

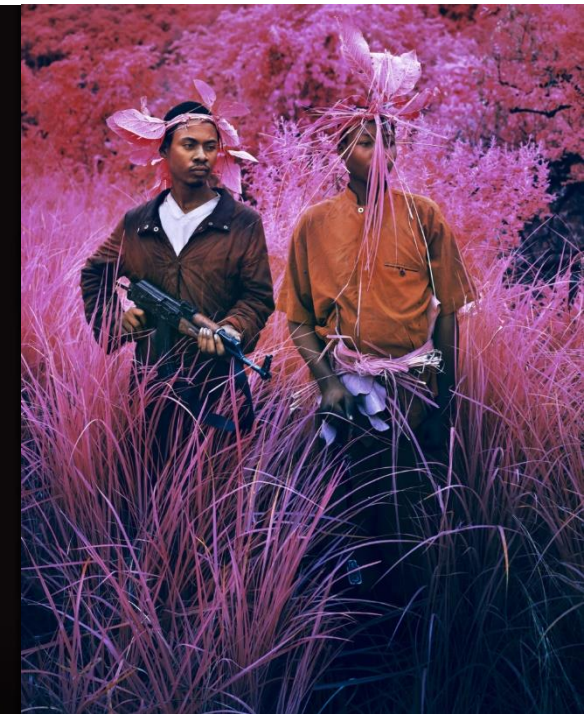
## ***Major Project Proposal – Daniela Zaharieva***

**Summary:** This project will focus on creating a short experimental digital or analogue film, aiming to communicate two distinct inner states through transforming environments as a reflection to the experience of a fictional character. It will specifically focus on melancholia and euphoria as environments. To do so the primary research will focus on collecting data through qualitative research of people who have been diagnosed with bipolar disorder and have experienced depressive and manic episodes. Although the project is not aiming to create a representation of what bipolar disorder might feel like, as there is no first-hand experience of the artist, it does aim to inexplicitly emphasize the complexity of mental disorders through focusing on these 2 particular extremes, whilst also incorporating previous works about psychological states, such as a panic attack in *Expressions* (Zaharieva, 2020) and dissociation in *Blue Esc.* (Zaharieva, 2021).

**Initial Research:** The initial research looks at Jonathan Glovers text, *The Philosophy and Psychology of Personal Identity*, which states that the belief that a person has an indivisible unity is mistaken. Essentially arguing that one's physical body and consciousness can exist separately, whilst maintaining a unity to a certain degree. The only exception of this unity is in pathological cases and when this unity is so radically shattered, perception of reality often becomes distorted. Distortion of perception is experienced in both affective and psychotic disorders and so altering existing environments would be an effective way of communicating this often presenting experience. Julia Kristeva's *Strangers to Ourselves* is also a part of the initial research, where one particular word stood out for me, fugue. In psychiatry, dissociative fugue is a loss of awareness of one's identity, commonly coupled with flight from one's usual environment, associated with disruption of conscious awareness and perception. (*What Is Dissociative Fugue?*, 2021) This led to further exploration into distorted perception, particularly in understanding this distortion presented in different and drastic ways from desolation to elation and communicating that visually through the transformation of environments.

**Psychology:** Secondary research stems from previous works related to psychological states and breach in perception of reality, as informed for the creation of the piece *Expressions* as well as *Blue Esc.* It further looks at different definitions of bipolar disorder to understand its complexity. Bipolar Disorder is something that fluctuates with time and episodes can last days, weeks or even months. Some people are affected more severely from it and can even experience hallucinations or delusions in both depressive and manic states. The research is primarily informed from *The Lancet Medical Journal* (Phillips and Kupfer, 2013) which presents the modern psychology definition of bipolar disorder within a group of "affective disorders in which patients experience episodes of depression, characterized by low mood and related symptoms (eg, loss of pleasure and reduced energy), and episodes of either mania, characterized by elated or irritable mood or both, and related symptoms such as increased energy and reduced need for sleep, or hypomania, whose symptoms are less severe or less protracted than are those of mania." (Phillips and Kupfer, 2013).

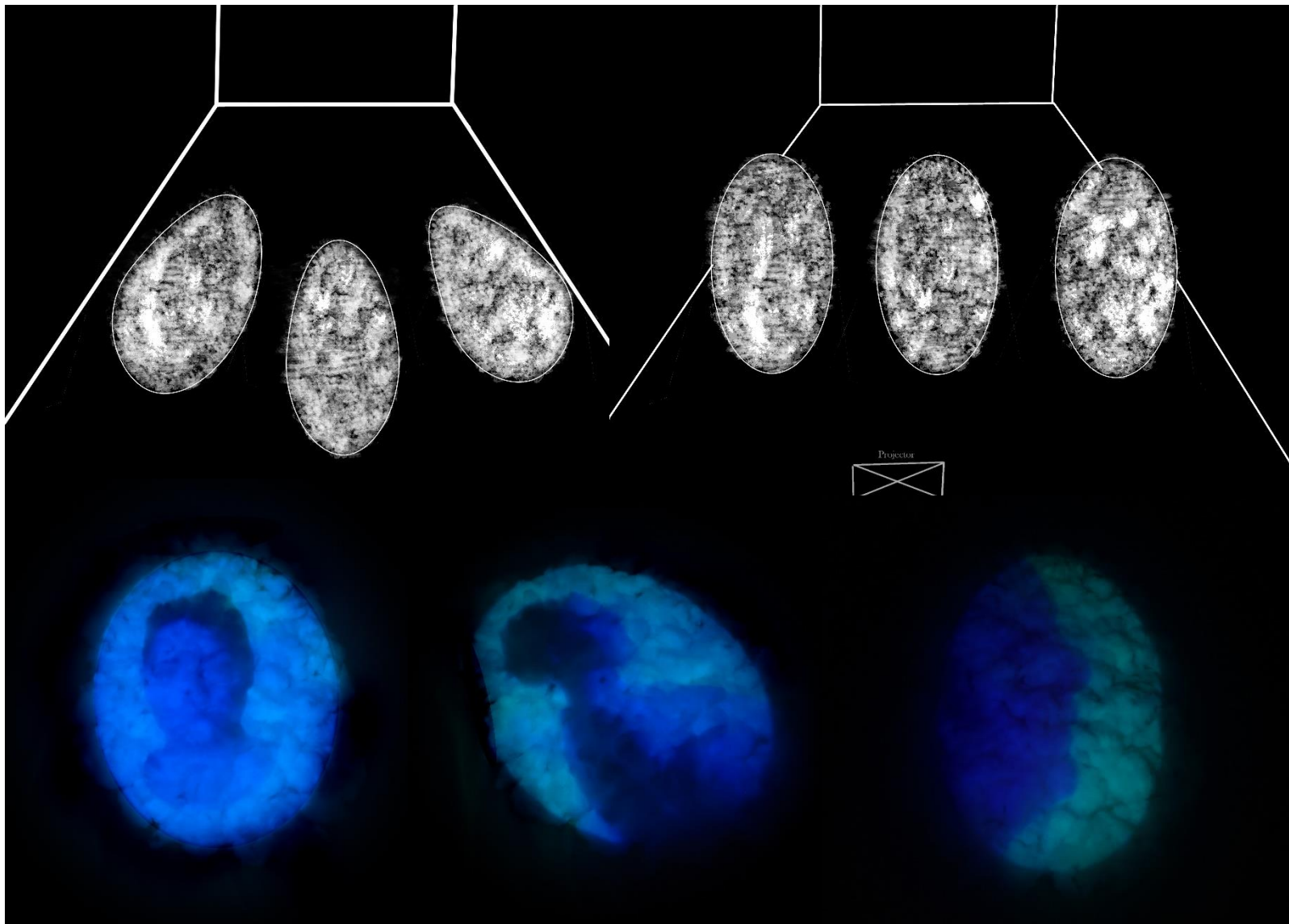
## Inspirational Artists



1. Jim Hobbs, Black Sun - Jim Hobbs work has the following recurring themes: observation, landscape, monuments as well melancholia. One specific piece which will act as a core reference in my work is Black Sun which is described as a pensive observation of the sun itself, “forming a type of melancholic and abstract environment” (Hobbs, 2021). In some ways the notions of the sun and its potential of eliciting delusion remind me of a portal into another state of mind. Meanwhile the monochrome scheme is what evokes a despondent reaction from the viewer.

2. Richard Mosse, *Hot Rats* - When it comes to vibrant and surreal visuals for environments externalizing the inner elation of the character, Richard Mosse became an inspiration. He is an Irish conceptual documentary photographer who transforms places by using thermal imaging photography. In his *Infrared* series, as seen in *Hot Rats* (2012), Richard Mosse has transformed a landscape which at the time served as terrain for war, into a totally different reality, something out of sight for the human eye and other-worldly. This different reality and intangibility is exactly what I am aiming to achieve as a portrayal of the contrasting states of an inner self, reflected in different environments.
  
3. Pipilotti Rist, *Ever is Over All* - Her work mostly focuses on creating experimental video art and installation art which is very relevant to the work I am proposing as it consists of both. What initially brought my attention to her work was the striking colours she uses and the surrealism these colours bring to environments she presents to the viewer. She creates worlds which are hyper saturated and are part reality, part fantasy. In *Ever is Over All* (1997), Pipilotti “transforms a destructive impulse into a hopeful, cathartic gesture” (MoMA Highlights: 375 Works from The Museum of Modern Art - Paperback (2019), 2021). The calming blue hues, the slowed down pace and visual implications such as the policewoman all play a part in communicating to the viewer that this is a dreamscape, an illusion or a visual representation of thoughts or feelings, and not a physical environment.

# Installation



Overall, the concept of this piece aims to create a visual representation of what extreme opposites of internal experiences might look like as a reflection in the world and it uses research into both affective and psychotic disorders to inform that as well as artists which present concepts of melancholia, elation, transforming existing environments and considering psychological spaces.

The video piece will be presented as an installation through the creation of 3 portals as gateways to the variety of psychological experiences that have been explored throughout the past year. There is much to be considered about the installation through further experimentation, yet as of the most recent experiments the use of fibre filling has proven to be effective in achieving certain qualities such as depth, texture and aesthetics which develop the piece further.

#### **The “Digital” Aspect:**

In relation to this project, digital art is a means for immersion and experimentation with a type of media, it being video, which is constantly digested in modern society and is commonly used as a way of spreading awareness, educating or creating experiences, which makes it the perfect way of creating this type of work. The digital in this proposal also becomes a mixed media installation, from fabric made sculpture, to video and projection. Similar the ways Pipilotti Rist uses digital art in her work.

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