ARE YOUNGER ARTISTS/STUDENTS MORE DRAWN TO USING MODERN EQUIPMENT AND TECHNOLOGY AS A MEDIUM DUE TO TODAY'S SOCIETAL NORMS IN HE, OR DO THEY PREFER TO USE OLD-SCHOOL METHODS AND MATERIALS TO CREATE?

INTRODUCTION

The investigation aims to focus on the inquiry if students are more inclined to using digital equipment or use 'old-school' methods. This action research aims to explore and gather opinions, answers and experiences within HE to generate an answer to my investigation, along with secondary research such as; literature, surveys and statistics. Additionally taking a look at the facilities provided by SCA, and conducting primary research through questionnaires to students on the Photography course, this can further support any inquiries, or questions that could generate throughout the research project. More specifically, I'll be looking into the diverse interests between traditional methods, use of equipment and facilities, compared to the digital aspects, programmes and cameras. This inquiry aims to critically investigate, research and gather data that could provide a potential answer to the action research and my initial question.

LITERATURE

Action research involves conducting research but to additionally participate and engage, (Spencer, 2019). Researchers conducting the methods to collect data, needs to maintain a high ethical standard to the setting when conducting research, but mainly to the participants involved, UWTSD, (July, 2022). At SCA, there are a range of facilities that covers all aspects of photography; darkroom, studio, printing studio, film developing, workshop rooms etc. The department aims to encourage students to experiment and create through different avenues, (UWTSD, 2024). Similarly, RCA applies the same principles, where they implore students to explore, (RCA, 2024). University curriculums for photography courses, cover all bases of the medium, and assists students with their explorative investigations. Curriculums are to be designed for students to have opportunities to flourish, learn and create, (CHEAD, 2024). Digital photography has taken a massive advantage over analogue. It provides us with the satisfaction of reviewing images instantly, (Barthes, R. and Howard, R. 2020). But, according to Ilford, the photographic distributor for darkroom and film equipment, they say that from a survey they conducted, the younger generation of photographers use film more than the older, by 68.4%, (Ilford, 2019). Although digital has risen significantly over the last 20 years, the film and darkroom industry is still considered amongst students. However, the use of digital cameras, has given us the ability to easily capture, observe, and edit the image within seconds, further leading to the overload of photographs, compared to the slow development of film, (Flusser, 2018). Photographers are more inclined to use digital rather than analogue due to accessibility and it's convenience. The creative development of becoming an artist practitioner involves new strategies, techniques and different ideologies, (QAA, 2019). By utilising the methods and various facilities that universities, specifically SCA has to offer, it can push their imagination, creativity and knowledge through traditional and modern equipment, (UWTSD, 2024).

RESULTS

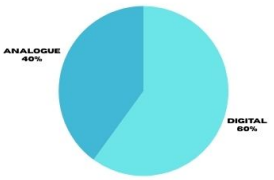


Chart 1

'Throughout your time as a student at SCA, would you say you have used digital technology more than analogue to create or take photographs?'

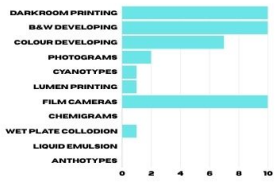


Chart 2

'Have you used any of the following processes or methods within analogue photography?'

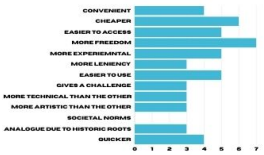


Chart 3

'With the selection of answers below, can you chose which ones apply to your previous answer.'

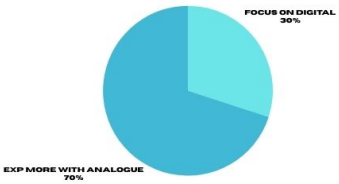


Chart 4

'Since learning about the photographic history and it's evolution, do you think you would continue to try and experiment with analogue or focus on digital as the main source?'

METHODOLOGY

Action research is lead throughout the inquiry of certain steps; practical, theoretical, collaborative, reflexive, contextual, (Advance, HE). When conducting primary research to collect data, all elements must be considered; location, facilities, pedagogy and the students due to their interests and skills, (Cohen et al., 2018). SCA photography students are my participants, due to their ongoing studies and that they have the opportunities at the department to explore, (Punch. K, 2014). Using the method of a virtual questionnaire, I'm able to include a variety of qualitative and quantitative questions, and remain anonymity, to obtain statistics and descriptive responses, (Punch. K, 2014). Google Forms is the tool, due to it's easy accessibility, virtual element and the anonymity to remain ethical standards.

ANALYSIS

Reviewing the results from the survey sent out to students via email and through Google Forms, it was apparent that there was a range of interests and responses from 10 participants. Throughout the survey, it included qualitative and quantitative questions to gather diverse answers. A pattern occurred when analysing as the responses were both inclusive to analogue and digital, (Cohen et al., 2018). All participants were from all years of the undergraduate degree, diverse with genders and age, and so the difference in responses is interesting to consider. it became apparent that 60% of participants use digital more than analogue, (chart 1). This may be due to the easy access and ease, (Yates, 2023). The use of digital equipment, (chart 3), is apparent through a range of materials. Students use digital cameras and programmes to edit their images. This could relate to the rise of digital photography because of the instant process, (Stuart Jeffries, 2013). However, some students utilise traditional methods, or are interested in creating work with it, (chart 2). Students are familiar with darkroom, film, film cameras and some processes, that indicates a knowledge of the techniques. But comparing both methods, students seem to lean towards digital, due to it's convenience, easier to access/take images, and is more convenient. Other questions related to their own work, and their personal interests. Through the last 2 qualitative questions, a range of responses covers film, digital, programmes, processes and detailed ideas. From this, it's clear film is not 'dead', as it is still being utilised, similarly to digital.

CONCLUSION

From overlooking the secondary research; publications, theorists, statistics and journals, it is evident that traditional was not necessarily forgotten, specifically in HE. Universities implore for students to learn both sides. Statistics and other articles suggest that there is a rise of interest in film, and although digital cameras have stripped the steps of photographing, students gravitate to analogue. By analysing responses from the survey, it is clear that the participants (undergraduates), are just as interested to analogue as well as digital, despite the convenience and advancement in technology. From overlooking the materials, data, and research included in the investigation, it is determined that photography students in HE implement traditional methods in their praxis as well as digital. Essentially, there is not one process that has the upper hand compared to the other. Both methods of photography are being used in HE by students.

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