AN INNERMOST LOOK INTO THE MIND OF A MEDIA STUDENT

The Real Impact
What are you actually seeing?

Fairies verses FANGS
A Fantasy based in Reality
When asked to do a self portrait, I found myself struggling to find an image, or even a series of images, that could accurately depict the person I am. And so, after several failed attempts, I finally compiled a series of images into what I feel to be, a fair representation of myself. The image is supposed to represent the world, existing as a stage. My value, aka the many faces of me, are surrounded by other faces, of which are consuming my space, watching and whispering. The middle of the photo contains a snarling and angry monster mouth, to represent the insatiable hunger to be accepted by those who observe and judge us. The faces, although a background element, represent what I feel to be a poignant addition to my project. The idea that our being is also influenced so heavily by our environment. Their presence only adds a sharper divide between the light and dark.

In each quadrant of my self portrait, there are small differences that I feel best represent me. For example, the left side contains a mirrored image of myself, that has been desaturated in the flip. By doing this I wanted to accomplish a certain degree of darkness, verses light. A ying and yang. A positive and a negative. Similarly, on the opposing side, those same images are represented, but in a different way. These elements, are supposed to suggest another contrasting idea of being masked, which would be the black and white, versus the unmasked, with the pop of color. Together they represent the vision I believe the outside world has of me. I think it is worth noting that in all of my work, from My Fantasy, to my Self Portrait, I work with mainly high contrast colors and elements. This is done not only for a pleasing visual, but more so to put emphasis on the four versions of self that have not only existed within me, but have recently been brought to light.

In the now four months I have spent in England, studying abroad, I have learned more about myself than all the time I’ve spent in America combined. My perspective of life and self has been completely altered. And for that, I now further appreciate all four faces of myself.

"It's not what you look at that matters. Its what you see"
-Henry David Thoreau
Darkness AND THE DAWN

1 The Dark

Two halves make up one whole, as the saying goes. The same type analogy works for both darkness and lightness. And equally so, positivity and negativity. That is precisely what I tried to capture on the left portion of my portrait. The top left element is what I visually saw negativity to be. Black, and white or a desaturation of color and life. I also chose to add a "Dark Strokes" filter to the photo to add a sense of cynicism and destruction. I thought this worked well with the faces, as negativity is often triggered by toxic influence.

2 The Light

In the equal, yet opposite way, the light represents positivity and happiness. This contrasts the negativity, as the drips from the negativity easily penetrate the positivity. The color difference is supposed to, and intentionally represents the division of light and dark in every personality. The lightness factor, also represents my time abroad. The picture itself is flipped in the way that puts more focus on the positivity quadrant of the photo. This was an intentional design, as I wanted to show that I, while slightly am influenced by new factors of negativity, remain positive.
The Masked

On the other side of the picture, there are two more faces, that resembles the left, yet have a slight difference. The right half of the portrait, is designed to look like a very dramatic contrast between masked and unmasked. The masked in this case, represents the black and white face with the cracks in it. It is done in a *Phantom of The Opera* like format, to convey some sort of mystery and/or depth.

This is the masked version of myself the world believes that I am, a black and white version of the person I am. The crack are supposed to represent the still lively beating soul that rests beneath my masked face. The color shows a need to burst through a shell of darkness, with a desire for light and acceptance.

The Unmasked

The Un-masked version, is the direct opposite of the masked. The un-masked area is where the flowers bloom and the light shines through. The color and vibrancy represents the overwhelming urge within the unmasked version, to overcome public acceptance, and just act as our pure natural self, A being that is seldom visible on the surface, but is brought out in comfort and self-acceptance.
MY FANTASY:
AND ESCAPISM

The magical story of one girl's escape from the real world into the unknown mystic of the Magical Kingdom. However, to escape the kingdom and to return to her home, she must defeat the Queen and assume control.

In the following section, My Fantasy, there is a comic-style depiction of what my life would consist of, if I were to be captured by fairies.

The setting involves me within this magical fairy dream world, where I am constantly surrounded by two small fairies, while I exist in my "human form". My journey into the fairy world occurs when a fairy notices me sleeping in a park, and decides to sprinkle her fairy dust on me and bring me in a magical fairy tree, with the help of her fairy companion. Once inside the tree, it is explained to me that now I am inside the tree I must become a fairy, and perhaps with hard work and dedication, I can be fairy enough to battle the current fairy queen.

Unsurprisingly, I take down the fairy Queen, with the help of the same fairy dust the first fairy used to capture me. And in the end, I reign supreme.

The Real Meaning

The real significance of using a world in which I was captured, was very in line with how I felt about England before coming here. I was captured by the essence, and ultimately that is what aided in my decision to go. While the force of the fairies is an outside force acting upon the version of myself in this story, the capturer would in the real sense, be myself.
The Setting:

Perhaps one of the reasons I picked "a magical fairy kingdom", is because it is so outside the realm of what I am used to, and thereby, seems magical. England is and was a magical mystical place to me before coming here, as the only knowledge of what it would be like to live in England were the movies such as Harry Potter.

For me, England existed as a new terrain, a new place with a new chance to prove myself. In fighting the fairy Queen and interacting with the other fairies, I am able to assimilate to lifestyle that differs to my own.

The Natural Self

Another factor of the story is how I interact with my environment. For example, the tasks the fairies make me complete in order to another fairy, are to plant trees, and build shelter. By doing this, I am learn the skills to build and maintain a new life.

Whilst perhaps I may not have small fairies telling me to do all of these tasks, but the tasks are sort of like an inner voice. In the scene where the fairy hands me the seeds to make the tree, this is trying to convey opportunity to come. All of these skills and materials I am being given and shown is very much in line with recreating life; an aspect in which I feel England has strengthened for me.

The Defeat

In the defeat against the fairy Queen, it was more or less proving to myself that I had defeated a fear. A fear of exploration, within the self and the unknown, was quickly avenged by perseverance and growth. To assume control and the crown just simple represents the newly-found sense of control I have gathered over myself and the dependence I had once had in my community.
Once upon a time

On a warm Spring day, Lauren sits writing in her journal.

After a few hours, the warm sun causes Lauren to fall asleep.

While she sleeps, a curious fairy wanders by, and sprinkles a bit of fairy dust on Lauren.

Now rendered unconscious, another fairy joins, and the two take her into a magical tree.
Before long, Lauren awakes from her slumber and is greeted by a world beyond her wildest dreams.

A new queen is in order, and we want you!

Lauren is greeted by two fairies of whom explain why they have brought her to this magical kingdom.

The fairy queen greets Lauren and explains that if she trains to be a fairy, she can battle for the title to be the new queen.

Lauren agrees, and begins her first task of planting trees.
Lauren also helps collect sticks to rebuild house in the kingdom.

I'm scared! I'm not ready!

The fairies think she is ready to fight the Queen, and provide her with magical fairy dust and a wand.

Lauren is scared at first, but after the Queen challenges her, she decides to give it her all.

I think I'd rock that crown. Okay, I got this!
Lauren and the Queen duel with wands at first.

hmm... I have an idea!

Lauren remembers the fairy dust that the fairies used on her to get her to the kingdom. That is to work for sure!

Victory is mine!

The fairy dust works and Lauren is proclaimed the new Queen.

THE END
In an essence, transformation and growth are simply symptoms of a life well-lived and well-explored. To experience fairy dust and fangs is a sensation in which all humans potentially feel to some degree. To be so compelled by life and its beautiful story can be like fairy dust. Adventuring to a new terrain and taking on new challenges, can feel like you exist as if you lived your entire life consumed by fairy dust.

On the opposing side, with growth, change and hardship, you might experience the fangs of life. In my self portrait, there are fangs placed in the middle of the four versions of myself. Although used a last minute addition, I think my subconscious desire to use fangs to represent myself, is something worth noting. As I mentioned before, my portrait not only represents me, but also the people around me. People in which may judge or not understand me, and so my four versions of self are then consumed by that judgement, that in turn deters me from acting as my pure unmasked or purely positive self.

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