

## **Module: Personal Philosophies (ADAA5004) Report**

**Student ID: 2207486**

**Name: Jay Kirby**

The Project began with the foundation of gender dysphoria, this on its own is broad subject, so the project ended up becoming a personal one. The book forms its narrative through the variation of imagery presented visually, The books foundation being focused on dysphoria contextualises growth and regrowth in bizarre and provocative ways which is not always associated as the embodiment of. The reason behind this was looking into the way a gender dysphoria patient looks and combats alien biology without medical intervention. The imagery is aimed to look uncomfortable at times, beautiful and fun, ultimately exploring gender is liberating and fun at times and trying to include that in my book is important as well as the suffocating side.

My initial research consisted of looking into successfully produced photobooks, where Raymond meeks's work spoke out to me as beautiful and personal, upon completion of his success in photo book form I found his work to be tied to time and place which left me thinking about documenting the body in its current state without much altered stylisation for the camera. This is partly why my image became provocative by default. I also looked into the recent history of trans women and the strange fluctuations in accounts from 60s to 80s privilege and discriminations through the internet's reputable sources and documented first hand accounts. Here I learned that the public perception at the time was constructed by culture and trends. When the aids crisis was at its height trans acceptance was arguably at its lowest but in the 60s when the notion of a medical transition became somewhat accessible for the first time one lady was able to become a celebrity and media seemed to be positive about the trans woman. This research led me to compare to the hardship that trans people face in Swansea today as graffiti hate crime aimed at trans people and hate crime towards LGBT art has been well documented and to go back to the point about crisis, the world today is becoming more hostile as we seem to be heading out of a golden age of development in western culture/politics and trans rights are decreasing linking to times of crisis and minorities being the first to suffer in context of rights.

My first imagery consisted of photoshop editing, double exposing and playing with aperture percentage as well as playing with the layout of two images into one. I utilised the studio in my image making process, I

used two soft boxes for a full body photoshoot utilising the new studio lighting. I then also used a domestic setting for my image making process using a Godox flash to capture movement and to brighten the subject. I would suggest that I developed my studio work the most, as I felt comfortable in the studio and had a clear understanding of how to utilise the lighting to create the images I had envisioned. My aims when focusing on LGBT art is about trying to capture kitsch, fetishism and thought out studio work and combining them as much as I can to capture a rich image with undertones that exist to the spectator.

My imagery was made in a span of seven to ten days and my finished products came out varied which married with the exploration of gender that I wanted to communicate in the book making process. How to layout these images where to be key to making a successful page turner, as well as a form of abstract documentation of the body in this moment of time. Luckily this variation I believed to be a valuable tool and it helped articulate these images together as a collective and to allow the images to dictate their position and size on the page rather than me trying to make sense for images position and size on the page. I made my book on the book wright application available with Blurb the book making and publication website. It was simple to use and it utilised a drag and drop website that even warns you when your images are altered in app in a way that would harm quality. I decided from the development of my mock ups that sporadic and playful positioning of my images would be best in its presentation to communicate the confusing, fluctuating and personal dealings with gender in a playful manner. This allowed me to play with all parts of a page spread from page to page I.E negative space creating jarring and juxtaposing relationships with presented images on a spread to the viewer.

All these images represent a struggle with gender, however I feel these images in a bizarre way present gender dysphoria in a bizarre yet positive light which I believe is important. I don't want to publish a book on dysphoria and make it objectively negative. This is why I wanted to steer away from black and white images and sprinkle kitsch aesthetic and playful composition into the book. It also makes my imagery relevant to contemporary art and in turn contemporary culture, as we to a degree stereotype LGBT culture with colour.

In conclusion as a finished product I am not satisfied with the book but I'm not dissatisfied, I think there are several images maybe four in total that I do not think are up to finished product standard, and I needed to reshoot them in a studio to get the technical aspects nailed however I can find poetry in capturing a imperfect body in a domestic setting and ending up with a imperfect image. As for the book I am slightly frustrated blurb did not let me fill a page entirely which has left borders to the front cover and the double page spread image. However one lecturer didn't say it was a big issue. I'm content with the playful nature

of the book and the variation of imagery made in a short period even though it was a big challenge rather than just committing to a formula.