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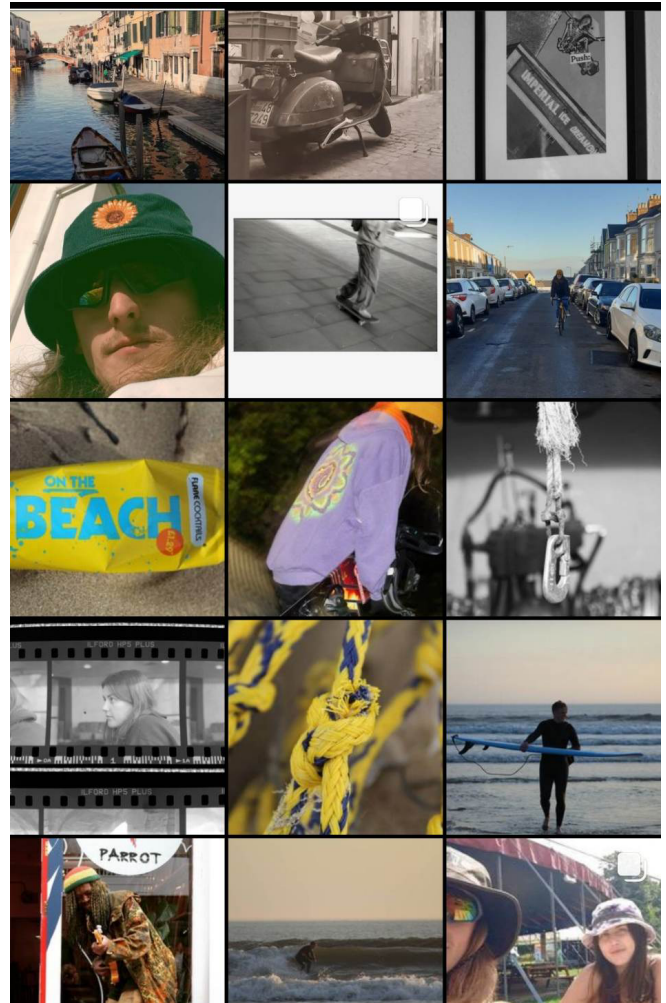
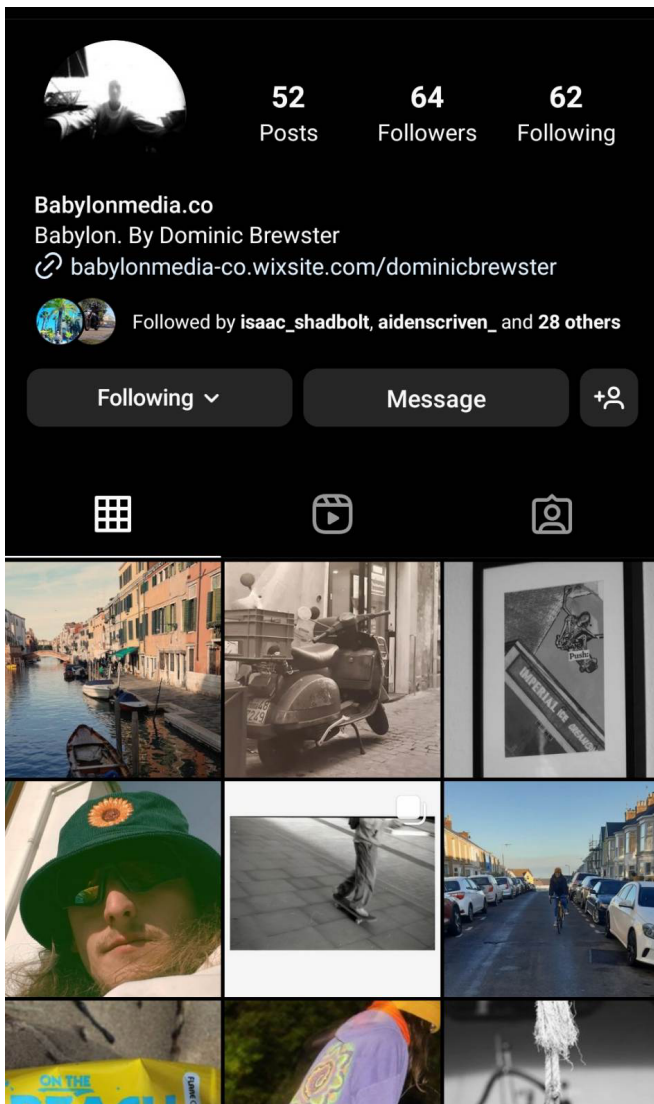
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1. Social Media Evaluation

Social Media allows artists and practitioners alike to have a platform to connect to people with similar interests, as well as, potential collaborators and buyers. Using popular applications such as Instagram and Facebook, creates an engaging and easy to use foundation, for a photographer or artists to reach a large scale audience quickly and cheaply.

Many photographers, including myself, use social media platforms for their own personal use, as well as the professional and creative. Social media can be used as an opportunity for building social connections and relations with other creative thinkers. Instead of relying on networking in person and visiting exhibition openings, creators can curate their own galleries online, completely filled with their own ideas and project spaces. It has never been easier to gain visibility within the art sector, which in turn gains traction from curators, collectors and potential buyers.

It has great potential for networking. Commonly, this creates a direct variation between views and opportunities. When the visibility of your content increases, the likelihood of connections made increase and therefore, commissions and openings follow.



Many practitioners see their social media platforms as a continuous portfolio of work, to build up on. They are free and fairly easy and direct to use, as well as, incredibly accessible, with the most favoured activities online being through social media, “In 2021, over 4.26 billion people were using social media worldwide, a number projected to increase to almost six billion in 2027.” (Statista, 2019). This means you can positively exploit the fact that there is a consistent and continuous traffic of people, making the use of social media far more efficient in sharing your practice. It is becoming an important place for discussion and business, with “over 80 percent of all Generation Y art buyers

bought fine art online, with almost half of online buyers using Instagram for art-related purposes” (Artwork Archive, 2023).

I believe social media, in particular platforms such as Instagram and Tiktok, have given the power back to the creator, with the opportunity to speak directly with their audience, without limits to location. This also means that they no longer have to solely rely on galleries to validate their successes, “today artists use Instagram as their own virtual art gallery, playing both dealer and curator while their fans become critics and collectors...” (Fleming, 2014). This is also becoming preferred over the use of websites, despite their professionalism, as they often come with a cost. For a website to become successful and gain footfall, you often will have expenses for domains, advertisements and most importantly web design. As an amateur photographer this is not a viable option, especially considering that out of the 64.4% of the global population that uses the internet, it is approximately 59% of these that use social media, spending far more time on these applications than on any singular websites (Statista, 2023). I do have an online portfolio set up through a free website domain called wix, which has been perfect for its use, but is very limited unless you pay for extras.

I also use Instagram occasionally, and enjoy sharing my work with others. However, this platform I could use more frequently for sharing my photography and creating a brand for myself, I feel this would benefit me in any future endeavours.

However, the use of social media does come with its downsides. It is seen as a very informal space and it entices a constant need for validation, or rather distraction.

“In a world that entices us to browse through the lives of others to help us better determine how we feel about ourselves, and to in turn feel the need to be constantly visible – for visibility these days seems to somehow equate to success – do not be afraid to disappear from it, from us, for a while and see what comes to you in the silence.” - Michael Coel, 2021

We are entering an age where it is nearing impossible to have zero online presence as an photographer, or a creative, at that. An online presence as a normality has formed an element of pressure, as there is now an expectation. This means they may struggle to gain a following, no matter how good their work and subject matter may be. Furthermore, it feels it is no longer a speciality to be able to take a photograph, the ease as which people have in taking a photo on your phone and instantly uploading to share. There is an instant sense of gratification. In addition, there is little control with what happens with your photograph, once it is out there.

References

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2. Artists Statement

Dominic Brewster is a Swansea based visual artist specialising in photography. Dominic's practice currently focuses on the use of 35mm black and white film photography. He frequently works with retro analogue camera which belonged to his great grandfather. This use of an old Balda camera is to expand his practice. Through using a dated camera there is an approach to learning and adapting to older technology and the common desire for constant improvement. It is a challenge of skill and an opportunity to gain knowledge. Brewster creates high resolution and dynamic imagery. He frequently wanders around with his camera, a flaneur with a keen eye for the finer detail.

His recent works have looked at themes of candid documentary work and surveillance, displaying his interaction with and finding curiosity within the everyday, he focuses on composition and his short period of time spent with the scene. These black and white images have captured the normality of surveillance, how it seeps into everyday lives and recording the moments of privacy. The moments we'd least expect.

Dominic likes to challenge the common place he finds himself in. He walks and cycles around watching his surroundings and the people he passes. There is a strong use of street photography that comes into play and frequently finds himself being an explorer, walking about finding the image.

Throughout his studies at university, Dominic has been interested in the outdoors, sports and the cityscape, frequently taking his cameras on his travels and photographing the historical sites and architectural landscapes. Dominic also grew up heavily involved in sports, in particular skateboarding and surfing, where he has found a lot of his influences in style have adapted from.

His practice explores a range of media within the realms of film and digital photography, photomontage and collage. Through experimenting with photomontage, he has used screen-print, adding colour and dimension to an artwork. This type of print gives him an alternative creative freedom and outlet. He often uses cut-outs from his own imagery and sports magazines. These usually includes imagery of outdoors and landscapes, within the surf and skate scenes. In the past he has incorporated his humour and playfulness into these prints, using a combination of cutting random imagery from old photography books and magazines and adding his own written text, overlapping the imagery. These collages are used to inspire his screen printing processes.

Furthermore, Dominic aims to transition into more multimedia based work, experimenting further with camera lens and other digital outlets, in essence using film and video to add an extra layer to his stylistic choices in his practice.

In the Summer of 2022, Dominic displayed a photomontage piece in the creative bubble. In the Winter of 2022, he displayed his work in the Dylan Thomas Centre in a group exhibition, as well as, working on his current debut in the Universities 1st and 2nd year exhibition this March, entitled 'Limbo'.

3. Artists CV

A second year BA Photography student at Swansea College of Art (UWTSD). An enthusiastic digital creative, I am experimenting with black and white 35mm film and photographic techniques. I am an enthusiastic and experimental photographer, I use my digital skills to create screen printed pieces to partner with my work. I enjoy photomontage and collage, often using cut-outs from my own imagery and sports magazines. These usually includes imagery of outdoors and landscapes, within the surf and skate scenes. These collages are used to inspire my screen printing processes.

I have competent digital software skills in applications apart of the adobe creative cloud. I can confidently navigate Photoshop, lightroom and InDesign. Furthermore, I am skilled in craft work. I have qualifications in welding and have hand crafted exterior wall hangings. I have also won multiple awards for my proficiency within the metal working industry.

I have prepared creative events and exhibitions in short time period. This included preparation of space, installation of work and curation at the Dynevor exhibition space, as well as the Dylan Thomas Centre. I have invigilated and contributed in the arrangement of opening nights of exhibitions. I am able to communicate my own experiences, ideas and practice to strangers.