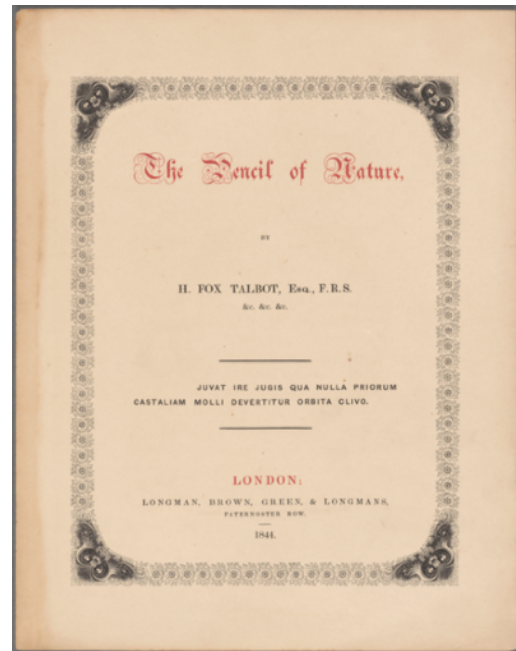
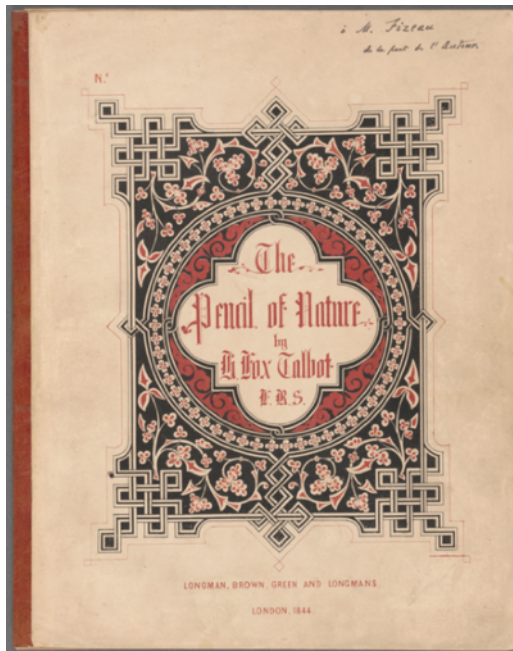


Photobook Proforma

Student Name: Carys Bristowe-Davies

Knowledge and Understanding Skills: 20%

Using examples (3 max), explore your understanding of the history, function and practical development of the photobook. Your analysis should highlight the strategies used by the artist/photographer to communicate their message. Include visuals (500 – 1000 words)

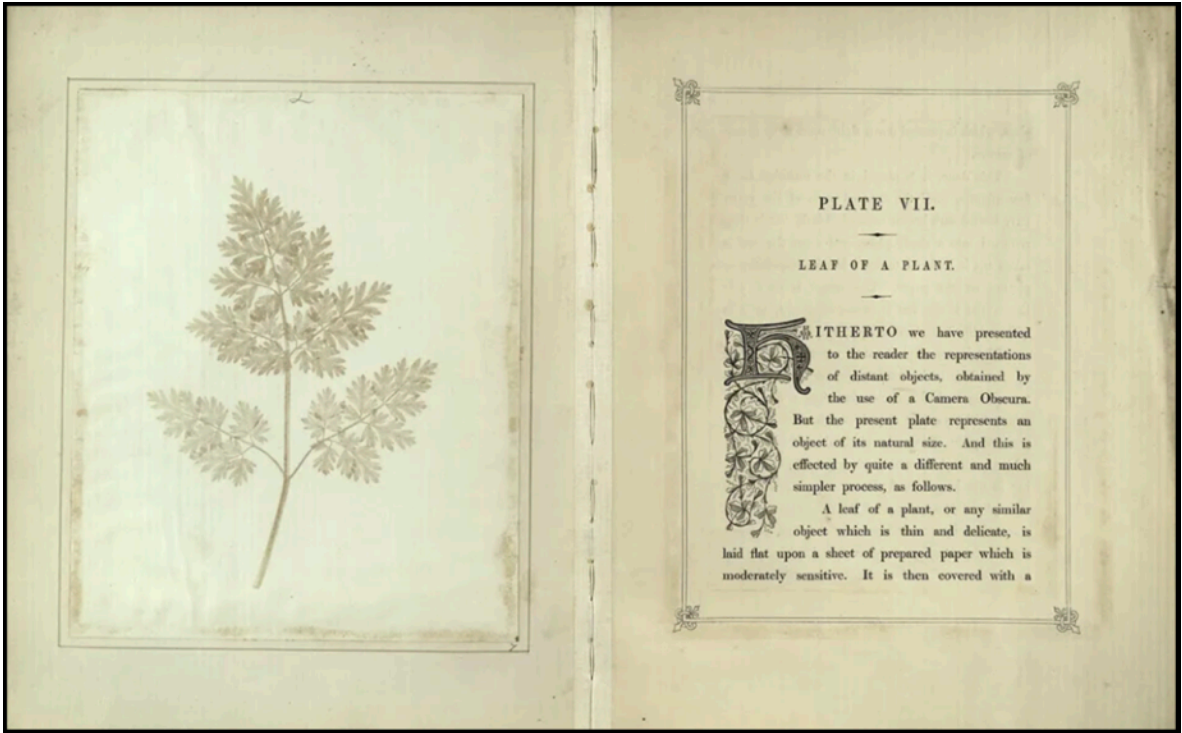


William Henry Fox Talbot's "*The Pencil of Nature*" (1844) is considered the first commercially published photobook. Within, Talbot presents photography as both scientific innovation and a tool for documentation and art. The book includes text and images to show photography's potential uses, from documenting details capturing everyday objects. This approach presumably laid the foundation for the photobook as a vessel for storytelling and visual communication.

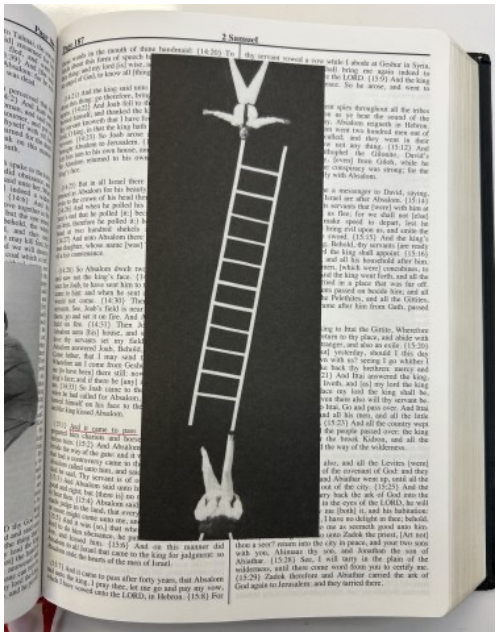
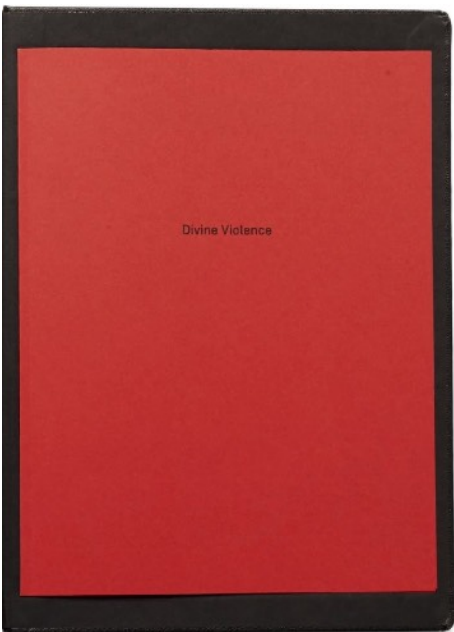
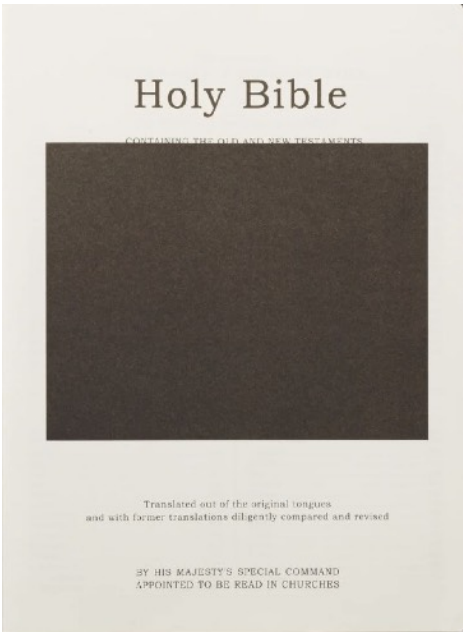
The Pencil of Nature is a compact volume made with a cloth cover, with an almost scientific appearance. The images consist of architecture, botanical specimens, and mundane objects. Inside, each plate is seemingly mounted onto thick, off white paper, framed by a fair amount of negative space. It makes each image feel import, almost like a scientific specimen or archival artefact. The text is a visually formal, serif font, reinforcing feeling that this is an educational document.

The inability to fix early photographic prints led to images that would darken over time, which led to Talbot presenting them under moonlight to prevent further deterioration. This act of viewing images under the slight glow of the moon, creates a sense of necromantic mysticism, almost like it became ritual or seance. Especially during a time where people delighted in paranormal interference and connecting to the dead. The images have and

continue to fade into a ghostly off white, almost transparent, like an artefact that is flitting between realms.

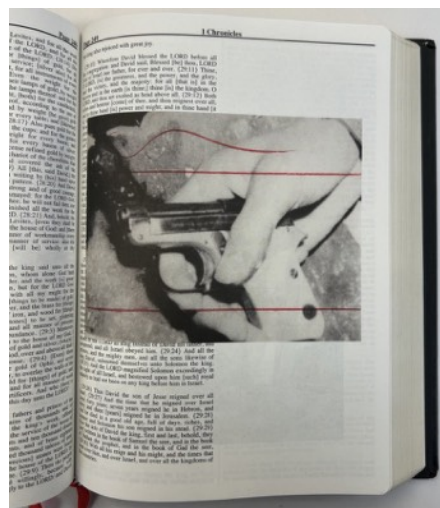
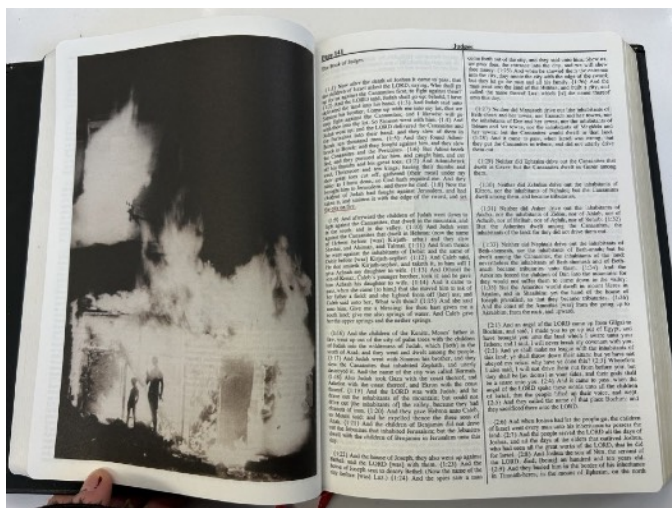


Talbot's way of using photography to document objects like specimens really connects with what I was trying to do in my own photobook. That combination of art and science, focussing on the a archival feel, is something I was really drawn to. Capturing overlooked things and making them into almost scientific evidence is similar to how I wanted to show the grotesque yet beautiful details in bodies, both human and animal.

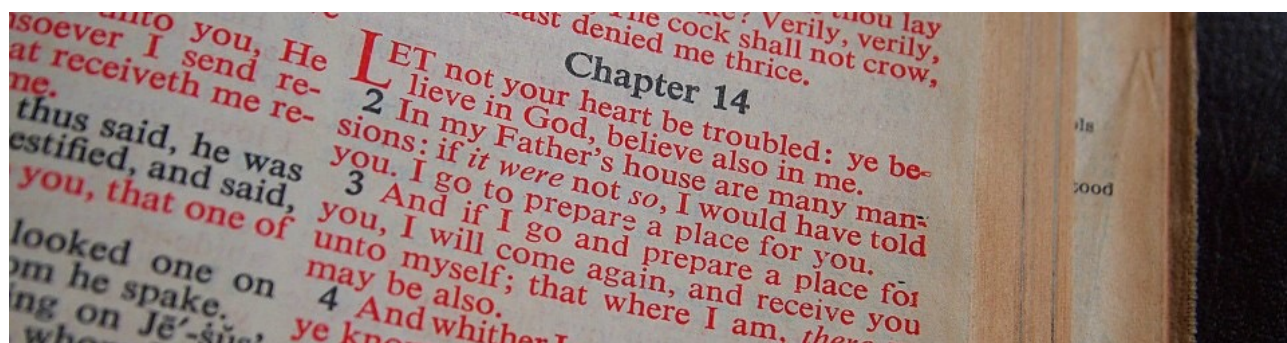


South African artists, Broomberg and Chanarin's *"Holy Bible"* (2013) is a photobook consisting of images from The Archive of Modern Conflict laid overtop a replica of a King James Bible, along side poetry and essays. Each image correlates to the text underneath, along with red underlined annotation. The book acts as a provocative, visual representation of God's catastrophic power compared to that of modern governance and war. A large portion of the imagery used depicts violence, destruction and poverty in which the authors display a muddled stance on religion. *"We did debate whether or not to shy away from these images, but, after all, they exist within the archive and elsewhere, even if we don't like to look at them."* (Chanarin 2011, The Guardian)

An uncanny image of a burning house with visible silhouette's of a woman and child in the doorway has been placed next to underlined text from The Book of Judges, that reads *"set the city on fire"*. I assume in reference to the nuclear family test sites used during the 1950s in America (Operation Doorstep). However, not every page within this book is so bleak, images of circus performers and acrobats are shown alongside more hopeful scripture, such as *"And it came to pass."* from 2 Samuel 15:1.



Red is used sparingly, yet effectively throughout this book. Symbolically, it is negatively associated with violence, danger and bloodshed, yet in South Africa it is more specifically associated with mourning - the red portion of South Africa's flag is in reference to the memory of those murdered by colonialism and apartheid. The red underlined text may also be in connection to 'Red Letter' Bibles, in which words spoken by Jesus Christ are printed in red ink.



The bible has become so synonymous with conformity and tedious self-righteousness that, to me, I view it more as an mass-produced document of sorts. As someone with no faith to follow, it's deeply poetic and raw sensibilities are sometimes lost on me, as though I am merely a fleeting observer of it's archaic, heavy aesthetics. With that being said, I am interested in the contradiction between its pages. There is nothing more inspiring than something that feels both wrathful and hopeful, violent and peaceful or destructive yet healing . These kinds of dichotomies are what have helped me to try an embrace my past experiences within my artwork, and not to shy away from showing strange or violent realities for the sake of the audience.

This book provides a thought provoking narrative that highlights humanity's lust for power, yet shows deep sensitivity for our strive for peace. Images overlaying text and graphic red colouring are aesthetic choices I was inspired by and looked to further explore and develop on within my own photobook. This book's ability to contradict and play with juxtaposed emotions also helped me with contextualising my book on a deeper level.

Cognitive and Intellectual Skills: 30%

Avoiding description, critically analyse the theme/ context you explore within your photobook. Your critical analysis should demonstrate your cognitive and intellectual skills in how you have understood the subject and made work as a response to it. Consider how the form of your book communicates meaning in relation to the subject of exploration. (500 -1000 words)

This photobook explores the complex relationship between species through the physicality of the 'body', in which I investigate humans, animals and other organisms. This theme came from a fascination with our shared biological structures of hair, skin, organs and fluids. When stripped of their usual context, these forms become eerily similar and start to lose their species-specific identity. By abstraction through visual representation and material, my book is an attempt to disrupt the boundaries between species and force the viewer to reconsider what is human and what is not.

The start of my research was shaped by the concept of animism, which is the belief that natural objects, places, phenomena, creatures and even the universe carry a spirit or have some form of sentience. This view collapses hierarchical species distinctions, which aligns with my artistic interest in creating an aesthetic that allows flesh to be both grounded and otherworldly. This felt important when handling imagery of organic matter as I didn't want the work to feel completely anatomical or scientific. I wanted to create something sacred, clinical and above all, visceral.

Expanding from this theory, Victorian specimen culture played a huge part in shaping the tone and structure of the book. I spent time researching medical museums, jars of wet-preserved tissue, insect cabinets, taxidermy and encyclopaedias. There's something strangely respectful and dehumanising about these archives. Flesh became data,

contained, labelled and made sterile in the name of education and scientific exploration. The cold and perhaps callous acts of pinning, dissection and flaying skin weirdly make these artefacts a way to see outside of yourself, which is how I wanted my imagery to translate.

At first, I wanted the book to feel almost overwhelming, full of hair, latex and pig skin (the closest to human). I wanted texture. I wanted it to smell, to create a physical reaction. But as the project developed, I was pulled more towards the subtlety and order of historical preservation. The work became more structured, more ritualistic to the point where the grotesqueness felt too easy or even obtuse. What really stuck with me was how bodies are suspended, ordered and contained in science, in a state of unrest. The unsettling idea that a body, long dead, can still be viewed, displayed and rendered an object became more interesting than shock value. The act of preserving flesh to defy decay ultimately reveals our discomfort with death and our desire to control it.

This research also led to many questions between science and artefact, what happens to specimens when they're no longer useful? Many Victorian anatomical collections are now obsolete in modern science, yet they remain stored or hidden away. When something is no longer useful to science, do we keep it for its historical value, or is it time to let it rest? Should these jars be cracked open and buried, the remains returned to soil, or do they still hold meaning simply by existing in an institution or educational context? I wanted the book to sit between that confusion, unsure whether it is preserving or freeing.

The construction of the book itself is designed to relate to these questions. The sugar paper I used is recycled and green-beige in tone, which is a direct reference to the way wet specimens change over time. With age preserved skin becomes pale, wrinkled and slightly bloated. It takes on a sickly tone and starts to look like its trying to lift away from the bone or deeper layers of the tissue. I wanted to create that fragile look and texture, as if it's something that has been in a jar for a bit too long. I chose to print in red ink in reference to the inside of the body e.g muscle tissue, organs, veins as the colour usually creates a more intense response. Evolutionarily, humans are hardwired to primally react to the sight of blood, that intense reaction or flash of danger or empathy is something I wanted to bring out of people.

The choice to risoprint was initially graphically important to me, but through the projects development it became more contextually relevant. With risoprinting, the images are created through patterns of small dots, which I consider to reflect the hundreds of tiny cells, follicles, and textures that make up the surface of the body. I was interested in the dichotomy of using a mechanical tool to mimic the reality of flesh. Abstraction was also important in defining the books identity. Through tight cropping, bright colour, and image scale, my intention was to leave the viewer confused rather than jump to obvious classification. It allows the viewer think, and see flesh without hierarchy or category.

At the end of the book, there's an index page inspired by taxonomy and scientific cataloguing. I used Roman numerals and Latin denotations as a nod to historical systems of classification. But I added a 'notes' column that blends both real and fictional observations. Some are accurate, others imagined which was my way of playing with the idea of authority in scientific archives.

All of this combined research contributed to the eventual decision of the book's title "*Caro Mortalis*", which in Latin translates to Mortal Flesh. It speaks to the inevitable decay of the body, not just human but animal, insect, anything with skin or blood. Using Latin ties it back into the clinical, taxonomical language of early science, connecting with the systems used to categorise and preserve organic matter. It felt important that the title sounded quite cold, distant, and perhaps ritualistic. I wanted it to feel like something you'd find written on a specimen label or the spine of an old anatomical volume.

Overall, this book is rooted in experimentation and pulling things apart to see what happens when form, texture, and context are taken away. Through abstraction, I wanted to blur species, identities, and boundaries until what's left feels both grotesque and strangely beautiful.

Practical Skills: 40%

Evaluate the methods and technical processes you have employed in the making of this body of practice. Explain your process for making your book, consider how editing/ design/ typography and format speak to the subject matter you have explored. Provide examples of the book dummies you have created over the past semester to show developments in your practical processes. (800 – 1500 words)

Throughout this project, the form of the book has been just as important as the imagery itself. The physical process of making, printing and testing helped me figure out what kind of object this work needed to be. I did not want the book to just be something to look at, but something that feels held, grotesque, yet archived and organised. I created multiple book dummies and material tests, each one helping me refine how I could visually and physically represent the themes of flesh, species, decay, and the archive.

The first photobook I made for this project was more of a technical and design experiment than a conceptual one. *Croen/Carreg (Stone/Skin)* was a small, A5, zine-like booklet made as part of a set task. It focused on imagery taken in Welsh heritage sites and museums, mostly of statues. What interested me most was how the softness of flesh was depicted by being carved into a rough, withstanding material. I was drawn to how intimate and vulnerable these statues were and their permanence through time.

Visually, the book used a red, black, and white colour scheme. It was hand bound with red string, and the images were physically sewn in, some even cut and stuck in by hand rather than layered digitally. The book itself was incased in red acetate which completely changed the overall feeling of the front and back cover image. This acetate was used to

symbolise how museums help to preserve their history, which was an idea that stayed with me throughout the semester.

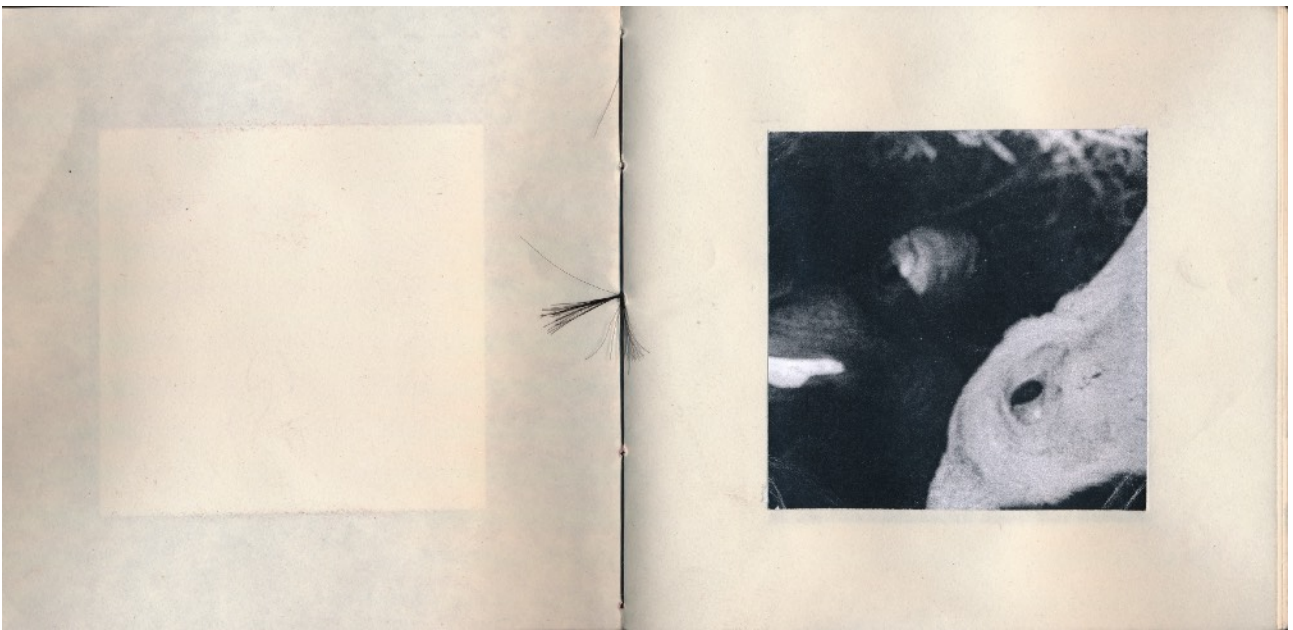


Although this book didn't really relate to my final topic, it gave me confidence in my ability to bind, design, and present work in a tactile and graphic way. Feedback from this dummy encouraged me to keep pushing my ideas physically, using both materials and imagery to carry meaning.

Once I decided on the theme of obscuring boundaries between human, animal, and insect bodies, I became set on creating a book that was visceral, ugly, and textured. I wanted each layer of the book to reflect the layers of skin: a latex or pigskin sleeve to act as the dermis, a translucent inner paper to mimic membrane, red imagery for muscle tissue, all stitched together with my own hair.

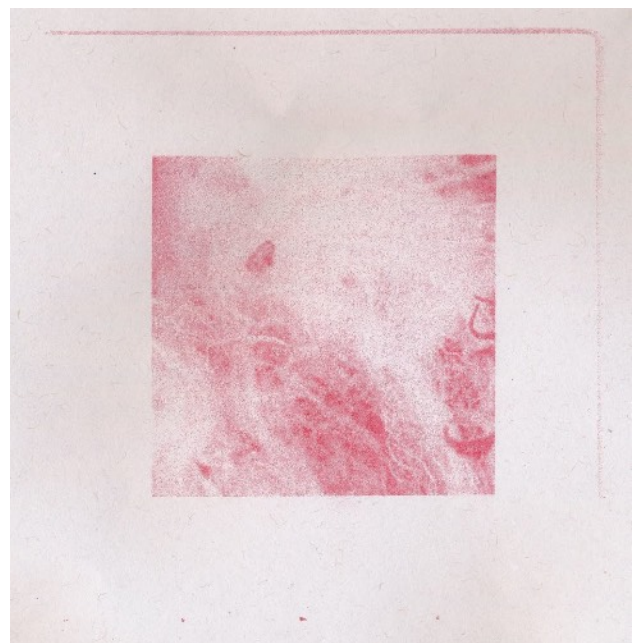
While some parts didn't work out (the latex idea didn't take off), others ended up being key methods I took into the final result. I created a small 8x8" square book, with images cropped in close showing bruised skin, fur, dead animals, cattle, and ambiguous textures. I initially printed them in black and white for ease, with a few red edits, though these didn't visually land the way I wanted.





The most successful part of this book was binding the pages with strands of my own hair, something I hadn't done before but was really happy with. It made the book feel more personal and unsettling. Feedback from tutors encouraged me to push abstraction further. Many of the images still felt too legible or species-specific. I realised I needed to let go of the "ugly" in a literal sense, and instead focus on discomfort through ambiguity and suggestion.

My final book format came about through extensive experimentation and a fair amount of trial and error. After creating the two initial dummy books, I began focusing more directly on how riso printing could create the look I was after. The first riso tests were done in a square format like my second dummy and printed in red ink on three different paper stocks: white recycled paper made from coffee cups, 300gsm watercolour paper, and an off-white paper from an old sketch pad. Each one changed the contrast and intensity of the ink. The off-white gave my favourite outcome, but the texture of the paper was too slippery and kept jamming the riso printer.



I began looking for another paper stock that still felt archival and organic. Eventually I found a recycled beige-green sugar paper online, which reminded me of old specimen labels. When I tested my riso prints on this stock, it immediately felt right. The slight greenish tone resembled how skin tones shift over time in preserved bodies, while the texture gave the prints a more fragile, fleshy look. The prints were produced at A3 size, portrait format with a slight boarder. Feedback from tutors confirmed this choice, and I used it for both my exhibition prints and the final photobook.

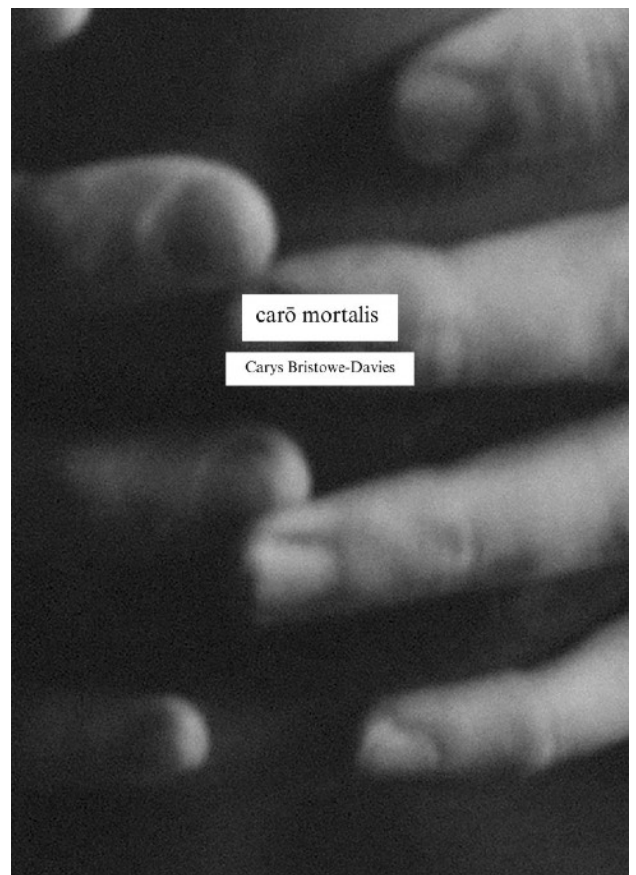
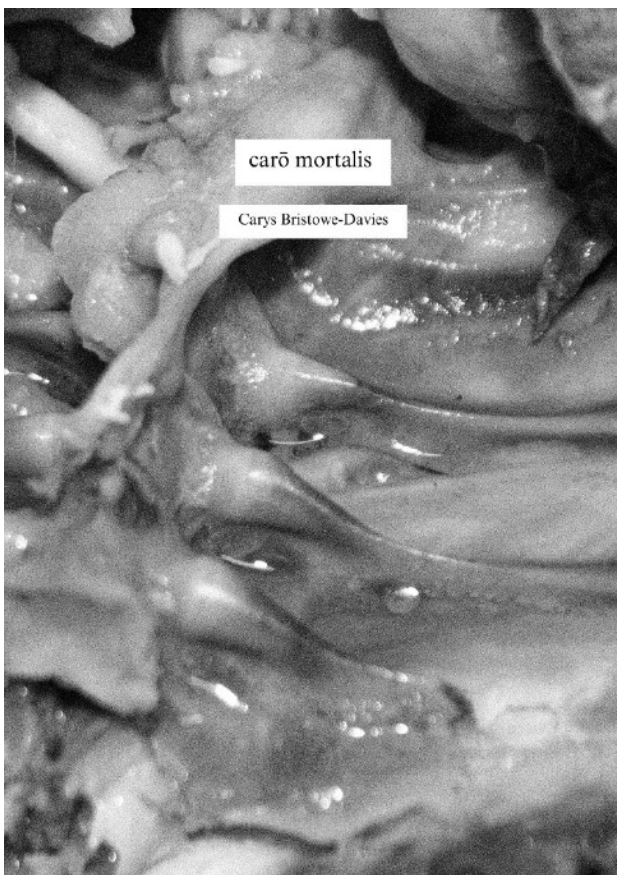


During this process I was creating new work by dissecting meat at home, photographing remains from local butchers and fishmongers, and visiting places like Plantasia to collect new images of insects and reptiles. I also looked through earlier works from the project and older pieces from my archive, looking for anything that could extend or strengthen the series. I finalised a selection of 30 images.

While printing the final A3 images for the exhibition display, I had a conversation with Ryan and Glen (the art technician) about how the book could be physically constructed. That's when we decided the book would open vertically, like a medical flip chart and I'd include a contents page at the back. We also discussed options for the front cover, text, and typography, though those decisions were finalised later in the week.



The following day, in a tutorial with Ryan, we worked together to sequence the images. All the prints were laid out onto a large table and organised by tonal value, shape and subject. Most notably beginning the sequence with a cow eye and ending with a human one. This part was really important to the project. Not just in terms of figuring out the pacing and flow but the act itself it mirrored the careful ordering and categorising that happens in scientific documentation.



Before the final printing session for the book, I decided on what the front cover would be. I chose 2 images from the series that I believe were the most striking and poetic, as to not reveal too much too soon. These would be printed full-bleed (unlike the internal pages which had borders), to immediately differentiate them . I created small title labels in Times New Roman, one with *Caro Mortalis* and one with my name. With my intention to physically stuck them on, referencing the handmade tags found on specimen jars and archival materials. Times new roman was chosen due to it's classic clean style and its rooted association with text books, newspaper and academic documents.

During this time, I also began designing a table of contents. My first attempt was in Pages, where I used a standard table layout. However, I found the alternating grey row shades and the visible lines made the table look too busy and chaotic. Wanting something more scientific and less GCSE textbook, I moved the layout to Canva, opting for a cleaner layout with no visible grid. The contents included English and Latin denotations to mirror encyclopaedias, and another with observational notes. These notes are scientific-style descriptions and fictional observations for each image, as an ode to historical taxonomy.

◆ TABLE OF SPECIMENS ◆			
Index of Organic Matter <i>Illustrated from Life. Classified with Latin Denotations.</i>			
Nº	Common Name	Latin Classification	Notes
I	Cow Eye	<i>Oculus Bovinus</i>	Ocular Tissue
II	Tuna Flesh	<i>Thunnus musculus</i>	Marine Muscle
III	Horse Hair	<i>Crinis Equinus</i>	Mammalian Fiber
IV	Human Ear	<i>Auris Humana</i>	Human Anatomy
V	Cow Kidney	<i>Ren Bovinus</i>	Bovine Organ
VI	Prawns (Intact Exoskeleton)	<i>Penaeus exoskeleton intacta</i>	Crustacean Exoskeleton
VII	Squid (Ink Removed)	<i>Teuthida sine atramento</i>	Cephalopod Remnant
VIII	Pig Meat	<i>Carnis Porcina</i>	Porcine Muscle
IX	Pig Ribs	<i>Costae Porcinae</i>	Skeletal Structure
X	Goose Feathers	<i>Pinnula Anserina</i>	Avian Fibre
XI	Cattle Butting Heads	<i>Bos taurus – comportatio aggressiva</i>	Behavioral Observation
XII	Salmon Gills	<i>Branchiae Salmonis</i>	Respiratory Tissue
XIII	Salmon Gills in Skull	<i>Branchiae intra calvaria</i>	Contained within cranial cavity
XIV	Human Skin (Knee)	<i>Cutis Genu Humani</i>	Epidermis
XV	Human Fingers	<i>Digitus Manus Humanae</i>	Whole digits
XVI	Common Fly	<i>Musca domestica</i>	Intact, live specimen
XVII	Human Teeth and Lips	<i>Dentes et Labia Humana</i>	Maxillary and oral soft tissue
XVII I	Poultry Fat	<i>Pinguedo Avium Domesticorum</i>	Cooked Avian Tissue
XIX	Poultry Carcass	<i>Corpus Avium Domesticorum</i>	Avian Remains
XX	Human Cheek & Molars	<i>Bucca cum molaribus</i>	Half-dissection
XXI	Sloth Fur	<i>Pilus Bradypodis</i>	Coarse guard hairs
XXII	Human Finger (Knuckles Visible)	<i>Digitus Humanus cum articulis</i>	Preserved Joint Anatomy
XXII I	Cow Flesh	<i>Musculus Bovinus</i>	Bovine Muscle Slab Section
XXI V	Salmon Head (Decapitated)	<i>Caput Salmonis resectum</i>	Includes gill arches
XXV	Male Human Hand	<i>Manus Virilis Humana</i>	Human Limb
XXV I	Sheep Wool	<i>Lana Ovis</i>	Found Mammalian Fibre
XXV I	Human Eye (Prominent Tear Duct)	<i>Oculus Humanus cum ductu lacrimali</i>	Ocular Tissue Slight inflammation

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XXVI	Sheep Wool	<i>Lana Ovis</i>	Found Mammalian Fibre
XXVII	Human Eye (Prominent Tear Duct)	<i>Oculus Humanus cum ductu lacrimali</i>	Ocular Tissue Slight Inflammation
XXVIII	Avian Water Monitor	<i>Viverra vivipara</i>	Marine Reptilian Specimen
XXIX	Dried Spider Skin	<i>Aranea Sepulchra</i>	Arachnid Shedding
XXX	Human Eye (In Reddish Back, Nine Visible)	<i>Oculus Humanus post dissectionem</i>	Post-mortem

It was graphically strong and conceptually in line with the rest of the book, but I had concerns it might spell things out too clearly. Part of what I wanted from the book was ambiguity, to let people sit with the images and form their own reactions before reading

into them. I messaged Ryan for feedback before committing to sewing the final book together.

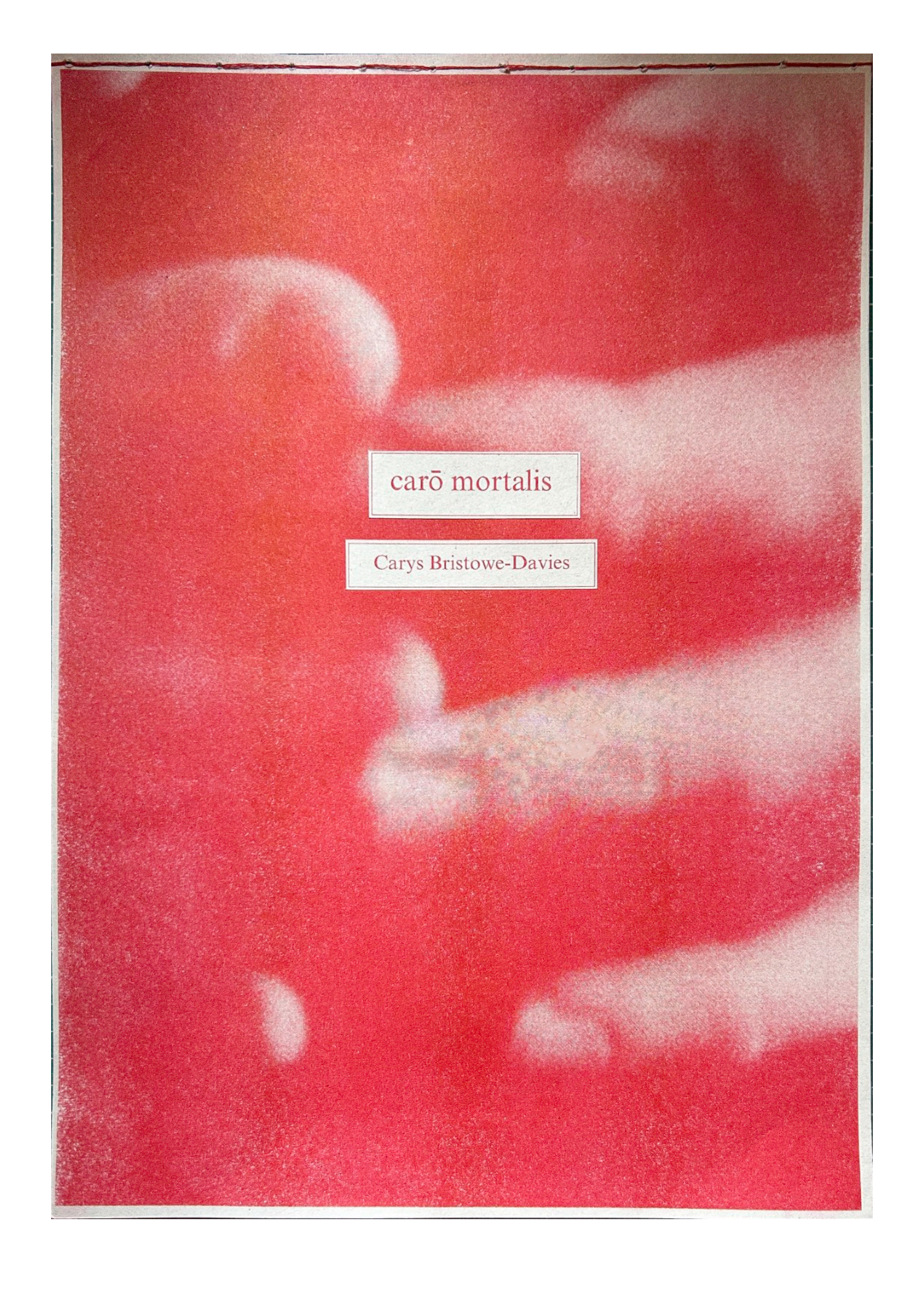
Even at the last stage, I was committed to hand binding the book with strands of my own hair. This would allow me to literally embed myself into the book, bringing full circle my original intention to blur the lines between body, object and image. However I had made no further tests with this technique using larger size prints in higher volume, which proved to be unseen overconfidence.

The final book came together through a lot of trial, error and last-minute decisions. I started by cutting out the front cover labels and tested their placement using tweezers and a glue stick. I originally wanted to use the chicken carcass image for the cover, but I stuck the labels down slightly off-centre and it looked unprofessional. I had to go with my second option, the image of interlaced fingers. Looking back, I think this worked better. While the carcass image immediately sets a certain tone, the fingers feel more ambiguous. They mirror each other in a way that reflects the themes of interconnectedness between species and in red print, they almost resemble a ribcage.

For binding, I measured 1.5 inch spaces for the holes along the top edge so the book would open vertically. I stacked nine prints at a time, clamped them with binder clips, then used an awl to punch the holes through. I used the last page of each stack as a template for the next so everything stayed aligned. Once all the pages were punched, I clipped them together and stitched through the top edge in a simple running stitch.

I really wanted to sew the book with my own hair to literally tie part of myself into the work. I cut a small section, wet and used hairspray to give it more structure, and split it into two strands. But in the end, it just wasn't strong enough. The strands kept slipping out and unravelling. I was disappointed because the idea added so much conceptually, but it hadn't been tested enough beforehand. I swapped to a thin red wax thread instead. It was much easier to work with and still fit the theme as it is visually similar to veins, sinew, and internal tissue.

All the pages stayed aligned, nothing got cropped, and the prints sat even and straight. It felt good seeing it all finally come together. The process was pretty frustrating at points and I wish I'd had more time to push it further, but overall I'm really pleased with how it turned out.



carō mortalis

Carys Bristowe-Davies

Transferable Skills for Life and Professional Practice 10%

Evaluate what you have learnt throughout the process of making your photobook. Pay particular attention to the transferable skills you have developed. (500-1000 words)

This project has helped me develop on a lot of skills. I learned the importance of research, especially experiencing things firsthand. Visiting the farm, going through museum collections, and revisiting my own archive added a lot more depth to the work than expected. It helped to ground my ideas and even gave me emotional reference to draw from.

Time management was really important for me this semester, especially when working with processes like risoprinting, where I had to book sessions. I always made sure I was on time and prepared for these printing sessions, as well as ensuring enough time between printing to account for any more experimentation or problem solving.

Sourcing materials was sometimes challenging. I often bought things that didn't work out, creating a bit of a cycle. Adaptability became key. I faced small issues, like not having certain skills or enough testing, but I found ways to manage these problems. Creating dummy and tester books was really beneficial for my design and stylistic choices. Feedback from tutors and technicians shaped the project including the book's format and the sequence of images. It also helped me recognise when to pull back and let the work speak for itself.

My Communication skills and organisation was also developed on. I was in consistent communication with art technicians, often emailing lectures on advice and always attending feedback based tutorials. Art technicians, students and other artists were also there for me to talk through ideas I had. This reinforced the importance of collaboration and how helpful outside perspectives can be. It also helped build my confidence in explaining my work and the concepts behind it, which is something I find quite difficult.

In terms of technical skills, I learned a lot from risoprinting. I got to see how the machine itself worked and went through the trial and error process of testing different paper stocks and formats. Testing different formats become really helpful, I didn't realise how much scale could change the feeling of my imagery. Experimenting with stitching, especially using hair, pushed me to think about unconventional materials and how material can deepen the concepts of the work. I also became better at problem-solving and was less stressed about small things, like the printer jamming materials, and adapted my idea to bind with hair without compromising my concept, using red thread that resembled veins and sinew instead. I definitely feel like I've become more resilient.

Looking back, I definitely would've pushed the abstraction and distortion of my images further, taking more inspiration from artist Daisuke Yokota. The way he re-photographs and layers his images to create ghostly, almost accidental textures really relates to how I

wanted my work to feel, like you're not quite sure what you're looking at but you can't look away.

Unfortunately, I couldn't get hold of a macro lens because it was already booked by another student, but it's something I was really interested in using. It would've been perfect for getting extreme close ups of flesh and skin. I also wish I'd gone back to the farm once I'd figured out the direction I was going in. With a clearer focus on abstraction, I could've captured new imagery that felt more aligned with the final concept.

Text is another thing I kept thinking about but didn't end up using. I considered adding anatomical-style labels or notes, almost like dissection diagrams, to bring in a more clinical, medical tone. It could've been a good contrast to the fleshy imagery and added another layer to the narrative without spelling things out too much.

Overall, This project felt instinctive and more personal than i'm used to. I'm now considering reprinting the book in a new edition, A4, black ink riso on the same paper stock. This would open up the possibility of finally using hair in the binding and would shift the tone of the book. The change in scale, ink and materials would offer a more grounded, classic, possibly more macabre interpretation of the same theme.

I've realised how much I enjoy making physical outcomes and will definitely continue exploring photobooks as part of my practice. This format feels like a natural progression.

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