

Christy Brown

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Fading Mask

This photo was a part of a series of photos I did for my Lens Art Class. When I started on the project I had trouble coming up with ideas for it, but after I look at some inspirational material that was given to us to help gives us an idea of what the project was about I started to get some ideas. The idea I ended up with was the idea of masks and people wear metaphorical masks every day hiding their true feelings. In retrospect, I've had this idea in my mind for quite a while. The farthest back I can remember thinking of masks in these terms was when I play the game "Legend of Zelda: Majora's Mask." Ever since I've had this idea in my head in one form or another. But I usually had it idea to do it as a drawing or painting, not as a series of photos, so I had to take my idea and think of how I could practically do it. I first drew out some designs for the mask. I had the idea of the mask slowly disappearing to show the true face underneath. I went through many different designs and it took some time to come to the final design. What I came up with is a bright yellow mask with red lips, eyelashes, and blush on the cheeks. As the different photos went on the mask would disappear and the expression on the face would change along with it. After finalizing this design I got the material I needed, I got three masks and paint. I painted them one by one, the first one I made to look happy while the following masks were made to look sadder and sadder. After this, I set up a day to shoot. I knew I wanted to shoot in a populated area, so I decided to shoot out on campus near the student center. I used my sister as a model because she was the only person I had around. So we went outshooting the first batch of photos. I thought they were good but I was disappointed that there weren't too many people out on campus. After the critique in my Lens art class, I decided to try to improve my photos on my next go around. I went out again, this time I got some photos of her in a crowded area. I also used myself in some of the photos as well. After this, I edited them and picked the best for my project.

I must be honest I wish I had done more with this project. I don't know if it was because I had was busy with other work or just laziness on my part, these photos in some ways are a disappointment to me. One thing I hate in particular is that some of the photos were a little over-exposed because of how bright it was outside. Because of this, I had to fix them in post. I wish I'd had more of her in a crowded area, the whole point of it is to show the isolation and contrast between her and ordinary people. Without more photos like this, the meaning is lost. Although I do like the contrast between the bright yellow and the model's mostly blue outfits. She's usually the focal point of the photos, The bright yellow mask makes her stick out from the mostly bland areas. The one that sticks out the most is the one with me in it. It's the one with the close-up on the eyes. It shows the pain felt within and how it is being shielded by the mask.

The message I was trying to convey was how people hide their real feelings behind a mask. How people put on a happy while deep inside they are suffering. The whole progression of the piece is that as the photos go on the mask slowly disappears showing the slow decay of this front this person is putting on. Like I said in the beginning I've had this idea in my head for a

long time, but the thing that brought this idea to the forefront was the work of Ralph Eugene Meatyard. I saw his photos with people wearing rubber masks and it drew my eye to them. The contrast between the normal and the people wearing the mask struck me and I wanted to do something similar.

A-S 285 Lens Art Class- Lee Paynter