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Tania Franco Klein, *Valley (Self-Portrait)*

The first of Franco Klein's photographs that I will describe is titled *Valley* ... followed by the words *Self-portrait* in brackets. It is portrait in format, so taller than it is wide. The photograph was taken in 2019.

The photograph is set in a desert landscape. A white woman with dark curly hair sits with her back to the camera, looking out over the view.

The ground around the woman is a rough gravelly texture, and golden brown in colour. She sits centrally, on the edge of a short drop, within the bottom half of the image. Her legs are bent at the knee and positioned over to the right side of the composition. Her arms are out at either side of her body, slightly behind her. Her pale fingers and hands are dirty from resting flat on the ground. Her torso is turned slightly so that her back faces towards the left side of the composition. Her head appears to face directly to the middle of the composition ... turned at a slightly different angle to her body.

The woman wears an outfit which matches perfectly in colour to some of the golden-brown tones of the desert. She wears a short-sleeved top, which appears to be knitted out of a fine wool or cotton. The colour is a rusty brown ... golden, orange and warm in tone. The sleeves reach just above her elbows. The top is tucked into a high, elasticated waistband of trousers or a long skirt. The fabric looks to be a thin cotton, or perhaps even silk. It has a sheen to it in the light ... which hits it from the left side. The fabric goes to at least beyond her knees, but anything further is out of shot ... as the bottom of her legs hang over the edge she is sitting on ... out of sight.

She has long dark brown or black thick curly hair, styled into a mullet ... with shorter pieces at the top, and longer strands falling around her shoulders.

Next to her right hand ... on the right side of the image ... is a pair of red leather sling-back, vintage style heeled shoes.

The vast and sprawling terrain of the desert reaches out in front of the woman. The landscape is rich in iron oxide, which creates the burning orange in colour ... and the woman almost merges into it in her matching outfit.

A road zigzags through the terrain, with four large cars driving on it, visible in the very far distance. Further away still ... once the road has straightened out to the left of the composition, another four cars can be seen driving through dust clouds.

Small rock formations that look like little orange mountains stretch out ahead of the woman. It is difficult to understand the scale – the size of the woman means that everything appears small beyond her, but the size of the cars in the distance hints that the rock formations that appear small, are actually pretty big.

Beyond the burning orange desert landscape and the roads, there are five ginormous rock formations in the distance. They are in the top half of the composition. These rocks are the buttes of Monument Valley in Arizona, each one measuring around 2km in height.

Each of the buttes are tall, flat-topped, steep-sided towers of rock ... taller than they are wide. The bottom of each butte is multi-layered, with clear ridges that run the circumference of the steep-sided mounds. This surrounding rock is covered in many smaller rocks and what looks like gravel. The monolithic rocks on top of each of these mounds glow a slight orange colour and reach up in an impressive display of height ... peaked on top with a horizontal layered ridge.

There are two buttes on the very left of the composition. One is darker, tucked behind the other. Also on the left side towards the centre is another smaller butte far away in the distance. The largest of the five is directly in the

centre of the composition. Another smaller butte is further away in the distance on the right side of the photograph.

A pale blue sky fills just over one horizontal third of the composition. The blue colour is a perfect contrast to the predominately orange landscape. Thin white clouds are visible in the far distance, close to the bases of the two furthest buttes.