

Martin Dykstra
Visual Enquiry 2.0

What is a Photobook?

My definition would be:

‘A body of illustrated work, allowing the Artist to communicate their subject matter to a reader.’

The Tate Gallery definition is:

‘The photobook is a book of photographs by a photographer that has an overarching theme or follows a storyline – a convenient and reasonably cheap way of disseminating the work of a photographer to a mass audience.’

Photo Book Review

The following are reviews of five photobooks, looking at their Theme, Layout, Form, Function and target Audience.

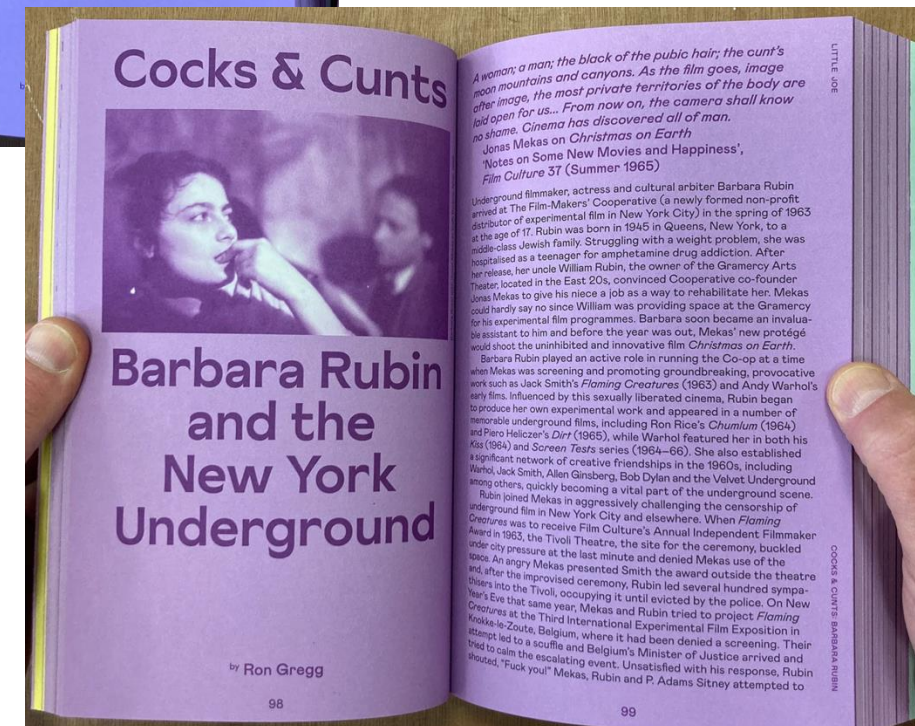
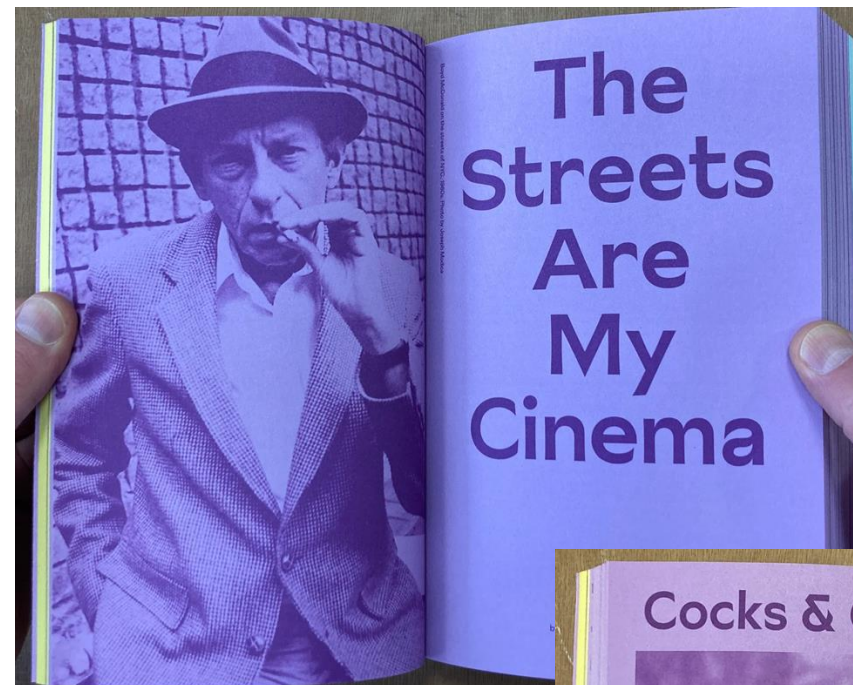
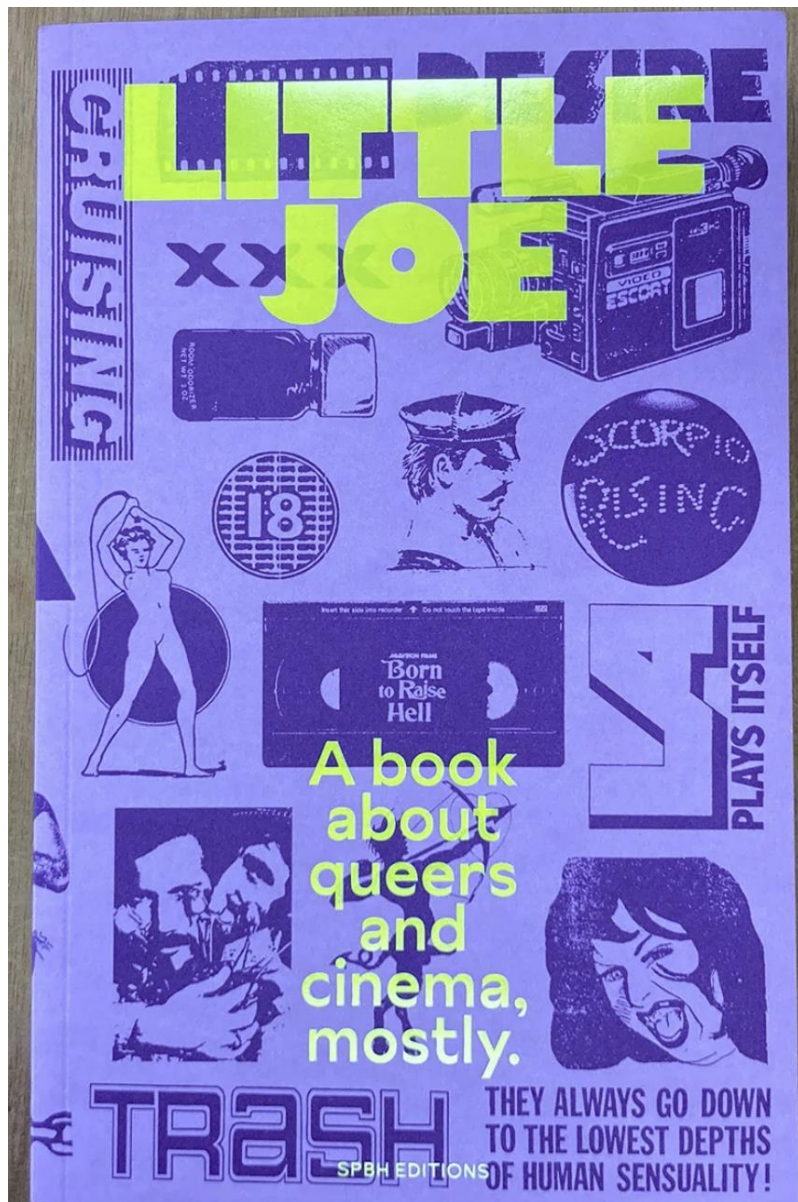
1.

	I shall sing these songs beautifully - Yorgos Lanthimos
Theme	Contemporary imagery of real-life blurring into cinematic make believe.
Layout	Black and white images with a white border, virtually no writing.
Form	This photo book is a 21cm x 24cm hard-backed book of 112 pages.
Function	Although the write-up states the theme, I found the book fragmented, with no flow. The images were documentary in style and well taken, but I felt they lacked the connection between cinema and real life which the author stated the book was about.
Audience	Creative individuals, who can bring their own interpretation onto the images.



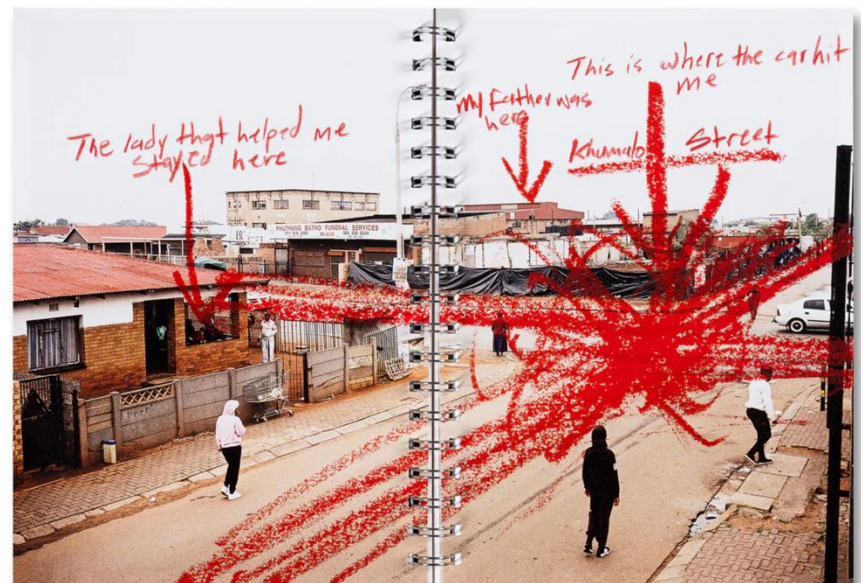
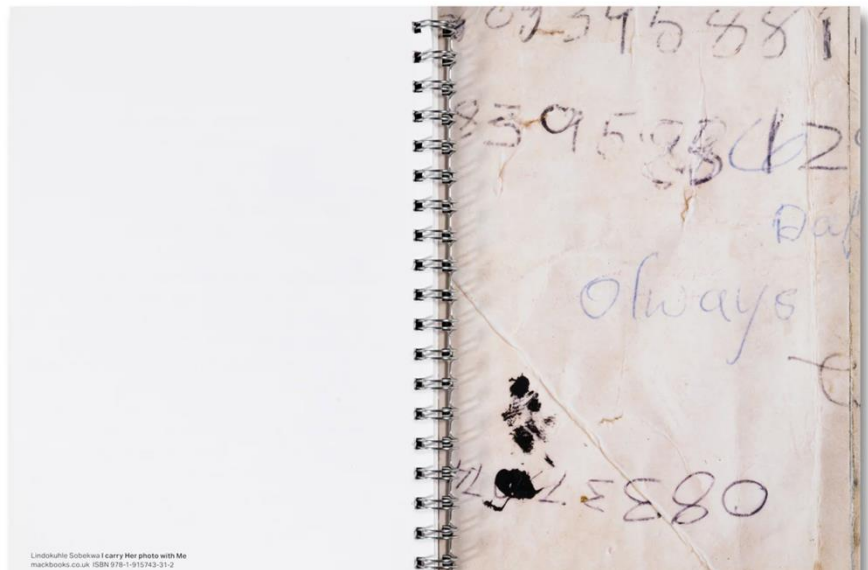
2.

	Little Joe: A book about queers and cinema, mostly Sam Ashby (ed.)
Theme	A book depicting the roles of gay and trans people in the real world and cinema.
Layout	A book of literature and imagery, utilising various coloured pages and imagery. It is well laid out and easy to read.
Form	A paperback book 13.8cm x 21.6 cm with 512 pages.
Function	To allow the reader to gain an insight into the world of real life and cinematic gay and trans individuals through imagery and write-ups from prominent writers to actors across the spectrum of adult performance and pornography.
Audience	Over 18's interested in broadening their knowledge and understanding of the gay and trans scene, especially in cinema.



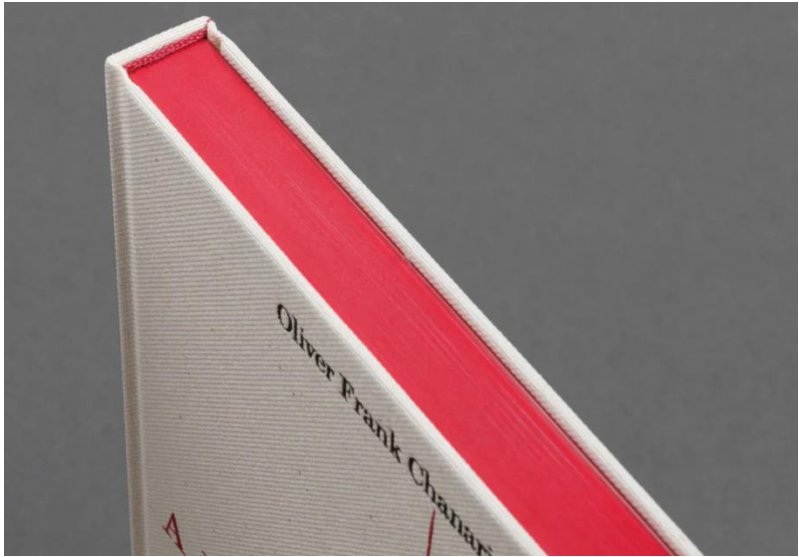
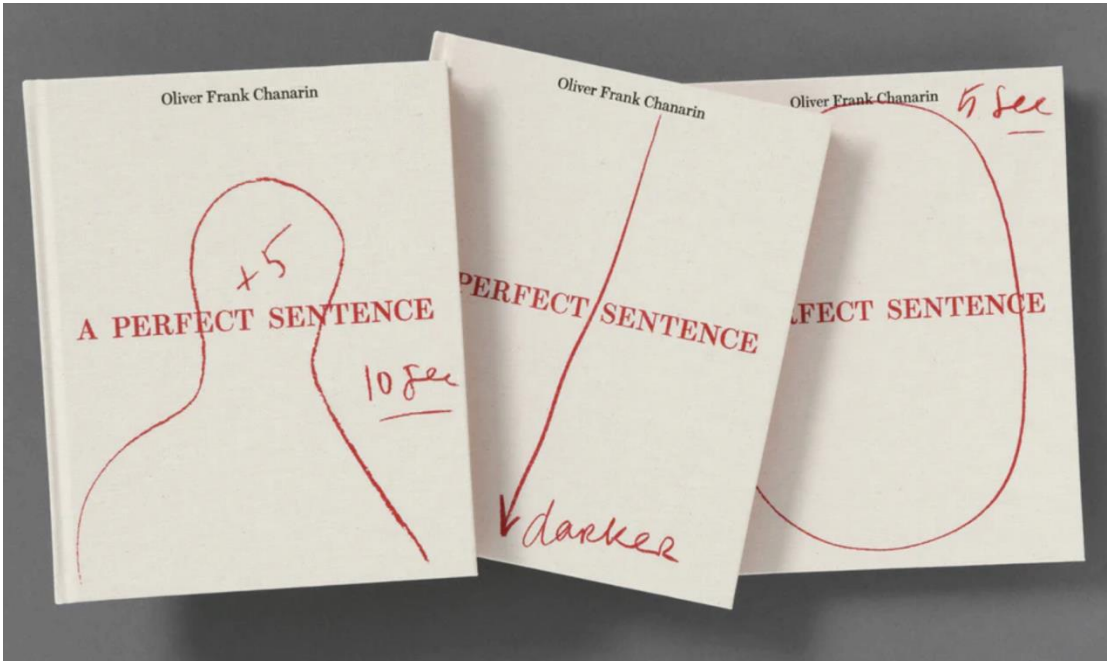
3.

	I carry Her photo with Me - Lindokuhle Sobekwa
Theme	A brother remembering his sister in a poverty-stricken, troubled South Africa
Layout	Photos with handwritten notes alongside them.
Form	Hard-covered with metal spiral ring binding, 18cm x 22cm, 80 pages.
Function	To engage the reader by describing his sister and the conditions he lived in, and also to touch on the dangers his family faced every day in South Africa.
Audience	Multi-generational read, with an interest in the personal lives of people.



4.

	A perfect sentence - Oliver Frank Chanarin
Theme	A book to challenge the themes and style of documentary photography
Layout	Mainly colour images with no writing, then a section of mainly writing.
Form	A photo book of 240 pages, 200 × 250 mm, 112 colour plates with a 24-page text by the artist
Function	Supposedly to challenge documentary style imagery, however to me it looks like a photo book of documentary style images?
Audience	Anyone who likes looking at images, regardless of whether they understand them or not.

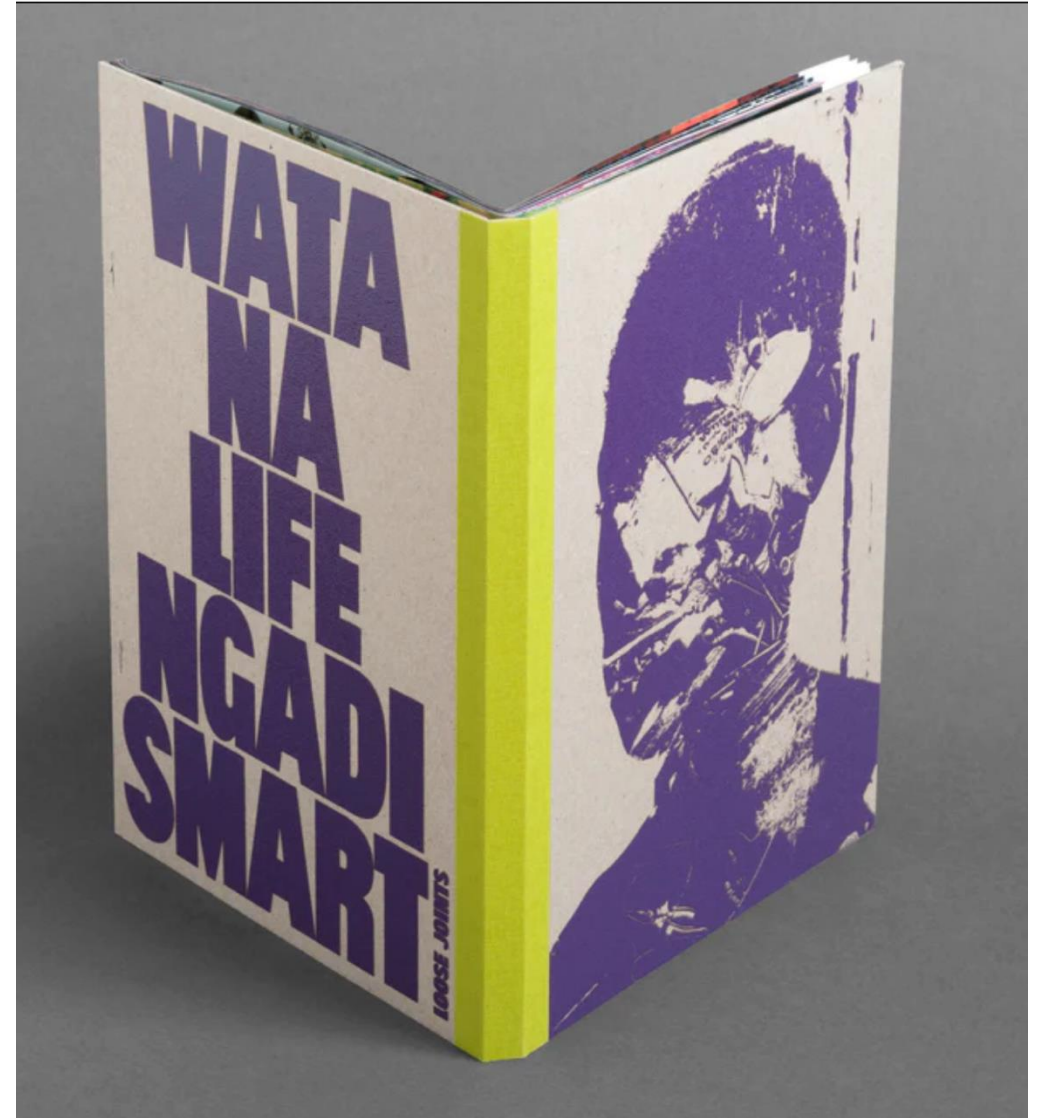


5.

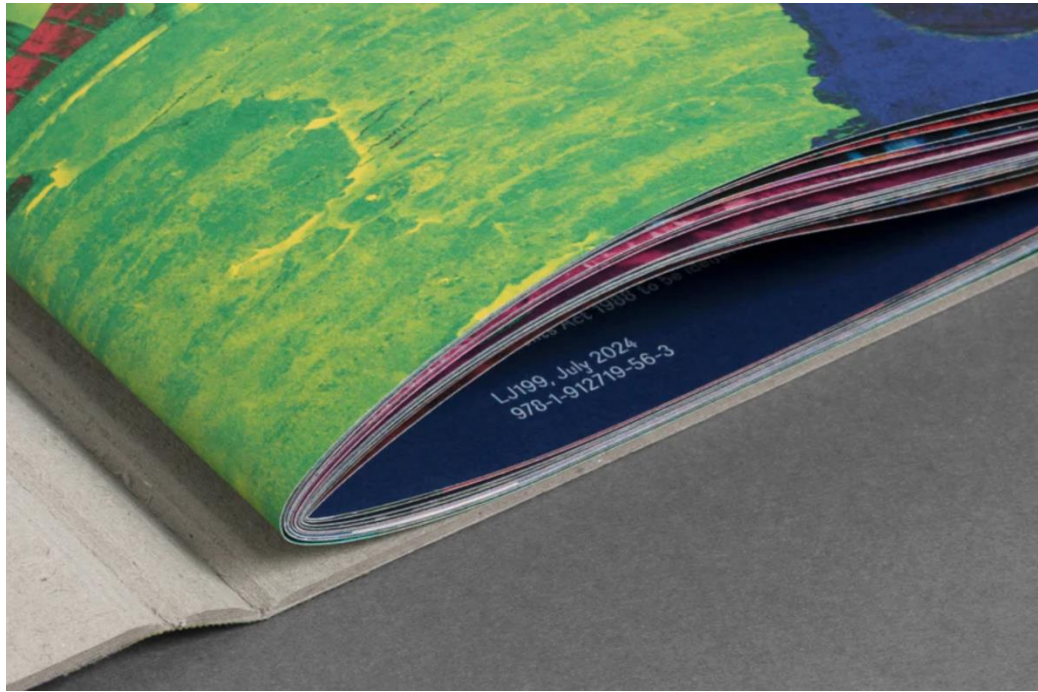
	wata-na-life - Ngadi Smart
Theme	A contemporary visualised story of water shortages due to climate change in Sierra Leone.
Layout	A kaleidoscope of abstract and manipulated images, with write-ups on the outer edge of the pages
Form	88 pages, 220 × 260 mm, 75 colour plates Post-folded hand-made book, stab-stitched to raw hard cover with cloth spine.
Function	To educate people about the water crisis in Sierra Leone, through words and colourful imagery.
Audience	Anyone with an interest in the problems of climate control, or a love for contemporary photography.

Wata Na Life by Njadi Smart

This is one of my favorite photo books. It is colourful; it tells an actual story through photography, without the need for text, which in this case there is at the sides of the images to heighten the readers information. I love the way it unfolds into larger images that are unbonded to pull out and view separately.



loosejoints.biz



loosejoints.biz



Contact sheets for my idea of an ocean coastline pollution photo book

The following five contact sheets are of man-made waste from a Porthcawl beach, taken on Saturday, 8th February 2024. The images were taken with an 18mm – 70mm lens.

I chose Rest Bay and Pink Bay beaches in Porthcawl as these were the beaches I went to as a younger person and still do. There is always a lot of waste here due to its tidal position; however, on the day of the shoot there was far less than normal due to the high tides and storms, which has blown most of the waste back out to sea.



These images are too cluttered and would make an untidy picture, they will be saved however and possibly used in another exhibition

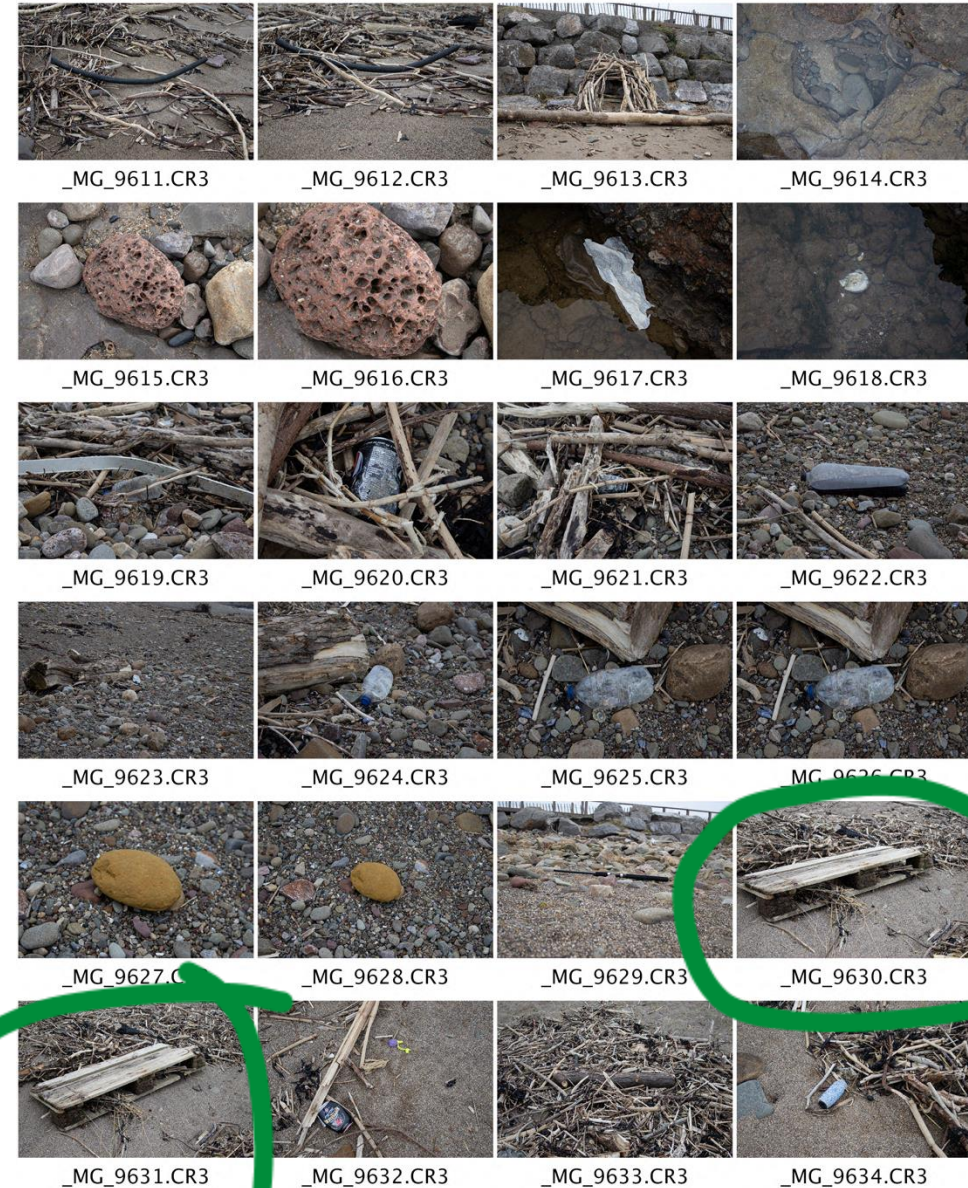


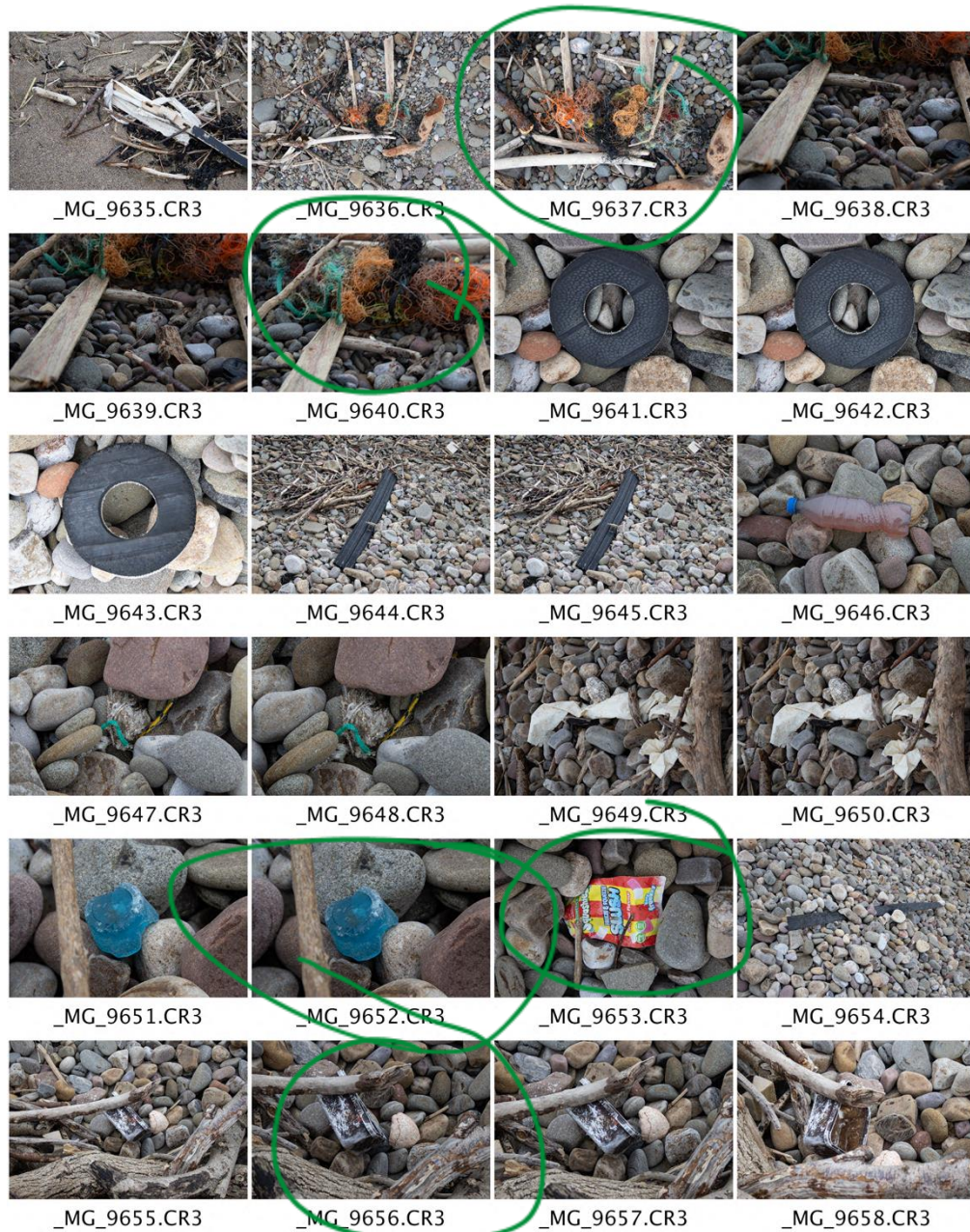
I like these images, they are colourful;, vibrant and are great images for cropping down



The images in green are great images for the book, once cropped and edited in Photoshop, I believe they will look great. Some of these may look good in the exhibition as well

Only the two circled are of any use in this batch,
the others are too bland and cluttered, making
for an untidy image.





Most of these images are not right for the photobook. However, the ones highlighted in green may be okay once cropped and the colour played with in Photoshop.

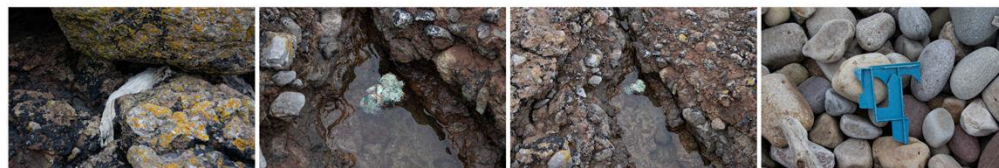


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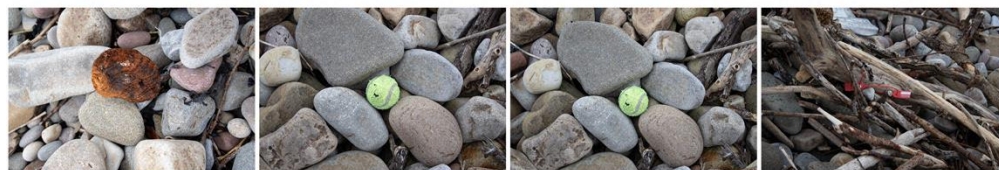


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None of these images have hit the mark for what I want in the photo book, they are clear images and may be used at another time.

14th Feb

Newton Beach, Porthcawl

The images were taken with an 18mm – 70mm lens.

I chose this beach because it is located between Sandy Bay Beach and Ogmore Beach.

I aimed to walk all three beaches; however, even though I had multiple layers of clothes as well as a hat and gloves, I only managed to stay out for an hour and only walked Newton Beach due to extremely high winds and freezing temperatures this brought.



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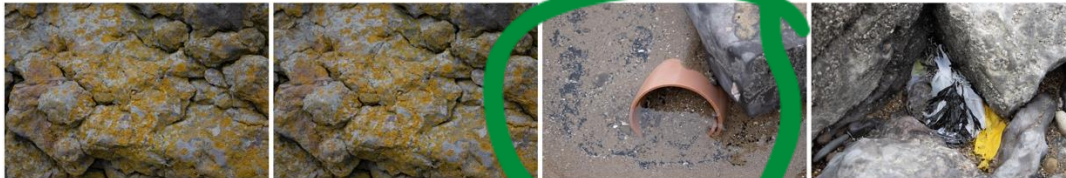


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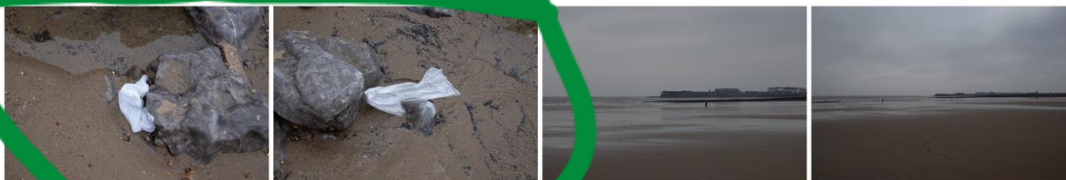


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Most of these images are not right for the photobook. However, the ones highlighted in green may be okay once cropped and the colour played with in Photoshop.

Other than the piece of wood, which I believe will look great once cropped, the remainder of the images are too messy. Saying that they may still have use in further exhibitions.



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17th Feb

Sker Beach, Porthcawl

The images were taken with an 18mm – 70mm lens.

It was a bitterly cold day and quite a long walk for me with my back problems, so my son accompanied me in case I got into trouble at any point.

All went well. However, one of my memory cards corrupted and did not work, so a smaller backup one was used, but this filled up before the shoot was over. Not that I was complaining as I was frozen.



Here are some nice images for the photo book, once cropped and edited. The colours and unusual shapes will look fantastic.

Again, here are some nice images for the photo book once they are cropped and edited. The colours and unusual shapes will look fantastic.



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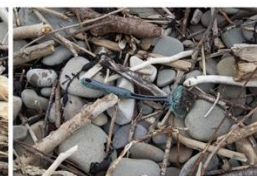
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Photography Disaster

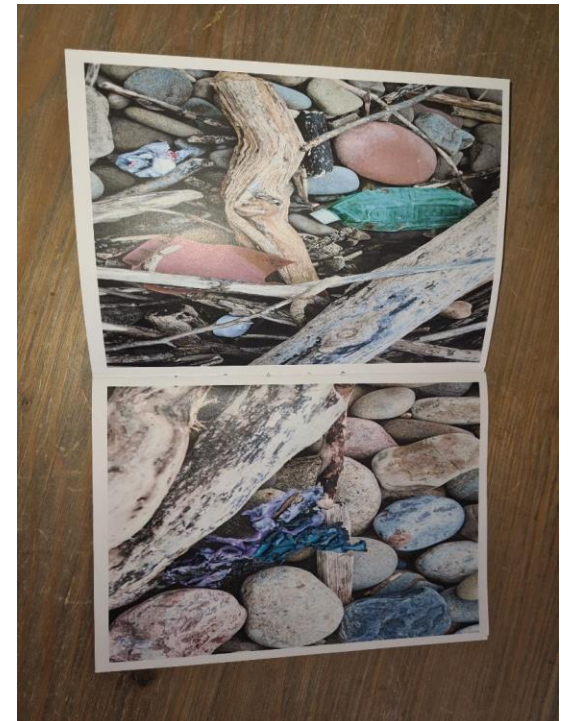
Another beach adventure at Rest Bay to photograph waste again, but this time in close-up detail, not quite Macro, but closer than previously taken.

All was going well, and it was warmer than previous adventures, which was great. About 20 minutes in, I slipped on loose pebbles and landed heavily on the ground. It did not hurt, and everything felt fine. Five minutes later, I could feel my back and hips seizing up. Luckily, my son was with me, as within another five minutes, I could barely stand, let alone walk.

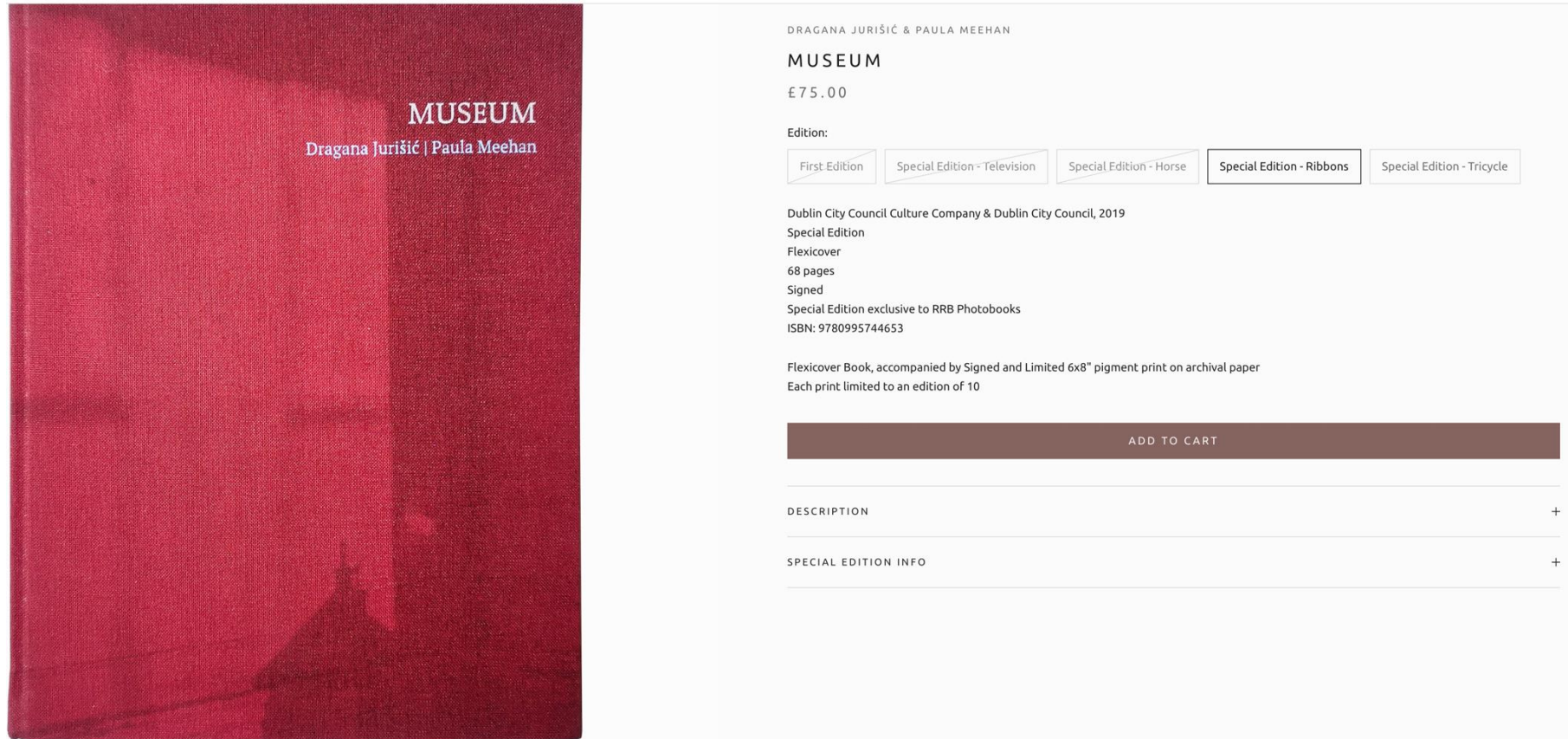
The end result was literally laid on my back in agony for six days. This highlights that you need people to know where you are going and the approximate return time. If I had been on my own, I would have been in trouble as there was no phone signal.

Worse than that all the images taken were not up to scratch and will not be used in the photobook or exhibition.

I produced the following test booklet in In Design and printed it out at the University. I like the colours of the imagery, but I need to work in InDesign more as it compressed some of the images too much. Another additional observation from doing the test booklet was it showed that the finished book will definitely have to be in Landscape format, due to the style of the photographs taken.



Some more Photobooks I really liked are:



<https://rrbphotobooks.com/>

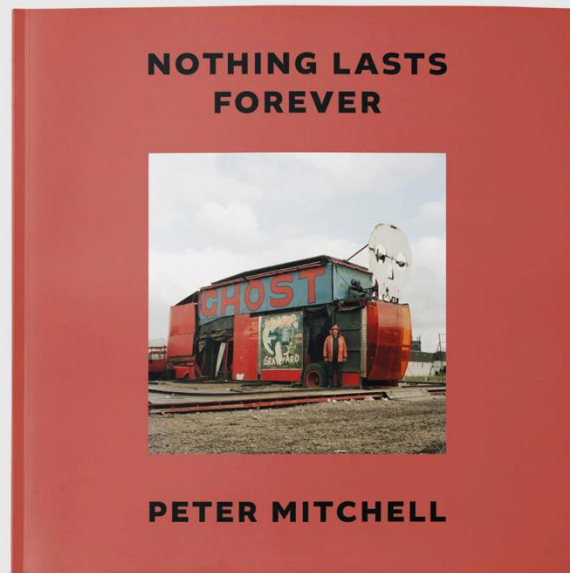


I liked the style of imagery, it varied from the surreal to the contemporary. The images went from full spreads to central square. All on high gloss paper, which enhanced its style.

Images from the Museum photobook



<https://rrbphotobooks.com/>



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Edition:

First Edition

Special Edition

RRB Photobooks, April 2024

First Edition

Softcover

148 pages

Unsigned

ISBN: 9781738516308

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DESCRIPTION

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SPECIAL EDITION INFO

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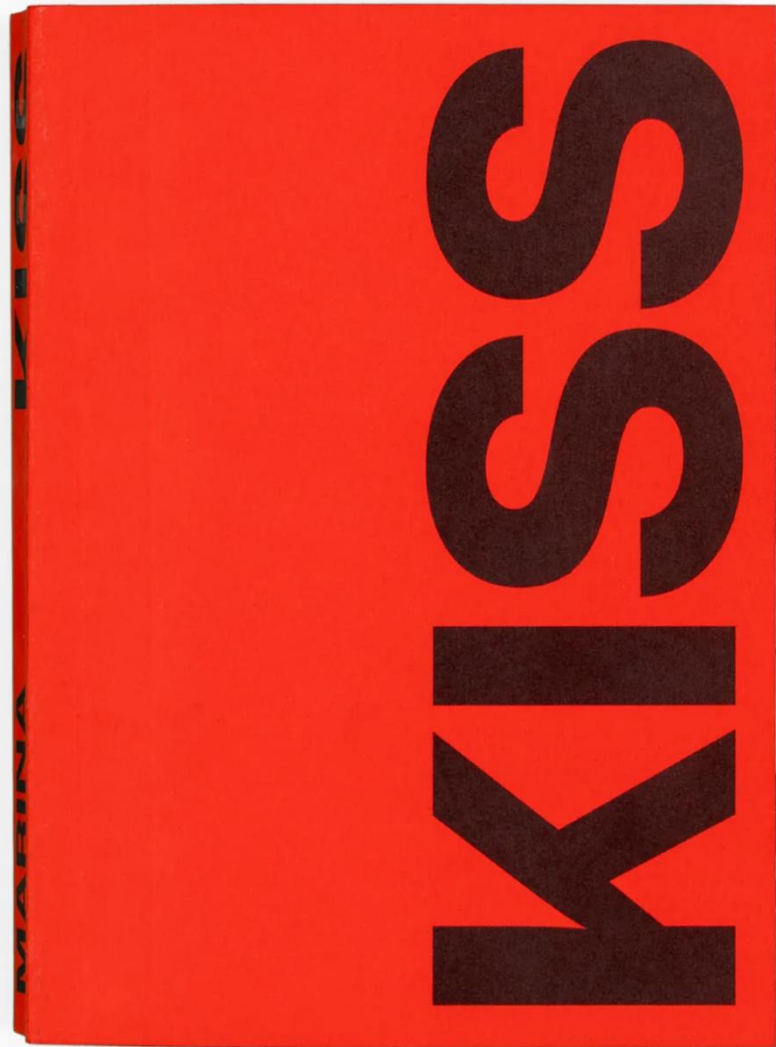
<https://rrbphotobooks.com/>



Vibrant, colourful and creative. The photographer shows how to make mundane images interesting and leaving the viewer wanting more.



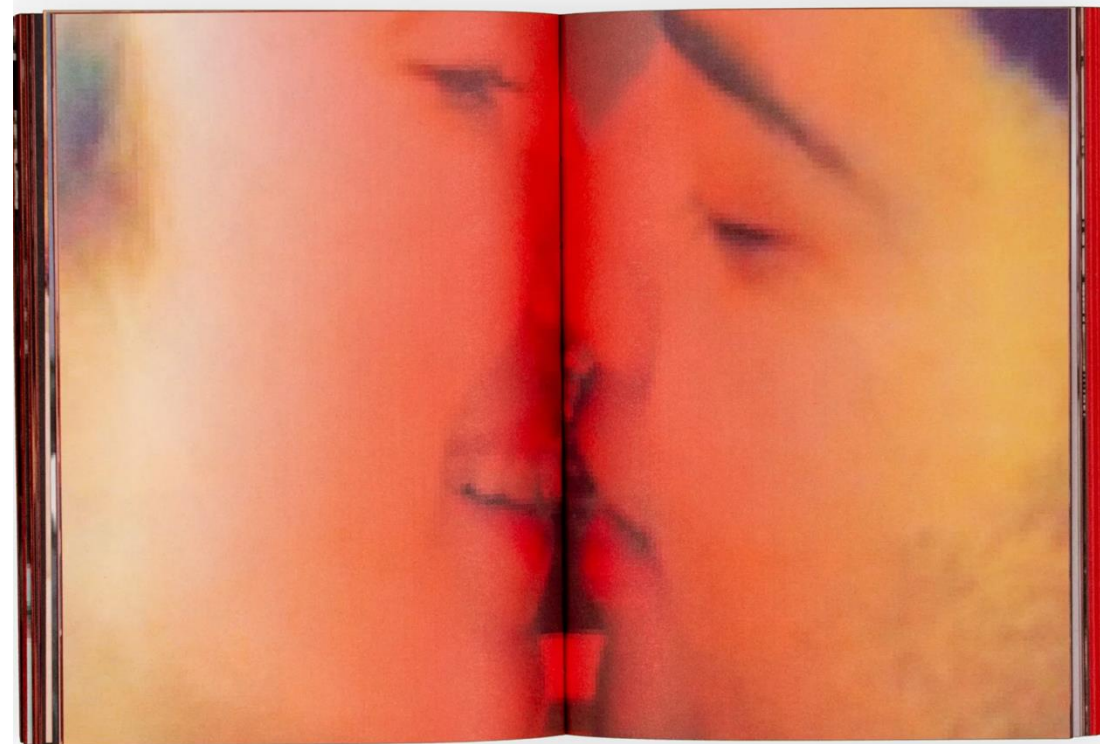
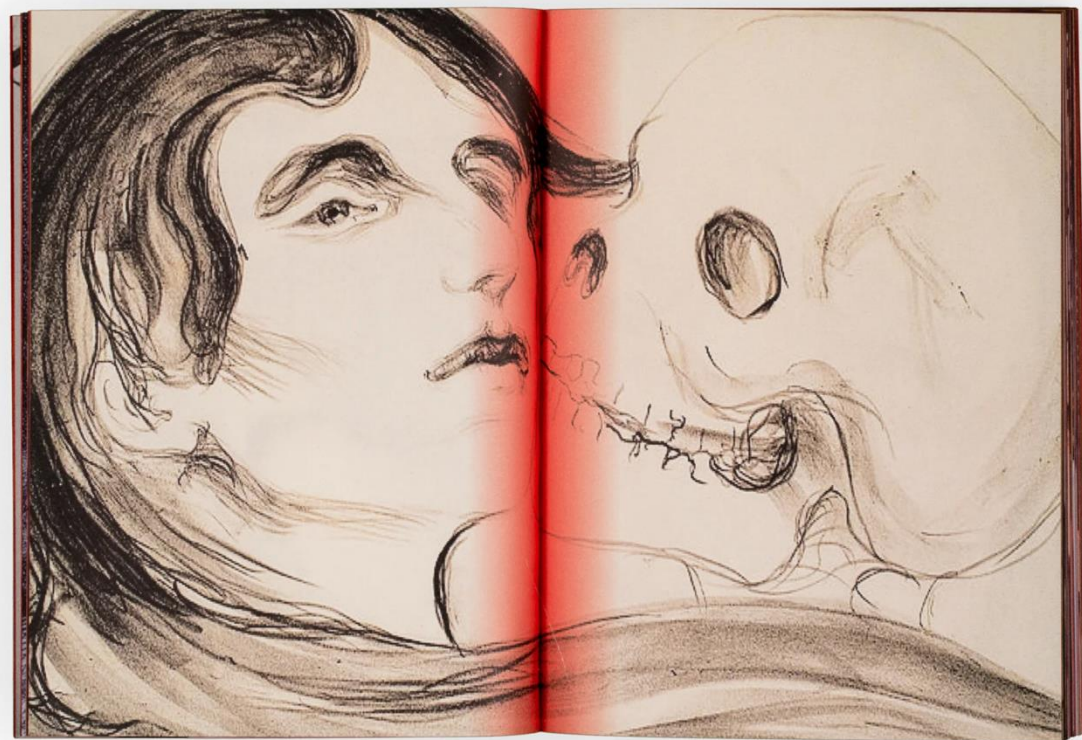
<https://rrbphotobooks.com/>



I like this photobook; it has vibrant colours, which change with each page, making the same style of images unique to themselves. I like the addition of the drawings, which break up the photographs and puts a new stance to the story of the book.

<https://www.dalpine.com/en-gb>

Images from the Kiss photobook



<https://www.dalpine.com/en-gb>



COVID Diary by Beth Galton

£59.00

- 1 +

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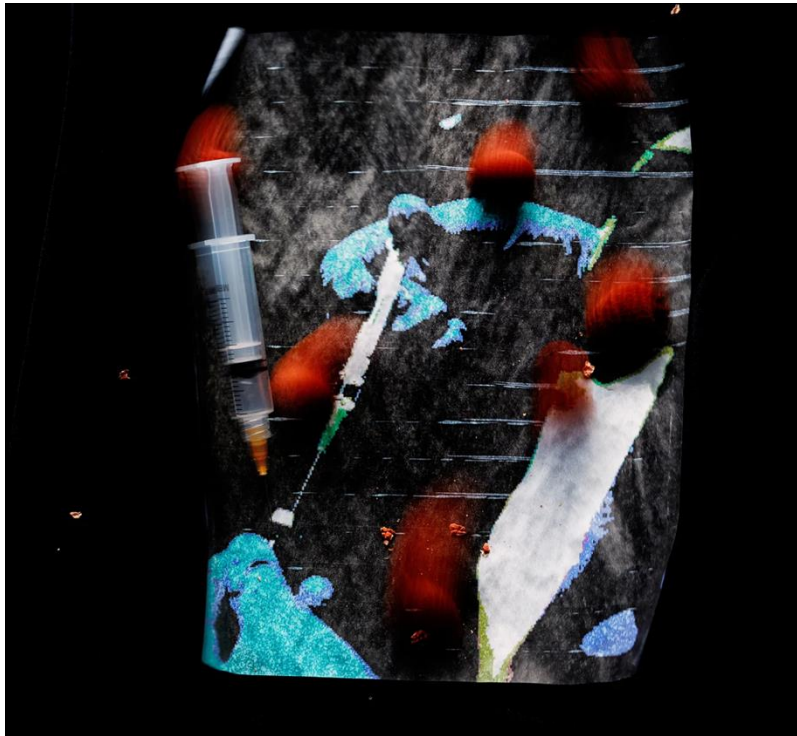
Description

COVID Diary is one photographer's tale of processing the COVID-19 pandemic through the lens of her camera. This unique book, one part diary and one part art exhibit allows a glimpse into Beth Galton's life, thoughts, and art process as New York City weathered the storm of the global pandemic.

While the news was everywhere and overwhelming at times, Beth found both comfort and heartbreak in it. Walking away from her well-honed skills as a commercial photographer, she began a process of creating images that would speak to her anxiety, to the uncertainty of the time, and to the trajectory of how this crisis was handled. Compelled to find the humanity in the myriad charts and graphs that reported cases, deaths, and recoveries, Beth reached for symbols of life to balance the data. Botanical matter is scattered through the photographs, metaphorically and hopefully interwoven with jarring data, and ephemera from this period.

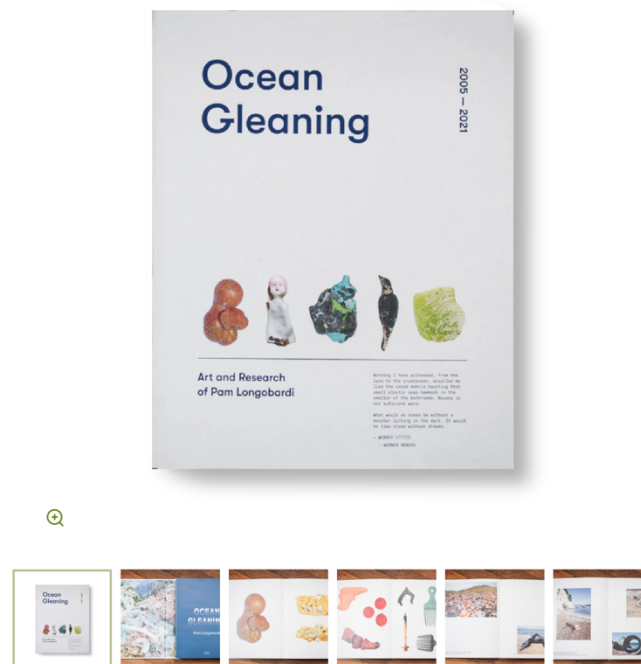
<https://falllinepress.com/products/covid-diary-by-beth-galton>

Images from Covid Diary



<https://falllinepress.com/products/covid-diary-by-beth-galton>

This is not my favorite photobook, however, it is as close to my idea and style as I can find.



Ocean Gleaning by Pam Longobardi

£83.00

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Description

Ocean Gleaning proposes a collaboration between art, science, activism and like-minded groups that begins with the assumption that the ocean is a conscious entity that, in many different ways, from rising levels and temperatures to declining fish stocks to coral bleaching and finally to the deformed material plastic objects that float the world round, is attempting to communicate its declining state of being. Pam Longobardi has channeled her lifelong love of the ocean into an artistic practice that transforms the mountains of plastic debris that wash up on beaches around the world. For more than 15 years, Longobardi has utilized found ocean plastics as her primary source material, arranging hundreds of plastic pieces into wall-mounted artworks or floor-based sculptures. Working collaboratively with communities around the globe, Longobardi has cleaned beaches from Hawaii to Greece to Panama, and dozens of locations in between, removing tens of thousands of pounds of plastic from the environment and converting them into thought-provoking works of art that shed an unflinching light on the effects of global consumption on the natural world.

<https://falllinepress.com/collections/current-titles/products/ocean-gleaning>



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Ocean Gleaning

Artist Biography

Pam Longobardi's parents, an ocean lifeguard and the Delaware state diving champion, connected her from an early age to the water. She moved to Atlanta in 1970 and saw her neighborhood pond drained to build the high school she attended. Since then, she lived for varying time periods in Wyoming, Montana, California, and Tennessee, and worked as a firefighter and tree planter, a scientific illustrator and an aerial mapmaker, a collaborative printer and a color mixer. Her artwork involves painting, photography and installation to address the psychological relationship of humans to the natural world. She has exhibited across the US and in Greece, Monaco, Germany, Finland, Slovakia, China, Japan, Italy, Spain, Belgium, Costa Rica and Poland. She currently lives and works in Atlanta as Regents' Professor and Distinguished Professor of Art at Georgia State University and drifts with the ongoing Drifters Project, following the world ocean currents. For more information, visit www.driftersproject.net.

falllinepress

Pam Longobardi's powerful art is a passionate call to action to transform our wasteful ways. She works toward forging reconnections with humans and the natural world.

- William Boling

Ocean Gleaning proposes a collaboration between art, science, activism and like-minded groups that begins with the assumption that the ocean is a conscious entity that, in many different ways, from rising levels and temperatures to declining fish stocks to coral bleaching and finally to the deformed material plastic objects that float the world round, is attempting to communicate its declining state of being. Pam Longobardi has channeled her lifelong love of the ocean into an artistic practice that transforms the mountains of plastic debris that wash up on beaches around the world. For more than 15 years, Longobardi has utilized found ocean plastics as her primary source material, arranging hundreds of plastic pieces into meticulous wall-mounted artworks or turning them into monumental floor-based sculptures. She refers to this body of work as the "Drifters Project." Working collaboratively with communities around the globe, Longobardi has cleaned beaches from Hawaii to Greece to Panama, and dozens of locations in between, removing tens of thousands of pounds of plastic from the environment and converting them into thought-provoking works of art that shed an unflinching light on the effects of global consumption on the natural world.

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Ocean Gleaning



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I am using this image to
produce a sculpture using
similar washed-up beach
waste for my exhibition



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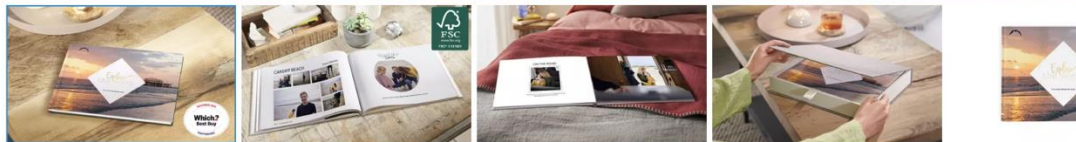
Do I want to turn my photobook into a real book?

To do this, I need them professionally made, one business making photobooks is Cewe, but there are hundreds more.

Then, if I want them sold in shops, I would need an ISBN number and barcode, which are usually found on the reverse of the book.

I have looked into wording to add to the photobook, but I think it looks too messy with the images. However, I believe that the front inner page or the outside back does need some text, explaining where the photographs were taken.

I also found a lovely poem about sea trash by Max Antoniou, from Chicago, called Plastic Poem

my
cewe photobook

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Plastic Poem

Plastic bottles are drifting,
Fishing nets are sifting,
The oceans are a mess,
We need to try our best,
To help our fishy friends,

Our fishy folk are dyin',
Baby seals are cryin',
There's trash among the kelp,
These animals need help,
To survive our sloppy oceans,

We've got filthy ocean floors,
And dirty ocean shores,
We need to start policing,
The garbage that's increasing,
To save our lovely waters,

Islands of trash are forming,
Plastics are swarming,
Fish are eating garbage,
Their stomachs are turning
hostage,
To these vile micro toxins,

Plastic is on the beach,
You can hear the animals
screech,
Birds are eating rotten,
And they're also chewing toxins,
From the plastic in our oceans,

Waste is washing ashore,
Our oceans have to be cared
for,
Wouldn't it be fantastic,
If we could keep our toxic
plastics,
Out of our beautiful oceans,

Trash is thrown to float,
Caps get stuck in sea turtles
throats,
Our oceans are too lovely,
To make them all turn ugly,
With all this plastic pollution,

And sooner or later,
It'll all come back to us,
Because our oceans are our
water,
And our water is our life.

ISBN numbers

ISBN stands for 'International Standard Book Number.'

An ISBN number is a unique 13-digit number that serves as identification for a published novel.

Each one of these numbers is unique. Additionally, each edition of a book has a different ISBN number.

An ISBN is intended to not only identify the title of the publication, but also its format and edition.

What is an ISBN number used for?

An ISBN number is used to communicate specific information about a book. Each section of its numbers has a different meaning:

- A prefix element (3 digits), which currently can only be 978 or 979.
- A registration group element (1-5 digits), which identifies the nation or geographical region of a publication.
- A registrant element (7 digits or fewer), which denotes the specific publisher or imprint of the text.
- A publication element (6 digits or fewer), which identifies the specific edition of a title (1st edition, 2nd edition, paperback edition, digital edition, special edition, etc).
- A check digit (1 digit), which mathematically validates the rest of the number.

What is the purpose of an ISBN number?

An ISBN is used by supply chain participants to identify each book in their records. These participants include publishers, libraries, booksellers, online retailers, and more.

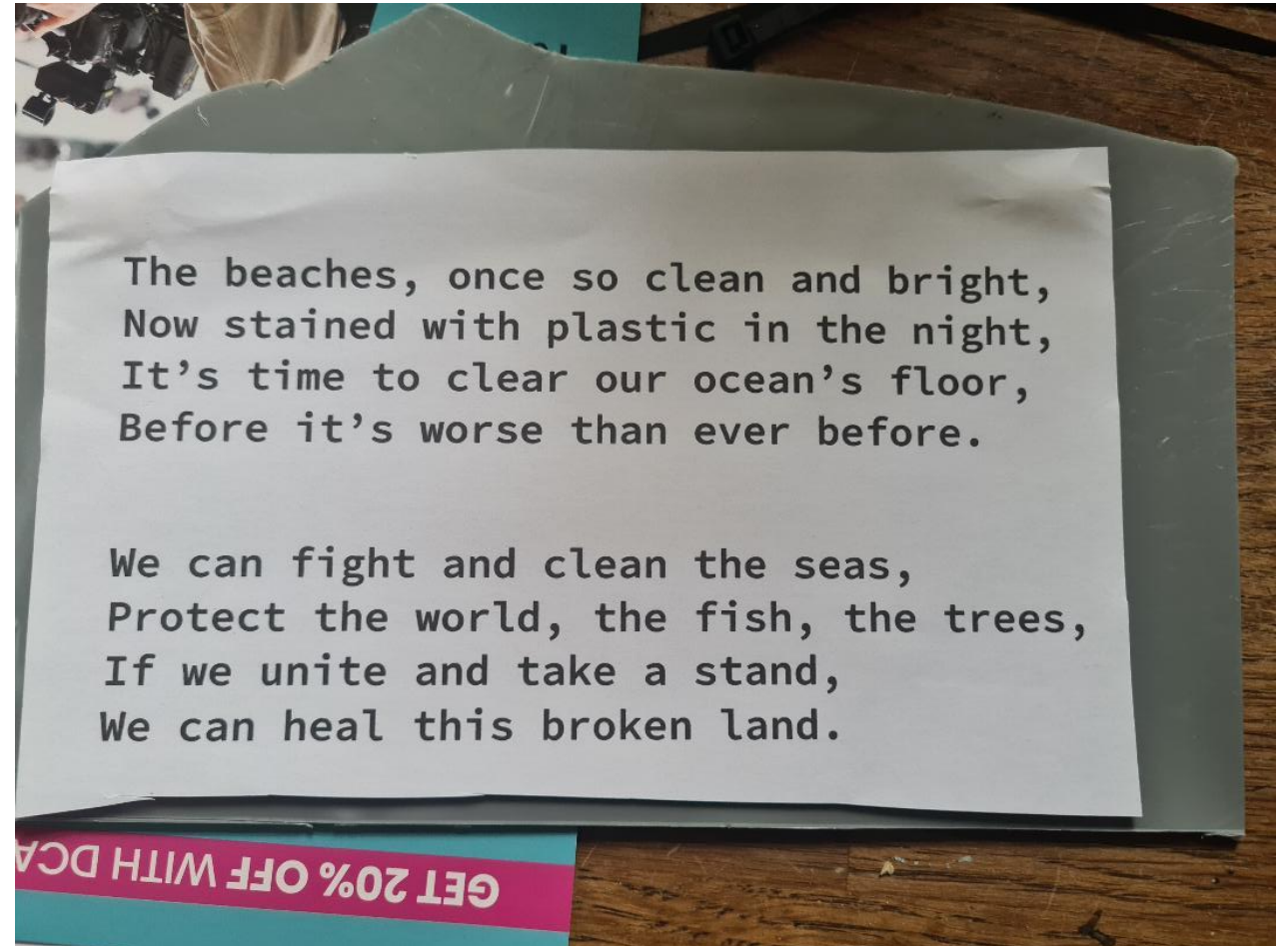
The number assists them in ordering and listing the books that they have in their collections so that they can keep record and control stock. ISBN numbers also help consumers make sure that they are ordering the edition of the book that they want for their collection.

How much does an ISBN cost in the UK?

The average cost of an ISBN number is around £80 and usually doesn't include the image of the barcode itself. The barcode can be purchased separately and you can get greater discounts for purchasing multiple barcode images. **How to register your book and ISBN number**

www.bookbeaver.co.uk

I believe I will use the poem, but in a different format, I entered it into chat GP and asked it to give me an alternative. It produced a four verse poem which I intend to etch onto a piece of plastic, found on the beach, which is approximately A5 in size. However, no matter what font I used, the letters were too small. In the end, I decided to cut the poem down to two verses using a mixture of the four. Using Source Code, size 20, I ended up with what I hope is a usable template



My photobook

I am looking at using a found piece of plywood, driftwood to use as my front and back cover.

I will bind the images using fishing line or thin cord/rope (all found at the beach).

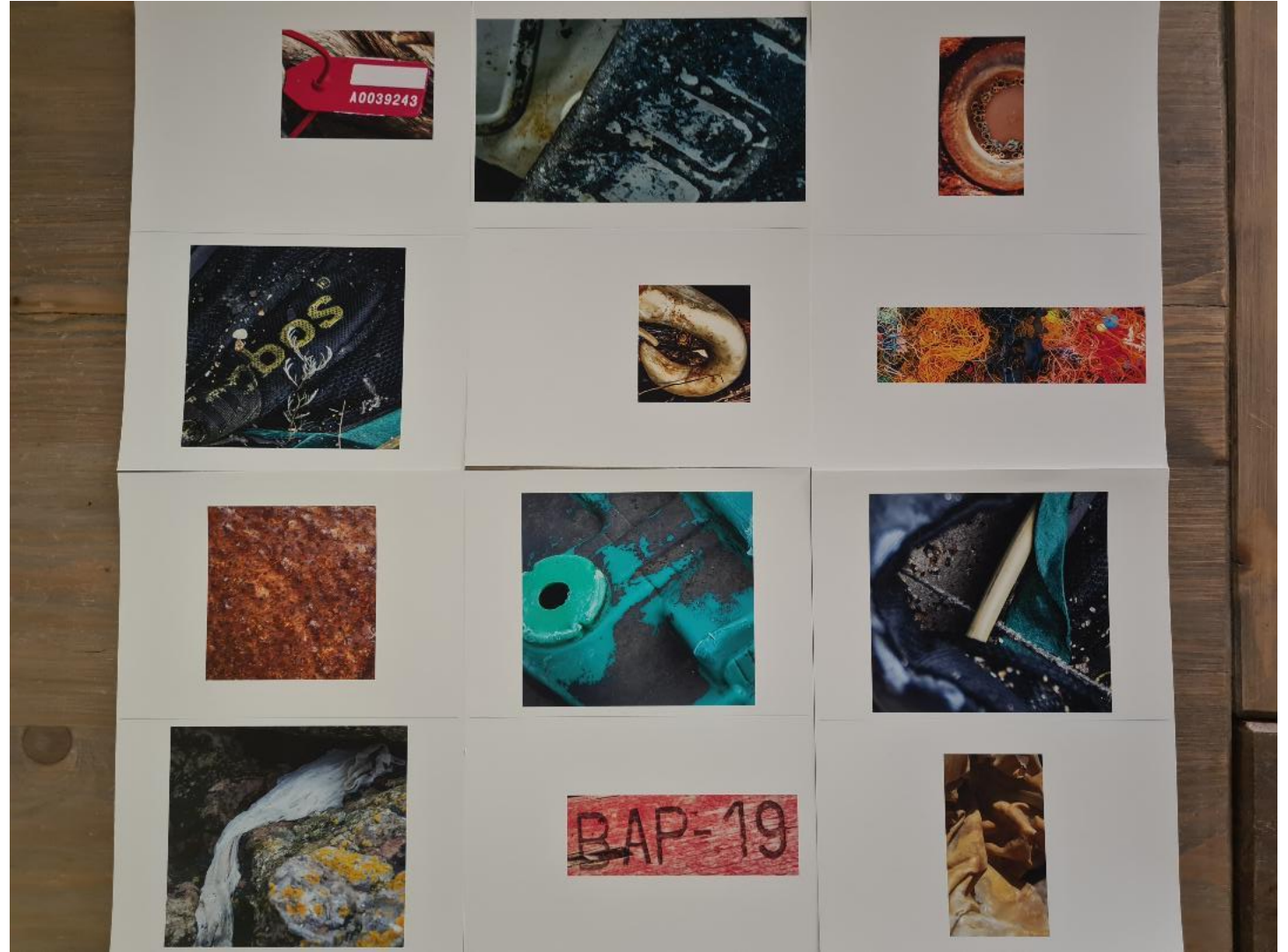
I intend to use high gloss paper for two reasons, firstly, I believe, it will make my images look visually better on the page (I have printed test pages on satin and matt paper, but they definitely did not look as good). And, secondly, using high gloss will form a differential between man-made waste and sleek manufacturing.

These are images I am going to use in the photo book, you cannot really tell, but they are printed on high gloss paper using the lazer jet printer.



These were a completed set of images for the book. They were printed on Photo rag paper, which gave a magnificent rough texture, and they were printed on the large Canon inkjet printer.

The finished product was exactly what I wanted, however it was then decided that we had to buy the paper ourselves, which at the moment is not possible so will have to make do with an alternative, yet to be decided.



I am currently in two minds about how to exhibit the photographs. I am unsure whether to bind traditionally, creating a traditional style of photobook or whether to have them loose in the book, so that the viewer can take them out, spread them about and change the order that they look at them. If I go with the latter idea, the book would be tied together, again using found cord/rope. Additionally, if the pages can have their order changed, it ends up being different for the next viewer.

Following discussions with Ryan Moule, I will still use the piece of driftwood, but produce it with wood (cut) just at the bottom, without the cover, and make a sleeve to put it in. The sleeve will be made of green velvet, which will shimmer like the sea.

I have also decided to give the book a name, which is the same as my exhibition piece, it will be called:



‘Orae Erema’

(Which is Latin for Sea Waste)



Techniques

Since I am now unable to use the Universities Photo rag paper, I have tried several trial and error techniques for the paper, I have used Matt paper and a type of rice paper, but neither gave me the finish I was looking for, it ended up looking like washed-up rubbish on washed-up paper. Eventually, I decided to go with a high gloss finish to add a pristine commercial look, with the waste in the images mainly coming from businesses, whether associated or indirectly associated with the sea.

The images have been subtly edited. They have all been de-noised to enhance them, and then different preset colour enhancers were used. In the main I used a selection of presets but mainly:

Cinematic 2, numbers CN 11,33,34,35

Autum

Spring

Auto & Retro

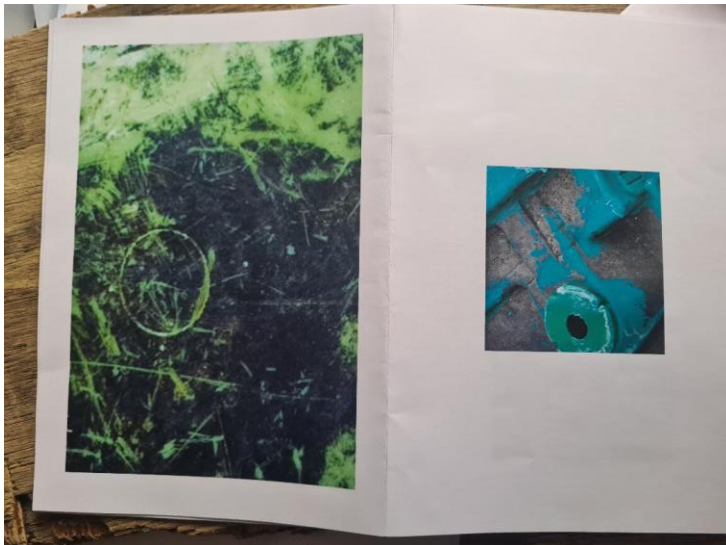
Architecture

Vintage

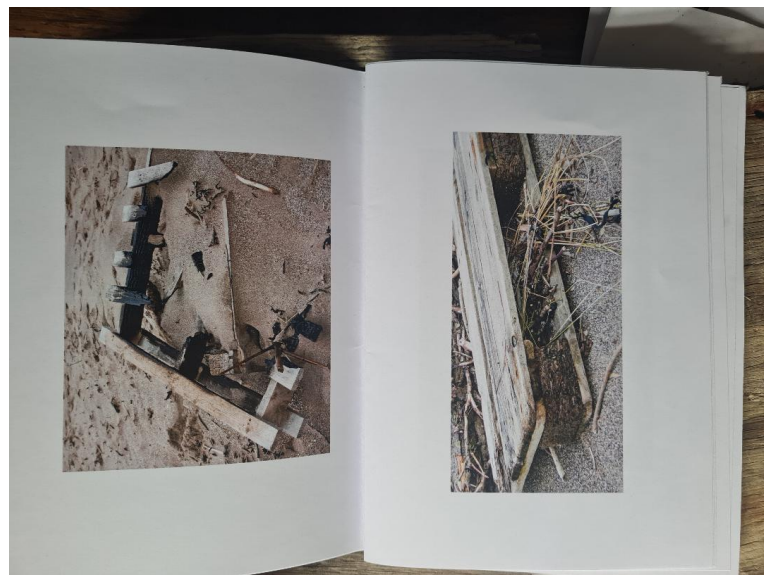
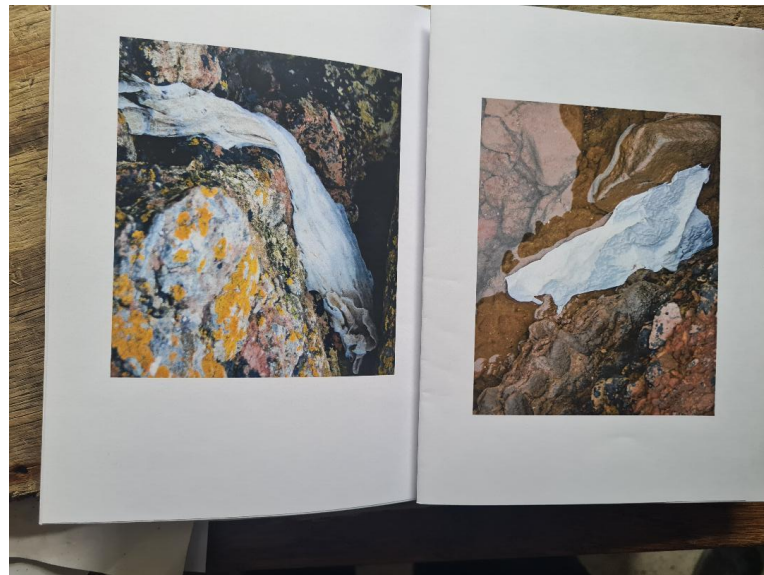
This may not be a big thing for some people, and it is very easy to do, but with IT skills like mine, undertaking a subtle change of the images was very challenging, as usually I am quite heavy handed.

The images were then cropped to varying degrees, and two test booklets were made. The first was using images that were heavily cropped. The second one was a mixture of the first and additional slightly cropped images.

Test Book One

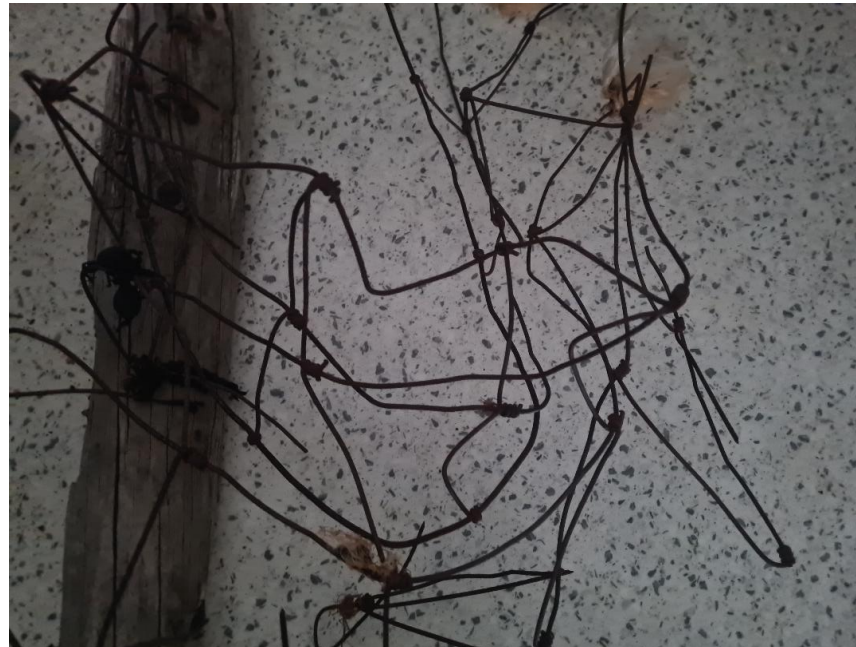


Test Book Two



Following further discussion with the academic staff, it has been decided to use the heavily cropped images. This is so that the reader will see images of the man-made waste, but will be left wondering what they are actually looking at. This will lead to more discussion and a closer inspection of the images. I believe that the book would appeal to children as well as adults.

I decided to fasten the pages of the book to the board using metal fencing I found on the beach. however, After several failed attempts, this is most definitely not going to happen.

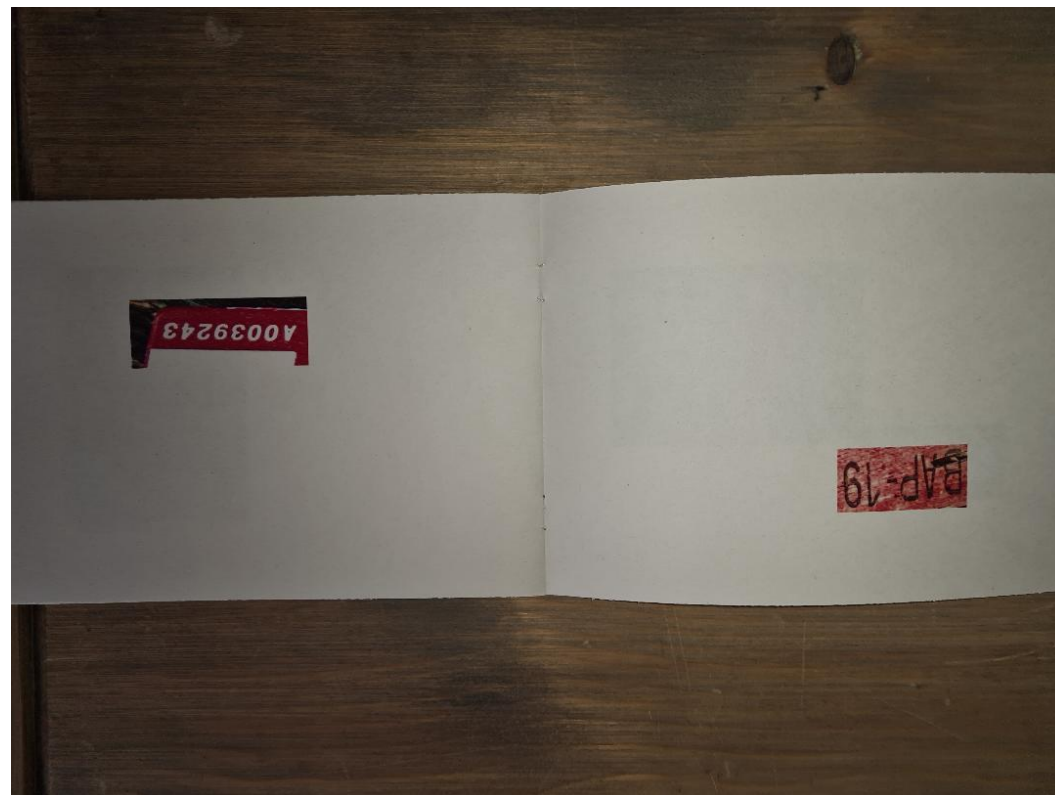


The high gloss paper is now not being used, following further discussions with academic staff, instead, I am going to use recycled paper.

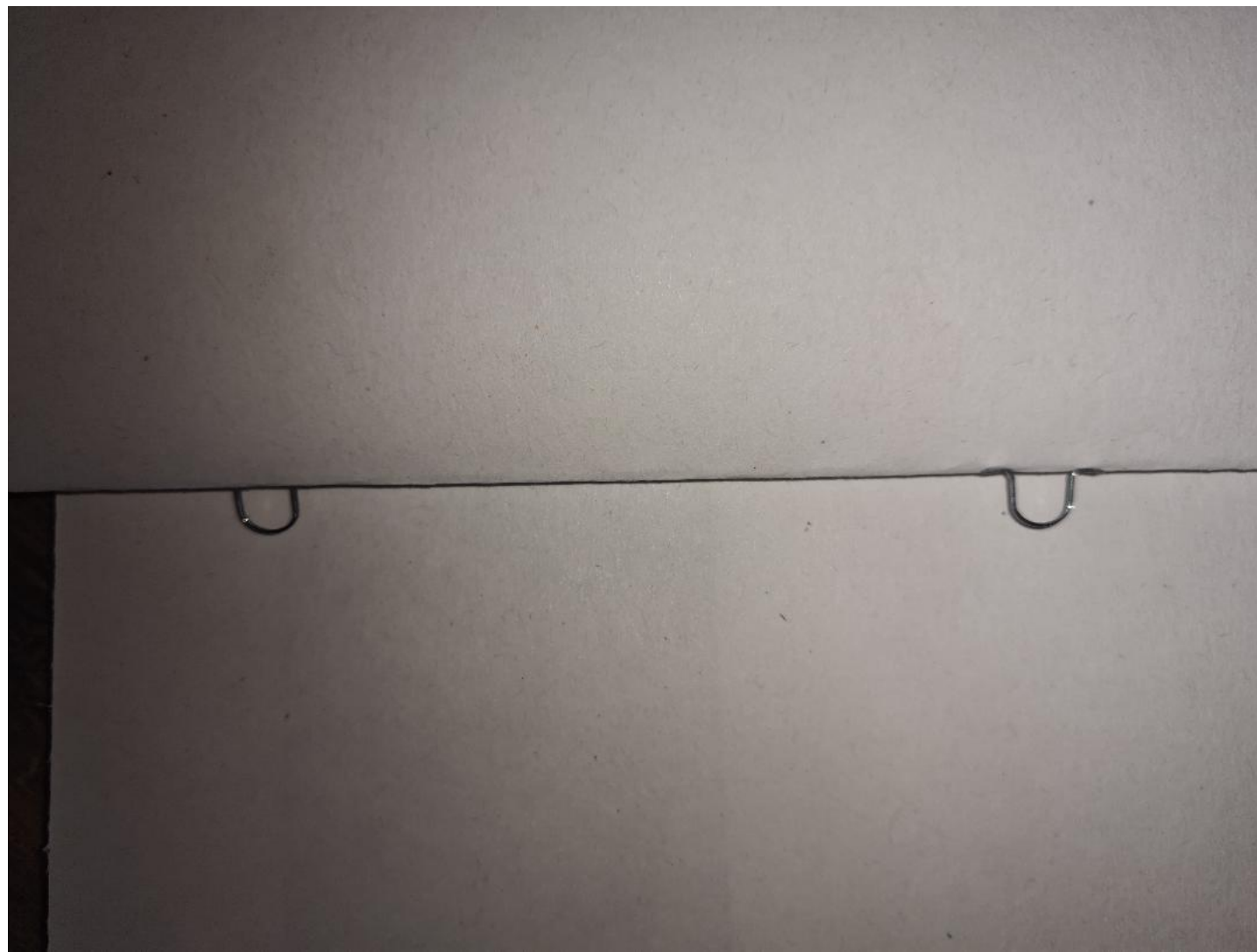
This does have a texture to it, but it is grey, and I am unsure how it will look. The book was then printed on the Laserjet printer. The result is questionable. I do not believe it has worked out very well, I believe the images look of poor quality and not do them justice, like the high gloss paper did. In the end, I stapled them together using the university's new stapler, which leaves a clip at the end, which will be easier to attach to the wood, compared to physical binding.

In total 4 books have been produced.





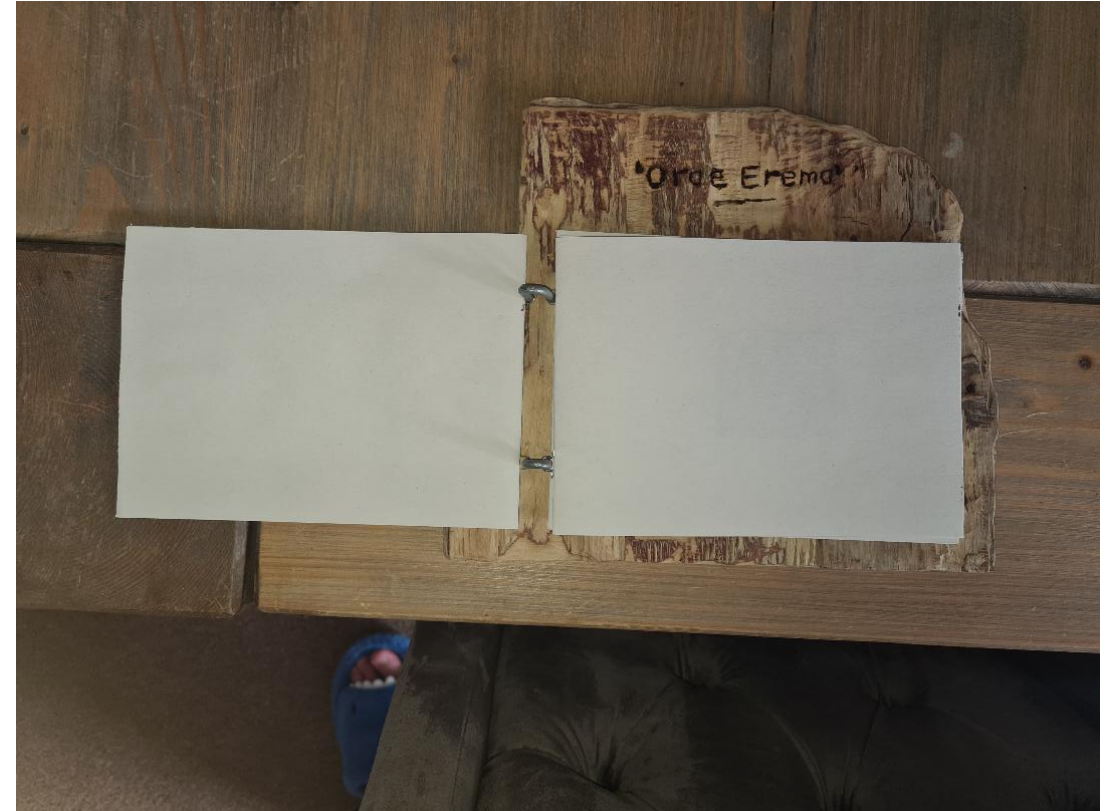
Attaching staples



The wood that was chosen for the back of the book has been reduced by over a third in thickness, and all edges and faces sanded to avoid unintentional splinters and snagging within the sleeve. I am also going to use two large staples to attach the book to the wood, which should make it look rugged and worn.



At the back of each book, there is a double blank space, here I will glue an A4 piece of paper with information about ocean waste.



The four additional facts that I
have added to the photobook

More plastic than fish

Up to 12 million metric tons: That's how much plastic we dump into the oceans each year. That's about 26 billion pounds — or the equivalent of more than 100,000 blue whales — every single year. By 2050, ocean plastic will outweigh all of the ocean.

5 garbage patches

There's so much junk at sea, the debris has formed giant garbage patches. There are five of them around the world, and the largest — the Great Pacific Garbage Patch — includes an estimated 1.8 trillion pieces of trash and covers an area twice the size of Texas

Plastic poses a double danger

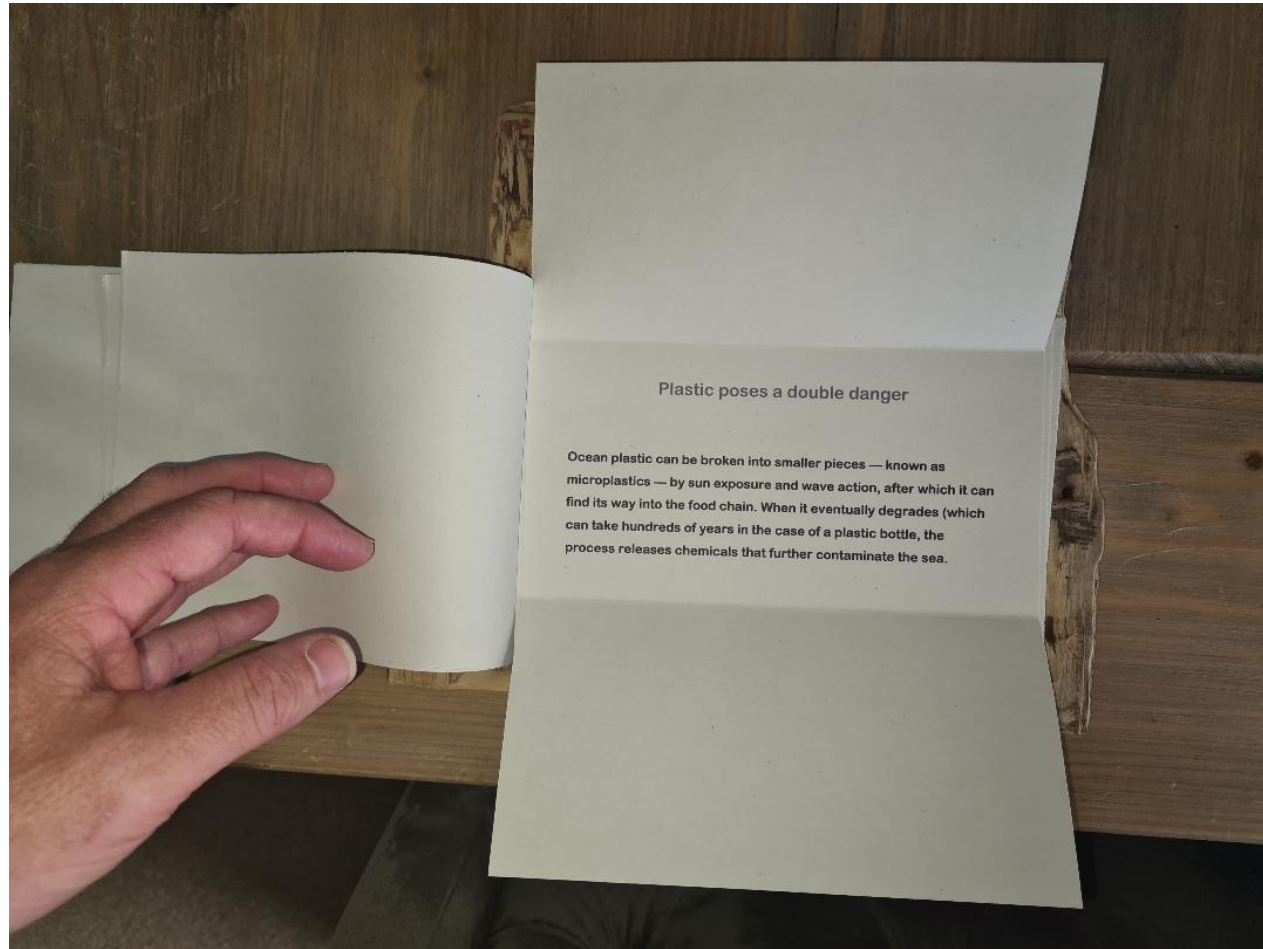
Ocean plastic can be broken into smaller pieces — known as microplastics — by sun exposure and wave action, after which it can find its way into the food chain. When it eventually degrades (which can take hundreds of years in the case of a plastic bottle, the process releases chemicals that further contaminate the sea.

Ocea

5.

Indonesia and India top the trash tally

More plastic in the ocean comes from Indonesia and India than anywhere else— together, they contribute more plastic to the world's coastal environments than the next seven countries combined, including the United States, which ranks third on the list.



Plastic poses a double danger

Ocean plastic can be broken into smaller pieces — known as microplastics — by sun exposure and wave action, after which it can find its way into the food chain. When it eventually degrades (which can take hundreds of years in the case of a plastic bottle, the process releases chemicals that further contaminate the sea.

Completed Book



Orde Erema







Conclusion

The completed book looks great, I would have made a few alterations if I undertook it again, which is a distinct possibility.

I would have used gloss white paper as I think the grey being used currently diminishes the photographs, however, this is growing on me.

The main thing I would do is add more pages. I believe that for a professionally bound book, what it has would be enough. However, for this book, the timber it is attached to is heavy and the staples large, and although there are twenty pages of work combined, I think double would have suited this more. On the other hand would this have made the book too repetitive?

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