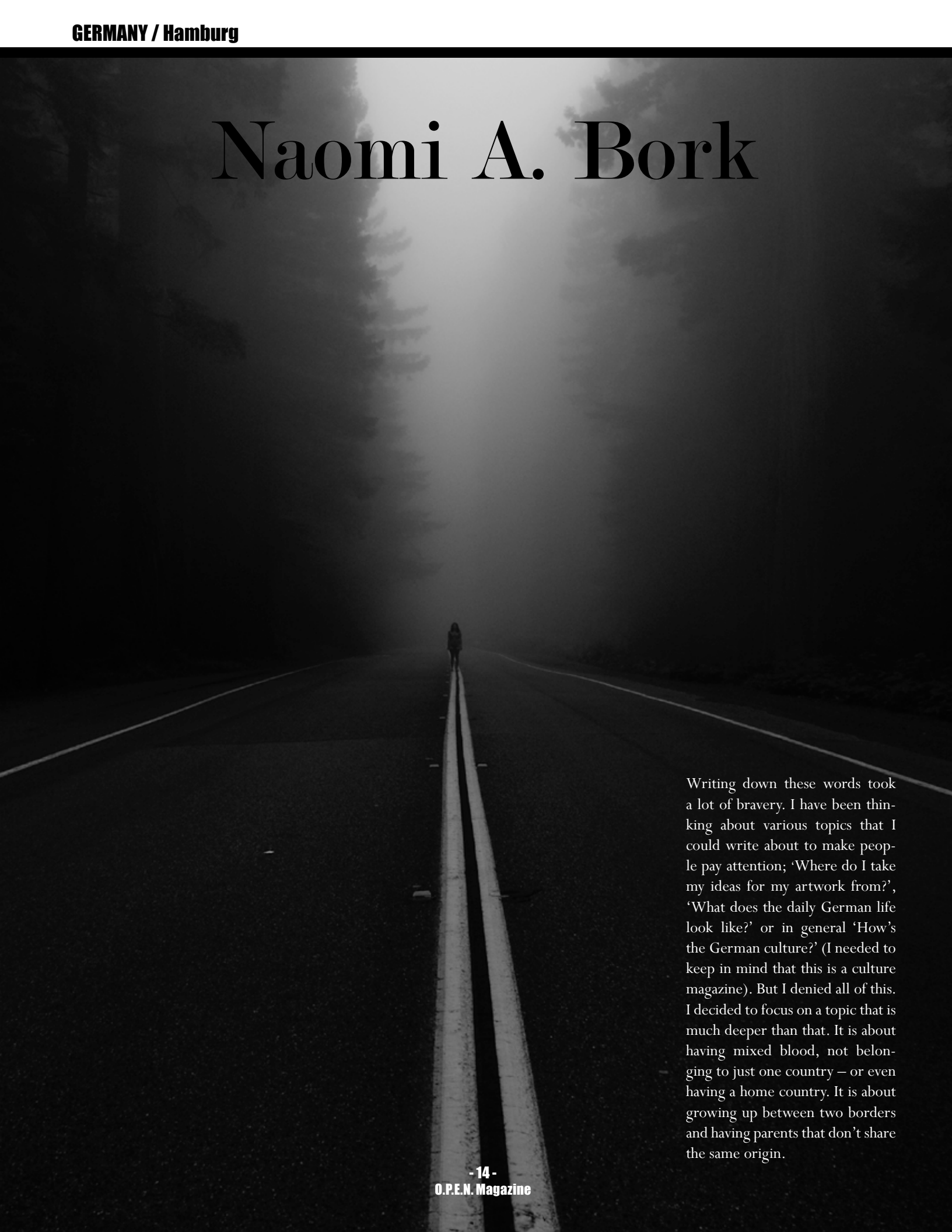


# Naomi A. Bork



Writing down these words took a lot of bravery. I have been thinking about various topics that I could write about to make people pay attention; ‘Where do I take my ideas for my artwork from?’, ‘What does the daily German life look like?’ or in general ‘How’s the German culture?’ (I needed to keep in mind that this is a culture magazine). But I denied all of this. I decided to focus on a topic that is much deeper than that. It is about having mixed blood, not belonging to just one country – or even having a home country. It is about growing up between two borders and having parents that don’t share the same origin.

*You probably think now 'God, please, not another article about hispanics that feel discriminated.' If you do, you are wrong.*

*But let me start from the beginning:*

I was born in Guadalajara, Mexico. My Dad is Mexican, my Mom is German. I grew up in the Mexican culture until my Mom and I left Mexico and went to Germany. This is the point when your prejudice against this story starts failing cause this is not another 'Chicano Story'.

I forgot Spanish. I grew up like every other German kid. When people heard that I am from Mexico, they were thrilled cause in that town Latinos were rare. I didn't share this feeling, I didn't even understand it. In my eyes I was German, no big deal.

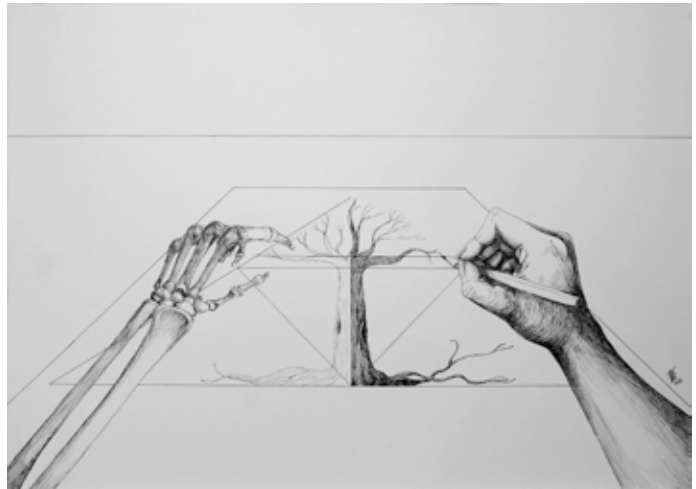
Things started changing in the age of around 14 when I started roaming around in the internet. It's the typical age when teenager start asking about their roots. I got to know other Latinos and experienced their lifestyle and way of thinking, which (I hate myself for writing that, but I want to be honest) included attitudes like 'The Mexican culture is the best, all other ethnies are less worth' and bullshit like that. I was deeply impressed, I felt as if I found a community that I belonged to. But there was one huge problem: My missing Spanish. I could speak it, but not fluently.

My head got so brainwashed that there were even days that I felt hatred towards my Mom because she stopped speaking Spanish with me when we moved. I couldn't see that we left Mexico for a better life. To me we had left the only country that I really belonged to.

I was all up in this Mexican or Chicano stuff. You can absolutely say that my opinion became kind of derogative about Germans. Or about any other culture in general that is not Latin. I buried myself in the imagination of a perfect world going on in America. There was even a time that I seriously considered to go back to Mexico because I couldn't stand it anymore.

Until now it sounds like the story of a Mexican that recovers her culture. But as I already mentioned, I am not a full Mexican. And Mexicans made me feel it several times more. You have no idea how often I got to hear that I am not Mexican because I don't speak Spanish fluently nor even have an accent. It felt like hell. I was torn between two cultures that both didn't seem to be a shelter for me. Making this experience especially in a time when teenagers needs to know where he/she belonged can be the worst feeling.

I can't remember when I got rid of that craving for a decision between those two cultures. It might have been the fact that I broke the ties to the majority of my Latin circle of friends or simply the growing up of a stupid mind of a child. But I remember that I once wrote about Being Mex-German. It was about making the best out of those two cultures. Not a lot of people can suggest that they know two cultures as well as 'mixed people' do. (Right now I have to think of the 'Being Mex-American Interlude' by the Delinquent Habits, (I love them for adopting this issue). That was also the point when art became my cultural home. The most of you probably don't know that I used to



'Co-Drawer', ink 23.4x16.5"

draw or paint typical Mexican motifs only. It was because of melancholy, a scream for something that I felt that was missing inside of me. It's been like a year now that I stopped picking only that kind of motifs. They still touch me but I went on. I found my place in life AND culture. I will never belong to just one country and I respect it like that. Though I still wish this realization would have hit my mind earlier.



'Last Dedication', oil 16.3x19.8"





My friend and artist Jesse aka INKtellekt/PsykoINK



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New York City (right: Egyptian demonstration against the murder of Christians in Egypt)



I would like to mention as a sidenote that my Mom and I came to Germany with empty hands. We had that typical life of a single mother and her child. I remember sitting in the Kindergarten's entrance, waiting for her to pick me up and watching the sunset. I was often one of the last kids that got picked up. Writing these words still make me cry but not because of sadness. Not at all. I could never put into words how proud I am of what my mother has reached in life. By now we have a better standard of living than a lot of other families that I know. I appreciate that to the fullest. It is only because of her hard work and support I was even able to make it this far. You could pretty much say that the biggest part of my motivation is to show her that it was all worth it and that I am able to use her support to make it. Not only because of that I dedicate every piece I create to her.



One of my favorite musicians: Rapper Sadistik