

Real/Imagined Self Portrait

Photographing yourself in different personas

Overview:

You will create photographs of yourself that hint at both the objective “truth” of who you are and also create images in fictional personas.

Detail:

In this assignment you will be experimenting with portraiture, using an ever-present subject – yourself – and creating images that hint at what you feel you truly are, as well as fictional representations of yourself. In previous assignments, we have been investigating how photography might or might not be an objective record of reality, and how simple changes (vantage point, selective focus, signifiers, etc) can alter the perception of the subject.

The first part of this assignment is fairly straightforward: to create 10+ images in what you feel is an accurate representation of who you are. Do feel you are serious, studious, fun loving, intelligent, passionate, or quiet and reserved? However you define yourself, create 10 images that through the use of signs/signifiers and posing, accurately represent how you define yourself.

The second part of this assignment is perhaps less straightforward. You will create 10+ images that widely (and wildly) diverge from your definition of yourself.

Whether for the sake of illustrating a point, concept, or for fun, artists have often photographed themselves in different guises and personas in an attempt to tap into the archetypal schizophrenia of the ego and the fantasyland where creativity resides. Your end goal is to transform yourself into a being which is perhaps mundane, glamorous, or otherworldly – in short, to hug the line of familiarity and fiction.

Inspiration (you need to know the following individuals and be able to identify the photographs associated with them, via Google, as there will be a quiz on these artists):

- **Countess de Castiglione** – Her photos from the 1850s to 1890s.
- **Joan Fontcuberta** (his Sputnik series)
- **Anthony Goicolea**
- **Cindy Sherman** (all of her work)
- **Tomoko Sawada**
- **Jen Davis**
- **Robert Parke-Harrison**
- **Teun Hocks (Parke-Harrison’s inspiration)**
- **Yasumasa Morimura**
- **Nikki Lee** (needless to say, the *photographer* not the soft-core pinup mode of the same name!)

Purpose:

As your first fully creative photographic assignment, my hope is for you to start to think about creating a photographic environment, staging yourself in this environment, and practicing your new skills photographing and processing RAW images.

Assignment:

Shoot at least ten completely different setups of yourself in your “truthful” persona, and at least ten in various fictional personas. Process all 20 images.

Naming convention:

2674_selfportrait_lastname_real_xx.--- (xx = 01-10)

2674_selfportrait_lastname_fake_xx.--- (xx = 01-10)

-> *Example* (if I was using a canon camera and I was submitting my “real” photos):

2674_selfportrait_chalmers_real_01.cr2

2674_selfportrait_chalmers_real_01.xmp

>>> ALL 20 FILES WILL GO INTO A FOLDER TITLED “2671_selfportrait_lastname”

Grading:

Your grade will be based upon the tableau you create, how much energy and creativity is demonstrated, how well you fit in this tableau, and your skill at making and processing the RAW files.