

Name: Kelsey Jones
Student Number: 2101007
Tutors: Ryan Moule and Joe Coleman
Module: Experimental Strategies ADAA5003

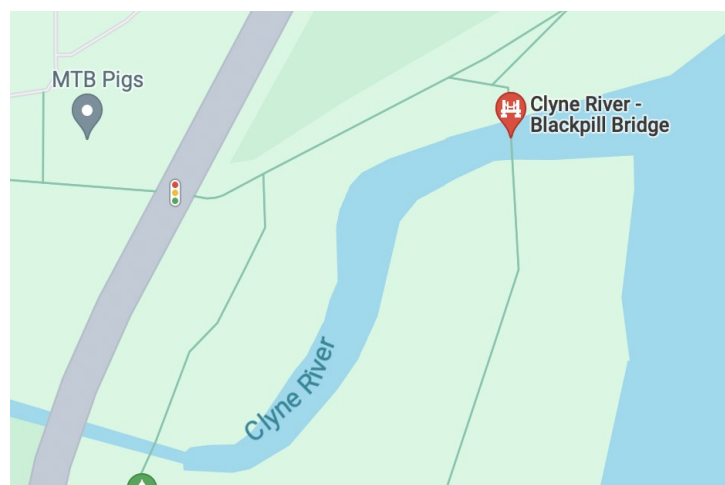
Site- Specific Exhibition Evaluation and Research Report

The Significance of the Site

When the class was first split into groups, the first thing we did as a group was read through Karsten's proposal. In his proposal for Clyne Valley, he outlined an idea based on litter and explained how he wanted to make work responding to the issues littering causes within the environment. During our first site visit, we walked around Clyne and selected a particular area we wanted to hold the exhibition in; this was the cycle track by the Railway Inn. However, as we discussed the site and potential ideas further as a group, we decided that by following the river down to the estuary this would unlock much more potential, and provide us with an area that has so much to offer, with such an interesting dynamic. Moreover, by moving further downstream to the estuary, Karsten's initial idea for a project highlighting the issues of littering became more relevant, as litter is such a significant issue on the beach. Upon exploring the new site, as a group we began thinking of the main elements of the landscape. We all mentioned the river, and how this is clearly a defining feature of this site. I suggested making work responding to the river, as we could collectively agree on this being the main feature of the site.

Information about our Chosen Site

The site we held our exhibition at is the estuary of Clyne river. The estuary is located underneath the Blackpill Bridge, at the intersection between the promenade and the beach. The site is a very interesting space, as it marks the transition from land to sea, and from a forest to a beach landscape. As a result, there is a mix of driftwood and fallen trees, shells next to leaves which creates a really interesting dynamic. Although this time of the year, the Autumn/ Winter period, is quieter along the beach, there are still a fair amount of people who walk along the beach, passing the estuary.





Research Process

Initially, we planned to hold our exhibition down the cycle path by the railway inn, following the Clyne river. After our first site visit here, we began to wonder about the history of the site. Consequently, we began our research by speaking to Andrew Dulley, who works at Swansea Archives, about the history of Clyne River and the surrounding area. Andrew explained that the river flows down from Clyne Common, which is the historic boundary between the parishes of Swansea and Oystermouth. Further up the valley was Clyne Valley Colliery, and Clyne Valley Brick and Tile Works. Andrew also mentioned that there was once a railway along the seafront down to Blackpill, before turning up into Clyne Valley. Moreover, Andrew commented on a few small features that were once at Blackpill, such as Clyne Chapel, but explained that Blackpill was very much a place out in the country. After speaking to Andrew, we came together as a group and decided to continue our research as we had collectively agreed that the historic nature of the site had not sparked any inspiration between us.

We decided to return to the site, allowing ourselves to be open to the influence of the site. We followed the river downstream to Blackpill bridge, which marked the end of the river and where it met the sea. We all felt inspired by this site, and felt it was more appropriate to hold an exhibition as it was a much more open and public space than the woods further upstream. Knowing that we did not want to follow the route of historic research, we spent some time at the estuary site exploring what it had to offer, thinking of potential starting points for work. Karsten's initial proposal had discussed a possibility of a project about litter, which we realised was an issue along the beach at this site. Our research then began to take a more environmental approach, as we did beach cleanups and observed the volume of litter found along this stretch of the beach. Whilst we had this idea, as a group we decided to conduct some material experiments and make work responding to the site, to see if we could create something that could be used as a starting point for the project.

Artist Research

Our research also took the form of artist research. As a group, we had initially thought about creating sculptures to explore and represent the environmental impacts of litter. One artist we looked at in particular was David Batchelor. As an artist, Batchelor works with a

variety of mediums including: drawing, sculpting, painting, photography, animation, and textile work. Much of Batchelor's work focusses on installation pieces. We were mostly intrigued by his sculptures, which he makes from found objects and materials. We began to look at his style of sculpture, and allowing ourselves to be influenced by this we thought of some designs for potential sculptures. Despite the fact our final outcome was not a sculpture, looking at David Batchelor's work certainly inspired us to work with found materials, which ultimately led to our final outcome: the installation of plastic bottles.

Furthermore, another artist who I researched was Susan Derges. Once we had decided to conduct material tests, exploring key elements of the site I began to think about the work of an artist I had seen before, Susan Derges. Susan Derges is a photographic artist, specialising in camera-less photographic processes. Derges work explores natural landscapes, which is one of the reasons her work came to mind. Derges is most widely known for pioneering the technique of submerging photographic paper in water, and capturing the movement and flow of natural bodies of water. After researching Derges' technique, I decided this was something I could experiment with myself. Derges' photograms of the movement of water was what inspired me to create photograms in the river, using a mix of both a torch for long exposure and a flash to capture the shape of the water in a moment.

What I have learnt through the module

As a whole, my biggest lesson learnt through this module definitely revolved around working within a group. Despite having worked as part of a group before, I found working within a group in a creative capacity to be a much different experience. I felt I was able to navigate group disagreements well, as whenever I raised a point I was able to justify and support my views with appropriate evidence. In addition, I felt that I listened to and understood other's views well. However, I found my main challenge to be asserting my views within a group setting. I sometimes felt that my views were being somewhat dismissed, so learning to advocate for my views was something I had to do quite quickly.

In terms of creative skills, making photograms in the river pushed me to develop and work with a new technique to create work, that I was unfamiliar with. Personally, my practice is very much involved with digital photography, and I do not often spend much time in the darkroom. However, working with camera-less photographic techniques has further expanded my experience, and something I quite enjoyed working with.

My Contribution to the Process

Throughout the course of the exhibition, my role within the group changed and developed. During the early stages of the project, I took a much more practical role rather than a creative role. Despite voicing my ideas for an outcome, I felt that others in the group had a strong idea of what they wanted the outcome to be. I feel that my role during this module can be divided into three parts: my role in the process of planning the preparation, my creative role, and my role in the final stage of the exhibition.

During the process of planning the preparation, I was responsible for dealing with all emails, emailing relevant people. More specifically, I dealt with researching who to contact, and then gaining access to procure Clyne Gardens. Once we decided to change our site, I then also had to research how to get access to put work at Blackpill. This process involved

emailing a member of the council, completing and sending the risk assessment form along with the insurance policy, and filling in an events form, detailing the specifics of our exhibition for the council. In addition to these independent roles, I attended all group meetings, in which I made notes of what we discussed. I was present for, and pushed to have, regular group meetings to discuss the next stage of our project.

In terms of my creative role, my materials test and experiments with the site, the photograms in the river, ended up informing a significant part of our final piece. I made three sets of photograms in the river, which I presented to the group. I ended up blending a selection of photograms together to create a banner, which was meant to span the width of the river at high tide. I was then tasked with researching which product option with Pixart Printing was most suitable, and then ordering this. When the banner arrived, it was my job to find a way to present the banner at the site in a way that it would maintain its shape, and stay secured to the bridge.

In the final stage of the exhibition, I feel that my group began turning to me to resolve issues and decide what needed to be done. In the week before the exhibition, I helped Karsten finish working on the two panels of photograms he had created, and suggested ways to weatherproof these, and secure them at the site. The night before our exhibition was set to open, I met the group at the site and we all tied the bottles to the bridge. On the day of the exhibition, I dealt with very last minute issues that arose, such as the exhibition statement not being complete and printed. I also installed work at the exhibition. Moreover, I participated in creating the performance element of our exhibition by creating the walkway. After the exhibition, the rest of the group was unable to meet at any point so I took on the responsibility of returning to the site to collect the photographic paper we had placed in the bottles. Once collected, I took these into the university dark room and fixed them, and finally scanned them in and sent them to the rest of the group.



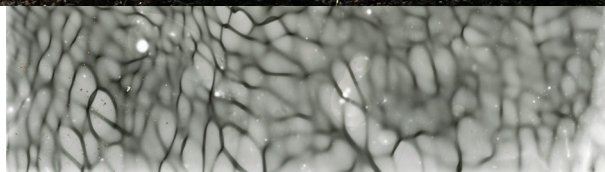
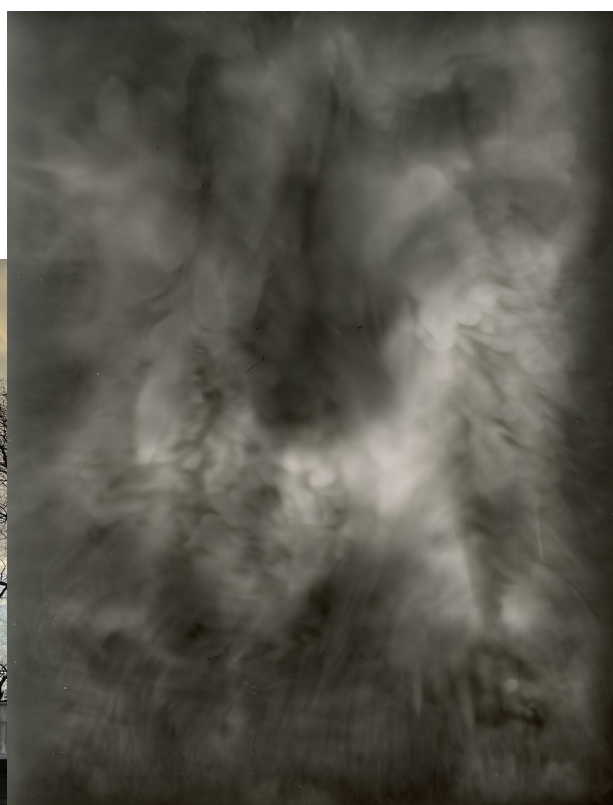
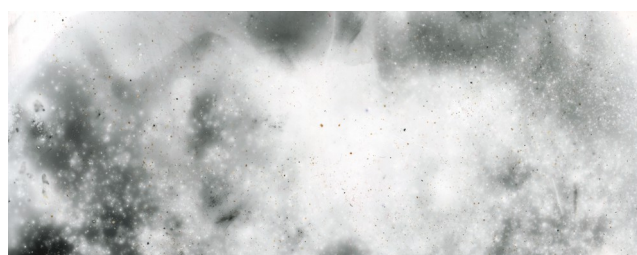
Evaluation of the Exhibition

The photo above shows our final exhibition installation. On the bridge, hanging above the river, is a banner I made of the photograms created in the river. This piece of work is a blend of photograms, made in the river at both high and low tide. The banner is a representation of the ever-changing flow of the river. The banner spans a width of 5m, as this was the maximum size Pixart could print for this product. Initially, we planned for the banner to be much longer so that it could span the width of the river at high tide. To combat this, we made two panels of photograms of plastic bottles found on the beach. One was hung either side of the banner, bringing the width of our work to match the width of the river. Our exhibition also included an installation of plastic bottles we found on the beach. Before hanging these bottles above the river, we filled some with river water and some with photographic paper. The motive behind the photographic paper was that it would act as a metaphor for a message in a bottle, which is a twist as in the context of our exhibition the message lies within the bottles themselves, and the volume of bottles we found along the beach speaks to the environmental message we are conveying.

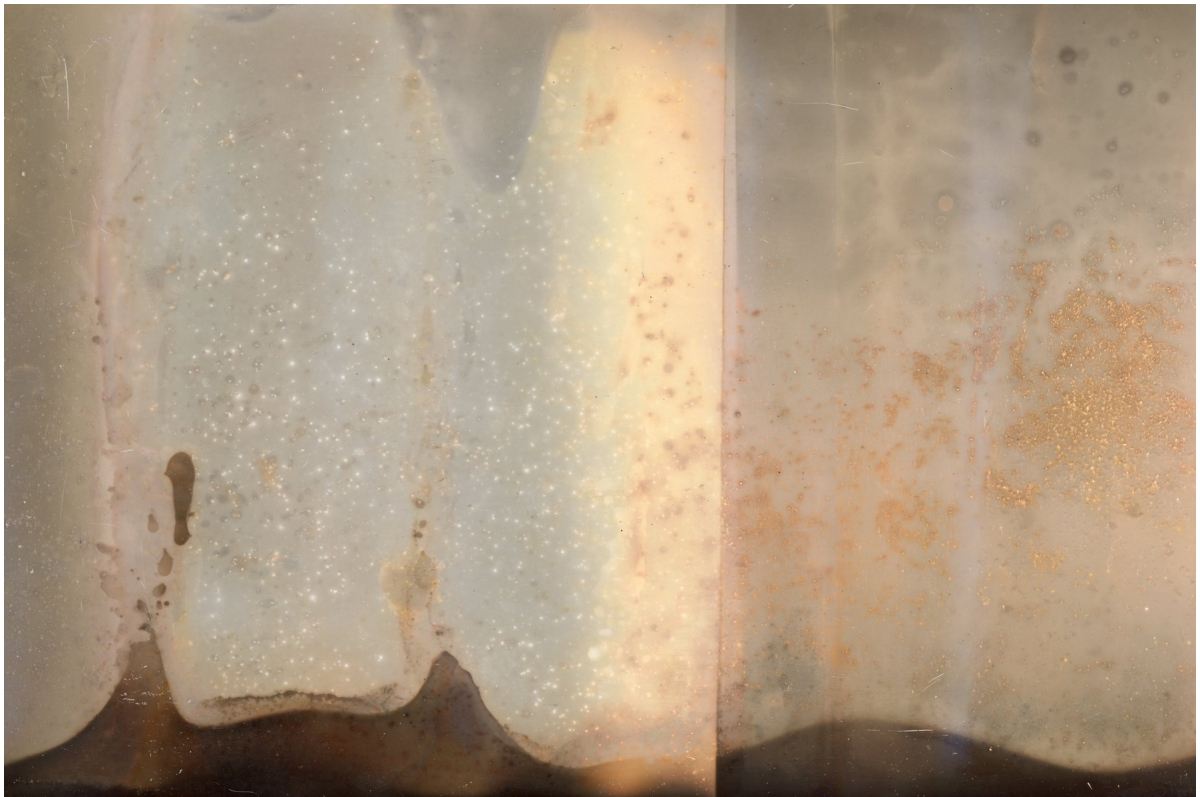
Overall, I can say that I am pleased with the outcome of the exhibition. As the exhibition date drew nearer, I know I was personally very stressed thinking about our final outcome. Personally, my way of working is to first come up with an idea, and then plan how to execute this in an effective way. Consequently, I found working in the 'trust the process' way that a site-specific project requires to be challenging. I disliked the lack of certainty about a final outcome as the deadline drew nearer. However, I think as a group we worked well to create something that speaks to our intentions very well. To reflect, in terms of what I would change I can say that the size of the banner is the main thing. This is because we wanted the banner to measure the width of the river at high tide, but we were only able to print the banner at a width of 5m. Unfortunately, due to the budget of the group we were limited with what products we could order from Pixart Printing, meaning that the size we could print at was also limited. Although we could have printed the banner with the university's printing facilities, we faced the issue of weatherproofing our work. This is why we chose to print externally through Pixart, as we could order the banner to be printed on rain resistant paper, to ensure it would last the duration of the exhibition. Our final element of the exhibition was the sun prints created in the bottles during the exhibition. These photograms serve as the remnants of our exhibition, and the message we aimed to convey. Although I think the sun prints are interesting, they were created as a means of documentation and to mark the longevity of the project. I think the sun prints by themselves are unable to achieve this. However, I think if we came together and turned them into a book or a zine, along with the photograms created during this project and some photos of the exhibition this could be a positive way of ensuring the longevity and impact of the project.



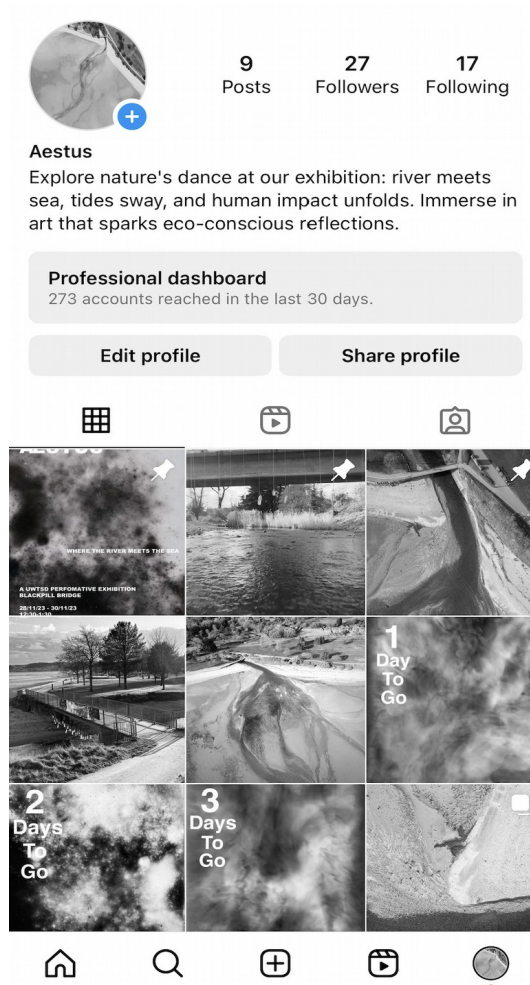
These photos show our exhibition fully installed.



These are a selection of photograms created in the river.



This is one of the sun prints created during the duration of the exhibition, inside the plastic bottles.



This is the Aestus Instagram page we created to advertise and document our exhibition.