



# THE PHOTOGRAPHY OF PATRICIA PARINEJAD

Interview by Lulu Berton

*On a brief layover in Manhattan on her way to Venice, Italy, photographer Patricia Parinejad (thanks to her intensive yoga) knows how to catch up with her jet lag. She's been keeping constantly busy working on her upcoming book about Oscar Niemeyer's architectural work. "I am developing an open and fresh floating feminine dialogue in my photographic approach, conceptual — free, sensual and human — investigating form and space in details," she points out while sipping a Yerba Mate green tea. The product of two cultures, German and Persian, Parinejad has published several books with Taschen as both a producer and writer, participated in group and solo exhibitions worldwide, not to mention her well-deserved prize at the Arles photo festival with a conceptual series of digitally manipulated photographs based on children's eyes she captured all across the world. She shows me a series of her outstanding recent photographs featuring the blurring boundaries between art, architecture and design, adding, "Our way of living today is expanded, fragmented, kaleidoscopic, infinite."*



**What drew you into exploring photography as a career?**

I used to be a stylist and worked several years with my ex-partner who was a photographer. His artistry captured my attention to the point that I started shooting myself. I was lucky, as my work got immediately published.

**You have a master's degree in American and English Literature. I assume you are a self-learner in photography.**

Yes. I've learned it all by traveling in all continents and observing the tiniest details in people, landscapes and architecture.

**In developing a strong interest in cutting-edge architecture, you have, in a way, created your own niche as an artist.**

I've always found contemporary architecture to be very fascinating. I love the clean pure lines, the play of light and shadow and juxtaposition of different materials in large-scale buildings. My approach, though, is a very feminine one, exploring buildings in details and in a sensual way.

**I can totally see this unique feminine dialogue in your photographic approach.**

Yes. It's mainly about not being rigid. Being sensual, regarding curves, shapes, colors, details. Embracing the building with the camera, following the lines, contextualizing.

**How exciting. You have an upcoming book about Oscar Niemeyer's architectural work. How did this project come along?**

I wanted to pay homage to this great central figure of Brazilian architectural modernism and the people of his country. I then met a German publisher called Keherer, who does amazing books in the art, architecture and photography fields. They loved my idea and will publish the book, hopefully by the end of this year.





**You are the product of two cultures, Persian and German. What were your childhood and upbringing like?**

I was born in Berlin but grew up in Teheran where I lived with my family and two brothers for 14 years. We then fled the regime in 1979 and went to Germany. After finishing school, I relocated to France for one year working as an au pair first and then as a part-time flight attendant for a German airline. Later on, I moved to the states, and now I divide my time between Berlin and Los Angeles.

**What are the things you enjoy the most in both cities?**

They both have enormous space, are very laid back and offer a relaxed way of living. In L.A., I love the incredible nature one is surrounded with, the car culture and the climate conditions. Of Berlin, I love the amazing creativity and honesty of the people, and, nature-wise, I enjoy the lakes surrounding the city, as they are all swim friendly!

**You certainly are a world traveler. In which other cities have you lived?**

Tons. Teheran, Duesseldorf, Miami, New York, Paris, Hong Kong, Rio de Janeiro, and on the island of Fuerteventura.

**What is it like being a female photographer in a male-dominated industry?**

I see no difference, as there are a lot of females in this business, although it's hard to carry the stuff around. Professional photographers need a fully equipped set of tools.

**You have published several works with Taschen as a producer and writer. How did you end up collaborating with one of the greatest art publishers in the world, and how has that experience influenced your work?**

I have known Angelika and Benedikt Taschen for a long time, and my former husband used to buy comic books in Benedict's store in Cologne. Later on, I met Angelika with my second partner, and we were offered to do a couple of books with them. I was very much influenced by Angelika's vision of modernism.

**What other projects are you currently working on?**

A book on architecture and nature with Jane Glassman founder of ART Team L.A., and some of her people. I will soon be traveling for a series of photo journeys to Naoshima, Japan, Lamu in Kenya, Sri Lanka and Rio de Janeiro.

**You are a yogini. What are the details of your yoga journey?**

I started practicing yoga 20 years ago, diving into the Ashtanga and Bikram styles but did not feel comfortable with any of those. Due to a serious back-pain issue topped with a motorcycle accident that caused me even more back pain, I finally discovered Iyengar yoga. Ever since, I am pain free, much more grounded, and I gained emotional stability. It is a wonderful art, and I am deeply grateful to have it in my life. ■