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ANJA NIEMI'S SHE COULD HAVE BEEN A COWBOY EXPLORES THE
CONCEPT OF 'SELF'

By Laura Collinson, February 19, 2018



In her latest series, Anja Niemi continues her investigations of the self. This time she turns the lens to a life lived under the constraints of conformity.

Every day her fictional character finds herself trapped in the same pink dress, but what she really wants is to be a cowboy, dressed in fringe and leather, riding horses in the Wild West. Through this series of photographs with multiple layers and possible interpretations, Niemi delivers her most political work to date.

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"The story is not really about being a cowboy. It's about wanting to be another", Niemi says.

In order to visualise the imaginary world of her character, Niemi had to experience it for herself. Alone in a rental car, dressed as a cowboy, the photographer visited and photographed all the places on her character's annotated maps.

She hiked up and down the mountains of America's national parks and rode a horse on the same field John Wayne filmed one of his famous horse battles. Always trying to be what her character would have wanted, unafraid and unaffected by others.

Niemi works alone, photographing, staging and acting out the characters in all of her images.

She Could Have Been A Cowboy by Anja Niemi launches in New York at Steven Kasher Gallery from 1 March - 14 April, followed by Photo London 17-20 May with The Little Black Gallery, and finally The Ravestijn Gallery in Amsterdam from 8 September - 21 October. Find out more at www.thelittleblackgallery.com.