

“Work is self-expression. We must not think of self-expression as something we may do or something we may not do. Self-expression is inevitable. In your work, in the way that you do your work and in the results of your work your self is expressed. ... There is the work in our minds, the work in our hands and the work as a result.”

Agnes Martin, *Writings, On the Perfection Underlying Life*,
Cantz, Switzerland, 1992, p.67

Exposing the self and juggling the uniform

Liz Rideal November 2017 Keynote for Nantes University & Beaux Arts Nantes
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Oscar Wilde's comments refer broadly to portraiture yet are nonetheless relevant, “Every portrait that is painted with feeling is a portrait of the artist, not of the sitter. The sitter is merely an accident, the occasion. It is not he who is revealed by the painter; it is rather the painter who, on the coloured canvas, reveals himself.” And Max Beckmann, complicates the issue further with his statement, at the opening of the Exhibition of 20th German Art, in London, in 1938. “*For the self is the great veiled mystery of the world*”

We reveal ourselves by what we wear at work, at play, at ritual. Identity is specified through uniform yet idiosyncrasies of personality escape through rebellious detail.

In 1996, Martin Kippenberger annotated his own suit with abstract daubs, simultaneously claiming it (and signing it as his) through his own graffiti and declaring that he is a painter despite the formality of the suit. One person's uniform is another's fancy dress. Kippenberger here collides the two, attesting to the premis that the artist's attire is always purposeful even when purportedly unconsidered.

Self-portraits reveal artists' uniforms, whether working outfits or smocks or records of wealthy dress for effect, that convey success and tempt commissions. Bohemian looks infiltrate the genre and variations appear. Women's self-portraits reflect their own specific status, fashion and aspirations. Fashion in clothing infects self-portraiture and these particulars are recorded morphing with time as does the very nature and style of painting and other media: *Ogni pittore dipinge sè*, as the old Italian proverb goes; every artist paints himself, or ‘the medium is the message’ as Marshall McLuhan would have it. The idea that the artist is an ‘own brand’ also colludes with the notion of the self-portrait.

Whose gaze? A narcissistic one or that of the audience? Narcissus whom Caravaggio, wearing a brocade doublet, impersonates in his self portrait (1597-99) symbolises an element of self-regard fundamental to the self-portrait.

[Narcissus](#), according to the poet [Ovid](#) in his [Metamorphoses](#), is a handsome youth who falls in love with his own reflection. Unable to tear himself away, he dies of his self-absorption, and even while crossing the river Styx continued to

gaze at his reflection mirrored in the water (*Metamorphoses* 3:339-510). Echo is the audience and the repeated response to the obsession. Leon Battista Alberti wrote, "Narcissus, who saw his reflection in the water, and trembled at the beauty of his own face, was the real inventor of painting." In his, *De Pictura* (1435) painting is defined as "constituted by the act of looking", and if the art of looking equates to painting, so art itself could be defined as a form of self-portraiture.

The Game

One could equate uniform with the concept of a Duchampian measure or stoppage – ideas of what is uniform or defined costume, provoke questions about standardisation. This leads inevitably to issues of language, translation, countries and identity. Furthermore artists generally work and dress against the grain or 'norm'. Here we also encounter the caricature of national costume.

In 1964 Duchamp explained: 'This experiment was made in 1913 to imprison and preserve forms obtained through chance, through my chance. At the same time, the unit of length, one meter, was changed from a straight line to a curved line without actually losing its identity ([as] the meter) and yet casting a pataphysical doubt on the concept of a straight edge as being the shortest route from one point to another.'ⁱ

Reinforcing his theory, Duchamp's self-portrait *With My Tongue in My Cheek*, 1959, is particular and specific. A real cast of his cheek segues into his authored drawing, creating a mixed genre work reflecting his own stance of absolute originality, producing a physical yet conceptual portrait. Just as he underpins his own 'brand' stylistically, Jean-Siméon Chardin, in his work, *Le singe peintre* (1740. Musée du Louvre) also takes a sideways swipe at the notion of the artist's self-portrait by introducing the monkey and therefore adding an element of self-mockery. The studio trappings are meticulous, as are the period clothes of the animal and the painting rag that trails out of its' pocket.

Duchamp relies on the ruse of the cast also performing as a mask and using the process of direct casting makes an elegant connection to the whole history of portraiture as it springs naturally from the roots of memorial image making and the death masks taken of individuals once life has departed. The whole notion of memento mori is deeply embedded in the the idea of the self-portrait and the examples I investigate here recognise the complicity of this bond throughout. The monkey in the studio is surrounded by symbolic props and equipment.

If we focus on the self and the analysis required for peeling away the layers of emotion, experience and expression, then we can make analogies with the layering of clothes and the possibilities of disguise. We can consider the costume or uniform as mask, the layer that absorbs or negates personality, that regularises ideosyncrasy, that suggests a 'normality'. This is the uniform against which the individual artist rails. The uniform exists as a backdrop of the quotidien, represents an accepted structure that can be dismantled and played with by the artist when searching for his/her own identity of spirit and expression. Briefly, the uniform equates to the everyday and the fancy dress is the open door to expression whether festive or introspective.

Artist as self – introducing the mask.

Artemisia Gentileschi (1593-1652) introduces herself as both woman and the personification of painting in, *Self-portrait as the Allegory of Painting (La Pittura*, c.1638-9). Her clothing is contemporary and her jewellery the key to this work, the mask on the gold chain around her neck symbolises and qualifies her stance in the guise of 'imitation' – corresponding with the description of 'Pittura', the female personification of the art of Painting. In conflating her own likeness with 'Pittura', Gentileschi creates a truly original image – and one unavailable to her male contemporaries. Pablo Picasso's (1881-1973) *The Artist in front of his Canvas*, 1938, records a 'uniform' of striped Breton t-shirt injecting a playful air to this most serious of challenges, the white untarnished canvas before him. His pose equates with hers, three hundred years earlier.

The Backdrop

The notion of the artist's work being analagous with their self, comes into play with the breezy confidence of Anne Vallayer-Coster's *Attributes of Painting, Sculpture, and Architecture* (Louvre, 1769) a line-up of codified objects relating to the triple arts of painting, sculpture and architecture. Her skills in painting them qualifies her position as an artist, by not representing herself, she cleverly offers herself implicitly in the brushstroke. A plaster Academy model of the antique Belvedere Torso (1st century AD, Rome, Vatican) is rendered in paint. But how should artists present themselves and can we deduce aspects of their personalities through clothing portrayed? Is dressing up, dressing for a masquerade part as well as conforming to the stereotypical uniform presented by society?

My photo-booth work from 1985, illustrates and investigates the complex layering of these questions and I decided to use this early work as an anchor for my themes today. The photo-booth is an obvious and classic self-portrait tool, the natural medium for the genre. Known as the identity machine, it is essential equipment for passport production, and self-portraits are the first and most obvious portraits to create within the booth.

Societal uniforms were previously documented by August Sander in his classificatoins of German society in the 1920s, his trade specific uniforms have mostly disappeared today, engulfed by basic overalls, jeans and the ubiquitous suit.

The notion of clothes needed specifically for working in, these "uniforms" impinge into language and customs, infiltrating the psychology of the stratification and hierarchies of society. Vestiges of the sumptoury laws of the past are still complicitly obeyed (or obviously flaunted) in today's society. Examples can be seen in the rosta of 'red carpet' costumes on offer at Hollywood Oscar celebrations. In art and life symbolism continues to dominate our visual world through colour, accoutrement, decoration and uniform.

The mask is connected to the masquerade and ideas of role play.

Gentilleschi's pendant is a mask. A mask can show the face or character of someone else, and is often assumed to conceal the 'real self' that lies beneath. However, the mask's capacity to dramatize or conceal character actually depends upon a connection between this conventional fake face and the wearer; the 'true' person within.

Every self-portrait painting is a performance of a kind. The artist chooses a particular costume and pose, and adopts a persona for his or her audience. These examples suggest self-image that is mask-like or contains a mask – with human features in graphic symmetry the portrait is the perfect vehicle for visual play with and without mask or inclusion of the mask as in the work of Ensor (1899) manipulating ideas of comedy and tragedy. The ubiquitous masks in his work were probably based on those sold in his family's curiosity shop a few floors below his studio. He explained, "*The mask means to me: freshness of colour, sumptuous decoration, wild unexpected gestures, very shrill expressions, exquisite turbulence.*"ⁱⁱ

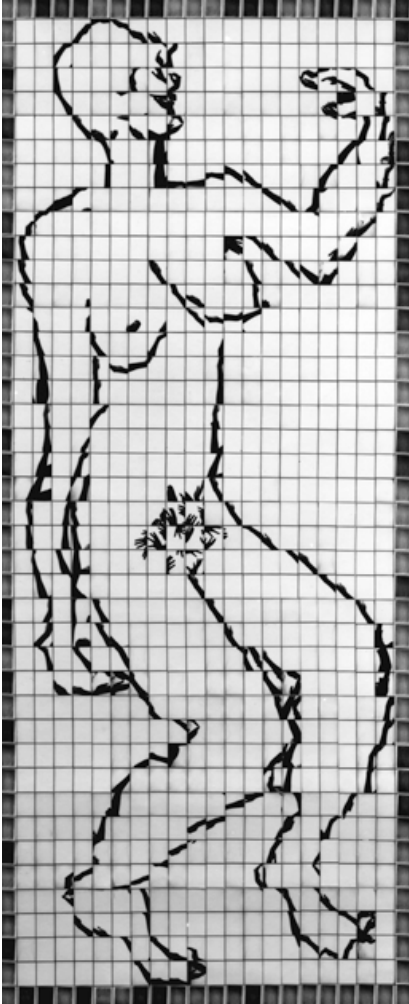
Claude Cahun (1928) states, "*Under this mask, another mask. I will never be finished with carrying all these faces*".ⁱⁱⁱ Tony Oursler performs in make-up, masking himself and assuming roles for his scripts. Albrecht Dürer (1509) and Diane Arbus, (*Self-portrait Pregnant*, N.Y.C. 1945), both record themselves naked. The model who is the artist, reveals and disguises herself; there is the conundrum of the self and the adopted role, and role reversal and duplication. Their performances reveal and communicate self-exposure and nakedness. Sometimes called the "birthday suit", nudity here is seen as a trope for disguise, for hiding within the skin. The skin signifies not simply 'without clothes', but colour, texture, age and sometimes quality of life. The protagonists here take on the role of model, artist model/model artist.

Hippolyte Bayard's, *Self-portrait as a Drowned man*, 1840, is a portrait of one of the principal inventors of photography. However because he postponed announcing his discovery he was beaten to public acclaim by rival Louis Daguerre. This self-portrait was his repost to the French Government who, Bayard felt, had treated him unjustly. The work illustrates his psyche and relates his personal rejection; he has nothing but a hat and a loincloth. He is a "poor wretch" who possesses but death itself, the manipulation of that suicide, his control of it and of this image. Also naked is Alice Neel, a left-handed painter, who shows herself holding her paint-brush in her right hand in the painting (the mirror image of herself^v.) She was aged eighty when she finished the work, that she had started ten years earlier. Neel commented, "Frightful isn't it?" [...] "I love it." [...] "At least it shows a certain revolt against everything decent."^v

Christian Schad (1927) and Amy Sillman (2005) scrutinize themselves. Their work an implicit comment on the ridiculousness of nakedness and artistic self-mockery that relates back to Chardin's monkey.

Ron Bowen's *Red Shift*, 1996 and Jenny Saville's, *Juncture*, 1994, share obscure titles and poses that crop the head in order to foreground the body. These paintings are about the power of figuration, and celebrate the expression of the body, the model and life experience compressed.

All of these works reference other narratives and techniques. My *Cerne Abbas Lady* (1985, see below), Helen Chadwick's, *Vanitas II* (1986) and Juana Gomez's, *Constructal, X* 2017, discuss scale, installation and embroidery in relation to the the portrayal of the self.



Sarah Goodridge's (1788-1853) *Beauty Revealed*, (1828, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York), offers up her ready-boxed, white accoutrements in the form of perfect breasts. She sent this painting to her lover in an act of love that was, avant-garde for the time (but sadly failed to seduce him). However her painting somehow pre-empted VALIE EXPORT's *Tap and Touch Cinema* (1968) performances whereby she invited members of the public to fondle her breasts encased in a cardboard box). While Barkley L. Hendricks, *Brilliantly Endowed (Self Portrait)*, 1977 plays to the myth of the black super stud, undercutting and mocking this theory by including his white contrasting socks and cap as 'decorated' extremities. Art historian Richard J. Powell observes, Hendricks's 'forays into questions of race, gender and self-invention are pivotal (if not

canonical) to figurative realism in modern painting'.^{vi} Both works are sexy, individual and political.

Examples of artist at work in the nude serve dual purpose; as portraits and as documents of time, for even Lucian Freud, in his, *Painter Working, Reflection*, 1957, sports slip on footwear. By contrast Edvard Munch is pictured at work at the beach in Warnemünde, 1907, a modesty wrap around his genitals while a fully naked passer-by is caught on camera in the background. Artists formulate their identity, through technical prowess, constant refinement and originality, nurturing artworks that become reflective of a 'home brand' that constitutes their own domain.

Robert Morris, made his *I-Box* in 1962 and it was shown in the Green Gallery, New York in 1963 together with other small sculptural works including *Portrait* (1963) a set of grey-painted bottles containing his own bodily fluid, and *Self-Portrait (EEG)* (1963), a work based on his electrocephalogram. Morris, whose work is often uncategorisable, claims a place as the epitome of the intellectual and original artist with his position at the forefront of the avant-garde. He was messing around with blood, urine and sperm, long before others decided to even call this art.

Exhibitionism through the ages is exemplified by a set of naked images produced by Jacopo Pontormo, 1525, Richard Cockle Lucas, c.1858, Edvard Munch (Self-portrait naked in the garden at Asgardstrand, 1903) and Pieter Hugo c.2010. Renaissance Pontormo's drawing in sanguine on paper is like an action shot, the artist capturing himself in contraposto in the act of creating his drawing. Nineteenth century Cockle Lucas's portrait, entitled *As a martyr to the truth*, shows him in a loincloth, arms stretched heavenwards, lost in his own world of recorded performances. Munch in a similar fashion, is no less dramatic as he wields a sword in the back garden.

Pieter Hugo, as twenty-first century new man performs a homage to Olympia, but with a baby in tow, recalling the expression, 'naked as the day we were born'. These works underpin the idea of nakedness as a natural costume, an everyday covering that although standard uniform, is in fact individual and distinctive. In effect these artist attest to a regularity of 'types', as in Duchamp's 'regularity of stoppages'. After nudity comes swimwear, a type of covering exploited by Angus McBean (1904-1990). McBean casts himself as the star in his Christmas cards, from 1933-1984. He appears in miniature form in a striped swimsuit, shooting his collection of bisque bathing-beauty figurines and incorporating these into collaged works. When he hired this costume, he discovered that the last person to have worn it was Gracie Fields, a detail that adds to the photograph's ambience of gender fluidity, and sense of playful, self-deprecating surrealism. From swimwear to mermaid tails, and bathing beauties both indoors and outdoors. Swimming pools are perfect places for looking at the human body but complex for photographers who must deal with lighting issues. I am recorded swimming within the photo-booth, while Dijkstra (in 1991) stripy suit recalls that of McBean's traditional and classic seaside costume. Martin Munckacsi, in 1935, poses as he floats in Long Island Sound, wearing his glasses and balancing his camera on his

chest. His dark one-piece has a contrasting white buckle and belt. Ten years earlier, posing in her unisex version of the swimsuit, but on land with a backdrop of bamboo and wearing a chinese-type sun hat is Claude Cahun. Also evoking holidays of sun, sea and sex is Thomas Hart Benton and wife Rita, in Martha's Vineyard in 1924, during their first year of marriage. A model of health with six-pack and tan, he anchors the centre of the composition. Perhaps he has a white towel around his waist, curiously he keeps his watch on, while Rita sports the standard black one piece. From beachwear to underwater, artists discover below surface abstraction: Noriko Yabu offers us the naked face masked by the water, as opposed to wearing a snorkel mask. My work, manipulating four images together to masquerade as a skull, is a self-portrait aged forty-seven (2001) that serves as a pictorial memento mori: the skull appears as if by magic.

Image:

In an era when women were arrested for smoking in public, 25-year-old Alice Austen and Gertrude Eccleston (the Episcopalian minister's daughter) were simulating sinfulness, in Gertrude's (Trude) bedroom in the rectory. Austen wrote on the negative sleeve: "Trude & I masked, short skirts. 11 p.m., Thursday Aug. 6th 1891. Gas on, flash. Stanley 35, Waterbury lense. 11ft."^{vii} What Austen refers to as short skirts are in fact undergarments; petticoats and the images are performed privately not in the public eye and on the beach. While Austen was photographing Manhattan, Frances Benjamin Johnston made her name as a photographer in the 1890s, taking portraits of the political elite in Washington, D.C. Johnston was part of the artistic community hosting costume balls in her studio and asserted her independence by travelling around the country unescorted. She published an article in the *Ladies' Home Journal* (in 1897) encouraging women to think about photography as a way of supporting themselves financially, writing that, "To an energetic, ambitious woman with even ordinary opportunities, success is always possible," ... "hard, intelligent and conscientious work seldom fails to develop small beginnings into large results."^{viii} Her self-portrait confirms her absolute determinism and challenges the status quo 'uniform' of acceptable behaviour by displaying her ankles and petticoat. She also drinks from a tankard and smokes; both male attributes in standard painted genre scenes.

The WORK within the narrative

Fantin-Latour famously said that the self as sitter was the ultimate convenience, "The model is always ready and offers all sorts of advantages, he is punctual, submissive and one knows him before painting!". Laura Knight's 2/6 charity shop cardigan is the key to her colour scheme and an excuse to sample pointillist technique within her profile portrait. Her image includes her friend Ella Louise Napper opening up a situation whereby she can include both her own painting of the model, a rendition of the model (in situ) and the artist at work. This riot of red, orange, stripe and pink flesh is a comment about the nature of the artistic statement and the position of women as artists in 1913. Historically created at a

time of political and social unrest, women were finally given the vote but five years later. The Telegraph critic described the work as 'vulgar', this kind of nudity painted by a woman was not acceptable.

In 1929 Doris Zinkeisen shows off her Chinese shawl bought on travels in Hong Kong. Painted in her hotel bedroom in Sydney, the work epitomises drama, elegance and panache.

Both Van Dyck and Delacroix would appear to be dandies, donning posh clothes for self-scrutiny, and showing off their ability to invest in 'threads'. Our perception of Van Dyck's silken jacket is of an article of fancy dress but this opinion is from our point in time, of course this was not practical studio wear but perhaps what he wore when Charles I came to visit him in his Blackfriars studio. Giovanni Pietro Bellori (1613-1696) wrote that when Van Dyck was in Rome (in 1620, when he stayed in Italy for six years) he alienated his fellow Northern artists by appearing with "the pomp of Zeuxis... his behaviour was that of a nobleman rather than an ordinary person, and he shone in rich garments; since he was accustomed in the circle of Rubens to noblemen, and being naturally of elevated mind, and anxious to make himself distinguished, he therefore wore—as well as silks—a hat with feathers and brooches, gold chains across his chest, and was accompanied by servants".^x His predilection for costume is associated with his ability to conjure up rich, ruffled fabrics and in the eighteenth century even Gainsborough followed the fashion of painting sitters in Van Dyck Dress. Delacroix was an anglophile dandy and one of the first Parisians to wear suits cut in the English style. However when at work, it is said that he was carefully wrapped up against the cold in an old jacket buttoned to the chin, slippers and a muffler around the neck. 'The mask is everything,' he noted in his journal of 1823.^x

Lord Chesterfield (1694-1773), stated in his *Letters*, 1745, that "Dress is a very foolish thing, and yet it is a very foolish thing for a man not to be well dressed."^{xi} The focus on clothing or lack of it, during this period is evident in the surge of images of people in fancy dress costume. François-André Vincent, *Self-portrait*, c.1775 and wife Adélaïde Labille-Guiard with two pupils, 1785 (her second marriage) are two such examples. In Vincent's self-portrait with friends Pierre Rousseau, architect and Philippe-Henri Cochers, painter, wear Spanish costume. According to the Louvre label; "in the spirit of Fragonard's fantasy figures". A self-portrait from 1770, (Louvre) shows Vincent in quasi Pierrot-Van Dyck mode. Fancy dress costume derives from standardised Italian Comedia del Arte figures that could be adopted as we see in Watteau's, 'Fête champêtres'. This behaviour might also relate to the fashion for dressing in other national costumes. Today's Halloween festivities merely mimic Hollywood's interpretations of Mary Shelley's, *Frankenstein* or Bram Stoker's, *Dracula* with fake teeth, blood and outlandish make-up or for parties. Period costumes worn to fancy dress balls in the nineteenth century, grew out of the eighteenth century Venetian masques that also had roots in older festivals, in Britain mummers and "guisers" (performers in disguise) can be traced back at least to 1296. Generally speaking dressing up even in painting, tends to focus on recognisable types and disguise is

used in order to reinvent who we are, if only temporarily.

Francis Frith's (1822-1898), Turkish-style travel costume (1857), acts as a confirmation of the physical journey. He travelled to the Middle East and Egypt with his special portable darkroom, sometimes developing pictures in the cool of the tombs he photographed. In Akabar, he wore Arab garb sixty years before T.E. Lawrence (1885-1930), and the image reproduced here appeared as the frontispiece to his two-volume publication, *Egypt and Palestine photographed and described* (London, 1858-59). He fulfilled Baudelaire's idea that photography should "enrich the tourist's album and restore to his eye the precision which his memory may lack" (1859). Another Frenchman, Nadar (1820-1910) shows himself got up in native American costume, 1863-5. Nadar photographed the mime artist Charles Debureau and his son Paul Nadar in Pierrot costume. A talented all round artist, he was a photographer, caricaturist, journalist and balloonist. Gaspard -Félix Tournachon used the trade name Nadar and commented, "It's the psychological side of photography—the word doesn't seem overly ambitious to me." This statement is particularly apt in relation to all things dressing up in the realm of self-portraiture, and pertinent in relation to my series of self-portraits dating from 1985. These autobiographical narratives, collated in story-board fashion, set out to take a variety of personas and explore them within the confines of a photo-booth exploiting props and costume. The Nun features Catholic accoutrements to amusing and scary effect.

If habits are for nuns, so smocks are for artists and painters Chardin and William Orpen (1878-1931) wear these as their work uniform in 1771 and 1908. Orphen's is both practical and homage to his hero (*Self-portrait as Chardin*, Laing Art Gallery) as he wears the same kind of white turban bound with a blue ribbon and round-rimmed glasses. In 1907, he had dressed up as Chardin for the Covent Garden Ball, and that year he had painted a similar but smaller scale head and shoulders work. In the full-length version, he includes the self-portrait painting he is painting, as many artists had done before and Laura Knight after.

Thus artists self-portraits repeat formats, symbolic resonance, similar desires realised through imagination and ambition: "Ars longa, vita brevis" (art lasts whereas life is short-lived). The notion that the self-portrait is a journey (Orpen painted many self-portraits), a pilgrimage into the self that can transcend or investigate issues of gender and nationality; Orpen it is known was a conflicted personality caught emotionally between his Anglo-Irish roots. The artist is in a sense in permanent exile, an icon of exile like Ovid, in a state of alienation, at odds with the culture yet part of the avant garde.

Overalls are worn by Anna Zinkeisen (c.1944) and De Chirico, who also played out a series of roles in his numerous self-portraits, (naked but for a loin cloth, in marble, wearing armour, as a matador, in hats, in suits.) His theoretical writings of 1910-20 emphasise the importance of time and memory in the creation of art, seeking renewal in the use (rather than the rejection) of history. Also in the 'suit' of the white overall is Henri Lartique (in 1923), photographing himself outside and reflected in the mirror, showing himself working on the painting by using the camera to record the act, in a development of the idea of the artist at work painting the self-portrait. Both Dethleffs-Edelmann (1932) and Degas (c.1900)

record themselves in smocks, with their works behind them as backdrop, each showing examples of the 'type' of work that reflects their 'trademark'. These modest working outfits denote the hand made as opposed to the silken costumes of sixteenth century miniaturists such as Hilliard.

The idea of 'costume' as translation exists not only visually but verbally when for example in French, 'costume' refers to a suit. The etymology of the word opens up myriad connotations. For example, when you travel, suddenly you could be in the wrong clothes because of weather conditions. Costume as custom, as culture and as identity. Suit as disguise, suit as male, suit as normal? These notions were pertinent to my *Self-portrait in a Paul Smith suit*, (it was the epitome of 1980s high fashion), acting here as a marker for 'costume' within the image and consolidating a time frame for the artwork. Similarly Nadar's suit as recorded in his 1865, 360 degrees sculptural surround view, yet Kahlo (1940) refutes this angle with her famous image and propagandist work. The artist had cut her hair after divorcing Diego Rivera, (whom she would remarry by the end of 1940). She wears an oversized men's suit and red shirt, perhaps his, rather than one of the traditional Mexican dresses that she favoured for her work. She retains her earrings and high-heeled shoes and holds scissors in one hand and a lock of hair in the other; strands of cut hair are displayed in snaking patterns around her. At the top of the painting are inscribed musical notes and these lyrics from a Mexican folk song; "Look, if I loved you it was because of your hair. Now that you are without hair, I don't love you anymore." Perhaps the suit is a comment on an unfaithful lover, inviting him into the portrait as a silent partner and forced guest in the complicity of portraiture? Here the suit overwhelms her in size but she can use it as a banner to advertise her painting skill and perhaps her disdain for having been jilted. In fact, Whitney Chadwick points out that this was Kahlo's largest ever painting at 6 foot square, and that it should be read in relation to the 1940 *International Surrealist* exhibition in Mexico for which she painted it. It is her most public and monumental declaration of HER importance as an Mexican artist and it was the first thing that visitors saw when they entered the exhibition, as it hung directly opposite the entrance to the gallery.

In 1935, Walter Sickert paints himself in grisaille, wearing a favourite long jacketed suit that exists in a contemporary photographic documentation. Uniform can indicate 'conformity' or 'normality' when worn by men, but a type of disguise and subversion/personification occurs when worn by a woman. We witness Frances Benjamin Johnston dressed in male attire for cycling, the new sport that paved the way to the culotte split skirt, encouraged by suffragist ideologies and 'the march of time'. In 1881 the *Rational Dress Society* was founded in London which aimed to "promote the adoption according to individual taste and convenience of a style of dress based upon considerations of health, comfort, and beauty, and to deprecate constant changes of fashion which cannot be recommended on any of these grounds." (*London Standard*, May 27, 1881, 5.) The Society's president and co-founder, Lady Florence Harberton, was herself a keen cyclist and an advocate of exercise for women. Recognizing the restrictive nature of women's clothes she advocated the wearing of a divided skirt over a

pair of bloomers or other under trousers.^{xii} In the spirit of the time, Alice Austen photographs herself having gay fun, *Alice Austen, Julia Martin, Julia Bredt and self dressed up, sitting down*, 1891. (Alice Austen Photograph Collection. Courtesy of the Staten Island Historical Society).

Many male artists paint themselves in the uniform of dark suits but J.S.Lowry and AlexeiJawlensky, experimenting with their art, turn away from grey to abstract blocks of brilliant colour to denote the uniform we recognise instantly. Likewise the everyday is seemingly caricatured by McFadyen and Kerry James Marshall. The latter titles his work , *A portrait of the the artist as a shadow of his former self*, both artists play with skintone and contrast; black versus white for painterly and political effect. The ubiquitously besuited Gilbert and George (*Thumbing*, 1991), Kwong-Chi Tseng (*East meets West*, 1983) in an equivalent Mao suit uniform and Robert Longo (1981-87), a calligraphic outline of an action suit or as poseur form a trio of alternative encounters encased in the standard 'costume' for the twentieth century male.

Sophie Calle wears Sigmund Freud's overcoat, taking on the mantle of the father of psychoanalysis (he was famous for his statement, 'The public self is a conditioned construct of the inner psychological self'). Calle, through his clothing recognises the patrician and colonialist history yet seems to question its viability by her ineffable expression as she poses inside the oversized (for her) garment outside the front door of his north London home. Louisa Buck wrote, "It's a match made in heaven: Sophie Calle, the French artist whose work revolves around identity, fantasy and role playing, and Sigmund Freud, pioneer of the subconscious and inventor of psychoanalysis."^{xiii}

Munch too is photographed wearing an overcoat whilst out in the snow, and was positive about the role that photography could play in relation to painting, writing, "mechanical production made by a judicious hand can provide good results." (*Kunst og Kultur*, a Norwegian magazine).^{xiv}

Hats in self-portraits are common too; Wyndham Lewis, in a fedora (1932), Romaine Brooks (1923) in black riding habit with top hat and Van Gogh in straw hat (1887). The direction of the pose, particularly visible in the head and shoulders with hat, relates to the position of the mirror and the handedness of the artist. Van Gogh commented; 'I *would like* to do portraits which would look like apparitions to people a century later. So I don't try to do this by photographic resemblance, but by our passionate expressions'.^{xv}

In the works by Zanele Muholi, *Ntozekhe II, Parktown*, 2016 and Zhang Huan, *Family Tree*, 2001, the costume is one of colour, a black that envelops all colour and blots out yet reinforces the notion of black self, the black out and the loss of identity through overlaying and repetition of an identity mark. The declaration of identity as black.

This notion of 'black out' or alternative self by annihilation can be seen as transformation through abstraction or a flight from identity. This concept of masking within the stylistic trope of the artist whether performance or painterly

masquerade is revealed. Christiane Möbus's, *New Life*, c.1970 and Arnold Schoenberg, *The Red Stare*, 1910, that offer personal statements that are explicitly 'anti-uniform' and original.



Self-Portrait Right Thumb 1991 (Liz Rideal, 385 uncut photo strips 225x140cmms)
Courtesy Museum of Photography, Odense, Denmark.

My own disguise wrought through the whorl of abstract pattern which defines my identity; in the form of my right thumb print, was created through multiple, purposely choreographed photographic images collaged together to make up my self-portrait measuring almost two metres in height My own disguise through the whorl of unrecognisable pattern which defines myself, through multiple purposely choreographed photographic images making up my own identifiable thumb print, while simultaneously a set of unique photostrips in collage.. This overkill of self-hood leads to an idea of the self lost within the landscape as seen in the work of Judy Dater, the artist at one with the earth, an abstract dot or magnified grain of sand, brings to mind William Blake's *Auguries of Innocence*: "Hold infinity in the palm of your hand" and consequently the idea implicit in the self-portrait, that artistic desire for immortality. The trope that brings us back to the foundation of the genre and the merry-go-round that is the artist/model=model artist tango and Nadar's 360 degree portrait turning on his eternally revolving gif of life.

Costumes and suits, uniforms, habits, clothing as habit and fancy dress as special occasion. The plethora of human array evokes symbolic meaning and codified visual implications in equal measure. An awareness of the powerful communication possibilities of costume is essential when approaching the self-portrait. Clothing is the masque behind which we all hide and through it we negotiate the tides of our lives, as we are swaddled from the cradle to the grave. One only has to consider the furore surrounding the recent debates about Hilary Clinton's trouser suits to grasp the nuance of unconscious meaning that clothing continually transmits.

Otto Dix wrote that, "By reproducing the external form, one also captures the inner gestalt"... "Self-portraits are confessions of an inner state, they always come as a surprise to me. I look at them and think, why, that's not what you look like at all. There is no objectivity there, only ceaseless transformation; a human being has so many facets. The self-portrait is the best means of studying them." Liz Rideal. December 2017

ⁱ Anne d'Harnoncourt and Kynaston McShine, eds., *Marcel Duchamp*, exhibition catalogue, Philadelphia Museum of Art, 1973, pp.273-4.

ⁱⁱ <https://www.moma.org/collection/works/79855> Accessed 20/11/17

ⁱⁱ <https://www.moma.org/collection/works/79855> Accessed 20/11/17

ⁱⁱⁱ Aveux nos avenus. 1930

^{iv} Jeremy Lewison, & Barry Walker (eds) *Showing the Barbarity of Life: Alice Neel's Grotesque* in *Alice Neel: Painted Truths*, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, 2010

^v Ibid

^{vi} Richard J. Powell, 'Barkley L. Hendricks, Anew', in Trevor Schoonmaker (ed.), *Barkley L. Hendricks: Birth of the Cool*, exhibition catalogue, Nasher Museum of Art at Duke University, Durham, North Carolina 2008, p.51. Accessed 20/11/17

<http://www.tate.org.uk/research/publications/in-focus/family-jules/hendricks-today>

^{vii} <http://aliceausten.org/trude-i> accessed 19/11/17

^{viii} <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/victorian-womanhood-in-all-its-guises-14265506/> Accessed 18/11/17

^x <https://www.spectator.co.uk/2016/01/eugene-delacroix-foresaw-the-future-of-society-not-just-art/> Martin Gayford, The Spectator, accessed 18/11/17

^{xi} *Letters to His Son on the Art of Becoming a Man of the World and a Gentleman* (1774)

^{xii} <https://cyclehistory.wordpress.com/2015/01/30/women-on-the-move-cycling-and-the-rational-dress-movement/> Accessed 20/11/17

^{xiii} in *The Art Newspaper*:

^{xiv} Accessed 17/11/17 <http://www.dailyartdaily.com/edvard-munchs-life-in-photos/>

^{xv} Vincent van Gogh, *The Letters. The Complete Illustrated and Annotated Edition*, Ed. Leo Jansen, Hans Luijten and Nienke Bakker, London: Thames & Hudson, 2009, vol.5.p.254