Portraits with Agency | Zanele Muholi

Student studio brief · 9–12 · 50–65 minutes × 3–5 sessions

Your creative challenge

Consent-based self-portrait and authored caption

A question to guide you

Who controls the meaning of a portrait?

Look closely

Find two examples from the linked sources or assigned readings. Write or sketch one detail from each that you can explain.

Try the material

Experiment with photographic lighting, self-representation, caption. Keep your experiments; a failed test can still teach you something.

Make choices

Draw two different possibilities. Circle one. Explain why it communicates your idea more clearly.

Create and improve

Make your original work, ask for feedback, then change at least one element. Write down what changed.

Present and reflect

Give the work a title. Write 2–4 sentences or record a short explanation about evidence, technique, revision, and meaning.

Your evidence checklist

☐ A cited observation or source

☐ Two distinct initial ideas

☐ One technique experiment

☐ A planned and completed artwork

☐ Evidence of feedback and revision

☐ A caption explaining a choice and crediting sources

A note about originals

Look carefully at the artist or subject; do not trace or copy a source image as your final result. You are making a new idea.