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MEGALOPOLIS: BEIRUT, THE CITY WITH A BITTER-SWEET FLAVOR

**Life in Beirut can be described with one adjective:
*bittersweet.***

On the one hand, war and destruction are afflicting the country, while on the other, young artists are trying to tackle this devastation with art, design and above all COURAGE.

They are DARING.

Writer Rashid Al-Daif wrote about a Beirut myth that describes the Middle Eastern city as a metropolitan area full of dreams and promises but also teeming with disappointment.





In the nineteenth century Beirut was considered the new Alexandria. Both cultured and liberal. In fact, it was in Beirut that for the first time a Muslim woman decided to take off her veil. Also, Beirut saw the first strike organized by university students who rallied in support of a professor who had praised the work of Charles Darwin.

Although Beirut is a city that has experienced many types of challenges throughout its history, it always knew how to “immunize” itself and be reborn. Beirut is full of life: it grows and grows with its people, it is constantly changing.

We want to talk about the modern side of Beirut, a city full of young people who use their art to spread their voice and to give a voice to those who don't have one. Young artists who believe in the power of beauty and the kindness of art. Dream makers.





Yasmina is a young artist from Beirut. With her photography she wants to create a connection between people, a sort of bridge that links different cultures. Yasmina says the most important part of her photography is to represent her culture and her roots.

Hello Yasmina, tell me something about yourself. How was your passion for photography born?

My name is Yasmina Hilal, I was born and raised in Beirut. I'm a mixed media artist, both photographer and experimental filmmaker. My passion for photography started when my mother gave me my first camera at the age of 13. From there I started experimenting and tried to photograph whatever inspired me.

"There are so many difficulties in being a young artist in Beirut"





What do you want to convey and show to the audience with your photography? What do you like to represent in your images?

I want my photography to be able to connect with people in a different way than usual. I don't really care that my work is aesthetically beautiful. I think my work is all about the process rather than the product itself. I was born and raised in Beirut, but then moved to the United States for about 6 years. In those years I realized that the representation of my culture and education is the most important part. That's why I chose to come back to Beirut, because that's where I thrive in the most.

Being able to represent my culture is the most important part of my photography.

In your opinion, what are the difficulties that a young artist like you has to face in a city like Beirut?

There are so many difficulties in being a young artist in Beirut. Above all, with the economic crisis and the blast, it has become very difficult to grow artistically here. It's quite sad because there is so much potential here, and so many amazing artists, but we cannot sustain ourselves in this economy.

"I realized that the representation of my own culture and education is the most important part"





Do you think that through photography you can give a voice to your generation or to young people who live in Beirut?

I hope that my photography can give a voice to future generations. Never give up on your dreams and always strive to push harder!

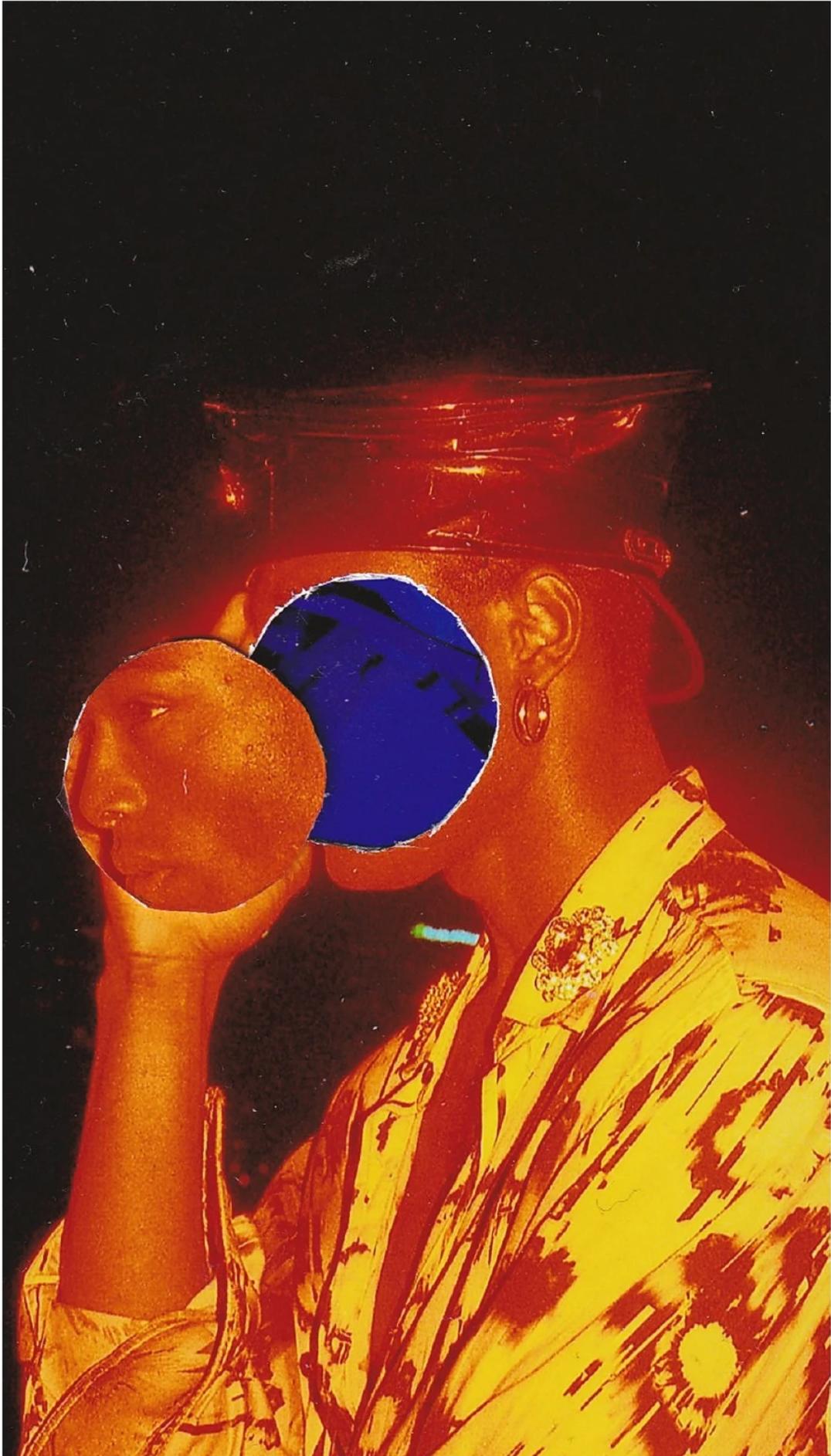
What do you think it means to be a young girl with her dreams in a city as Beirut?

In my opinion, being a young girl with her dreams in a city like Beirut is something I wish and long for. Unfortunately, with everything going on here, it has become quite a struggle to be able to be creative, especially when there are so many fallout in this country. It would be my dream to be able to live and continue growing here, but I don't think it will be possible for me in the next 5 or 6 years.

Being a young artist in Beirut is far from easy but if you have a dream and the strength to follow it you can help other people to dream too.

“Nothing is very constant in Beirut. Certainly not dreams. But despair isn't constant either. Beirut is a city to be loved and hated a thousand times a day. Every day. It is exhausting, but it is also beautiful” — Nasri Atallah







Interview & Article by
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