

DI DONNE E DI DEE

A PHOTOGRAPHIC
SELF-PORTRAIT JOURNEY



alle bonicalzi
photography through blue eyes

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by Alle Bonicalzi - www.allebonicalzi.com

The challenge of this journey was to shoot seven images: one for each ancient Greek mythology feminine archetypes as related in Jean Bolen's book *Goddesses in Everywoman: Powerful Archetypes in Women's Lives* (1984). These Goddesses are: Hestia, Artemis, Athena, Demeter, Persephone, Hera and Aphrodite.

Each Goddess embodies a definite archetype²:

- Hestia (Goddess of hearth domesticity, hospitality and family life) is purity, integrity, intuition.
- Artemis (Goddess of hunt, nature and moon) is the independent, brave, confident feminine side.
- Athena (Goddess of wisdom and crafts) is the rational and skillful woman, the strategist.
- Hera (Goddess of marriage) is the wife, the companion, capable of strong leadership.
- Demeter (Goddess of the harvest) is the loving mother, the giving nurse.
- Persephone (the Maiden and the Queen of the Underworld) is the daughter: adaptable, receptive, vital and guide into the deep.
- Aphrodite (Goddess of love and beauty) is the lover and the creative/transformer energy.

With Bolen, we can divide these archetypes in three groups, defined by the quality of the relationship each Goddess has with the world and the others. So we have:

- the *virginal* Goddesses (Hestia, Artemis and Athena), autonomous and independent, they are never victims and they never suffer;
- the *vulnerable* ones (Demeter, Persephone and Hera), shaped by the relationship with someone else; someone they have to be grateful for their ease as wife, mother, daughter;
- the *alchemical* one (Aphrodite), source of power and transformation.

As far as regards my view, I associated each Goddess to a color (used for lights, dresses and fabrics) and to a body part, which is the 'core' of the attention and meaning.

LIGHT PICTURES

My aim was to *draw* these portraits, using the 'light painting' photographic technique, based on a long exposure in the darkness. What I would like to verify is if this shooting experience has got something in common with the experience of triggering the archetypes (each woman should activate the appropriate archetype according to her necessity, finding it in her intimacy).

Talking about composition and texture, my stronger references are the sixteenth-seventeenth iconography and art (Caravaggio, Rembrandt): what I'm interested in is the color mellowness, the darkness-and-light relation and the portraiture mastery. Some uncertain or distorted anatomical features (due to the timing of this sort of shooting) refers to a kind of 'expressionism' I love (from El Greco to Francis Bacon).

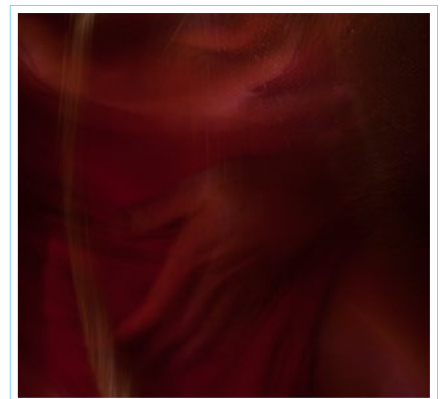
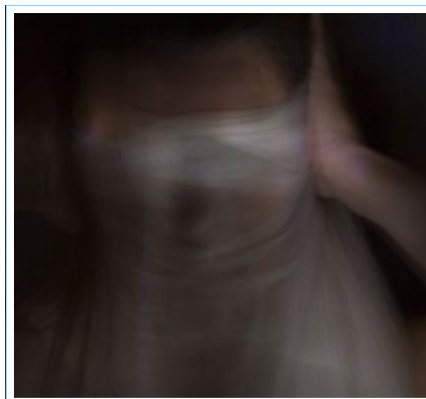
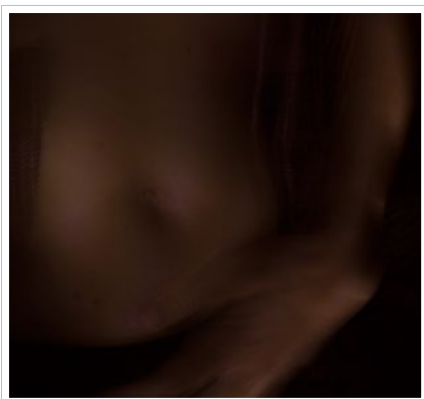
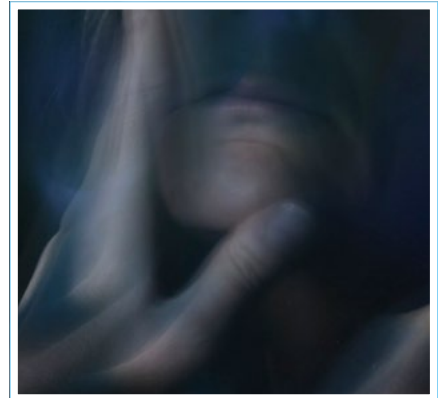
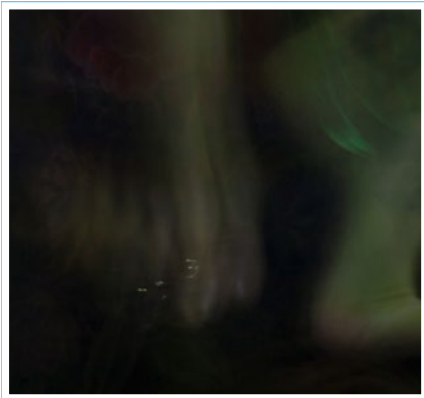
What was really significant to me was working in real time, 'painting' each detail and every layer directly during the shooting.

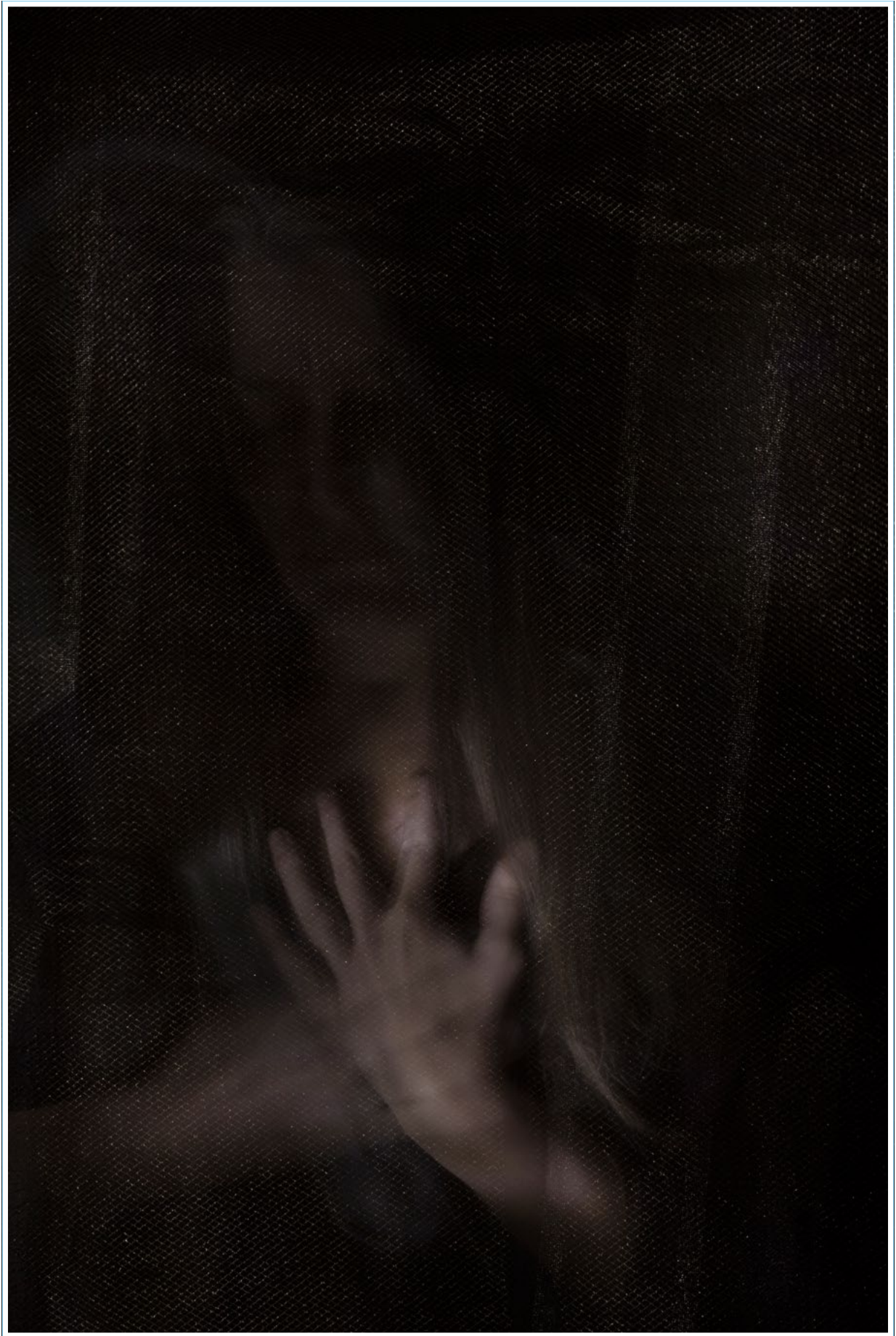
No extra effects. No Photoshop.

The shooting experience is essential, because it is the grounding and it *builds* the quality of the pictures.

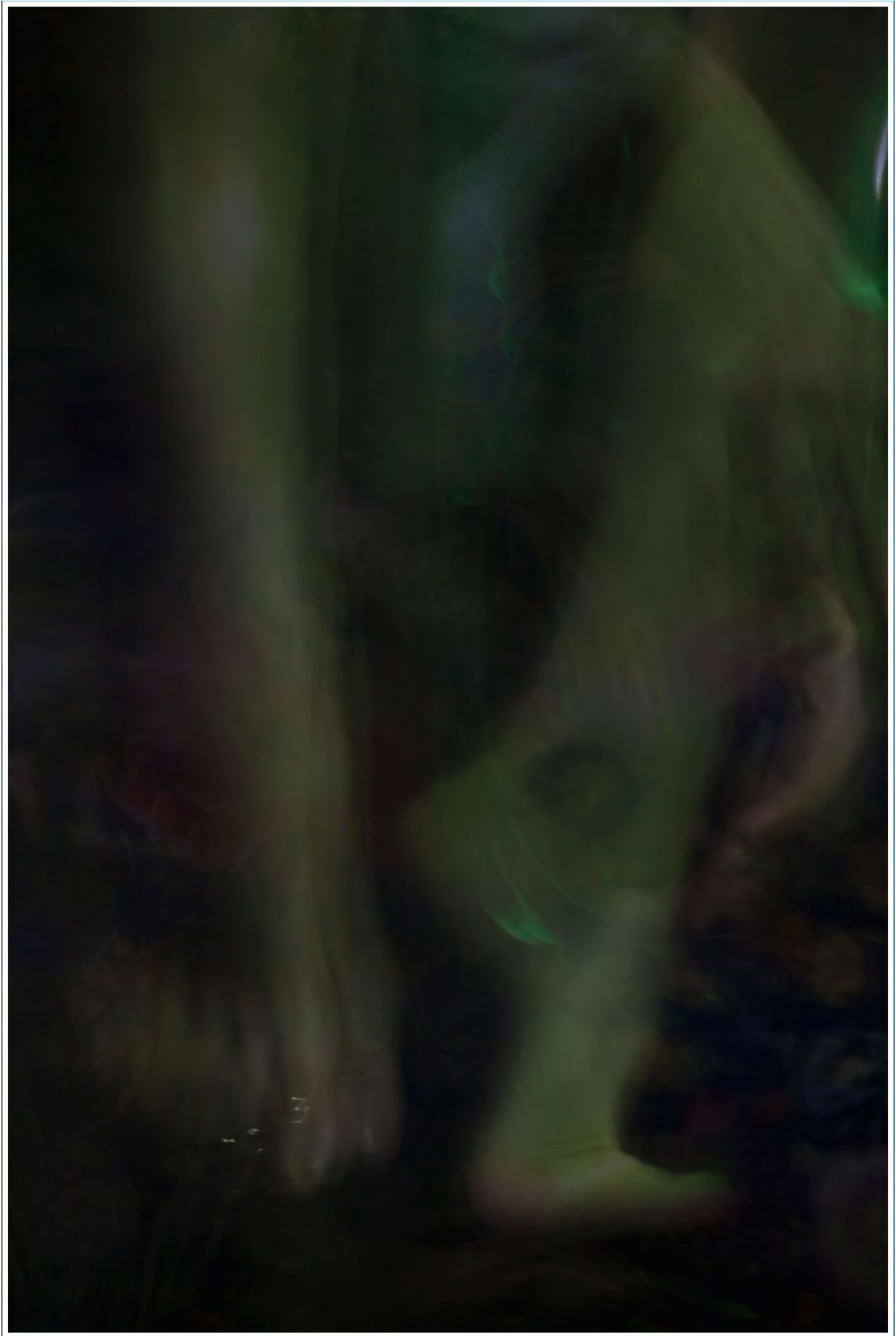
I started. With myself³.

1. *The Italian euphonic title of this work means: Of Women and Goddesses.*
2. *I decided to work on Goddess's strengths.*
3. *Self-portraiture is just the starting point to reach whoever would like to measure herself with the archetypes and... dance with her own peculiarities.*

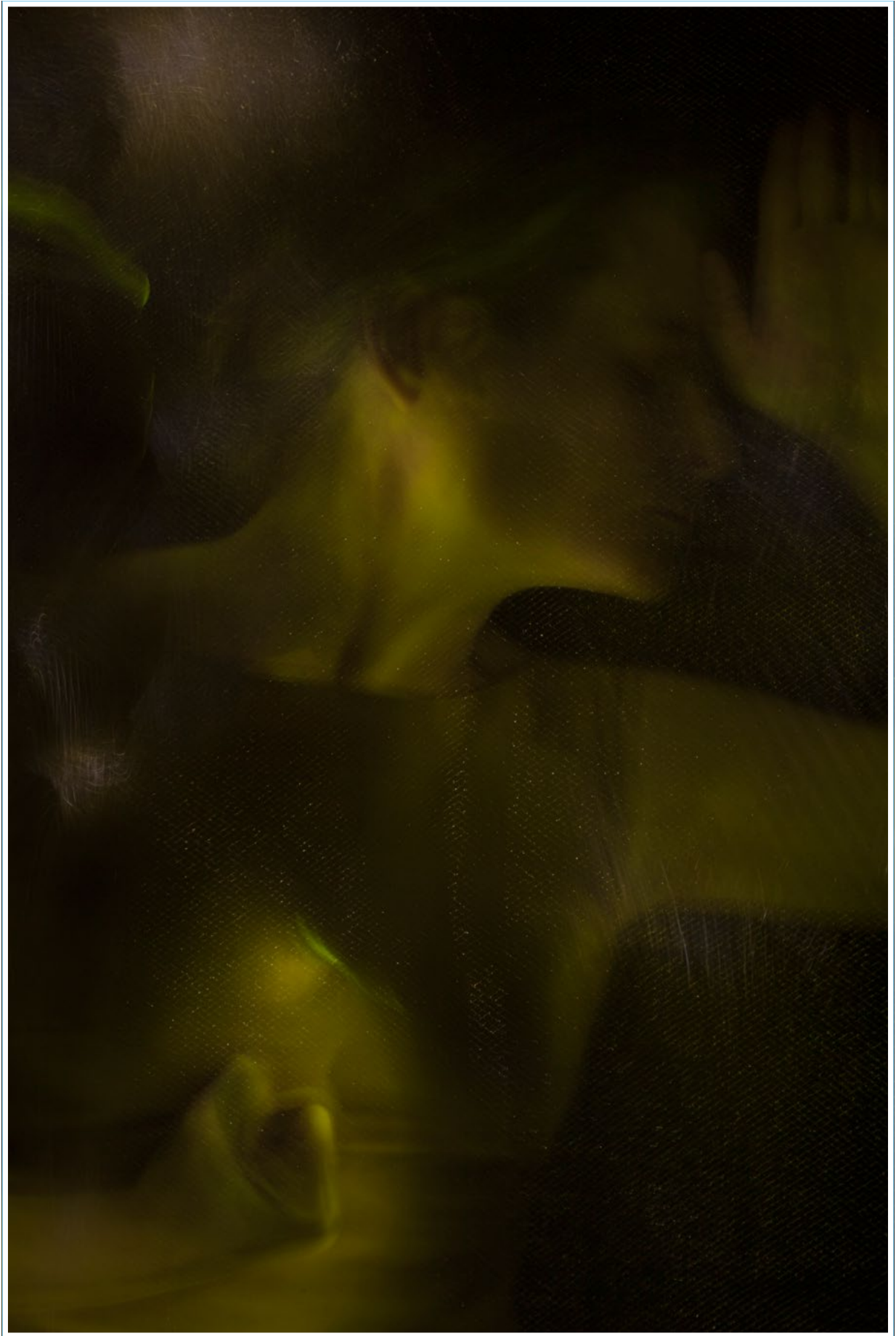




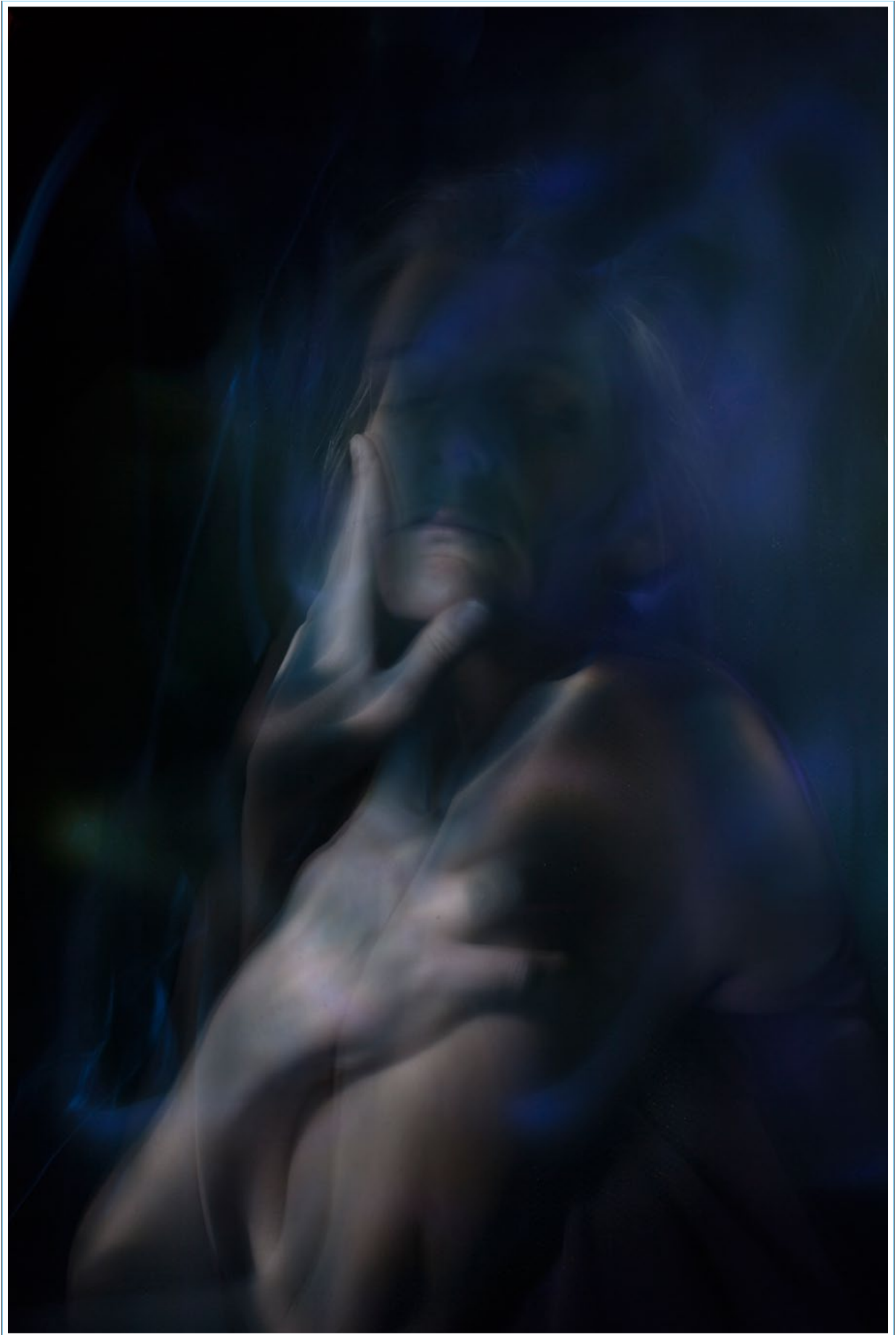
HESTIA THE CUSTODIAN



ARTEMIS THE SAVAGE



ATHENA THE STRATEGIST



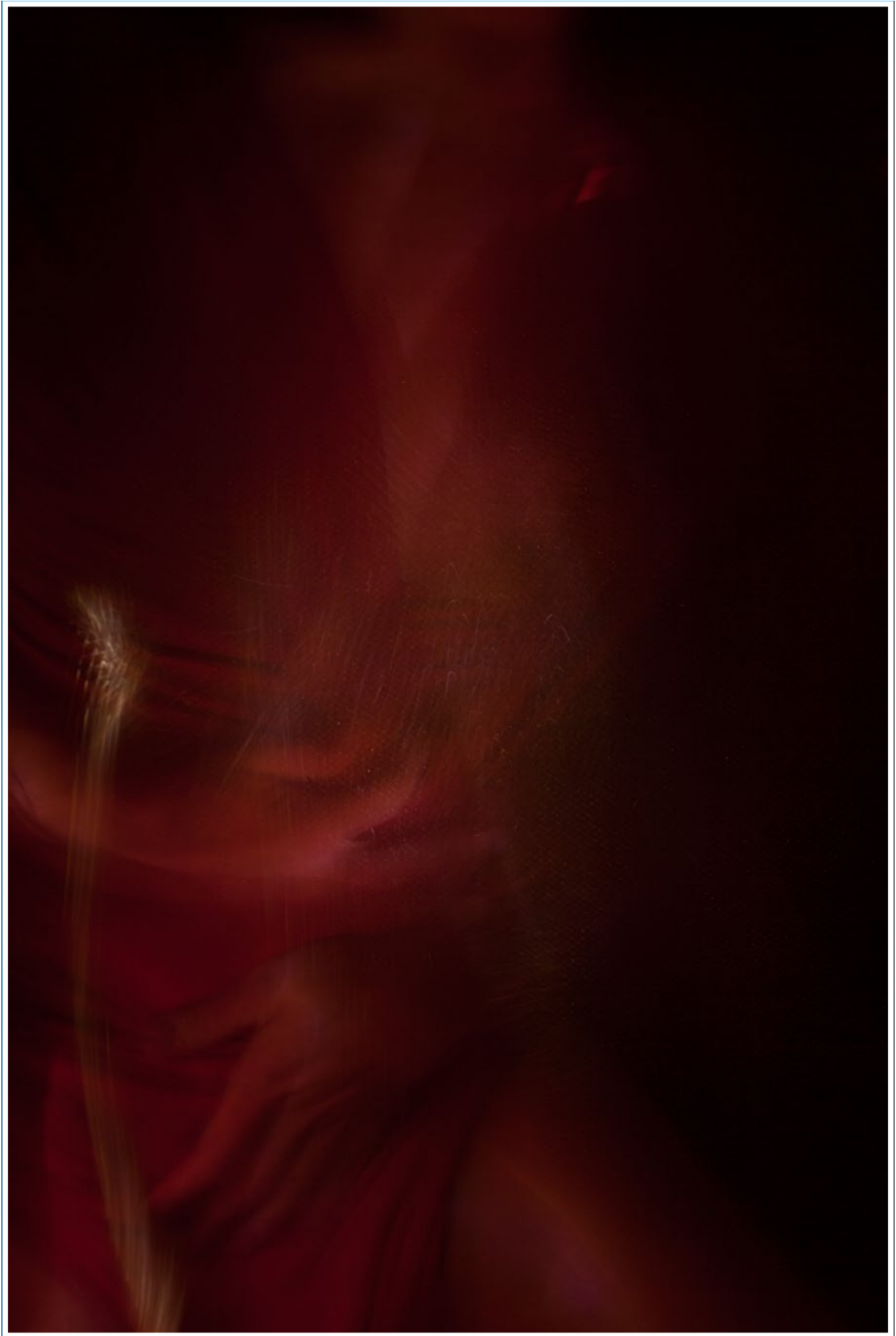
HERA THE COMPANION



DEMETER THE MOTHER



PERSEPHONE THE DAUGHTER AND THE QUEEN OF THE UNDERWORLD



APHRODITE THE ALCHEMICAL LOVE

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