

Photobook Proforma

Student Name: Harvey Shaw

Knowledge and Understanding Skills: 20%

Guidance specific to task (from the brief):

Your evaluation should show clear understanding of the history, function, practical development and production of the photobook through a range of critically understood examples. The analysis of these will highlight the functions and strategies employed by the photographer and your interpretation of their communication of meaning through the publication.

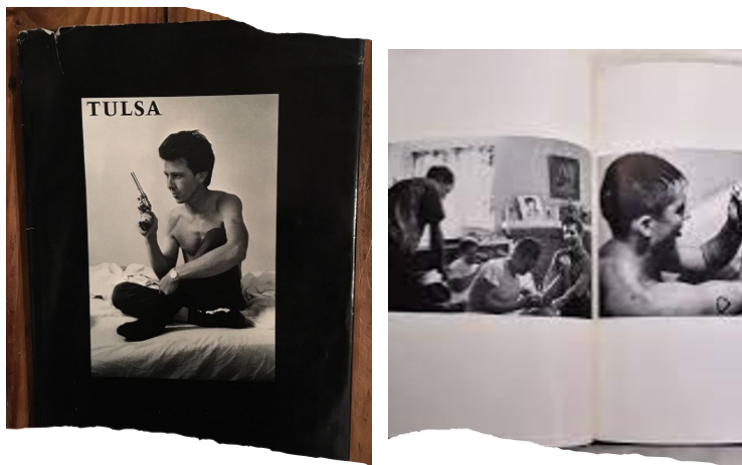
Using examples (3 max), explore your understanding of the photobook's history, function, and practical development. Your analysis should highlight the strategies the artist/photographer uses to communicate their message. Include visuals (500 – 1000 words)

Exploring the history, function, and practical development of the photobook, three examples of photobooks that have helped me understand the topic, my own creative process, and how it collides with bookmaking are Larry Clarks *Tulsa*, Trent Parke's *Dream / Life*, and the Japanese documentary photobook *Provoke*, made by a few collaborated artists and photographers.

Looking at these three specific works and artists, I want to highlight the different strategies and technical steps behind the development of the books and how they differ from one another. To begin with, each book has different contents and intentions behind the creation/publishing of them; however, to compare imagery alone, they all share or represent a similar experience or viewpoint regarding what they photograph and what it means to them. Despite the actual subject of the photos being entirely separate, each book takes a glimpse into the unknown and the mundane. The photographer's reasoning behind taking the photos is entirely personal and unique; however, they all share the opinion of finding beauty within the mundane and the unseen.

To begin with, Larry Clark's book *Tulsa* is almost what is to be described as a photojournalistic/documentary project about his life in Tulsa in the 70s, where his friends and family would take drugs, sit in groups naked, or play with weapons. Larry essentially revealed how people lived their lives in the 70s and documented explicit scenery that you struggle to comprehend to feel comfortable in.

Tulsa by Larry Clark, first published in 1971, is a gritty and unfiltered photographic documentary of youth, drug use, and violence in 1960s Oklahoma. Shot in black and white, the book captures the intimate and often disturbing realities of Clark's friends and their lives, blurring the line between participant and observer. Its harsh, autobiographical style has made it a landmark in documentary photography. Clark's ability as a photographer to be present in and capture the unseen and the realities of life in the 70s in Tulsa made for a delicate book about the harshness and fragility of life itself, as well as the beginning and the end of it. The book is quite poetic with very few words and we are given a narrative and a perspective into their lifestyle simply through solid, interesting imagery.



The project touches the viewer and forces them to engage their own emotions in the direction the book takes, and it is a perfect example of a book with only a few words. To clarify, a book with fewer words tends to imply that the photographer wants a lot of the imagery to do the talking, so then it is worth more time to figure out and understand the work yourself as a viewer of it. His book at the time of release was a debatable subject; however, as time has passed, it has become more accepted as a true depiction of life as it serves a purpose and level of authenticity.

The next book is Trent Parkes' *Dream / Life*, which is a photobook about him capturing the environment around him but with equipment and ideas that give them a real and also surreal dreamly look like it looks slightly off in some way or with the way he has managed to find an angle on a moment. "Dream/Life" is a photographic exploration by Australian photographer Trent Parke, first published in 1999. Over five years, Parke documented the streets of Sydney, capturing the city's essence through his unique perspective. The resulting images present Sydney as a realm of shadows and light, transforming ordinary scenes into dreamlike narratives.



Parke's innovative use of light and long exposures often "whitens" his subjects, creating an ethereal atmosphere that reimagines the urban landscape. I like this photobook because it has widened my perspective on what variety of imagery that works well together in a photobook. It has shown me that photography I like isn't necessarily restricted in any way; it can be represented and paired alongside other connected works. The amount of content within this book helps provide the viewer endless scrolling as it entices them to keep scrolling through the pages out of curiosity.

The Third and final book is Provoke, which was made in 1968-1969 and was intended to be created to shake things up politically and culturally. It was put together in 3 editions and made by multiple Japanese artists. The photographers and writers involved, like Takuma Nakahira, Yutaka Takanashi, Daidō Moriyama, and Koji Taki, wanted to challenge the traditional idea that photography had to be clear, objective, or documentary.

They then proved this by working together to create the Provoke book, which contained gritty, emotional, and raw imagery.



The book slightly looks at phenomenology and the value of experience, and how you interpret others' experiences through art and photography, rather than looking at perfection and pretending everything is perfect and clear all the time. It exposes the idea of something being 'correct' and only approachable or representable in a singular way, and they express their disagreement through taking rugged and rough grainy photos that grasp the viewer emotionally more than a 'quality' image would. They saw photography as not a way to show reality but to disrupt it and make the viewer stop, question, and think.

Cognitive and Intellectual Skills: 30%

Guidance specific to task (from the brief):

Your research report should critically analyse the theories and concepts explored in your photobook, as well as the techniques it employs. Focus on developing a reasoned and informed debate rather than simply describing the work. Your analysis should lead to clear, valid conclusions, considering the form of the book, the reading experience it creates.

Avoiding description, critically analyse the theme/ context you explore within your photobook. Your critical analysis should demonstrate your cognitive and intellectual skills in how you have understood the subject and made work as a response to it. Consider how the form of your book communicates meaning in relation to the subject of exploration. (500 -1000 words)

Within my book, I explore a main theme of 'the unseen'. This can have many interpretations and meanings, but looking at the content and referring to this, I explore the mundane and represent the beauty that I see in it to other people. Exploring what is essentially all around us and overlooked. I look specifically at theories such as phenomenology, where the experience of a moment and translating the experience and emotions behind other imagery, and how that can represent the fragility and value of life for example.

Phenomenology, explored by Maurice Merleau-Ponty, studies perception and how we experience things within the world before understanding and rationalizing them. We also learn about how photography does more than give us a technical process and visual outcome, but also a slim perspective on an experience and moment. It also explores how photography is a tool for people to understand and make sense of the world around them through what may be unseen or untraceable with the human eye and in the present.

I believe this is explored within my book and my work in general, as I try to find beauty within the unseen or the mundane. I also really value the fragility and nature of life itself, so I feel this helps me find something where others can't through photographing what's around me and what I get a further understanding and experience of throughout my life and later projects.

Looking at previous examples of photobooks through the mentioned photographers, it has helped me visualize and create a concept of how I would like my own to be and what intention/theme would work in book format, and what would also feel right personally to explore.

The form of my book works as a suitable vessel for the content/work because I am covering a subject that is, for one, a very wide and expansive topic to try to cover, especially when highlighting the versatility and dynamics of life and expression. (This justifies the size and amount of content within it.)

And two, the use of no words and all imagery emphasizes the philosophy I have explored and experienced within photography, and how photos can convey the feelings I was experiencing at the time of taking them, or for the situations of the people that are being photographed. Exploring phenomenology and ideas around perception has led me to want to not speak for any of my imagery because it is all subjective anyway, to what people have experienced, and then relate to it.

Within the process i have explored the different forms and vessels that can hold and transport my work, i initially approached the magazine format, then i added content which made it a proper photobook, and then later i experimented with a hard back and made it 200 pages which was the complete opposite of my beginning intentions however it helped me narrow down my visions and intentions for my work.

Because I knew I had a lot of content, I explored ways of representing an A4 book that has a wider spine for a larger number of pages, and what types of covers would work to hold the imagery and entice people to view it. In the end, I went with the cover being a self-portrait (wet plate of myself) and the back cover being a different image of some people putting their art up on a wall. I think that the form and representation of my book are appropriate and sensible. I am aware of my graphic style of imagery and how they appear to belong in a magazine, so I utilized materials and styles of that alongside the photojournal style of a book like Larry Clark's or Trent Parke's

Practical Skills: 40%

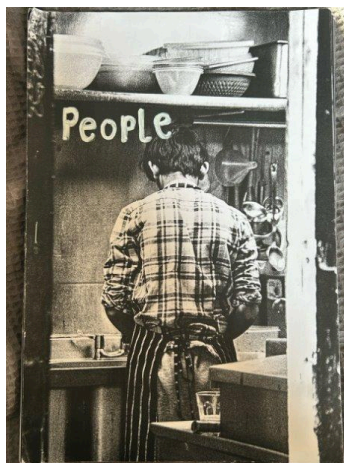
Guidance specific to task (from the brief):

Present your book professionally, carefully considering how you deploy methods, technical processes. Your methods should synthesize the form of your book and the context/meaning of your subject. Your book should demonstrate proficiency, selection in editing and flair. The decisions you make should be as product of significant research into book production and design. Within your evaluation, ensure to provide examples of book dummies to show the developments in your practical processes. These decisions should be as product of significant book design planning including alternative idea generation.

Evaluate the methods and technical processes you have employed in the making of this body of practice. Explain your process for making your book, consider how editing/ design/ typography, and format speak to the subject matter you have explored. Provide examples of the book dummies you have created over the past semester to show developments in your practical processes. (800 – 1500 words)

Within this book project, I have explored many different formats and material types. I approached the project and created a 25-page book similar to the format of a magazine. This book consisted entirely of black-and-white imagery, all of which was of people whom I had taken past photos of throughout my photographic progression and career. I was referencing and responding to artists such as Larry Clark, photographers who explore areas such as 'the unseen' and the 'human condition'. This began my journey in exploring emotion within photography and phenomenology. From here, I started looking at other documentary/street photographers who shot people from their unique perspectives and intentions. Looking directly at philosophies and research such as phenomenology and existentialism i began to dig deeper into the rabbit hole of subtopics to explore such as experience within photos and trying to understand emotion through the visual.

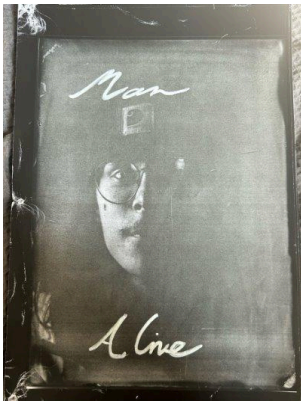
1st dummy (magazine):



I started responding to photographers and evolving my content until I exceeded the magazine format and set my sights on something bigger, which can include more content. I also had some feedback to use color imagery alongside my previous monochrome stuff, so I locked in on the subject/topic and got more imagery for the project to solidify my intentions and process. I created another photobook, which was a softcopy, and explored a different binding method from the previous one. I then got some feedback and decided to focus mainly on the

form of the book and the ways the work can be presented. I also decided to look at the title early on so it was sorted and I settled on the idea 'Man Alive' which references the accomplishments, experiences and emotional levels of mankind and how we all relate by having so much yet so little in common. It also refers towards the awakening / understanding of finding beauty and value in the mundane and exaggerates this by referring to 'man' feeling or becoming 'alive'.

2nd book dummy (larger book):



I looked at photobooks such as Trent Parkes' *Dream / Life*, which expands the customs and expectations within photography, and it explores a more visually graphic and posterized approach to representing and exploring a topic, and the aesthetic of the images makes it intriguing, which is what I wanted within my book. Discussing pushing the norms I also looked at *Provoke* the documentary photobook series made in Japan, this was a book that allowed me to find footing within the area of photography that I take and have used for this book, it allowed me to explore the philosophies around photographing people and recognizing the experiences/emotions of the photographer as well as its subjects. This book explores subcultures and the human condition also however, this book nudges the traditional and expected confines of photography away and allows for viewers to also judge their own understandings and motivations behind art and the process behind it.

This led me to explore hard covers for my book, where I made a third book dummy with 200 pages and bound it a different way through the hard cover. This allowed me to physically visualize my book in what I would consider to be a more finished product. I took this self-reflection and began to think about where my book could be taken to have it reach that next level of quality and professionalism that I wanted. I looked at external printing options and different materials that I could now use by going through the process of making multiple dummies and reaching the conclusion that I want it externally printed, and being able to justify that through my previous explorations and intentions.



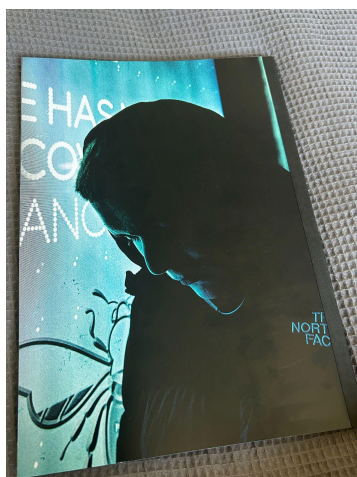
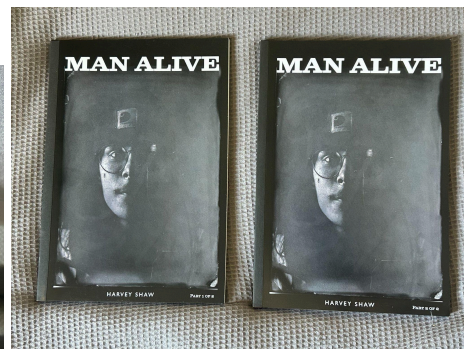
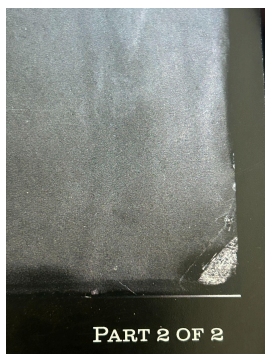
The book dummy helped me recognize that I wanted my content to be in a vessel that has no mistakes or minor differences, not for a visual aspect, but also to solidify the concept behind concealing/protecting the nature and value of life, time, and our experiences through the book. I looked at the different materials and options to present my photos, and I decided to go with the cover as a 250 gsm Matte card and the internals as 170 gsm glossy silk paper, which makes a clear definition between cover and content materials. I already had the layout on InDesign saved onto my USB, so it was just a case of handing that over and waiting for the outcome.



The book turned out to be exactly what i was after however there was a problem with a few pages falling out due to the limit of content and binding, so I decided to have it split into two separate books, which are split into two editions, halving the pressure on the binding. To further clarify this decision, I researched and responded to City Diary by Anders Petersen in which he explores a similar subject of human condition and explains how his separate editions work in a way of separating a subject and having the viewer move themselves or the content, like his journey taking them. Looking back at Ander Petersen's work i also noticed the similarity in the graphic style that his images have and the fill of black around the space of his work and it made me feel like i was already on the path of making similar work like that before i even discovered or properly looked and appreciated it for influence or reference. This helped me further visualize my work even while in its later stages and i was able to evaluate how my books also worked differently now throughout the visual and metaphorical elements of it. I could now explore and link the nature of the form and how choosing between an edition that look the same is similar to choosing a path to walk down or making a decision based of emotion and intuition, all relating back to the human condition and the unseen elements within photography.

Final Book:

My final book outcome is two editions that split my original book up into two and represent it with more of a presence on the experience and reading value of it over just the images. I feel like i can finally appreciate both the form and the contents of the book and they help eachother in a symbiotic relationship where they make eachother better and more influential / successful. I really like the subtle difference between editions as it keeps the topic / subject the same while still having an interruption or impact on the rhythm / viewing experience of it. The book also now has a decision factor involves as in which edition will you pick up first and what page / person will you land on, this relates and references our human ability to make decisions based off emotion of intuition which is shown in the photobook.



I believe they worked out really well and i am happy with the materials i chose and the decision to split the book into two. Although the book covers are identical other than the edition number the beach covers both feature a different image so that is also a giveaway into which is which from a further away distance if ti was on a

shelf etc. The books do not flatten out onto the table however i was anticipating this anyway when i wanted to make a larger scale book however i think that the idea around viewing the images of the book and not getting to handle it the way you want makes you really change focus and mindset as a viewer as it exemplifies the act of wanting to discover and know more about something. It highlights the unspoken and the unseen as the slightly hidden and missing makes the viewer question what is there to a higher level and what is left out of sight or purposely meant not to be seen.

Transferable Skills for Life and Professional Practice 10%

Guidance specific to task (from the brief):

Your photobook should meet industry standards in design, development, and production. Plan your workflow according to your chosen publication method to ensure timely completion. Active participation in sessions is essential for sharing your work, engaging in discussions, and demonstrating both employability skills and a strong grasp of the module content. Your evaluation should reflect on your learning throughout the process and highlight the transferable skills you have developed.

Evaluate what you have learnt throughout the process of making your photobook. Pay particular attention to the transferable skills you have developed. (500-1000 words)

Within this project, I have learned a lot, in terms of researching and being able to transfer my photography skills over to a book format. One important part of the process that I feel I gained a lot of helpful knowledge in was using InDesign and getting tutorials in that, and the digital aspects of making a booklet in digital format before even thinking about printing and binding, etc. InDesign is complicated at first, and even though I have a lot of prior experience in Photoshop Lightroom and other Adobe software, InDesign complicated the process, and when I learned the basics of it, I could keep trying different layouts and orders.

Another area in which i feel like i have learned a lot in is actually being able to visualize my concept and how it changes from one step to the next. I enjoyed this project because it showed me how making changes and doing a new book dummy will help narrow down your later intentions and ideas so this really helped me get a brief idea on what form my content would work in, as well as how the book dummies are different to read and feel. This also ties into my improvement of project managing and being on top and in charge of the creation of a piece of media. Looking at this further i am referring to setting goals, deadlines and milestones and then having to quickly adapt when something may not go according to plan or as hoped.

A really important aspect that i have included and had to learn more about within this project is communication skills. What i mean by that is how i have managed to essentially tell a story without including any text, this also explores how the different audiences might choose to interpret / translate my work.

Another thing that i had to learn regarding the creation of my book is attention to detail, Because my book contains no words and because the evolution of the book has led to it having a professional appearance i have had to notice the details within my own work and what needs removing or adding. Because i came to the justification of reaching a limit as to what quality i can attain by making a book with my hands i have had to learn more about quality attention and self reflection. I have had to evaluate my own progress and decision making as i have created the photobook as well as being open to ideas and feedback from lecturers / classmates.

This book project has helped me look at work and be able to critically analyze and tear down the meanings, materials and form of books. This doesn't just apply to the making of my own book but also putting into perspective the use and technicalities of other artists photobooks who use the book format as a vessel for their work. This has also been an interesting topic to discover as well as the main topic for my

book which has been intriguing to learn more about and explore. For example phenomenology is something i have learned about within this project and my photographic methods however this is something i can further explore though later works and and the analysis of it.

Another transferable skill that i have learned throughout this project is how i find appropriate ways to represent and grow my work and i think that in exploring the book format to show photography i have found a way of piecing together and showing my imagery through a process that lets me see progression, change and feel rewarded after getting to the finished version. I think in general exploring the photobook as a format to represent work i have found a method that i enjoy and feels works well in relation to the content i capture and push out there. I think i will also be exploring this method further in future in larger and smaller formats now i have had a solid experience in making one and looking into exactly what influences me.

I have most importantly learned about quick decision making and the ability of going through with an idea and improving off of the steps you take. within this project there were many times in which i encountered a problem and i had to find a solution or head in a different direction. An example of this was when my final book didnt fit all of my work in and i had to split the book into two. although all along my intentions and ideas were to have one book that is continuously scrolled through the process of quick decision making allowed me to explore another unique element of photobooks and it happenes to suit my content and intentions really well as i related and found footing from other photographers and their books.

