

When beginning the project assignment 'Developing a unique voice' my intuition told me to venture into the world of exploration in identity and self expression in particularly within sexuality. Being a gay male the world of sexuality and identity seems to be an inescapable one, always the first to call when a question of someones self arises and the last to know about my own identity. As a proud member of the LGBTQIA+ community I have always been happy to explain and delve into the psyche of self expression and sexuality to those who ask. However, this has left me in the awkward position of being the coach in the game of life rather than a player on the team. In this project I wanted to explore the world of self expression starting with myself.

Cindy Sherman was the first artist in this project to really stand out to me. As an artist she made me challenge my own perception of femininity and how I may represent that. As a man, my ideology of femininity has been shaped by patriarchal figures in my life such as my father, grandfather and uncle. These one sided perceptions of femininity stem from misogynistic and sexist stereotypes, while these men in my life are not overtly sexist to their female counterparts. Traditionalist sexism ideals of women have



been socially conditioned into their

ideology from a young age and passed onto myself.

Cindy Sherman's use of sexually aggressive stereotypes and humorous depictions of the scrutiny women inspired me to present femininity in a similar way.



Zanele Muholi uses their harsh flash photography style to create powerful and strong images. These images ,reinforced by the flash aesthetic, creates a sense of exposure that conveys an unmasking of

truth. This exposing quality of flash photography is something that I aspired to create in my images. Muholi is a gender non-binary photographer that explores their relationship with gender as well as their relationship with their birth place South Africa and the apartheid that they had experienced in their childhood.

Cathreine Opie was my final artist that intrigued me most. In Catherine Opie's 'cutting' she expresses her longing for a normal family, or rather fitting in. She carves in her back what she most desires, a house belonging to two women living happily. While this goal is not physically unattainable. The idea of normality and respect that the image would have if the characters were male and female is much different to that of two women. Not only do they face the everyday, ever growing lack of acceptance in sexuality from her peers but also the daily misogyny that holds so many women captive. Opie doesn't long for a house, she longs for the idea of acceptance, ease and happiness, all foreign concepts in a world that distastes your very being. This harsh and depressing



subject matter combined with the gruesome image conveys an overwhelming sense of dread and unease. While this feeling was not something that I had wanted to create in my own work. The resonating tone of Opie's image was something that I aspired to create.

In conclusion, each aspect of my research in Self Identity, Alternative Identity and Subversive Identity had artists that made me question my own code of morals and ethics as an artist. I believe it is always important to challenge yourself in order to stay fresh and ever changing. Staleness leads to obsolescence and obsolescence has no place in a world of change. These artists allowed me to grow within my own practice and seek out new subject matters discussed in my research and curative narrative.

