

## **Artist Statement:**

My studies in philosophy have guided my interest to more incorporeal aspects of human nature. If you could draw your mind, what would it look like? 'Portraits of the Mind' - the final piece for my MA in Photojournalism and Documentary photography at LCC - endeavours to understand people's inner selves through art, and identify who they are and how they feel. How could I 'photograph' the mind and create a portrait of what is going on inside, as well as outside, the heads of my subjects? The only way that seemed possible was to invite them to be both observer and creator of such a portrait.

This project has been at the centre of my personal work for a few years now and I would like to introduce you to a new edition of it - 'Portraits of the Quarantined Mind'.

## **Summary:**

How often do you share what's really on your mind? 'Portraits of the Quarantined Mind' is an online collaboration inviting people (whom I photograph using FaceTime) to reveal their innermost thoughts by drawing on their portrait. The result is a snapshot of the powerful impact of quarantine on our mental states.

## **Explanation:**

It seems that the quarantine has caused a personal enlightenment for many people all across the globe. We are stuck at home, reflecting on who we are and re-evaluating what is important to us. It is a particularly unusual time historically and when we look back on this in 100 years we won't only want to know the facts of what happened, but understand how people felt. This is why 'Portraits of the Quarantined Mind' aims to document what's been on people's minds during the pandemic.

The process is very collaborative between me and the subject. Firstly, I take a photo of the subject (via FaceTime) wearing their protective mask and in their 'quarantine habitat'. Then, I ask them to dedicate some time to reflect about what has been on their mind/what thoughts they've been having during this time. The subject is invited to try to visualise their thoughts by drawing on top of their portrait. The challenge to translate their thoughts/feelings into something tangible, like a drawing, creates an opportunity for a deeper reflection about their inner worlds. Lastly, I ask the subject to hand-write about their experience, which reveals another layer of their character.

'How often do you share what's really on your mind?' This is a question I ask my sitters. Despite the physical distancing and our many 'new normals' - we are more connected than ever. And so I encourage people to open up. It can be liberating to share and be vulnerable.

Each story has warmed my heart and it has been a blessing for my own mind to realise that we are all in the same boat. We are all getting more time alone with our thoughts than we are used to and it's taking us on a journey ranging from an existential crisis on a Monday, the mid-week start up idea, to the Friday speculation of whether wearing jeans will just never be a thing anymore...