

Visual diary

Jamie sides

Week 1

What is site specific



—

**This week we were asked to
define site specificity,
studying 3 images and
comparing them, seeing
what makes them 'site
specific'**

**In an essay exercise we will
expand on this but one of
the key images I studied
was kikito by JR**





Kikito JR

Kikito is an artwork by photographer artist JR. As you can see it is a giant print out of a child looking over a fence. However it has no meaning if you don't know the location.

This is the Mexico/US border, a border with huge turmoil over the years especially now. Kikito is a mexican child and the image of him peering over the wall makes him a political statement in a way. Kikito symbolises an entire national issue that is being oppressed by America. The image only works because it's the US/Mexico border. This artwork couldn't be moved to anywhere else in the world because then Kikito as a message loses meaning. Therefore the site specificity is clear,

making it exclusive to work in the location the art is placed.

One way that the artwork is made is the research of finding a place and also Kikito. Kikito being found is a pivotal piece to the artwork. According to Tate Modern the quote "As a site-specific work of art is designed for a specific location, if removed from that location it loses all or a substantial part of its meaning." This directly relates to what I said about how it only works on the border of Mexico and the US, Kikito as a child is equally as essential. Although any mexican person could have worked it did need to be a mexican person, Kikito as a mexican is not changeable and to change it to another nations person would again lose the meaning, same as the location. Site specificity needs to only work in the location placed as well as the people who will be in the art or see it. For instance in a time when the mexico/american tension is so high, with pop culture taking it into account even now with Paul Thomas Anderson making 'one battle after another' a film about this topic and it being raved about shows how people see this kind of impact and see the importance behind it. I believe if this statement was made 30 years ago less people would see the importance and message behind it even with the 'sensitivity of the topic' it works in this place of the mexico border but nowhere else does this message work for this time and era we live in

Mapping potential territories

Last week we were asked to scout and investigate potential places that would work for a site specific project.

I chose the
grand theatre.



**We were asked to
make a full report on
the site and develop
ideas and make sure
the possibility of
collaboration is likely
or unlikely**

[https://docs.google.com/document
/d/1A3lWf1d61PE-DFa_NZG3IsgBHb
I3n5obFt3ixVsGLlM/edit?usp=shari
ng](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1A3lWf1d61PE-DFa_NZG3IsgBHbI3n5obFt3ixVsGLlM/edit?usp=sharing)

Link to the full report

My report compacted

I have chosen to investigate the grand theatre in Swansea. I took interest in this site when I started to think of the possibilities of a workspace that's easy to negotiate with and also can supply a good place for photographic and artistic work. The accessibility so far seems like more negotiation is needed. As I've been in an email chain trying to convince them to let people have an exhibition in their space. It's a difficult bargain to push as they haven't said no but have stated it would be hard to implement an exhibition space. As of writing this part I have not had a chance to investigate the site in person but have arranged a date to visit and take some photos this Tuesday the 7th of October. My relationship to this place is surface level, I've never been into the theatre, never seen a play there or any shows and the closest I've gotten to it is by walking past it. However I've seen photos from their website and it looks like a beautiful venue and I have always been fascinated by the stage. The curtains, the seats and the all very theatricality of the building itself. I look forward to seeing what I can negotiate and see if I can find connections to an artistic approach I can photograph and write about.

opened on July 26, 1897, and was designed by William Hope for entrepreneurs H H Morell and F Mouillot. Apparently however in august of 1934 the theatre was converted into a cinema due to the rise in film media taking over stage productions. This was a last hope heel turn because the theatre was no longer bringing many people into see theatre productions. It remained as a theatre until 1947 where due to swansea suffering badly from post war Damages, the cinema was put for sale and was purchased by a Captain W.E Willis. Willis restored it to its original theatre layout and sold it later to Swansea city in 1979. Speaking to fellow classmates, the theatre is a great place and beautiful design, and speaking to some people who stay at my workplace to see the theatre shows always tell me how great it is and that they travel from miles away to see some of the productions put on in the theatre. According to the FOH manager i spoke to in person, the now “arts” sector of the building used to be a part of the Swansea bus station. When it was acquired by the theatre they expanded it into where the box office and cafe now reside. The woman told me she works closely in the cafe and that a lot of older people come in just to relax and enjoy teas and cake etc

Images of the site i was allowed to take



Visit to the archives

Week 2 we have visited the swansea archive to obtain knowledge on the tools at our disposal. It was also a lesson in how learning about the history of a site is crucial to how to create work around it.



Visit to the archives lessons learnt

One the of Key lessons learnt was research is Key
Similar to the Quote "If your photos aren't good
enough, you're not close enough." by Robert Capa the
changed version is if your pictures aren't good
enough ,you're not reading enough. And by using
that information it seeped into how i decided every
choice before landing on my final idea

In the workshop style visit we learnt
about the city of swansea and a history
of it. How the train station changed,
the tesco was a cafe. The dock was
much larger and how boats were a way
of traversal around the city being a
much more important and crucial
characteristic of the city. Learning
about the fundamental history and
what once was a regular occurrence
can now be near extinct, shows how
research really tells you how to
progress in your work.

Week 4. Learning of our sites.

Yesterday we learnt of our groups. I was put in
a group with
millie , rebecca, Libby and Amelia.

Our site was graciously the palace theatre

Palace theatre



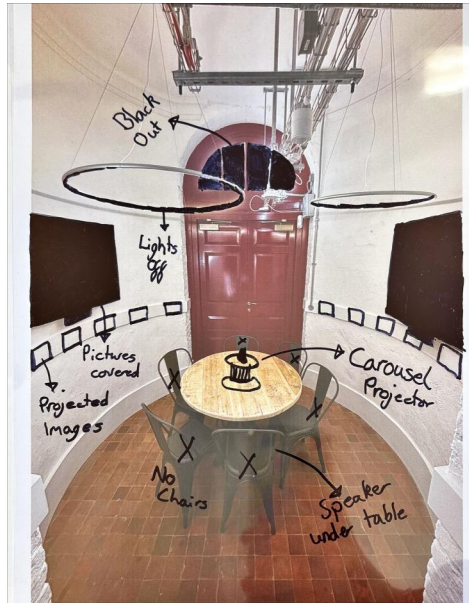
Visualising the site



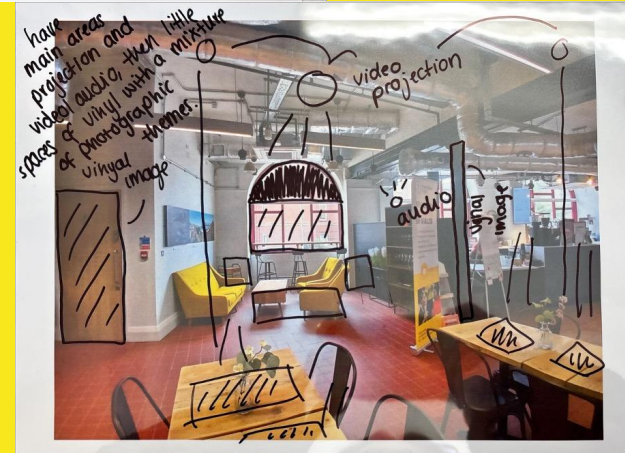
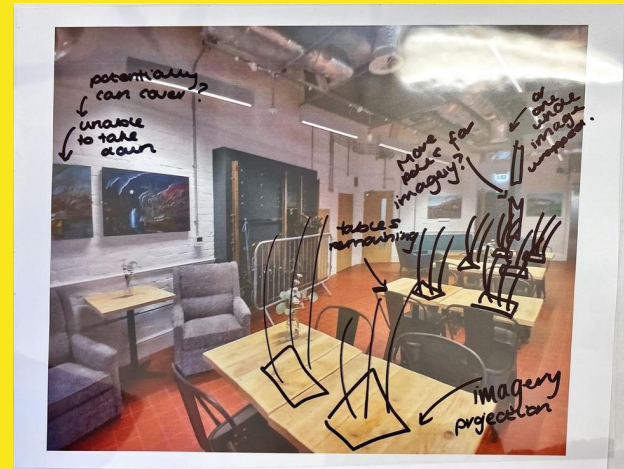
My visualisation

We as a group were told to draw visualisations on the building, to come up with inspiration. We each took a image and expanded on it with marker.

My groups visualisations



History based Projection



Deciding on my project

After some time of thinking and research i learnt a history about the palace theatre.

Articles included

<https://www.timeout.com/uk/news/this-derelict-victorian-theatre-which-once-hosted-charlie-chaplin-is-set-to-reopen-080524>

A timeout magazine pointing out the fact of the palace theatre being the home of the first silent film to be screened in wales.

With this information i spoke to my lecturers and my fellow exhibitors about the idea of making a short film surrounding the building and the place it's become. This idea was met with good response and so i began on the Project by Outlining a 1st idea of genre/feel and style.

One of the key aspects i had to think about was how its going to be exhibited

Week 5

Last week for week 5 we had a workshop on projectors. After expanding on my ideas for the site finding the ideal projector was paramount for my art film to succeed. Projection seemed to be the best way to exhibit a silent film. Harking back to old school projection of the 1st silent film



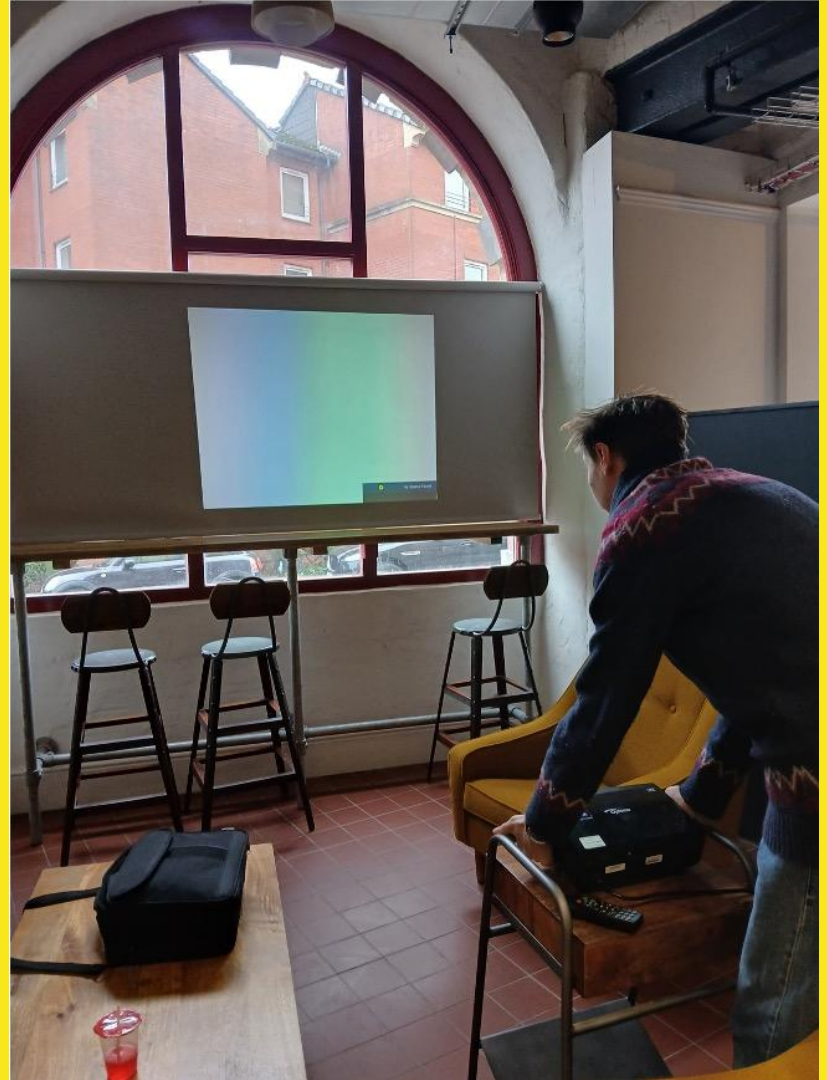
Conversations with the building

After learning of the building we
as a group did a site visit
together in order to get 3 things

- Permission to exhibit
 - permission to make a short
film and film on location
 - Gain a rapport with the staff
and create a professional
relationship
-

On a site visit to experiment with projectors

Luckily we got those permission and so started on our work straight away. The next day I experimented with the screen provided in a little comfy corner of the building. It seems ideal for viewing the short film, one issue is i feel it doesn't feel site specific, it at the moment is just a corner with a projector in the way. I hope to come up with a way to make it more aesthetic and match with the film being shown on the screen



Learning more about the people and the building

Me and libby decided to do a
recorded interview with Zed.
the manager of the ground floor
of the palace theatre

We asked if he'd be happy to
contribute and with good grace he
accepted and gained us exclusive
access to one of the conference rooms
on the upper floors. We got to see the
devastating gentrification of the once
rich in history theatre. Seeing the
building now reduced to grey carpet
and office desks, glass partitions and
soulless cubicles. It was a very sad
sight but we couldn't speak out when
being given such good homeliness by
Zed. so we stayed quiet and proceeded
without interview

The interview

Originally intended to be a piece for the final exhibit we've now scrapped. It still served a purpose for learning about Zed and building that relationship.

Off camera we spoke about our personal lives, learning about who he is and what kind of person he wants to be. Why he's so kind and helping us. Most of which i won't share as he said in confidence but he did say publicly that he once was in the art world and understood how important an easy collaboration would be for us.

Watch the uncut interview here



[Zed interview tape .mov](#)

Refining the projector



In one of the experiments lecturer Joe provided. It seems that the idea is actually what i'll be doing almost exactly in my site. As you can see we projected a still image onto a bookshelf, creating an almost makeshift cinema out of a space used for something else. In my site their are wine shelves which seem ideal for projecting a film onto.

On that same day i started filming the first few shots of my film, bringing in inspiration from the days of buster keaton, by using the method of one shot long takes, often as it was the only method to make films in those days



Libby And I's Collaboration

I wanted to make it a shared idea, i was to take the helm for most of the workload but i wanted it to be a collaboration creatively. I would write the shot list and “script” even though its silent, and Libby would be my proofreader, making sure it worked and giving back ideas to work on. The film isn't finished but most of the main Moving shots were filmed by Libby



Week 4s key notes

From week 4 a Very specific artist stuck out to me. I've left it til now for the sake of understanding my key inspiration when told directly next to my own work



Claude and christo inspiring my work

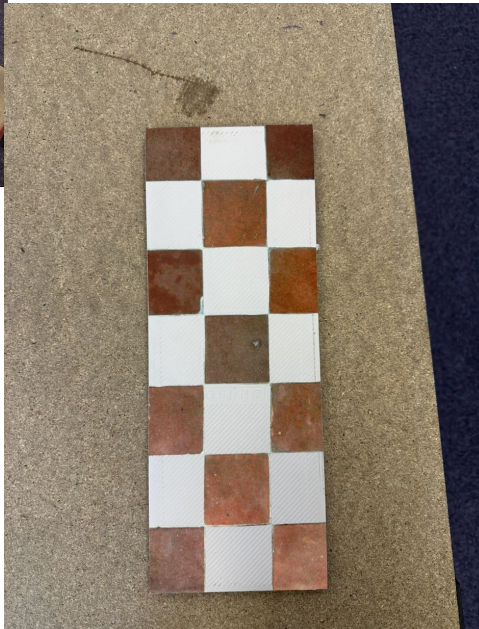
In looking into their works, they force viewers to notice its scale (the buildings scale), contours, and relationship to its surroundings in a new way. Translating this idea into a short film, a singular building like the palace theatre could become the film's central character. its façade altered, concealed, or revealed over time so that the audience experiences the space as something alive and changing rather than static architecture.

A short film inspired by this approach would revolve around the act of transformation itself. the anticipation before the building is “covered,” the tension of the process, and the emotional shift once the transformation is complete.

Re working a piece of the building

In a workshop we were tasked with bringing an item from the building to work on and create something with in the workshop at university

Zed Gave Libby one of the new wall tiles from the recent renovation. A very heavy but cool piece to be given and re work and manipulate into something cool



What we did was take a photo of the still maintained OLD tiles still in the corner of the cafe and paste the old tiles onto the back of the new tile. Creating a piece where the new piece is on one side, and the old piece on the reverse. In the end we decided on creating a pattern, as the building is more new on the inside than old, a 50/50 split isn't accurate, in the end it's about 3:1 ratio of new to old. And that is what you can see is the final product.

**After this it was back
to schedule making
more of the film.**

After getting the initial opening shots i needed to have a plan. As it took an entire day to get 1 minute of useable footage. And in so i started writing

I decided to watch a few films in order to Grasp a clear inspiration and shot list of what to shoot.

I watched

- Maltese falcon
- The lighthouse
- And sherlock JR (Buster Keaton

Why those films?

The reason I watched these was to mix them all into my own style. I had never made a film before and so I needed to watch these films in a new way, a way where I could see why certain choices worked, what visuals would be doable on a shoestring budget on a short time frame with no experience on now obsolete equipment.

I also have been reading room to dream. A book I started reading before we started for second semester. This also taught me about filmmaking but it wasn't research i did as i was already reading it

See the progress and watch the first 3 minutes of unedited footage

[palace dream film tape, 1st 3 minutes .movie](#)



The SONY PD150

The camera used for the film.



Why a SONY PD150?

The reason i chose a sony pd150 is for two reasons. The 1st is my creative expression, drawing from one of my idols love for this specific camera. David Lynch. Lynch made Inland Empire entirely on the pd150 to prove that filmmaking can me done on a cheap piece of equipment if you yourself have the creative drive for it.

Second was because we are trying to replicate a silent film from the 20s. Of course in the 20s a camera would have been film camera on a crank usually. Of course we cannot afford this kind of equipment as to even get hold of a camera that old would be costly, let alone the price of film and the time crunch to edit it and finish it intime. Its purely impossible. By using the PD150 we are hacking into an era of crunchy old quality, that on today's screens would look ancient. Therefore it gives us the ability to look old without faking it with filters and editing, and it allows us to easily edit, efficiently and cheaply. A roll of film for 10 seconds of footage would cost about 40 pounds, whereas a tape of 40 minutes costs 5.

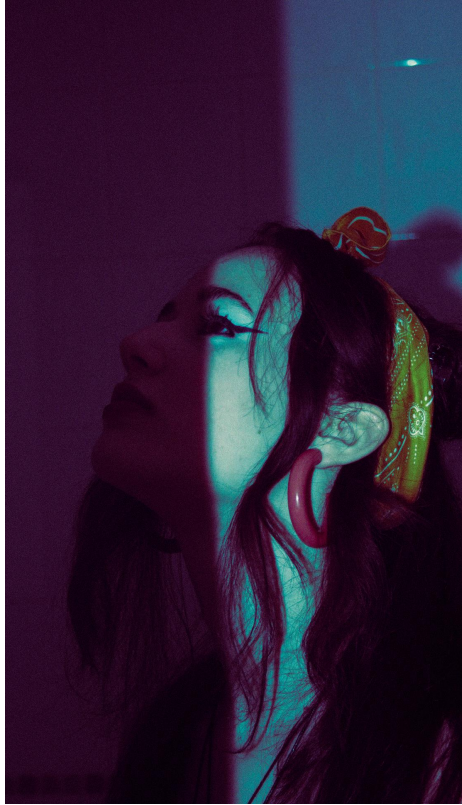
Artistic inspiration

As Well as those two 21st century artists i've taken inspiration from a lot of different places.

By using Books and practicing my skills of image making i found what works best for me.

I've learnt that i work best in an environment of performability. In my past projects of photography and image making i've learnt to realise my work come out best when people are aware of a performance. For instance my street photography doesn't have as much of my own character as something like a photoshoot with someone playing Amy Winehouse or someone acting in a parked car, or a phonebooth. My work excels when people not involved in the creation and viewing the work are aware of a level of performance.

Some of my performative works



Compared to my key inspirations

Buster Keaton



David Lynch



Making more progress in my film

Some time has passed since
lessons has stopped and
production is continuing to
flow.

One of the most complicated
aspects so far, is transferring the
tape footage onto my computer

The transfer process

In order to edit the tape I had to daisy chain wires.

The process was complicated but here are some images of the daisy chain

To explain. The tape is fed into the camera in VCR mode. The camera then has AV cables and one S video cable fed into another set of AV cables that is then connected to a Capture card. The capture card is usb, so it's then connected to a usb to usbc adapter which is then connected to my MAC. The Mac then has a quick time player. The mac detects the av as a camera extension, the quicktime capture application then can record the fed tape. Press play on the tape and record on the mac at the same time to record. I'd then feed this into imovie to make a timeline. And then feed the imovie timeline into premiere pro.

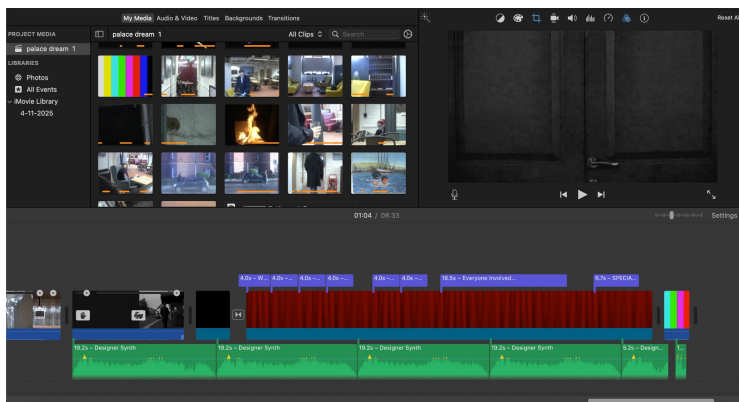
As I discussed before. Why do it this way when it's much more hassle. And the reason is for the art. If the art is not authentic to the context or the source material then why do it all. Why fake it when making it more legitimately can be more fulfilling, more true and in the end it is just better.



Editing the footage

editing was hard. I'd never done it before and learnt everything from scratch. And probably the worst way possible. I didn't watch a video or something most would do. I needed the editing to feel like 1920, hard cuts, freeze frames and cuts to black. I read the built in articles on premier pro and imovie, i mixed both softwares together in order to make the final product.

In the final editing process i would transfer the timeline into IMovie. This was in order for the footage to run smoother, as Adobe has buffering issues when playing on a loop. The timeline would then be editable with the computer knowing which edit was done on which software, making it very easy to refine timings and frames in the final edit



End credits

Final exhibition week

We're now in the last week of the project and are exhibiting next week

This week is time to

- Put up the exhibitors pages online
- Set up the marketing pieces
- Finish the final edit of my film
- Make sure all equipment is loaned appropriately and have info boards made up

Exhibition week to do

- Set up the exhibit
- Maintain the exhibit for 24 hours with constant invigilation
- Take down the exhibit
- Fill in site specific proforma
- Return all equipment intact and in good time

Marketing material

I didn't have much artistic input for the marketing as the girls took on that with pride so i observed but gave valid opinions and rare criticism as i genuinely loved the choices being made

The marketing materials were all analogue, paper posters, ticket stubs and foam board in the foyer of the building making it known that and event was to occur on the 4th of december



 Prifysgol Cymru
Y Drindod Dewi Sant
University of Wales
Trinity Saint David

Swansea
College of Art
 Founded 1853

cyflwyno / presents

THE PALACE THEATRE

mewn / in

ENTR 'ACTE

ARDDANGOSFA FFOTOGRAFFIAETH
PHOTOGRAPHY EXHIBITION

CUADWYD GAN / CURATED BY

Amelia Peacock-Everett, Jamie Sides, Libby Turner, Millie Jones, Rebecca Davies

3ydd o Ragfyr 8am - 3pm
 TAN 4ydd o Ragfyr 8am - 3pm

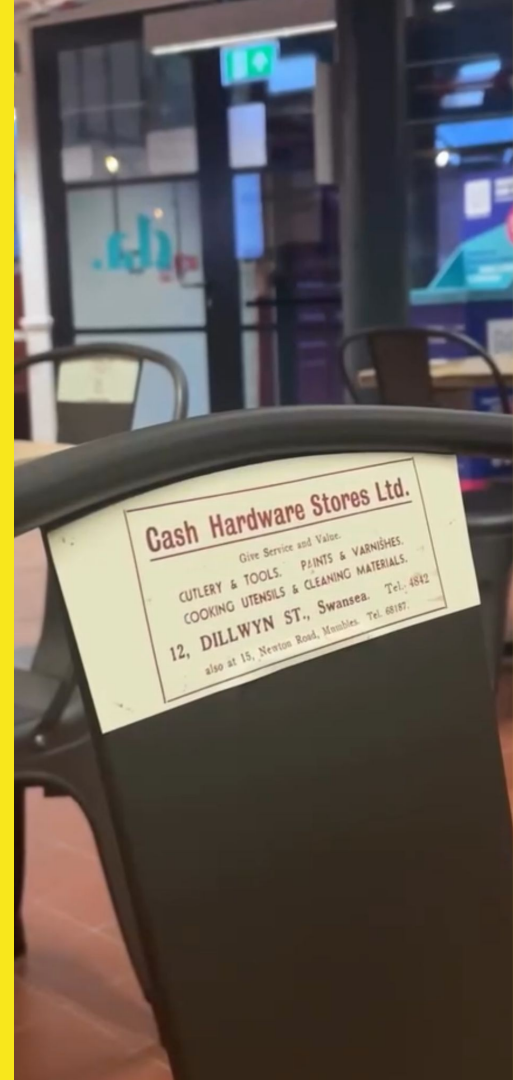
December 3rd 8a.m - 3p.m
 UNTIL December 4th 8a.m - 3p.m

 **TRAMSHED
TECH**

156 STRYD FAWR, ABERTAWE, SA1 1NE

 **TRAMSHED
TECH**

156 HIGH STREET, SWANSEA, SA1 1NE



The ticket stubs

On a workshop much earlier in the month we looked at a wide range of marketing materials, not many people showed for this lesson but this is where me and libby fell on the idea of the stub and passed it onto the other three. So although i didn't design the stubs, me and libby did land on the idea of the stubs themselves



Final day

Today is the day of setting up.
In 24 hours the project will be
finished and the palace theatre will be
a place in my own history from then
on

I plan on placing all the pictures i
take in these slides to show how the
exhibit went (hopefully well) and to
show how not just mine but the
entire exhibit and how it meshed
together in the cohesive way we
planned



The pictures from the 24
hours





More pictures

Watch my exhibit at

<https://jamiesides.odoo.com/>

And that's the end

At the end of it all i've had a fantastic experience, a memory i'll have from one of the most exhilarating explorations of my skills and abilities. This is something i'd love to continue in and keep on expanding my skills in editing, filming and exhibiting effectively. I had some of the best moments in a group project ever and i doubt i'll forget this experience.

This has been the visual diary of my journey

By Jamie Sides