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Artist Statement

Changing Room

Following my wedding in July 2009, I decided to make a series of changes to my lifestyle in order to lose weight. During the year that followed, I successfully lost over 160 pounds. Throughout this time I was also working towards my BFA in photography at the Milwaukee Institute of Art & Design (MIAD.) Utilizing self-portraiture, I explored my physical and emotional experiences, subsequently developing my long-term photographic project entitled "Half."

Both in front of the lens and not, I struggled to come to terms with my changing body. As the weight came off, the shape of my body shifted dramatically and the monumental task of maintaining a well-fitting wardrobe ensued. I felt lost, not understanding the person looking back at me in the mirror. My physique was always in a state of flux and, in an attempt to strike a balance between how I felt and how I looked, I ventured out to stores on a daily basis, piling my arms full of clothing of all shapes and sizes. There was no method to my madness and I subsequently spent hours within the confines of store dressing rooms trying to "find" myself. Purely for personal reference, I used my iPhone to document these endeavors.

The first photograph in "Changing Room" was taken in early 2009, well before I embarked on my healthy-living journey. I was shopping for my wedding dress with my sister, Jamie (who actually doubled as the photographer for the image.) Evident is my discomfort; not only with the dress I was modeling but also with the act of allowing myself to be "captured" by the photograph. Nearly 200 images followed. From swimwear and ballgowns, to lingerie and high heels (some items more serious than others,) the digital captures harness not only the physical, but also the emotional, changes I endured - unrestricted by the photographic constraints embedded from my training.

The images in "Half" are real and true to my personal experience but are also very controlled in their execution – equal consideration was paid to visual aesthetics as it was to content. The images in "Changing Room" are just the opposite, as it was not an intentional photographic series. These photographs were never meant to be shared, they were taken for myself. It wasn't until one year later, succeeding the completion of my series "Half," that I uncovered the archive of cellphone images I had amassed.

Upon reflection and retrospection, these photographs have been released as, the now titled series, "Changing Room." They serve an important role breaching the divide between the public and the private and offering a raw, uncensored, and unrestricted "behind-the-scenes" look of my personal experience. These images not only compliment those in "Half" but also connect to the more universal themes of body-image and self-exploration that I continue to investigate in my complete body of work.