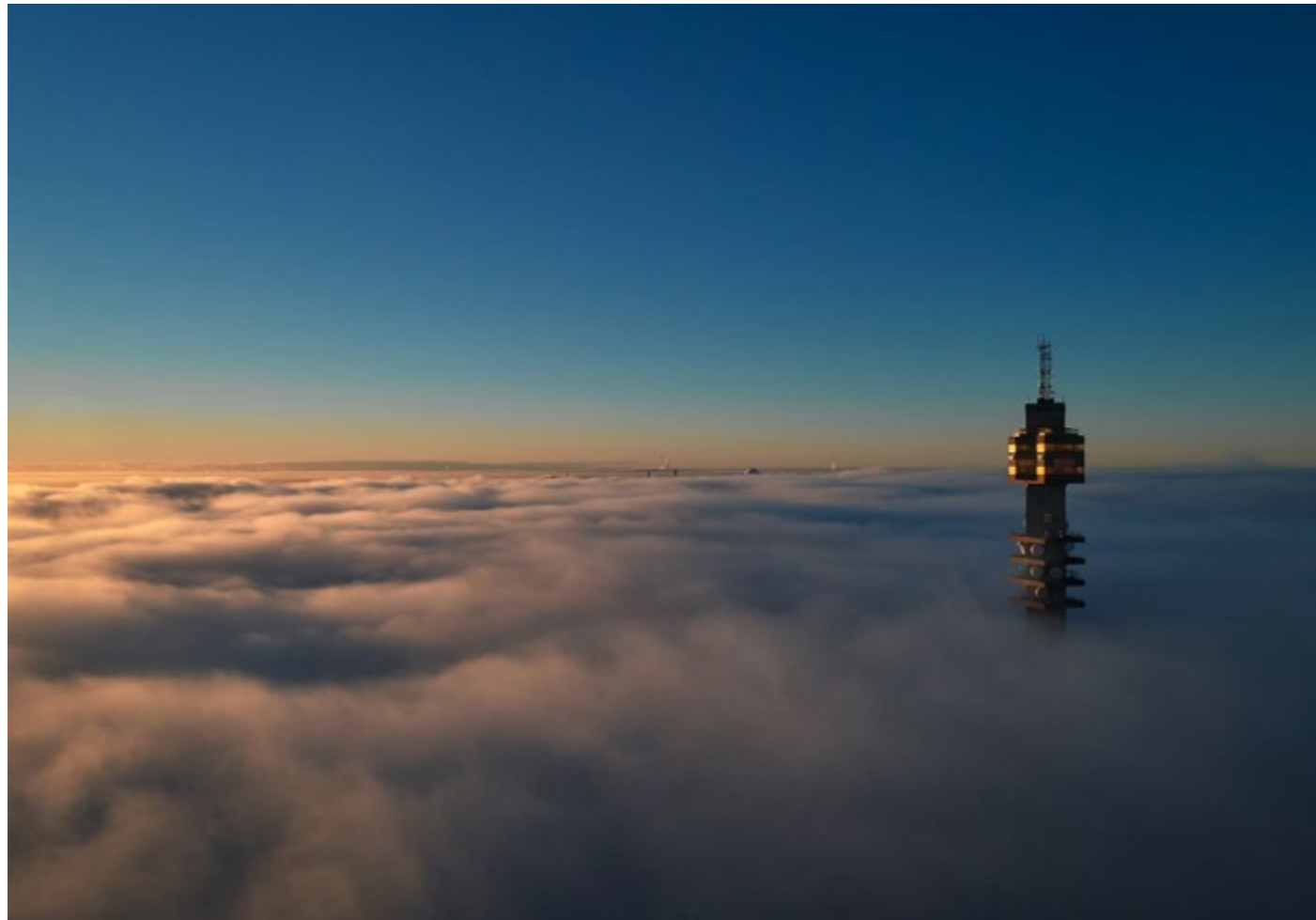
Aerial

John Guthed

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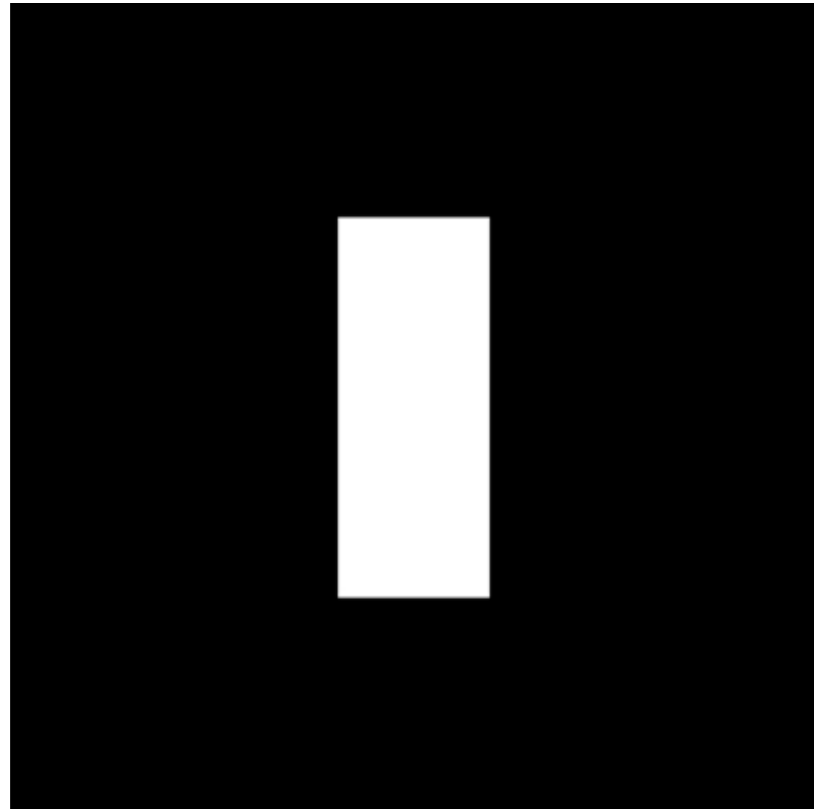












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Interview

Frank Lassak of Efacts Photography

What is Dream Control?

„Dream Control – When Freedom Ends“ is both an art book with staged photography, essays and stories – and an exhibition. The book describes and visualizes the fascinating and terrifying aspects of a future amusement park for sleepwalkers. At the same time, it is an invitation for the readers to scrutinize the value and integrity of allegedly life-enhancing services, whose primary aim is to jeopardize the clients' ability to lead a self-determined, sovereign life. The exhibition is fully immersive and invites visitors of the museum or gallery to visit the so-called Somniverse – a virtual entertainment park where sleepwalkers experience tailor-made dreams. In addition to the 20 large-scale pictures from the book, there is a soundscape plus several screens with videos, showing interviews from behind the scenes of the production. We are also preparing some interactive elements, such as cut-out life size figures of the officers in the Somniverse – so people can make selfies with them.

That's a rather dystopian outlook, isn't it?

Today, the entertainment industry has conquered almost all areas of life but the realm of the subconscious. Now it is quite likely it will expand into that field in the near future. DC Corp., the fictional company that runs the so-called Somniverse in the book, is loosely based on the model of today's multinational enterprises and an example of scrupulous entrepreneurship in the age of surveillance capitalism. And the concept of the Somniverse is indeed dystopian. At one point in the book, a cyborg character tells the dreamer: "The Somniverse has become a cesspool of greedy rascals. Stay away from that miserable venue and keep your dreams to yourself."

What events inspired you to create this?

No particular events, really, but rather an eye for what's going on in the digital sphere right now. "Dream Control" and the Somniverse are viable future trends or derivatives of what we know today as social media: a sophisticated system for behavior control, run by ruthless corporations and partly controlled by government organisations. It's a matter of three or four decades that something like the Somniverse may become reality.





How did you produce the photos and the book?

The staged photographs were produced using artistic miniatures from the collection of Musée de Cinéma et Miniatures in Lyon, France. Actors and actresses were photographed separately in a studio. In total, the production team consisted of more than 50 specialists, led by my trusted creative director Lena Naomi Krebs. All pictures were recorded on film, scanned in high-resolution and digitally post-produced. The resulting composite files were transferred to film again (4x5" format), for archival purposes.

For the book, I wrote a fictional story, a treatment on the historical and scientific background, as well as detailed production notes. Austrian art critic and writer Julius Deutschbauer and Düsseldorf-based lyricist Sina Klein added an illuminating essay on the aesthetics of the photographs.

Could you tell a little more about the photo production?

The question was: how to integrate actors and actresses in those fabulous miniatures, without having to shrink them. But seriously, there were a few questions that had to be answered before the production could start. Like, how do you photograph a miniature that is approx. 40 cm wide and 100 cm long, if you want to have all those tiny details in focus? Apparently, the Scheimpflug method is the answer. Yet, even with Scheimpflug macro photography is tricky. The Fuji GX 680 with its outstanding lenses and movable front standard was the best choice for me. 6x8 negatives were large enough for the planned print size of the pictures, and medium format film is obviously much easier to handle than large format. Lighting conditions in the museum were all but ideal, and the miniatures had to be photographed through thick protective glass panes – think about reflections. So the typical setup of the camera was like this: 65/5.6 lens, linear polarizing filter plus 82B filter (I used Fuji Pro 400H daylight film and had to use the color correction filter, as the miniatures were internally lit with tungsten lights.) In post production, a special grading was applied. I had developed it with Philipp Schmitt, who did most of the composing work after scanning.

Each scene has its own grading – reflecting the subtle nuances in atmosphere and mood of the portrayed situation. Most importantly, we didn't want to make the pictures look as if they came out of a sci-fi movie. They had to appear credible, authentic. As if you are reading a book that illustrates some events that lie in the past. Some people call this style retro-futurism. I'm okay with that.



And those fantastic background scenes: what's their story?

The Musée de Cinéma et Miniatures in Lyon is home to more than 100 meticulously crafted miniature scenes, some of them resembling pre-CGI era scale models of film sets, some showing the interiors of ocean liners, others depicting 20th century streets and buildings. In short, an ideal collection of authentic scenes suitable as backdrops for this series.

Thirteen miniature used in Dream Control were created by Dan Ohlmann, the museum's founder. Most of his works are assembled in 1/12th scale, each taking up to one year to finish. Ronan-Jim Sevellec, an artist from Brittany, was another major contributor. His miniatures were used in four pictures. Additional pieces were provided by Alan Wolfson (USA), Mathieu Chollat and Michel Perez (both from France).

Can you tell us a little bit about how it started to come together?

There was a considerable amount of planning and coordination necessary to let the production run as smoothly as possible. After I came back from location scouting in the museum (aka: making low resolution digital preview pictures of all available miniatures of the collection), creative director Lena Naomi Krebs and selected those scenes that were most suitable for the series. Then I went back to Lyon for a week to produce the negatives for the series. In the meantime, we had organised castings with more than 250 actors and actresses. 29 of them finally played a part in the series. Once the casting was completed, we had to design the optimum production schedule, as we only had eight studio days to produce all 20 scenes, making sure that all actors and actresses would be available on a given production day. Film productions work pretty much like this, and I had gathered some experience in that field over the years.

What was average day on set like?

A typical studio day had 12 hours, 8 am to 8 pm, with a few breaks in-between. We worked a lot with the actors/actresses in order to make them „feel“ the situation they were supposed to play. In front of a green screen this is quite tricky, but in the end it paid. Another important thing was the lighting: each actor or actress had to be lit matching the lights and shadows of the background, i.e. the lighting situation had to be adapted to the miniature scenes. Marc Orsini, who was responsible for studio lighting, did a great job. The costumes and make-up department were performing equally excellent, especially when it came to SFX make-up and exotic garments, like the burlesque dresses that were used in one picture or the uniforms of the admins in the Somniverse. Those are original 20th century Prussian uniforms. All in all, a huge production effort with a highly skilled and motivated team. Not to mention the love we shared, keeping stress levels at a minimum.







Where will Dream Control be exhibited?

There will be several exhibitions in Europe – and hopefully also in other parts of the world. As of now, we have confirmed shows in Lyon (at the museum, 2020), Forli (Italy), Vienna and Berlin in 2019 and 2020. The book was officially launched on April 13, 2019, at my home gallery in Berlin: The Ballery. Over the course of the year, we will organize road shows to present the book and hold artist talks and workshops.

The book may also be ordered on our website:
http://www.efactsphoto.com/store/p4/dreamcontrol_book.html

More information about events, exhibitions, etc. on:
<http://www.efactsphoto.com/news.html>





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