

Exhibition Review

Introduction

Within my exhibition titled 'Relics,' I have explored themes of connection between humanity and nature, and through an ecological agenda, have raised questions about the unsustainable way the world is currently living as well as nature's ability to persevere despite our abuse. A substantial part of my work focuses on the intertwinement between natural elements and human structures, the cycle of encroachment between man and nature and all its complexities. I do this by capturing a range of images, including large – scale aerial photographs as well as close-up shots, outlining the intricate detail. By shooting a diverse variety of imagery, I highlight the whole spectrum of scale of human interaction and the detail it brings to the environment.

Research

During the planning process of my installation, I conducted research into a range of photographic artists to broaden my understanding of the subject matter. One example I encountered was "Genesis", a book and photographic project by Sebastião Salgado which encompasses imagery of breathtaking landscapes along with wildlife and indigenous communities deriving from various places across the globe. Through these images he showcases the raw beauty and resilience of nature by capturing natural elements that have avoided the imprint of modern human intervention, this brings forth the idea of nature's existence outside of human constructs of time and progression, and its ability to persevere. Through an ecologically conscious agenda, he showcases the ever-increasing importance of preservation of the natural world for generations to come. This selection of work and its subsequent meaning aligns with my own due to questions raised on our ecological impact and how we define progression as a species. It has provided me with much insight into the subject matter. However, I plan to differentiate from this, in favour of directly showcasing human impact on the environment to highlight the imbalance we are creating within nature.

Another photographer I researched that provided me with insight into the theme of interplay between nature and the artificial was Edward Burtynsky. Known for his large scale, aerial photography, he documents the impact of human intervention within the landscape. Through his imagery, he highlights our impact on the natural environment and how we influence and reshape it. Burtynsky captures beauty as well as ecological consequence combined and leads the viewer to contemplate the effects of human development in context to the enduring presence of nature. Burtynsky directly displays the interaction between man and nature, which is precisely what my work aims to achieve. From his work I have learned the significance of shooting large scale, aerial shots in broadening the viewers perspective, as this type of image may lead to contemplation on the broader issue rather than just isolated examples of human impact.

One other photographer of whom I had encountered during my research was Robert Adams and his contribution to the 'New Topographics' exhibition in 1975. Within his work he examined the

environment in America in a context that was avoided during this period of history in favour of romanticising the landscape by highlighting its appealing aesthetics. Adams sought to capture the unfavourable aspects of the American landscape to shed light on the negative impact humanity has on the natural world. By showing our encroachment on nature's rightful territory Adams, similarly to other artists I have considered, touches upon ecological issues and raises awareness to the unsustainable way the modern world lives. This work provides another layer of insight and has taught me the importance of showcasing damage to nature and how this can affect the viewer's interpretation of my own work.

Idea Development

This project is rooted in a personal feeling of dissatisfaction of the world we live in today. It is an expression of a yearning for a simpler, natural way of life. This feeling is described by a word: "Hiraeth," a Welsh word that translates to 'distance pain,' or 'longing' which describes the distinct feeling of missing something and the inability to return to what once was. This nostalgia and longing that I felt led to anger and outrage at the unsustainable systems civilisation has created, and the immense impact we are having on the environment. I feel that through the passage of time, each generation is cheated of their connection to nature, it will wilt and wane as the distance society puts between itself and nature increases. Considering this idea, it is apparent that our efforts of conservation should be humanities top priority, as it is paramount to not only our connection to nature, but our survival as a species.

Through this thought process I led myself toward the concept of nature's reclamation, and despite all the damage it has sustained, it continues to flourish. My work captures this process through the visible interaction between man and nature; the intertwinement between plant-life and human structures.

Exhibition Contributions

During the planning for this exhibition, I undertook a role within the advertising team. My focus within this role was shared management of the Instagram account we had created. My contribution to this task was collecting images as well as artist statement from my peers and posting these images, ensuring that our set format was followed. Each post to the account was carefully considered by the whole group within the advertising team group chat and the caption was thoroughly studied for grammatical error to ensure that the profile maintained its professional appearance.

This management of our social media furthered my skills learned using my personal photography account as well as my previous direction of our site-specific exhibition's profile. Throughout this process, it became apparent that formatting was an important aspect of creating a look. To improve in future projects, I will ensure that the account is converted to a 'professional profile', allowing the use of in-app advertising as well as analytic information which allows insight to user interaction.

Conclusion

I consider this exhibition a success for several reasons. One of which was the interaction between the exhibition space and my work, and how the simple black and white images combined with a black frame contrasted the white wall, which created an attractive display. I also believe that this exhibition had positive results due to the learning experience the planning and creation provided me with. This was the first exhibition of which I had framed my work, which led to me learning about the pros and cons of various mounting methods. I decided to use mirror plates and learned that their use not only provide a steady and level display, but also one that is sturdy and protects the health and safety of the viewer.