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Photography in the Arts

M4X01684: Photographic Art Practice

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Research

Tasks in the order I received them in:

The Poetic Image

The Cinematic Image

The Collaborative Image

The Networked Image

The Poetic Image

When I first read T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*, I thought it was one of the most dramatic pieces of poetry I have ever read, even though it was split into five equal parts, it is formed into one poem that tells a story in every word that is written. When it came to researching into the life of T.S. Eliot there were some fascinating points about how he grew up, and why he got into writing poems, I find it all interesting and allows me to gain more of an insight into his poetry. His artistry in every word is incredible, my favorite part of the poem was 'The Burial of the Dead', the section where he talks about 'the hyacinth girl', 'the heart of light, the silence', it brings me peace, but it also makes me feel love for the one nearest and dearest to me. I researched more into the meaning behind 'the hyacinth girl', according to *Essential Facts of Life* (2015), the hyacinth girl comes home both wet and happy from a walk around the hyacinth garden with her boyfriend, to me that feels like a complete romance novel, and I love every part of it.

When it came to taking the photographs, I wanted to pursue with my favorite section of the poem, but there was a problem which prevented me from moving forward with that idea, such as location and not having the right people who were unavailable at the time. I then decided to read the poem one final time to see if I could pick out key aspects that could potentially be turned into photographs, I chose particular sentences from each section of the poem that I thought were going to best represented in photographic format. *Academy of American Poets* (2014) talks about T.S. Eliot, whilst in London he became under the influence of Ezra Pound, who at the time recognized his poetic genius and assisted him in publishing his work into his first book, *Prufrock and Other Observations*.

I am surprised at how realistically I captured the poem into the photographs, I did have a few doubts to whether I may have made the images too specific to the poem itself. I went through my contact sheet and discovered that there were photographs I captured that did not replicate those words in plain sight, they told a story instead of saying exactly what T.S. Eliot states in his poem. I went out into the cold morning whilst parents and kids were starting their day and took some photographs of the parts that have inspired me. I also took inspiration from various black and white photographers such as Man Ray and Edward Muybridge, who utilized the depth of their photographs and sequence of motion. However, throughout this task I learnt that no matter how big, or small the task might be, you have to keep pushing yourself. The more you push yourself, inspiration will strike even at the strangest of times.

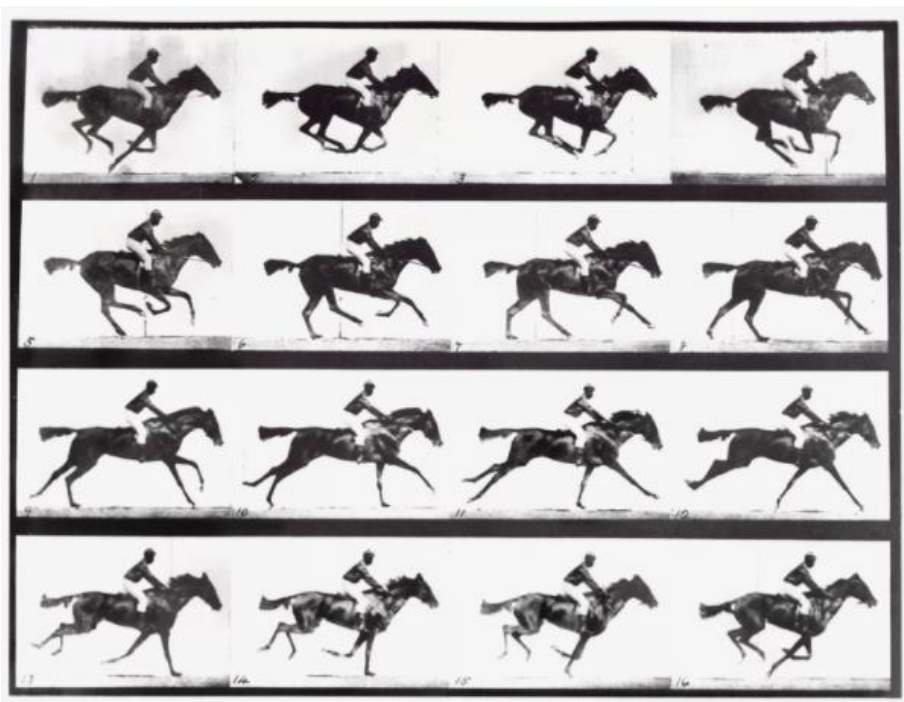


Figure 1. *Eadweard Muybridge Collection*. Edward Muybridge. 1878

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The Cinematic Images

The cinematic image makes me think of movies, the magic of making something as delicate as a photograph seems realistic, the daily aspects of life which is how motion pictures come together to tell a story. Lewis McGregor (2017) states that “cinematographers can find inspiration in many different media”, to me that means artistry can be anything and everything, even people can appeal to photographers. I’ve been thinking a lot lately about film making, when directors shoot their films, each sequence is assembled together through the post-production process. One that comes to mind is *The Sound of Music*, the beautiful way each scene is captured, and the colours of Austria, that to me is the magic of cinema.



Figure 1. *Nakano Nights*. Liam Wong. 2015

All I had to do was try something similar but in the form of photography. I had many ideas on how to proceed with this task, where to shoot in terms of location and also, who was going to be in the photograph? Then I eventually realized that when you are doing cinematic photography, it can be interpreted in many different ways. It does not have to be planned out to the exact detail, just

relax, and go with whatever feels natural. I decided to shoot my images in the city center of Swansea, photographing the natural life of those with different personalities, and with the Christmas markets approaching it seemed a good time to start thinking, and taking images of people within a natural environment.

I walked around the many areas of Swansea waiting for inspiration to strike, despite the buildings, people, and the time of day. Whilst doing research on the cinematic I came across this New York based photographer, Andrew Mohrer, the way he captured the natural life of his hometown, the day life and night life of citizens, the underground railway, and how Mohrer captures the subtle beauty that surrounds us all. New York is a very different city from what I've seen, every city is different and can all be interpreted in our own way.

For this project I also took it upon myself to watch the incredible film *Interstellar* (2014), the most historical, cinematic film I have ever watched in my lifetime. I enjoyed every minute of this motion picture. The drama in every scene gives me such a thrill, but it also makes me question the aspect of reality in this film, the reasons why they chose to create a film specifically about disaster, the future of earth depending on a team of astronauts to save human life. It took several attempts to eventually realize the purpose and nature of the film, it made me laugh at the smallest times, and the finale always make me cry. The cinematic aspect gives me a whole new perspective on the film industry, it makes me think about how much films have changed since they started, when televisions were introduced, and black and white became popular.

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Figure 1. *Nakano Nights*. Wong, L (2015) [Photography] Accessed from: <https://www.liamwong.com/>

The Collaborative Image.

I had fun working on this task, the process gave me a whole new objective and perspective on photography, and most of all working with others in a different context. For this task I collaborated with a very good friend of mine, she is autistic and during the time of our friendship I came to notice a lot of things about her, the way she thinks, the way she communicates with her friends and family, and deals with the daily aspects of life. I would follow Maddie around all day through the week with a camera and just took photographs of whatever she was doing. It would sometimes be in the sanctuary of her bedroom, or in the kitchen when she would be cooking, even whilst she would take a nap on the sofa with her plushies, anything and everything is a photograph with Maddie.

To help me with this particular task I did some research to find similar photographers who have done anything remotely similar. Gigi's Joy Photography (2017), a photographer who has created a blog to share the stories of her autistic children, the reality in her images are absolutely stunning, they show such passion for what she loves. You can see the emotions in every one of those children's' faces, the happiness and the sadness within autism, it is an emotional roller-coaster and from what I have seen with Maddie it creates a clearer picture of what I was dealing with. When we were taking the photos of her plushies she was very protective of them, I now understand why.



Figure 2. *Landon and Mum*. Gigi's Joy Photography. Stories of Autism 2015

Maddie does not socialize with people very well, her plushies are a way of escaping from the struggle of trying to socialize. I cannot say that the experience with Maddie didn't have its challenges, because it did. It was one of the most challenging tasks in photography I have ever done. Due to Maddie's autism, she will have good days and bad days, the obsessive-compulsive disorder allows her to be very particular in where she likes her objects to be laid, whether it is food, or the things that are near and dear to her personally. During the shoot we did have some bad times, and a few disagreements on the aspects of the images. In the end we sat down together and decided on the final images to go into Photoshop, she sat there with me throughout the whole process of changing them, making the images express her in the best way possible. I have to say I very much agreed with Maddie on her choices, she has a very good eye for detail. I can definitely see more collaboration in the future.

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Figure 2. *Stories of Autism 2015*. Hansen, G (2015) [photography] Accessed from: <https://gigisjoy.wordpress.com/2015/04/28/stories-of-autism-2015-landon-gigis-joy-photography-wisconsin-special-needs-photographer/>

The Networked Image.

The networked image was a very interesting project, and a great challenge as a photographer. The internet is wider than any of us can possibly imagine, social media, and online shopping, it makes you think, what does the internet have to do with photography? After this project I think I might just answer my own question. I thought to myself what can I do? As I was scrolling through the latest posts on Instagram it then hit me as I was researching photographers, Tifentale, A. (2016) pointed out something very important, 'there was photography before Instagram', and I agree with that 100 percent. Photography has been a part of this world since 1826 when the first photograph was taken by Joseph Nicephore Niepce, and since then not only has photography become a way for people to see themselves, it is also a way for us as photographers to see the world from a whole new perspective.



Figure 3. *The World's First Photograph*. Joseph Nicephore Niepce. 1826. Burgundy region of France

A few months ago, I recently discovered a new app that has made my experience with Instagram a lot more exciting, GridPost, an app that turns an ordinary image into a large-scale photograph. Since lockdown started, I have been corresponding with my family members, my sisters, and my sister-in-law, but I have also been talking to friends of mine and every one of them has said the same thing, 'sticking together is important'. I then decided to take that inspiration and my online research to create something unique, Tate (2016), *I'll Show You Mine, If You Show Me Yours*, "separated by geographical distance, to come together on a single surface, while gesturing to their separation and distinction", it replicates what we as a country are going through at this very time, and what I am portraying is that women should always stick together. I then developed a poster with a very important task that I was going to give to my fellow Instagram followers, I chose to combine portraits with the idea of feminism, which lead me to woman power.

After completing my poster, I then shared it via Instagram where my followers can then take part and share the results. Additionally, I decided to reach out to close friends and family members for which I then had a better response than the first attempt. I remembered a project I had during my time at Neath College, where the influence of colour psychology was influenced upon people's personalities, I thought to myself maybe I could use it now. I then asked my fellow participants to choose a colour, it could be their favorite, or even at random. They all selected their favorite colours to best represent them for their portrait. I then took screenshots of their posted portraits that have been displayed via Instagram, which also has their profile name above as a presentation of their chosen identity. As Sontag (1933) stated "[p]hotographs really are experience captured, and the camera is the ideal arm of consciousness in its acquisitive mood". This means that a photograph can be interpreted in many ways, through pain, emotion, or even relationships, it's not just reality that gives us life it's what is captured that sets the tone.

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Figure 3. *The World's First Photograph*. Niepce, J.N (1826) [Photography] Accessed from:

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