Photography by Helena Kennedy [300596981]

COPING

Processing the World Around us.

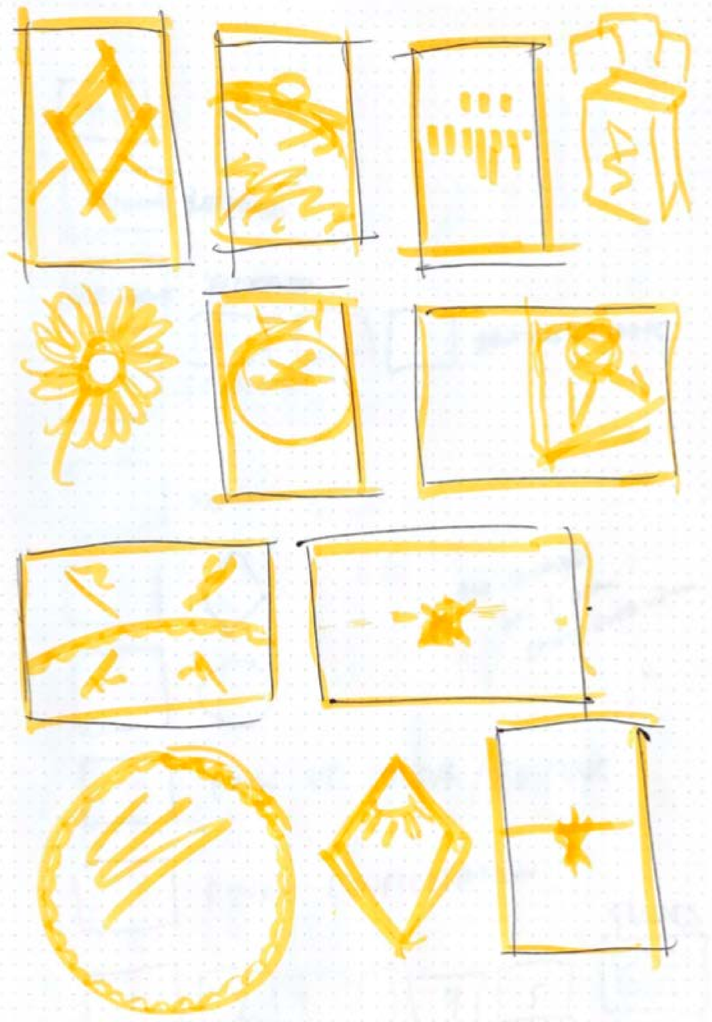
Situation

With the arise of many situations (even unprecedented ones) comes a flood of emotion, opinions and change… All of which have to be processed by individuals day in and day out. I wanted to explore the ways we cope with situations, whether they are unhelpful or perhaps timely I think it's a beautiful process of the human experience. I have explored perception and reflection in a physical and philosophical manner and attempted to represent a psychological process that takes place differently in everyone. Processing internal and external situations is very hard yet crucial to growth.

Ideology Development

My idea originated from a conversation about how situations can be positive or negative but mostly In our world the situations tend to lean towards negative. I explored so many ideas about circumstances / unprecedented times, I landed on ideas about solitude as a huge part of the problem but also part of the solution.

I expanded on the idea of how an individual copes with all types of situations and researched common stress responses. My idea went from many fragments of ideas to this idea around reflection of how we are coping. From the way information is coming in all day everyday to how we attempt to manage our emotions and ultimately how we grow throughout all this difficult change.



When I started reflecting deeper on the situations currently taking place in our social climate I realised there was a lot that I havn't fully processed yet. I went back over my brainstorms and realised that so much of what I had written was about coping stategies; how we are just making it up and figuring it out as we go.

Precedent One : Florence Henri

Florence Henri was a surrealist artist and who was primarily introduced to photography at The Bauhaus and experimented with photography from 1929 - 1963. She composed her photographs as if they were paintings and used mirrors to add new perspectives into her paintings. Her range of work is very broad but I am inspired by the way she explored the mechanics of perception by using deep shadow, interesting compositions and reflections to create quite abstracted black and white photographs. Her work is puzzling with random juxtapositions and industrial objects but it is beautiful and intriguing. I want to explore using visible reflections as symbolism for internal reflection that is taking place as well as creating abstracted photographs with intentional composition.

Henri, F.(1929). *Jeanne Lanvin* [Photograph]. Time. https://time.com/3675305/florence-henri-jeu-de-paume/

Henri, F.(1938). Self portrait [Photograph]. Time. https://time.com/3675305/florence-henri-jeu-de-paume/

Henri, F.(1937). Brittany [Photograph]. Time. https://time.com/3675305/florence-henri-jeu-de-paume/

Henri, F.(1930). *Woman with cards* [Photograph]. Time. https://time.com/3675305/florence-henri-jeu-de-paume/

Henri, F.(1930). Tulia Kaiser, Circa [Photograph]. Time. https://time.com/3675305/florence-henri-jeu-de-paume/

Henri, F.(1929). *Window* [Photograph]. Time. https://time.com/3675305/florence-henri-jeu-de-paume/

Precedent Two : Coping Mechanisms

Coping is the constantly changing cognitive and behavioural efforts to manage emotion and stress or external or internal demands. Coping can look very unique to each person depending on their personal understanding of themselves or the world around them but there are some common coping strategies that I want to explore through my photography.

1. Denial - Denying problems or feelings.
2. Disengaging - dissociating and detaching, potentially giving up.
3. Creating strategies or plans to process, reflecting and future thinking.
4. Reframing and accepting. Could look like forgiveness or letting go.
5. Seeking support. Wisdom or insight, can be from close people or just space to express.

S, Blum. R.C. Silver. (2012). *Coping Strategies*. Science Direct. https://www.sciencedirect.com/topics/medicine-and-dentistry/coping-strategies

Shoot 1 : Solitude/Detaching

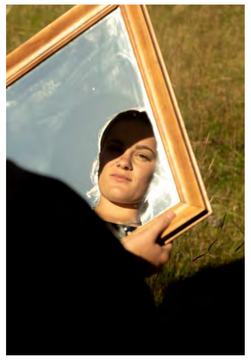
During this shoot in Mapua we were familiarising ourselves with the mirror and the possibilities of reflection. I was trying to experiment with a shorter depth of field which is something I havnt tried before. When I was shooting I had these ideas of denial and disengaging/detaching in mind and I wanted the model to be completely alone within the frame. I struggled with some of the exposure but overall achieved quite high contrast photos that I'm quite proud of.

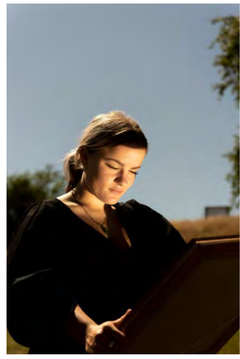
f/3.2 1/640s ISO100

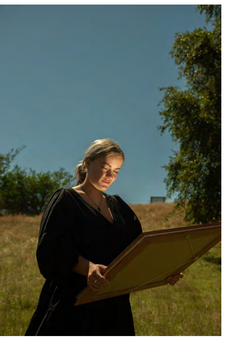
f/5.0 1/800s ISO100

f/9.0 1/320s ISO100

f/5.0 1/800s ISO100







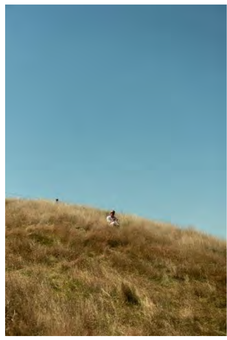
f/5.0 1/800s ISO100

f/5.0 1/500s ISO100

f/4.5 1/800s ISO100

f/5.0 1/500s ISO100

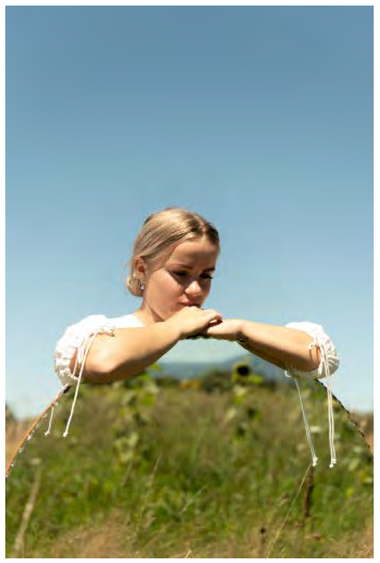
f/9.0 1/500s ISO100



f/4.5 1/800s ISO100

During the editing of these shots there was no drastic things I wanted to change except the tone - I felt as though editing that looked subtly like film (darker blacks, warm toned + green tint) helped to focus in on the subject and define the contrast in colours - Cropping was a huge part of this as well, I really cropped a lot of them to have only the subject and the ideas in frame and not really anything else.

Shoot 2 : Growth/Denial



f/3.5 1/1000s ISO100

f/3.5 1/1000s ISO100

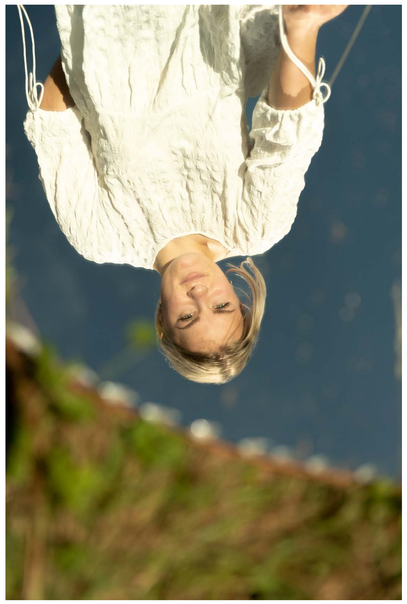
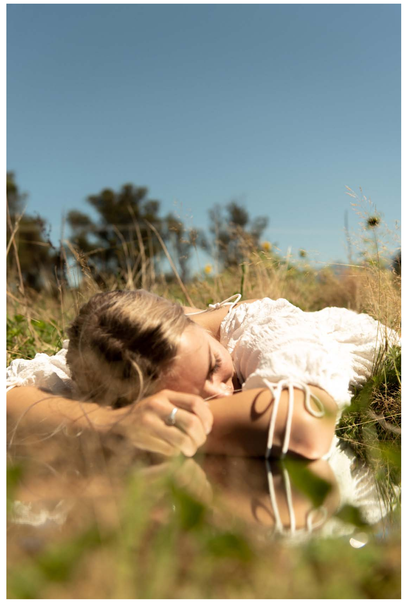
@ Aporo Rd

For this shoot I focused on bisecting lines and beginning to sort of distort reality with the mirror. I loved creating these contrasts of sky and sunflower fields within the photos which felt like how Florence Henri so precisely sets up her photographs like a painting. I had to be quite selective about my angles and the way the mirror was pointing to show what I wanted and avoid lots of harsh objects. I focused on the coping mechanism of denial which is more obvious in the photos in the top right where the subject is potentially confused, contemplative and exhausted - this is all part of the growing process. I love how effortless the photos appear even though it was quite a hassle to shoot but there's something quite peaceful about them considering the effort. I chose to follow the same editing style as the first group but there was way less to fix because I set up my camera well before shooting. I did remove some minor things from the sky that felt like they took away from the subject.

Shoot 3 : Perception

f/3.5 1/1250s ISO100

@ Ruby Bay

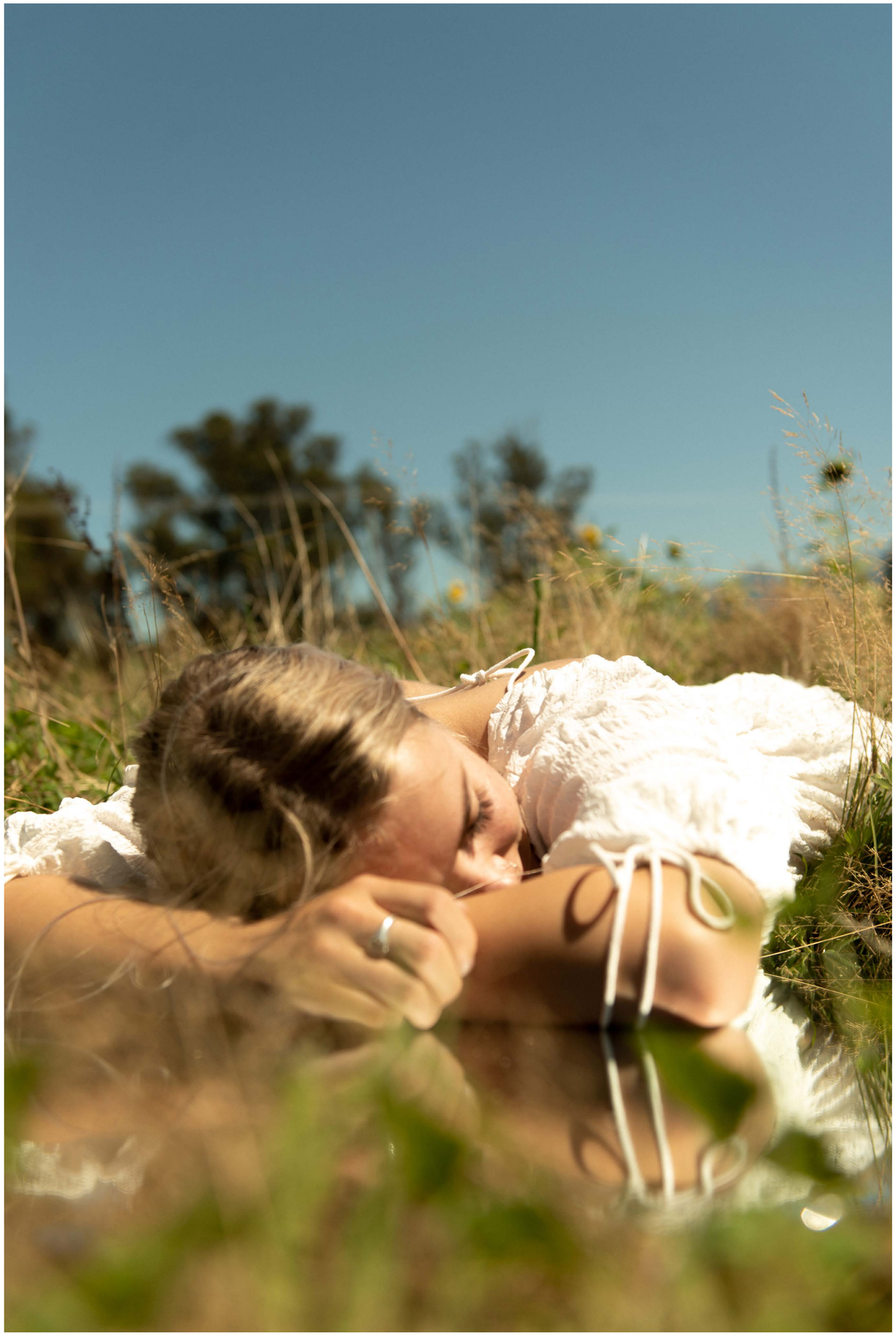
Exploring techniques inspired by Florence Henri. I changed it up a bit and really started to play with perception, this was so fun for me to paint new pictures of reality and use the reflections in ways that I didn't even think was possible.

I couldn't bring myself to put these in B+W like Henri as I enjoy the colouring and the tones so much - also the way the light is carried through the mirror and the difference in colouring is so intriguing. These photos seek to portray a more a version of coping that is more confident and effortful. From seeing things in a new light to acceptance and considering a way forward - I love the way this series explores reflection physically and philosophically.

Exploring B+W

Something I didnt consider well before I shot was how much the colouring on a beautiful sunny day would affect the emotion of the photograph - it could take something that wasnt meant to be positive and make it look fun. Also when working with the mirrors the contrast of the blues and greens of the sky and plants means that you cant really see the reflection without the colour. I love these following shots in a monochrome high contrast edit but seeing as this reflection of coping mechanisms is a current situation taking place and one that will continue to take place for every individual and not a thought of the past; I want to keep the colour for my finals.

denial : i dont want to talk about the hole in my heart.

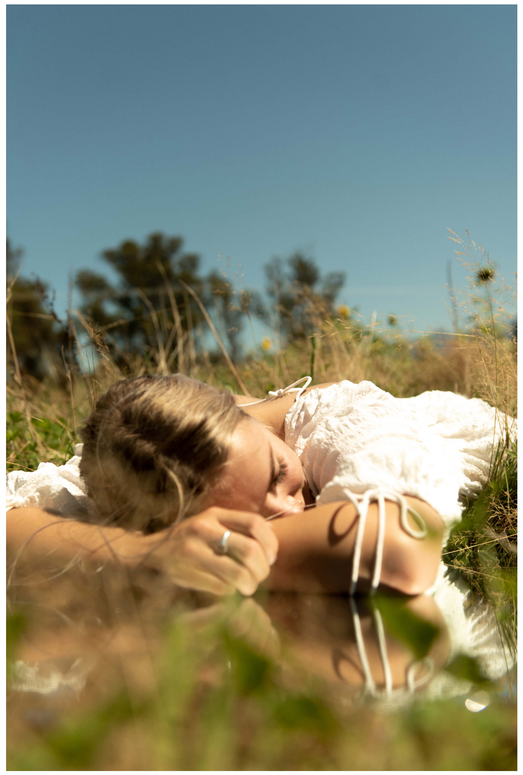


disengage : sleep it away

reinterpret : new or different light

acceptance : own it

support : the only pep talk that matters



COPING =

denial
disengage
reinterpret
acceptance
support

Thank you to my beautiful friend Paris for being the face of this project x.