



## THE MANY FACES OF NIENKE KLUNDER

Text Anneloes Gaalen | Photos Nienke Klunder

Photographer Nienke Klunder, born in 1975 in San Jose, CA, but raised in the Netherlands, first became interested in photography when her father handed her an old Pentax camera. Armed with her beloved camera and a sense of adventure, Klunder began documenting her travels and journeys while secretly dreaming about a career as a documentary war photographer. However, Klunder's career goal changed when she attended art school. "Instead of searching externally for the images I wanted to photograph, I began to create my own scenes and realities." While Klunder first asked friends to pose in her versions of reality, she soon began shooting her own portrait. "I photographed a lot of my friends and models, had a lot of fun, but figured out that to be able to express certain feelings, it would be more honest, practical and personal to use myself."

Before settling in Barcelona, Klunder, who spent a year-long residency at Fabrica, Benet-

ton's research and communication center in Italy, began working on photographic sequences in which she examines the images and perceptions of the female persona in contemporary society. Klunder says, "This project started as research about all the different types of women that would live in the 'perfect city,' which is why they were all

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smiling." Over time, the project became a more serious undertaking, and rather than simply dressing up and smiling happily at the camera, Klunder's started making portraits where the women she portrayed became more specific, more realistic. "The fact that everybody can be

categorized, and that you can even imagine their lives, jobs, habits, and hobbies, fascinated me. I began to explore different personas but I never copied the style or personality of a real-life person. Instead I got my inspiration from my wardrobe that I had stockpiled with all kinds of outfits, props and backdrops from second hand shops to use in my photos."

Klunder's photographic sequences struck a chord with many and her work has been published in such magazines as *Photo*, *IdN*, *El Pais Semanal*, *Sport & Street*, *Marie Claire*, *Oxygen*, and *Surface*, while she has also exhibited in the Netherlands, Milan, Lisbon, Paris and Tokyo. As for the future? Klunder likes to keep things under wrap but she continues to be fascinated with people as a subject matter. "I'm working on a project that involves horses, big-breasted women, Disney World and a celebration of Hollywood! And that's all I will say about it for now."