

2021/2022

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**Dream Analysis, Self-Portraiture, and the
process of Individuation, in the light of
Female Identity / Project**

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Project presented to The IADE - Faculty of Design,
Technology and Communication of the European University,
to meet the requirements necessary to obtain the degree of
Master in Visual Design under the scientific guidance of the
Doctor Filipe Figueiredo, PhD of the Artistic Studies.

Keywords

Self-portraiture, Therapeutic Photography, Dream analysis, Performance for the Camera, Analytical psychology.

Abstract

In this visual culture project where different fields of study are merged - from psychology to photography and performance project, the objective of the researcher is to uncover her own identity as a woman and photographer by producing a series of photographic self-portraits that seek to develop her identity and empowerment as a female artist. Through reflecting on her inner creative drive as an artist and submerging herself into the study of Jungian dream analysis and therapeutic photography practices, while focusing on expressing herself through performance for the camera, the researcher seeks to explore the realm of her own dreams in order to generate a self-understanding that will lead to the process of individuation, female empowerment, and true identity. The account of this practice of visual and performative self-portraiture can provide others with an entrusted methodology of creative investigation that aids to find one's true identity and self.

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Introduction:

This project was created to examine the complexity of photographic self-portraiture as a reflective practice and assess its value as a method of investigation. It is supported with empirical evidence observed by me as a photographer and by other scientific and photographic means.

This dream analysis and self-portraiture process that aids in the search for finding one's identity is a practice with truly empowering methodology. I would like this method to be available for any individual who seeks awareness and development of their true self. Especially for those who may possibly resonate with my deepest passion for photography and self-knowledge.

I was always drawn to creating portraits of myself when I was younger. It was a deeply explorative journey for me as a young adult when I had my first camera which was a bridge one - a Panasonic DMC 100. It was not a single lens reflex, but it had a Leica lens, so I was very excited to see what I could conjure up with it. With my deep interest in photography, fashion, art, and film, I was inspired by many fashion photographers like Helmut Newton that portrayed women in a very strong and empowering way. I wanted to see myself like that already when I was very young. So, I started to create self-portraits of myself. I tried all the different modes on the camera seeking to find what fits best with my vision. My passion for photography and self-portraiture grew over the next few years when I was studying psychology. The insight of psychology into the world of photography gave more ideas for myself and others in my photography. In the next few years I decided to get my master's in visual design and photography. During the master I have come across self-portraiture as a therapeutic photography process, and that created so much drive to create something of my own in this genre.

The idea for this project came to me during another assignment in self-portraiture. I was creating self-portraits for a photography class and after the whole process I started to think that this is most interesting: the world of self-portraits and how they can be used for understanding yourself. I was always very interested in knowing myself as a woman and as an artist. I started to research the topic more and I found therapeutic photography as a scientific domain. All of this was coming together in my mind and then I thought/started asking myself; what can/could I bring into this therapeutic self-portraiture world? And I realized the answer was/could be in my other line of studies: Psychology, and, particularly, the theories of Carl Gustav Jung and his dream

analysis. Analytical psychology was one of my main interests while studying for my psychology master. I was always fascinated by the theories based on ancient knowledge that bring true awareness to ourselves. I wanted to use that knowledge the best way I can and bring it into the process of self-portraiture and therapeutic photography.

While investigating the world of Analytical dream analysis I came across Carl G. Jung's theory of individuation. This brought me to think more about the goal of the research I would like to create. The process of individuation is when a person becomes their true self, a pure version of what they are meant to be driven by their collective unconscious. Jung claimed that this can be achieved through listening and understanding your unconscious. This can be done with the means of dream analysis.

From then on, I was researching Analytical dream analysis and therapeutic photography with an emphasis on self-portraiture and female artists, as I wanted to understand myself as a female. The "female" notion of the project is based on my need to put emphasis on female strength, sexuality, and empowerment. It is rooted in my background as a child and young adult, when I was denied these things. I want to empower myself and create a method that will help and empower other women and girls. I believe it is very important for females to know their inner selves and really work their way to higher levels of individuation. I had a deep intuitive feeling that all these areas of study will come together and allow me to create something very meaningful for myself and for the world of therapeutic photography and self-portraiture.

While studying female self-portrait artists I found several that stood out to me. I admired their strong images and unapologetic way of making themselves heard through their photography.

One of these was Hannah Wilke with all her provocative art. The message that she gave to the world and for women artists was very inspiring for me:

I become my art, my art becomes me....My heart is hard to handle, my art is too. Feel the folds; one-fold, two-fold, expressive, precise gestural symbols.... Eat a fortune cookie, don't ask me to sign it. Kneaded erasers; the grayer softer chaos that is tragedy....Needed erase her? Don't.... Laundry lint; residual magic rearranging the touch of sensuality. Terra cotta; the tragedy of multiple romances; latex rubber, the loose arrangements of love vulnerably exposed.... A performance; Starification, or S.O.S.... object - I Object....The double-folded gestural drawings made from gum....These drawings, like Morse code across the wall, relate the many individuals who touched me and I am touched by their lives, not

their death” - Excerpts from Hannah Wilke Letter in Art: A Woman's Sensibility, Feminist Art Program, California Institute of the Arts, 1975. <http://www.hannahwilke.com/id15.html>.

Wilke's work and message made me think about myself as a woman and how I could contribute to the art world and to other women. I want to follow and find my own strong female calling and identity with the help of the iconic past female artists. I will let their freedom of expression guide me and inspire me to create my photography.

Another female artist that really motivated my work was Linda Troeller. Her work as a self-portraiture artist was thought provoking and striking. The way she portrays herself and women really delves deep into the female psyche, what it is and what it can be. Some of her most inspiring works were various Self-Portraits produced between 1970-2020 plus *Healing Waters*, and *The Erotic Lives of Women* publications. All her works made me think more about myself as a woman and as a being in this world. I want to explore and find out more about myself. Why am I the way I am? And what I am and can become. I can see how photography brings us closer to ourselves when directing the lens towards us. All of Troeller's work is truly inspirational and acts as a path towards my own research and exploration of self.

One more truly important artist that has really influenced my work was Francesca Woodman. Her eerie self-portraiture and exploration of her persona really inspired me to look into myself. For me her images reflect mental illness, because in my opinion the subject of the image is always unclear, blurred dark and eerie, which can represent depressive states or anxiety, and other unpleasant disorders. They are loaded with negative tension in my opinion. It also reminds me of film stills from a horror films. I think that she was exploring her own mental illness which was depression during many of those shootings. She was looking to find herself in the images. If not consciously then in an unconscious way. That is also why her images are very inspiring for me and my work, because I have studied mental illness and dealt with my own difficulties at times of my life. I believe exploring the self in photographs can bring great awareness to mental states of mind. I want to be inspired by this type of photography and feel how mental states can be transferred onto images in order to help the subject of the image understand themselves clearer. I want to create methods of insight into the self and promote ways of bringing out the true self. These ways can be brought about with therapeutic photography, when subjects can take self portraits of themselves and then analyze those to bring out more knowledge about

themselves in the process. Woodman's work is dark and brooding, almost depressive. It is clearly disturbing, but very beautiful at the same time. She was definitely a very interesting artist to my studies, in the way she explored her own identity in her images.

I have always been attracted to the concepts of self-knowledge since I was young and I think this is what motivates me to keep searching for answers and becoming more and more in tune with myself. I want to analyze my behavior and mind, to come up with interesting facts that will lead me to discover the most powerful truths that will lead me to become a better person and photographer. For I have learned with the help of Judy Weiser and Neil Gibson that therapeutic self-portraiture claims to be a powerful tool in understanding and finding oneself and identity both as a photographer and as a person. I want to find out all I can about myself during these self-portraits so that I can learn and develop my own methodology that can help others do the same in the future. That is my main motivation: I want to contribute to the field of therapeutic photography and with it help others in their quests on self-discovery.

The Hypothesis:

In this project, I will investigate how the practices of therapeutic photography - through female self-portraiture - and the process of individuation - through dream analysis - helps to find female identity and self-discovery. I consider that these methodologies are powerful, affirm one's identity and empower women. They should lead to knowing yourself on the unconscious level, thus truly. This can be life altering because knowing yourself on that level will integrate your unconscious with your conscious and lead you to your identity. With all these ideas in mind I established the project research question, problem and methodology, as follows:

The research question: Can therapeutic self-portraiture photography and analytical dream analysis lead to the process of individuation and finding your true self as a female? Does it lead to female empowerment and finding one's true identity?

Research problem: I want to contribute to society and to the Arts with my work, with this method. I want to help others find themselves with the help of dream analysis and self-portraiture. I know there are many women out there that would really benefit from something like this. Especially ones that are feeling stuck or lost at a time in their lives, but do not want or are afraid to go to a therapist. In the future I would like to develop a tool for this process. Like an

application, that can be vastly used by the public. A self-therapeutical tool for female empowerment and identity. At the moment my work is aimed at females, but It is not limited only to them.

The method of research will be through therapeutic photography processes and Jung dream analysis. The modes of photography and psychology will be brought together in order to find the answers I seek. The dream analysis method is by a Jungian psychologist Robert. A. Johnson. All of the methods and results will be clearly explained in the method section of this project.

I hope to find my true identity and empowerment as a female artist throughout this research process. I believe that coming closer to being the true self helps an individual the same as it helps all others. For if a person knows themselves well, they will make better decisions and live in a positive manner for themselves and others. I believe everything is connected and we must help each other understand what we can do to make this world a better place for all.

Performance for the camera:

The power tool I use in this project, the self-portrait, lays its strength in the performative act. The performing energy that I convey in my work creates a mind-opening to a further self understanding and awareness position. The performance for the camera is the point that crosses the diverse fields I dealt with; it determines the nature of the object I created, and brings emphasis to the outcome of this project. Performance documentation has been understood to encompass two categories, which according to Philip Auslander are the documentary and the theatrical. The documentary category represents the traditional way in which the relationship between performance art and its documentation is conceived. It is assumed that the documentation of the performance event provides both a record of it through which it can be reconstructed and evidence that it actually occurred (Auslander, 2006).

The documentation of the performance event provides both a record of it through which it can be reconstructed and evidence that it actually occurred. The connection between performance and document is thus thought to be ontological, with the event preceding and authorizing its documentation.

In the theatrical category there is a host of art works of the kind sometimes called “performed photography,” ranging from Marcel Duchamp’s photos of himself as Rose Selavy to Cindy Sherman’s photographs of herself in various guises. The space of the document (whether

visual or audiovisual) thus becomes the only space in which the performance occurs. The image we see thus records an event that never took place except in the photograph itself. It is equally true that the images in both categories were staged for the camera. Although some of the early documentation of performance and body art was not carefully planned or conceived as such, performance artists who were interested in preserving their work quickly became fully conscious of the need to stage it for the camera as much as for an immediately present audience, if not more so. They were well aware of what is described as performance's "dependence on documentation to attain symbolic status within the realm of culture (Auslander, p.6. 2006).

Amelia Jones takes up the idea of the documentary photograph as a supplement to the performance to challenge the ontological priority of the live performance. She offers a sophisticated analysis of "the mutual supplementarity of . . . performance or body art and the photographic document. The body art event needs the photograph to confirm its having happened; the photograph needs the body art event as an ontological 'anchor' of its indexicality. While this formulation questions the performance's status as the originary event by suggesting the mutual dependence of performance and document. The performance is originary only insofar as it is documented, it also reaffirms the status of the photograph as an access point to the reality of the performance (Auslander, 2006). With these ideas and theories I have built my object for reaserch. In the next sections this will be fully elaborated.

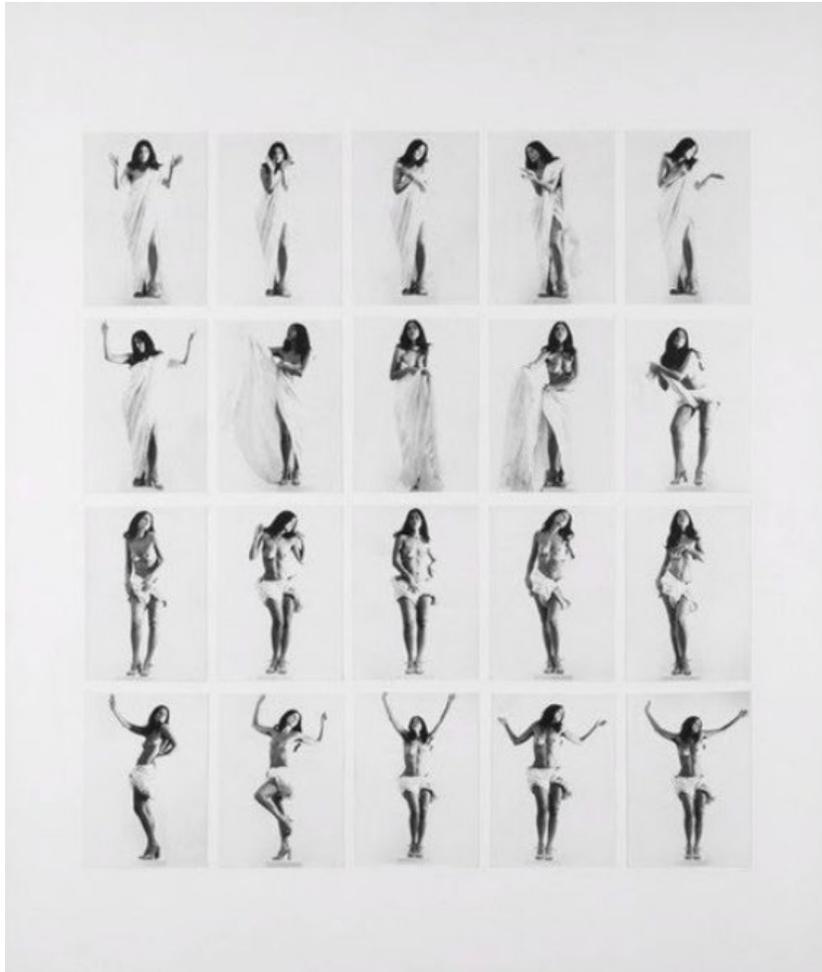
Photography, Female Identity and Therapy:

Female photographers and identity:

There are many female photographers and artists that have always pushed the envelope when it comes to female identity and expression. I have been drawn to several of them, they inspire my need to promote female issues and needs through art. I admire the rebellious nature that they portray and how they lead the way for many female artists. It is of utmost importance for these artists to be known far and wide, as I believe that they stir up people's notions of what a woman should be, and how she feels about it, and for me they create an endless path of inspiration and learning.

Hannah Wilke is such an artist. Hannah was a feminist conceptual artist who explored the issues of feminism, sexuality, and femininity through her work. She was one of the first artists to use explicit vaginal imagery to bring emphasis on female liberation, as her inspiration came from the Women's Liberation Movement of the 1960s. Her "vulva" terra-cotta sculptures became the signature form that she used in many of her works throughout her life. This type of vaginal imagery was a form of propaganda for sexual equality. Throughout the 1970s Wilke has created many iconic pieces of feminist photographic art. They were a combination of performance art and photography. One of the most interesting for me was *Hannah Wilke Super-t-Art (1974)*, a live performance at the Kitchen, New York, which she also made into an iconic photographic work. Super-T-Art (1974) is a large grid of 20 black-and-white photographs whose title plays on the words "Super Tart," which she references the rock musical Jesus Christ Superstar. The series of photographs begins with the artist dressed in a Roman-style toga, which she gradually dresses and undresses, until she ends with her arms raised in the mimic of the Crucifixion. As she states herself, her work has always been about language. She manipulates the language in her titles and plays on serious female topics that touch us all. Her work is about empowerment and life. Living to the fullest and using the body to tell stories (Chen, M. 2006).

I am very drawn to this type of work, that resonates with freedom and empowerment for women. I am inspired by Wilke by what she was saying to the public and how she was doing it. Her work inspired me to create my own vision of the female body and "self". I believe that women need to fully express themselves in their art just as Hannah has shown. This is very beneficial because



only then can a woman really start to look inside herself for any answers she wants to know. If she expresses herself fully, she will be able to view for herself and experience what she has created. This also has to do with the "performance for the camera" practice. It allows us to review ourselves, it is an autoscopic process that is vital to the self portrait. Thus, giving her a very important map of herself, a piece of the puzzle. The puzzle that I want to find, and fit is my identity as a woman, and my journey

towards individuation.

Hannah Wilke critiqued the ways in which women's bodies were seen as passive objects for the consumption of the male gaze. In her performance, where she enacted the series of gestures, Wilke challenged the notion that women's only position in the sexual exchange was that of a consumable entity.

Also, the photographic piece *S.O.S — Starification Object Series*, in which she merged her minimalist sculpture and her own body by creating tiny vulval sculptures out of chewing gum and sticking them to herself. Then she photographed herself in various "pin-up" poses providing a vision that was contrasting the ideas of women having to be always glamorous. These poses were to exaggerate and satirize American cultural values of feminine beauty and fashion. Wilke first performed *S.O.S.—Starification Object Series* for the public in 1975. Visitors were given colored gum, which they were asked to chew and then return to the artist, who, topless, stretched

and folded the pliable wads into small, labia-shaped sculptures and stuck them to her skin. These handwrought anatomical forms have been read as both sensual fetishes and unsightly scars emblematic of the power, but also the stigma, of the female sex. Interested in how these transitory actions could outlive the moment, Wilke posed for photographs for the S.O.S. series, making what she called “performalist self-portraits.” She hired a professional photographer to take editorial-style portraits of her while she expertly performed rote poses from fashion and advertising: hand on a thrust-out hip, mouth suggestively agape, fingers buried in voluminous hair. These facile displays of her sexuality are clearly farcical, yet she pointedly harnessed the simple truth of her good looks. Here Wilke challenged the viewer-voyeur to resolve the tension between revulsion at the sight of the gnashed forms scarring her body and pleasure at being given such access to her beauty. As the title of the project suggests, Wilke explored the relationships between prescribed constructs of beauty and femininity, states of seduction and distress, and the entangled roles of victim and aggressor (Wilke, H. 2021, June 5).



This type of art and photography is very inspiring; it represents the strong female voice that was just starting to be heard in those times. It is even more powerful in the light of the history during when it was created.

Another amazing work of Hannah’s was

“Through the Large Glass”. Which was one of Wilke's most effective and well-known performances, where she performs a striptease behind Duchamp's *The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, Even* (also known as *The Large Glass*) at the Philadelphia Museum of Art (1976). Dressed in a fedora and a white suit, Wilke strikes a series of poses and then strips. She is seen through the glass of the Duchamp sculpture. Wilke willfully uses her own image and her

sexuality to confront the erotic representation of women in art history and popular culture (Wilke, H. 1975).

Through the Large Glass is one of Wilke's most famous performances; the striptease is seen through a key work by the French artist Marcel Duchamp at the Philadelphia Museum of Art.



In the film, she disarms one of the most iconic pieces in art history, one that represents the cult of the male genius: Duchamp's "The Bride Stripped Bare by her Bachelors, Even" (1915–1923), also known as *The Large Glass*. "To honor Duchamp is to oppose him," said Wilke. *The Bride Stripped Bare* is one of Duchamp's most famous works in which he reduces human sexuality to a mechanical process, while also dividing the "male" bachelor section of the work from the "female" bride section. Wilke undercuts both elements. Dressed in a fedora and a white satin man's suit Wilke plays both the bride and the bachelor so that they are no longer separated. Her dress evokes the style of fashion icons of the period such as those recorded by Helmut Newton

and Yves Saint-Laurent. Filmed, partially concealed, through the glass of Duchamp's piece, Wilke began the performance by striking a series of poses commonly used in fashion photography before she began to strip, thus returning desire and eroticism to sexuality and challenging Duchamp's mechanized view of sexuality (Blessing, Jennifer, 1997).

As with most of her work, Wilke's performance addresses images of women, here suggesting that both high art and popular culture are implicated in women's objectification; that not much has changed over the decades since Duchamp's *The Large Glass* (Wilke, H. 2021, May 15). Most of Wilke's work is very thought-provoking and inspiring. She is one of the feministic artists that I admire and wish to follow her "passion for all things female" in the future.

Another important female artist and photographer is Cindy Sherman, who is a master of critical contemporary photography. At the start of her career, and during the aftermath of American Feminism, Sherman began to photograph in order to explore many female social roles and personas. She wanted to shed a light on all of the seductive and oppressive influences of mass media over the individual, and their identities. She turned the camera on herself in order to create many roles: Such as fantasy Hollywood, the fashion world, mass advertising, and "girl-next-door" among others. Sherman has brought the attention of the public to all of the "make-up" and production that lay behind the images that circulate the media. Sexual desire and domination, the fashioning of self-identity as mass deception, these are among the unsettling subjects lying behind Sherman's extensive series of self-portraiture in various guises (Sherman, C. 2021 June, 3).



One of the most recognized and interesting works she created was the series *Untitled Film Stills* (1977–1980), which consisted of 69 black-and-white photographs. Here the artist poses in different roles and settings such as librarians, hillbillies, and seductresses, in streets, yards, pools, beaches, and specific interiors, in order to call attention

to the objectification of women in the media. She avoided putting titles on the images to preserve their ambiguity. She would often pose her heroines as alone, expressionless, and in private. An overarching characteristic of her heroines were those that did not follow conventional ideas of marriage and family. They were rebellious women who either died as that or who were later tamed by society (Sherman, 2007).

Sherman's photographs in the series all consist of females in specific situations. They look like real movie stills, and we can observe a female in various stereotypical female roles inspired by 1950s and 1960s Hollywood, Film Noir and European Art-House. Sherman used clichés or



“feminine types” that were universally known to the public as the office girl, bombshell, girl on the run, housewife, and so on. They are all deeply embedded in the cultural imagination (Sherman, 2007). The whole process of her work was motivated by her will to understand women and their environment. As she states herself:

In the series she posed as all of the clichéd “characters” she thought of, especially bringing emphasis to self-portraiture and the environment that she was living in. This is very powerful and inspiring because it challenges the stereotypical ways women are viewed and how they themselves see themselves. One of the most interesting aspects of this series according to me is that Sherman implied that it was created for women, by herself, so as from the female perspective for a female audience, not aimed for male viewing at all (Sherman, 2003). Sherman’s statement speaks very strongly. Her will and her



perspective to understand female identity in herself via the images, but also in others and helping others see her point of view is very influential and empowering for women. Especially if one is searching for any answers concerning female identity (Blessing, 1997). The way Sherman pushed boundaries back in the times they were made, is truly inspiring and thought-provoking. When you look at Sherman’s photographs, as a woman you feel a special connection to her images. As anyone can “be” this woman in her photos if “set up” in a specific way. The psychological aspect of this lies deeper though. I think many women can identify with some of the woman portrayed in the photographs at some time of their lives.

Mostly meaning the way a women should feel or look at a specific time. Sherman mocked all of this, and it is really empowering still today.



Another strong female artist that needs to be noted here is Linda Troeller.

Troeller's art projects focus on personal, women's and social issues. Her transcendent self-portraits have a unique feminine quality that calls to identity and strength. She achieves the liberated female subject through her self-portraiture. Her many faces that are seen throughout the images compose the idea of the female self. Her methods of working with the body are derived from her many years of study and working

with other photographers. Space, angles and molding herself into the scene are just some of her methods. Troeller says that being photographed has been a heightening of sensation and often showed her a fuller, participatory way of being in the world. Self-portraits offer the power to dream us forward into our solo and our collective consciousness (Troeller, L (2021, 10 March).

Apart from her powerful self-portraits, she is an advocate for female empowerment and sexuality. This can be seen throughout her various series/publications like "The Erotic Lives Of Women" and "Orgasm Photographs and Interviews". The way she portrays women and allows them to be themselves is very liberating and eye opening, inspiring other women to be themselves and thus empowering them. Troeller states on self-portraiture that:

"When created over time it becomes a document, a memoir that is an exploration into one's most innermost thoughts, moods and identity. Through the lens you are capturing a moment in time that can open your eyes to a higher purpose, reveal and inspire you to expand and develop your potential" (Troeller, L. 2021, 12 March)

When the photographs are brutally honest, it creates certain questions that bring you towards your true self. The exploration of what is transformational is something she really looks into.

Troeller states that this process will allow a person to look into themselves, ask who they are, and to contemplate identity. It is a longing for knowing where you belong (Troeller, L. 2021, 12

March).



One more artist, whose work was important to my reflection and photographic project is Francesca Woodman. Her photography is eerie and loaded with emotional turmoil which makes it very powerful, and the imagery is loaded with archetypal symbols. Francesca was an American photographer known for her black-and-white self-portraits. She created her works in the 1970s and 1980s. Despite her short career, which ended with her suicide at the age of 22, she produced over 800 untitled prints.

Influenced by Surrealism and Conceptual Art, her work often featured recurring symbolic motifs such as birds, mirrors, and skulls. The artist's imagery of sexuality and the body is an exploration of the self and identity. Woodman's work is also characterized by her use of long shutter speed and double exposure, the blurred image creating a sense of movement and mystery. Many of the



images are self-portraits that show an almost ghostly presence of the artist, as if she knew she would be a "ghost" soon. What is interesting is that her images are both timely and timeless at the same time (Woodman, F: 2021, 20, June).

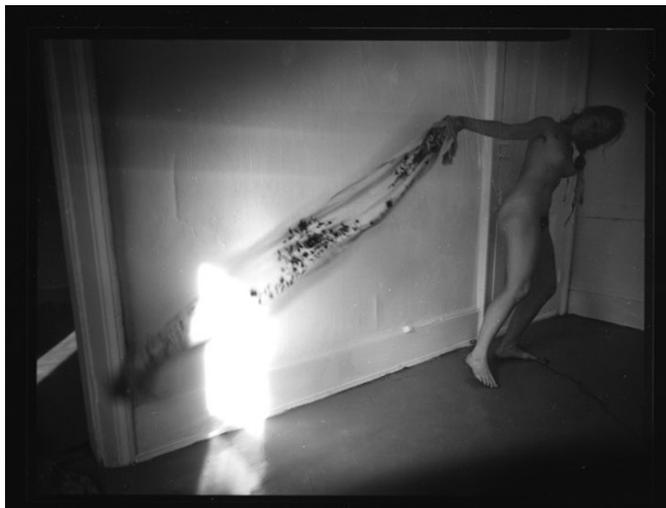
Her influence of surrealist art can be seen in the images. The use of the body, props and sets create a surreal and obscured vision. The imagery in her work speaks as if they are from some dreamscape. Her images make one think and examine the meanings behind them. The

search for identity and something else, something unconscious. Woodman was channeling her inspiration from her unconscious, as some of her images portray a different reality. The way she uses the camera, how her imagers are recording movement and blur. This is rooted in the unconscious domain and makes one think of that. Woodman's work seemed to question femininity, and identity (Woodman, F: 2021, 20 June).



In much of her work it can be seen that she was shooting “into the corner” of the space she was in. The old decaying spaces and the corner can hint as a passage towards another realm, and it certainly disrupts the way space and vision was usually used in photography. Altering the architectural space was a part of her signature. Her influence of Surrealism is also inspiring for me. I believe there is a thin line between surrealism and the unconscious. Because they are both rooted in things we do not see normally in conscious life. They are of the same matter.

According to The Woodman Family Foundation, Francesca's use of space and body is thematized throughout her work. The portrayal of the body juncture of the crotch for example is a symbol among others of female identity. It is one where the geometrical shapes started to show in her work. The shape of the triangle is consistent in her images. The body is a condition of



folding and doubling into another piece. Radical perspectives can be seen in many of her series. All of this is very interesting because of how she uses her body, and her female “junctions”. Like she is searching for something in that junction or wants to say something with it. Which I personally admire and identify with. The female form has always been a powerful tool for self-

expression, this can be seen in the work of many female self-portraiture artists like the ones mentioned above. Woodman's photographs explore many themes that affect young people such as relationships, sexuality, questions of self, body image, alienation, isolation and confusion or ambiguity about personal identity. All of those are also linked with the unconscious and conscious as a whole (Woodman, 2021, 15 June).

Another view on her images is linked to psychoanalysis. Where many individuals have tried to psychoanalyze her work and what it means. They have tried to interpret what the images mean and why. This is also linked to the psychological side of the photographs and their owner and creates a bridge between the two.



horizontal naked body is supported by the undergrowth of the tree's roots. Her long hair floats, whilst her fair skin provides a good contrast to the dark shadows cast all around.

In the background there are gravestones, revealing that the tree is situated on the edge of a burial site. Woodman's hair, her legs, and the roots of the tree all become serpent-like in their curves. There is a reference to birth as Woodman appears to emerge from a watery (possibly in-uterine) environment, but at the same time we imagine the end of life when buried beneath the surface (Woodman, F. 2021, 11 June).

In my opinion this work is linked vastly to the unconscious, because it looks like a scene from a dream, or a nightmare. It is very calming but also disturbing at the same time. It can have quite some archetypal imagery with the tree and its roots as well as the water and the graves. As Jung always claims that the images of water is directly associated to the unconscious. It is very symbolic and powerful.

All of the female artists mentioned here paved the way for my inspiration and ideas towards my own work. I want to harness their methods and bring them together with methods of therapeutic photography, in order to create a specific tool that can help with finding one's identity.

Therapeutic Photography:

“Making the photos, or bringing them along to the therapy session, is just the start -- once the photo can be viewed, the next step is to activate all that it brings to mind (exploring its visual messages, entering into dialogues with it, asking it questions, considering the results of imagined changes or different viewpoints, and so forth.” (Weiser, J. 2021, 6 April).

Before there was therapeutic photography, first there was phototherapy. Phototherapy is where photography is used in a therapeutic setting with a licensed therapist or doctor. The use of photography for some primitive types of “therapy” dates back even to as early as the 1850s, according to some scholars (Gibson, 2018). But among the first therapists who began using phototherapy as we know it now, was Judy Weiser in 1974. Judy Weiser is one of the great pioneers of phototherapy and therapeutic photography. Her photographic techniques are based on psychology and photography. They harness the essence of photographs and of psychology. The techniques are based on using photographs to improve wellbeing, mental health, and personal healing. People use photos to help themselves in therapeutic photography, they use the same

techniques as in phototherapy but without a therapist present. People perform this method to themselves for their own mental health. Thus, therapeutic photography is based on self-initiated photo activity that happens without a licensed therapist. It includes the application of photography to increase self-knowledge, awareness, well-being, relationships, and to challenge societal issues such as exclusion, isolation, intercultural relations, conflict, social injustice, as well as informing research (Weiser, 2013). The process of taking photographs has been described as therapeutic in itself as it can encourage the photographer to be reflective, mindful and task orientated. Loewenthal (2013) claims that photo-based activities can among others assist in the expression of emotions, enhance self-esteem and self-efficacy through exploring self-image, and strengthen relationships through sharing and communication. According to Dr. Neil Gibson in his publication: *Therapeutic Photography, Enhancing Self-Esteem, Self-Efficacy and Resilience*, claims the techniques of therapeutic photography usually produce outcomes that fall into four categories: control/self-disclosure, self-efficacy, self-esteem, and empowerment. These outcomes will be discussed in the methods section of the project, because they are directly connected to the method of research.

According to Judy Weiser when you look at a photograph the image comes alive immediately. You are looking at it as if you are there. In therapy patients hold the edges of the photographs and are asked to “go inside” of the photo. To interact and imagine what is beyond the borders. Based on this knowledge therapists have been using several techniques to guide their photo therapy practice. Therapists have seen that when they ask their patients to ask certain deep questions to their photos, this results in learning a lot about themselves. The meaning of a photograph lies less in the visual facts and more in what the details evoke in the mind and heart of the viewer. The meaning of any photograph is not in the photo, it’s always in the viewer. Every photo has an emotional meaning and message for each viewer. The viewer creates the meaning while looking at the photo. The meaning and emotional message of a photo are dependent on who is doing the looking. The viewers unique life experiences frame and define what it is they are seeing (Weiser, 2013). This way people can explore their lives through photographs.

According to Judy Weiser, within the 5 techniques of phototherapy, the method that is most important for therapeutic photography is the self-portrait. This is the method that therapeutic

photography stemmed from. In this case the self-portrait is defined as any kind of photos that clients have made of themselves, either literally or metaphorically (but in all cases, these are photos of clients where they themselves had full control and power over all aspects of the image's creation). In self-portraits the photographer has all the power. The therapeutic benefit of that is that it is a direct self-confrontation. It is an immensely powerful technique in therapy of this kind. It gives the person great insight into themselves and can be the first step to knowing yourself if used properly. When a person aims their camera at themselves, they are in control of the whole process and what they want to achieve. This can guide them to who they are, to their identity. And identity is exactly what interests me as an artist and as a woman. Female identity in the aspect of self-portraiture.

According to Dr. Neil Gibson therapeutic photography is taking photographs to engage with an image. This is done for exploring issues of self-exploration, relationships, society, and environment in a person. Photographs are used as a form of expression and communication to facilitate exploration. It is about taking photographs and talking about them. In self-portraits a person has control of what they want to photograph. How they want to photograph themselves. They can think about their true self, and this will bring about empowerment in the later stages of this method. It's about identity, and who I am. People use the photographs to engage their mind and find out about themselves. Looking into the photographs a person can really explore their triggers and emotions. This leads to understanding. When a person uses this method, they engage the unconscious and bring ideas from there to daylight. They can look at an image and suddenly a thought can emerge from "somewhere". This is because the unconscious is reading the material in a different way than the conscious, and a person can have even more insight into themselves. It can bring out the true self that they hold inside (Gibson, 2018).

In the scientific approach of therapeutic photography there have been many photographers and theorists tackling the subject. The most interesting to me have been coming from personal exploration and evaluations. The authors wanted to know themselves and really probe into their own psyche with their exploration of self-portraiture. They have paved the way for some remarkably interesting theories and methodologies. Cindy Sherman was one of those artists. Her work revolves around self-portraiture and social identity issues (Sherman, 2007). Much of her work dates to the 1980's and is very meaningful. As stated in the earlier section, Sherman puts

more emphasis on the role of self-portraits as auto reflective and significant for the self. But there are other photographers who brought self-portraiture and therapeutic photography together in a more literal sense. They have connected the two together with great results.

Jo Spence is such a photographer, having a wide array of self-portrait studies in her career. Among the most significant was her work using self-portraiture to bring awareness to political and personal affairs. This series was called “The Picture of Health?” (1986) and demonstrated the power of self-portraits to higher levels of reasoning. Spence’s work is clear and straightforward. There is no effort in trying to make the image look flashy or glamorous. And that is the power that they have. Spence says that the simplest images can start off a chain of thought that will bring us to new ideas and unknown notions about the world and ourselves (Spence, 1986). For instance, in one of her portraits within “The Picture of Health” series, she is sitting half naked toward the camera, with her breasts exposed, and written above the left breast is: “Property of Jo Spence?”. This image is immensely powerful in my opinion and brings a great deal of political and personal questions along with it. It takes her to think about herself as her “own” self or not “her own”. Drawing attention to all women though this, and their roles in society. Like if they really belong to themselves or to the way society wants them to be. Spence says she wanted to deconstruct herself as a person, as a woman with the help of self-portraiture. This is very thought-provoking in my opinion, as she is looking at herself for answers, of who she really is, and hinting who she wants to be, or “not to be”. It is very empowering in the long run, and I find it very inspiring as a woman.

Another female photographer that was passionate about self-portraiture was Rosy Martin. It was she who had collaborated with Jo Spence to create the notion of phototherapy (Spence & Martin, 1986). In their collective works they had created many photo therapies works and sessions. The most significant were based on recreating family photos and really diving into their emotions while doing that. So, they would think about the feelings and possible traumas that they felt back in childhood and then get in front of the camera. This helped them really reveal to themselves hidden emotions and truths. They wanted to reach their deeper unconscious levels of thought and process those feelings and emotions so that they can reach self-acceptance (Spence & Martin, 1986). In many of their sessions they used the studio, where they would meet and take photographs. Then they would reflect on the photographs and see what came to mind. They

wanted to access a vast variety of “selves” that they would find during the process and learn about themselves and their identity from that (Spence & Martin, 1985). A lot of their work brought them to heightened awareness as photographers, and to a state of healing on personal levels. It is very interesting how this type of work can create powerful reflections on oneself. It has inspired me to follow my own questions about identity, emotions and hidden truths.

Christina Nunez and her “Self Portrait Experience” is the next valuable example of therapeutic photography that I have come across. Her use of self-portraits in therapeutic light is very interesting and inspiring for me. According to Nunez, anyone can convert negative emotions into art and understanding (Nuñez, 2021, 23 March). Her method consists of a series of self-portraits, divided into three parts “Myself”, “Me and the other”, and “Me and the world”. In the first part people are to search their emotions and identity with character representation. In the second part, there are explorations of one-on-one relationships; and in the third part, our relationship with the world is explored (Nuñez, C, 2021, 23 March). This methodology is carried out either in the studio or people take their own photographs and then reflect on them with Nunez. All of this is a powerful tool for guiding someone towards their inner self. I have also been inspired by Nunez’s work when building my own method of therapeutic photography. I was most interested in the “Myself” section because that is where emotions and identity were dealt with and acquired.

Analytical Dream Analysis:

Before we start to talk about dreams and dream analysis, it is of utmost importance to explain the basics of Carl Gustav Jung’s Analytical psychology. According to Dr. Jung, each person has a unconscious and a conscious, which interact with each other. The conscious stems from the unconscious and continues to develop all throughout life. The unconscious refers to the unconscious mind, inside an individual. According to Jung, the (collective) unconscious contains archetypes, or universal primordial images and ideas, as well as instincts. The archetypes lie within the collective unconscious, and according to Jung they are universal psychological patterns and energy systems that all human beings have in common. They appear in symbolic form, not only in the dreams of individual people, but also in mythology, cultural patterns, religious symbols and rites, and all products of the human imagination, such as literature and art (Johnson, 1986). Jung called archetypes “primordial images,” that formed the biological pattern according to which the basic human psychological structure is formed. We might think of them

as the natural blueprints that dictate the shape of our inner mental structures. These modes are built-in to the basic unconscious layers of the human psyche, they do not have to be transmitted in any way. They arise spontaneously out of the unconscious to appear in the dreams, visions, or imagination of any individual, anywhere, and any time (Jung, 1983). There are many archetypes as described by Jung, but there are some that are thought to be of higher significance to individuals and the process of individuation. Some of the most interesting and influential archetypes are the anima/animus, the shadow, the hero, the mother, the self, birth, death, rebirth, and the persona. The animus is the unconscious masculine side of a woman, and the anima is the unconscious feminine side of a man. The shadow represents the dark side of a person's personality and psyche, it consists of the most selfish repressed instincts and capabilities of the individual, ones which they themselves are not even conscious of. It represents the person's weaknesses, desires, failings, repressed ideas, shame, and instincts. The hero represents the process of overcoming obstacles to achieve specific goals. He/she is a champion, a defender, a rescuer. The mother is depicted as the nurturing, selfless caregiver who protects and provides for their offspring at any cost to themselves. Can also be a negative side of this as a neglectful and bad mother. The self represents the unified unconsciousness and consciousness of an individual. Jung often represented the self as a circle, square, or mandala. Creating the self occurs through the process of individuation. Birth, death, and rebirth represent those notions and mysteries of life/death. They usually have symbolic meaning. The persona represents all of the different social masks that we wear among various groups and situations. It acts to shield the ego from negative images. According to Jung, the persona may appear in dreams and take different forms (Jung, 1983).

Thus, the unconscious is a marvelous universe of unseen energies, forces, forms of intelligence, and even distinct personalities, that live within us (Johnson, 1986). It is all that is inside us that is not consciously known to us but drives us to a large extent. The unconscious is the secret source of our thought, feeling, and behavior. It influences us in ways that are all the more powerful because unsuspected. The unconscious manifests itself through a language of symbols. It is not only in our involuntary or compulsive behavior that we can see the unconscious. It has natural pathways for bridging the gap and speaking to the conscious mind. One of them is through dreams.

When thinking of one's dreams, we think of something mysterious from another realm of unconsciousness. According to Gustav Jung, dreams are symbolic manifestations of our unconscious. They are of great importance for our inner psyche because they are representations of what our inner self is trying to tell us. They play a great role in the process of individuation and can be used to explain the growth process of the self (Jung, 1968). The process of individuation is where humans develop into a well-functioning whole. It can be achieved through experiences and connecting the unconscious mind with the conscious. According to Jung (1968) it is also described as: when an individual transcends group attachment and narcissistic self-absorption. Human consciousness develops out of the primal matter of the unconscious. Its growth is nourished by a continuous flow of contents from the unconscious that rises with time to the level of consciousness, seeking to form a more complete individual. The incorporation of unconscious materials must continue until, finally, the conscious mind reflects the wholeness of the total self. Jung believed that every person has an individual role to play in this process. For just as our collective human capacity for consciousness evolved out of the unconscious mind, so it does in each person (Johnson, 1986). The process of individuation is based on integrating different parts of the psyche, and the conscious with the unconscious. The more one faces the unconscious and makes a synthesis between its contents and what is in the conscious mind, the more one derives a sense of one's unique individuality. When we work at individuation, we begin to see the difference between the ideas and values that come out of our own selves and the social opinions that we absorb from the world around us. We can stop being appendages of a society or a group of people. We learn that we have our own values and ways of life that proceed naturally out of our inborn natures (Johnson, 1986). Jung believed that disharmony between the unconscious and the conscious mind could lead to psychological problems. Bringing these conflicts into awareness and accommodating them in conscious awareness was an important part of the individuation process. Therefore, dreams are a window to the unconscious mind. Their synthesis is a great way to study the unconscious mind and its symbols. According to Jung (1968), in dreams you can find the archetypes and be acquainted with them. They bring you closer to your true self when you acknowledge them and integrate them into your conscious mind. This process can be very difficult and "dark" for some individuals. Especially when it come to the assimilation of the shadow archetype. But the shadow is one of the most important archetypes to face and release. To be aware of it, but not identify with it is the process to follow

according to Jung. This way person can begin the healing process towards their true self. The process plays a central part in individuation. Other archetypes also bring the person towards their true self. They are the next steps. Overall reading into one's dreams and dream language is a central theory of Carl Gustav Jung, that explains the human psyche and how important it is for individuation. For reaching your true self, your true identity (Jung, 1968).

Jung's theories hold a central role in the dream analysis method that will be described shortly. I believe the theory of individuation to be very important to my performance for the camera and the self-portraiture that will result from it. This is because all the elements of the object that I have created fit together into a whole. The performance for the camera is needed for the portraits, and the Jungian dream analysis is needed for the subject matter and deeper psychological emphasis.

Method and Process

The method used in this project will be a combination of analytical psychology, dream analysis, therapeutic photography, and the process of visualization/set design/shooting itself. The interpretation process that will be performed after the photographs are produced belongs to the genre of therapeutic photography and Jungian individuation theory as well as dream analysis theory.

Dream analysis method:

The dream analysis theory that will be used here is based on the Jungian school of psychology. The method is by Jungian psychotherapist, Robert Johnson and was created for individuals to analyze their own dreams by themselves without the presence or help of a therapist. Johnson's whole publication "*INNER WORK: Using Dreams and Active Imagination for Personal Growth*" is a guide to analyze your inner unconscious. The method consists of four steps for dream interpretation and analysis. The steps are making associations, connecting dream images to inner dynamics, interpreting, performing rituals to make the dream concrete (Johnson, 1986).

The dream analysis method comprehends four steps which can be introduced briefly; to start in the **first step** for interpreting the dream a person finds the associations that spring out of their unconscious in response to the dream images. Every dream is made up of a series of images, so the work begins with discovering the meanings that those images have. The **second step** is based on looking for and finding the parts of inner selves that the dream images represent. One finds the dynamics at work inside that are symbolized by the dream situation. Then, in the **third step**, the interpretation, a person puts the information together, and sees the dream's meaning as a whole. In the last **fourth step** a person learns to do rituals that will make the dream more conscious and imprinted into the mind to integrate the conscious and unconscious mind. The complete process of dream analysis that was followed in this project as written and constructed by Robert Johnson was as follows:

Step one: Associations. "First, go through your dream and write out every association that you have with each dream image. A dream may contain persons, objects, situations, colors, sounds, or speech. Each of these, for our purposes, is a distinct image and needs to be looked at in its own right. The basic technique is this: Write down the first image that appears in the dream.

Then ask yourself, “What feeling do I have about this image? What words or ideas come to mind when I look at it?” Your association is any word, idea, mental picture, feeling, or memory that pops into your mind when you look at the image in the dream. It is anything that you spontaneously connect with the image. Usually, every image will inspire several associations. Each brings to mind a certain person, word, phrase, or memory. Write down each association that comes directly from the image. Then go back to the image and see what other associations come to mind. Keep returning to the dream image and writing down each association that is produced in your mind. Only after you have written all the associations that you find in that one image should you go on to the next image and begin the same process. Often the first connection that comes up, the one that seems so obvious, is not the one that will work best for you later on in the process. The unconscious does not follow the pathways of ego-logic. An association that feels silly, off-the-wall, irrational, may turn out to be the one that makes the most sense after you work awhile. Sometimes all the associations turn out to be relevant to your dream, although they seem contradictory at first. After this you take the association that “clicks.” Jung said that one of the associations will “click”! As you go through your associations, one of them will generate a lot of energy in you. You will see how it fits together with other symbols in the dream. Or you may feel a spot touched in you where you are wounded and confused. You may find that this association makes you see something in yourself that you had never looked at before. In that moment, you will get a rush of conviction from somewhere deep inside: It fits. It clicks. You can also find associations to dream images with archetypal amplification. It is basically a process of gathering information about the archetypes that appear in our dreams by going to sources such as myths, fairy tales, and ancient religious traditions” (Johnson, p.54-67. 1986).

Step two: Dynamics. “In the second step we connect each dream image to a specific dynamic in our inner lives. We identify the parts of our inner self that appear as the images in the dream. To perform this step, we go back to the beginning and deal with each image, one at a time. For each image ask: “What part of me is that? Where have I seen it functioning in my life lately? Where do I see that same trait in my personality? Who is it, inside me, who feels like that or behaves like that?” Then, write down each example you can think of in which that inner part of you has been expressing itself in your life. By inner dynamics we mean anything that goes on inside you, any energy system that lives and acts from within you. It may be an emotional event, such as a surge of anger. It may be an inner conflict, an inner personality acting through you, a feeling, an

attitude, a mood. In this step follow your intuition but not your ego. So do not inflate your ego with positive dynamics” (Johnson, p.67-86. 1986).

Step three: Interpretations. “The interpretation of your dream is the end result of all the work you have put into the earlier steps of dream work. The interpretation ties together all the meanings you have drawn from the dream into one, unified picture. It is a coherent statement of what the dream means to you as a whole. At this stage you ask questions like: “What is the central, most important message that this dream is trying to communicate to me? What is it advising me to do? What is the overall meaning of the dream for my life?” We do not have the right to make an interpretation of a dream until we have gone through the two earlier steps. Trying to make an interpretation without first making your individual associations is really just guesswork. The interpretation should flow naturally out of the first two steps. The associations begin to tie together in your mind; the connections to your inner life become clear; and out of this is born a sense of the dream’s overall meaning. As part of your interpretation, you should try to make a simple statement of the one, main idea that the dream communicates. Ask yourself: “What is the single most important insight that the dream is trying to get across to me?.” The four principles for validating interpretations are as follows: 1. Choose an interpretation that shows you something you did not know. 2. Avoid the interpretation that inflates your ego or is self-congratulatory. 3. Avoid interpretations that shift responsibility from yourself. 4. Fit dreams into your lifelong term. Meaning look at the dream in the development of your life as in a timeline how you develop” (Johnson, p.87-96. 1986).

Step four: Rituals. “By the time you reach this fourth step you have made an interpretation. You have done your best to understand the dream with your mind. Now it is time to do something physical. This step is very important because it helps you to integrate your dream experience into your conscious, waking life. Doing a physical act has a magical effect on dream work. It takes your understanding of the dream off the purely abstract level and gives it an immediate, concrete reality. It is a way of putting your dream into the here and now of your physical life. Rituals and ceremonies in general are ways of using small, symbolic acts to set up a connection between the conscious mind and the unconscious. If we look at ritual from a psychological standpoint, we may say that correct ritual is symbolic behavior, consciously performed. Different persons will have different language to express what is symbolized by the ritual acts. But the highest form of

ritual has this characteristic: Those who participate sense that they are doing an act that has symbolic meaning, and they consciously seek to transform that act into an active, dynamic symbol. Their every movement becomes a symbol-in-motion that carries the power of the inner world into visible and physical form. Each ritual must be custom-made out of the raw material of your own inner self. It flows out of the same inner place that produced your dream, your associations, and your interpretation. All inner work becomes much less threatening when we begin to see that every expression of the unconscious, whether dream, imagination, vision, or ritual proceeds from the same reservoir deep within. And everything, therefore, works together” (Johnson, p.97-111. 1986).

My Dream Analysis using Johnson’s 4 step process:

In this process I have decided to use three dreams that I have. All these dreams have been repeating in my life. But Each time they are slightly different. This according to Jung psychology is part of the process of individuation as well. It is the natural process that happens by itself inside each individual and manifests through dreams, among others.

Dream Nr. 1: The Centipede dream.

Description:

The dream starts with a room, where I am entering. It is a room in my old house where I use to live with my parents in Poland. I look at the wall and there suddenly appears a huge centipede walking across the wall. I am first startled by it and intimidated but not fully scared. It is surreally large like a mythological creature. It was bigger than me. Like a dragon or something. I see it moving and I stare at it for quite some time in the dream. Then I woke up.

Step 1: Associations: The centipede makes me feel intimidated and scared. But it is also very interesting for me. Its size and power make me think of power. I have a feeling it is trying to tell me something about myself. Or it represents a part of me. It can be both good and bad. It had dual energies in my feelings. The colors I cannot remember, I have not registered them if there were any. The size and type of animal in this dream have drawn me into only that. I have a feeling it represents change. A metamorphosis. A painful one, due to its poisonous nature.

Step 2: Dynamics: It represents a part of me inside, something I have not come face to face with, something dark. But at the same time, it can be power and strength as well. It is a symbol for leaving toxicity behind. My toxic biological family that I had to dwell in at those times. This is what “clicked” for me most. That it is calling to me to move on and to undergo the painful process of change that must await me if I want to be free and self-sufficient on my own. It can also represent the state of mind I was in back then. When I felt scared all the time due to my family. The dream makes me feel hope at the end and strength. It reaches to my pain points as well as my drive to move on.

Step 3: Interpretations: After all this analysis the dream is telling me that change must come, and it will be painful. But also, It will be empowering and full of metamorphosis. It showed me that I can be a stronger and better person than I thought. I can be free of any toxic people If I want to. Even if they are biologically connected to me. Even if it is a taboo in the culture we live in, that you should always obey your birth parents, I have the choice and the freedom to choose. While staying can mean a total loss of self. And becoming free means becoming who you are meant to become. I do not know what it is, but I feel a great deep need to find out. That is pushing me to the upper heights.

Step 4: Rituals: The ritual that will be done here is a therapeutic photography - performance for the camera - self-portraiture procedure where the dream images of the centipede will be cast on my body by a projector. During the ritual I will perform intuitive motions and gestures that will appear naturally to me, to be able to express myself and my body through movement and bring out my feminine self. It was done in a studio setting, using a digital single-lens reflex camera and multimedia projector. This is done in order to integrate the unconscious with the conscious. The photographs that come from this will then be examined by me within the process of therapeutic photography and really evaluated with my thoughts and feelings about them. I am seeking to find my true identity and strength as a woman through this creativity.

Dream Nr. 2: The Giant waves dream.

Description: This particular dream is very repetitive for me and happens quite frequently with slight changes inside it. The dream starts with me being in the water. In an ocean and I am floating on top of it. By myself usually. Some time passes and I see huge waves coming at me. They are all around me and they are almost crashing on me but somehow, they do not. I tend to

stay on top of them when they rise and fall. Like I am surfing them with my body. But I am very scared of them and especially the dark water below. Then the wave is going to come again and a huge one starts to form in front of me. Then I am suddenly standing on a beach when a huge wave is coming to crash on me at the beach. Just as it is seconds from coming down on my head, it turns to rain. And it falls on me while I am standing on the beach. It is very overwhelming, and I feel like I cannot breathe for a moment. Then the rain goes away as fast as it came, and I am ok. Then I woke up.

Step 1: Associations: The giant waves make me feel scared, and out of control. They are dark and mysterious. They make me think I am about to die drowning in the water. But after a moment as I see that I am not drowning, they make me feel just uneasy but not scared anymore. The rain falling makes me feel relieved that the wave has not killed me, but also the relentlessness of it makes me feel breathless. It makes me feel tense and tired. Mostly out of control which I do not like. I really want to be more in control.

Step 2: Dynamics: This can represent my feeling of loss of control in my life at times. When I am worried about something I cannot control. It can be trying to tell me that I cannot control everything and even if I am scared then I can somehow get through, like keep floating on the surface even in the worst conditions. I can make it through. I just need to keep going and staying on top of the water, which will carry me.

Step 3: Interpretations: After the analysis and working over the associations and dynamics the dream reflects my psyche when I am overwhelmed and overworked. It happens usually when I have no time for myself, and I feel like I am sinking. It is an emotional quicksand that I fall into. It means that I need to think about what I can and what I cannot control. But also, that I can keep floating at times when I am scared and feel that I cannot. So, it can be empowering in the end. But it is very draining as well.

Step 4: Ritual: In this ritual I will photograph myself with waves being projected onto me with a media projector or with waves being combined with my face or my body. It was done in a studio setting using a DSLR camera and studio equipment. During the photoshoot I will perform for the camera: pose intuitive ritual motions and gestures that will appear naturally to me, to be able to express myself and my body through movement and bring out my feminine identity. This will mean to integrate the unconscious and conscious parts of my mind so that I can become my true

self and leave the past behind. It is like the need to process what lies inside to be able to evolve as a person. To leave the deadweight behind. Because that will hold you back or down in one position for your whole life. Once I have the photographs, I will examine them and use the methods of therapeutic photography as well to interpret and go through them on an emotional and mental level, in order to find important aspects of my female identity.

Dream Nr. 3: The white horse dream.

Description: In this dream, there is an open space with water. Little pools of water on a beach and behind them a large glassy lake like body of water. I am walking toward the water and then I am walking with a large white horse. He is walking next to me, and we continue walking towards the water. Then we walk on water. It is very peaceful and serene. I feel like he is my totem, spirit animal. In the next dreams (this dream has been the most changing while recurring in my life) I am riding the horse and we gallop through long alleys of trees. We are on a mission to save someone or something. I am an amazon, and I am fighting against something evil. The next dreams are similar with minor adjustments. I am either riding the white horse or he is there with me. I feel strong and protected by him. It is a very beautiful dream.

Step 1: Associations: The white horse makes me feel safe and present. It makes me think of peace and strength. But also, of something supernatural. It is not of this world. It is more ethereal. It is a spirit animal, and it is guiding me through certain times in my life. It appears when some changes are happening. I feel strong and happy when I am with them. But also, an unknown tension as well. Like something is going to happen that can be bad. Like it is a warning and a sign. The horse is there to help me through whatever will be coming my way. That together in “battle” we will be.

Step 2: Dynamics: This can represent the part of my psyche that is most sensitive to the esoteric world. To my intuition. In this world it can be a spirit animal coming to guide me through life. But also, in a more psychological theory it can be a defense mechanism helping me through tough times like death of a family member or extreme changes in life. I feel that it can be a mechanism inside me that keeps me going and helps me stay strong as much as it can. It represents strength and calm in the midst of a storm. If it was not there, I might not be able to manage some of life’s hardships and fall apart mentally, and into a disease. Overall, it is a good mechanism and sign for me.

Step 3: Interpretations: The dream represents my defense mechanisms that help me through challenging times in life. But also, it certainly has a “magic” component to it. I truly feel connected to the white horse on some level. For me it is a protector and a guide. It helps me see that I am strong and can get through many trials in life. It is one of my spiritual animals.

Step 4: Ritual: In this ritual, I created self-portraits with the help of a media projector and studio setting. I projected a white horse onto my face and body, while posing for the camera. During this I performed intuitive ritual motions and gestures that appeared naturally to me, to be able to express myself and my body through movement and celebrate my feminine nature. This was done to integrate the conscious and the unconscious mind with the symbolic practice. This was the first step in therapeutic photography. After the photographs were taken, I analyzed them according to therapeutic photography and Jungian psychology. This gave me important results for my identity, growth as a woman and learning about my life.

The three photoshoots that were created, are a part of the ritual at the end of each dream analysis. In order to create something symbolic and physical with the dream symbolism. For the integration of the unconscious and conscious mind to occur. After this according to Gustav Jung’s theory of Individuation, the process of individuation will also occur. Meaning that my psyche will be getting closer to the true identity and true self that is inside me. The self-portraits are also a part of therapeutic photography that were performed as well in order to gain maximum self-discovery and understanding. The performance began the first step in therapeutic photography, where the image was made from that performance and then further evaluated by myself after it was created. The performance for the camera gives emphasis to the images, as they are not just images, and it is not a classic performance in front of a live audience. In this case it was both. It was a whole ensemble of performance and images created for an audience, expressed in a strong visual way.

Therapeutic photography method:

The therapeutic photography method, as mentioned in the earlier sections has been created to help people heal themselves, with diverse types of photography. I am most interested in the area of therapeutic photography dedicated to exploring self-image. The practice of self-portraiture is very beneficial and powerful technique when looking for one’s identity. This is exactly what interests me most about it. Taking photographs of the self, or self-portraits, can be used

therapeutically to explore issues pertaining to the self, with regards to esteem, knowledge, and confidence. Judy Weiser is one of the earliest pioneers of Phototherapy, Therapeutic Photography, Photo-Art-Therapy, Video Therapy, and other related techniques. Having spent over 25 years using her Phototherapy techniques in a private practice as a therapist, she has spent the past 20 years consulting, lecturing, teaching, and conducting training intensives about her techniques, all over the world. According to Judy Weiser Therapeutic Photography is the name for photo-based activities that are self-initiated and conducted by oneself, but where no formal therapy is taking place and no therapist or counsellor needs to be involved. It is a technique that encourages introspection with an aim to highlight positive aspects of identity to facilitate self-acceptance (Weiser, 2001). Exploring the way people feel about themselves underlies the majority of contacts, including self-esteem issues, self-worth issues, feeling disempowered and feeling undervalued. According to Weiser, any therapeutic intervention should begin by looking at how the client feels about themselves and work towards trusting self-acceptance before the client can trust others to accept them. Working with self-portraits helps this process by encouraging the client to work with the question, "Who am I?." To address this question, there is an element of communication with the self through the image, and this may involve an exploration of self-concept, along with self-disclosure, to be able to address issues (Weiser, 1999). According to Ziller (1990) self-concept is a key factor in the integration of personality, in motivating behavior and in achieving mental health. He believed this was a factor that was worth exploring through self-portraiture. He explained that perceptions of self-concept link into confidence and will impact on situations an individual is willing to place themselves into, which in turn impacts on the behavior of the individual. Through exploring self-portraits, Ziller assisted the process of finding meaning, which he believed had a direct impact on enhancing self-concept. He also found that internal thoughts and feelings about the self, had to be set in a societal context and consideration given to how individuals are expected to behave in the given culture in which they exist.

According to Berman (1993) the concept of self-image is very important and inborn into us. From a very early age children are fascinated by their own image. A photograph can confirm a child's identity and place within the family; from very early in life, the need to have oneself reflected is crucial to the development of the self (Berman, 1993). Winnicott (1971) claims that from birth, a baby needs confirmation of its own identity and will look to its primary carer for

this; cries initiate a reaction from the carer, and a response brings confirmation that the child exists and can command attention in order to have needs met. Later it will look into the face of the carer, test out a facial expression such as a smile, and look for a reaction from the carer, a process calls mirroring (Winnicott, 1971). When the mother mirrors the baby's action, the baby recognizes that it has been seen and therefore exists. As we grow, our identity formation is informed by how our interactions with our community and society are mirrored to us. According to Neil Gibson (2018) self-portraiture through photography allows us to see how others see us and allow us time to reflect on how we project ourselves.

Due to this I have chosen to use dr. **Neil Gibson's self-portrait technique**. This is a technique of therapeutic photography that was developed for exploring self-image.

Neil Gibson's self-portrait technique is as follows: A person is to create a self-portrait while capturing a positive quality of themselves, something the person likes about him/herself. There is no "correct" way to do a self-portrait, and no photograph will be "wrong" if it captures a positive quality of the self. There is no set format for doing self-portraiture. The primary notion is that the photograph must be of the person, preferably taken by the person. The photograph is then used in some way to analyze how the person is perceived, which will involve analysis of how they see themselves.

The process is quite straightforward and simple. I will be using the parts where I will be photographing myself as a self-portrait and analyzing those images later. But the analysis part is what can be interpreted differently by each person. According to therapeutic photography there can be several types of schools used to analyze the photographs by the person. For example, Psychodynamic theory is quite often used for this purpose. But in my case since I am working with Analytical psychology theory and Jung Psychology, so I am going to interpret the photographs in that school of thought. Within the theory of individuation and dream analysis.

Visualization/Set Design/Photography Process:

The projected images

The set design and visualization methods have been created in order to best portray my symbolic visions of dreams onto a self-portrait photograph. The process started as soon as I was producing my final interpretations of the dreams, and I could search for images of the dream imagery that I

have used. The main symbolic images in the dreams that I have decided to use are as follows: A centipede for dream nr.1, a set of giant waves for dream nr. 2, and a white horse for dream nr 3. While searching the images I was using my intuition to what makes sense most and conveys my dream imagery the best. I have found the intended types of images to use in the media projector of each symbolic vision. They were found in the adobe stock. They are of a centipede, of waves, and a white horse. I have chosen two images of the centipede, three images of the waves and one image of a horse on a beach. The number of images chosen for each symbol were according to the different imagery in the dreams, as in the waves dream had the most differences in the look of the water, thus I wanted to have three different types of waves to project. As well as the centipede there was one isolated image and one in a green jungle environment. The horse image was exactly like I imagined in a water/beach like setting thus one image was just right. After finding all my images I was ready to project the images onto myself in the self-portraiture studio session.

The studio session



I wanted to use a studio setting for my projections and photographs because it is the most controlled environment I can have in this case. I have contacted the Media Lab of my university, IADE in Lisbon Portugal, and I have booked a studio session of several hours for the production of these photographs. I have used a multimedia projector, with one

fill light. The backgrounds have been white or black depending on the image and the desired look.

In my previsualization I have created and imagined the images that I will create. They were shots of me from the waist up. So half-body portraits. I chose this because it is the best to create with a projector on top of it. A full body might be too little skin and body because I would be smaller in the camera against the overall picture. I wanted it to be the most aesthetic, so I chose the half-body. I wanted to create myself in the photograph as a strong hero type of female. Something

like an amazon warrior or a goddess of dream like fantasy legends. This was inspired mostly by my inner female voice, and by Jung's archetypal hero, and esoteric world of myths and legends. There is something mysterious and truthful in the legends and myths of our ancient ancestors that Jung describes in his publications, like the Red Book. Especially that they are linked to us by archetypes and stay in the unconscious mostly all our lives unless we look for them and find them out, through different practices like dreams and meditations.

The camera used was a Nikon D500, with an AF-S NIKKOR 85mm 1.8 lens. I wanted to use a prime lens because of the best portrait quality that they provide. The camera was set up next to the projector.



The costume/props design was thought out by me. Through them I wanted to celebrate my femininity. Thus, I chose to wear less in order to bring emphasis to the natural female form. I wanted to be in a more primitive primordial state where it would match the unconscious part of the dream imagery. I chose to

wear a beige skirt hung from the low hips and be mostly naked from the waist up so that the projected image can cover my naked body best. I wore nipple stickers of a skin color on my breasts in order to have some of the light reflect on them creating a “fantasy” like look. I imagined it would be goddess and amazon warrior like. All this in order to bring out my inner goddess and a strong feminine identity that is rooted deep inside.

As for the props that I was choosing to use, it was a handmade silver fan. It was made of paper with a high metallic finish. It was my “ceremonial” fan that I had imagined. Like shaman's fan the air and the smoke of the herbs they burn. It helped me get into character better and create a vast array of movement and light reflection that I liked. It looks like a surreal weapon and that is what I wanted to achieve. I wanted to be portrayed as an amazon “style” warrior, to bring out my inner female strength and empower me. It felt most natural to create the ritualistic movements and poses with it in my hands.

The shootings



The shooting process was similar in every set up of the set. The first set created with the multimedia projector was of the centipede image being projected onto the subject (me).

The centipede images were two because they both portrayed a light and dark image, where I wanted to create the image with both. Just as the centipede has good and bad qualities this was fitting best. The background used for this set was black, in order to see the projected images best in this case. At the start I tried them against a white background, and it was not a good

visual, so I chose to go with the dark one. The camera was set up with a self-timer mode and interval shooting. It was set to take 9 images every 5 seconds. I wanted this type of set up so that I can pose freely and not have to go back to the camera to push the shutter button. I did not want to have a remote control or anything that would not be natural on the image, so this was my best option. The camera was first focused on a light stand that was placed where I was to pose and stand. Then I removed the light stand, pushed the shutter button, and placed myself in front of the camera. The first part of the photoshoot was where I was still getting into character and into the mode that I wanted to portray. It took some time before I could pose more elaborately. After some 30 minutes I was posing my ritual poses and in my free from most attire state. It was all right to create the poses at the start in the first hour. But later in the next 3 hours it was getting increasingly tiring and draining. It was like a therapy session with a gym session put together.

The second and third sets that were shot included the waves images and then at the end the white horse. In the waves series I had 3 images of waves projected on me. This was deliberate because it is the most often and most powerful dream that I have. I wanted to really inspect all the types of water and symbols in it. The projector was working well with the water images being projected on a white background.



The third set of the white horse was also created against a white background. It worked best in this way. The white horse image was only one because I have found the best image with the horse in the water environment to portray the symbolism of the dream and other images were not needed. The last set shooting was the

most difficult. I was very tired from the last 3 hours, and I pushed myself to create the last hour properly with the poses. It was difficult on my body and mind because of the projector beaming light at me for 4 hours with different images. But I always want to push myself especially if it is for achieving the goal I set.

After the whole photoshoot, I was very tired but satisfied. I had created around 70 images that were to be analyzed for the right images to use in my final results of the project.

Out of the 70 images there were 3 groups. One of the centipede, one of the waves and one of the horse. I have decided together with my guiding professor that I will choose 3 images for each series to best portray the ritual that I was making in this process.

The Images were chosen on the basis of their role in the project. Their purpose was to be the best images to portray the merging of the unconscious world of dreams with the conscious persona of myself. Therefore, the criteria were similar for all of them. Firstly, if the symbol that was projected onto me was in some way visible to me in the photograph? Secondly if the image was a



good image to analyze in the sense of therapeutic photography. And thirdly If I was visible to myself in the image, the way that I was to be portrayed? And last if the image looked interesting and aesthetic. To me these were the most important criteria.



In the end the photographs that were chosen were 3 in each series. This was the best solution for the next part of the interpretation by therapeutic photography and analytical dream analysis.

The final images that have been created in this process are fully presented in the appendix section of this project. There are 15 images in a series of 3, one per each dream. One series has 3 subseries because it is a long and very repetitive dream. Hence there is a centipede dream series, a water waves series, and a white horse series. The water waves series consists of 3 subseries since the water images were divided into 3, as the 3 water images that were projected onto me.

Performance for the camera:

Photography has been linked to the realm of performance for the camera since its invention. From the Victorian stage though to the artistic 1960's, and all the way to today's trend for selfies. Posing, role-playing, or staging a tableau: the impulse to perform has long been a fixture of photography (Baker, 2016). Photography became the fundamental way to document performance, one of the crucial ways to record live and ephemeral situations, which took place in the gallery, the studio, or often on the street. While performing for the camera the artist can use the body or bodies in order to document a specific scene, or to pass on a message of inner importance to the audience. The notion of performance is important and makes the capture most significant as it creates the composition and the message of the image. It also makes it more reliable and valid as taken from a time and space of natural life. It is voyeuristic.

While performing, the body became the most important mode of representation of the artist and his/her identity. Body art, performance art, and live art are all terms wielded in various discourses and in various sites to point to works that activate a body or bodies temporally either for an audience present at the time ("live art") or for audiences who engage the work through representational modes such as video installation. In each of these modes of creative expression the body has a significant role to play (Jones, 2012).

Inside the realm of performance of the camera there is a space dedicated to identity. The increasing awareness of identity that was already apparent in the 1970's has become an area of exploration and expression for many artists. During the "performing of identity" artists communicate gender, race, class, roles, and aspirations. The body is used for blurring and crossing boundaries of identity, and to explore the implications. People are still viewed in diverse ways by viewers and critics, where females are viewed as narcissistic, and males are not (Jones, 2012). This is changing in some aspects of today's work and society. But it still has a very large weight on the psyche of women and men. I believe that identity can be a very powerful tool for self-expression where people can become their true selves. Although due to the anxious nature of humans and their society, identity will most probably always cause such labelling as "narcissistic." It is best to exclude the outside world and the "critics" and follow your inner voice to bring that true identity out. Therefore, a person can be their true self and not what society deems fit for them. I know it is a very difficult task, but one of the most important for a healthy and happy life. Because true living starts where a person is truly themselves and follows their path of development.

Another factor in the purpose of performance for the camera I believe is so called "Embodied Resistance." This is a movement that contributes new analyses of what has been deemed inappropriate, disgusting, private, or forbidden in particular social contexts. It focuses on the exceptions to the socializing conformity thesis of embodiment and on what resistance can reveal about concepts foundational to the interdisciplinary study of the body: agency, identity, conflict, privilege, reclamation, negotiation, and performativity. It tries to get at these slippery constructs by accessing the lived and messy realities of people from various backgrounds, social locations, and political orientations (Kwan, S., & Bobel, C, 2011). The concentration in female roles, identity and expression is what interests me most. How females are "supposed" to be in a certain culture and how it sometimes goes against their true self and true identity. The fact that we are told to be a certain way since birth does not help our true selves and developing our identity. We are molded into something that may or may not be beneficial to us. It is like being helpless and bound. To be dependent on where you were born and raised by whom. I want to reject all this and lead myself into my inner unconscious self, where I believe I can find some freedom and my true self.

When looking in under the perspective of the “Resistance,” the body becomes a battleground. On this battleground, individuals fight for recognition of their authentic selves, their autonomy, their full potential. They attempt to reconfigure normative practices and processes, fighting to redefine narrow scripts and challenge cultural embodiment norms. People do not always play by the rules. While there are competing discourses about the body that arise in any situation, dominant discourses deem certain acts proper, desirable, and culturally acceptable. At the heart of these body battles are agents exhibiting “Embodied Resistance” which is defined as acts, be they material or discursive, that oppose hegemonic norms, customs, and conventions about the body in a given context. Acts of embodied resistance involve risk. Risks can be psychological and involve identity conflict and mental anguish (Kwan, S., & Bobel, C, 2019).

I have decided to bring performance for the camera into my project, due to its expressive and explorative form. Also, to create a resistance towards the conscious, socially formed and learned identity. I choose to bring out my unconscious true self, and bring emphasis to the natural state of the body during performance art. I want to give the photographs that come from the performance a sense of true identity, which I was, and am searching for throughout this project. The female body and its expression are a key factor in this performance. The performance itself creates a notion of truth. Searching for the truth, identity and pure female essence was in my thoughts throughout this process.

The performance consisted of a series of movements that were intuitive and ritualistic at the same time. I had made a “ritual fan” from a silver like paper material which was used in the performance. This was done to bring emphasis on the movement itself and to capture the light it reflected into the photographs that would be taken during the performance. The fan was also used to show movement and shape. The performance begun the moment I arrived in front of the projector and the camera. I had imagined the dreams and the images inside them, while performing the gestures and poses. This brought me closer to the dream imagery that was projected onto me and allowed me to reflect deeper into myself. After a moment, the performance was driven from the unconscious without much thought. I wanted to move the way my body was leading without consciousness. The heat and light of the projector also helped in this putting me into a state of trance for some time. It brought out my unconscious though the performance, which was very beneficial for my project and my photography. My goal was to

drive my true identity to my conscious mind so that it can be integrated. With this process I was rejecting the taught and socially acceptable self.

It is of importance to point out that the type of performance work in this project is neither a traditional performance documented by photography nor a photograph previously staged. The performance for the camera concept lays its roots on the specificity of the object I created: of something in between. The result of a specific dispositive. Like mentioned in the introduction of this project, Auslander (2006) claims there are two types of performance for the camera, documentary and theatrical. In the end, the only significant difference between the documentary and theatrical modes of performance documentation is ideological: the assumption that in the former mode, the event is staged primarily for an immediately present audience and that the documentation is a secondary, supplementary record of an event that has its own prior integrity (Auslander, p5. 2006). For this project, the photos produced in a studio with myself as the artist performing for the camera alone, serve the traditional functions of performance documentation: they provide evidence that I actually performed the piece and allow the audience to reconstruct the performance through the images created. They are photographs by me, taken while performing. They partake of the traditional ideology of performance documentation. Since the action of the piece consisted of taking photographs, the existence of the photographs serves as the primary evidence that I executed my own shooting and performing instructions. The photographs were produced as both the performance and of the performance. Thus, my photographs are both theatrical and documentary (Auslander, 2006).

Interpretation Method:

In the next and last step of the method, therapeutic photography and analytical dream analysis methods were used for interpretation of the self-portrait photographs. Three images were chosen for the interpretations. One for each dream. They were interpreted by me using the methods of analytical psychology and therapeutic photography as follows.

First three images were chosen. One from each dream, representing the most significant symbolism in the dream according to me. The criteria for the choice were a very strong visual image that triggers something inside of my mind, something unconscious. So, images that make me feel a certain way but not yet knowing what and why. Also, the most disturbing images for me were brought into this correlation, due to the fact that they reach deep into the unconscious.

The images chosen:

1. The centipede dream:



This image was chosen by me due to the fact that it represents the centipede the best out of the 3 in the series. In the image I can see the elements of the centipede's legs on my back and hair. The pose in the image is leaning back with a hand raised, in a ritualistic performance. My face is not fully visible, and this adds a sense of mystery and question to the image. The centipede itself can be seen also in the dark grey background if I look close enough. Like it is there but underneath some mist. This is quite disturbing for me and will be a good image to interpret for the process of individuation.

2. The waves dream:

The image chosen for the waves dream (pictured below) is the most disturbing in the series. That is why I decided to choose it for the interpretation. It represents the rainwater crashing down on the sand, and my silhouette in the middle. The way the image was captured due to my constant

movement and the slow shutter speed, show a movement around the arm area and lack of arms. The performance for the camera that was going on and the heat of the projector and fill light eased me into a more trance like state. The absence of my face in the image also adds to its strength. Because I cannot see my face makes me feel quite uncomfortable and at ease at the same time. Thus, it is a complex and interesting image for the analysis.



3. The white horse dream:

The image chosen for the white horse dream was also the most thought provoking out of that series for me. My body is standing tall and looks strong, but my face cannot be seen. The movement of the performance for the camera and the ritualistic poses create a blurred effect

especially around my arms and hands. The hands are barely seen. The image is interesting to me also because if I look closer, I can see my face through the blurred arm shadows. The camera was capturing the scene at low shutter speed thus the whole image is like a mirage with a ghost like hallucination effect. All of this is interesting for me and will be used in the interpretation of the image during the results section.



Interpretation with Analytical psychology and therapeutic photography:

The interpretation process that was used was a mix of Dr. Neil Gibson's "Self Portrait Technique" and Jung's analytical psychology theories on individuation. They were described earlier in the method section. This was done to create the best mix for integrating the unconscious with the conscious mind, in order to bring out the process of individuation.

Interpretation and Results:

The next steps in the project were the interpretation of the three images in the light of Jungian Psychology and Therapeutic photography. The method of interpretation was the same for all images:

First to look deeply at the image and then use my intuition and delve into the unconscious for any associations that can be found there. Look into my emotions and feeling what it brings out. Try to think of any ideas that come from looking at it. Think of any metaphors that the images can mean to your life. Try to engage with your unconscious mind while looking at the images. In any intuitive way you can think of. Use free flowing thought during this, Try not to use any ego, or conscious mechanisms (Johnson, 1986). Try to lead yourself down the “rabbit hole” of the images and symbols you see and think about what they can mean for you. Think of them in a symbolic sense. Really use your intuition and try to let go of any outside world interpretations in the first line of thought. Then write down what you have found. This will bring you closer to your own process of individuation and your true self. The interpretation will give your insight into where you are in the process of individuation and how you are advancing to become your true self (Jung, 1964).

The first image: The centipede dream.

The first step to interpreting this image was to really look at it for some time. I gave myself 10 minutes to just look at it in a quiet place with no disturbances. The first thoughts that came to my mind were quite negative and went into some anxious feelings. The dark colors and the images of the centipede made me feel uneasy at the start. My body was feeling tense, and this means that there is some underlying trigger that was reached by this image. I started to look further and think less, let my unconscious lead the way. The centipede itself makes me feel scared at first. Then it made me curious about the animal it represents: The strength the ferociousness. I started to think back to the dream and my thoughts brought me to the room that I envisioned and my family life that I was in back in that time. It was a negative and tough time in my life. I started to feel the centipede might have been a resemblance for the situation I was in back then. That I was not escaping like I knew I should. Away from the toxic situation I was in. Then More thoughts came that it might be something in me, something negative. That I did not want to see. Perhaps that I lead myself into these situations by not standing up for myself and leaving earlier. The next thoughts I started to think was of the shadow archetype. The dark part of my mind, of my

unconscious. What it is/was trying to say to me. I started to think that I need to be more in tuned with my intuition and think more before I act on certain situations. I need to be more independent in what I want to do in my life, not let people steer the way for me. Then I felt tired and trapped. I was feeling like a child, small, scared and very sad. I started to think I might be trapped in a situation I do not like, and feel is wrong for me. My unconscious is telling me it is wrong. I need more freedom in my life. I want to be free. Freedom is the most important thing in my life the thoughts say. Then my mind comes to a memory I had when I was younger, where I was sitting on a tram, and I was thinking of moving away from my life situation away from my abusive father. The verbal abuse he gave me for years was too much for me to handle back then. I wanted to be free and independent, but I did not know how. So, I just sat on the trams and listened to music and hoped for the days when I will be strong and independent. I imagined an amazon persona that I was, fighting against the wrongs of this world. I wanted to live by myself and be exactly what I want to be and how I want to live my life. It was all about emancipation and freedom. Mentally and physically. It was about being a strong independent woman. Something inside me my animus, hero, or rebel archetypes had been giving me these thoughts and pushing me on in my quest for freedom. Like it was written what I am supposed to be, and they are leading me there with my intuition. I was now feeling that I needed to face that fear represented by the centipede that was inside me. The fear of always being imprisoned mentally or physically in some way due to life circumstances. I need to let go of that fear, acknowledge it. Know that it exists but I do not have to identify with it. I take it that it is a natural part of my psyche. But I choose to move forward and transcend into higher realms of development. I choose not to stay with the fear and let it control me. I understand it will still be there as the shadow archetype. But it can help me develop and become stronger and free. I can see now that it brought me to where I am now. Without it I would not be motivated to fight for my life and my passions. I understand the significance of the dream now. It was my fear manifesting as a most terrifying image. It was my child like reluctance to understand that back then. Looking at myself in the photograph I can now see that amazon inside myself. She is strong and she has that fear behind her, on her back and hair. But she is not fixating on it anymore. She moves with it using it as an ally and motivator in her quest for freedom. She has come so far already. She knows she will keep developing and becoming her true self. I see a strong woman in the image looking up and taking the world on.

According to Jung, the shadow archetype can manifest in such anxious and negative images. It happens so that the person can face the shadow and assimilate it. To face the fear and acknowledge it, but not identify with it. This according to Jung plays a central part in individuation. It is the travelling through healing spirals upwards as he puts it (Jung, 1964). The process of individuation allows humans to develop into their true identity. Where a person rejects group attachment and narcissistic self-absorption. The collective unconscious brings a person there if they are willing to listen to the symbols and language that it portrays. I believe now I am travelling on the path of the process of individuation. I can see that my intuition and dreams are leading me to some place where I am meant to be. I can see my identity more clearly now. I still have a long way to go and much to learn. But I can see the strong amazon persona inside me that is guiding me and protecting me from my negative thoughts.

The second image: The waves dream.

I started with looking at the image for some time. 10 minutes looking and thinking freely. I started to think of the dream and the water in it. The way the water moves up and down. How it is very powerful and intimidating. I started to think of the colors of the water, from black, blue, to white. It makes me feel uneasy but interested. The feeling of being in the water and not being able to see the bottom or underneath makes me feel troubled and scared. It brings me back to a childlike helpless state. Then I think of being carried on the water. On a wave I am carried, and I am not drowning. I feel relieved that I am not drowning. I see my mother somewhere on the beach. She looks ok, even happy. She is young and beautiful. I am carried by the wave as it grows and starts to peak. It forms into a huge wave, and I am on the top of it. I do not feel too much fear now. I just let it take me and carry me to where I need to be. I am then standing on the shore. I am ok. The rainwater from the wave is not crashing on me anymore. Like I almost forgot about it. The image makes me feel uneasy as I look at it more. The fact that in the image I cannot see my full self. My arms are not visible, and my face is not either. Like they have disappeared. Although I know that it is me and I am there. The wave water behind me makes me feel a little alarmed. If I were really there and this water would be behind me, I would be scared. I think I do not like to be without control. The water you cannot control. I cannot control my emotions at times of profound change and grief. This is a sign from this dream that my emotions are rushing over me and carrying me. I do not like the feeling that I have no control over feeling sad,

anxious, and scared. Another thought comes that I am allowed to think and feel all of those emotions. I should not be told that I cannot feel those things. That I must always be strong and happy, or a certain way in my life. I am not a robot. I have the right to be myself and to develop on my terms. I have been bullied into what I should or should not be too long in my life. My intuition is telling me that I can be overwhelmed at times in my life, but the water (my emotions) will carry me and release me fast enough. I need to let them come and go. It is natural. I need to be my own self and not what others want me to be. I need to fight for myself and be my true self. I can see that I am an emotional person with a fragile quality to her. But also, strong, and willing to fight for her life at the same time. My identity is developing along the lines of cultivating the relationship with my strong self and my emotional self.

Another important aspect of this dream is the water. According to Jung water is the most common symbol for the unconscious. It is the mystery of creation, birth-death, resurrection, purification, redemption, fertility, and growth. The sea is the mother of all life. Water is the “valley spirit,” the water dragon of Tao, whose nature resembles water- a yang in the yin, therefore, water means spirit that has become unconscious (Jung, 1964). In my dreams this can mean the unconscious is trying to carry me through my most emotional times and lead the way with confronting the archetype that is water. The water archetype can be understood in my case as my spirit of the unconscious telling me that I am of the water, and I can survive on it and in it. I do not need to be afraid. My intuition will carry me and guide me through the difficulties of life.

The next part of the dream that needs to be analyzed is the visual of the mother, and the mother archetype. With this dream symbolism I very often think of my mother. The water is also a feminine mother symbol. According to Jung the “good mother” archetype (positive aspects of the earth mother) is associated with the life principle, birth, warmth, nourishment, protection, fertility, growth, abundance. In my dream this can mean I am needing to connect with my own mother archetype more and trust in the way she is leading me. I feel protected by this persona and looked after. This persona is different from my own mother. It is something deeper and more ancient. Like from another time and space. That is why it is an archetype.

The process of individuation is happening through these meetings and dreams. I am meeting with more archetypes throughout the dream imagery and symbols. They raise awareness of oneself

and contribute to holistic self-understanding. I can now see my identity forming and why it is more spiritual and connected to the unconscious through the dream work that I am doing. I helped me see myself more clearly after this self-portrait analysis. I can say I am a spiritual person connected to my unconscious in many ways that manifest in my dreams and sometimes in my daily thoughts.

The third image: The white horse dream:

I started by looking into the image for about 10 minutes. To really observe and let my thoughts start to flow freely. The first thing that comes to my mind is strength and water. I think about the way the water is splashing in the image all around me and how it is visible on my skin through around my face and hands. The image is blurred in some areas which makes me feel a sense of mystery. I feel connected to the horse persona which is a positive symbol in my mind. It is a guide or a protector from the spirit world. I remember the white horses that I have seen in my dreams and how they walked beside me or let me ride them and journey into a forest with them. I feel safe but also in an urgency that there is a task to do when I am with them. I think of the amazon persona that I am in the dream. I am riding on the white horse, and we are galloping through a wide forest path towards somewhere, but I do not know exactly where. I am wearing armor and I have a sword. The horse is big and healthy and very strong. I feel power and control over my world at that time. But also thinking of the future I am unaware of what is to come next. Looking at the photograph I see my face behind the shadows of the blurred arms and my body posture is facing upright. This makes me think of the sky and ethereal beings. In the image my body is melting into the image at some points. My hand with the face of the horse gives me a sense of unity with the horse persona. As do the shadows that its body forms on my body. The shadows of the horse's body create a tattoo like pattern on my body which makes me think of war paint and amazon like ceremonies. It makes me feel empowered as a woman and free. The splashes of the water above my head give the image a sense of mood and drama. It makes me feel as if the elements are adding to the strength of the horse and amazon personas.

The white horse as an archetype can be interpreted in many ways based on the intuition of the dream's owner. According to analytical psychology, the horse archetype throughout the ages has been closely linked with instinctive, primal drives. Jung thought the horse's appearance could

signify instincts out of control. The horse evokes intense feelings and unbridled passion, it can also be seen as symbols of the body and one's physical health.

Another archetype Jung links the horse with is the mother: The mother is an archetype that refers to the place of origin, to nature, substance, and matter, to materiality and the womb. The horse within the mother archetype means the unconscious, our natural and instinctive life, the physiological realm, the body in which we dwell. As an animal it represents the non-human psyche, the subhuman, instinctual animal side, the unconscious. As the mother it represents the origin of life. So, the horse has a close relationship with the mother archetype. The fact that the mother is linked to the horse can mean it is a libido symbol according to Jung. Thus, the horse can symbolize the animal instinct within the man/woman.

In Jung's theory, instincts involving simple survival and reproduction are a part of an archetype called the shadow. But it is also difficult to tell them apart from archetypes themselves because they are linked. Jung identified five prominent groups of instinctive factors: creativity, reflection, activity, sexuality, and hunger. Hunger is a primary instinct of self-preservation, the most fundamental of all drives. Sexuality is a close second. The urge to activity manifests in travel, love of change, restlessness, and play. Under reflection, Jung included the religious urge and the search for meaning. Creativity was for Jung in a class by itself. His descriptions of it refer specifically to the impulse to create art (Jung, & Franz, 1964). All of this theory has been taken into consideration when analyzing my dream and delving deeper into its meaning. I have come to think about the primary instincts that Jung describes and what they can mean for me with this particular dream. The instinct that was most prominent for me when thinking of this dream was activity but also reflection. My intuition was helping me see more into the symbols behind the scenes of this dream, as I was always going somewhere and trying to solve something. Either a quest or a task. The instinct that was strong in this was most probably activity. Due to the need to travel and being restless in some ways. The reflection instinct was also coming from the unconscious because I could feel the urge to search for meaning in that time.

The creativity instinct is also striking a chord with me. I was always in need to express myself and create art. I think It can be linked to this type of instinct as Jung claims, our need to create and use the archetypes in this. Confronting them and then using them in the art is very powerful and takes the work to various levels of importance for the artist.

The forest in the dream that we ride through is also considered part of the nurturing mother archetype. The green color paired with the mother archetype can be interpreted by me as a safe womblike area through which I am riding. I realize that I am on a quest to some danger, but I have this forest around me that seems to keep me calm at the same time. I have realized I feel safe and calm in green areas of nature. Anything flora is considered very positive for me. It always makes me feel in the right place.

And last but not least there is also the notion of the hero archetype within the amazon that I see myself as. According to Jung symbols of a hero are expressed when a person's ego and self are further strengthened, when the consciousness cannot take an action alone or at least without the help of the power source which is in the unconscious, it needs the unconscious (Jung, 1964). The main task of the hero is the development of him/herself. The awareness of his weaknesses and abilities so that he can overcome his life difficulties. This sounds familiar to me because I think I could not behave like a "hero" for myself when I needed or wanted to in awake life, so my unconscious brought her out through dreams, like Jung suggests happens when consciousness cannot act without the unconscious. Therefore, I had to meet with my hero archetype to integrate that energy into my consciousness. I needed to see that this hero is inside me and ready for me to fight when I need her.

Thus, the whole mix of archetypes and instincts in the symbols of this dream are layered and can reveal several things for my identity, psyche, and the process of individuation. I concluded that the white horse was most intuitively my instincts of activity and reflection. I needed to reflect on my life and where I was at that time, in order to be able to move forward like my activity instinct was pushing me to do. In waking life, I was not moving at all, I was trapped and immobilized by anxiety and a negative family situation, so my unconscious was sending me warnings that I need to act on my life. The process of individuation happened throughout these dreams, but also now while understanding them and connecting the pieces. I have acknowledged the archetypes in the dream and confronted them. The horse and the hero. Both are a part of me and can be integrated into my consciousness now with this dream analysis work. My identity is being constructed from all of this as well. The more I analyze and understand the more I see myself clearer as a woman. I am a deeply intuitive and spiritual person, who is just unraveling into her true self. I have something to do here on this earth that will be beneficial to others and to this planet. I see myself

as a strong amazon like persona “inside” but also a healer, which takes kindness most seriously. It is one of my most important values I possess.

Results:

What does all this mean for the research question? Which was “Can therapeutic self-portraiture photography and analytical dream analysis lead to the process of individuation and finding your true self as a female?”

The answer is yes, you can be led to finding your true self as a female through this process of self-portraiture and dream analysis. I have felt and acknowledged some of the steps in the process of individuation. Viewing my dreams and analyzing them to find out many things about myself that came from my unconsciousness. Then bringing those things into consciousness with all this analysis and thought. Identifying and naming the archetypes I met in my dreams were a most critical part of this process. I have felt the effect of that instantly. The understanding that came with naming them and knowing what they are and why they appeared to me, was life altering. The process of individuation has begun a long time ago, as it is in every human, but to consciously understand it and steer it to a positive end for myself is very empowering and helpful for my identity. The fact that I am listening to my unconsciousness and doing my best to understand what it is saying to me lets me facilitate the process of individuation and becoming my true self. The work that needs to be put in is hard when facing your archetypes, but the rewards are truly understanding and knowing yourself more.

There is one more important notion that must be stated here when working with dream analysis and Jung psychology theories; the work that is done happens at a certain time. The dream is analyzed at a certain time and in that time the persons self and identity are at that stage in time. The process of individuation is a forever evolving process. This means that it is changing with time as the person develops and grows mentally. Although there can be times where it is not changing or moving in any way. This is when a person ignores their inner selves, their unconsciousness and just focuses on their ego and the outside world. Or when a person interprets their dreams with their ego in an inflated narcissistic way. Not seeing themselves in the negative archetypes but seeing others there. For example, when people see their mother who is evil in a dream, they think my mother is bad, or it is a bad sign. But according to Jung this “bad mother,” is the mother archetype of something negative in you. This can mean you have traits in you that

you do not like or accept, and you need to deal with them to move on. Jung suggests that we must let go of our ego and analyze the dream in a way that all of it is us. The negative scary “monsters, people, objects, etc.” in our dreams are a part of us that we do not like or accept. And we need to acknowledge them and find out what they are, in order to move on and really grow as a human. It is important not to identify with some of them. But to acknowledge them and move on. “In healing spirals upwards” as Jung puts it. To experience the process of individuation in a conscious way, you need to do the work. Overall, the process of individuation and Jung psychology is very complex and can be very confusing for some. I have only touched into the tip of the iceberg when it comes to the whole theory. It is a particular school of psychology that some do not agree with. But for me it makes sense, and I will surely be working more with it in the future, as it is a very long process.

Therefore, therapeutic self-portraiture photography and analytical dream analysis can lead to the process of individuation and finding your true self as a female. It does lead to female empowerment and finding my true identity (at that moment in time). I am more whole now as a person, a woman, and an artist after performing this self-portraiture and dream analyses. My identity as a woman is clearer to me than before. I feel empowered by knowing some of the things that are in my unconscious. Knowing myself more is one of the most positive and powerful aspects of this process.

Conclusions:

The process of individuation is one of the most interesting theories I have come across in psychology. How a person goes through certain trials in order to become their true self and the way symbols in our dreams can be deciphered by ourselves and used to help this process is truly fascinating for me.

During the creation and development of this project I have not come across any difficulties myself in regard to psychology bases. That is because I have a background in psychology that I have studied in university for many years. I do understand that some aspects of the method can be of a challenging nature for others. So, I would like to think more about how to make this procedure better for others as well, because I want to contribute to society and to the Arts with my work, with this method. I want to help others find themselves with the help of dream analysis and self-portraiture. I know there are many women out there that would really benefit from something like this. Especially ones that are feeling stuck or lost at a time in their lives, but do not want or are afraid to go to a therapist.

In the future I would like to develop a tool for this process. Like an application, which can be vastly used by the public. A self-therapeutical tool for female empowerment and identity. Or a tool for the use of photo therapists. At the moment my work is aimed at females. This is because I am a female and I want to test it on myself first as a woman. For the future I am thinking of a method for all people.

The dispositive that was created during this project is an apparatus that has the power to bring out and show the state of a human psyche and condition. According to Giorgio Agamben, a dispositive can be something that has a way to show and determine the state of the living. This is in a wide array ranging from orienting to modelling and controlling the gestures and behaviors of beings (Agamben, 2009). The visual content that comes from the use of this dispositive has an immense impact on the outcomes of this project. The dispositive is the apparatus I have created here. The process by which a person can get to know themselves with the help of self-portraiture, dream analysis, performance for the camera, and therapeutic photography. The method consists of several different genres of study and that is why it is innovative and strong.

After performing the method, myself I have come to think about some of its areas that might be too demanding for some people. The dream analysis method: from the section about writing, it down to the sections analyzing them and really attributing them to yourself, is one that can be

laborious. Although the way to decipher dreams can be a challenging task, it is worth the trouble to gain the great insights. According to Jung the dreamer's individual unconscious is communicating with the dreamer alone and is selecting symbols for its purpose that have meaning to the dreamer and to nobody else. Thus, the interpretation of dreams, whether by the analyst or by the dreamer himself, is for the Jungian psychologist an entirely personal and individual business (and sometimes an experimental and very lengthy one as well) that can by no means be undertaken by rule of thumb. The converse of this is that the communications of the unconscious are of the highest importance to the dreamer—naturally so, since the unconscious is at least half of his total being—and frequently offer him advice or guidance that could be obtained from no other source (Jung, & Franz, 1964). The dream analysis methods that this project relies on can be an arduous task for some due to the fact that the dream analysis processes are by nature rooted in a section of psychology that resembles therapy. In my case I was open to really analyze my dreams deeply and without any barriers in my mind. But for others this might be a problem. People are not too keen on letting of their ego. And for some people it might release some unknown traumas from their past and create a full-blown crisis. So, I am fully aware that this process is not for everyone. Especially not to perform by themselves. With the help of a therapist or a photo therapist I think it can be a workable solution.

Another issue that might arise from these analysis is of a pathological nature. According to Jung, strongly intuitive individuals become aware of their dreams and try to translate them into communicable ideas. If they succeeded in translating the unconscious into a communicable language, this had a redeeming effect. But if the contents of the unconscious had a disturbing effect, and the person would identify with that, then the collective unconscious might replace reality, which is pathological. These type of happenings can occur if a person is not careful when performing the dream analysis. If they are not used to feeling strong negative emotions that will flood out with the analysis it can be very difficult and even dangerous for them. I had been in long term therapy for years, several years ago, thus I was taught by my therapist how to handle the feelings and sensations my body gave me during very strong mental episodes. Thus, this might be a problem for some people in this method. Due to this I would like to think more about how I can make this method better and more “user friendly.” I would most probably suggest having the help of a licensed therapist while performing anything that is deeper dream work.

For myself, this process and method worked very well. I have really understood my past better and thus can move on with my personal development. It took very high effort to get through the dream analysis and the analysis of the photographs, but it is worth it for me. I would definitely like to work on this method more for myself and others in the near future. I want to show my example and process of development as an artist and as a woman to inspire others to do the same for themselves. This does not necessarily mean for others to want to do dream analysis or self-portraiture, but to look into themselves and understand themselves better. Because any kind of development starts with knowing yourself. That is what I am trying to do throughout all this as well. To know my identity and really understand myself and my thoughts and actions. This dream analysis and self-portraiture really helped me in that. Now I can see myself clearer and that helps me move forward with my life goals and aspirations. That helps me become a whole fully functioning self. I believe anyone can achieve this goal if they really open themselves up and do the work.

Another outcome of this project that was purely coincidental but very positive was learning about the way the collective unconscious can bring out “poetic art works” as Jung calls them. The discussion about instincts according to Jung in the method section of this project, explained that there are several instincts in the collective unconscious. One of them being of an artistic nature called creativity instinct. This is very interesting to me, and I will surely follow this notion further to understand myself and my art. I want to use my unconscious to create art just like Jung says it is possible. Because then it will be in the purest form from myself without outside disturbances. Jung claims that some works can stem from the collective unconscious. In such instances, the creative process consists of the unconscious activation of an archetypal image. The archetypes released in us a voice that was stronger than our own: “Whoever speaks in primordial images speaks with a thousand voices; he enthalls and overpowers ... he transmutes our personal destiny into the destiny of mankind and evokes in us all those beneficent forces that ever and anon have enabled humanity to find a refuge from every peril and to outlive the longest night” (Jung, & Shamdasani, 2009). I feel with my intuition that this is the type of art that I need to create. And this is just the type that I have created here for this project. The images are inspired by symbols from my dreams, so from the collective unconscious. Then the both the dream and image analysis go deep into the unconscious again. Much of the visual outcome is based on archetypes that I have seen and confronted in my dreams. The shadow in the centipede dream,

the water and mother archetypes of the waves dream and the horse, mother, and hero archetypes of the white horse dream. All these are now better understood by me now. When I look at my images, I can see the archetypes and their symbolic nature in them. I hope to show them to others and allow them to spark some dialogues in the unconsciousness of others. This might inspire them to go on this journey of self-discovery as well. I have come a very long way within this project. I believe it had answered my questions and thoughts about my identity as a woman and an artist. I feel very empowered now and fully ready to face whatever the future has to offer. I will continue to work hard on continuing to develop such methods of interception into oneself. It is the key to a better future for everyone. If we all knew ourselves better, then we would know what we really need to become our best selves. This would make the world a much better place in terms of relationships with ourselves and others.

With the results and conclusions of the object created during this project, it must be stated that performance for the camera played a vital role. The photographs created from the performance are of a mixed category both theatrical and documentary. This makes the images more powerful in my opinion and gives me a strong disposition to use. With this tool that is performance for the camera I have learned to express myself most truly and freely, while being most in the state of flow. I learned how to use my body to challenge myself and all the norms that I do not agree with in the process. This whole project was fueled by the deep need to express myself and know myself as a woman. I believe I have achieved that to a great extent through the process of individuation, and performance for the camera. Now I am very inspired to know this genre more and explore fully the realms of performance. That is what I will want to contribute to next.

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Appendix:

All of the photographic series. In the order of appearance.

1. Waves whitewash 2. White horse 3. Centipede 4. Waves rainwater 5. Waves tidal wave.

