

# SHELLY SHORT

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## **Creative Research Statement**

I am interested in how our identity is formed by accepting or denying the layers that society places upon us throughout our lives. My artwork explores these layers and their significance to our “self” through the still and moving image.

As a photographer and filmmaker my goal is to capture moments, objects, or ideas that support a lifelong curiosity surrounding identity. When I approach a project my main objective is to explore the origin of each layer and emphasize its importance as part of the whole.

### **Identity Through Life’s Stages**

We are born with a pure sense of curiosity and wonder. As we grow and become aware of our individuality, our curiosity forms impressions through trial and error. This creates a perplexed uncertainty that moves us into a moment of personal self-awareness as it relates to our newly formed identity and its collision with society’s prescribed identity. We begin to assimilate and accept the social and psychological characteristics of a particular group that meets the needs of this prescription. We settle in to a collective pattern.

As our periods of trial and error continue the conscious choice to defect from dictated notions of identity, and the desire to adopt individual choice, lead us to exploration and self-discovery within the layers of self. Individuality, acceptance, and total awareness emerges from the exploration and creates a sense of confidence within ourselves. The journey through life ends with a recognition of self and an acute awareness of the inability to perform our desired identity due to the physical and mental restrictions of aging.

### **Identity As A Combination Of Layers**

I find that there are many different factors that shape how we identify ourselves and interact with the world around us. These factors are tested and applied to create a full version of perceived self. Traditions, symbols, and societal constructs influence our development. We form our identity through the investigation and selection of those influences.

### **Turning The Lens**

I appreciate all forms of art, but I gravitate towards the camera. My current work has been in experimental film and traditional landscape photography that investigates my present environment. Through my art, I have turned the lens on myself and investigated the layers that I have accepted or rejected. I ask myself, “Who am I?”, “What makes me who I am?”, and “How I am this person now?” Sometimes I am annoyed at where and who I am, but in other moments there is joy in the very spot I stand.