

Title – Examining Enneagram Personality Type 5 through Photography

Program of Study – Graphic Design / Photography

Presentation Type – **Choose one of the following:** Juried Arts

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Proposal Abstract:

Research Problem Statement

Identity is a very complex subject. We spend a proportionally small amount of our lives deciding who we are and who we want to be, until we eventually settle into that identity for the majority of our lives. One way we are able to get a glimpse into people's identity is through personality tests such as the Enneagram test. These tests are not comprehensive, but give a glimpse into what someone's personality is like. Despite all of the information they give and the sometimes eerie accuracy these tests have they cannot fully profile someone because we as humans are so complex.

After taking part in the Enneagram test I found out that I am a type five. The Enneagram Institute says, "We have named personality type Five The Investigator because, more than any other type, Fives want to find out why things are the way they are." Similarly Your Enneagram Coach stats that, "Type Five is a person who pulls back from the world and other and prefers to live in their mind. They may be wise, visionary, and knowledgeable, or abstract, stingy, eccentric, and schizoid." My goal with my research was to use a combination of information from these tests as well as some deep self-reflection to produce a series of photographs that I felt reflected the way I thought about my personality.

Communication Objective

Personalities are very nuanced. Someone may feel like the personality test nailed them in one sense, but was completely wrong in another sense. It is impossible to profile anyone to anything so simple as just a number. That being said the Enneagram test is a very useful tool to be used to help relay your own personality to someone else. It can be difficult to explain your personality to someone, but using the Enneagram test to do so can help explain things you otherwise might not be able to.

My intention was to harness that part of the Enneagram test, but instead of explain it with words use photography instead. I chose 4 aspects of my personality as a type 5 that I felt really defined who I am. Those four parts of my personality were the titles of the photographs I took; Competence is Confidence, Detach for Reason, Live in the Mind, and Pursuit of Knowledge. Using the photographs I wanted to give people a glimpse into what I feel like it means to be a type 5. Each one of the photographs reflects how I feel about myself. I had to think a lot about myself and how I can relay that to others through photography.

Visual Solution

I will briefly describe each photograph and explain the thought behind it.

Competence is Confidence- In this photograph I wanted to relay the idea that when I am knowledgeable about something it makes me feel confident. Knowing that I understand a situation or task allows me to act naturally and confidently, but when I feel like I do not know enough I will often back away because I do not feel equipped enough. In the photograph I

staggered two copies of the same photograph to create a sense of confusion and disorder. If you notice the only thing that is clear is the reflection of the eyes in the mirror. The clearness of the eyes is meant to symbolize my competence in a subject. Although chaos may be all around me if I feel like I comprehend the situation fully I am confident in myself.

Detach for Reason- A hallmark of the Type 5 is their tendency to seem detached from people and the world. This is something I found I could relate to significantly. I often keep my thoughts and emotions to myself. I avoid intimacy very often, not because I am afraid of getting hurt but because that is my natural inclination. I know that emotions are valuable and meant to be expressed but I often suppress them in favor of reasoning through situation. My sense of rationality is very strong and I often reason myself out of feeling emotion. The photograph shows this by showing shadows of the main figure that are detached from the main figure. This is to signify how I may be feeling a certain way but I will detach from myself in favor of reason.

Live in the Mind- Very similarly to the last examples this photography is meant to show my tendency to “live in my mind”. Taking my time to think through every situation and coming up with appropriate reactions are keys to how I handle interactions. I often find myself lost in thought playing out situations in my head or analyzing something that has already happened. My brain is always running and I often feel like I can escape to my thoughts as another home of sorts. The photograph depicts a second face and building rising up from the main figure’s head. This is supposed to reflect the idea that my head is my home.

Pursuit of Knowledge- Another key aspect of the type 5 personality is their thirst for knowledge. I love learning and that love is not limited to any specific area. I enjoy knowing things just to know them, whether or not the information will prove useful. From music to design to surfing to film I have a lot of interests where I will intentionally learn all I can. For me there is a new door around every corner with information behind it. This is how I decided to show this idea in the photograph. Opening the door is meant to show my constant searching for new knowledge.

How it was produced

After deciding on the themes for each photograph I started brain storming ways I could show my ideas. I decided to use a person in all of the pictures because I felt like since the subject was so personal it would seem odd not have a person. I chose to feature a double exposure or layering effect in all of the pictures because of the complexity and layers to my personality. I chose black and white because theta is very representative of how my brain works. After taking the photos I brought them into Photoshop and layered them to create a single photo for each part of my personality I chose.

After creating the composites I edited each photo individually until I got the shadows and highlights how I wanted them. A part of my photographic style I use high contrast so when making black and white photos I wanted to make sure each photo had some shades very close to true black as well as some bright whites. Not only does the imagery of the pictures display my personality but also the way in which I edited them as well. Every part of the series of photographs is in some way reflective of how I think about my personality.

