

Me, Myself and I

On the occasion of the exhibition *Francis Bacon and the Existential Condition in Contemporary Art*, the CCC Strozzi developed a special program **Me, Myself and I**, dedicated to American students who experience a period of artistic and cultural growth in the city of Florence.

The project involves art teachers leading studio art courses from six foreign universities in the city of Florence to initiate a shared reflection on the issues faced by artists of the exhibition.

Each teacher received didactic materials in order to explore the theme *Me, Myself and I* during their lesson programme, and have the chance to have guided tours to the exhibition. At the end of the project the involved teachers selected the students who were best able to interpret and develop the theme.

CAPA International Education

Jamie Miller Morris, Professor of Painting

CAPA students began this project contemplating the subject "myself in relation to Florence" in various ways, largely gathering practical experience and processing ideas working from local sculptures. The investigation was taken a step further after viewing the exhibit; examining the perception of oneself in response to the work of one of the artists represented.

Oliviero Draghi, Professor of Sculpture

Five students from my mixed media course plus two students from Letizia Francini Naldi's photography course at the Accademia Italiana participated in this project. Each student was encouraged to give a verbal presentation of images, thoughts and dreams stimulated by their having viewed the various artists' material. Some students told about the unfolding of their personal experience in Italy, one through a remake of the icons of Florentine art, others through a collection and re-elaboration of small everyday objects. For still others it was a reflection on the fragmentation/composition of their self image.

FUA – Florence University of the Arts

Nicolas Müller, Professor of Foundation Sculpture

When I first heard about this project, I felt very excited for the students. But soon afterwards I got really stressed "Me, myself and I". How will I avoid to let them falling into the "talking about myself" 's trap. In fact this is a very complicated theme and a challenge for this youngsters, almost all total beginners. Thankfully they are smart guys, and after few discussions, they all find their own path to follow. I finally decided to select two works out of the seven: *Consumption*, by Tyler Berry and *An Essay On Personal Identity*, by Andrew Thomas Wolfe.

If their two works are drawing a complete opposite theoretical approach, they have a strange similitude. While they are starting from a very figurative shape, their journey lead them to some degree of abstraction.

New York University

Alessandra Capodacqua, Professor of Photography + **Giuseppe Toscano**, Assistant Professor of Photography

Students from the class at NYU have been involved with creating work in conjunction with the show at the Strozzi. The students are at an intermediate/advanced level, and their works show a deep understanding of the topics presented in the exhibition. Each of them has chosen one artist in the exhibition, and has created photographs that resonate with the exhibited works. They have produced three original bodies of work inspired by the idea of self portrait and its relation to chaos (Katz), imagination (O'Neil), and limitations (Riegle).

Lorenzo de' Medici Institute

Rossana Pinero, Professor of Advanced Painting + **Elisa Gradi**, Professor of Art History

The development of the project *Me, Myself and I* with CCC Strozzi has been a very enriching experience for the students in the Advanced Painting course at LdM.

Throughout the project, viewings and discussions of artists' films, essays, art history lectures as well as individual and guided group visits to the multi-media exhibition *Francis Bacon and the Existential Condition in Contemporary Art*, have provided a constant flow of energy and inspiration for the students. In class discussions, we have further explored various aspects that deal with existentialism in many of its' potential forms of expression, Individual and autobiographical aspects have been often at the center of our focus and exchange of ideas with subsequent analysis on their potential use in the creative process. Emotions such as angst, despair and irony have been evaluated and considered in the process of art making, particularly related to painting and mixed media investigations.

SACI – Studio Art Center

Dejan Atanacković, Professor of Sculpture and Mixed Media Installation

The works in class developed as a response to recurrent elements in Francis Bacon's compositions: mirrors, shadows and portraits, things traditionally associated with the manifestation of a double, or a doppelgänger. In early anthropology the primitive double is primarily an evidence of cohabitation of death and man. With life and death historically separated, a modern double appears as an anxiety resulting from the strangeness of the familiar (the uncanny). A double - a competitor, an impostor, or rarely an advisor - announces the loss of the self, and it serves as a potential object of sacrifice and self-punishment (as in Billie Holiday's *Me, Myself and I*, a song about an unreturned love resulting in endless fragmentation of the subject). Students created video works that explored ways in which the self is manifested as external and fragmented, such as: a constant duplication of oneself in making everyday choices; a set of rules that promote bodily standards and behaviors; a dialogue about oneself performed by its two different manifestations; a parallel self made of collectable statistic data.

Syracuse University

Stefania Talini, Professor of Art Photography

SUF students of intermediate and advanced photography approached the theme *Me, Myself and I* investigating themes such as Identity, Personality, Spirit, Consciousness and Freedom, Authenticity, Body and Appearance, Intimacy and Estrangement. The students found themselves encouraged to both explore and translate their ideas visually in the forms that best reflected their own experiences. A guided visit of the exhibit *Francis Bacon and the Existential Condition in Contemporary Art* was a true source of inspiration for them.

Kirsten Stronberg, Professor of Painting

The Special Topics in Painting Class at SUF approached The Project: *Me Myself and I* focusing on 3 main aspects: The Metaphoric Self, The Body as Site for Expression, and Articulating The Non-Self. Sub themes included: Uncertainty, Honoring the abandoned and rejected, Memory, and The Eternal Return. After a period of technical research focusing on self-portraits, students developed their project work with on-site visual research in both inside and outside museums, linking the history of painting to their own contemporary existential questions, issues and concerns.