

CULTURE

02.04.20

These Are the 8 Young Photographers to Follow in 2020

From recent graduates to a former professional dancer.

by **Stephanie Eckardt** and **Maridelis Morales Rosado**



It's reassuring to know that all those hours spent reblogging and liking on Flickr and Tumblr weren't for naught. For many of the photographers now coming up in 2020, their careers effectively started by going down internet rabbit holes, whether scrutinizing selfies or studying up on Helmut Newton. Get to know eight of this year's most promising, and their stories, here.

Chanell Stone



Potted Earth. Courtesy of Chanell Stone.

Chanell Stone



In search of a certain Eden. Courtesy of Chanell Stone.

Age: 27

Instagram: @___califia

Location: From Los Angeles; based in Oakland.

It's no accident that Chanell Stone, who specializes in self-portraits, grew up during what she calls "the dawn of Myspace." The site got her thinking about modes of self-representation, sparking her love of photography at age 13. Since taking an analog photography class in high school, Stone has stuck to working with film; she now uses a medium-format camera, and primarily creates images that are black and white, like her self-portrait series *Natura Negra*. For more than two years, Stone photographed herself amidst what she refers to as "urban nature," exploring the Black body's connection to nature that's both rural and man-made. (The series is now on view at the Museum of the African Diaspora in San Francisco, marking Stone's first solo exhibition since she graduated from the California College of the Arts in May of 2019.) "Representation is at the forefront of my practice, so my main subject matters are Black people and cultural material," Stone says. "Making self-portraits among urban nature is a very meditative and cathartic experience for me. It acts as an emotional release."

Luis Alberto Rodriguez



Courtesy of Luis Alberto Rodriguez.

Age: 39

Instagram: [@luisalbertorodriguezstudio](https://www.instagram.com/luisalbertorodriguezstudio)

Location: Based in Berlin.

Luis Alberto Rodriguez, who trained at Juilliard, had been dancing professionally for 14 years when he decided to pivot to photography. Initially buoyed by the traction he gained on Tumblr, Rodriguez quickly found much more official affirmation: He won the Hyères Festival of Photography Prix du Public in 2017, marking a turning point in his career. Still, Rodriguez hasn't completely turned his back on the past: "I've been a dancer most of my life," he says. "The human form is definitely front and center in what I do." Thanks to a photo residency in Wexford, Ireland, Rodriguez is now working on his first book—an almost sculptural look at hurling, through slow-motion footage of the fastest sport played on grass.



Courtesy of Luis Alberto Rodriguez.

Senta Simond



Left, *Laurence Rayon Vert*, 2016. Right, *Marie Rayon Vert*, 2017. Courtesy of Senta Simond.

Instagram: [@senta.simond](https://www.instagram.com/senta.simond)

Location: From Geneva; based in London.

Senta Simond's breakthrough came in 2018, when she self-published her book *Rayon Vert*. A portrait series of women which feels arrestingly personal, it quickly went out of print. Two years later, the publisher Kominek is on its [second edition](#), and the series has made it to New York's esteemed Danziger Gallery, marking Simond's first American exhibition. The buzz around her work is ever growing, but Simond's process of creating it remains low-key. Above all, the Swiss photographer values shooting her subjects in their privacy—an approach that seems key to Simond's sensual, rather than sexual, portrayal of nudity. She doesn't take that level of intimacy for granted, especially with those she met on social media or in the street. "I always found it quite intrusive," Simond says. "But I also can't resist."

Age: 33

Denisse Ariana Pérez



Left, *Boys and Water II*; Right, *Boys and Water I*. Courtesy of Denisse Ariana Pérez.

Age: 31

Instagram: [@denisseaps](https://www.instagram.com/denisseaps)

Location: Dominican-born; Copenhagen-based.

Water figures prominently in the work of Denisse Ariana Pérez, who says she feels a “very powerful, almost spiritual” connection to it. Lately, she’s been exploring how boys and young men interact with water, leading to an “aquatic pilgrimage of sorts” from Nordic waters to East Africa’s Lake Victoria. Still, Pérez considers it secondary. “My main focus is and forever will be the subjects,” she says. “I photograph people. My quest is to highlight the beauty I see in them.” Her portrait series of LGBTQI+ people across Africa, including countries where they face persecution, is intentionally celebratory, not somber. Nor is her portrait series of young men born with albinism and living in Tanzania, which has a history of segregation and violence against people with the genetic condition. (She’s hoping to raise awareness of the issue with the funds from selling her work.) Pérez, whom Red Hook Labs named one of its “new artists” last year, started off 2020 by signing to Probation Agency in London, becoming “an officially represented artist.” At the moment, though, she’s still sticking with her side gig as a creative copywriter: “One could say I’m juggling two careers.”

Francesco Nazardo



Images for *Alla Carta, FW18*. Courtesy of Francesco Nazardo.

Age: 34

Instagram: [@francesco_nazardo](https://www.instagram.com/francesco_nazardo)

Location: From Milan; based in London.

For a new graduate looking for a job in the midst of a financial crisis, suddenly pursuing photography seems optimistic at best. But for Francesco Nazardo, who’d just earned a degree in history, it all came together—even though he was “very ignorant” about photography at the time. With a little help from Flickr, which he came to consider something of a “community,” Nazardo got into the field as a photo assistant. Unfortunately, he was “terrible” at it. “A photographer I assisted for a bit one day told me: ‘You’re a lovely guy, but you should definitely do your own work because you have no future as a photo assistant.’” It was very good advice,” Nazardo says. For proof of that, look no further than the list of clients—Burberry, Jil Sander, Nike, Calvin Klein, and Off-White among them—Nazardo has worked with since pursuing photography full-time. None showcase the full scope of Nazardo’s style and ambition better than PRISCAVera. For his second campaign for the up-and-coming label, which rolled out this week, Nazardo opted to capture the models midair, in the midst of flyboarding in Sardinia.

Carlijn Jacobs



Courtesy of Carlijn Jacobs.

Age: 28

Instagram: [@carlijnjacobs](https://www.instagram.com/carlijnjacobs)

Location: From the Netherlands; based in Paris and London.

"I like to take my viewer on a journey," says Carlijn Jacobs, whose work could also be considered storytelling—even when it takes the form of an ad campaign. But it's fashion editorials where the Dutch photographer really thrives. Far from static, as is so often the case, Jacobs's fashion photography is cinematic; she goes out of her way to create "mysterious artistic scenery," so that each shoot exists in its very own atmosphere. It's no wonder the Foam photography museum once exhibited her work alongside that of [Helmut Newton](#), in a show tracing the legacy of his distinctive, unconventional approach.

Lindsay Ellary



Left, *Kina Princess* for *Document Journal*. Right, *Alexa*. Courtesy of Lindsay Ellary.



Age: 28

Instagram: [@lindsayellary](https://www.instagram.com/lindsayellary)

Location: From Dallas; based in Los Angeles.

"If I can feel how the light would feel on my skin, the image is successful," says Lindsay Ellary, who first got into photography when her dad gave her a camera for her 12th birthday. Since then, Ellary has developed a style she describes as "very driven by light and connectedness"—one that's instantly recognizable for its painterly chiaroscuro. And that's what makes Ellary's portraits of oft photographed celebrities like Mj Rodriguez and King Princess stand apart. It's arguably most effective when [her subjects are up-and-comers](#); in carrying over that same approach, Ellary's subjects come off just as established, even if they aren't just yet.

Gilleam Trapenberg



Steven, 2019. Courtesy of Gilleam Trapenberg.



Left, Nadira, 2019. Right, Jeremiah, 2019. Courtesy of Gilleam Trapenberg.

Age: 28

Instagram: @gilleamtrapenberg

Location: From “a small Dutch Caribbean island called Curaçao”; based in Amsterdam (“but I try to spend a few months in the year in the Caribbean”).

These days, Gilleam Trapenberg is based in Amsterdam. But he’s still true as ever to Curaçao, the island where he was born and raised, and long used as a vehicle to explore representation and masculinity. He hopes to challenge Caribbean stereotypes with his photographs, like those that make up *Big Papi*—one of two books he published even before graduating two years ago, from the Royal Academy in The Hague. “It’s the hardest place for me to make images because I know it so well, but it’s precisely this reason that has pushed me to go deeper with my work—every time I visit, it’s as if I discover another layer.”
