

This project was born from the desire to depict experiences that are often neglected by society – e.g., Romani and queer people or migrants – mixed with my own observations of the political debates in Hungary during this election year. My goal was to create intimate portraits displaying to an unaware audience how it feels to be an outsider in a context in which one can oftentimes feel not-welcomed or simply out of place, but also to experiment with some techniques I got in touch with through my academic studies.

Originally, my plan was to depict friends, most of them queer or foreign students, in intimate and personal spaces to them employing the video portrait technique to confront the viewer with images they are not used to see, either for not knowing any foreigner, for example, or for not being interested in knowing more about this type of experience. In this context, the video portrait technique was chosen due to its possibilities of conveying a subject's emotions and personality vividly by providing an immersive way to capture and present a subject. Its dynamism and movement explores identity, presence, and the relationship between the subject and the viewer in an intense way (CHRISTIANE, 2003).

My main inspirations, on the matter of technique employed, were the works of Bill Viola, namely *Ascension* (2000) and *The Crossing*, or the artworks of Robert Wilson in which he invited actors to play mysterious characters, but also the short documentary film *Portrait* (2002) by Sergei Loznitsa in which he highlights the passage of time and ways in which people can showcase who they are without uttering a single word.

However, during the early stages of the project I underwent a severe process of introspection. Being, at that point, almost two years far away from my family and culture started to highlight once again some cultural differences I experience as a Brazilian in Hungary. After believing I had overcome them, feelings related to loneliness and being misunderstood started to arise once again in me.

But these emotions are not exclusively mine, according to Koelet And De Valk (2016), migrants are more sensitive to social loneliness aspects and, at the same time, queer individuals are more susceptible to experience loneliness, stress and negative well-being (BLANKENAU ET AL.,

2023). As for me, this moment was when I realised that being in this intersection was influencing some of these feelings in me.

With the intention of working with my feelings and personal experience as a driving force of my project instead of an obstacle. I then decided to shift the camera's perspective, investigating which elements in me could convey what is to be me when nobody is watching – slightly lonely, out of my comfort zone and disconnected from my surroundings –, and depict these emotions I couldn't even find words for. It was a journey of self discovery, obviously, on a personal level but also professionally, since I was able to experiment with an approach I am not always in touch with – being a film student and not a photography student.

That way, my project "What happens if a tree falls in a forest but nobody is around to hear it?" uses the technique of video portraits to explore themes of loneliness and belonging, focusing on my personal experiences as a queer foreigner living in Hungary. Through a series of "self-video-portraits", I seek to capture the complexities of those feelings in everyday life, utilising subtle and unusual twists in situations that contain familiar elements to highlight the emotional depth of these moments.

The situations I chose are banal yet carefully selected to refer to a sense of comfort, routine scenarios in which we can let our guards down and be ourselves – having a bath, eating a cake or wearing pajamas, for example –, however, each scene contains a slight unsettling element. Through trial and error, I searched for situations in my life that could represent the internal disconnect between me and my surroundings in this foreign environment, amplifying feelings of isolation even in spaces that might otherwise seem familiar or bring solace.

Inspired by Marina Abramović's performance *The Artist is Present* (2009) and again *Portrait* (2002) by Sergei Loznitsa, I decided to place myself at the center of these video portraits staring at the audience or a specific object in the scene for ten minutes. With that, I want to challenge the viewer to confront the tension between outward appearances of normality and the internal struggles that define my experience as a migrant, whilst inviting them to take part in my silent emotional processes. The use of the unexpected shifts in daily situations intends to communicate

the subtle ways in which loneliness and alienation manifest in daily life. At the same time, the work raises questions about identity and presence – how belonging is both sought and resisted in these quiet, personal moments.

My goal was that the final pieces would offer an immersive, contemplative experience, inviting viewers to engage not only with my specific narrative but also to reflect on broader themes of solitude and connection. Through the medium of video portraiture, the project transforms mundane routines into spaces of emotional introspection, ultimately creating a visual and emotional dialogue between the artist and the audience.

REFERENCES

Amelia Blankenau, Amy Wax, Lena Auerbach, Zachary D. Schuman & Andrea Hopmeyer (2023) **Queer Peer Crowds on Campus: LGBT Crowd Affiliation as a Critical Correlate of College Students' Loneliness, Academic Well-Being, & Stress**, *Journal of Homosexuality*, 70:7, 1411-1439, DOI: 10.1080/00918369.2022.2030616

Koelet, S., & de Valk, H. A. G. (2016). **Social networks and feelings of social loneliness after migration: The case of European migrants with a native partner in Belgium**. *Ethnicities*, 16(4), 610-630. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1468796816638398>

Paul Christiane: **Digital Art**, London, Thames and Hudson, 2003.

Rush Michael: **New Media in Art**, Thames and Hudson, 2005.

Yanguas J, Pinazo-Henandis S, Tarazona-Santabalbina FJ. **The complexity of loneliness**. *Acta Biomed*. 2018 Jun 7;89(2):302-314. doi: 10.23750/abm.v89i2.7404. PMID: 29957768; PMCID: PMC6179015.