

RadioPaper

In Collaboration with Adam Thirlwell
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Autoportraits with Hidden Elements

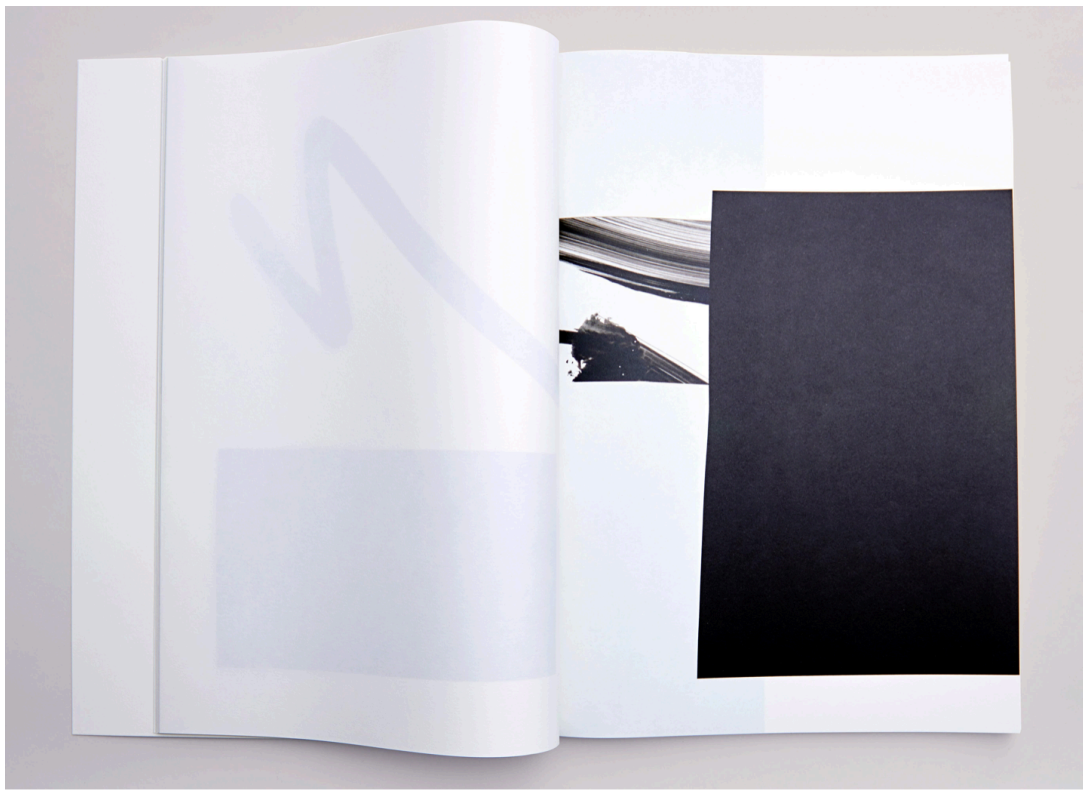
1

It was when she was about to go out that she realised she had not consulted her reflection in a mirror. Outside the sun was melting and the lights on cabs were emerging more strongly in the twilight, and inside she felt a kind of urgency or fear. True, she had a small hand mirror but this was only the kind of mirror that exists to help you with an emergency of eyeliner, whereas what she needed was to see her look entire. And of course to be disconnected or disjointed from one's whole reflection is a dilemma, it is a terror to be considered, and she considered it when suddenly

she remembered that in fact of course she did have the perfect mirror, right here in her hand. Gratefully she took her phone and arranged herself in a series of poses, for if you want to know what you look like it's not possible to rely on a single pose. She took a series of photobooth shots, and was comforted, and that's at least one version of utopia, to have this kind of access to your image so successfully and with such ease.

2

F o r
r e a l l y
s o
m a n y



rehearsals are necessary, and in private, too, to create the perfect autoportrait. And this is true especially when you are arranging a photo to be sent to the person you are currently going to bed with: it's a terrible trial to confirm that all the angles are correct, it's not so simple as aesthetics, it also involves philosophy and a knowledge of the sublime and what flatness might really look like, so that when you are posing in a bikini or naked in the bathroom, you need to make sure your breasts or muscles or other features

are visible in a way that makes you happy, that your nipples are darkly visible, and that the light disguises the fact that your arm has a bruise or small cut, or the way from a certain angle your bottom looks not voluptuous but just some strange way your leg is growing. For what's the point of doing this unless it will turn the other person on? Without the erotics and the demands the erotic imposes it makes no sense to be sending such a photo at all.

3

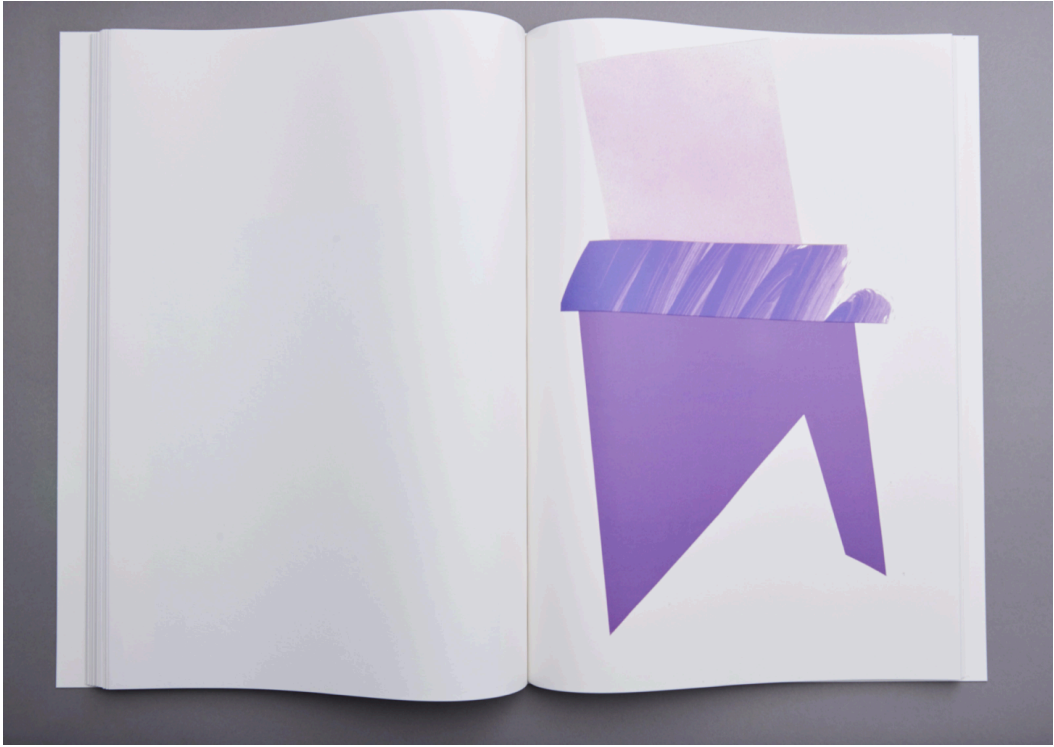
In one picture you just see in the foreground a girl and her make-up, the little fringe swept over and each eyelash arranged around it, in the perfect anime mode. Then beside her the make-up artist employed for the occasion, and her orange frappé and kit bags of toner and make-up. But what you only slowly see is

how behind her there is a mirror, which therefore displays the reverse side of the photo, where the girl, who seems suddenly smaller, now that she is no longer in the foreground but the background, is holding up her phone to take the picture, whose flash is blazing white against the yellow dressing room wall.

4

The dirtiest selfie she ever took was

between her legs, when she was slightly glistening, the softness and the waxed hair above it, and this too required many versions and for a particular reason, because it's strange how difficult it is to do, to allow that kind of image to acquire an aura and charisma, so often it can seem impersonal and almost absent, but still, it is possible if you only try with carefulness and persistence, and if you include, for instance, the fingernails of your hand gently touching where the wetness starts.



To possess this many autoportraits is at least some method of self-preservation, to guard against the way time does its ravages to your memory, and I guess that also is a mini utopian procedure. It's like when someone asks you what tumblrs you follow and you say *oh so many things* and then they say *but what exactly* and you say

you know, right now I can't think of any but I like a whole bunch of them, and it very gently leaves you worried that everyone thinks you must have lied, even though of course you have not lied, you just have these moments in your memory which are presently unavailable. In the same way, or for the same reason, to guard against all absences you take selfies.