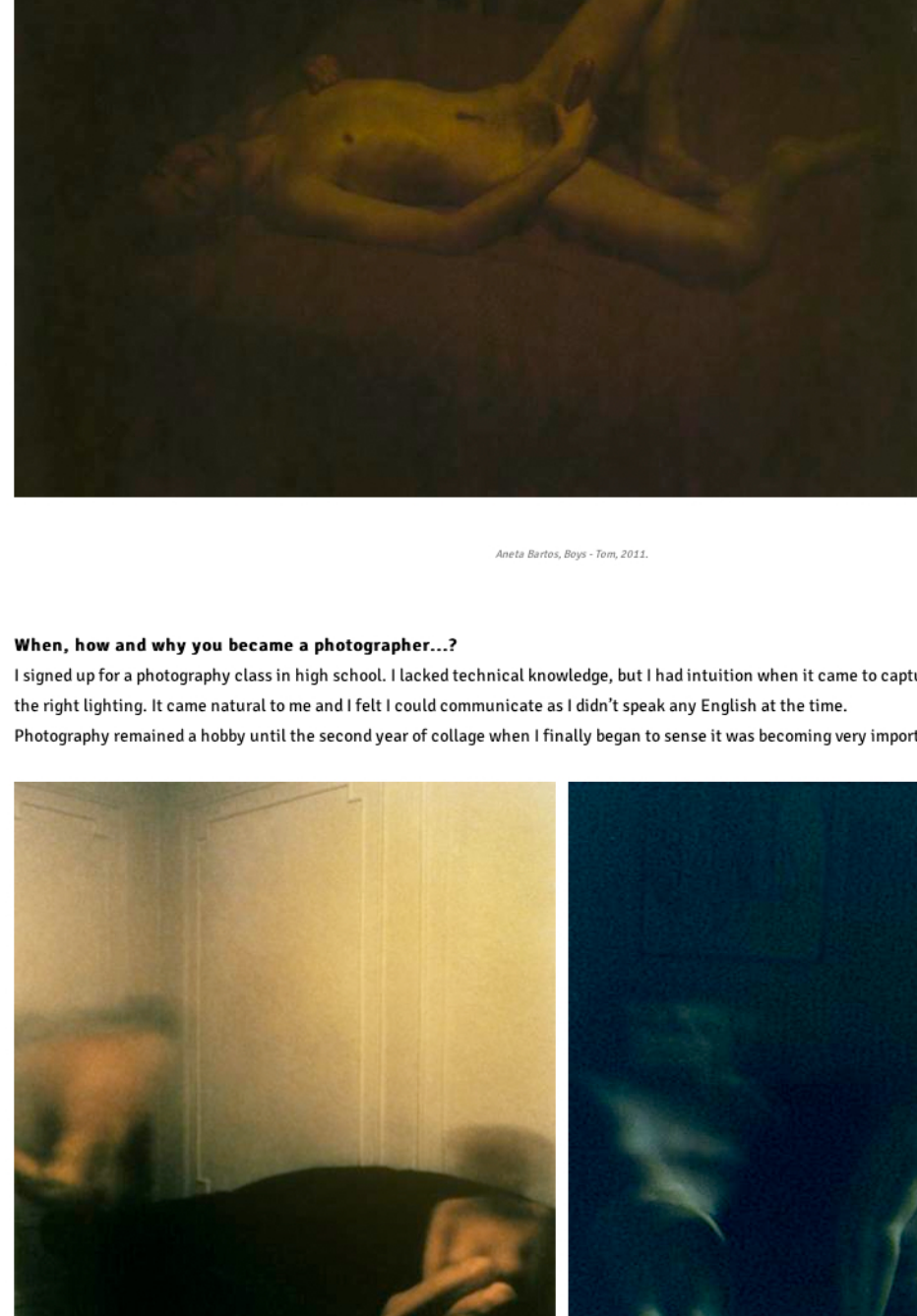


Aneta Bartos - INTERVIEW

Par Laetitia Alliaf.

Who is Aneta Bartos?

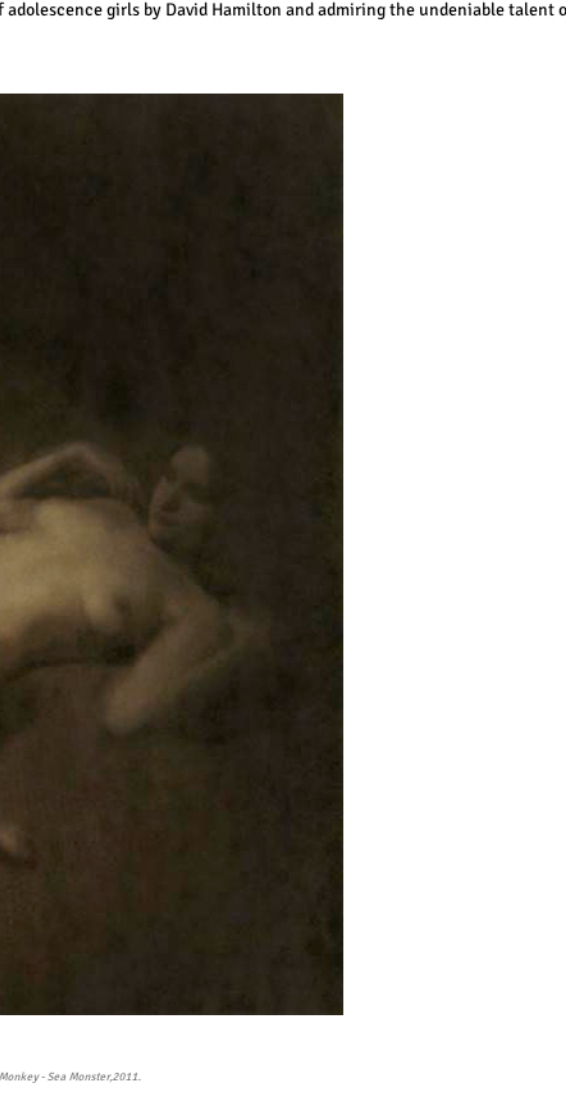
I was born in a small town called Tomaszów Mazowiecki in Poland. I grew up at my grandmother's old house and spent most of my days playing with friends in the near by forest and a lake. At the age of 16, I came to the States to visit my mother who moved here 8 years before and I ended up staying.



Aneta Bartos, Nude, 2011

When, how and why you became a photographer...?

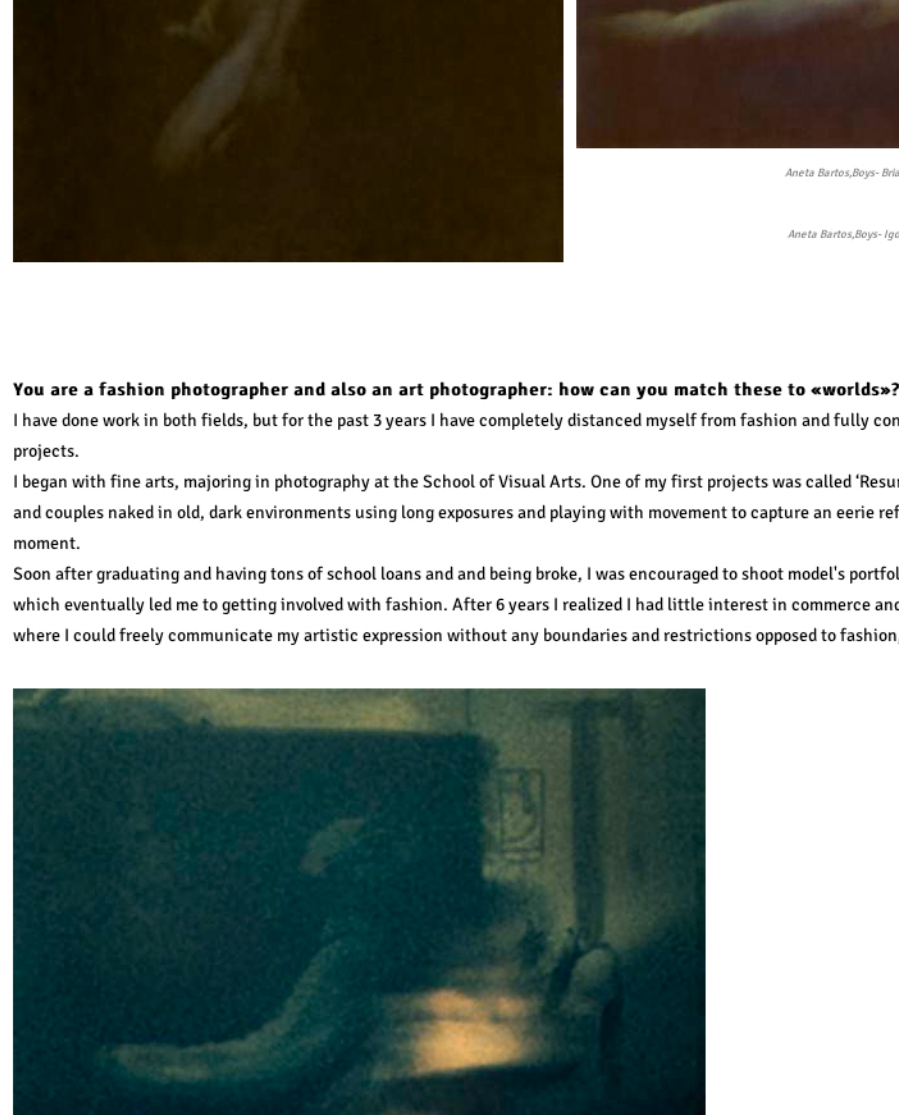
I signed up for a photography class in high school. I lacked technical knowledge, but I had intuition when it came to capturing the right moment with the right lighting. It came natural to me and I felt I could communicate and I didn't speak any English at the time. Photography remained a hobby until the second year of collage when I finally began to realize it was becoming very important to me.



Aneta Bartos, Reclining, 2011

What photographers/artists/directors... have been the greatest influences?

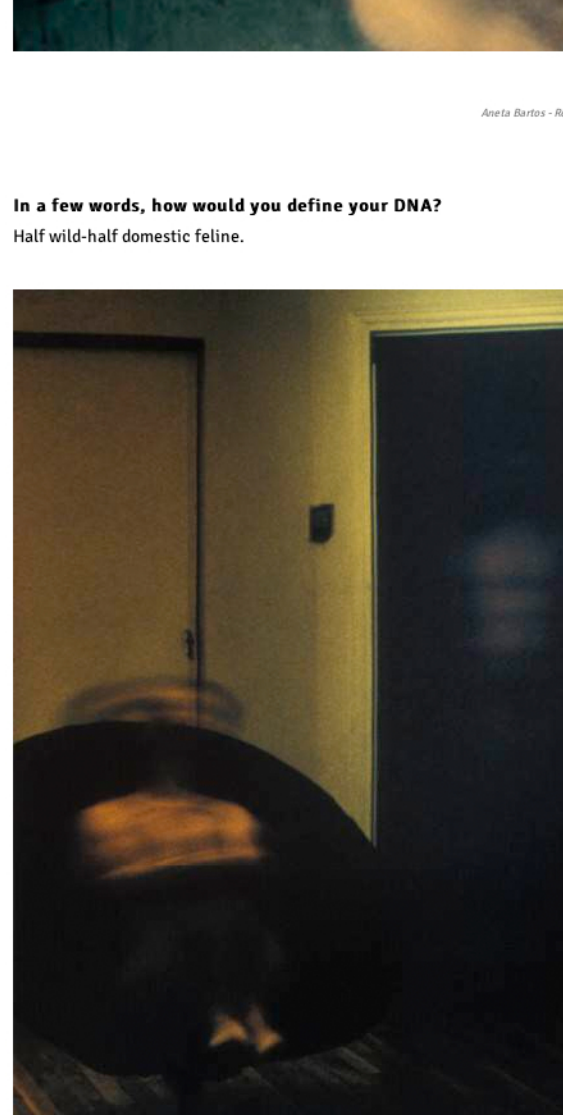
For a long time I never bothered to learn about other artists besides that one taught in school. In a way, I preferred not to be affected by others and share my own style without much influence. In collage I remember loving the romantic and soft images of Julia Margaret Cameron, Rembrandt's fascinating use of light and shadows, the pictorialist photographs of Edward Steichen and beautifully staged as well as the terrifying photos by Joe Postel. In later years, I discovered the commercial nude photos of adolescence girls by David Hamilton and admiring the undeniable talent of Picasso, Klimt, De Kooning, Francis Bacon and Hans Bellmer.



Aneta Bartos, Reclining, 2011

Your work is very pictorial, close to painters' work. Is it a will to give this impression?

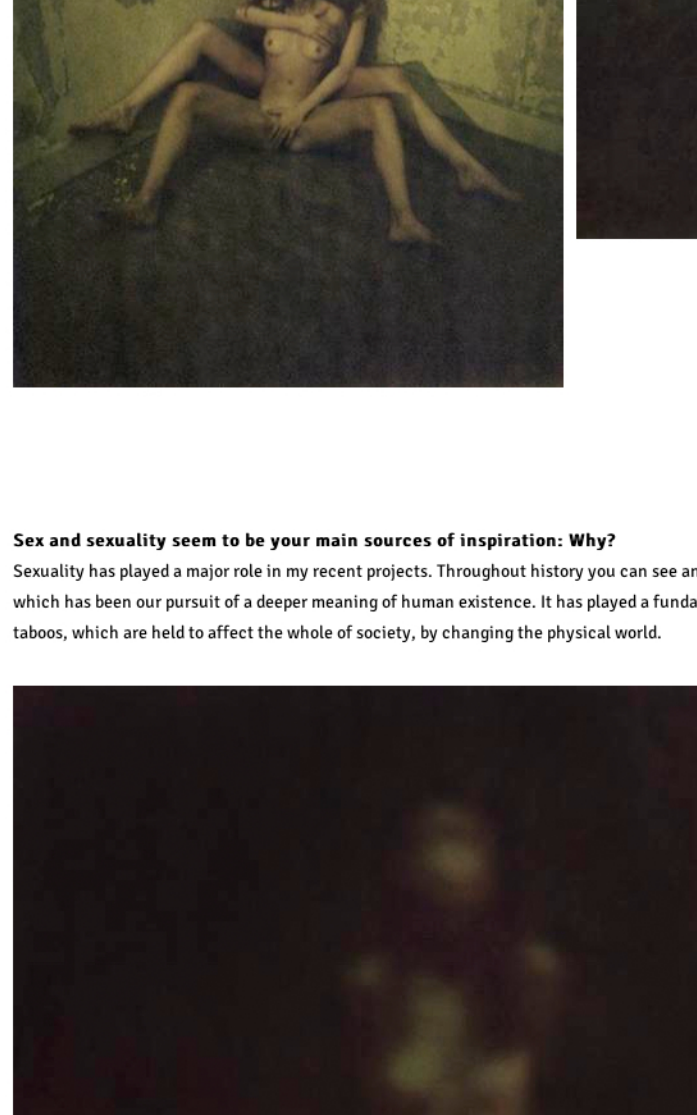
Pictorial quality of a photograph is something I have always been aesthetically drawn to. I have an obvious fascination with the past and it's classical element.



Aneta Bartos, Reclining, 2011

You are a fashion photographer and also an art photographer: how can you match these to ourselves?

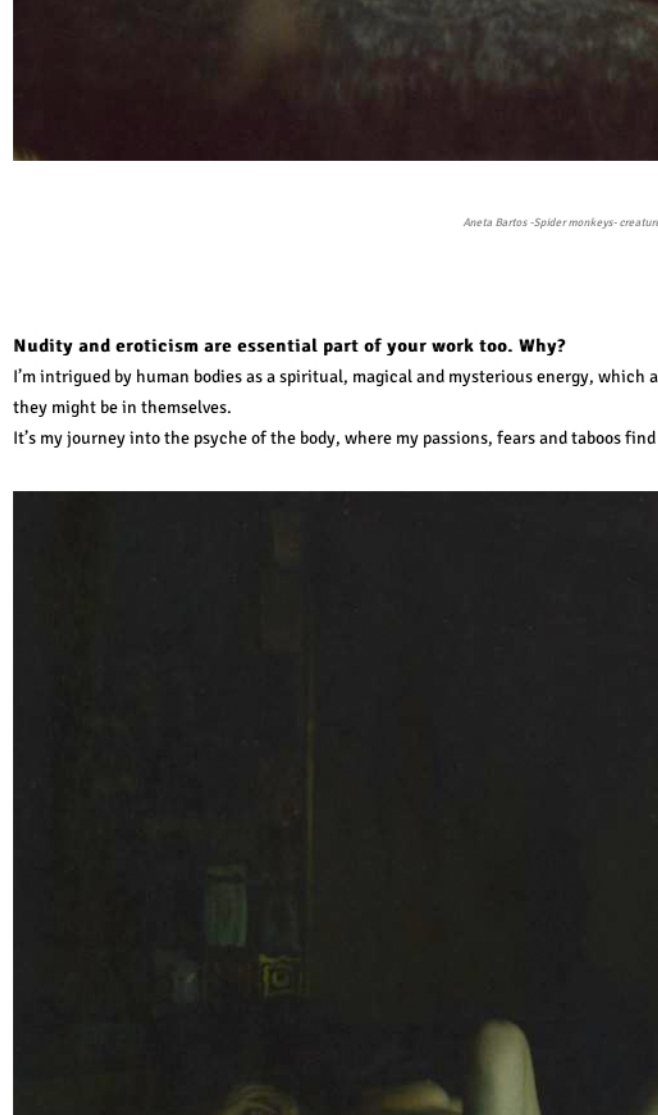
I have always been in both fields, but for the past 2 years I have completely distanced myself from fashion and fully concentrated on my personal projects. I began with fine arts, majoring in photography at the School of Visual Arts. One of my first projects was called "Resurrection". I photographed men and women naked in old, dark environments using long exposures and playing with movement to capture a new reflection of the body's spirit in the moment. Soon after graduating and having tons of school loans and being broke, I was encouraged to shoot models' portraits as a way to make money, which eventually led me to getting involved with fashion. After 8 years I realized I had little interest in commerce and decided to go back to my roots, where I could freely communicate my artistic expression without any boundaries and restrictions imposed to fashion, where I constantly felt limited.



Aneta Bartos, Resurrection, 2011

In a few words, how would you define your DNA?

Half wild-half domestic feline.



Aneta Bartos, Reclining, 2011

What is your art theory?

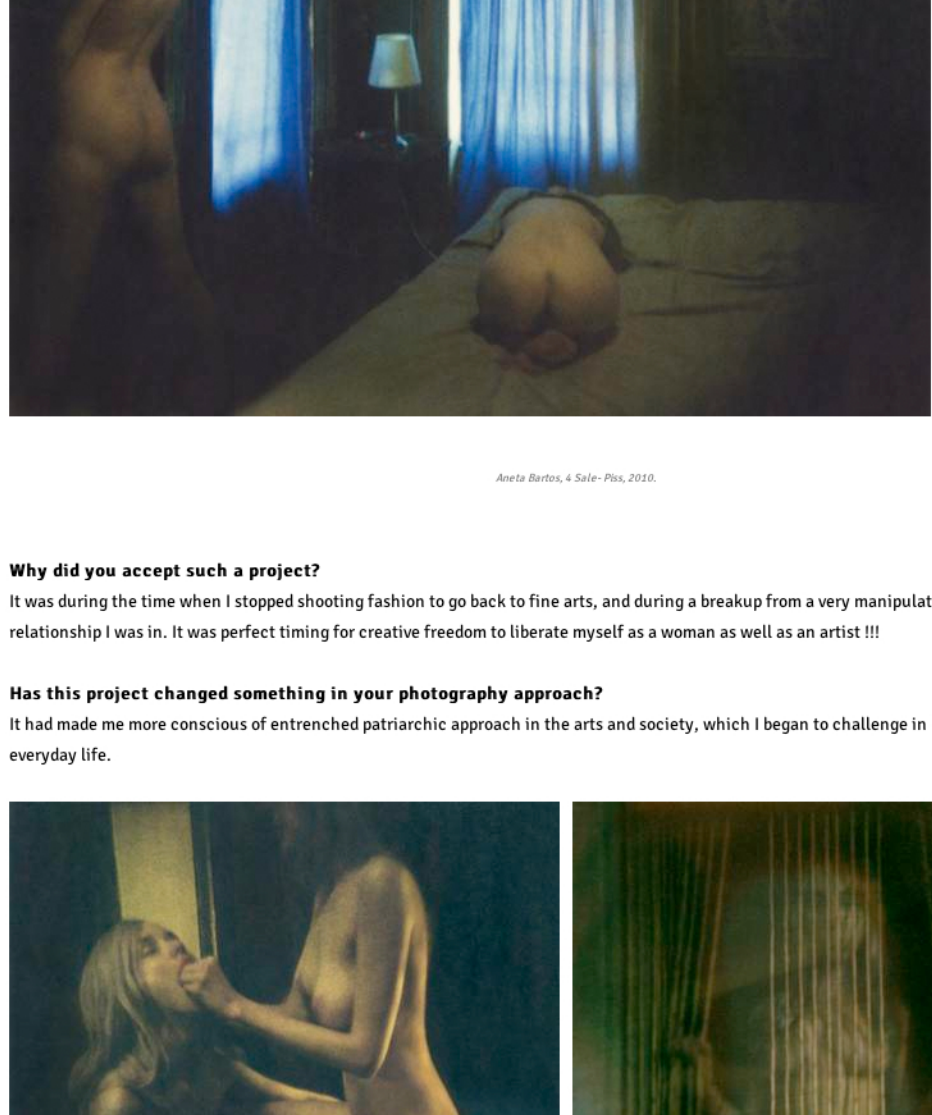
I don't have one.



Aneta Bartos, Reclining, 2011

Sex and sexuality seem to be your main sources of inspiration: Why?

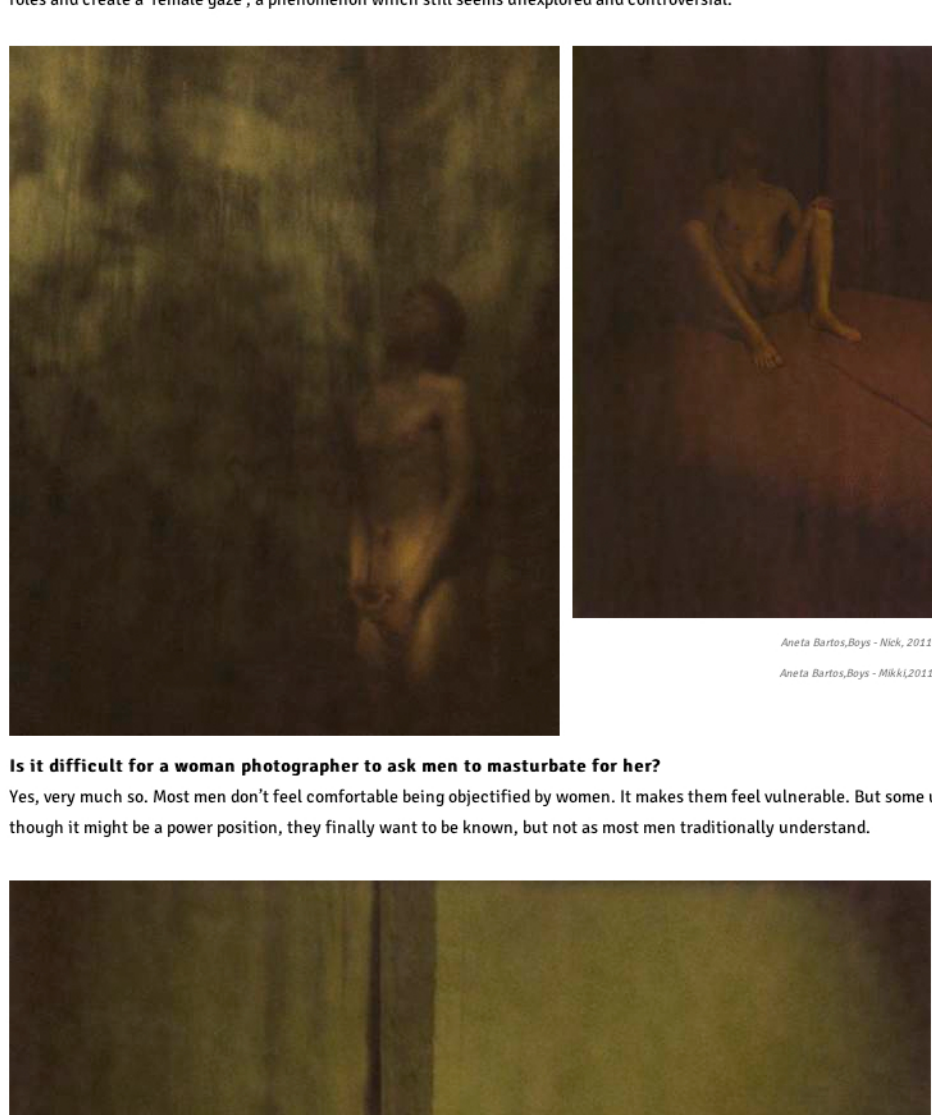
Sexuality has always made a mark in my recent projects. Throughout history you can see an undeniable connection between sex and human spirit, which has been our pursuit of a deeper meaning of human existence. It has played a fundamental role in formations in religions, cultures, and taboos, which are held to affect the whole of society, by changing the physical world.



Aneta Bartos, Reclining, 2011

Nudity and eroticism are essential part of your work too. Why?

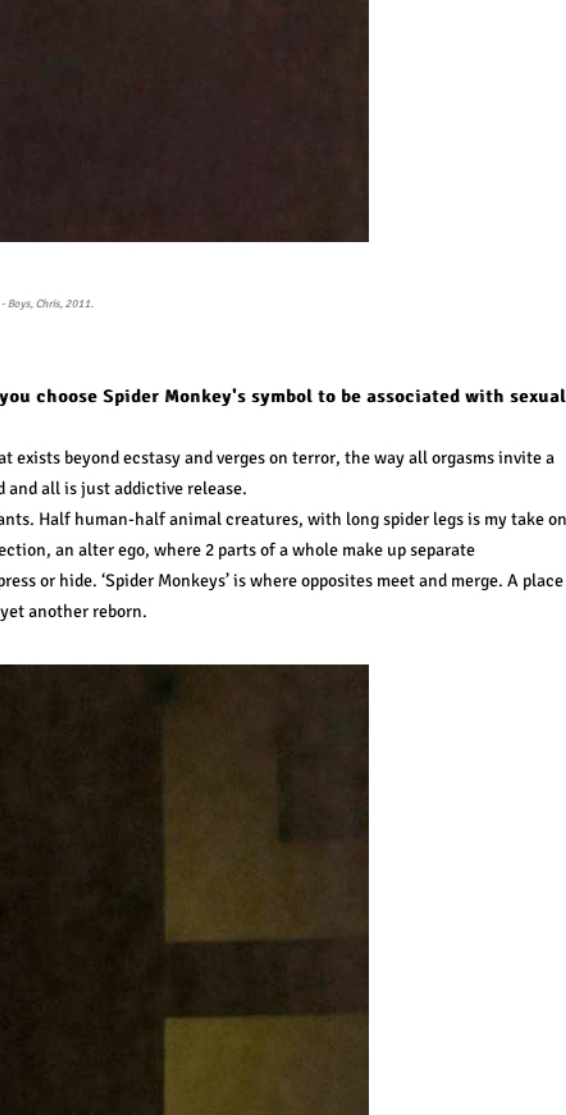
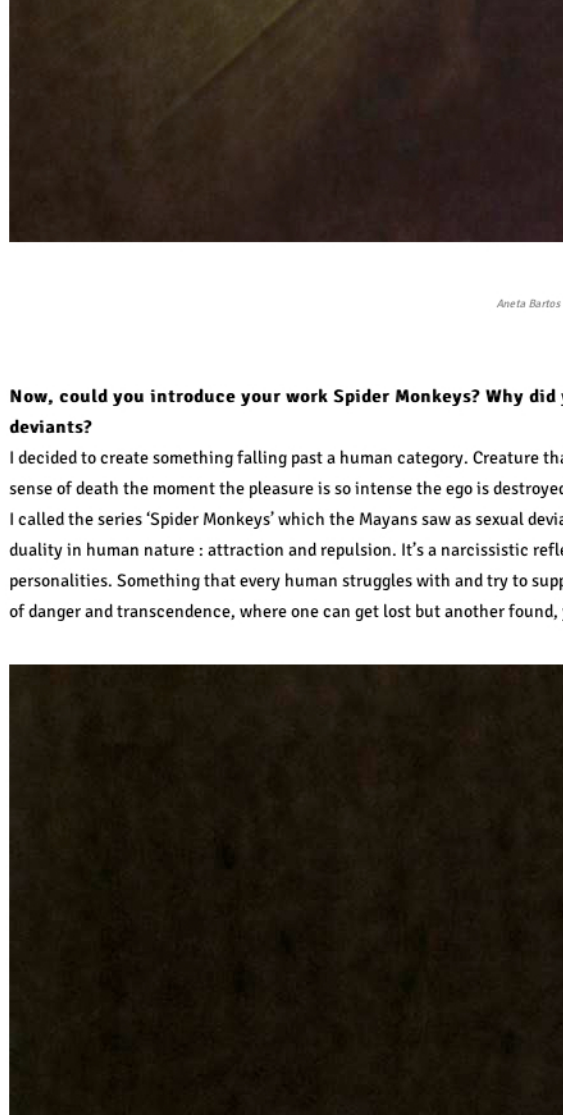
I'm intrigued by human bodies in a spiritual, magical and mysterious energy, which appears to us as a thinking being, but we know nothing of what they might be in themselves. It's my journey into the psyche of the body, where my passions, fears and taboos find it's home.



Aneta Bartos, Reclining, 2011

Your approach is, sometimes, close to voyeurism is it a will?

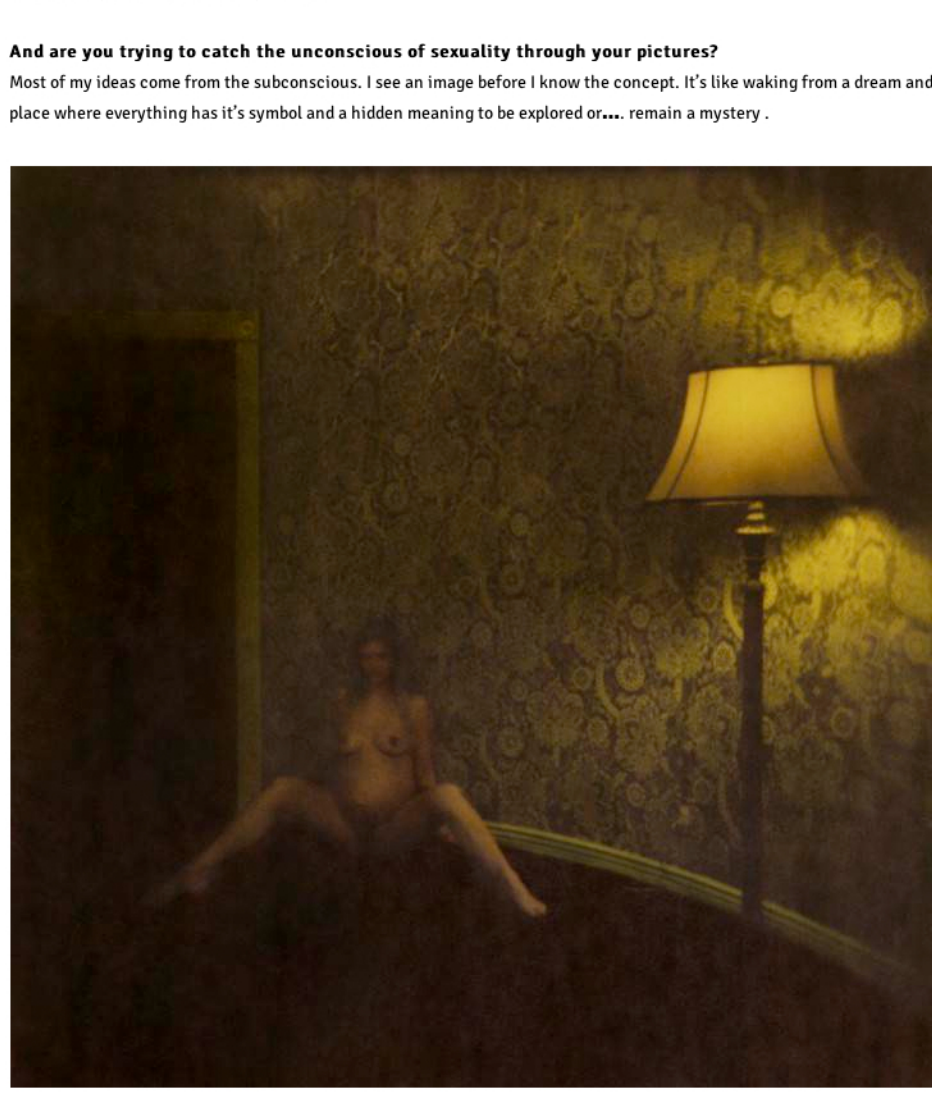
Voyeurism in my own falls much deeper than just simple pleasure of looking. I'm exploring myself through others in a hope to experience something unexplainable and new.



Aneta Bartos, Reclining, 2011

A Solo was a special project where you and 3 other female artists (Martyna Wawrzyniak, Elle Mellarskyh, Yana Taylor) explored the female nature in a psychological and intimate way. Could you please explain on the concept? And Why such a project?

The original concept for a Solo was to explore the rites of exhibitionist and voyeur as well as female sexuality. Each of us wanted to see our own, personal point of view, developing different approach and delivering a unique message. My aim was to open myself up to honesty in exploring my reflections of the peripheries of women in gender politics. I wanted to create self sufficient, sexually and dangerously charged world of females, completely independent of men and their gaze, which is known to have always dominated and ruled the world.



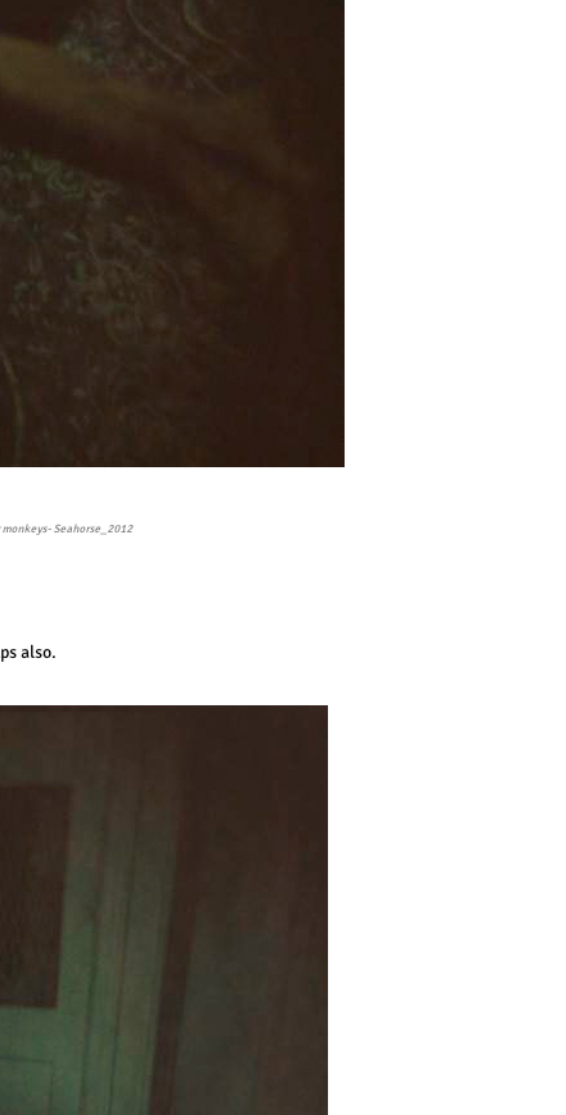
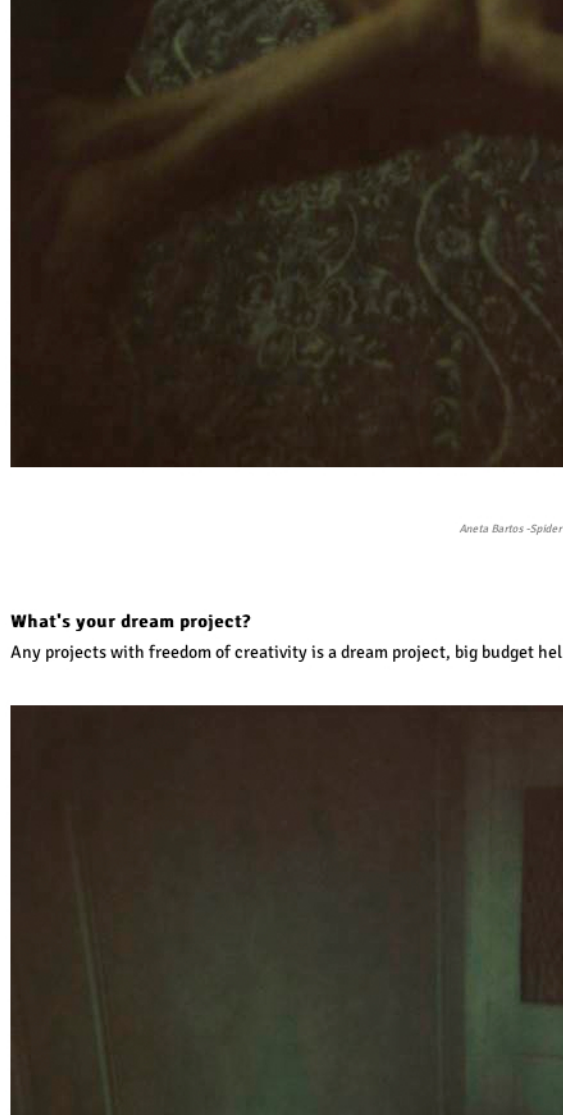
Aneta Bartos, Solo, 2011

Why did you accept such a project?

It was during the time when I stopped shooting fashion to go back to fine arts, and during a break from a very manipulative and controlling relationship I was in. It was perfect timing for creative freedom to liberate myself as a woman as well as an artist!!

Has this project changed something in your photography approach?

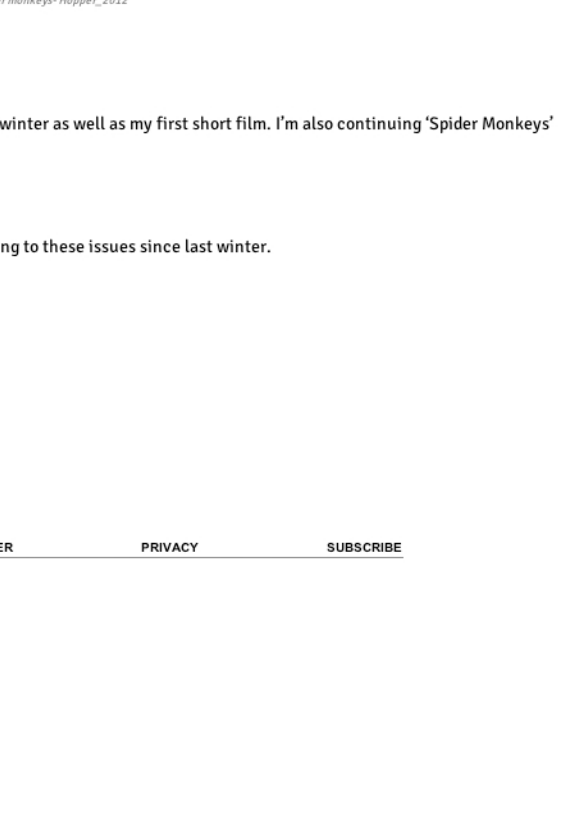
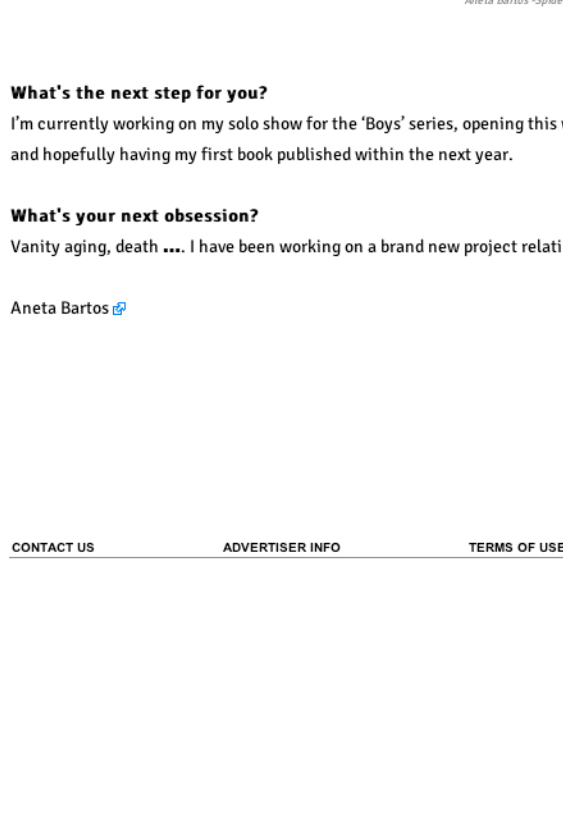
It had made me more conscious of entrenched patriarchal approach in the arts and society, which began to challenge in my work as well as in my everyday life.



Aneta Bartos, Solo, 2011

How, and why did you decide to shoot self-pleasuring men?

In 2010 I decided to go further than exposing female perspective and unlike much feminine dialog that cries out for freedom and equality by means of exposed reflection of insight, I took a step further by grabbing the reins of my expression and "manhandle" the gaze. I wanted to reverse the rites and create a "female gaze", a phenomenon which still seems unexplored and controversial.



Aneta Bartos, Solo, 2011

Is it difficult for a woman photographer to ask men to masturbate for her?

Yes, very much so. Most men don't feel comfortable being objectified by women. But some understand that even though it might be a power position, they finally want to be known, not be most men traditionally understood.

Aneta Bartos, Solo, 2011

Now, could you introduce your work Spider Monkey? Why did you choose Spider Monkey's symbol to be associated with sexual desires?

I decided to create something falling past a human category. Creatures that exist beyond ecstasy and verges on terror, the way all organs inside a sense of death (the moment the pleasure is so intense the ego is destroyed and all is just addictive release. I called the series "Spider Monkey" which the Mayans saw as sexual deities. Half human-half animal creatures, with long spider legs in my take on duality to human nature - attraction and repulsion. It's a narcissistic reflection, an alter ego, where 2 parts of a whole make up separate personalities. Something that every human struggles with and try to suppress or hide. "Spider Monkey" is where opposites meet and merge. A place of danger and transcendence, where one can get lost but another found, yet another reborn.

Aneta Bartos, Spider Monkey, 2011

Spider Monkey, half human half animal creatures, is it a way to flirt conventions?

I think all my recent projects play on that.

And are you trying to catch the unconscious of sexuality through your pictures?

Most of my ideas come from the subconscious. I see an image before I know the concept. It's like waking from a dream and trying to make sense. It's a place where everything has it's symbol and a hidden meaning to be explored. It... remains a mystery.

Aneta Bartos, Spider Monkey, 2011

What's the next step for you?

I'm currently working on my solo show for the "Boys" series, opening this winter as well as my first short film. I'm also continuing "Spider Monkey" and hopefully having my first book published within the next year.

What's your next obsession?

Varying my work... the more I learn the more I want to project and bring to the masses of my art world.

Aneta Bartos @