

Student Name: Sophie Hooper

P Number: 1902027

Programme of Study: Photography in the Arts

Module: ADAA5033

Experimental Strategies Lecturer's Name: Ryan Moule, Sain Addicott

Experimental Strategies

Bunkhouse Exhibition: To Begin at the Beginning

For my groups exhibition we chose to do it in the Bunkhouse on Kingsway. We are focusing on the history of Kingsway; from the bombing of it, to the current use of the building; a bar and gig room. My art piece will be focused on music, which is the current use of the building.

Originally, Kingsway was just a street with houses but after the 3 day blitz happened, it was then rebuilt as the main shopping strip/ city centre in Swansea. Over the years it has slowly changed to become what it is today with many of the building being demolished and rebuilt. The street was once the main club street in Swansea before wine street became the main one. The Odeon was originally on Kingsway before moving to its current location in Parc Tawe. Many of the old clubs, such as *Oceana*, *The Orange House*, *Jumpin' Jaks*, have been demolished. The Kingsway is now a greener area with many flowerbeds and trees layed along the road.

We were originally only allowed to use the basement of the building but then eventually we were able to use the gig room as well. The top room is the gig room, it has a stage that takes



up a small amount of the room at the front, a bar in the corner with the lights and DJ area connected to it. The basement is down some stairs and is a small room with seating areas around the edges. There is a mural painted on one of the walls of a skyscape.

Naomi Jones



Looking at Naomi Jones' photos helped me frame my photos and what I should focus on taking photos of. With her photos, I like how small the field of focus is in her photos as you can then pay attention to the detail of the instruments.

With the photo of the guitar, I like that they have framed it so then the strings go from the lower left corner to the top right corner as it then guides your eyes throughout the image. The amount of detail in the photo is great as well, you are able to see the wood grain in the fret board and the swirl pattern in the pick guard.

I like how out of focus the rest of the piano is as it looks like there is more black keys than what there should be. As with the guitar photo, having the keys go from one corner to the opposite one, help your eyes move throughout the photo.



Nick Gentry



Looking at Nick Gentry's art pieces was useful as it gave me ideas of how to position the CDs and to have the images on the CDs.

With these two art pieces, I like how simple the portraits are and how he uses the vinyl covers to his advantage. With the VHS art piece, I like how he kept the painting black and white as it then let the labels on the VHS's stand out against the grey paint.

I like how the vinyl covers do not distract you from Gentry's painting as that could have happened very easily with how bright some of the covers are. Also, he has connected the covers with the painting by having the main covers you see have people on, connecting them to the portrait Gentry has painted over them. Instead, they add structure and colour to the painting, with them being laid out in a grid format, it adds a pattern to the art piece. The same goes with the VHS painting.



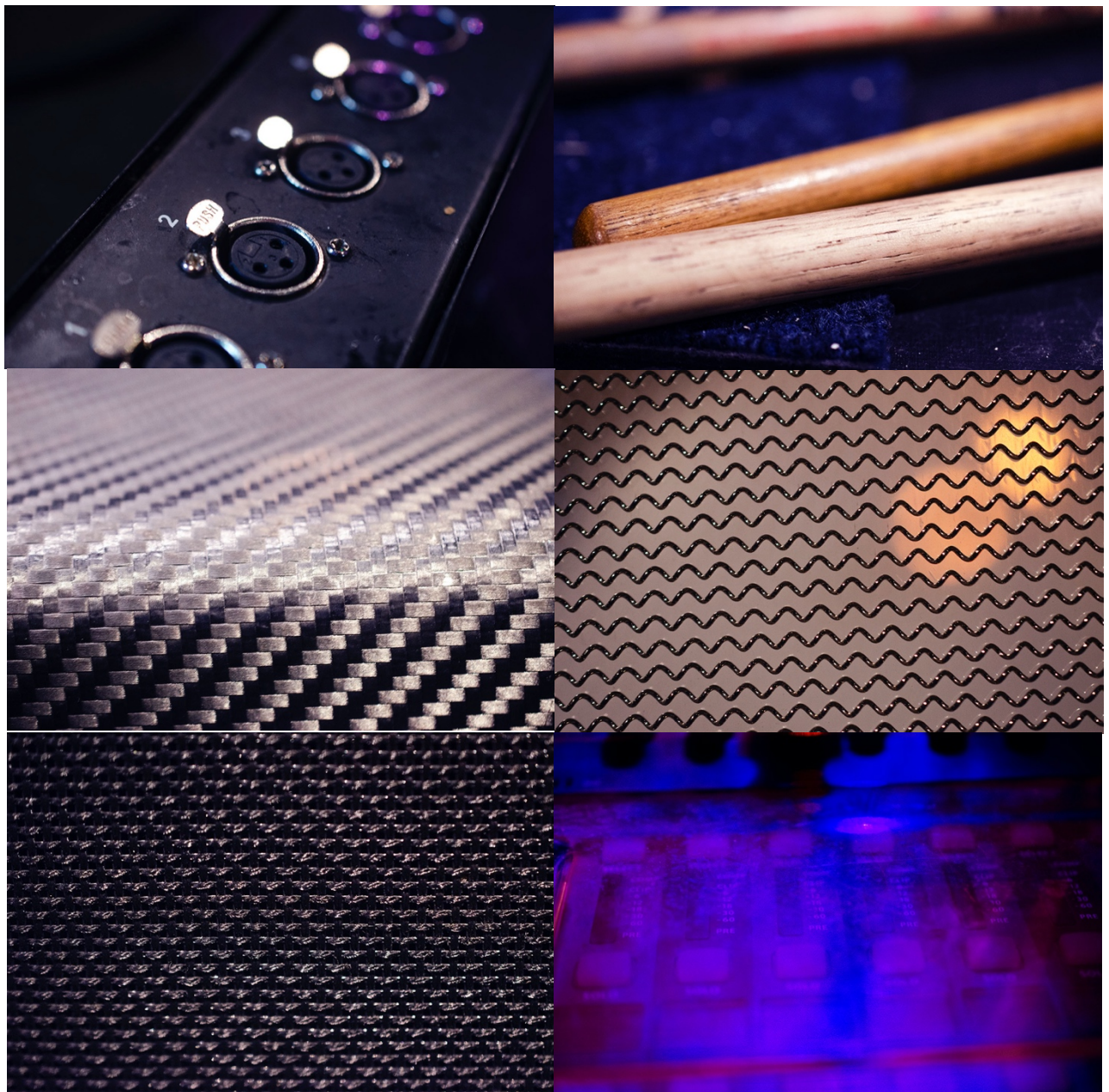
With the VHS tapes not having much on the fronts, I do like that Gentry has gone in with more detail with the portrait, otherwise the portrait would look flat.

For my main piece I knew that I wanted to do something about music (as the building we chose is a gig venue) but incorporate macro photography into it, so I came up with the idea of using CDs to present my photos. I had the idea of hang them from the ceiling with both clear and shiny CDs with the stage lights shining on them, so they then would reflect the lights.

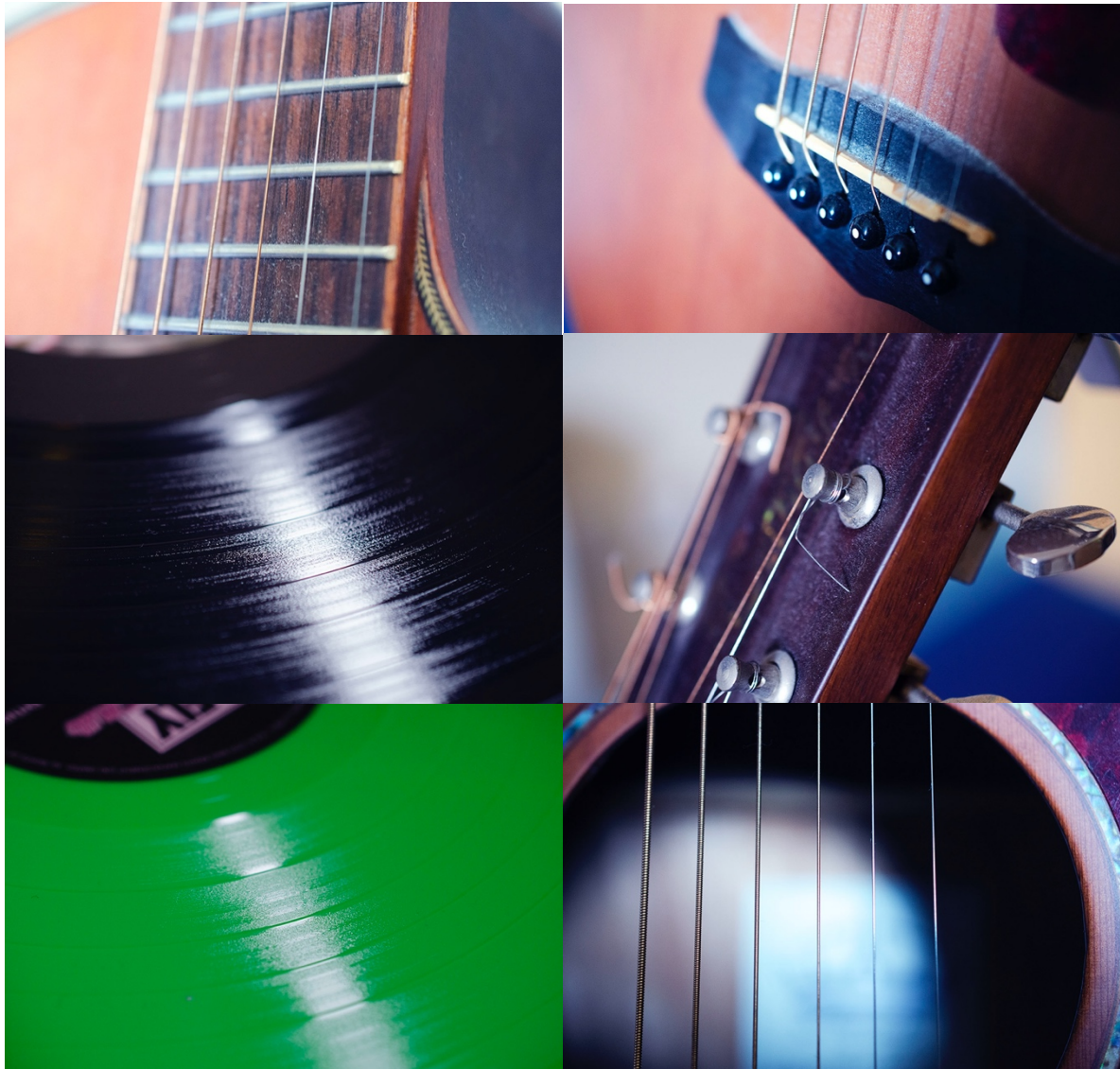
I started off with getting the CDs, I got a simple pack of blank/empty CDs and then started trying to separate the two layers as I know you can do that with some CDs as I was going to

put the images in between these two layers but was unsuccessful. I also experimented with making the CDs clear. I was able to get the shiny coating of the surface of the CDs by scratching a small area and then using tape I was able to get the rest of. After that I would then use nail varnish remover to help get rid of the left-over adhesive from the tape. The problem with this is that it wouldn't get rid of all the adhesive and would also leave green splotches over the surface. This meant that I didn't get the CDs to be as clear as I wanted them as I was going to place some over the images to give extra protection to the images and have the rest be hanging with the rest of the CDs.

Photo wise, I first decided to take some macro shots of object in the bunkhouse, mainly on and around the stage. These were things such as speaker and pieces of a drum kit that were there. Doing this gave me a variety of different textures and patterns in the photos. From this first shoot I produced 6 final photos.



With these photos, I wanted to show the small details of the equipment on and around the stage. But I also wanted more ones with instruments, and one that when you look at that can tell that it's an instrument, so I then decided to take photos of my own guitar. When doing the second shoot I decided to also take ones of my vinyls as this then showed another way of playing music and music in general.



With the layout of them, I organised them into 6 rows of 4 CDs, each row having 2 images and 2 shiny CDs and have the images diagonal from each other so then it's in a chequered pattern. Doing this made it so that then each photo stood out on its own and then you can look at each photo individually. I tied them together with invisible string so then it would look like the CDs are floating and spinning in mid-air. I originally had the idea to hang them in the middle of the room and not the stage as then people could walk through them if they wanted and interact with the exhibition. This would have also filled out the room more and not left a large space in the middle.

The only things that I couldn't do was use the clear CDs and being able to have the concert lights on as a person train in the equipment had to come in and sort them out. This would have then made them stand out more as they would be reflecting the lights as the CDs spun.



Our group also did two pieces together, the rope that went throughout the exhibition, and the recording that went over Connor's video. The rope was to represent how you move

around the place when a gig is playing. It's also to help/guide you through the exhibition piece by piece.



When you walk into the first room, you notice how sticky the floor is from all of the alcohol that has been spilt on it. We then had the idea to record the sound of different shoes walking across creating different sound. We were then going to overlay these and play them in the main room to create the sound of people walking around. Eventually we tried the sound downstairs and it created an eery sound and sounded like people were walking around above you. We then used this over the top of a popular song from WWII which added to the atmosphere of downstairs being a bunker.

Evaluation

Overall, I am pleased with the outcome of this exhibition. We set out to produce an exhibition about Kingsway and the bunkhouse and I feel like we achieved that. Even though we all did individual piece we helped each other develop the ideas and gave feedback to each other when we had a completed a section of our work.

Looking at the artists was useful as it helped me with my idea and help me develop it. Looking at Naomi Jones has helped me improve my skills with taking macro photos and to have my photos focused on the middle of the frame and not in the top or bottom which came be strange to look at. With Nick Gentry, it helped me with the layout of my art piece and to have it in a grid format and not a random pattern.

With my piece, I am happy with how it came out, if I could change anything I would make more and have them hanging around the whole room and have people walk through them. I would also like to have tried and make one photo out of many CDs like Nick Gentry. I would also have tries and used vinyl's mixed within the CDs as this would have given another connection to the music side of the street/venue.

If I had more time, I feel like I could have produced more of the CDs and have them all over the room with more photos as this would have then filled out more of the space in the room. I think we could have made a bigger collaborative piece as well.

In conclusion, I am happy with the exhibition. This has given me experience of organising an exhibition which will be useful in the future if I am going to be doing anymore. It was also giving me experience of working in a group as I normally struggle with that, but we helped each other and were able to finish the exhibition.

Bibliography

Naomi Jones

<https://www.naomijonesphotography.com/p45585447>

Nick Gentry

<https://www.nickgentry.com/>

<https://www.walesonline.co.uk/lifestyle/nostalgia/long-lost-clubs-bars-swanseas-14277571>

<https://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/wales-news/gallery/history-swanseas-kingsway-pictures-18623603>