

Portfolio of Writing

Student Number - 1912980

BA Documentary Photography & Visual Activism

Module Code – ADAD4018

Task 1 - Julia Lockheart-Manifesto Writing: “What do I believe in?” – Word count 512

Task 2 - Ryan Moule-Observational Writing: Identify an image and write a semiotic analysis – Word count 511

Task 3 - Jon Pugh-Reflective Writing: Do you know what you think? – Word count 548

Tutors – Ryan L Moule and Rob Jones

Task 1 - Julia Lockheart-**Manifesto Writing: “What do I believe in?”**

- Detritus is killing us fast
- Depression & Anxiety sucks
- Embrace the quirky and unusual
- Beautiful isn't perfection -
- Photograph what inspires me
- You never truly know what is happening
- It's ok not to be ok
- Are we living in a simulation?

Outcome

My manifesto details the main drivers and passion behind my photography. Detritus is killing us fast, it's ok not to be ok, and beautiful isn't perfection are my key beliefs. A large proportion of people's perception of photography is that you should aim to take an image that is 'traditionally beautiful' and that you showcase subjects at their best. I see beauty in decay and destruction and highlighting environmental issues that these present and challenge the context of beauty. I like to take photographs that interest me and represent how I'm feeling during my recovery from mental health issues rather than what I think people want to see.

One of my beliefs is that we should highlight the areas around my locality, an image that represents beautiful isn't perfection is of old, rusty mining equipment in a deserted mining site. It's probably not a style that is visually pleasing for some, but I appreciate the natural lighting, the detailing of shading of tonality of colours on the equipment and rust are a vast contrast to natural grounds that they are abandoned at. I like that they look both natural and out of place at the same time, but the decay means there is a story to explore. A photographer who has similar style and beliefs is Matt Emmett.



Abandoned Copper Mine – Cyprus | Photo: Matt Emmett



Abandoned Mine – Bridgend | Photo: Kyle Branigan

I have a strong passion that we are causing our demise of the planet through the litter we leave behind and consume with our convenience lifestyles. I walk the coastline; not taking photographs of the landscape, I actively want to highlight the rubbish that is washed up in the sea or we have left behind. I take my inspiration from Mandy Barker; she has been pioneering in her journey of taking rubbish from our oceans and making beautiful images. An image I feel represents me is 3 washed up cans following a storm that were battered and crushed that I took back to the studio; artistically placed with the underlying message of cans that we use on a day to day and discard without a care in the world.



Discarded cans – Bridgend | Photo: Kyle Branigan



Colossal | Photo: Mandy Barker

An important value and belief of mine is that its ok not to be ok, I have a challenging journey with my mental health condition and for so long I felt I had to be brave and not show what was really happening to me with my peers, I like to take images that can be interpreted differently depending on how you are feeling at that moment. I like to entice the viewer to come to their own interpretation of whether the person is suffering, contemplating, happy, lonely or just enjoying their own space. I want to get the message out to other young people that its ok to let others know what is going on with you. An inspirational artist I find that has helped me is Louis Quail and his representation of his brother's schizophrenia journey, it's both heart wrenching and inspiring.



1000 words – Photo Louis Quail



contemplation – Photo: Kyle Branigan

My manifesto is important to me as it reflects who I am as a person and not just as the photographer.

Word Count - 512

Task 3 - Ryan Moule-**Observational Writing: Identify an image and write a semiotic analysis**



Jerry Uelsmann -

Untitled Image, 2014

“Does your work mean anything?” or “Do you try to create a message through your photographs?” (Uelsmann untitled: A retrospective 2014)

My initial observation was that Uelsmann had tried to draw the eye at the main focal points by making them stand out more than others. In my opinion, the message in this image is that you’ve always got to look deeper to see the full detail, meaning and deeper connection.

This style of photography inspires me and in particular this image because everyone has the potential to read their own interpretation and meaning. This is a very dark black and white image. I find it mysterious, cold and even depressing but this captures my imagination. There are certain aspects that are dark and by contrast light and many variances in the tonality and texture which is captivating. My interpretation is that, there's a deep, emotional message hidden within. I feel the image Uelsmann has created represents everything looks fine, but it may not be. I imagine that this image is all about inner emotions, feelings and despair and the loneliness that takes you down certain paths, and how someone can live an everyday life by looking happy and putting on a fake smile but then get home and break down, the entrance of the tunnel could symbolise a cross roads and decision point.

My favourite part about this image is that it looks like there is an image within an image. The main image is the natural lighting and the pretty shapes and textures of the clouds in the sky and the beautiful architectural bridge and beautiful environment, but then the darkness is crashing in, almost creating a crack in the floor of the foreground of the image with shadows. The luminosity of the pool of slick, shadows lead all the way to the back of the image until you notice this dark figure underneath the bridge. This figure is just staring at the light on the other side of the tunnel as if it is a sunset or a way forward. This represents how people struggle with depression every day but do try to fight it, it could also show that the hardest part of facing it is finding the courage to go out into the light.

The bridge itself, is slightly off centre although the main image is centred, the trees grown on the left-hand side partly overshadowed. However, having researched Uelsmann works, I feel he composed the image in this way purposefully. It almost feels like the trees are slowly eating away the bridge and getting closer and closer to the person stood in the middle, which coincides with the depressing, dark mood with the rest of the image and meaning behind the image, almost symbolising when you feel like the world is swallowing you up when you feel depressed or at the end of the road. Uelsmann has made use of the natural light and possibly took this in colour and changed to black and white to obtain the crispness and definition of the key focal points.

Word Count - 511

Task 3 - Jon Pugh-Reflective Writing: Do you know what you think?



<https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/gallery/faces-of-the-miners-strike-3215598> ARTICLE AUTHOR **Sam Adams**, 6 MAR 2014,

The Miners' strike was one of the largest political events to affect the UK in 1984. It divided the classes and economic impact was immense with the driver of the strike being fear of unemployment, loss of community and loss of their way of life and heritage with the threat from the Tory government closing many pits and buying cheaper coal from other countries. Many miners came from generations of miners and there was no opportunity for other jobs.

I imagine that this image was created to highlight the scale and impact of the miners' strike and focuses on the people it affected the most, the men who worked the mines, across the whole of the UK. It was taken to highlight that it affected men of all ages and to show the misery and to invoke a connection to the people and the reasons these people went on strike and the effect on these people and their lives and that they were not happy to be on strike but it was seen as their only option. It captured one side of the story and the depressive state that the country was in at this time. It would have been an image that would fit in with the editorial landscape at the time as this and the economic demise that was affecting the whole country not just the mining communities. The image captures the misery of a picket line. The black and white tonality adds to the effect the photographer was trying to capture. The image challenges the senses, you can almost imagine the smell of the coal, the cigarette smoke and sense the anger and resentment. The image is well balanced and taken from a lower angle of the crowd which allowed for a variation in depth and focus on the miners but has a very busy frame.

The picture was reused within a 30th anniversary article in 2014, which shows that the subject is still topical and relevant, even after all that time. The composition of this image is still able to tell the story of the plight of the strike and trigger discussion points it would raise with younger generation and the negative effect that it had, this image would still invoke a reaction of passion and anger from all those that were affected by the strike if shown today. This style of photography capturing political events and in particular strikes is still relevant in the present as many photographers capture the climate change activists and Brexit campaigners but now many are pushing the boundaries and trying to get the most provocative images of maybe an altercation rather than the mass demonstration.

This image is important to me and my style of photography due to the personal impact for my family. My great grandfather was a miner and my grandparents and parents were affected by the strikes from food rations, energy rations to unemployment as the divide between the classes grew. Many mines in Wales are used as tourist attractions and images used as historic artefacts so that we do not forget. I like to use the local mines in my photography and the exploration of history of disused mines and equipment in remembrance of the demise of mining strike had on the local area.



Miners shower block – Photo: Kyle Branigan



Miners Equipment – Photo: Kyle Branigan

Word Count - 548

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