

LAU KIT WAI



HAVE YOU ever taken snapshots of yourself or your friends on the streets? That's what Lam Wai-kit, a local independent artist, has been doing as a means of self-exploration over the past few years.

The 37-year-old artist has turned photographs of herself and a friend into an exhibition at Shanghai Street Artspace. *The Other* showcases two sets of photographs and a short video.

The two sets of photographs are placed on opposite walls inside the gallery. The composition, content and settings of the photographs are almost the same, except that Lam is portrayed in one set while the other set features her friend.

The video, meanwhile, shows Lam moving around a red corner while her friend does the same around a blue corner.

The subtle images and sounds convey an extreme sense of loneliness – a feeling that we all inevitably experience when growing up and searching for an identity in our family, school or society.

"My friends used to say that my photographs carry an air of indifference and solitude," says Lam. "I find that when I take pictures of myself, I will unconsciously adopt the perspective of a third person."

The distancing from oneself while

Outside in



taking pictures means that you can look at yourself and explore your identity objectively.

Lam says her initial concept for taking the photographs was similar

to that of painting self-portraits.

"Why would I take that picture at that moment in that place? What feelings did I have for that place during that moment? There must be

a reason for why I was there. It is through this process that I search for my identity."

However, she gradually found that even her photographic portraits were, to a certain extent, subjective.

This is because our identity is strongly influenced by the outside world, which bombards us with images and information.

Consequently, we tend to create a perfect image of ourselves through photography according to the standards imposed by others.

"My understanding is that we all have a boundless desire to look for a perfect self," explains Lam. "That's why many people do body slimming or skin whitening because people tell them they should do so."

Are images of us in photographs true reflections of who we really are?

That's the question that Lam wants to provoke by juxtaposing the images of her and her friend in her exhibition. Does her friend, who poses identically to Lam in similar settings, share a similar identity with the artist?

"I want young audiences to question the process of self-understanding. Is the person doing body slimming or skin whitening really you?"

The Other runs from today until June 10 at Shanghai Street Artspace, G/F, 404 Shanghai Street, Yau Ma Tei.