

Project #6 Video Portraits

DUE April 7th

A portrait is a work of art which depicts a specific person, a group of people, or an animal. Portraits generally represent the subject visually in some manner and (in good portraits) reveal the subject in a new intimate light. From the surreal imagery of the paintings of Frida Kahlo to the open vulnerability found in the photos of Diane Arbus, portraits in their finest form are about revealing aspects of the subjects personality and creating a psychological connection between the viewer and the subject.

Traditionally portraits have been the province of photography and painting, but in this project you will use the moving medium of film to create video portraits.

For this project you will create **two** Video Portraits:

- 1) A Self Portrait &
- 2) A Portrait of a person outside of class

There are several ways in which you may approach this project.

Here are some examples of possible strategies:

- 1) You may approach this video with a strong relationship to the history and traditions portraiture. This is to say you may attempt to engage the visual conventions of portraiture (how do you know a photo/painting is a portrait? what are the visual clues? how are portraits usually framed? how do portraits traditionally engage the subject?) with the properties unique to the video medium. You could directly reference a famous portrait - appropriating its composition and other formal elements, or you could simply make a video that "looks" like a portrait. But remember you are making a video and not a photo/painting! There are fundamental difference in the mediums and you must be sure to address those differences (i.e. the elements of time, movement, and sound).
- 2) or you could approach the idea of a video portrait in a more cinematic manner. Many narrative/character driven videos(films) include intimate, revealing, and often private moments with their subjects which hint at the characters motivations, desires, and personality. These types of scenes are often tangential to the main plot or action of the film, but help to give depth to the characters, and create and emotional investment with the viewers.
- 3) you could make a video which engages the subjects inner-workings through the use of surreal or jarring imagery juxtaposed with the character. The imagery of dreams and of psychosis are often used as foils to provide insight into a subjects subconscious, and certainly there is a long history of using such devices throughout the history of portraiture.

(more on back)

Project Criteria:

- Each video should be 30s-1min in length
- One of the Videos must be a continuous, unbroken shot for the duration of the video
- The Other video may be shot in any manner you wish
- You may use music, but be prepared to have a good answer as to why you chose that music, and make sure that the music doesn't overpower what you're doing visually

Things to keep in mind:

- how does the way you are shooting the video reflect the subject matter? how near or far are you from the subject, is there anything (undergrowth, windows, doorways) in-between you and the subject, is your view of the subject obstructed or clear (is the subject behind frosted glass, or submerged in murky water)
- How does the motion of the camera or subject create a relationship? are we moving towards or away from the subject; how fast? is the subject coming towards the camera, moving parallel, running away? Does the camera stay claustrophobically close to the subject as they walk along? is the camera being handheld giving the video a shaky documentary look, or is it on a tripod for precise steady shots?
- What is the subject doing? are they looking at the camera, are they yelling, are they walking away? are they chasing the camera? are they shirtless, riding an ATV in circles around a bonfire screaming into the night?
- How does the location reflect the subject? Is the subject standing in a super swanky hotel lobby, an office cubicle, a classroom, a prison, a cave. How does the subjects appearance fit with their surroundings - do they match the surroundings or are they out of place - how comfortable is the subject with that relationship. (is the businessman happy to be in a cubicle? is the hobo strutting proudly in the swanky hotel lobby?)
- Lighting & Color: is the lighting bright and happy does the subjects clothes match or contrast the lighting? mysterious noir lighting? filmed in B&W?
- Editing: Fast frantic editing with lots of jarring cuts between disparate imagery, or is the editing slow and serene with no hard edges?

How "real" the portraits are in entirely up to you. You may use real life as a source of inspiration or you may create an imagined portrait which is performed for the video. Keep in mind that these portraits are not Biographies, but rather just snippets of information which reveal an aspect of the subject.

Due April 7th

File format as follows: *lastnameFIRSTINITIALvidportrait_self.mov*
 lastnameFIRSTINITIALvidportrait_other.mov