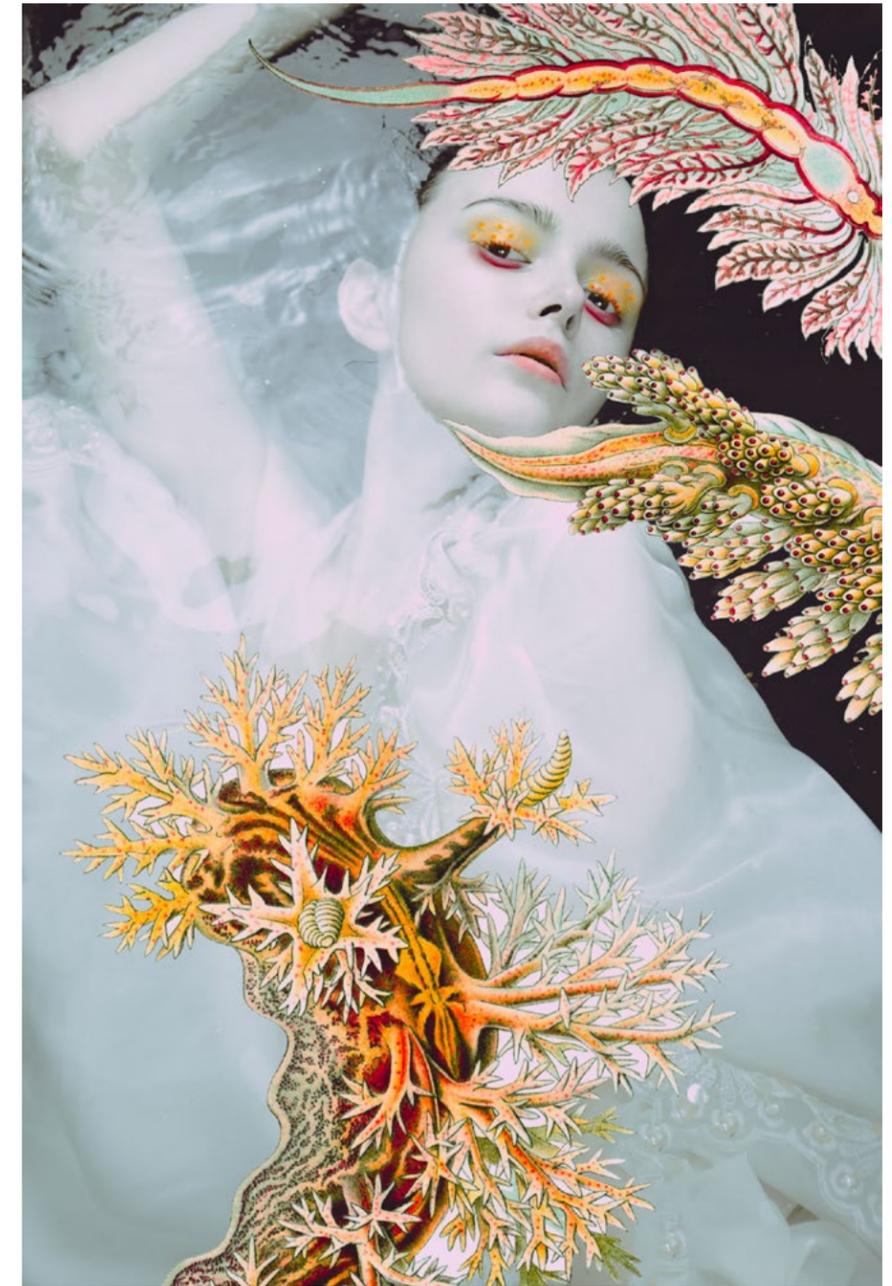


Mira Nedyalkova



P O R T F O L I O



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Text edited by Gunild Symes
All artwork and photos by Mira Nedyalkova

Mira Nedyalkova is a Bulgarian artist and photographer based in Sofia who creates stunning, sensual, surreal and evocative imagery by approaching photography and the element of water with the touch of a painter. *X-Ray Mag* interviewed the artist to gain insight into her thought-provoking art and her creative process.

X-RAY MAG: Tell us about yourself, your background and how you became an artist and a photographer.

MN: I have always loved photography as an art, but I started out with drawing and painting. Later in 2007, I discov-

ered photography as a means of expressing myself, and it completely replaced painting for me. My photographs are not exactly photographs, because I do a lot of editing in Photoshop, and my creations are somewhere between paintings and photography. Both arts, for me, are very similar and interrelated.

X-RAY MAG: Why marine life and underwater themes, and how did you develop your style of photography?

MN: Yes, the majority of my works are in the water; this, of course, is not accidental. From many points of view, for me, the water is a very suitable means for expressing what I carry



X-RAY MAG: What is your artistic method or creative process?

MN: It's different every time. Sometimes, I decide to shoot spontaneously, and I organize everything very quickly—in a day. When I do that, I like to improvise, and I usually either do not use any props or I just repurpose old ones from previous projects.

In other cases, I start out with whole concepts, with fully formed ideas and projects. In these cases, I start preparing earlier because I need to find specific clothing and objects, as well as a suitable model. I usually shoot for about four to five hours; but this, of course, includes coffee, water and chocolate breaks.

X-RAY MAG: In your underwater imagery, what locations, set-up and camera equipment do you use in your shoots?



inside me and recreating my ideas.

First, I will say that from a technical point of view, shooting water brings me great joy. Upon contact, water transforms light, shadow, shape and color in an incredible way, and the final effect is outstanding and always surprising. It's really inspiring to me.

From an artistic point of view, the water is my creative vehicle. Creation, life, power... water is filled with tremendous energy. It gives both pleasure and delight. It gives life, but also poses a risk and a threat. It can destroy us.

I love the transparency and purity of water, and the light, reflections and transformations that result when it is in contact with another medium. For me, water is a highly erotic element precisely because of the opposites that it brings. Water is the thing that quenches our thirst and saves us in our lust for life, our thirst for love, our eternal struggle and our attempts to erase, to dull or to heal our pain, sadness and loneliness.

THIS PAGE: Digital compositions from the *Element Like Deity* series by Mira Nedyalkova





Digital composition from the *Element Like Deity* series by Mira Nedyalkova



MN: Actually, I do not shoot underwater, so I do not use any special underwater equipment. I take my photos using a large aquarium, which the models enter, and I shoot through the glass.

X-RAY MAG: Please tell us about your series *Element Like Deity*. What was the inspiration for this series?

MN: For this series, I was inspired by the German biologist and artist Ernst Haeckel and his incredible illustrations of marine animals. My idea was to merge the beauty of the model (representing our human race) with the beauty of these marine organisms into a perfect symbiosis.

X-RAY MAG: What is your relationship to the underwater world and marine life and where have you had favorite experiences?

MN: I love nature and animals very much, and I also love the sea and the entire underwater world. My dream is to be able

Digital black-and-white compositions from the *Countdown* series (left) and *Origins* series (below) by Mira Nedyalkova

Mira Nedyalkova

to live on the seashore so that I can enjoy it constantly, observing all of its forms and states.

X-RAY MAG: What are your thoughts on ocean conservation and how does your artwork relate to these issues?

MN: A very large topic, this is a global and very serious problem, affecting not only the seas but also our entire environ-





THIS PAGE: Color underwater photographs from *La Femme Parallel* series (far left), *Sanctuary* series (left), and *Heart Space* series (below) by Mira Nedyalkova

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that they have cried while looking at one of my pictures.

Part of the audience is afraid of looking at my works, linking everything to death, even if it is beautiful. Others feel bliss, total peace of mind and inner calm. Whatever the emotion is, it's always there, and that's my main desire. Emotions are the engine of our existence, our real and most faithful way of communicating.

X-RAY MAG: What are your upcoming projects or events?

MN: I really have many projects in my mind. Some are a bit old and not realised for various reasons.

Some others are new and maybe not clear yet.

It often happens that, even when I have projects and ideas ready to be put into practice, I might start on something new that just popped into my mind. I prefer to do things spontaneously and in accordance with my mood, with the people who are around me, and with my free time.

X-RAY MAG: Is there anything else you would like to tell our readers about yourself and your artwork?

MN: I would like to thank them for the support, attention and love they give me, and I promise them that I will continue to do what I love, and I will always be honest with myself and with my audience. ■

For more information, visit the artist's website at: miranedyalkova.com.



ment. With our constant technological progress, we are responsible for the problems and the climate changes on our planet, and we do not realize the consequences of it.

X-RAY MAG: What is the message or experience you want viewers of your artwork to have or understand?

to make my audience look deep inside themselves, feel life with all of its beauty and pain, and appreciate it for the small, simple things that are its essence.

X-RAY MAG: What are the challenges of being an artist in the world today?

MN: Creating for me is an internal necessity. I would not call it a challenge—it's

just something I need. This is my therapy, the best way I manage to reveal my inner world. I believe that in this way, I am reaching out to many people who need to feel it as well.

X-RAY MAG: How do people respond to your works?

MN: I often receive emails from people who write to me with a lot of emotion about how my art has affected them. Often their response has been so strong