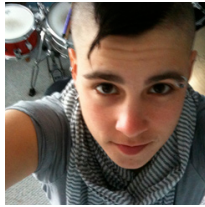


2011/12 Worldstudio AIGA Scholarships Young Photographer's Alliance Award



KATIE KOTI
Photography
Graduate Student
Yale



I have struggled throughout my life with an overwhelming and unexplained sense of disconnect from the world I am surrounded by. In the simplest terms, I do not know how to overcome the persistent feelings of being alone, of being different and feeling misunderstood. I cannot remember a time in my life where I have not felt the presence of anxiety and depression. This depression and disconnect have now merged into one singular entity as I cannot see far enough into my past to decipher whether I became depressed due to feeling disconnected, or whether the disconnect was a result of the loneliness which accompanies depression. Regardless, I have come to accept and honor these feelings rather than to try and repair or cover them.

Within this disconnect I have found a sense of place. Although I have felt the negative effects of being marginalized in a society that does not accept queers, those margins created a structure wherein a queer subculture formed – where differences are celebrated instead of scorned and unite rather than divide. Here I found a place where I could finally be in my own skin and where I wasn't alone anymore.



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the professional association for design

KATIE KOTI

Photography



I am drawn to exploring gender dynamics and roles. I feel that society has split gender and sexuality into two defined boxes – male and female, when they are much more complex and fluid. We live in a time where there has been so much progress and change, yet at the same time none at all. I feel responsible as an artist to articulate areas of cultural concern. This includes having awareness, in my work, of how images may play into, or challenge cultural norms. In addition, as photography is a pastime activity often attainable to the general public, when used as a fine art form, it also becomes a more accessible means of visual expression.

When I take pictures I feel connected to the world around me. This connection creates a sense of peace, both spiritually and mentally, that I so often cannot obtain otherwise. For me it is cathartic. Being an artist gives one the ability to transform pain into meaning. For me personally, I was able to take the things that isolated me from others and turn them into an outlet to engage with and connect with others.



My images addressing gender and sexuality create opportunities for me to educate people who may otherwise revert to traditional stereotypes and misconceptions about differences in identity. I use the accessibility of imagery to break down binary norms and stereotypes. I hope my photographs will enable a visual space where a dialogue about the work and the figures in the work can be questioned and discussed. The ultimate goal is that the viewer gains a greater sense of awareness of the diversity and commonality that exists in the gray areas of gender and sexuality. My hope is that my photographs will enable a visual space where a dialogue about the work and the figures in the work can be questioned and discussed. The ultimate goal is that the viewer gains a greater sense of awareness of the diversity and commonality that exists in the gray areas of gender and sexuality.

