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The artist Andi Kacziba, through her works passes the message that all women are unique

InStyle Greece | Niki Kefala

After finishing high school, the artist, Andi Kacziba, moved from her small town to Budapest to continue her studies and started working as a model in order to be able to help her parents financially and live independently. After about 4 years she moved to Milan and for a long time lived with other models of different nationalities. This was the starting point and the opportunity to observe closely the problems and everyday life of women. Women's physical changes, their beauty, appearance and youth, which is transformed into a simple product whose value is measured only with money, have become the central themes of her research.

**How did you decide to go into photography?**

In my life, photography has always been a central, fundamental element. From a young age in front of the lens as a model, it was for me a reality that glorified the female image from an aesthetic point of view. Then, when I became an artist, I wanted to express myself through the photographic medium, because it seemed to me the most appropriate and natural language in order to pass on my message about what women are.

**Is that why women are at the heart of your work?**

My research obviously starts first and foremost from myself, from the observation of myself, of others, and of the world around me. However, one thing I have always noted in the course of my existence, not only applicable to my life but also in a global sense: is whether it is true that femininity has changed over time.

**Is this the element that inspired you for your new exhibition "Take my heart"?**

The title of the exhibition "Take my heart" refers to *Catullus'* Latin version of a poem by Sappho. I started with Sappho, considering her to be the first

great female artist in history to convey a powerful message inherent in equality and female emancipation. Therefore, Sappho to me is an eternal, universal and primary symbol of women's struggle. In the poem Sappho proposes her heart, a symbol of her love. I recommend not only my heart, but also my organs, lungs, liver, kidneys, as a ransom, to the society that punishes me as a woman who is on the threshold of fifty years, who has not fulfilled her "duties", such as motherhood.

**You did an exhibition having mirrors in the foreground and wrinkles on your face. Why do you think women try so hard to hide them?**

The title of the project is Turning (G)old (the English title uses the pun Old - Gold). My works speak of complex social concepts in a simple, direct way, I would say figurative with a subtle challenge. I made a series of Polaroids, with the wrinkles full of gold. If, as I grow older, I lose my value by the standards of our society, filling the wrinkles with gold, I could regain my lost value. With the passage of time, I have more and more wrinkles that may contain more and more gold. Therefore, and as I get older, I will "be of value" more and more.

The project focuses on a very complex and topical issue, namely the pressure of society on women, with regard to ageing. Women generally tend to hide their wrinkles, their age and transform into a false and attractive object because of the imposition of society and male desire, but not only. The purpose of beauty products marketing is to convince women that they need to maintain their beauty and youth at all costs.

With my work I try to convey a message and make people think: a woman's life has a strong value and the marks on her face and body are not only signs of time, but also the result of her actions and expressions. They tell their own story. Wrinkles are more valuable than anything else, they define identity and make us unique.

**Is #MeToo and similar movements an inspiration for your work?**

My work is independent of the various movements, although it focuses on the role of women in modern society. The movements were born of courageous women and give voice to the injustices they suffered, attracting worldwide attention.

I believe that my fundamental role as a female artist is to try to create positive social change through my research. My projects focus on various problems and tell short stories that can highlight a global problem, often unsolved, and linked to the socio-political situation of women.

**Today is International Women's Day. What's your wish?**

This day is celebrated every year in many countries and was founded to commemorate the social, economic and political achievements of women, but also the discrimination that they suffer and continue to suffer all over the world. My wish? I would like to see the day when Women's Day ceases to exist because it will no longer make sense or when we achieve gender equality as a whole. The term 'gender gap' will no longer be used and we will have the right to be just women. For now, today is a moment of reflection on the past and the present, and it allows us to measure how far the goal is and to work on our experiences to give a better future to generations to come. The road is still very long, but we can get there together, even if we do it in small steps.

**As an artist and ex-model, do you have any beauty routines you'd like to share with us?**

In time, I learned to love myself. I'm over 40, so I noticed changes in my body. Now I have to sleep well, at least seven hours a night, or I'm fighting to get my strength back. Regarding the face, there are no great "tricks". Clean and moisturize the face twice a day, avoid smoking: it takes a few minutes of effort, and the skin looks radiant, without many expensive cosmetic products.

After the pandemic, many women decided to give up their monthly dye and leave their hair grey. I'm dyeing my hair in my natural colour and I still don't feel ready to give up dyeing it. In recent years we have had time to reflect and observe ourselves, we have become more courageous, free to change. When I can, I

try to walk around town and wake up a little early in the morning to do 15 minutes of exercise. I believe in the importance of manicured hands, but I have short fingernails, because otherwise I wouldn't be able to work with ceramics.

Because of the clay, my hands are always dry and that's why I have a small tube of cream in my bag and especially when I'm nervous or undecided, I save time to think by massaging the cream into my hands. When I'm not working, my nails are strictly painted red. I believe in proper nutrition, I try to eat less meat, more vegetables and not eat more than my body needs, but there are days when I need more chocolate.

**Of course, this is just a first step.**

I would like to live long and work until the last minute with a revolutionary heart, like Louise Bourgeois or Carol Rama. Is that too much to ask? I live for the day and every morning I read the news. What is happening around us and in the world affects our lives and the last two years have shown that our lives can freeze or change direction in a flash. It is important to live in the present and to take action. Every day I try to improve myself and my work. I like to always feel ready: to face unexpected changes and new challenges. For various reasons I have not had children, and this probably leads me to share my experiences and observations in a public way, through my research. My destiny is my job: to know how to recognise and overcome injustices, to comfort women, to help them face difficulties and problems. In short, to let them know we're not alone.

*The exhibition "Take my heart" is hosted on 8-25 March at the Raffaella De Chirico Arte Contemporanea in Milan.*

[https://www.instyle.gr/people/i-kallitechnis-andi-kacziba-mesa-apo-ta-ergatis/?fbclid=IwAR0sEWGQzFcFoNdfZwdtr-Uh-LJUJSJkmRxlZGoc0k77hwAl9csJXQ\\_pSG0](https://www.instyle.gr/people/i-kallitechnis-andi-kacziba-mesa-apo-ta-ergatis/?fbclid=IwAR0sEWGQzFcFoNdfZwdtr-Uh-LJUJSJkmRxlZGoc0k77hwAl9csJXQ_pSG0)