

This piece is a byproduct of a thinking trajectory that began several years ago, but was distinctly catalyzed this summer, following an innocuous trip to the movies. It was out of this event that the presented text arose. During the movie, I realized that I was much more interested in the people around me, rather than the movie itself; more so in the anesthetized quality of my fellow spectators. J.R. Eyerman's famous photograph <sup>[fig. 1]</sup> comes to mind. I began to think of the auditorium as a sort of inauguration grounds, gathering quarters for the sensory deprived, with an appetite for instant gratification, the not-so-secret club. It was an entertaining and somewhat disturbing thought [clearly the movie itself wasn't doing it for me]. The notion of individuality ceases to matter in that type of context, the "I" is morphed into the "we" that is further morphed into the "crowd", there for the sole reason of communal entertainment. We all take on a role of the "spectator," relinquishing our original values to fit into the context at hand; as Sartre would note, "to act in bad faith."<sup>2</sup> This type of perspective may seem quite morose, advocating necessity of holding on to our individuality amidst our contemporary moment, but I mean otherwise [as I attempt to argue against and with myself]. Does not the notion of "individuality" seem outdated? It sounds strange to say it, but I found the thought to be worth some contemplation. In some ways, encapsulating ourselves (our essence) within the framework of "individuality" feels rather constrictive. With such awareness, one would logically assume that people would long to free themselves from the bondage of their own identity. Of course our compulsion to attempt to define everything around and including ourselves by the ultimately illogical laws of logic, stems from the still-dominating Aristotelian Western way of thinking. Hypothetically, if the concept of "identity/individuality" is in fact discarded from our consciousness, what is it that takes its place? Does anything need to take its place? It feels bizarre to deliberate anti-individualism in the context of an art school, a place that is suppose to celebrate it, but that friction in itself is what I feel makes the thought compelling. I clearly have no answers at this point, just ricocheting, somewhat connected reflections...more than enough to keep myself stimulated daily, pushing myself to explore them through every facet imaginable: graphic design/art (the piece in front of you), writing (this artist statement), verbal discussion (this crit) etc. Everything in front of you is the physical residue of the aforementioned thought process. I do realize that these attempts at objectifying something so elusively metaphysical, can be equated to trying to cut a sword with its own blade...nonetheless I can't help myself but to continue and that reasoning in itself is enough for me.



fig. 1

2. Phenomenon where a human being under pressure from societal forces adopts false values and disowns his/her innate freedom to act authentically.