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Unripe Fruit

Project Statement

When I was fifteen, I was raped by my first boyfriend. We were together for nine months at the time, and the pressure to have sex was constant. We lied down on his bed, hugging when he began to kiss me. I loved him, and so I let him. I don't remember how I found myself naked in that bed when he decided that it was our time. I remember freezing, eyes open wide, uncertain of how this man made this decision for me. In nature when an animal faces an offensive threat, it enters a momentary state similar to mine where it feels no pain, meaning that it will not suffer when danger fulfills itself. This freezing state is also known in humans when they face a traumatic experience.

It was only years later that I managed to come to terms with what happened to me with him and others. I realized that this single moment changed my life, causing me to spiral into a never-ending cycle of abuse. In my eyes I was fucking these men, sure it was all done under my authority, yet today I know that I was the lesser one.

Unripe Fruit speaks of these memories. My first experience of intimacy, the abuse I underwent and its consequences.

In a constant loop I revisit my reality as a teen, the lies and walls I built to protect myself and my what ifs. Using the approachable language of fashion photography, I created these narratives, where a single movement symbolizes a whole experience. In addition to being a therapeutic way of approaching my trauma, this project also speaks of memory and various ways of remembering painful events. We either mold our stories in our mind to create likable versions to be able to live with ourselves in peace, or we face our own harsh truth. Here, I chose to confront the beast on my accord, embrace my pains and their aftermath and finally understand how my trauma shaped the self that I am today.