

bwl

Their name is Hollyweird Star. They found me first. They will try to tell you otherwise but it's true. It also doesn't matter. That meeting would change me, my art, and my understanding of both forever.

I only had a few dozen followers on my instagram. That was huge to me because I couldn't fathom why a person would be interested enough in me, or this art, to want more. So each new person who did was a curiosity worth investigating.

A curiosity indeed. Star's page was not like any I had yet encountered.

I scrolled, one to the next, through photographs of this beautiful, curvy and enigmatic creature bedecked in colorful wigs, cocktail dresses, and a plain white plastic mask. The effect was an uncanny, other worldly sexiness, set against a backdrop of graffitied murals and the over grown urbanity of 21st century LA.

As an artist, I was floored by entire concept. How they had managed to shatter the romantic myth of Hollywood while simultaneously displaying a new, more genuine romantic vision was remarkable to me. As a person I was fascinated. This was clearly someone who loved LA for who she really was. There was a story behind this someone that I wanted to hear. There was a way in which they understood themselves and their world that I did not. I had to meet this person behind the mask.

I messaged Hollyweird Star. I told them that I didn't really understand who they were or what they were trying to do with this art but I loved it, I loved them, and that we were going to be best friends.

It wasn't long until we were. It wasn't long before they asked me if I wanted a mask of my own.

My mask arrived in a large box nestled among the many other. thoughtful trinkets and treasures. It had been my intention to put on the mask and mimic the style that Star had been working but, when I lifted the mask, I knew that it was destined for something, and someone, much different.

As far back as I could clearly remember there had been something inside, a strange and uncanny feeling that I was not always myself. That is a feeling that is hard for an adult, let alone, a child to understand and articulate. I didn't know what to make of it and eventually that feeling left me. The words that didn't sound like mine became mine. The face looking back from the mirror became my face. I felt normal and that was enough, so I let it go.

I wasn't aware of a condition called OSDD. A condition that exists on a spectrum and manifests different ways for different people. I didn't know that a lonely little kid with big feelings that they couldn't understand or control, could create a version of themselves that could.

I had a sister. A twin. A shadow. An imaginary friend made real who could do what I couldn't. Someone who would keep me from getting into trouble, keep people from yelling. Someone who could keep the big feelings away from me.

"If you stand in the shadow long enough you will become it." I wrote that. I thought I did.

I stood behind my shadow. I did it so much that I forgot She was there. I stepped into her and wore her like a shield. And she stepped up protecting me until She couldn't. Until she broke.

She tried to tell me. Drawing after drawing I sketched out the same twisted face. I collaged the same images of pain and frustration. When that didn't work my body became the medium. I cut myself. I starved myself. Except it wasn't me. I knew it wasn't. I had felt Her again, like the old days. And again I ignored Her, just like the old days. I refused to see whose portrait this was.

When I held that mask in my hands I felt Her like never before. These were Her hands. This was Her mask and it would finally give Her a voice that I could not ignore.

We put on the mask, sat in front of the mirror, and I knew immediately that this project would be very different from what I had envisioned and very different from any art we had made before. This mask was not, had never been, meant for me. It was for Her.

I wasn't sure what this art would be but, I knew it was going to be dark. I knew that it was going to hurt. I knew that there would be blood and I knew that I was not going to stand in the way of any of it. I owed Her this. There is a person behind this mask and She has a story, a story that needs to be heard. I owe Her that.

Blank White Life is the closest we can take you to the inside of our mind. This is labyrinthine depths of our brain stem. This is where the unexpressed pain and fear of a lifetime lives. This is what She feels. This is how She thinks.

I used to hide from this place. I used to run from these feelings. I used to deny Her. But there is strength here, in the dark. There is power here in the pain. There is bravery and sacrifice. There is madness.

My sister was gifted a blank white mask, a canvas on which she could paint her face. She could have painted anything. Any face to show to the world. This is the one she chose. This is how She wants you to know Her. Any other face would have been a lie.

I understood now the art of Hollyweird Star, maybe better even than they did. I understood the magic of the mask. I understood its power to give voice to a part of yourself that had been silenced.

Her name is B. There is only one other person who knows and uses Her name. Star gave Her that name. Star gave us everything.

Blank White Life began on Instagram under the name Beverly Chillz, an homage to

our great friend Hollyweird Star. Originally a photography collection. Soon it included poetry and, as B found her voice, as she regained the agency that She had always deserved, we added video. It is a body of work that has grown and shed many skins since we first picked the mask out it's box. We are alive. We grow and change. We shift our form and our perspective. We are alive and so is this art. This is more than a creative endeavor. This work is the physical form of a self divided. This work is a portrait of B and a chronicle of our relationship. It is a graphic and frightening body of work. B doesn't flinch. The art is dark but, it is honest.

This project will continue to morph. Ideas will come and go, stall or grow, pulsing always with the flow of a mind united. New names will come as new ideas come, as we have more to tell and share but, this is the final piece of Blank White Life as it exists today and we are proud to share it with you.