

Exhibition 2.0

Evaluation

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Transforming my photobook into an exhibition space was an intricate process that required me to rethink how meaning functions across different formats. Unlike the contained intimacy of a book, an exhibition demands a more dynamic engagement, where interpretation is shaped by scale, sequencing, and material interaction. This transition challenged me to reconsider the relationship between the viewer, the work, and the space itself. Drawing on post-structuralist theory and reader-response criticism, I embraced the instability of meaning that arises when art is liberated from a fixed narrative. My photobook was curated to invite contemplation, oscillating between ambiguity and the sublime as an emotional and conceptual experience. However, within an exhibition space, the images acquire new meaning- not just through their individual compositions but through their spatial arrangement and the viewer's movement.

One of the core challenges in adapting the work was ensuring that same ambiguity and viewer agency remained central to the exhibition experience. The photobook offers a controlled, sequential reading, whereas an exhibition requires fluid interaction, disrupting linear interpretation. To achieve this, I curated the sequence of images carefully, balancing abstraction and familiarity. The deliberate use of negative space between mounted prints introduced pauses for reflection, encouraging viewers to construct their own interpretations rather than passively absorbing meaning. Taking inspiration from the absence of explanatory captions in my photobook, I ensured that the exhibition retained a similar approach. My artist statement was intentionally minimal and abstract, reinforcing viewer agency by allowing audience interpretations to remain open-ended- this aligns with Roland Barthes' theory of the death of the author, ensuring meaning is created through the viewer's engagement rather than dictated by my intent.

Stephen Gill's *Please Notify the Sun* played a critical role in shaping my work. Not just the subject of work at hand but his ability to construct layered, immersive narratives often through unconventional sequencing and material experimentation, resonated with my desire to maintain ambiguity while enhancing viewer engagement. Gill's photographic projects often challenge traditional visual consumption by encouraging tactile, experiential encounters with images. Inspired by this, I paid close attention to how print quality, spacing, and environmental factors could enhance the physical and sensory engagement of my exhibition. His emphasis on letting materials guide the meaning also reinforced my decision to work with high-quality gloss paper, recognizing how its reflective qualities could alter audience interaction depending on their position and movement within the space.

The writings of Phillip Shaw and Edmund Burke were essential inspirations in shaping both my photobook and exhibition display. Burke's exploration of the sublime portrays it as an overwhelming experience noted by a level of vastness and obscurity, and this resonates highly with my own work. However, while their subjects are more focused on landscaping and space, my work directs more towards the vastness of microscopic scale. Furthermore, Shaw's interpretation of the sublime only builds upon that of Burke's. Shaw frames the sublime as a fluid and subjective concept, one not bound by traditional definitions but instead shaped by individual engagement. This viewer agency is an aspect I wanted to replicate within my own exhibition display, I wanted the meaning to be co-generated through interaction and personal experience. I believe that this was successful due to the amount of people commenting on the obscurity of the images during the exhibition and questioning the subjects seen. Furthermore, I found that post-exhibition, viewers comfortably shared which image resonated with them the most- through memories as a child or reflections of cultural patterns. I believe that each person related more with a specific image rather than the collection as a whole.

Beyond conceptual considerations, the technical execution of the exhibition was equally critical. Choosing to print externally on high-quality gloss paper was a strategic decision aimed at enhancing the vibrancy and depth of my images. The reflective quality of gloss interacted with the lighting, amplifying the subtle interplay of texture, movement, and light within each composition. However, post-installation, I realized that gloss paper's interaction with natural lighting could sometimes create glare and full-bleed colour

reflections. Given more time, I would have refined the lighting setup to better control the interaction between the prints and the environment, such as the interaction between the prints and direct natural sunlight. Since I'm not able to go back in time, I will instead use this under looked characteristic of gloss paper in my future projects to immerse an audience in a print.

A particularly valuable aspect of the exhibition was the collaboration between photography and fine art disciplines. The contrast in artistic methods enriched the curatorial process, allowing for a more diverse audience experience. Engaging in curatorial discussions, resolving technical refinements, and physically installing the work provided me with valuable insight into exhibition design as a professional practice. Understanding how space and environment shape viewer perception has been an essential takeaway- one that I will carry forward into future projects.

Furthermore, this project reinforced the importance of adaptability, intentional sequencing, and audience engagement. The transition from photobook to exhibition was not just a shift in format but a transformation in how both I and the audience engage with the work. While the core themes translated successfully, areas such as lighting refinement and interactive engagement could be further developed to create an even more immersive experience. Looking ahead, I aim to experiment with multi-sensory interactions, including layered prints of larger scale, projections, or tactile elements that heighten a viewer's sense of participation.

Overall, I can confidently state that this module has deepened my understanding of how artistic intent functions within an exhibition setting. Through curatorial refinement, technical execution, and conceptual integration, I was able to preserve the essence of my photobook. While developing my creative practice as a photographer, I can say with conviction that this project has strengthened my approach to exhibition curation, material experimentation, and the balance between conceptual intent and immersive presentation.