

EWL Photo Competition 2010:

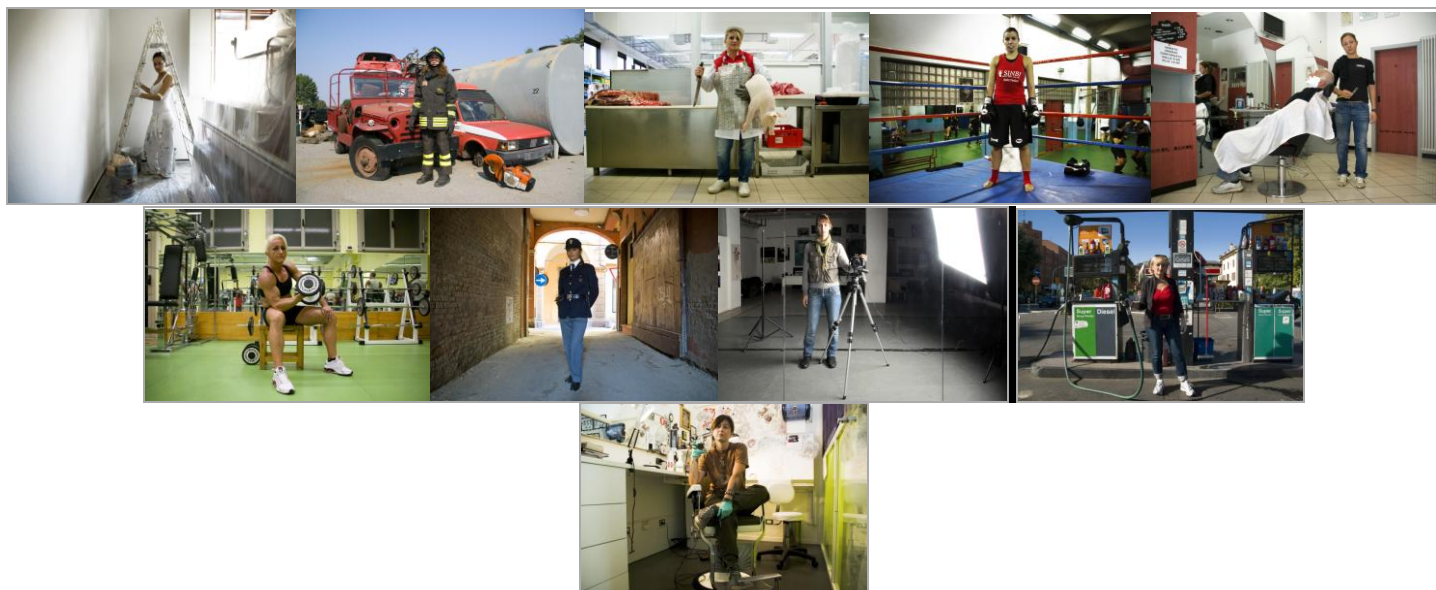
My World: Visions of Feminism in the 21st Century

Jury selection results



1st Prize: Charlotte Draycott (UK): In Chambers: The young barrister dressing signifies a moment where the woman oscillates between her femininity, youth and the identity imposed by the barrister's robes. It explores the tension between the traditional presentation of the English legal establishment and its modern reality. My interest in producing this work arose from the historical absence of women within the legal system. This portrait and the others in the series are intended to conflict with the conservative conventions of portraiture within the legal establishment. Growing up within the Inns of Court I felt compelled to respond to the masculine codes of conventions implicit within traditional legal portraiture, much of which dates back to the 17th century. Retaining the painterly aesthetic and the court dress, the portrait celebrates these young modern women. I was driven by a desire to represent the unrepresented with the intention of invoking new sentiments into the portraits.

2nd Prize: Aurore Martignoni (IT): Working Girls: In Italy as in Europe as a whole, there is a significant gender gap in terms of opportunities and participation in the labour market. My research is an exploration of the stories of women who have chosen traditionally 'male' occupations. This project was not born from the intent to start a feminist polemic, but from an almost anthropological reflection on the role of women in the contemporary working world. Working Girls becomes a portrait of society today, seen and told from a female perspective. Some of these professions remain strongly masculine, others are no longer so, and still others are simply special and are considered male by some and ambivalent by others. This analysis then leads to a discussion about where the male starts and female ends, but also and especially regarding the assumptions underlying these ideas.



3rd Prize: Ana Alvarez-Errecalde (ES): The Birth of my Daughter: The image of the woman is not of the protagonist or hero but as someone with an illness, out of control, someone who needs assistance. Once again the woman is seen as an object, and objects do not bleed. Refuting the idea of fragility that is culturally learned, I wanted to show myself in control of my experience. I am standing, with the placenta still inside me. With my baby connected to me by the

umbilical cord, and I do as I wish, I decide went to stop, take the photo and show myself. On a more historical level I am interested in lifting the veil. Showing a maternity that is less virginal. A maternity seen from the archetypal primal woman, the woman beast who is prohibited NOTHING. Showing a maternity not seen through the eyes of Eve (the divine punishment "you will give birth with the pain of your body") but seen through the eyes of Lucy (the first humanoid).



Lisa Castagner (UK): Break: These photos work towards an understanding of women's identities and relationships in the framework of my own experience in my particular socio-economic circumstances. This is reflected in Cure and Break, by the subtle yet pronounced dynamics of women from different privileges and cultures, all set within a commercialised Western setting. Break is a follow up to Cure, using another ambivalent environment as a mise en scene in which two female women, presumably workers, are having a break or rest. The occupations of the women are not clear, but a sense of hygiene is suggested by the polythene glove that one of them wears, as well as an underlying hint of violence. The clock does not confirm whether it is day or night, but the general malaise expressed by the women points to a regime of shift-work.



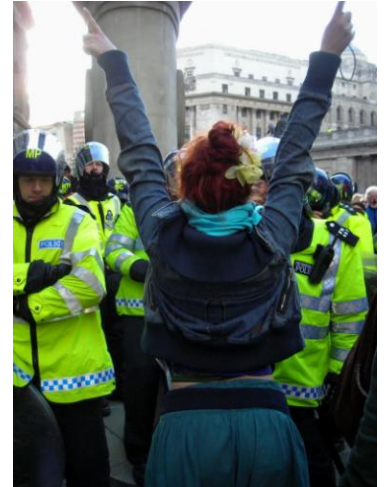
Lisa Castagner (UK): Cure: A young woman appears to be trying to hypnotise her companion, who stares disinterestedly at the ring held on a string, perhaps stilled by her cool expression. Both women are dressed in smart, business-like clothes, blending with the bland corporate setting. The headscarf worn by the girl who is apparently being hypnotised and the photograph's title point to a drama that is ironised by the girls' similarities. Here Islamic fundamentalism is raised not as a spectre of difference or threat, but as an immaculately worn headscarf, with the interaction between the two women ambiguous as the position of the hypnotiser on a low stool makes her appear to be anxiously trying convince her companion to join in her fantasy of mastery, rather than a straightforward narrative about Islam versus a westernised Asian identity.

Erika Szostak (UK): Trapped: I chose to wear a mask in the image because of the way that masks symbolize performance. If gender is both performed & performative, then gender roles can be the mask that we may have no choice but to wear. In addition, the more economic & professional gains that women have made, the more stringent the demands on our appearance seem to have become. With the increasing prevalence of eating disorders & depression among teenage girls (who are officially the most depressed demographic) & such a normalization of cosmetic surgery

that scholars have called it a feminine moral & cultural imperative, the mask represents the only kind of face women are allowed to show the world - smooth, ageless, indistinguishable, bland.



Louise Whittle (UK): G20 Protestor: This is of a woman protester outside the Bank of England, London, on the 1st April 2009, during the G20 protests. She is facing a line of police officers. Her back is towards me, her arms outstretched as in an act of defiance to the line of male police officers.



Dawn Woolley (UK): The Substitute: My artwork forms an enquiry into the act of looking and being looked at. Referring to psychoanalysis, phenomenology and feminism I examine my own experience of becoming an object of sight and also consider the experience the viewer has when looking at me as a female, and a photographic object. I aim to question the nature of representation and idealisation in these purposefully provocative scenes. By producing artwork that establishes me as an object it could be argued that I reinforce stereotypical images of the female body, but it is the active male who is being deceived in the embrace. There is a suspension of disbelief taking place in the viewing public, as they want to see image and body simultaneously. The overtly sexual nature of the body compels the viewer into the position of voyeur, only to reveal itself as an inanimate object.

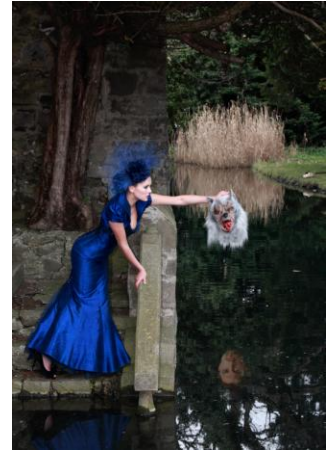


Jill O'Meara (IE): Fairytales:



Snow White: In this tale, Snow White was a threat to the Witch due to her stunning good looks. Is beauty a reason to prevent a woman's advance in society. This is a form of sexual /gender harassment. In the 21st century, strict laws protect women.

Beauty and the Beast: This scene is based on the well-known fairytale "Beauty and the Beast". 'Beauty' has kept all the physical characteristics from the tale: she is beautiful, well dressed and perfect, but her personality is very different. She is powerful, dynamic and in control of the Beast. She is not looking for "the perfect man" but a chance to prove to her father that she is more than a wife for someone but a very independent woman who not only deserves a better life but can also protect herself and her family.



Alice in Wonderland: In this tale, Alice is known to drink a special potion that makes her grow over 10 feet tall. Women's traditional role as wives and mothers has not disappeared but has been reinvented in the 21st century. They are now expected to juggle all aspects of their lives and are responsible for any failings in family or work life. She nearly needs to double herself to complete both tasks successfully and this links back to the fairy tale.



Thumbelina: Thumbelina is a very strong individual. She is a very tiny in this very large world but yet this doesn't not hinder her success in life. She is an independent woman who

has created her own little world that suits her needs. She is proactive and focused so that she can overcome obstacles in order to provide an environment that makes her complete. She is the perfect icon of a feminist in the 21st Century, someone to be proud of and an inspiration.



Alessandra Quadri (IT): The Islamic centre: Italy has become a point of arrival for many Islamic immigrants from North-African countries. Usually the men come first, find a job and, when they have a steady situation, are followed by their women (wives and daughters). These women arrive in a country they know nothing about, have no contacts with other women and often are segregated in their homes and objects of submission even more than in their homeland. The Italian Center for Islamic Culture is one of the few places where Islamic women can express themselves freely (in this picture a group of women happily bellydancing in one of the Center's rooms) but especially aggregate, know each other and exchange opinions and ideas.





Ana Alvarez-Errecalde (ES) : Alquimia: The dress represents the illusion, the love, the beginning. It offers the alchemic property of transformation. The normal becomes extraordinary. What happens to the illusions once the dress is put away? What happens when the wedding becomes part of the “past”? What lies beyond the lost protagonism? How to offer resistance to household mediocrity? A poem is the alchemic element that brings back the magic of transformation to a bunch of forgotten dresses. On a personal level I realized this exhibition basing myself on a poem written by one of my sisters (BanySol Alvarez-Errecalde 1965-2007) who recently passed away, transmuted the pain of her absence in union and complicity.

Ana Baidan (RO) : Double: What is the 21st Century about? Speed, chance, adaptability, inner (and outer!) strength. How, therefore, is the 21st Century woman? She must be brave, ambitious, versatile, strong, able to make her choices and stand her ground. But is she, then, truly feminine - or does her femininity stem from just that??



Peggy Thiele (DE): Europe: My world is characterized by contact with women of many different characters. Every day I experience that it is possible to bring together all these women with their diverse interests and ideals, opinions and tastes, forces and weaknesses and create an incomparable solidarity and group dynamics. For this reason I took photos of my models dressed in seemingly standardized clothes and in harmony with each other, at the same time without suppressing differences and diversity. The palette of my models includes the masculine, athletic type as well as the vain diva and the self-confident career woman. The pictures shall show how women through self-confidence, creativity and humour can take win the world over – even assumed male domains such as the financial sector. Women do not rank behind men, even in career and social relations – it’s just the opposite! European women have worked a lot but did not compromise. Europe is on a good path.





Stella Pellegrini (IT): Silence Nevermore: In 2010 we have to fight hard, as women, to get what we all long for: true gender equality. Women are not objects anymore, they are no longer silent dolls. With this picture I want to show how proudly we struggle every day, for ourselves and our rights. We must not stay silent any longer, and have our lips sealed, we must be able to say 'I am a woman and I'm proud of it!' The picture's title is 'Silent Nevermore'. It is my message to women like me, but it is also a message against those who force us every day not to speak, not to have an identity. Even though there is still a long road ahead of us, and many women will not be able to react, it is to them above all that, through my photography, I want to send my message: Silent Nevermore.

Lisa Castagner (UK): Corpse Variation: The spectral quality of Castagner's models is not to be confused with passivity; in each piece, it is the presence of the model that appears to cause the psychic activity; a still centre around which to work through the fictions of femininity, revealing narratives of domestic disturbance and otherworldly seductions. In this new series, her female protagonists act out their aggressive fantasies – albeit in small, suppressed gestures. As with the face turned from the viewer in Corpse Variation, Castagner responds to the awkward imaginings of the viewer with a polished blankness that appears to mock narratives of mastery and masculinity, a distorting mirror that concretises the imaginary and reconceptualises the everyday. 'I leave the lone woman to explore her body within the impersonal setting of the modern home; she is at odds with this somewhat hostile environment, but empowered by an intimacy with her own flesh.'

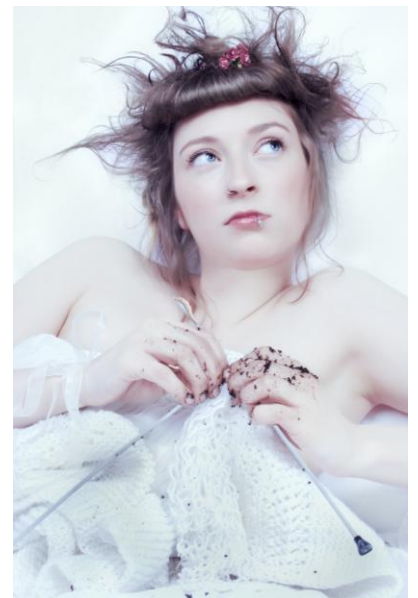


Riikka Kakelaa-Rantalainen (FI): Identities: For me, true modern feminism means that a woman can be a woman as well as an equal citizen, a person, a spouse, a friend and a coworker. Womanhood is no longer a thing you must hide or try to shake off in order to reach equality. I believe and hope that in Finland we are finally starting to achieve this. One example of this development is that here a woman is able to be a mother, to carry, give birth to and nurse her children; to give care to them and still be seen, to be an equal part of the society. Even as a mother, a woman has the right to enjoy working life, developing her career and making a difference. This message is in this photo where a mother is proudly nursing



her child - a toddler - on the stairs of our Parliament House, which overlooks Mannerheimintie, one of the busiest streets of our capital.

Marina Paulenka (CR) Portrait: The subject of this research project is woman and her position in society. Everything is done with studio lighting, and so incurred the classical dramatic portraits with a touch of the unexpected aspects of it all. Portraits with complex connotations and glamorous looks are amended by an unexpected detail: scatterings of earth, blood, a worm, inverted eyelashes. With this concept I wanted to show a certain lack of spirit in everyday human events in which people very often do not even notice some things may be absurd, and so they spend their lives dreaming automatically. This way they never resolve certain crucial issues that



hinder their progress, remaining instead in the role of a marionette within the society they live in. I tried to examine the relationship between beauty and its loss, growing up and entering adulthood, the lost dreams, the importance of women in today's world, the underestimation of women in the businessmen's world. Of course, all this is allegorical messages.



Aletheia Casey (IT): Picking Flowers The family emigrated from Tunisia several years ago and made their home in the small town of San Severino Marche. Despite their father's drinking tendencies on this particular summer evening, the girls run freely, picking and collecting the wildflowers which grow by the roadside. Their mother looks on, guardedly. The young girl in the photograph runs and plays without restraint, with an air of freedom and liberation. This absolute sense of freedom in the movement and actions of this small girl is perhaps proof of what the feminist movement has succeeded in achieving: a sense of freedom despite difficulties which continue to exist in life. We hope that this is a positive sign for the future of feminism and gender equality and hope that this equality and

freedom one feels as a child may continue into adulthood for females throughout all cultures.

Zsofia Pilhal (HU): Comfort of Movement: The woman of the 21st Century is well-read, but doesn't stick to books. She is inspired by her surroundings, sensitive and tolerant, she knows her rights and she values her freedom. She dresses a simple, comfortable black dress, but doesn't want to be sexy just for anyone. She doesn't need high heels, she doesn't want to look like anything much. She is self-conscious, unstoppable, always in movement. In this self-portrait, I am walking towards the door, the light, symbolically leaving behind my books, the old sciences, the odd concepts, the rigid philosophies, I am opening myself to the world. I feel comfortable and without fear.



Darina Hlinkova (CZ): The Princess Who Gave Birth to a Dog: The project, called Italian Fairy Tales, is based on magic-realistic fairy tales by Italo Calvino. Models - actors chose spontaneously the roles and played the plot of the story. I worked with them not only as photographer or director, but also as a participant in this photo therapy. One shooting lasted one hour, another nearly whole day, depending on the personalities of participants how they can be open or close to each other during the action, how selected women can solve their problems through playing roles. We use costumes and roles to unblock our emotions, to hide under the mask, to feel more relaxed. This photo shows the photo therapy of two sisters who deal with strong family problems based on different sexual orientation, etc. My vision of feminism in the 21st Century is based on hope that

we will be strong enough to be ourselves and to not hide behind any mask