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Rationale

For my site-specific exhibition, I chose Swansea Castle because I felt like the site would work best for what I wanted to create work based around. From the start I knew I wanted to create work based on the War, particularly the Three Night Blitz, since this year it is 80 years since The Blitz.

Within my group are Sophie-Mai Pemberton, Rhys Llewellyn Jones and Emma Spreadborough. As a group we thought it would be best to have our work placed on different materials that represent the history of the castle the best.



Site

The Castle was originally built with wood in 1099 by Henry Beaumont De Newburgh (Celtic Publications, 1969, page 5). The original wooden castle was destroyed by an attack by the Welsh, however, it was later rebuilt in stone towards the end of the 12th century, but was later destroyed again in 1217, then was later rebuilt between the end of the 13th and 14th century (Castles and Fortifications of England and Wales, undated). The Castle went through different stages and was reused for many things, such as; glass factory, carpenter's shop, candle shop, workhouse for the poor, debtors prison, barracks- housed soldiers, Post Office, South Wales Evening Post (Celtic publications, 1969, pages 35-36), as well as being used as a copper processing works, market, town hall and chapel (David Ross, undated).

Artist Research/Inspiration

Christian Boltanski

As a group we looked at Christian Boltanski and we were all fascinated by his way of using lights within his installations, and we felt as though the use of lights within our exhibition would work really well to represent and act as a metaphor to shine a light to remember the people who lost their lives during the Three Night Blitz and The War.

Fig 1



Christian Boltanski was a French artist, who was well known for his use of installation pieces within his exhibitions. Within Boltanski's work he often looked at representing death, life and memory (artnet, undated), which is what I looked at throughout the curation of my exhibition. Boltanski often used objects like clothes, photos, flowers to represent the absent subject to allow the viewer to stop and think (Marian Goodman, undated), this did inspire me to consider placing a gas mask within my own exhibition, however, my idea later changed.

Within Boltanski's 2010 exhibition *No Man's Land*, Boltanski used a recording of hundred's of heartbeats alongside an installation of an enormous pile of discarded clothes, to signify that death is inevitable (artsy, undated). The use of audio within this work was so powerful, considering he often incorporated The War into his work, this, I feel, is a way of representing the lives lost during The War. Boltanski's use of audio, and the affect it had on people, made me think about incorporating some sort of audio into my exhibition in attempt to create a strong impact on people viewing our exhibition so it can be remembered.

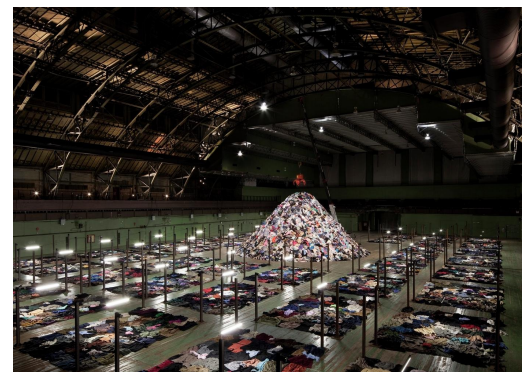


Fig 2

Don Mccullen



I personally find Don Mccullen's portraiture really fascinating to look at, and I feel like they work really well with conveying emotion, which is what I wanted to do with my photographs and portraits.

Don Mccullen is a British photojournalist and is best known for his photography of wars around the world. His work consist of landscapes, portraits and still life

Fig 3

(Don Mccullen, undated), which whilst looking at made me think about incorporating still life as well as portraiture within my own work for this exhibition. Mccullen first photographed war in Cyprus in 1964, which he won a World Press Photo award for (Don Mccullen, undated).

Fig 4



Development

When first given the brief for this piece of work I originally planned on photographing my grandad's old gas mask in places around Swansea that were bombed during The Blitz and The War and displaying it in a collage piece, whilst my group did their own pieces, however, we collectively decided it would work best and be less confusing if we worked collaboratively. We originally planned on printing onto glass or perspex, since the castle used to produce glass, and placing the glass/perspex in some of the pigeon holes that are surrounding the castle's walls with some LED candles behind to light up the image (similar to Boltanski's work), however, we were concerned about the stability of it in the pigeon holes with how uneven they are, and being limited on time we had little time to experiment with printing liquid light on to different materials and less room to make mistakes. Though we did not use the glass/perspex idea we still used the LED lights within the pigeon holes because we thought it would be a nice addition to the exhibition to represent the people who lost their lives. I thought it would be a nice installation of the exhibition to include my grandad's physical gas mask in a glass or clear stand, however, after thinking it through I thought it would be best to not do

that since the exhibition is outside and I would not want anyone coming and damaging it or stealing it.

After many conversations with Cadw, who look after the castle, we were informed that we would not be able to hang anything off the brick work or place anything in places that would be out of our reach, to avoid damage to the building or any of us hurting ourselves whilst setting up the exhibition or taking it down, so we were limited with what we could do quite early on to

only having access to place work on the gates and in the pigeon holes. Since we were more



limited we went and took measurements of all the gates and pigeon holes to make sure we did not create work that was too big for the places that we wanted them to go.

Due to the exhibition being outside we had to be aware of the risks of the weather affecting our prints badly, like damaging them, so we had to think about printing onto and using different materials. To fit the site, we felt it would be best to use metal, since the castle used to be a copper works, however, due to the cost of copper we had to improvise and use steel instead.

We originally wanted to try printing photos onto the steel, however, we were limited on time and did not have enough time to make mistakes, especially since it could have been more time consuming and more difficult to print on the steel than it would on paper. After deciding against printing onto the steel, we thought it would be nice to incorporate text, so Rhys, Emma and myself went to Swansea Library and went through *The Swansea Wartime Diary of Laurie Latchford, 1940-41*, and we found two quotes that we felt would be a really powerful addition to our exhibition, "If you have tears, prepare to shed them now." (page 247)

and "They will not be back in my lifetime. For me Swansea is dead." (page 254)

Rather than using photographic paper we thought if we used watercolour paper, since the castle was originally built in wood, it would link to the production of the paper. Once we had the watercolour paper we went to the castle and rubbed it on the walls to incorporate the creases and dirt from the actual castle, and would make the prints more personal to the castle. To print on to the watercolour paper we used the liquid light technique, by printing our chosen photos onto acetate and then printing via the darkroom. We decided, since we were working



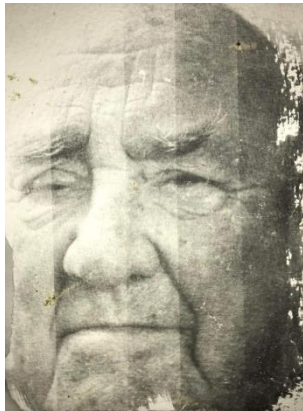
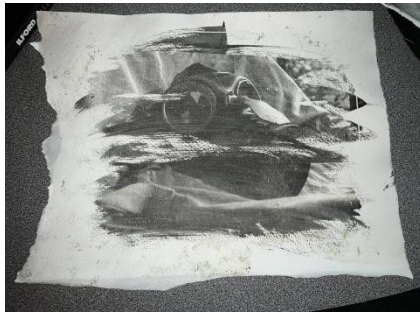
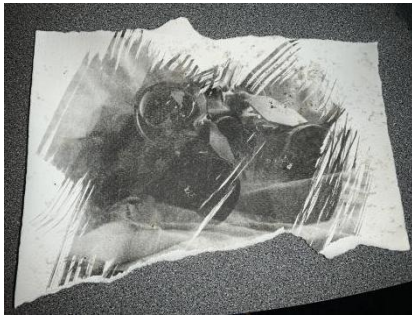
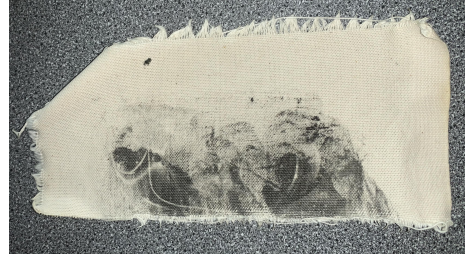
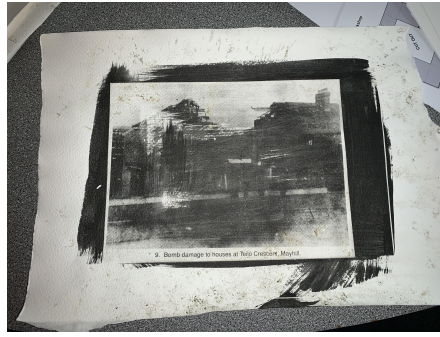
collaboratively, we would do our own individual prints of our own photos, mine were of my grandad's gasmask and closeup portraits of my grandad, and then have all of our chosen prints stitched together. Also within the two collages of our liquid light prints are long exposure of us all rubbing the watercolour paper on the castle. Alongside the collages, I have typed up a handout to give people when they come to the exhibition, and on the handout is a QR code (that



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Rhys made) which once scanned is an audio which I recorded using a H4N sound recorder that I borrowed from the university, and edited on Premiere Pro, of my grandad talking about his memories from the war.

My prints:



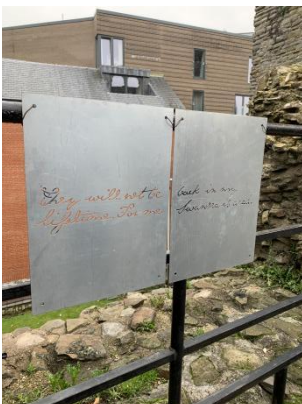
As a group we all thought it would have been a nice addition to our exhibition if we were able to use the lights that are surrounding the castle and have them turn red to represent the death from The War and The Blitz, however, through conversation with the council we were informed we would have had to pay £75 which we did not want to do, and due to safety reasons we were unable to have red lighting gels over the lights. Instead of the lights we cut up an old red bed sheet and placed it on two gates that were on either side of one of the collages, to attempt to have a similar affect as the red lights would have had.

To come up with a name for our exhibition we first thought up *Deconstructing Time* because we felt it was representing the castle decaying and 'deconstructing' over time. However, we wanted a name that was more connected to our theme, so we finally decided on *230*, because during our research we found that in Swansea 230 people were thought to have been killed during The Blitz (Swansea Council, undated), and we thought it would be nice to have our exhibition as a memorial for those who lost their lives.

To promote our exhibition, Rhys made the poster and we all put it on our personal and photography instagram accounts and shared it across social media and had friends and family sharing it too, as well as us going around Swansea Centre and placing the poster in shops and local businesses and sticking it on bins, phone boxes and walls on the streets. Since we were also in touch with the council, Swansea City Centre put promotion for us on their social media accounts too.

Exhibition

We decided to have our exhibition on Wednesday 17th because it was student night on Wind Street so we thought it would be good for people walking past to go to Town and see our exhibition. We also thought it would work for our theme, if we started our exhibition at 14:30 to go with our name of *230*.



Before the day of our exhibition we wanted to go to the site to check we could put up the steel with little issue, because we were concerned about the weight of it and if the wire we were using would hold it up. However, we put two of the pieces of steel up to check and we saw it held really well, though

we did see that we had to move the steel over so behind the text would not be blocked off from a pole from the gate we were attaching it to, so we were able to change this the day of the exhibition.

We wanted to start putting our exhibition up with plenty of time, just in case anything went wrong or if we needed to clean the site beforehand, since we had some issues with litter on the site in the past. However, once we started putting pieces up we realised it was not taking us nearly as much time as we thought it would. Since there were four of us putting everything up, we went in pairs so we could help our partner with holding a piece up whilst tying it to a gate and taking turns doing so, in all it took us a little over an hour to set up. We used string to tie up our prints because we thought it would link with the tags that were around children's necks whilst they were being evacuated during The War, we also used rusty metal wire to tie the steel upon the metal fence because we felt it looked like copper and linked to how the castle used to be a copper works.

Setting up the exhibition:



Throughout the whole 7 hours of the exhibition, I think we had a really good turn out. People were walking past the castle and were curious as to what was going on so came to see it all. We all had printed 20 sheets each of the handouts that I had made so we were able to hand them out to people so they would have a rough idea of what to expect and be able to listen to my audio.

Evaluation

I am really happy with how the exhibition turned out. I was really nervous in case it went bad, as we had been told of previous outside exhibitions having issues. There was a worry that the weather was going to be really bad and ruin our prints, however, we had all planned for there to be a little bit of rain, hence why we wanted to print on watercolour paper so it would hold better if it got wet. We also liked the idea whilst stitching the collages together that it would be interesting if they did tear slightly to go with the decaying of the castle, though none of that happened. We should have thought more about how cold it was going to get, because after 2 hours outside we were all wishing we had put more layers and gloves on.

The time that we started there were quite a few people by the castle and walking by so we managed to catch some people's attention. I found that the typical people coming to see our work were people of the older generation, and them telling us about their memories of the castle and the war. It was really nice speaking to people who lived through the war and listening to their memories, and hearing them say they enjoyed our work.

Once it started to get dark we went and turned on the LED candles that were placed in the pigeon holes and I loved how subtle they were and how they led the viewers around from one side of the castle to the other. We also used torches, once it was dark enough, to show people our work and it looked so fascinating using the torches because it was highlighting the bits of dirt that we had got on the paper from the castle.

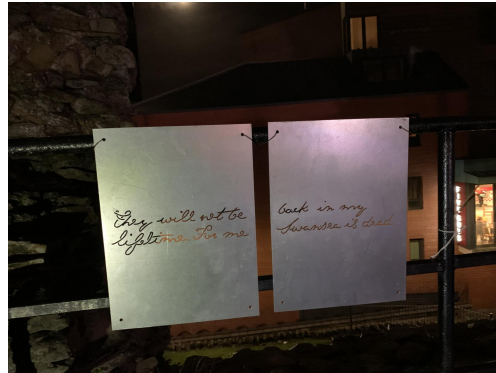
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Daytime set up;



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Night time set up;



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People visiting the exhibition;



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