

“I look at You” Self Portrait

Six digital prints with text of poem, 20 x 30 inches each
by Stacey Ward Kelly



The image I used for this work was a photograph I took of myself for my Goldsmiths ID card. After shooting myself a number of times, I felt this was an image that I could be happy with to use for the year as my visual identity while attending Goldsmiths. The text comes from a poem I wrote last year about myself. It was the kind of writing that once I began, seemed to flow out of me. It felt as if in writing each line, I discovered the words and ideas as they came. Looking back at the text now for this project, I felt it was something I could continue to revisit at different stages in my life and find different meanings and connections. For instance, the lines “this place is not what you thought/it’s not where you thought it would be anyway/does that even matter?” is very meaningful to me now as I find myself literally in a different country, studying in a program that when I wrote this didn’t even know existed. What I remind myself here is it’s ok to be in different places doing different things than you imagined because it’s all part of the journey of becoming who I am. I decided to blur out the image in stages until the end to coincide with the viewers unknowing that the poem is about myself until the last stanza/image.

As an interesting after note when reviewing the original image along with the image that was eventually used, I noticed that unintentionally in order to resize the image to fit the standard poster size I was ordering, I resized the image vertically to fit the frame, thereby lengthening and “thinning” my face and features. When working in photoshop I thought it was so slight as to be unnoticeable, but later after sending the posters to print, in reviewing the images along side each other I realized there was a somewhat considerable difference. I am noting this and have decided to keep the original work as is, because another important aspect of my identity is being revealed...I see myself, and have always to some degree seen myself, as thinner than I actually am. This is a visual denial that has allowed me to cope with gaining weight all my adult life. And while it brings up an issue that I won’t spend time on here, it is none the less part of the work that I am owning up to.