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Photography in the arts

My submitted work for the exhibition was a vinyl installation featuring images from my family archive. Although this work was developed alongside my photobook, it still needed to carry the same emotional feel. Presenting the images at a larger scale allowed me to communicate the concept more openly while keeping the feeling I aimed to achieve in the book. Instead of a book that someone might flick through privately, the exhibition invited people into the work in a shared space, where the images became part of the room itself.

Throughout the development of this work, I looked closely at how other artists use personal and domestic imagery to communicate deeper themes. One major influence was Nick Waplington, particularly his project *Living Room*, where he photographed families inside their homes. His ability to show everyday domestic life with honesty, intimacy, and respect encouraged me to be more open with my own family photographs. I also looked at Polly Alderton, whose unfiltered, emotionally raw images of motherhood and home life taught me to embrace imperfection and truth in my own work. The photographs that I used were unedited and raw to keep the memory as it is. As a family album is all about the unfiltered quality these images hold.

The main idea behind the exhibition work was connection, how people from different sides of a family, different generations, or even different countries (in my case, Wales and Latvia) can feel emotionally linked. I wasn't trying to create a timeline or tell a literal story. Instead, I focused on creating visual and emotional echoes between images. I used my family archive and printed selected images on vinyl, which allowed them to become part of the exhibition walls. This format gave the images a bigger presence and allowed viewers to experience them in a different scale. There wasn't a set sequence to how the images were displayed, but I chose to mix photos from both my side and my partner's to invite viewers to engage in the work and let them guess or consider which image came from which family.

This presentation felt appropriate for the themes I was working on. Domestic photography is usually hidden away, in drawers, on phones, or in albums. By printing the work onto vinyl and placing it in a public exhibition space, I wanted to bring that private imagery into view and let others form their own emotional connections with it.

As part of the wider exhibition process, I was on the hospitality team, which involved helping to organise and manage drinks for the opening night. I attended meetings to figure out how much stock we'd need, the pricing of drinks, and how much it would all cost. I also took part in a shift at the bar during the opening night. This gave me a sense of the behind-the-scenes work that goes into making an exhibition feel complete and professional. Everyone in the class, including me, contributed financially, we each put in £6 towards fundraising to help with the event costs.

Being a part of the hospitality team really helped me to connect with the people in photography and fine art, which made the experience smooth as we all got along and worked well together to be as efficient as possible and prepared for the opening night.

I was happy with how the work looked in the exhibition space. The vinyl format meant the images blended into the wall slightly, which I think helped maintain a feeling of softness and intimacy even in a public setting. Viewers had to physically approach the work to fully see the detail, which encouraged slower looking and deeper engagement.

The feedback I received was that the work felt personal. People could relate to it even without knowing the backstory. That was really important to me. I didn't want the work to feel like a closed-off archive. I wanted it to feel alive, shared, and emotional. While also talking to/ overhearing people talk positively about my work.

This project helped me grow in both practical and creative ways. Technically, I learned how to prepare files for large-scale vinyl printing, including image scaling. I also gained experience in installation, understanding how to position work in a space so it makes sense visually and emotionally. While learning the skill of how to put vinyl up which is a very simple process. I will definitely be using vinyl again in the future.

Creatively, I've learned to trust simplicity. I used to overthink presentation, but now I understand that sometimes the most effective choices are the ones that feel natural and true to the content. I also gained confidence in using my own personal history as material, which is something I plan to explore further in future work.