

OLGA STEFATOU

THE ARTIST STATEMENT

In my work as a visual artist, I use moving images, sounds, collages and, the medium I'm most passionate about, photographs. I've always wished to understand others through their stories, which honed my sensitivity to human rights. These elements have been a constant drive in my professional and artistic work. Since I can remember, I've felt different within the family environment, where women used to be strong but at the same time forced to take on traditional roles. So, I decided to follow my own path, my creative path. This has inspired me to research various topics around women's independence. In a broader sense, I am interested in exploring geopolitics and cultural heritage, where most of my themes stem from.

Asia has played a significant role in my photographic growth, since China was where I completed my Master's degree, but I have also spent years in Southeast Asia, particularly in Myanmar, to develop one of my most beloved projects, the "Red Ruby". In Qatar, I worked as a photography specialist with the Qatar Museums' photography collection, which focuses on the 19th and 20th centuries. Working with the archive enriched my knowledge about the history of photography and inspired my own artwork as well.

I work with both analog and digital photography, using medium or 35mm cameras, in color or black and white. The criteria for selecting themes and ideas to work on meet my genuine, inner need primarily to understand, and then to express myself and share my findings with society. My form of choice is documentary, which now is closer to art-documentary, and I often include performative elements as a tool to reflect alternative realities. Before every new project, I let myself free to experiment so I can find the visual language that suits the narrative best, especially during times when there are different types of barriers. Following this kind of freedom, I might create a staged art documentary work like "Chrysalis", I might focus on one specific dot of coordinates to send a message like in "The Pearl" where I also used flash for the first time, or instax paper for the series "A Pair of Brand-New Eyes", and those are but a few examples.