

MASKED

In “Masked” I use masks as a form of expressed emotion rather than concealed disguise. I fabricate oversized masks out of clay and ceramics bringing them to life using glass eyes, paint, and human models; I then photograph them in both abstract and commonplace settings. Sculpted stylistically, the masks appear to breathe and live, whether a person is posing behind them or not. With each mask I work to capture the private emotions that are expressed when one is alone.

Masks are relevant in the digital age given our lack of personal privacy. Social media has completely opened our lives - obliterating any sense of secrecy. Ironically, masks have been used by humans throughout history. They have been used as a form of disguise, ritual, entertainment and even protection. In this series I am using masks as a form of revelation. Through the masks I am able to explore one’s true sense of self - not one that is formed by culture, gender, race, age or experience.

SKINS

Brazilian artist Melissa Meier is internationally recognized for her evocative 3-dimensional installations, found-object sculptures, collages and photography. In her current series “SKINS”, Meier has created sculptural clothing hybrids, utilizing natural materials such as leaves, stones, fur, eggshells, wheat, rice, crystals, scales, sticks, feathers, pinecones and shells.

Inspired by Brazilian Carnival and Native American skin-walkers, her wearable constructions blend female empowerment with a self-created mythology, developed around the idea of ancient cultures of female warriors, exemplifying strength, beauty and unity of life lived in harmony with the elements. Her warrior women are breathtakingly sensual, while radiating a searing combination of purity and power.

Meier states, “At first I was inspired by the legends of indigenous people and how they used the skins of animals to transform into them, creating a bridge between the human and animal worlds. But as my work matured, I became equally interested in the future of fashion as an extreme form of kinetic sculpture.”

The costumes are developed into moveable, wearable sculptures that are brought to life as performance art works, serve as independent sculptures and in their final documented form as archival fine art photographs.

This is where the work creates a bridge to the present and allows us to connect with and find ourselves reflected in her images of hidden, treasured cultures, heroines and spirit guides, imagined and real.