SUMMARY

This thesis explores the representation of depression in contemporary photography and its influence on both the artist and the creative process. The research focuses on depression as a mental health condition within visual culture and examines how an internal and often invisible psychological state can be communicated through photography. The written research is connected to an autobiographical practical project, the photographic series I Am Not Okay (2026). The aim of the thesis is to understand the visual possibilities of depicting depression and to use artistic practice as a method of self-reflection and therapeutic expression. The theoretical section approaches depression as a psychological, cultural, and visual phenomenon. The research is informed by Stuart Hall's theory of representation, Sara Ahmed's affect theory, and cultural-psychiatric approaches that explain how emotions, space, and the body produce meaning in visual culture. Depression is discussed as a condition characterized by slowness, emotional emptiness, isolation, and immobility. The thesis also examines the role of art as a tool for interpreting and making visible psychological experiences. An important part of the thesis analyzes representations of depression in art history and contemporary photography. The works of Sophie Calle, Tracey Emin, and Anna-Stina Treumund are discussed in relation to themes of loneliness, vulnerability, psychological suffering, and autobiographical artistic practice. Their works demonstrate how personal emotional experiences can be transformed into universal visual language. The practical part of the thesis consists of the photographic series I Am Not Okay, which visualizes the everyday presence of depression in the author's life. The series is divided into three parts. The first section presents a static image of a bed, symbolizing immobility and altered perception of time associated with depression. The second section introduces fragmented body imagery, reflecting distorted self-perception and the bodily experience of mental illness. In the third section, the author is photographed by close friends and family members, exploring how depression is perceived from the perspective of others. The photographs are created using a documentary visual approach, natural lighting, and static compositions in order to emphasize a quiet, slow, and uncomfortable atmosphere. For the author, the creative process functioned as a therapeutic practice that enabled reflection on personal experiences and the impact of depression on everyday life and identity. The thesis aims to contribute to a broader understanding of depression and to reduce the stigma surrounding mental health issues in contemporary society.