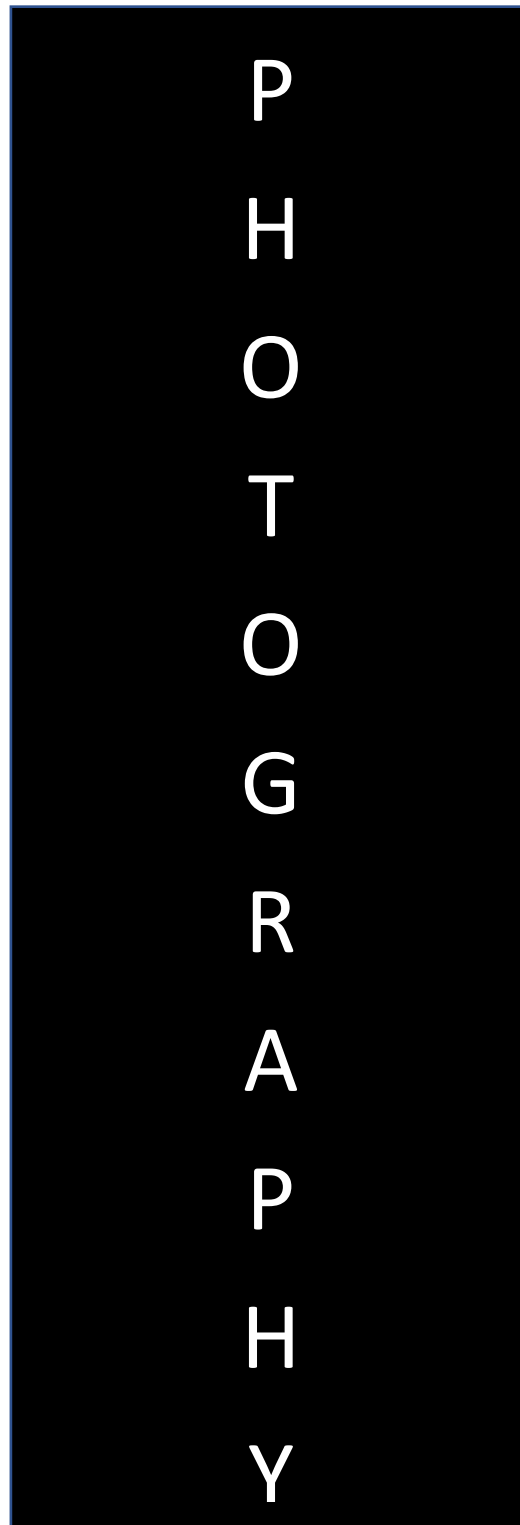


Venus E. Ashu

Photography Project – Apollo's Baptism



MAX CAREY MEMORIAL PRIZE

Apollo's Baptism looks at the rebirth of masculinity and the process of healing from the whiplashes of societal expectations.

My father himself inspired this project. After losing his mother this year, I saw my dad cry for the first time. I've never seen him do this because he was always very funny and smiley. Yet, I didn't take this for a weakness. In fact it made him stronger to me, to know that my dad is a man of emotion, a man of pain, a man of love.

As a lover of greek and roman mythology I was also inspired by the god of light, art, truth, healing and prophecy – Apollo, the son of Zeus. He was considered to be a powerful diety that many worshippers looked to, especially high priests, for strength and guidance.

It is said that when Apollo was born, he was born holding a golden sword that turned the entire island into gold. The colour gold had to be a key theme in the project as well as the contrast between light and darkness. Light and darkness are key themes as they represent the mythological land called Hyperborea. There, a vast, beautiful forest named the Garden Of Apollo would blossom and glisten during it's eternal spring which is when Apollo was present there. However, when Apollo would leave it would cast this place into a cold night like winter.

Masculinity isn't what society demands it to be. It isn't defined by height, strength or the amount of women you sleep with. It is the very depths and dna of the male soul.

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I hope my project allows you to answer the question: What makes a man?





Apollo is being baptised and reenergised in the beams of the sun.







He meditates on his soul and connection with the earth.





The cold winter months. Apollo understands the strength behind both confidence and insecurity. He finds comfort in his skin.







The eternal spring. Apollo is beautiful and therefore sees the beauty in everything else. His light, contagious, his joy, abundant.



After my own research and fulfillment of this project I have found my own answer:

Once you've understood yourself and your very being, only then can you understand your masculinity. Only then can you be a man.