

“IT’S TRADITION CHER..”

It doesn't matter if you look like an enticing porcelain doll, an evil jester, or a beautiful feathered peacock. On Mardi Gras, people wear mask to be incognito, unleash their alter ego. A reflection of one's soul perhaps. I started to create these portraits, following the initial announcements from the government to “**shelter in place**”, to take extreme precautions, that people were dying in our country as all over the world, from this invisible virus. My beautiful New Orleans has been hit very hard from this virus. These portraits were photographed during the most recent Mardi Gras event Feb 2020, just 2 weeks before the first death in New Orleans. Just 2 weeks before our country went on lock down, shelter in place.

At this time, the beautiful imaginative people in my city New Orleans, as in cities all over the world, continue to feel the surreal sense of disconnect and fear. Creating these portraits reconfirms why humanity will survive this frightening time in our lives. The people of New Orleans live by honoring tradition, celebration of life, it's music, it's history and even celebration of death. They gather together with family and strangers for any occasion, to celebrate who they are. These traditions are what keeps New Orleans alive. Mardi Gras, Second Lines, Children in Parades, Festivals Daily, and even the tradition of Monday Beans and rice, which is of course wash day. These traditions are what keep all of us alive, connected and provide hope, especially during this time in our lives, when we are reaching everyday to create a new normal.

We will rise again, New Orleans will rise again, even better than before. Through these portraits, I am looking to celebrate a small part of the traditions that keep us moving forward. I hope that this work will bring a smile to your face and light your heart, allowing us to remember that as our ancestors did before us, we will get through this together, and rise again even better. **With Gratitude and light**

“**Cher**” is a Cajun and Creole term for endearment, traditionally spoken to a female, but more often in modern times, used by all who wish to express a sense of connection with another. To create a sense of family.

All of my work in this project has been photographed with digital camera, natural light, and can be defined as street photography. All work printed on archival paper.