

Project 1: Self-portrait: variations on a "Screen Test": Due Weds/Thurs Feb 22/23, 10 am

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Your 1st project for this workshop is a self-portrait loosely interpreted as a "screen test." In the spirit of the word "test," this is an experiment in self-depiction in which you use your body as subject, object, canvas, medium, etc.
You might interpret this as an audition for the "role" of you. Your piece should be between 1 and 5 minutes long.

You will be shooting SOME or ALL (depending on the complexity of your project) of your footage in the Experimental Theatre (Com 1st flr) against a bluescreen (and you may choose to include footage shot elsewhere.) You will also choose images (moving or still), patterns, or colors to key into the blue parts of the image. You may want to use home movie footage, found footage, or original footage, and/or still images.

Props/objects, sets, costumes, etc. will establish an iconography that can become symbolic, or create a kind of private mythology: [for example, see Frida Kahlo's self-portraits]. COSTUMES can be checked out from the costume shop (2nd flr COM bldg.), and PROPS and FURNITURE can be checked out from the scene shop (1st flr COM bldg.). Arrange to go there soon to get some ideas. You will not be building elaborate sets in the space. Your "sets" will be created in postproduction. But you are free to use props and furniture in the space.

The project's focus on the body is not an attempt to literalize the idea of the "self" but a way for you to explore what it means to represent the "self." You may choose to focus on the whole body, head to toe, or to focus only on a specific part/parts of your body that "stand in" for the whole. You may choose to adorn yourself completely in costume/s, masks/makeup, wig/s, or other built materials. You may choose to appear only as a shadow. You may choose to include other live figures/actors in your piece. You might think about at what age you want to represent yourself, or what point in time you will represent: a past, present, or image a "future" self.

This workshop's emphasis on performance and theatricality asks you to consider the "self" as a "performed" entity, your "self" as something that becomes visible through codes and conventions of "being" or "visibility" or "audibility."

Your task is not to figure out: *who am I, essentially?*, but to proceed from the questions: *what are the possible ways I can explore what it means to be me, to be an "I", to be a "self", to be an individual, to be a body, a being, in this skin, a person in this culture, world, in this moment?*

Audio: The piece may have sync sound, post sfx, narration, or music, or be silent; I encourage you to at least consider why you might choose to make the piece silent, which would allow your body movement, adornment, etc. to do the "speaking" or to "make the sound." Your only constraint here is that you may not use whole intact pieces of music. Again, think about how you might represent the sound of your "self." This might be sync-sound speech, but might also be non-linguistic vocalized sound (muttering, screaming, murmuring, crying, etc.) or sound that the body makes in movement, or sounds of organs, muscles, joints, etc.

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A. PRE-PRODUCTION:

Pre-production documents (all typed) DUE TUESDAY of Week 6 to BRAD at 10 am. These will include:

1. treatment (1 paragraph)
2. script
3. storyboards
4. shot list (include camera angle and shot scale info). Be aware that it can be difficult to key in images around the feet. No shoes can be worn when standing on the blue curtain.
5. list of props, furniture, set items, and costume items
6. list of equipment you will need to use (e.g. what kind of mic setup? how many lights on yourself? All of this equipment will be there for you to use.

I will look these over and return them the next day (Weds.) with any comments or suggestions.

YOU MUST Schedule with your PEER GROUP a PRE-PRODUCTION meeting: Your peer group peers will crew for you during the shoot day. To streamline this process, peer groups **MUST** meet before the shoot in a **PRE-PRODUCTION MEETING** where you will fill each other in on what your shooting needs are, and assign crew roles for each person's 40 min shoot. You **MUST** choose to assign crew roles at this meeting. We will have monitors in the space that you will be able to see as you stand in front of the camera, but you will have a peer operating the camera for you, holding mics, etc.

B. PRODUCTION:

- Our studio shoots are scheduled for 2 days next week: Friday 9-6 and Saturday 9-6. Half of the group will shoot each day, peer groups arrive and shoot together, and you are required to attend only your peer group's scheduled shoot time, though you are welcome to be there for the rest of it if you want.
- If you shoot Saturday, you **DO NOT** have to come to the Friday shoot, and vice versa.

****EACH PERSON HAS 40 Min. TOTAL SHOOTING TIME.**

****Please understand that this INCLUDES setup time for each shot** (lighting, rehearsal for you and camera and sound people)

****KEEP IT SIMPLE.** Lighting for bluescreen is a delicate art and can take longer than you expect it to. Remember, you will be able to shoot other material outside the studio shoot.

****BRING FOOTAGE ON VHS or DVD to "practice key" at the SHOOT IF YOU NEED IT**

****YOU MUST BRING A SHOT LIST (listed in shooting order) and STORYBOARDS TO THE SHOOT**

This is so that all crew members can refer to them.

And, FINALLY: You will all need to rely on each other to keep your shoot running on schedule!
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<Artists/Books for further exploration>

Books: *Eye for I : video self-portraits* / Raymond Bellour (TESC)

Mirror mirror : self-portraits by women artists / Liz Rideal (TESC)

Seeing ourselves : women's self-portraits / Frances Borzello (TESC)

Mirror images : women, surrealism, and self-representation / edited by Whitney Chadwick (TESC)

Expressionist portraits / Frank Whitford (TESC)

In/sights : self-portraits by women / compiled & with an introduction by Joyce Tenneson Cohen (TESC)

Loss within loss : artists in the age of AIDS / edited by Edmund White (TESC)

A self-portrait : John Coplans, 1984-1997 (TESC)

The art of reflection : women artists' self-portraiture in the twentieth century / Marsha Meskimmon (TESC)

Artists by themselves : artists' portraits from the National Academy of Design (TESC)

Narcissism : artists reflect themselves : February 4 through May 26, 1996 / Andy Warhol ... [et al.] (TESC)

Samuel Delany, *Times Square Red, Times Square Blue* -autobiography on sexuality, urban life, community

Portraiture, Richard Brilliant [book]

Visual Artists: Cindy Sherman; Rebecca Horn; Adrian Piper; Tracey Emin

Rembrandt self-portrait paintings

Frida Kahlo self-portrait paintings

Claude Cahun self-portrait photos

Francesca Woodman self-portrait photos

David Wojnarowicz (writing and visual art)

Performers/film: Michael Jackson; Madonna; David Bowie [cycles of persona reinvention]

Particularly the concert film *Ziggy Stardust and the Spiders from Mars*, DA Pennebaker

Leigh Bowery <http://www.leighbowery.com.br>

[film] *Sherman's March*, Ross McElwee (TESC)

[film] *I'm the One that I Want* Margaret Cho

[film] *Notorious C.H.O.* Margaret Cho