

Perfect body, success guaranteed?

Judith Le Roux

I use objects that represent paradigms of western beauty models, which related not only aspects of the aesthetics of the market, but also the dark, tragic and terminal consequences of the tyranny of beauty.

Belonging or not belonging is a question of numbers, it is measured in numbers.

How many kilos do you weigh?, What sizes do you fit into?, What are your body measurements?



The testimony of a bulimia patient

“I began to perceive dimensions in a strange way. I wasn’t aware of what was happening to me. I felt extremely uncomfortable with myself and with my body, which was changing, and there were no truths. It was my gaze—nothing more—but it was very cruel towards myself.

I liked to lock myself away and stay there, tormenting myself. I began to think about how to hurt myself. I remember seeing darkness inside me. My body felt like a burden, a nuisance, and it had to be made to disappear—thinned out, weakened.

I don’t know where my strength came from... it was as if something else took control and my thoughts became fragmented, always fixated on the same issue.

And the mirror. Always the mirror. The tension.

I remember the mood swings. No one understood why I was so withdrawn. I didn’t smile, I had no desire to do anything. I just wanted to get home, lock myself in, and remain in that space of suffering.

That lasted a long time, because we deceive ourselves. The body hides it from others; it comes and goes as it pleases, shifting in dimension, like an accomplice. One becomes detached, hides, and wants to disappear.

Loneliness takes shape; social moments too. One shows an apparent balance.

During adolescence, I was very caught up in the world of fashion, social media, and all the staging and performance around image and its worship.

I saw an image and wanted desperately to chase it. I boarded that train. I didn’t care about the risk or the cost—I would rather have died than not achieve it.

The end, even if it doesn’t seem like it, is painful. The illness serves as a crutch. Some people live with it for a long time—it functions, even though it’s destructive.

There’s a deep wear and tear, and when awareness sets in, the pain arrives. There’s a void—the void of the illness. It leaves you; it was with you for a long time, and now there is grief.

There is a need for self-acceptance, for recognition. You rediscover yourself, you rebuild—and all of that comes with sadness, but not depression. You slowly regain strength, and at last, you can speak. You use words—the words that had been so long denied.

Words that were once replaced by food. You begin to understand: body and spirit. And not to dissociate them.

What does start to dissociate are the negative thoughts. They begin to drift away as a way to dissolve them: the fear of gaining weight, of growing up, of living, of making decisions.”

Part of Judith Le Roux's first solo photographic exhibition and sound installation, which opened on 5 October 2006 at the 'Espacio Blanco de la Casona Municipal' in Córdoba, Argentina.