

## *The Living Testimony*

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The inspiration for this work came after I finished reading 'The Philosophy of Andy Warhol' by Andy Warhol and discovered an appreciation for his work that I had once disliked, for no reason other than artistic ignorance. After living inside Warhol's head for a month through this book I saw the world in Polaroid while the Velvet Underground played in the background, I was inspired. While completing art as a subject in school I never explored my photography artistically and sidelined it as only a personal hobby. However, Warhol has inspired me to explore more modern media than my normal traditional love, the use of oil paints and the old masters.

I began researching any iconic photographer I could find like P. Horst, Philippe Halsman, Man Ray, and Diane Arbus, all of these mesmerised me, and I am genuinely grateful that I had found their work through this project. Their use of and experimentation with black and white film was refreshing despite its age. The subjects they photographed and the lighting they used began to enforce this desire in me to create a photography installation as my Final Practical. I have for some years now appreciated the art of drag, so when the motif of gender nonconformity and artistic divas begin to emerge in my folio I wanted to explore it further.

This project is intended to be a combined visual display that captures the entire transformation process of drag art while paying homage to historical queer and drag representation in art and media. These ideas are specific homages to Warhol and Arbus while being aesthetically inspired by the black and white photography of the other photographers I investigated. Through the ensemble of my investigative work I am attempting to show the dedication put into the creation of a female portrait by a drag artist. Furthermore I am attempting to explore the potential of videographing my subject to create a more immersive portrait that captures more authentically the talent of these artists, when the video is juxtaposed against the static imagery I hope for it to create a narrative of the transformation of these people.

It is important in Australia's political climate that we are allowed windows into the lives of modern the queer artist in a way that encourages empathy and understanding through artistic education. To frame modern drag performers in a style that directly homages the past is indicative of drags historical presence and cultural importance.

Maybe that is "just what this country needs: a cock in a frock on a rock." – Pricilla Queen of the desert...