

Ya pu no ye n'do no - the rejected daughter 2019

Translated from Twi, "We have rejected her, we don't love her"

I met Azimi on the streets of Kaneshie in Accra, Ghana in 2018. I ran up to her to tell her I found her beautiful, but with a distant gaze she replied "I am not beautiful". We met again after negotiations with her aunts to arrange a photoshoot. Since people with albinism are hunted and killed for spiritual rituals mostly in the west and east of Africa, they were protective over what my intentions were. This was the first time her portrait was to be taken. Azimi is not protected by the sun, and could hardly open her eyes.

"How can I be deemed a misfortune for my family, but still be chased as a holy entity in rituals?"

People with albinism are hunted for the sole reason that they are perceived as supernatural beings. An albino finger in rituals is believed to give access to prosperity, an albino arm for connection with a person of distance, an eye for clarity, or a body to cleanse oneself from one's sins.

In my project, I wanted to correlate our personal stories of belonging and rejection from family and society, which refers to the title of the project. I wanted to create a safe place for her, to see herself in another space and light, where she is holy by herself detached from the spiritual and harmful beliefs associated with her skin. In respect of her religion, at Nima market, I bought her a headscarf and a white kaftan, and I picked flowers and plants from my mother's garden. We found a sacred fundament for our relief of damning stories on identity and the need to belong. In the portraits of Azimi, she is safe and reclaims her own image. I wanted to shed light on her being. Azimi saw her portraits and said, "I look like an angel". The project consists of 3 images.