

Advanced Creative Inquiry

Final Major Project Development

Izabella Bristowe-Casey

1702665

Research Material

RESEARCH MATERIAL Evidence of a range of relevant research (including critical analysis) that has influenced and impacted on your major project. The research should be rigorous and thorough and should contextualise your concepts and process within contemporary visual culture.

Background of Project:

Throughout my time studying photography I have always been moved by the beauty of cinematic images and aesthetics. Creating characters has always been a part of my practice, and for most of my work I have used myself to create still scenes of what is going on inside my head.

This project has been heavily influenced by my love of films, music and images and I have decided to merge it with the research from my dissertation so that it is all relevant to each other. As mentioned in my dissertation: "Since a young age, sound and images have always played a huge role in my character development, from learning to play the piano, dance lessons and then being home alone and creating impromptu routines that were inspired by the music I had just adopted. After living this way for many years, and although these hobbies are now a thing of the past, i cannot seem to shake the feeling of constructing images in my head when listening to music i feel so passionate about. Part of the reason why as I grew older, decided to pick up a camera and show these thoughts through another medium." The concept behind my ideas for this project came to me after re watching Sofia Coppolas *Lost in Translation* and remembering how the pink wig which is only worn for a brief while, has stuck to be such an iconic moment. This influenced me to buy my own wig and use it as a central point in my work.

Major Project final piece ideas:

- Create a dream like state throughout
- Pink hues
- Small neon beams
- Be redirected to the *main character* by the pink wig
- Pink wig will be a running theme
- Not always worn by the same person
- Shoots inspired by the lyrics of songs from my *Final Major Project* playlist
- References to movie stills might also be noticed from the shoots
- QR codes that reference the pandemic but are also a link to my playlist
- A photobook that goes through segments of each shoot with the lyrics that inspired the shoots as captions
- Have the photobook on a plinth along-side headphones, scan the QR code to access the playlist and listen while looking through
- Have around 3 large glossy prints on the wall of images that weren't included in the book
- Show the connection the body and mind make when joint with music (*The Third Meaning*)

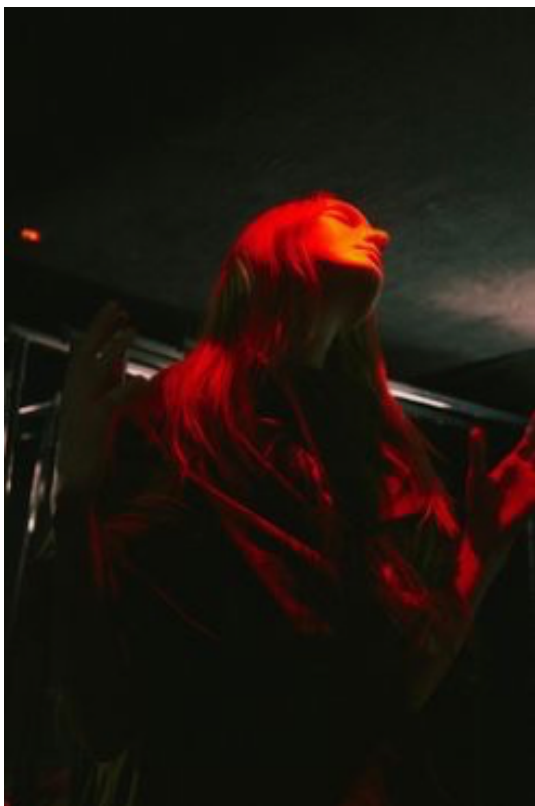
Research:

- Audrey Wollen
- Gia Coppola
- Sofia Coppola
- Amber Asaly
- Brain Eno
- Cinematography

Project visual Inspiration







(pinterest)



Notes from **Audrey Wollen** *Sad Girl Theory*:



(Fig 1, *Pinterest*)

Audrey Wollen's *Sad Girl Theory* pulls apart each feeling the female mind experiences when in our own company. It is something that has been carefully put together that includes all of our thoughts and guilty pleasures into a way that makes us not feel so bad about it. I think that sometimes the sadness of girls should be witnessed.

- Instagram as a virtual art gallery
- Shows *The Power of Sadness*
- Self-objectification isn't always a bad thing
- Everyone has a provocative side
- Sex work should be applauded as the females make money from their control over men
- Finding an Artistic Aesthetic

Is it about empowerment or another way of making girls look the weaker sex?

Why has my work always been surrounded by *The Sad Girl* aesthetic?

I think that throughout my time developing my self portrait creative process I have realised that it always stems back from my influence of favourite films. These films which often have a soft female lead are always in the back of my mind when I am in need of finding inspiration.

How would you describe *Sad Girl Theory*?

Sad Girl Theory is the proposal that the sadness of girls should be witnessed and re-historicized as an act of resistance, of political protest. Basically, girls being sad has been

categorized as this act of passivity, and therefore, discounted from the history of activism. I'm trying to open up the idea that protest doesn't have to be external to the body; it doesn't have to be a huge march in the streets, noise, violence, or rupture. There's a long history of girls who have used their own anguish, their own suffering, as tools for resistance and political agency. Girls' sadness isn't quiet, weak, shameful, or dumb: It is active, autonomous, and articulate. It's a way of fighting back.

(Wollen. A, Nylon)

I think this self-portrait created by Audrey Wollen is a reference to the opening scene of *Lost in Translation*, but instead of showing an innocently portrayed and lonely Charlotte, is a more confident woman who looks comfortable in her own skin.

"The Sad Girl Theory, which says that the expression of female sadness ought to be viewed as an act of political protest and resistance rather than personal failure." (Wells. E, 2016)



(Fig 2 Wollen. A *Dazed* 2015)



(Fig 3 Coppola. S *Lost in Translation* 2003)

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First shoot for final major project







(Fig 4 *You're Not Good Enough – Blood Orange*)

*Forty-nine days
Surely I should be feeling a whole lot better
Ways and ways
You keep on coming back
I keep letting you in*

*I never was in love
You know that you were never good enough
Fall asleep right next to me
You know that you were never good enough*

I chose this song to be the starting point for this shoot as it was featured in the film *Palo Alto*. The film follows a group of teenagers who grow up in the LA suburbs who are all trying to discover themselves. Each of the characters story is a journey of their growth and how they overcome certain situations. I chose to shoot in the tennis court because the excitement of being young and first passing your driving test leads you to the most random of places. When I was a teenager I also found myself ending up in this tennis court many times.

Palo Alto – Gia Coppola





(Fig 5 *Filmgrab* 2013)

"The kids in Gia Coppola's "Palo Alto" move as through a dream. It's a drift, appealing story, set in the Northern California city that gives the movie its title, about that twilight period between childhood's end and the start of young adulthood. Here, under wavering palm trees, teenagers slip through homes and streets with the vagueness that comes with certain visions of adolescence. These aren't the tireless achievers cramming for tests, and preparing for college and the conformity to come. They are instead the anxious children who have — since the likes of Holden Caulfield and James Dean's rebel — defined American adolescence as a state of poetic confusion." (Dargis. M The New York Times 2014)

Notes from Gia Coppolas **Palo Alto** movie:

- Adolescent
- Self loss
- Discovery
- Experimenting
- Suburban
- Foolish
- Soft
- Juvenile
- Desperate

Before taking on the role as director, Gia Coppolas previous photography work shows that her aesthetics fit perfectly for the style in which James Francos book needed to be visualised and then brought to life. Dusty, LA suburbia, troublemakers and broken teenage hearts needed an eye like Coppolas to give it her classic soft and vulnerable look. The Sad Girl Theory also seems to appear throughout the film as both leading female characters, April and Emily experience spells of loneliness, self loss and desperation and they face the constant battle of not being the weaker sex or losing their worth. Both females throughout the film are made out to be pathetic and fragile by men who use them as easy bait.

'In conversation with Gia Coppola' – Crummy. C I-D 2017

How was making the film with James Franco?

I always admire him for the position he's in and how supportive he is to women in giving us opportunities. Looking back at the experience with Palo Alto and the experiences trying to get other things off the ground, I had such liberty to do what I wanted. You have to articulate why you can do something or have to prove yourself so much, so to have someone trust you and even give you an opportunity is great. It's a great challenge to be an advocate for yourself but it's definitely hard to have that self-belief.

It definitely helps in some regards but it is a hindrance as to being able to define myself as my own person with my own vision. I work hard for a reason; because it challenges me, makes me grow as a person, and gives me stories to tell. I don't want to neglect myself of those experiences. I'm grateful I have wise people who have experienced that in all different forms, who I can turn to for advice. They are about doing what is right in your heart.



(Fig 6 Coppola. G 2014)

Sofia Coppola

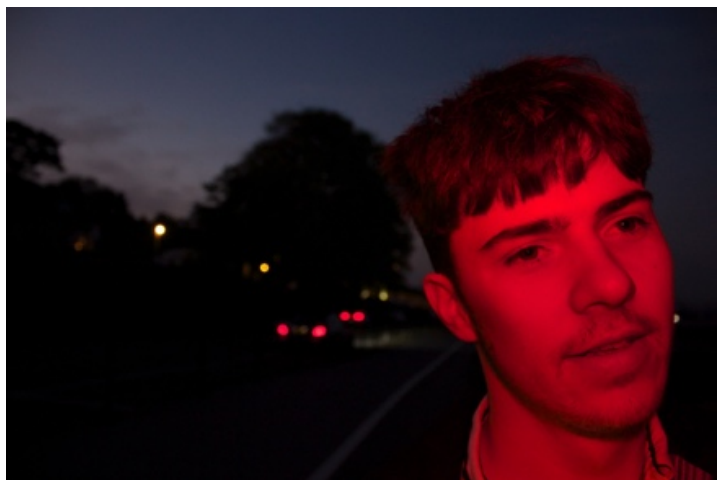
*“But what is it exactly that makes Sofia's films so dreamy? It's as if the auteur looks at life through a sun-soaked lens; ultra-light, hazy, with speckles of sunshine reflecting onto the camera. Yet for all the visual beauty, there's always somber undertones. Picture owner of a lonely heart Charlotte, in *Lost in Translation*, as she tours Kyoto -- the scene is prettier than a postcard, but while the dreamscape is as aesthetically pleasing as it gets, melancholia is the overriding sensation. The absence of dialogue turns all attention to the perfection of the landscape, within which Charlotte is disoriented and alone.”* (Brand. B I.D 2017)



(Fig 7 Coppola. S)

Sofia Coppola's *Hazy Dream like* quality is the style I also feel most comfortable creating in. From *The Virgin Suicides* to *Lost in Translation*, each of her movies delicate main characters look as though an empty void is missing and as we follow their journeys you can't help but feel connected to them. After growing up watching so many coming of age films it seems to be ingrained in the way I work. Since re watching *Lost in Translation* it was clear to me that referencing Coppola's work in my project would be an important reminder to what made me start taking photos in the first place. I also think that being influenced by such a strong female role in the industry

Examples of my work from previous projects:





(Fig 8 Izabella)

Notes from *Scoring the Screen: The secret language of film music*:

- In the Language of time, that pretty much defined “epic”.
- The musical gesture has to occur in proper relationship with a cinematic gesture.
- Some theorists believe meaning in music comes from surprise.
- Big shifts in tone can draw too much attention and diminish audience immersion to mere observance.
- Filmmakers like ambiguity and suspense.
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Amber Asaly

- High saturation
- Colour pallet
- Tropical
- LA Girl
- Dreamy
- Vibrant

These days it is hard to go on Instagram and not spot one of Aslays images pop up from some of the biggest celebrities out there. She is the mystery behind most of Kylie Jenner

and Hailey Bieber's posts and gets hired to spend endless hours in the sun photographing the stars on their private yachts or travelling around the world with them. I was first drawn to her high saturation film photos after seeing them pop up all over my feed and had to delve in to examine more. I think she really captures the cool LA vibes so well and they surely do a good job of making one second of someone's life look so envious.





Aslay. A fig 9

Due to the pandemic and the constant uncertainty of random lockdowns I have found it difficult to arrange shoots with anyone as we shouldn't be meeting up or travelling unnecessarily. Originally for this project I was going to stem away from self-portraits and try photographing other people but as this isn't a current possibility, I have resulted in going back to my roots. Aslays work has encouraged me to think outside of the box when doing a home self-portrait shoot, so I have bought some props and I am using the last image she took of the girl in the kitchen as my reference. I think her bold colour pallet is something to take note of and trying out some more obscure angles or editing.

Brain Eno

"Music is an abstract form of art" (Eno, 2020, *The Face Podcast*) When you begin to consume much more orchestral or ambient music it can free parts of your imagination that you never knew existed, which is why I think it is so vital that every good film has an even greater soundtrack or score to follow. A sound so crucial that when you hear it you are instantly taken back to every movie or scene it is combined with and creates something so aesthetically pleasing when they unify together.

While studying some of Brain Enos work for my dissertation I noticed that he amplifies the importance of having music or art as a structure and always something to fall back on. Music is something that will always be there and is my most common way of storing memories that become reignited again when listening to a specific song or looking at painting. He has also had various exhibitions involving neon lights, strobes and colour blocks which I would love to include in my work, especially seeing how different the atmosphere of my images would look in a dark room with a slight colourful glow could really add a more cinematic atmosphere. My goal for the end of this project is to have some of my favourite music be a part of such a memorable moment in my life. Enos way of merging visuals and sounds to create a final piece is something I would really like to try and make successful so that what I see in my head is brought to life by my sensory overloaded exhibition.

“Surprisingly, Eno’s preoccupation with light art can be attributed, in part, to Walt Disney. ‘My uncle Douglas had borrowed an 8mm projector and some reels of Disney films,’ Eno writes in the book’s introduction. ‘He didn’t have a screen, so he set the projector up to throw its image onto the kitchen wall. I have no recollection of what we saw: but what I remember, even now, was the visceral impact of that intensity of colour.’ On each page of Light Music this potency and depth reveals itself in technicolour rainbows.” (Parsons. E Wallpaper 2017)

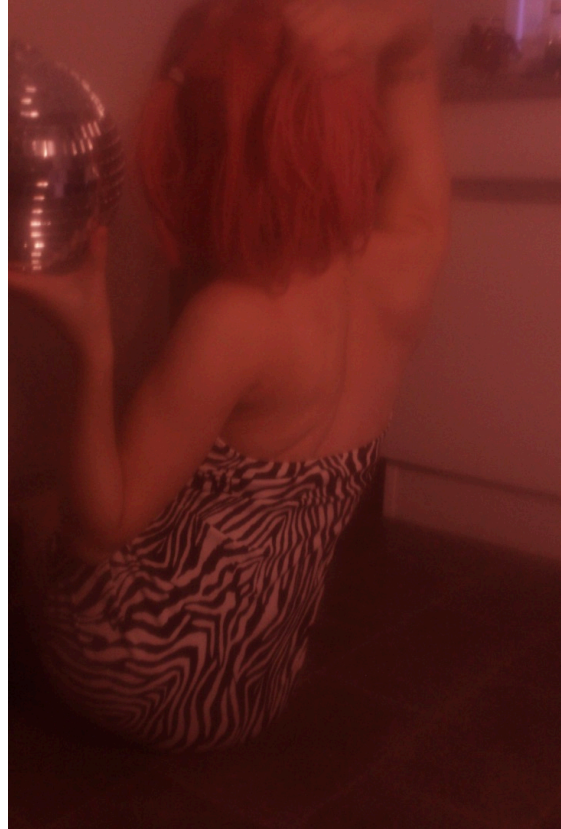


(Fig 10 Brian Eno)



Shoot 2 *unsuccessful*

The song I used as inspiration for my second shoot was Melody (1983 *Cub Vinyl Mix*) so my first thoughts when planning was disco, party, lights, and happiness but due to lockdown I wasn't able to project it how I had originally hoped for. Instead I tried it at home but sadly I am not happy with the way it has turned out. I will not be using these images in my final project but I will hopefully find them to be a helpful guide when doing the real thing.



Critical Analysis

I have found creating my presentation a very helpful task that has made me re trace my steps of previous projects and see how my ideas and style has developed over the years. I am glad that I have always held the same interest in film and cinematic images and i hope it will be something I decide to take further in the future. I am finding planning my Final Major Project very enjoyable It has also been clear to me that my photographic methods have only altered slightly as i just more edit more now than before I used to leave my images raw and then upload. While developing my concepts for this project I feel pretty set in stone about keeping my initial ideas and just making them more improved.

I have struggled a lot with not being able to meet up with the people I want featuring in my images and find it disappointing when I shoot doesn't turn out as planned when the ideas have been in my head for so long. I hope that in time I will be able to create work I am happy enough with to feature in our exhibition.

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