



3 PROJECTS

IRIS DEBELDER

COMPANY NOI & "DONNA"

In the fall of 2017, I met choreographer Valentina Nigro, founder of "Company Noi" at an interactive dance performance at the Gallo-Roman archeological museum in Belgium. Female dancers moved among antique statues of women and among huge photographs of the late Marc Lagrange.

I connected with Valentina, one thing led to another, and we set up a date for me to shoot rehearsals for "DONNA," the piece she was working on at the time.

My fondness of dance goes back a long way. I was always the girl too tall, in the back of the row, when attending my ballet classes, so I gave up that child's dream.

But I never stopped seeing performances from companies all over the world. To watch bodies move rhythmically, what they can do with such intensity, grace, beauty, and strength have always been such a thrill to me.





The final performance is the cherry on the cake, but there is a raw beauty watching and photographing rehearsals; the effort & discipline that leads to muscle memory is a beautiful process to capture.

The rehearsal room had big, wide-open windows. My love of movement is also prevalent in my photographic work. I precisely wanted to use the available window light and no strobes, as to emphasize the motion.

I constantly moved around, often had longer exposures, and at times, used the panning technique. I immediately knew these images had to be in black and white. Again I only used Lightroom to convert. The double exposures were created in Analog Effex Pro.



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POLKA DOT GIRLS

Coming of age in a complicated world.

Images part of the Polka Dot Series shot in a studio in Los Angeles. Viegela is a teenager, slowly growing into womanhood. Growing up in a world where everything is connected, where there seem to be no limitations in possibilities and where opinions manifest incessantly, it is a delicate and challenging exercise to find oneself & to find balance. How will her past, the present, and her future be connected? How can teenagers/adolescents listen to their own voices?



The polka dot background, symbolizing the overwhelming effect of the connected dots, creating at times a bit of a hallucinating effect, also has a nostalgic meaning to me.

Portraits are taken in the studio with mixed lighting (daylight and daylight-balanced continuous lights).

These images were converted into b/w in Lightroom. With some minor touching up in LR, they came pretty much straight out of the camera, except for one image "No more unreliable" on which I applied a solarizing technique.



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A photograph of three women of different ethnicities standing against a bright, clear sky. They are holding long spears with wooden shafts and red-tipped blades, angled upwards. The woman on the left is Black, wearing a white shawl over a black dress. The woman in the middle is white, wearing a black top and a white skirt. The woman on the right is Black, wearing a white shawl. They are all looking upwards with expressions of hope or contemplation.

IRIS DEBELDER

FLESH & BLOOD

Portraits of 3 sisters, photographed in Playa del Rey, California. Suzette, Viergela, and Layla are sisters and my relatives. I have been shooting them for a couple of years now, individually and together, from early teenage years on.

I have become fascinated by the concept of family. Since I don't have children myself, and I left my family in Belgium behind when moving to the U.S., the word "family" and being related has gotten a whole new meaning. Suzette and Viergela are adopted and were born in Haiti. Layla was born in Los Angeles.

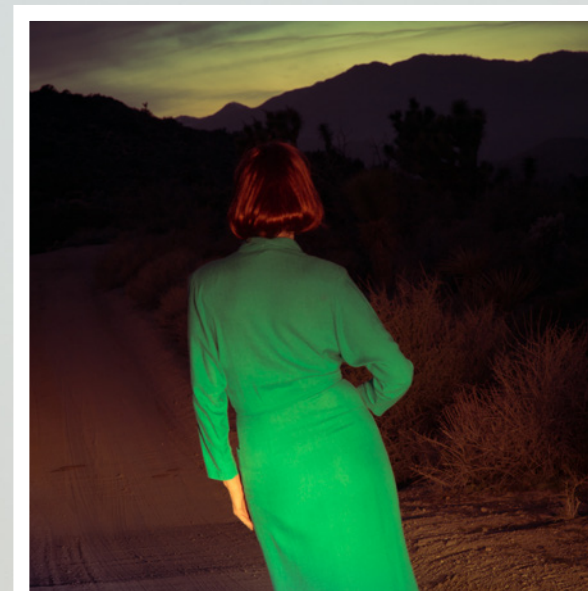
Although neither of the three girls are related by blood, to me, they are the representation of what a family can be or can mean.



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Blood ties can be strong, but they become less relevant when we look at the bigger picture of bonding and feeling connected. The girls also represent the American identity, as I see them as our hope and our future (the javelins symbolizing the strength, hope & future). The images are taken around sunset at the beach near Los Angeles with natural light. Edited in Lightroom, except for 2 images where I applied an extra foggy preset in Color Efex Pro.



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