

Student Name: Emma Spreadborough

P Number: 2004843

Programme of Study: Photography in the arts

Module: Visual Studies II (M4X01603)

Module Lecturer: Sian Adicott, Ryan Moule, Paul Duerinckx

Word count: 2106 words

My project started with the short story 'Company of Wolves' by Angela Carter. I researched the background of her life alongside the context of the book. Key themes were starting to become apparent to me, such as the idea of innocence, maturity and feminism. From these words I began to think about how I would construct photos that told similar narratives to the ones Angela Carter was communicating.



Fig 1 & 2: Research into Angela Carter's 'The Company of Wolves', Spreadborough, 2021



Fig 3: Initial Key themes brainstorm, Spreadborough 2021

While I was in the research stage of this project, I read John Berger's 'Ways of Seeing'. I was specifically interested in how he begins to challenge the objectification of women throughout art history. One specific image included in his book, 'Demoiselles au bord de la

seine' by Gustave Courbet inspired me to look at the Romantic art period from the 18th-19th century. I started to notice how innocence and femineity have been parallel themes to each other for a long time – just as they are in Angela Carter's 'Company of Wolves'.

In art, women were depicted in a dreamlike and fragile state. Many paintings also portrayed a contrast between women and the figures of men, which were usually presented as strong and powerful beside them. This was something I wanted to focus on.



Fig 4: Romantic paintings evaluation in Journal, Spreadborough, 2021

One of the first pieces of imagery I used as inspiration was a strip of wallpaper that I collected. I am very interested in materiality and how more than just photography can be used to inspire outcome results.



Fig 5: Wallpaper Scan, Spreadborough, 2021

One of the most interesting things about this wallpaper, is the history it suggests. The colours are faded, and it is badly wrinkled. There is a lady on the bottom corner of the right-hand strip who is slightly disguised. She seems to be wearing a vintage dress and holding a parasol. Along with the colour scheme there are hints of delicacy, making it very relevant to my initial project ideas.

After learning the different photographic techniques in the first visual studies unit, I knew I wanted to focus on the style of poetic photography because of its soft and sweet qualities.

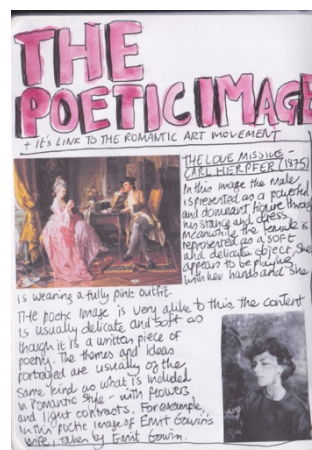


Fig 6: Journal research -The link between the Poetic image and Romanic art movement, Spreadborough, 2021



Fig 7: Robert De Mitri research in Journal, Spreadborough, 2021

The work of Robert De Mitri's 'Emily Dickinson' project had a poetic quality that I really liked. His model was a woman who appears to be half visible, with the viewer not able to see her face fully. This is largely due to the foggy weather conditions, giving the image an ominous quality. A direct contrast to the romantic paintings of the 18th-19th century. I began to think about ways that I could set up a photo that was visually influenced by de Mitri's photography and also had a parallel to the artistic movement I had researched.



Fig 8: Visual reference for clothing choice,

Spreadborough, 2021

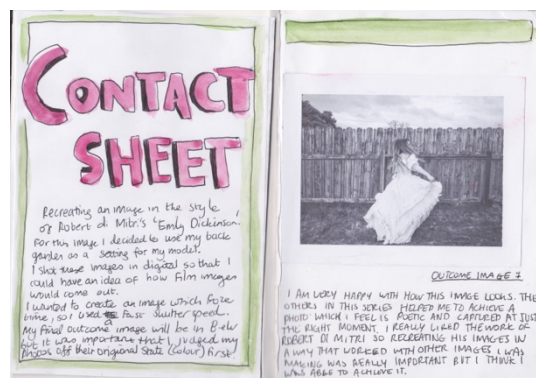


Fig 9: Journal planning for Outcome, Spreadborough, 2021



Fig 10: Journal Contact sheet for Outcome, Spreadborough, 2021



Fig 11: De Mitri Inspired Outcome

When creating this photo, I was aware that the weather conditions were a lot better than the conditions that De Mitri had. This has impacted the overall mood that the image gives. I do think that this image has a poetic and natural quality to it though. However, it could have been more atmospheric with less visibility.

When presenting this photo in a one-to-one tutorial. I was told that the height of the fence was an interesting background for my model's height. It made her look smaller and childlike. I think that this worked really well with the key themes of Angela Carter's book.



Fig 12: Journal Planning for Outcome, Spreadborough, 2021



Fig 13: Journal Contact sheet for Image, Spreadborough, 20201



Fig 14: Romantic art Movement Outcome Result, Spreadborough, 2021

The next image I created was heavily inspired by the French romantic art I had researched earlier in my project. I wanted to mirror the pose of the woman in the forefront of the painting 'Demoiselles au bord de la seine' with my model appearing to be in a daydream. I set the scene to look quite blank. The sheet in the background was wrinkled and reminded me of the wallpaper scan I had collected during the start of my project.

In my opinion I was successful with what I had intended to make, there were poetic and romantic qualities to the image, which I was very proud of. However, I think that it lacks in a story quality. Coming across as more of a fashion or beauty image.

I wanted to work in a range of media, so I took some photos using black and white film. The film I was using had been fogged by an x-ray scanner in the airport and I was unsure if I would be able to get any photos from it.

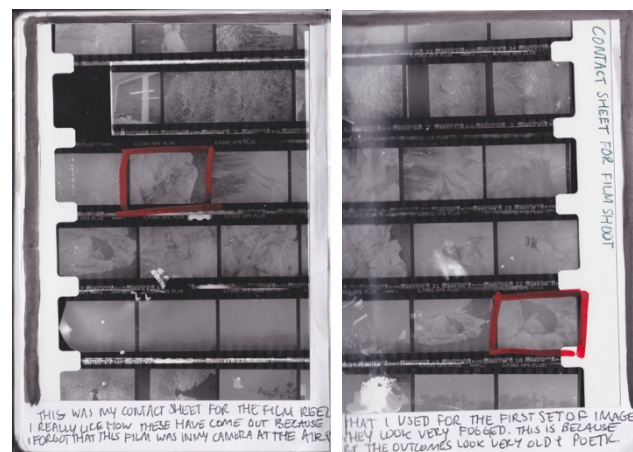


Fig 15: Journal annotation of Film Contact sheet, Spreadborough, 2021

The images were very badly fogged and made the subject matter barely recognisable.



Fig 16: Original unedited darkroom prints, Spreadborough 2021

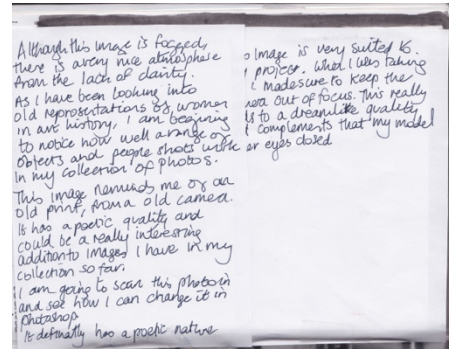


Fig 17: Evaluation, Spreadborough, 2021

I scanned them onto my computer and used photoshop to create more of a contrast between dark and light. This significantly changed the visibility, and I began to notice how good the lack of clarity looked within the boundaries of what I had been trying to communicate. It had an aged, almost faded quality.



Fig 18: Edited Scan Outcome, Spreadborough, 2021



Fig 19: Edited Scan Outcome, Spreadborough, 2021

In photoshop I changed the colour balance slightly to a green colour because I thought this helped them look more faded and worked well with the flower aesthetic of the romantic art period. This also provided a divide between the other digital work I had created and this film work. Since I was including wallpaper as part of my thought process, I began to think about how a variety of image styles could be used to make a narrative. If I was presenting this work in a gallery, I would want a range of materials to bring this project all together. I tried to mirror this in the direction I had taken so far with my project.

While I was researching artists, I found a mixed media textile artist called Melissa Zexter who combines black and white photographs with hand stitching. The models she used were mainly women and her stitched graphics had a very feminine quality to them.



Fig 20: Melissa Zexter Journal Research, Spreadborough, 2021

This was really inspiring to me and seemed to fit well into what my work was beginning to evolve into.

Going back to the 18th-19th century paintings, I began to notice a pattern of flowers and how they held a strong symbolic link to women. When I researched why this was the case, I learnt of the link between a woman's fertility cycle and the way a flower grows.



Fig 21: Journal Research into significance of Flowers in art, Spreadborough, 2021

I then found a visual diagram showing the cell process of a flower growing. This really inspired me to find some examples of the cell structures of roses, as I knew they had a symbolic resemblance to romance and feminism. These diagrams became the key visual influences for the stitching I was going to create on my photos.

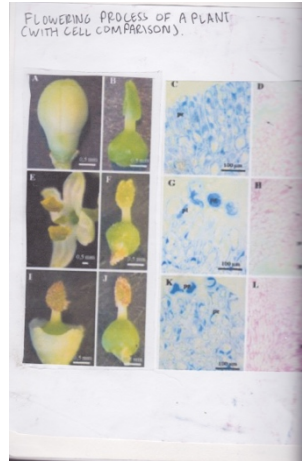


Fig 22: Cell Representation of growth of a flower, Spreadborough, 2021

I started stitching samples on bits of plastic and paper to see what materials would be most successful and whether there would be some designs that are more time consuming or difficult than others.

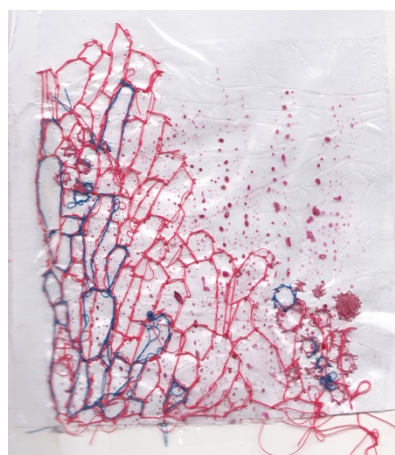


Fig 23: Cell Stitching Sample, Spreadborough, 2021

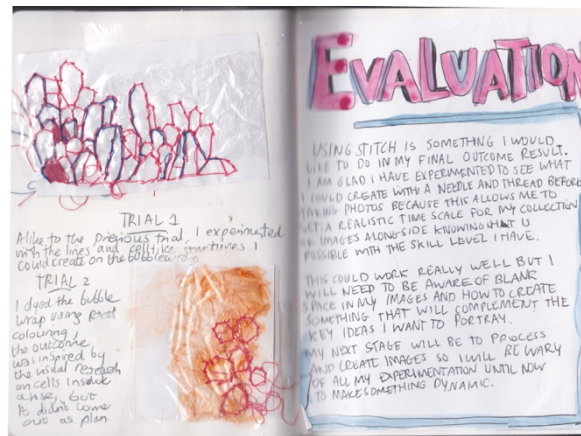


Fig 24: Journal stitching Samples and Evaluation, Spreadborough, 2021

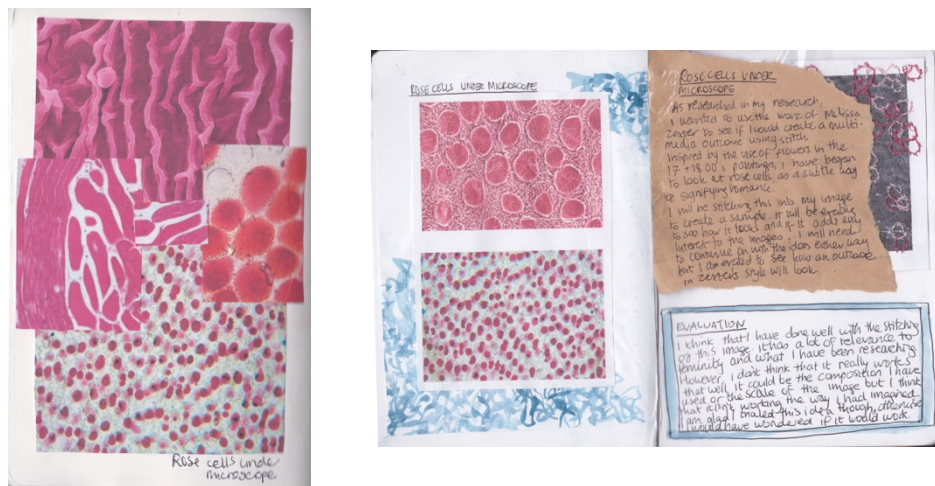


Fig 25 & 26: Journal Visual research for Stitching Outcome inspiration, Spreadborough, 2021



Fig 27: Melissa Zexter Inspired Stitching outcome, Spreadborough, 2021

The outcome I created was relatively successful, but I think that it doesn't fit well into the collection of photos I have created for this project. I am glad that I decided to trial stitching as I think it was very relevant to the photos I had created, and it made me realise that this is not where my project should be going.

Finding a direction for this assignment after the stitching was difficult, as I was running low on time and motivation. I asked for a one-to-one tutorial where I talked about the stitching and got some new ideas. One of the things Paul said in reference to maturity was really interesting, "What's going on in the outside manifests on the inside". This was a more sinister way of describing growing up than I had been looking at, but it really inspired me to think in a new light about what storyline I was making.

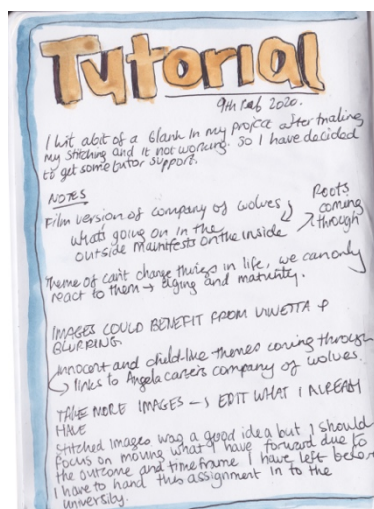


Fig 28: Journal Notes on One-to-one Tutorial, Spreadborough, 2021

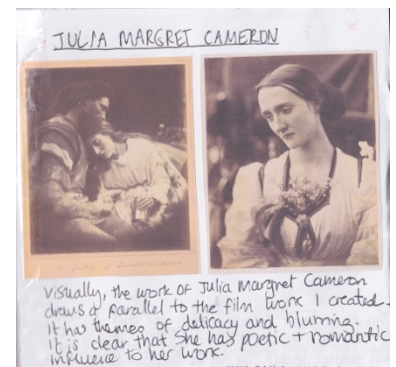
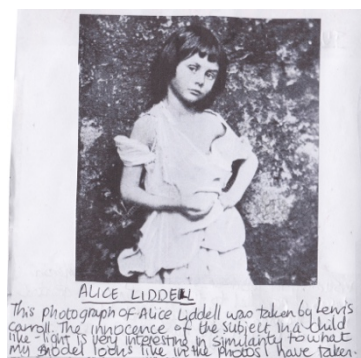


Fig 29 & 30: Art discussed in Tutorial, Spreadborough, 2021

One particular photo that I had made was of a bunch of flowers being held against the white backdrop. If observed closely, it has a very different mood than it first appears. There is an anger and firmness contrasted against the flowers that the other images I made didn't have.



Fig 31: Outcome image, Spreadborough, 2021

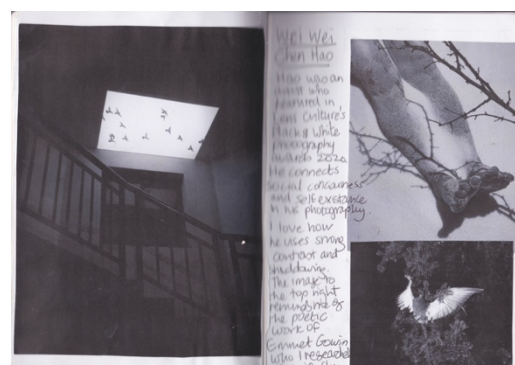


Fig 32 & 33: Journal research on New Relevant artists for new direction of project, Spreadborough, 2021



Fig 34: Journal Planning on new outcome idea, Spreadborough, 2021

When coming up with a final set of images, I wanted to create something that reflected the journey of where I have been throughout this project. Although the perspective has shifted, I still wanted the new photos to have a reflection on the old, so I could have a storyline.

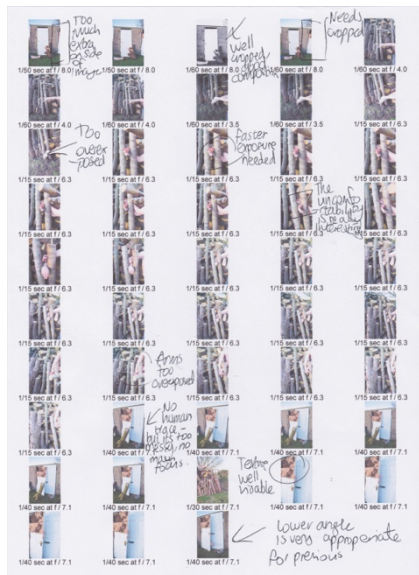


Fig 35: Contact sheet, Spreadborough, 2021



Fig 36: Outcome result, Spreadborough, 2021

Inspired by the work of Ohidul Arafat and Wei Wei Chen Hao, I decided to create some images without full visibility of the model. It was important to me that I showed my model in a mysterious environment, as this was the mood I got from these artists and the developed narrative I want to tell.

I think that the outcome is really interesting, I have used a wide range of artists to influence my take on the themes in Angela Carter's 'Company of Wolves'. The difference between being able to identify or not identify a model in the frame can completely change the communication behind a photo. I am so surprised by how this project has turned out from what I had originally created.

There has been a massive shift from the sweet and delicate photos I made at the beginning of my project to the more dark and heavy outcomes that have concluded this project.



Fig 37: Outcome Result, Spreadborough, 2021

This was my second outcome result. I really like how the door has a textured quality to it that looks a bit like the cells I had trialled stitching onto my photos. I made sure that the height of the model's hands was at a lower height to the door. This was a response to the feedback I had got previously on the image of my sister by the fence and the Alice Liddle photos I had researched. The model's hands are coming out of the door in a metaphor for the maturity in the outside manifesting on the inside.

This project began with a selection of key themes, all of which have been paths and influences in the making of my photos. For this reason, I am presenting a selection of images from each stage of this project in my final portfolio. Having a selection helps to tell the story of the progression from childhood to womanhood, as was told in the short story. The physicality of the darkroom prints and wallpaper scans in this situation, would provide a degradable and irreplaceable contrast between them and the digital images. I think that this

range in sizing and contexts would make this project very interesting in an exhibition context – this idea has also been my intention throughout the creative process. In my portfolio I used the size of each image as a representation of how it would be when framed in an exhibition presented beside each other. I think that if I was to redo this project, I would choose a more direct path, instead of using such broad key terms throughout. This would help me to have more time with the creation process and find inspiration as I go.

Bibliography

<https://www.angelacarter.co.uk/biography/>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=23zjSkhoUeE>
<https://www.lensculture.com/2020-black-and-white-photography-award-winners?modal=wei-wei-chen-hao-the-winner-of-black-and-white-photography-awards-2020>
<https://www.lensculture.com/search/projects?fallback=not-found&q=Emily%2Bdickinson&modal=project-243183-emily-dickinson>
<https://www.dodho.com/emily-dickinson-by-roberto-de-mitri/>
https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Irene_Serrano/publication/42640084/figure/fig1/AS:601734082752514@1520475993560/Olive-flowers-at-different-stages-of-development-Stereomicroscope-images-of-the-flowers_Q320.jpg
<https://www.bing.com/images/search?view=detailV2&ccid=NdaxXQhU&id=4F9BA1698AD5889ACE6A2776A1E9530A082CF131&thid=OIP.NdaxXQhUTRoGzEk09pD0cgHaGU&mediaurl=https%3a%2f%2fipseand.files.wordpress.com%2f2013%2f09%2ffragonardswing.jpg&exph=650&expw=761&q=French+Rococo+Painting+18th+Century&simid=608015134676683080&ck=BBA8D94851EEBEB15E4CA43BDCAEEC5&selectedIndex=0&FORM=RPRST&ajaxhist=0>
<https://thefashionography.com/zhong-lin-interview/>
https://www.instagram.com/zhonglin_/
<https://melissazexter.wordpress.com/2014/05/15/my-handmade-dress-all-images-c-2014-melissa-zexter/>
<http://www.melissazexter.com>
<https://www.lensculture.com/ohidul-arafat>
<https://www.jigidi.com/jigsaw-puzzle/jwi3022g/carl-herpfer-1836-1897-the-love-missive-1875/>
Stott, Floral Femininity: A Pictorial Definition, 1992 https://www-jstor-org.ezproxy.uwtsd.ac.uk/stable/3109092?seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents
Berger, Ways of Seeing, 1972

List of figures

Fig 1 & 2: Research into Angela Carter's 'The Company of Wolves', Spreadborough, 2021
Fig 3: Initial Key themes brainstorm, Spreadborough 2021
Fig 4: Romantic paintings evaluation in Journal, Spreadborough, 2021
Fig 5: Wallpaper Scan, Spreadborough, 2021
Fig 6: Journal research -The link between the Poetic image and Romanic art movement, Spreadborough, 2021
Fig 7: Robert Di Mitri research in Journal, Spreadborough, 2021
Fig 8: Visual reference for clothing choice, Spreadborough, 2021
Fig 9: Journal planning for Outcome, Spreadborough, 2021
Fig 10: Journal Contact sheet for Outcome, Spreadborough, 2021

Fig 11: Di Mitri Inspired Outcome, Spreadborough, 2021
Fig 12: Journal Planning for Outcome, Spreadborough, 2021
Fig 13: Journal Contact sheet for Image, Spreadborough, 20201
Fig 14: Romantic art Movement Outcome Result, Spreadborough, 2021
Fig 15: Journal annotation of Film Contact sheet, Spreadborough, 2021
Fig 16: Original unedited darkroom prints, Spreadborough 2021
Fig 17: Evaluation, Spreadborough, 2021
Fig 18: Edited Scan Outcome, Spreadborough, 2021
Fig 19: Edited Scan Outcome, Spreadborough, 2021
Fig 20: Melissa Zexter Journal Research, Spreadborough, 2021
Fig 21:: Journal Research into significance of Flowers in art, Spreadborough, 2021
Fig 22: Cell Representation of growth of a flower, Spreadborough, 2021
Fig 23: Cell Stitching Sample, Spreadborough, 2021
Fig 24: Journal stitching Samples and Evaluation, Spreadborough, 2021
Fig 25 & 26: Journal Visual research for Stitching Outcome inspiration, Spreadborough, 2021
Fig 27: Melissa Zexter Inspired Stitching outcome, Spreadborough, 2021
Fig 28: Journal Notes on One-to-one Tutorial, Spreadborough, 2021
Fig 29 & 30: Art discussed in Tutorial, Spreadborough, 2021
Fig 31: Outcome image, Spreadborough, 2021
Fig 32 & 33: Journal research on New Relevant artists for new direction of project, Spreadborough, 2021
Fig 34: Journal Planning on new outcome idea, Spreadborough, 2021
Fig 35: Contact sheet, Spreadborough, 2021
Fig 36: Outcome result, Spreadborough, 2021
Fig 37: Outcome Result, Spreadborough, 2021