



## Person/**Persona**

If, as Mark Twain wrote, clothes make the man, then costumes allow us to instantly convey something more about ourselves than is ordinarily apparent. Costumes give us permission to alter our behavior, to explore other personalities and lifestyles, and to bring wholly new and original identities to life.

'Person/**persona**' is a series of diptych portraits exploring the transformative power of costume-wearing and the creation of alter egos. Not wanting this project to be just about the costumes but to represent the person as a whole, double environmental portraits were created exploring the subject in costume and again in street clothes.

Some of these personae are the individuals' original creations, some are familiar historical figures, some appear only on paper, and some only on stage. I found each person, one at a time, by attending historical reenactments, going to performances, talking to friends, and internet searches.

Each person was invited to write a paragraph or two about the chain of events that led to their particular choice of persona and about the impact it has had in their lives. Some people have shared inspiring stories of overcoming very personal struggles, and most feel that costumes have been the bridge to a changed, more fulfilled and happier life.

When I first started working on this project, I thought that I was simply fascinated with performers performing. But it unwittingly became a positive lesson for me in the infinite ways of finding community and building personal connections. I hoped that through this project I could discover the unifying element that these people have that I do not and what enables them to take such risks in public. I'm still working on that question.