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Knowledge and Understanding Skills: 20%

Guidance specific to task (from the brief):

Your evaluation should show clear understanding of the history, function, practical development and production of the photobook through a range of critically understood examples. The analysis of these will highlight the functions and strategies employed by the photographer and your interpretation of their communication of meaning through the publication.

Photobooks have always been a popular and very efficient way for photographers to share their works in a way that is accessible to anyone that can get their hands on a copy, using different types of books, hardback, paperback and other book style mediums. It also makes for an easy way for photographers to get their work in several places at once without having to set up an exhibition.

For example, the photographer Gregory Halpern released his book ZYZX as a hardback book in 2016. The choice of hardback for this book and the choice of making it 24cm x 29cm played very well into the way that you digest the contents of this book. The physical weight of the book suggested that it was not something to pick up and read lightly but that it may be better understood if it were placed onto a table and looked at with full attention. It demanded attention. Though this is something that you would notice once you've picked it up, the thing that draws you to it is the odd pattern of white and black dots printed onto the light-blue silkscreen cover, then to turn it around and see the name of the book, ZYZX layered in a diagonal pattern at the centre of the back cover. No words, just dots and letters, leaving you wondering what could possibly be inside this book.

If this book were to be a paperback and smaller, it would not give off the same feelings and would suggest completely different things. Instead of treating the book as something that you should down with you may be inclined to quickly flip through it, bending the back of it in your hand as you watch the images flip by, maybe missing one or two. It wouldn't physically feel important; in my opinion this is why smaller paperback books help from having more writing and context on the covers so that the reader can understand what they are looking at.

The inside of this book contains single portrait images on each page, framed with a white border and printed in a bright and vivid colour. The minute you open the book you are handed the expectation that whatever lies ahead will be very pleasing to the eye. Which in my opinion, aesthetically, is very correct. And you even get the hint of the colour blue as a theme that will run throughout the book from the photographs used at the start and from the cover of the book.

I have chosen to analyse the form of this book due to how clearly well thought out the form of the book is and how well it translates the contents and feelings around the book.

Cognitive and Intellectual Skills: 30%

Guidance specific to task (from the brief):

Your research report should critically analyse the theories and concepts explored in your photobook, as well as the techniques it employs. Focus on developing a reasoned and informed debate rather than simply describing the work. Your analysis should lead to clear, valid conclusions, considering the form of the book, the reading experience it creates.

Experiences are things that we can only remember, once we have passed something we must delve into our memories and hope that what we see there is what really happened, what we really saw. The nearer these memories, the more important these memories the easier it is to grasp the whole picture, but as they fall farther from us through time we begin to only grasp at the things that were most important to us. Someone's jacket, something someone said, the time of day, the person sitting next to us, these are the important things that allow us to bring forward our memories. But what happens to the rest of it? The parts of the picture that meant less to us, the trees behind that person, the ground that we walked upon, the signs and adverts and strangers that are caught in that memory. For me, they begin to smudge, blur and jumble into an amalgamation of information that I have no hope of piecing back together, no matter how important the memory I can only remember the parts that *caught my eye*. This is something that I struggle with day to day and these *smudges* in memory can at time intrude on the entire memory, leaving me helpless to remember anything, an experience of my own lost to myself.

Taking photographs from a time where I intended to remember and care about everything in the frame and smudging the parts that my brain cares less to remember will hopefully help to visualise this internal intrusion in a way that will obstruct the entire image. Allowing only the parts that I would still remember to be understood and leaving the forgotten in a swirling mess of information. The order of these photographs will be as unimportant in this book as it is to my memory, jumbled and unnatural, a photograph of one thing next to a photograph of something completely unrelated, creating the same confusion that I experience when attempting to look fondly on some of the most important experiences in my life. Though some of the photographs were taken in the same day, in the same hour, they will not be placed near each other, such as my memories do not hold timestamps and I myself cannot remember the order in which I had taken these photographs.

The reading of this book will, for some people, be a mess and unintelligible, but this is the point, you will understand the struggle of not being able to keep the whole memory of experiences. Even if it was day to day life, just moving through spaces you will not be able to hold onto the whole picture, you will not understand the experience, the same as me.

Practical Skills: 40%

Guidance specific to task (from the brief):

Present your book professionally, carefully considering how you deploy methods, technical processes. Your methods should synthesize the form of your book and the context/meaning of your subject. Your book should demonstrate proficiency, selection in editing and flair. The decisions you make should be as product of significant research into book production and design. Within your evaluation, ensure to provide examples of book dummies to show the developments in your practical processes. These decisions should be as product of significant book design planning including alternative idea generation.

The process of making my book has been a stressful one, continuously making mistakes that would be easily avoidable if I had just taken my time. But when I finally did, I had landed on my final piece. A leather bound, hardback book, at A4 size to allow for my photographs to be looked at individually and with attention. Printed onto 120gsm paper with a small white boarder so that they may be framed within the page. The pages themselves sewn together with a waxed thread so that they sit firmly along the spine of the book and cut so that they don't creep out of the cover. And on the front, there are no words and no markings, just the leather, allowing you to digest the book without any prior suggestions of what you may see inside. Only a short explanation at the very end.

[EXAMPLE OF DUMMY 1]

Getting to this point, for me, meant trying different fabrics for the cover. If the fabric was too thin then the glue would seep through and the cover would feel damp, too thick and the book would no function as it is meant to. Once I had tried different thicknesses of fabrics I landed on a basic faux leather which had enough give in it to allow for use as a hardback book cover, and it was thick enough so that the glue would not seep through. Trying different papers was another hurdle. I wanted something that was thick and heavy but was also not textured and would turn easily as a page. The first paper stock that I tried in the university had a nice thickness but it was heavily textured on the top which would lead to terrible print quality, but the second paper I tried was a decent thickness and had no texture on the page so I was able to have something which felt thick and printed well. A lesser struggle in the long run. The board I am using for the hardback is just a simple thick card the I found whilst in the craft room, a stroke of luck.

[EXAMPLE OF DUMMY 2]

All of these materials were chosen deliberately and with intent. I wanted a book that looked professional and unassuming to the recipient. The faux leather not only works functionally as a cover, but it works to show an exterior of professionalism, the paper stock I use for the pages not only work towards this idea, but they also help to frame my contradictory photographs in a way that makes them surprising. I feel that these things help to mislead the reader into thinking that they may be about to embark on an experience about literature or photographs of birds and landscapes but are instead

shown a confusing mass of images that seemingly have no correlation. A stark contradiction to the books form.

The photographs themselves were something that I wanted to use in this book project from the start, but I had yet to understand how I was going to use them in a meaningful and interesting way. All it took was for me to look back on them and realise that I had completely forgotten about what happened on those days, forgotten if they were taken on the same day, if they were in the same place, why I was in those spaces and what I had even done on that day. I had to look at the photographs to try and spark my memory of the entire experience. This led me into the idea of distorting the images in ways that show the reader how my memory was attempting to distort my recollection of those days. Intruding the photographs with smudges and swirls which at times completely overtake the image and make it almost uncomfortable to witness. There was obviously trial and error with this process, picking photographs which meant something to me, were visually appealing and had subjects which were hard to recall, or events occurring within the photographs which I had not taken a mental note of. Once I had picked my photographs I then went into them and began smudging and distorting the subjects that I did not recall or that had no meaning to the greater image, in doing this I began to create images that at times would be appealing to look at with order and method, then at other times would be messy and completely assaulted with distortion. This was when I felt that the work was finally coming together, my way of remembering these experiences had been visualised correctly. No matter how messy they were, it is how I had internally visualised them.

Transferable Skills for Life and Professional Practice 10%

Guidance specific to task (from the brief):

Your photobook should meet industry standards in design, development, and production. Plan your workflow according to your chosen publication method to ensure timely completion. Active participation in sessions is essential for sharing your work, engaging in discussions, and demonstrating both employability skills and a strong grasp of the module content. Your evaluation should reflect on your learning throughout the process and highlight the transferable skills you have developed.

The main takeaway for me from this process would be that taking your time and working on mistakes is what makes you get better. Whilst this should be something obvious to anyone it's something that I overlooked when beginning my project, I thought that I could just do it once get it right and carry on. But in doing this I made more mistakes than I ever thought I would. This barrage of failure forced me to slow down and pay attention to what I was actually making, eventually ending up with a rather successful outcome. Within this faze of trial and error I found that I was getting better at skills that I thought I was already proficient in, things like; sewing, measuring, cutting, folding, gluing and making time to get things done. These are skills that I can and will take with into the future and they will undoubtedly help me in ways that I never thought possible.

The process of picking photographs is another skill that I thought would be natural for me as a photographer but ended up being something that needed working on. The ability to find the correct photos at the amount that you need is a skill that needs to be honed as early as possible, doing this will make me a better photographer for the future. It is something that I have become better at throughout this process but still something that I will be working on until the day I put my camera down. I have also learnt to ask for help when I need it, there have been times where I have felt stuck and not reached out, only to be so stressed that I could not work anymore. Gaining the courage to ask for that help from either my peers or my lecturers is something that I will take with me through my practice and something I see as a skill. Another thing that I learnt is the importance of material in relation to context in photography. I have seen different paper stock being used and I have seen people project photographs onto walls, but I have never really paid attention to it in book form, nor have I related it to photography in an exhibition sense. But when I started researching photography books and reading book reviews, I found that a good amount of the context for a boo lies in the way that it's bound, the way that it's laid out, the way that the boo feels in your hands. It all means something to the work within, being able to understand this is a skill that I feel will be incredibly helpful and important to me later in my practice.

