

## Thought-Provoking Photographs Depict Female Faces of Freedom

 J'aime 5

By – [Aimée Horwich](#)

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A brand new exhibition, opening in London next month, will explore the relationship between freedom, beauty and the hijab.

Azeri artist, Alexandra Kremer-Khomassouridze's Faces of Freedom photographic series, depicts 50 women from around the world – from different nationalities, backgrounds and professions – and explores their perception of identity in relation to wearing the hijab.



The fascinating, black and white exhibition, which portrays the women in their own clothes and then wearing a hijab, opens at Asia House on 3 February and runs as part of London's second Buta Festival – a celebration of Azerbaijani arts and culture.

Curated by Farah Pirieva, the photographs explore the veil, which has become a hot topic of international debate and controversy. Kremer-Khomassouridze's work embraces the complexity of the issue and the before and after-type images are moving and intimate.

Alexandra said: "No one left my studio the same. Our conversations had a lasting effect on each of the ladies. The complexity of the process was amazing. Some of my models cried and claimed never to wear a hijab again, others responded exactly the opposite, telling me, that they always will."



The international photographer, who left Azerbaijan in 1989, was inspired to capture the photographs upon returning to the country's capital, Baku, in 2011.

"When I left Azerbaijan the hijab was in decline, particularly among younger women who preferred to wear jeans and mini skirts as a sign that they were embracing a new ideology of multiculturalism.



"When I returned, I was astonished to see young Azeri women choosing to wear the hijab again. I felt like I had discovered a new Baku, full of interesting contrasts where freedom could look different to different people. Faces of Freedom, is my way of interpreting and exploring these differences – the freedom to wear a hijab and the freedom not to wear it."

Faces of Freedom runs at Asia House from the 3- 15 February 2015.

The 2015 Buta Festival provides a window to the Azeri Arts in London, offering unique insights into a country that is arousing our curiosity. For further information about the festival, visit [www.butafestival.com](http://www.butafestival.com). Updates about all things Buta can be found on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram – butafestival.

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