

Martin Dykstra

Exhibition Review

Exhibition 1.0 (ADAA4023)

I AM STILL ME

For my exhibition I decided to use a set of 7 images depicting my brother-in-law Mike Lynch, who was diagnosed with early onset dementia (Alzheimer's) in 2021 at the age of 57.

The images show Mike walking away from the camera, up a hill on a cold grey wintery day. These images represent a poetic narrative of the slow loss of oneself to dementia.

Initially there were nine images, however prior to hanging the images, with the support of three other students whose opinions I trust, we decided that two of the images were too similar, so were removed from the final show.

The frames were going to be black, but following discussions with staff, it was decided to go with white. The frames used were bought rather than made, and had a small curve on the inner lip, rather than box shaped, as is usual gallery practice. This will not happen again. The frame inserts were white and made at the University by myself. I did decide to go without glass, as I did not want any light reflection on them, as I wanted the coldness of them to be portrayed. This did allow for some very slight gapping between the insert and the photograph; however, I was more than happy with the result. Likewise, the satin finished paper chosen worked in my opinion very well also.

Hanging of the imagery went very smoothly, with the support of two other students, the frames were measured to their 600mm centre. And were hung in sequence from the door, so Mike was getting smaller as viewers walked along the corridor. I do believe that they would have looked better if hung on the opposite wall as the door was not set open, this meant people opening the door pushed it towards the left, so their first view was the left hand wall, this is not taking away the importance of others work, it is just mine was the only sequential work being displayed.

All hanging, finalising imagery, painting walls and cleaning was undertaken smoothly without pressure or stress, a core group of five students completed most of the work, with others helping somewhat haphazardly. The main negativity was that during the Monday to Thursday there was far too much hanging around and waiting, this did have quite a negative impact on the group through frustration of boredom and not able to undertake tasks.

The posters, Facebook and instagram was mainly undertaken by two students, with important decisions put out to the group. All this went seamlessly well.

The evening bar was hosted on a timetable with most chipping in to help, all went smoothly, the alcohol money was collected by one of the groups and then the alcohol was purchased and then shared out by one of the second years.

The exhibition was attended well with an array of individuals, from family, friends and academics. It was a delight to see the students taking so much pride in what they had achieved, all sprucing themselves up looking lovely, as were most of the guests.

One of the things we missed out on in our exhibition was a comment book, which could have been very useful and just plain nice to keep for the future.

I would have liked more students to have been around the exhibition space, other than with their family and friends. This would have given unknown guests time to discuss their work with them more, this would have also given the group invaluable feedback and pride.

In conclusion, this was a great first exhibition, there was very little I would have changed, except probably some of the sizes of the photographs, I think people were too insecure to go larger, most were A4 in size with a few A3 (including my own), but that was it, some of the images could easily have been A2 or larger, this is something to work on for the next one.

