

SUMMARY

“The Influence of Body Image on Art and the Creator”

Body image or body perception is an important part of self-concept, involving the perception, thoughts, and related activities of one's own body. Body image can range from healthy and positive (one extreme) to unhealthy and negative (the other extreme), often not corresponding to reality. The perception of body image is dynamic and may change throughout life, often complicating the development of negative body image during the transition period of adolescence. A negative body image can occur in both men and women in different socioeconomic situations, regardless of racial or ethnic background.

Body dissatisfaction is a major problem in today's society, especially influenced by social media. Frequent body comparisons to unrealistic standards can lead to the development of a negative body image. Therefore, it is important to educate people about this potential harm and protect their mental health.

Body dysmorphic disorder is a mental health disorder characterized by an obsessive focus on perceived flaws in appearance. Symptoms include obsessions with specific body parts, compulsions to alleviate anxiety, and disruptions in functioning that affect social life. The disorder often begins to develop in adolescence and can cause difficulties in daily functioning and relationships.

Artists have tried to depict the liberation of the physical form of the body through hybrid forms that distort traditional ideals. For example, Cindy Sherman and Jenny Saville have created works that address body image issues and represent the multifaceted meaning of the body through digital manipulation and traditional art techniques. Rankin Waddell has produced work that raises awareness about body dysmorphia and seeks to challenge societal beauty norms.

Self-harm as an art form is a controversial and complex topic that raises questions about expression, mental health, and interpretation. When dealing with it, it is important to be sensitive and understanding, while also emphasizing non-harmful coping mechanisms and seeking professional help. Self-harming through art creation can be therapeutic, helping with healing and encouraging individuals to seek treatment and stop harmful behavior.

As a practical part of my project, the photo series focuses on an episode of body dysmorphia, where a person looks at themselves in the mirror and starts "perfecting" themselves, trying to visualize their illness accurately. My goal was to use the creative process as a therapeutic form of expression and give the viewer an insight into the struggle with body dysmorphia, presenting my personal experience of distorted body image through the photo series.

The process I conducted was successful, I learned a lot of interesting and useful information on the topic and I was able to find mental relief in the practical part of my research. I hope that my thesis enlightens the reader as much as myself and that discussing it helps reduce the stigma of disorders and contribute to a more positive and healthier body image in society.