

Studio

Cassidy Clark

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Introduction

The photographer's studio is invisible. Whatever context it gives to a photo is concealed, it is designed to look like nowhere and to show nothing of itself. In a finished, professional work, it is full of light, but no light stands. It has a center of vision, but no cameras. Backdrops, often white, are silent and infinite — reminiscent of the "neutrality" of a gallery.

The studio is also a work space. It is where subjects, usually paying, come to have their photo taken. The work of the photographer is extractive; focused on the work and what will come out of the session. If there is conversation, it is a one-way direction, even command. There are roles, and they are binary: the owner of the studio, and the visitor.

Studio hopes to depart from that.

These photos are from mutual photoshoots, in which my subjects were other photography students, taking pictures of me as I take pictures of them. These photoshoots became a way to get to know people better rather than an extractive or productive process; as much a pastime with friends as a method of art. This broke down the binary roles of subject and photographer: both the scene of the studio and the event of photography were more shared. Their contributions to this work are invaluable: their time dedicated to making this project happen, their continuing feedback, and of course the photos they took.

Working with students gave a unique perspective into other artists as they learn their styles, their voices, and their methods. This work was born out of a phenomenon that was naturally occurring during my time as a photo student: we all need help on our assignments, and so we ask one another to model and assist. Among young artists, everything is new and the next work is always better than the last. It was a great pleasure to work with all of these artists, not only as models but as collaborators. Working with other artists continues to be my greatest source of inspiration.

My studio is anywhere, usually outside. By recontextualizing and un hiding the studio, removing it from a fixed geographical location with four walls, it becomes a space that both the photographer and subjects are visiting. I often sought out places where my photographer subjects had already made considerable amounts of work themselves, and sometimes simply accompanied them on their own assignments. Rather than a space charged with the direction of a single person, I wanted to work in spaces that belonged to nobody but in which everyone could find comfort and level ground.

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