

The Lebanese Photographer Celebrating the Girl Gaze

Yasmina Hilal is the 21-year-old switching up the game

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Inspired by the sudden passing of her grandmother, Yasmina Hilal (<https://www.yasminahilal.com/>) turned to photography as a way of overcoming the mourning process. Her latest melancholic series *Dam3a w Lulu* (A teardrop and pearl), a photo story that celebrates the girl gaze, is an ode to her. “In every tear, there’s a veiled pearl, a secret gain”, says the 21-year old LA-based Lebanese photographer.

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Hilal picked up her first AE-1 Canon camera from her mother at the age of 13, and has been shooting analog ever since. “To me, the idea of not knowing what the outcome is going to be for each photograph was and still is the most amazing surprise and experience as a photographer”, she explains. But growing up, her work, which essentially focuses on memory and gender, has organically evolved to become political.

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As a film student in the US, her recent experience has made her realise how much women struggle when they're behind the lens. Her "for women, by women" photography, aims to shine a light on the raw beauty and creativity that comes with being a woman, which is essence her response to the male-constructed images that flood our feeds. "I understand that the only way to achieve my goals, is to give females the opportunity to take on leading roles", she says.

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In recent years, the “female gaze” has emerged as a popular catchphrase describing the idea of women taking control over their narrative. With her hyper-feminine, dream-like approach to aesthetics, Hilal is committed to leading the voice of female gazers in the Middle East. “With such a small amount of female photographers present in this region of the world, I believe its

essential that we use this force in order to steer away from the norm and raise awareness through art and photography on social and political topics especially with gender inequality being the main concern". (<https://www.milleworld.com>)



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