

Andrea Solanki

Dancer and Photographer



Interview with

ANDREA SOLANKI

Interview conducted by Elke Lina Krüger

How did your early experience in your stepfather's darkroom shape your view of photography?

"In contrast to today's digital photography, the darkroom showed me a different temporal dimension of photography. Images took time to emerge, and that made me realize the value of patience and reflection in photography."

What does your escape from the GDR in 1989 mean to you in terms of your artistic expression? Did this time influence your view of freedom and creativity?

"Probably. It's hard to put it exactly, but every change influences you. You're not always aware of it. It's not necessarily my focus. I was very young in the GDR. It was a very different time. I don't want to compare them. I've always been very creative and never felt limited in that. At most by financial limits. They exist in every system. Finding solutions to problems is living creativity."

You have both photography and oriental dance as passions. How do these two arts influence each other in your creative work?

"Oriental dance has sharpened my sensitivity to shapes and lines in photography. I pay attention to the grace and harmony of movements and want to transfer this aesthetic into my photographic compositions. Oriental dance has also brought me closer to the richness of other cultures and opened it up, which certainly influences my photography. I am inspired by the colors, patterns and stories of the Orient to tell visual stories in my images that reflect different cultures and traditions."



Which moments on stage as a dancer have particularly inspired your photography? Is there a particular performance that has stuck in your memory?

"The last performance in March 2024. "Mytha" in Leverkusen. That was a very special experience, with many touching moments. I was often close to tears, full of happiness."

In your photographs you attach great importance to the small, often unnoticed details. How do you find these magical moments that you want to capture?

"The magical moments in images find me! They are just there! It is often these small elements that are easily overlooked, like the gentle play of light on a surface, a random color composition or the contrast between textures that tell a deeper story."

They help me slow down the moment and look at the scene with fresh eyes, as if it were the first time I was seeing it. By paying attention not only to the obvious, but also to the subtle changes and irregular details, these magical moments emerge. Ultimately, for me, it is about pausing at the right moment and paying attention to the beauty of imperfection and the everyday."

What do you feel when you look through the lens and try to capture the essence of a moment? What makes a moment "magical" for you?

"When I look through the lens, it is like I am immersed in a journey of discovery. It is a mixture of concentration and intuition, almost like a kind of meditation. I am completely in the here and now, time slows down and my gaze focuses on what for me is the essence of this moment."

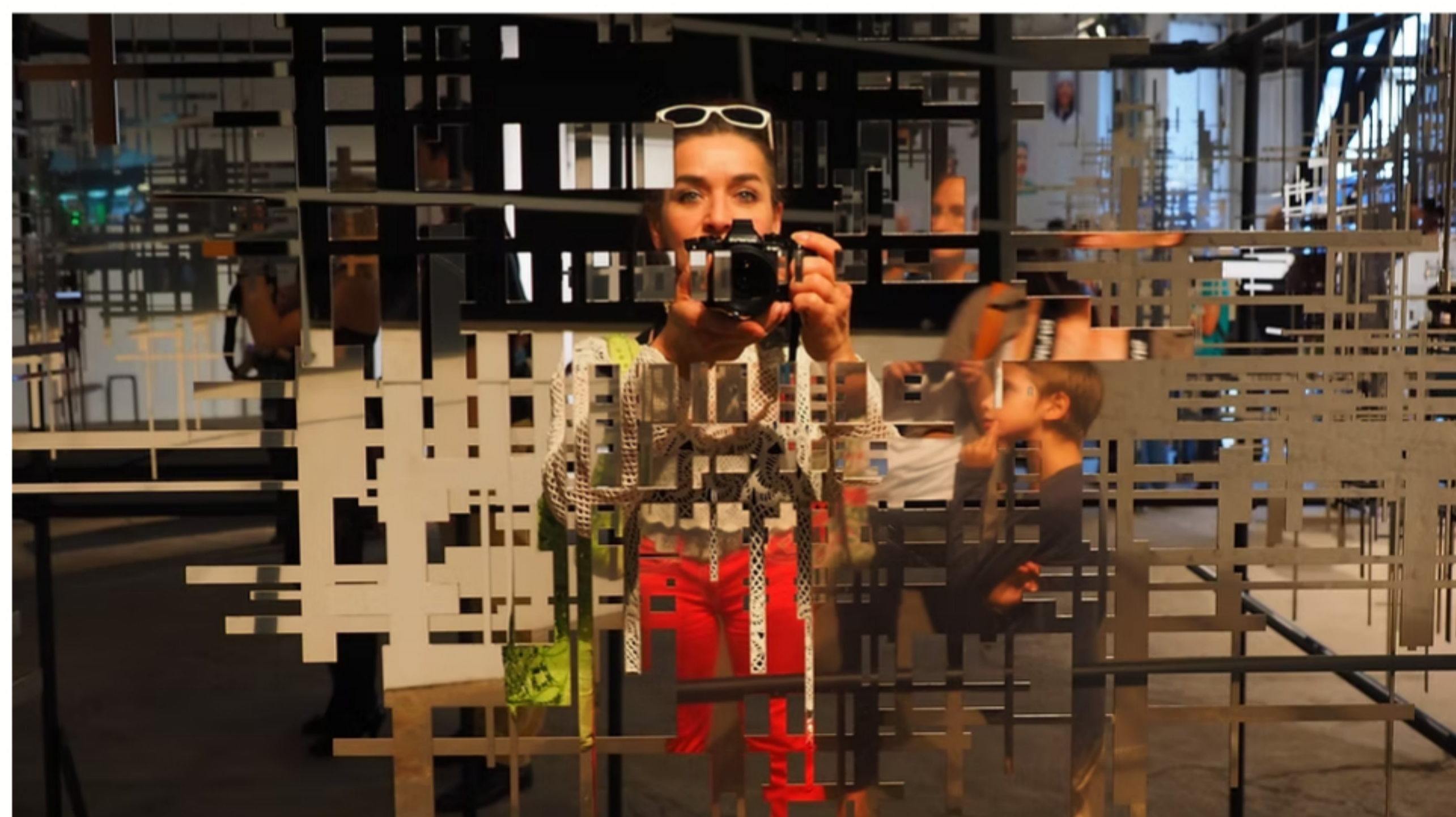
For me, a moment becomes magical when it is more than what is visible on the surface. It can be something quite banal - a random smile, a ray of sunlight falling through a window, or the way the wind moves a loose strand of hair. This magic often arises from a special harmony of light, colors, emotions and an unexpected, perhaps even fleeting beauty. It is this brief moment in which everything comes together and a deeper meaning becomes visible."

The "Lotus Garden" reflects a world full of colors and sensuality. How did this creative experience with Nasrah Nefer influence your photographic work?

"This phase encouraged me to use my own imagination more freely and to make the boundaries between reality and fantasy more fluid. Photographic moments became canvases on which the invisible became visible - a combination of sensuality, intuition and artistic expression."

What was the decisive moment for you when you knew you wanted to make photography your life's path?

"It was less a single event than a gradual, deep sense of fulfillment that developed over time. There was one particular moment, however, that brought me this clarity: when I looked at one of my early photographs and realized that I had captured an emotion that I could not put into words, but that was still palpable. In that moment, I recognized the aim of photography is to make the invisible visible - feelings, moods and stories that lie beyond the surface. And when I saw how people reacted to my pictures and found something of their own in them. I saw that I could touch people with my art. A gift for which I am infinitely grateful."



How has your experience as a mother changed your view of the beauty of life, and is this reflected in your photographs?

"I perceive the world with greater gratitude for the small, often fleeting moments - the way children look at the world with curiosity and wonder has helped me to capture this freshness and innocence in my photography."

In my photos I try to preserve the tenderness and fragility of these moments, be it a spontaneous laugh, a hug or playful interaction with the environment. I have learned to see beauty not only in big, dramatic scenes, but in the simple, everyday moments that pass quickly and are often overlooked. These subtle, intimate moments carry a special magic that I also want to convey in my photographs."

Your collaboration with André Elbing at international dance events began this year. What motivated you to work with him, and how does this partnership influence your photography?

"Working with André Elbing at international dance events is a natural and exciting extension of my photographic work. What particularly motivated me to work with him was his many years of experience and expertise in the field of dance photography and his ability to capture the dynamics and emotions of the dancers in a unique way. The world of dance has always fascinated me because it is full of movement, expression and intense emotions. André has an incredible sense of capturing these moments in a split second and that inspired me. I wanted to learn from him how to capture the energy and fleeting movements in a way that reflects the essence of dance. This partnership influenced my photography in several ways. Firstly, it deepened my understanding of timing and movement. Dance is often about pressing the shutter at the perfect moment when the movements and expression are at their most intense. I learned to react to these moments faster and more intuitively. Secondly, the collaboration inspired me to work more creatively with light and shadow. Dance is a very visual art form, and the play of light on the dancers' bodies opens up an incredible range of possibilities to influence emotion and underline movement. These experiences have enriched my photographic style by paying more attention to the interaction between light, movement and space. Ultimately, this partnership is a fruitful symbiosis: André brings his experience and technique, while I bring my own creative perspective and sensitivity to detail. Together we manage to visualize the art of dance in a way that captures both the power of movement and the emotional depth of the dancers."

You said that you want to freeze time in your photos. Is there a particular moment you would like to capture forever? "Every!!!"

What would you like people to feel or experience when they look at your photographs? What emotions do you want to evoke and share with your art?

"I hope that my art evokes a mixture of calm, wonder and perhaps even nostalgia in the viewer. I want to show everyday life in all its quiet magic, to give a special meaning to the moments that we often take for granted. At the same time, I want to evoke and share feelings such as joy, love or a certain melancholy that makes you feel the transience of the moment."

