

University of Wales Trinity St David



Exhibition Evaluation

Abigail Ashman

Documentary Photography and Visual Activism

ADAA5010

2204992

06/05/25

Table of figures

Figure 1 - Reflection in His Eyes – Maurizio Cattelan - Exhibition "Moi-même-Soi-même" in 1997, Galerie Emmanuel Perrotin, Paris, France

Figure 2 - Afghan Girl – Steve Mccurry

This exhibition, titled *Damage Control*, was a group show featuring both 2nd year Photography and Fine Art students. As it involved many collaborators, each participant explored a unique theme within the broader concept. My work focused on eyes, specifically, how they reveal emotion and act as a window into a person's true feelings. The exhibition was directly linked to our photobook project, and I used the same images across both modules. However, I presented them differently in each context, which added new layers of meaning. While the core theme remained consistent, the change in format allowed for subtle shifts in interpretation and emotional depth.

To display my work, I printed one large A1 sized image of an eye onto vinyl and stuck it in the foyer of the exhibition space along with approximately 15 smaller around A5 sized images which I installed throughout the exhibition space. Some were positioned high on walls, pillars, and even the ceiling, while others were placed closer to the floor or directly on it. The intention behind this method of display was to create an unsettling, immersive atmosphere, one that evoked the feeling of being watched from all angles. By placing the images in unexpected or easily overlooked locations, I aimed to heighten this sense of unease and encourage closer inspection from viewers. I believe this approach was effective in conveying the emotional tension I wanted to express.

This was not my initial display concept. My original idea involved submerging a printed image of an eye in a glass tank filled with water, which would be placed on a plinth. The concept was meant to symbolise the fluid and often overwhelming nature of emotion, with the image gradually deteriorating in the water to reflect the mental and physical toll of emotional strain. However, I ultimately decided against this approach due to the logistical challenges of executing it within the limited timeframe. An alternative idea was proposed to print the eye images on vinyl and adhere them to the staircase leading down into the gallery. Unfortunately, the staircase was carpeted and therefore unsuitable. As a result, I adapted the plan and chose to install the vinyl images throughout the gallery itself, using available surfaces such as walls, pillars, the ceiling, and the floor to maximise impact.

My role in the execution of the exhibition focused primarily on hospitality, though I also contributed to the installation, deinstallation, and invigilation of the show. As a team, we held regular meetings to discuss logistical details and practical arrangements, including budgeting and hospitality options. I was involved in researching suitable refreshments, comparing prices, and identifying the best places to purchase them to ensure we stayed within our budget. After finalising our choices and consulting with the treasurers, I was part of a small group buying the drinks and arranging appropriate storage ahead of the event.

We also carefully considered how the refreshments would be served, discussing whether drinks should be poured or served directly from bottles, as well as deciding on the type of glasses to use. Together, we set up the bar area and created a rota to ensure it was staffed throughout the opening night.

In addition to my work in hospitality, I supported the physical preparation of the exhibition space. This included sanding and painting walls, cleaning the gallery, and assisting with the overall installation and later deinstallation of artworks. I was also part of the invigilation

team, taking shifts to supervise the exhibition during the Easter holidays while it was open to the public.

The installation and display of my work played a key role in how it was experienced by the audience. By placing the vinyl eye prints across various parts of the gallery including high on walls, on pillars, the ceiling, and the floor, I aimed to create a disorienting, immersive atmosphere. This layout encouraged viewers to move around the space and engage with the work from different angles, reinforcing the concept of constantly being watched. Visually, the scattered placement helped maintain interest and added an element of surprise, as many visitors only noticed certain images after spending more time in the space.

Contextually, this approach worked well within the group exhibition setting, as it allowed my work to interact subtly with the environment without dominating it. However, in hindsight, I would consider using a variety of sizes of prints or incorporating subtle lighting to draw more attention to the hidden images. I would also plan more time for experimenting with placement before the final install, to ensure the balance between visibility and subtlety was just right. Overall, I believe the display was successful in supporting the concept, while also contributing to the mood and flow of the exhibition space.

In the process of making my work for this exhibition I researched many artists and artworks, one being Maurizio Cattelan's work *Reflection in His Eyes*, a project that depicts a set of eyes with a portrait reflected in the pupils of these eyes. I was inspired by his way of displaying this body of work, he printed large scale images and stuck them onto a white walled gallery, I loved the obscure nature of this and how the viewer feels watched while interacting with this work.

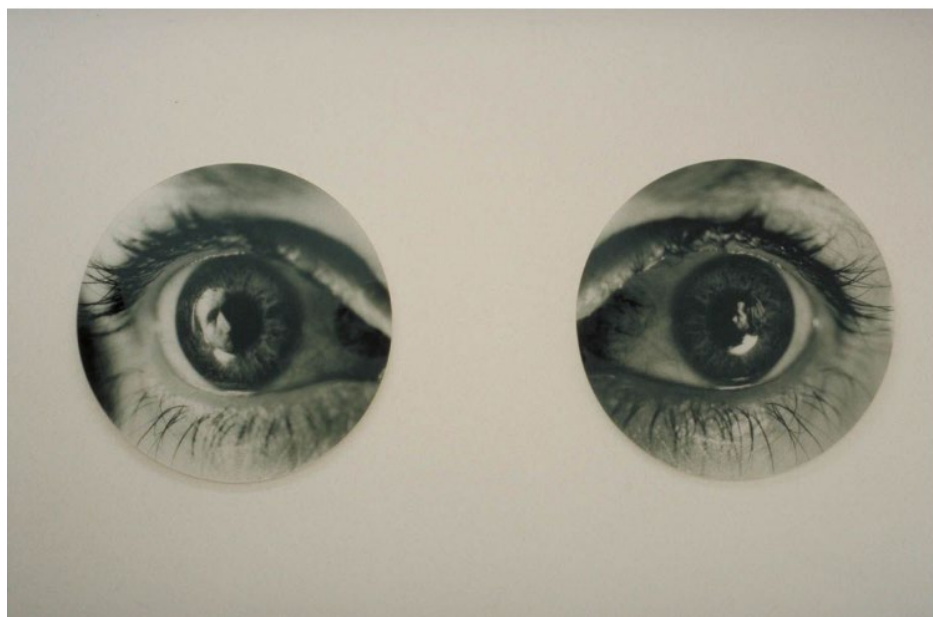


Figure 1

Another artist I was inspired by was Steve McCurry and his work entitled *Afghan Girl*, a boldly coloured portrait of a young girl wearing a red headscarf who is staring down the lens of the camera. The most visually striking part of this image is her piercing green eyes. Her eyes also seem to match the background of the image, however it's her eyes that are the most prominent due to the shallow depth of field. Her eyes seem to tell a story of trauma, survival and resilience in a silent way, her ripped clothing also points towards this. This work helped inspire my focus on how eyes can reflect emotion when often nothing else gives away the true feelings, eyes can.



Figure 2

I am overall very happy with the outcome of my work in this exhibition, and I was particularly pleased with how it was received by viewers on opening night. I believe I executed the work in a way that successfully achieved my aim of creating an immersive environment with an eerie sense of being watched. The positioning of the images encouraged viewers to explore the space more carefully, often noticing the eyes when they least expected it. With more time and resources, I would have liked to experiment further, particularly with different types of vinyl, such as a glossy finish that could have echoed the natural sheen of real eyes, adding another link to the book project which I used high gloss images for. Despite these limitations, I feel the display was effective and contributed well to the overall experience of the exhibition.

