



When an artist uses herself as a subject, it is merely because she thinks it would be easiest? Sometimes yes, but for me, self-portraiture is also done specifically to reveal something about the artist, either to an audience or to the artist herself.

As an example: an artist can design a photograph where make-up is used to make the photographed look as if they had a physical scar on their face in a effort to say something about what they have gone through, to validate emotional scars they have. That physical scar is a conscious attempt on the artist's behalf to tell the audience something about herself.

Self-portraiture can also say something about the world. Self portraiture can be very political in nature, revealing society's attitudes toward sexism or power, for example. But the artist consciously chooses to photograph herself usually because she feels somehow personally connected with the topic at hand.

In one example a mood can be created merely by the composition and the expression on the subject's face. That photograph could tell the artist as well as the viewer about herself.

And often that is what it does. "Therapy photography" uses the camera as a tool to help people discover things about themselves. By acting like they are their own mother or father for the camera, for instance, they can learn about feelings they don't express verbally - by seeing a scowl on their face, closed arms, what have you. Often the photographer wants to understand herself; that's why she does the work she does.

I have made an attempt to do a portrait of myself that I thought would say something substantial. But I found that the images often revealed more than I wanted to know. A lot of these photographs do that, intentionally or not. These photographs can reveal the basic emotions the artist has - and the basic emotions that most people have. And because they can be so personal, they can therefore be very strong.













