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Personal Philosophies (ADAA5004)

Book research report

Rationale

Siwrnai is a project of mine which explores the psychogeographic nature of a bike journey that is visually brought to life by film and digital processes. I extend my personal experiences through the medium of a book and allow the reader to create their own association with the images. The book's format allows for a non-linear reflection of the journey, which is intentional to highlight the recurring psychogeographic themes, it is also orientated heavily around the relationship of the bicycle as an extension of myself and its ability to transport me to these ethereal surroundings. Each area being of significance as perspective of your surroundings while in motion on a bike is completely different to what that may be for someone standing still or walking. Traveling on a journey is not just a destination and goal, it's the process to the desired location, and in my case, I was reliant on a machine to take me from A to B and to follow a non-conventional way of traveling to keep true to my chosen theme. So, upon doing so unlike a car I'm fully exposed to the elements and there is no protective shell to separate me from the surrounding location, this is what also made certain images so important as I would feel different stages of vulnerability / feelings in different areas allowing me to admire the things that could my eye while traveling with mixed emotions which again follows the non-linear format.

Research Activity

For my research I was open to many different artists and books to use for inspiration and one book that captivated me was *Passionate Journey* by Frans Masereel. This is a very entertaining book that uses 165 woodcuts and no words to tell its story. In the book *Passionate Journey*, a man who is thought to be Masereel is followed as he is overcome by an irrational, fictitious fear that is his political consciousness. His actions mirror his political views, which are based on a dislike of capitalism, nationalism, war, and injustice. The narrative and visual sequence in the book illustrate these ideas. This book's accomplishment in weaving a story through a sequence of pictures and bringing to life not just the idea of a "journey," but also its own unique elements and themes without depending on text to simplify the medium. Another artist whose book I have studied is Rhodri Jones (2006) *Return / Yn Ol*; while it does contain some text, the book primarily focuses on letting photographs tell a story too. It focuses on his significance as an artist and photographer upon returning to Wales, his birthplace. Rhodri's understanding of escapism has been a heavy influence for me as he does not limit the term's definition to leave something behind, he considers and understands the worth within his book to return to something still can revolve around escapism. As he explains mass migration and emigration are not new phenomena, and as he states he hasn't encountered a language that doesn't contain at least

one phrase that expresses a yearning for one's homeland. Even while every language has a somewhat different notion and a unique melodic sound, they all convey one of the most universal human emotions. Most significantly, it is a sentiment that will unavoidably spread even further around the world in our "global era." One may eventually almost take for granted the ability to travel back to your place of origin, should you so choose, the images and book made by Rhodri subjectively capture the journey of an emigrant's return who has been gone for a long time.

How do methods of production speak to the subject matter?

Every page is unique, and the book is not structured traditionally with black and white, colour, landscape and portrait pictures as well as supporting dividers. Allowing for the appearance of a light and bright theme book at the start before reaching the divided B&W imagery with more negative and distinct atmosphere to them, which contributes to the different emotions and feelings I had along the way in these areas. It also contributes again to the non-linear format of my work.

The images in the book speak for themselves, subsequently it doesn't need any writing, taking inspiration from Masereel's book and allowing the reader to form their own perception. From a personal standpoint, I can relate to anyone who reads the book in an entirely different manner because I have a connection to each location and photograph for a different reason. The title in Welsh is not just a reference to the area and my Welsh heritage, but also a nod to my return to the bike and the journey reflecting a similar process to Rhodri's photobook and it also is a direct translation for journey in Welsh.

Evaluate the final book and any changes you would make for future publications.

I really do not have any regrets with my book as I feel like I have done what I can to ensure it has touched on the key themes I've addressed, taking inspiration from the artists and book research. If I was to change anything at all, I believe I would do more drafts as I could end up discovering new techniques and additions that might better curate the format and design. Other than that, I would apply more imagery and possibly text, if my theme and context was different, as for this project it doesn't need it. I have really enjoyed the freedom to create the book and explore multiple options to make my book look high quality and simple, as I did not want to complicate things. I do want to publish another book and follow a process of developing new material as I find it very beneficial.