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#### **INTERVIEW**

# **BFA Senior Thesis Conversations** featuring Ashley Ross

Questions by Daniela Segovia

**Ashley Ross** is an undergraduate student working towards her BFA in Photography at California College of the Arts.

See more of her work on Instagram <u>@\_ashross\_</u> or visit her website ashrossphoto.com.

# What is your thesis investigating?

I chose to title my thesis project 10/27/03. It's taken from a certificate I received as a child after being baptised, given a "spiritual birthday", and then it declared that I was given a "new birth experience." The idea of being a child and indoctrinated with complicated spiritual concepts and religious doctrine such as "being born again" has continued to fascinate me throughout my life. This body of work is an exploration of themes centering around my religious upbringing, identity, family, and how it has informed who I am now.





Carry Each Other's Burdens, 2021.

### What is your major influence at the moment?

My childhood and religious iconography. There is a lot of symbolism in my work. I'm actually really excited to see how people from different backgrounds and beliefs might respond to it. Some of the symbolism might seem obvious or familiar and some might not make sense.

There are various artists that continue to inspire me. However, as I'm currently in the creation process of building this body of work, I think it's important to focus on visuals that I'm attracted to and are specific to the work I'm creating rather than taking influences from work that might influence me subconsciously.

## How has your project evolved?

I first conceived of this idea in Aspen Mays's Investigation 2: Sequence & Context class. I honestly didn't know what I was doing but I knew there were emotions that I was dealing with at the time that I felt I needed to confront myself with. I just chose my art to be the vessel for these conversations that I'm having in my head in regards to my experiences.

The intention of *Investigation 2: Sequence* & Context class wasn't necessarily just to create a photo book but to understand how images can inform and relate to one another. It helped me understand the importance of the relationship between the viewer and what they are experiencing when they look at a photograph. It definitely is a main reason for my desire to create my own artist book from this body of work.



A Return To The Water, 2021.



Self Abridged Passages, 2021.

# What's next for you?

I'm hoping to continue this body of work and create an artist book. It's unfortunate that due to covid we're not able to have a senior thesis show. Not having the ability to curate a show and see how your work adapts to a physical environment is truly a bummer. Regardless of these circumstances, I plan on submitting my work to various open calls and applying to artist residencies. My main priority is to maintain a consistent art practice after school.