

## Interview with Nazanin Tabatabaee Yazdi

### Iranian photographer

**FdR:** Why did you choose schizophrenia for your photographic project?

**Nazanin Tabatabaee Yazdi:** I always think of people specially the ones who live in abnormal situations. People with different life style, people with mental issues or people with disability. I always wonder about their life experience. How do they feel? How do they look at the life and how do they handle all these issues? Moreover, I would like to see how the society treats these poeple.

People who suffer of schizophrenia was one the groups of different people I always think about. My intention was to look at their life closely and create the opportunity to show it to others.

**FdR:** What did you understand while working with people affected by schizophrenia?

**Nazanin Tabatabaee Yazdi** They look like us. Normal poeple. I have a picture of smile and kindness of most of them in my mind. To be honest, I could not see their mental illness. I was amazed when they shared their imagination.

**FdR:** You choose to put yourself in the pictures? Tell us why.

**Nazanin Tabatabaee Yazdi:** When I met these people for the first time I found them close to me. I could have been any of them or they could have been me. I asked them: "What is your biggest dream ?". I was depressed when I found out that their biggest dream of outside of the clinic is my routine dalily life.

I made a note of all of their wishes and what we have chatted about with details then I put my self in their wishes to reperesent them to feel it on behalf of them. Then some photos of me have been taken in their wishes situation and the final shot is a projected photo of me with the patient portrait.

**FdR:** Is schizophrenia something people talk openly or a condition people are ashamed of?

**Nazanin Tabatabaee Yazdi:** Society was not able to make an appropriate contact with schizophrenics in the past but now everything has changed and people talk about not

only this illness but also about mental illness in general more openly . Society knows that they are people who need more care and attention. People know that schizophrenics can behave normally with some mediation and in some cases they even can live with their families. There is nothing to be ashamed of. Living in the clinic gives them a chance to live in a more appropriate place with required cares. That's my experience of meeting them in the clinic.

I believe that the more we talk about these issues the better we can help the society.

**FdR:** useWhere do you see the origins of this illness?

**Nazanin Tabatabaee Yazdi:** I have carried out some researches and met some specialists to realise the most important reasons of this disorder include genetics, drug addiction, etc.

**FdR:** Do you think that your photographic work could help people affected by schizophrenia to cope with it?

**Nazanin Tabatabaee Yazdi:** I would like to see the reaction of schizophrenics when they see the photos in an exhibition, but my main audience are ordinary people.

My intention is to show that schizophrenics are also people like us. They have their own wishes and dreams about future. Life means a lot to them. Maybe it has deeper and more beautiful meaning than the life of normal people.

On the other hand I intended to show that sometimes we dont enjoy of our life and whatever we have around as much as we should. There are lots of beautiful things in our life like family, home, mother, driving, friends, watching a movie or drinking a cup of tea in the sunset, which is a kind of routine in our life but a big wish for anyone else.

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