Experimental Strategies (ADAA5003)

RESEARCH REPORT

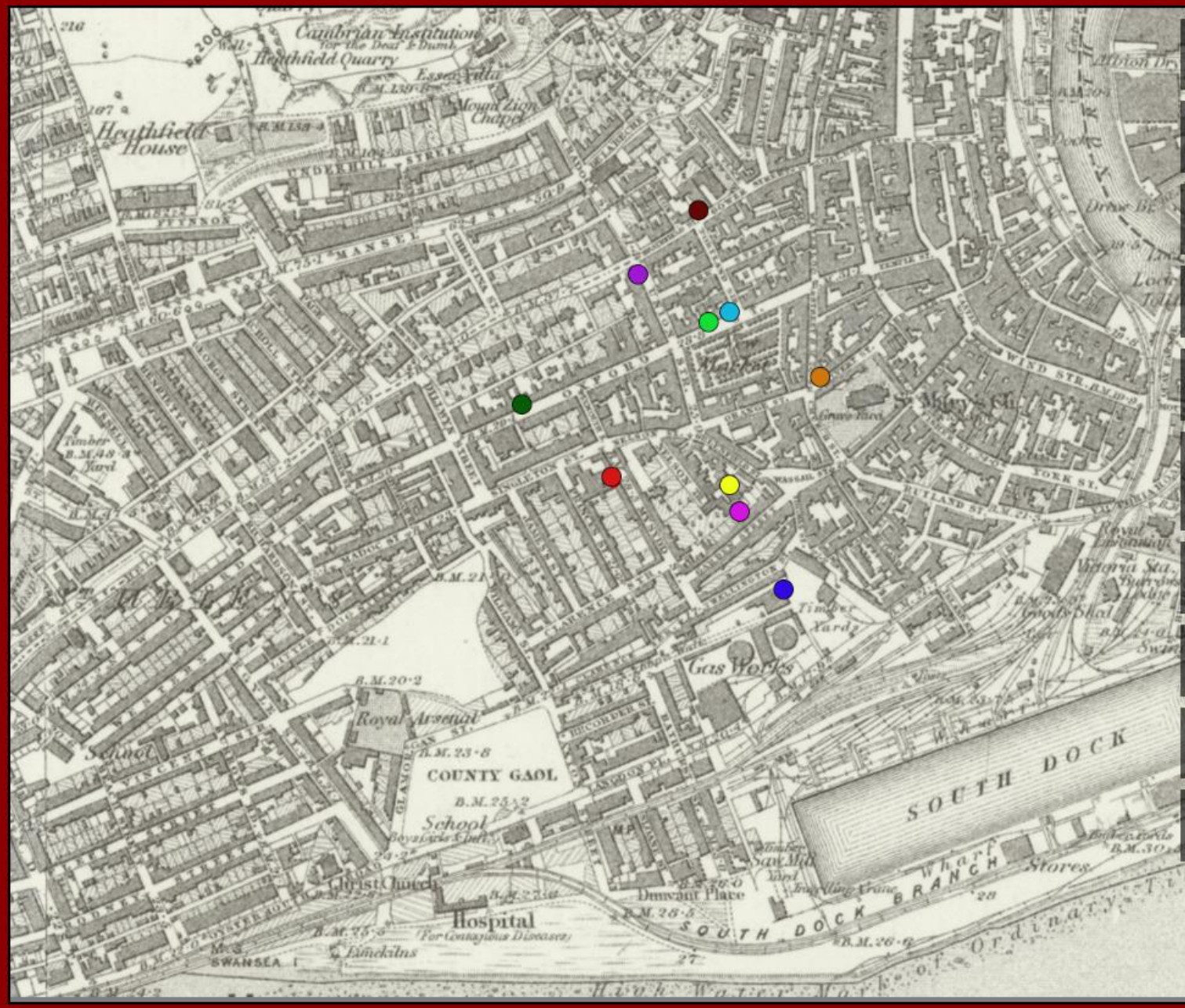
Cristina Castro 2223477

301 Moved Permanently

301 Moved Permanently is a project that explores the relationship between technology, consumer culture, and the physical architectures that haunt our cities as a result of our human and computational habits. Employing an interactive website and a city-wide walk, the project utilizes digital maps guiding participants to strategically placed QR codes. These codes, dispersed throughout the city, lead the audience to a final destination, where a 'live stream' reflects them both physically and virtually.

301Moved Permanently
Watch later
Share
301 MOVED PERMANENTLY
Watch on YouTube

207 303 103 111 210 608 108 504 109 508
101 109 502 304 308 209 309 603 201 405
102 307 403 601 407 403 105 204 507 606
302 402 208 510 611 602 301 501 302 104
401 203 509 211 610 403 511 210 607 409
107 206 110 106 408 205 202 305 503 411
JV50-MV MB
MAP



Coordinates: (51.6180632, -3.9446883)
HINT: Michael Kors Wonderlust.

Coordinates: (51.6184770, -3.9450517)
HINT: a place full of jewels but now empty.

Coordinates: (51.6182318, -3.9468816)
HINT: the entrance is permanently closed.

Coordinates: (51.6190520,-3.9484055)
HINT: entry pathway to the Kingsway.

Coordinates: (51.6173135,-3.9441501)
HINT: Don't dread returns, embrace them.

Coordinates: (51.6192239, -3.9437089)
HINT: just around the corner you can find amazing fashion and amazing prices.

Coordinates: (51.6199057, -3.9452227)
HINT: please enter your pin.

Coordinates: (51.6198659, -3.9454342)
HINT: triple closure.

Coordinates: (51.6203143, -3.9466070)
HINT: cutting the digital branches.

Coordinates: (51.6210058, -3.9450517)
HINT: update your CV.

NEXT

Coordinates: (51.5754006,-3.9987144)
HINT: Stallion on the wall.
Coordinates: (51.5716435, -3.9876207)
HINT: be digital, are you on board?
Clements Row
Oystermouth Tramway Station
Skating Rink
Assembly Rooms
Christadelphian Synagogue
Methodist Chapel
Claremont Villas
Sheffield Place
All Saints Church
Mumbles
M.S. SWANSEA CASTLE
Parks
Police St
Birchgrove
Roschill
School
Mermaid Hotel
Castle Hotel
George Hotel
Smithy
B.M. 22·1
The Knab
Thistleboon
Low Water
HOME

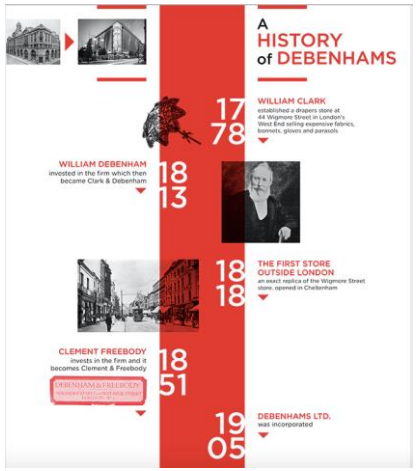
This project has suffered a great metamorphosis from the original proposal. During all these changes, the aim was not to forget the initial idea behind it. Every time that we were forced to adapt it, we went back to read the original proposal, to not lose sight of what we wanted it to achieve.

The original proposal was based in a physical space, the closed Debenhams building in Swansea Center, and this is the idea behind "…symbolizing the shift from traditional to digital spaces, resonating with the broader narrative of how we interact, connect, and navigate a world increasingly shaped by digital technology. This theme finds significance in the evolution of Debenhams, once a brick-and-mortar giant, into an online entity. The former Debenhams building offers a canvas for exploring the multifaceted dimensions of these transitions".

The selected site is the former Debenhams building, recently acquired by Swansea Council. This building, synonymous with the evolving retail landscape, symbolizes change and an uncertain future. Located in the heart of Swansea, it holds historical significance, reflecting the collective memories of UK shoppers.

This choice extends beyond the local context; it connects with shared memories and experiences nationwide. Recent closures, including Wilkinson stores, underscore the rapid transformation in the retail sector, reinforcing the relevance of this theme.

The initial research approach was diverse. It encompasses both historical research into the institution's evolution and on-site exploration of its location.
Walking around the site, engaging with residents, collecting their memories and stories related to Debenhams and other retail landmarks like Wilkinson.



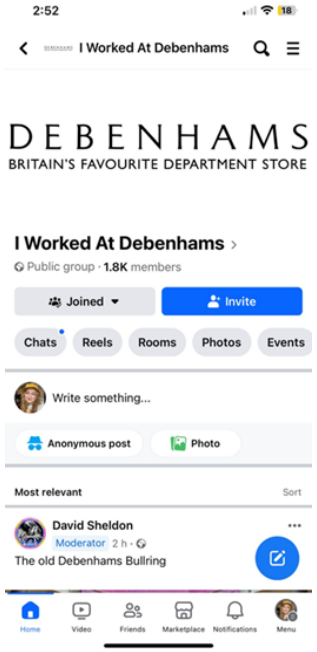
The industry fashion, *Timeline Debenhams*, (2019).

Former heavyweight boxing champion Henry Cooper signing autographs at Debenhams in Swansea on November 30, 1978.

Debenham & Freebody advert from 1915.

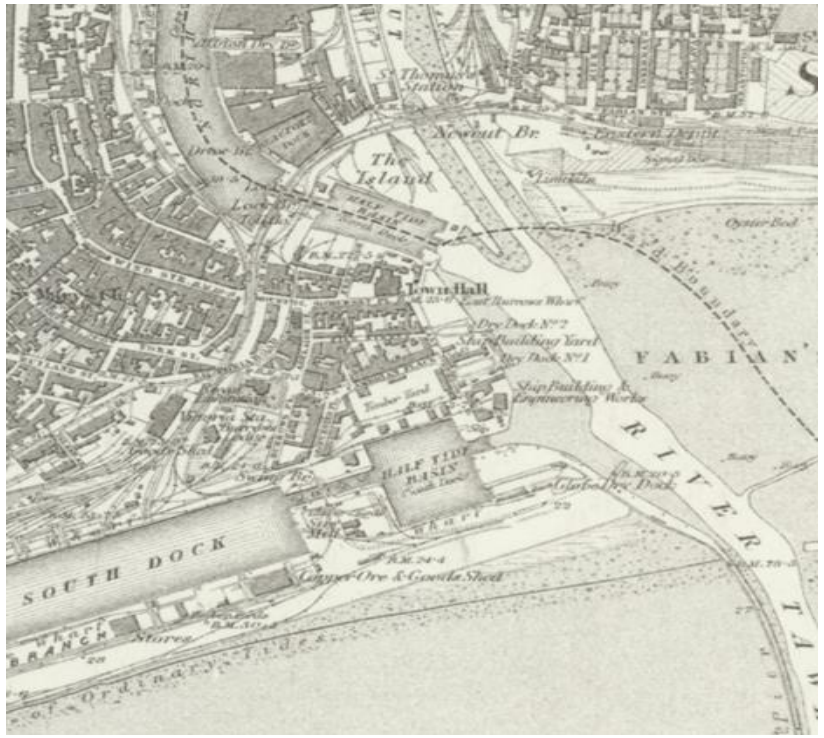
Model Brenda Cocchi wearing a satin evening dress from Debenhams in 1959.

A model shows off the latest range of clothes and accessories at Debenhams in 1977.

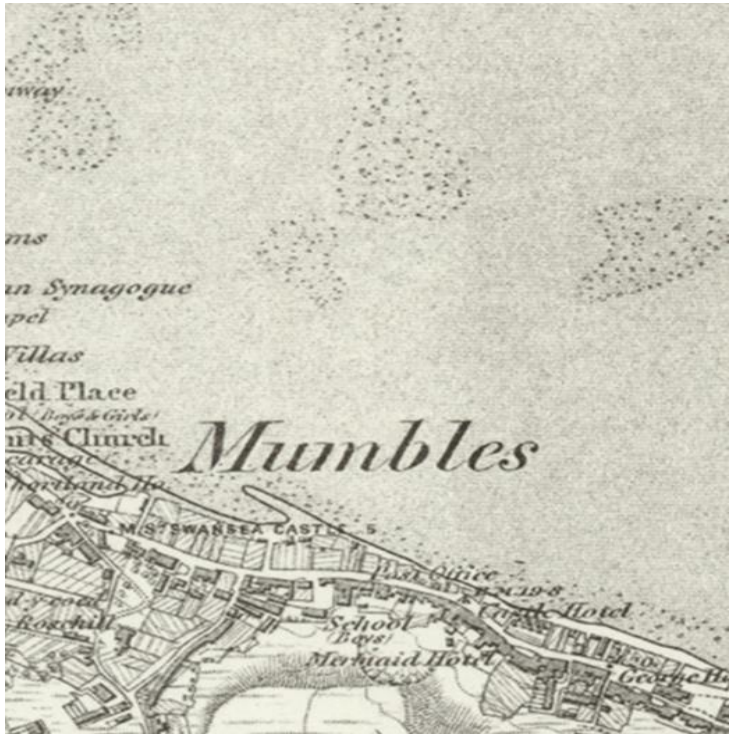


Screenshot Facebook research.

As a group, we went to the Archives and in fact, the two maps from the city that were used on the website are from the archive.



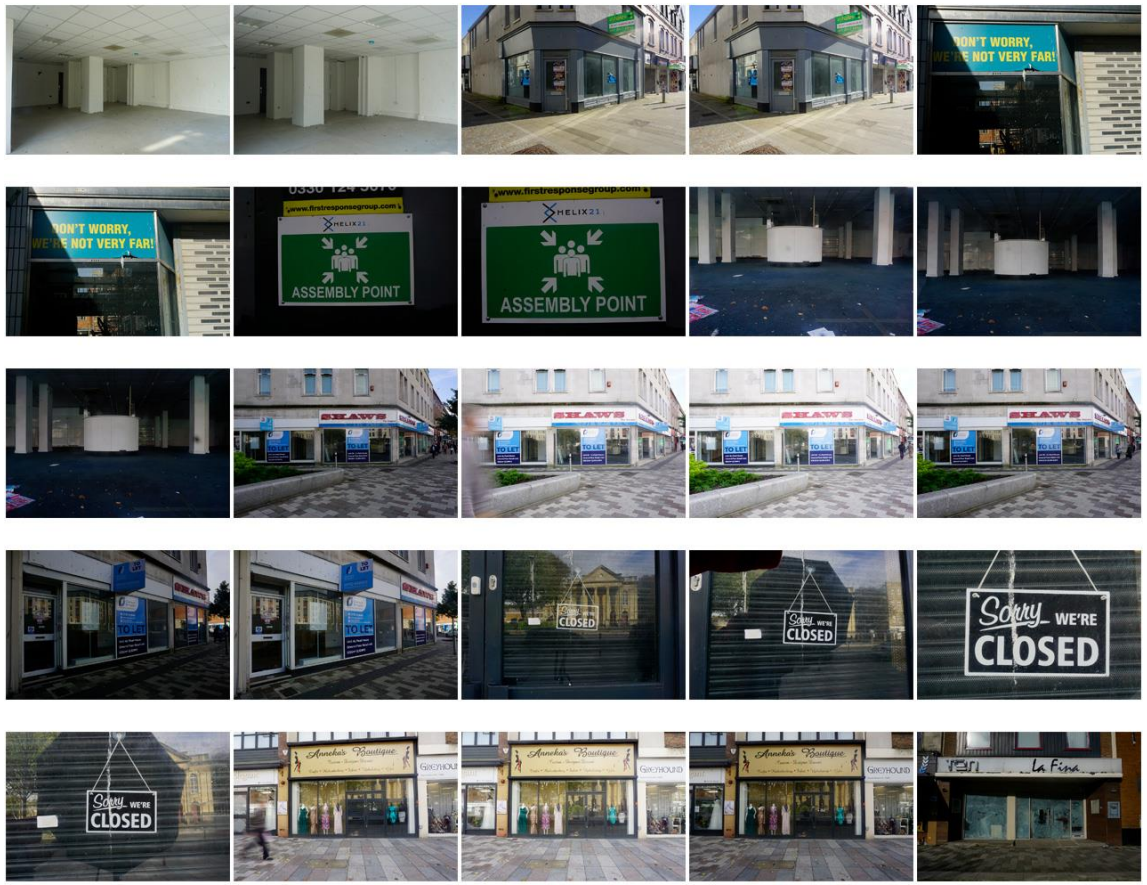
1st edition 1:2500 Ordenance Survey map of central Swansea, Glamorgan sheet 24.5

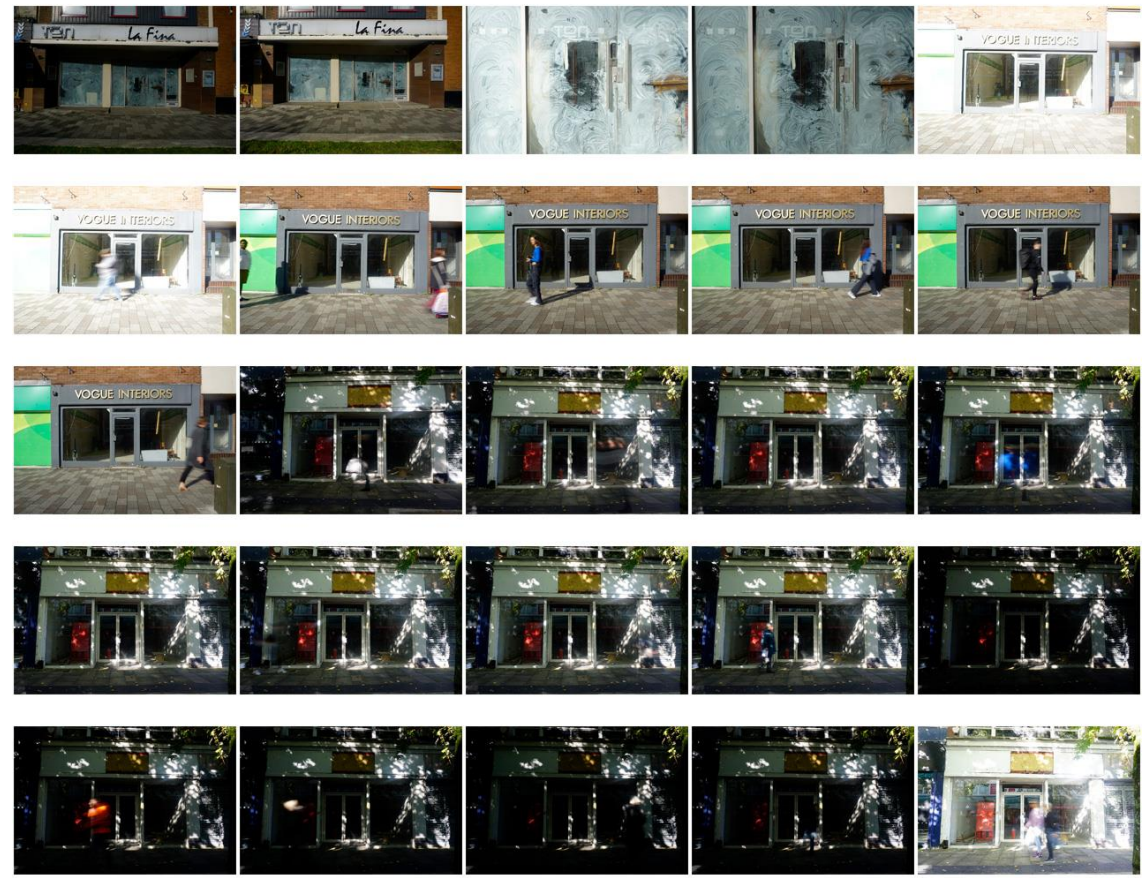


1852 Local Board of Heath map of Swansea

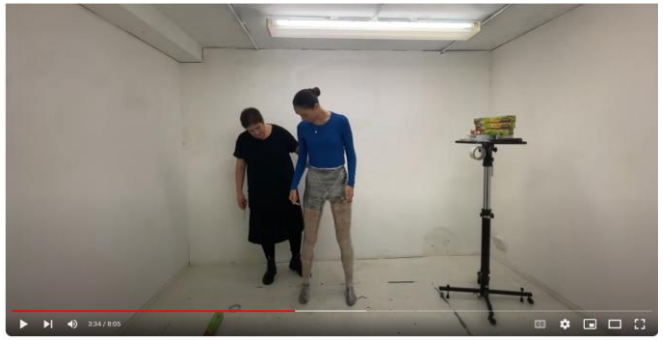
A great part of the project was to grant access to the premises that are owned by the council.
While communicating with it and waiting for the answer we decided which part of the building to use for the project, one small window shop that connected with the parking.

We contacted people who work there, people who had histories about the place. We walked around Swansea and took images of empty shops to use them for the window visuals.

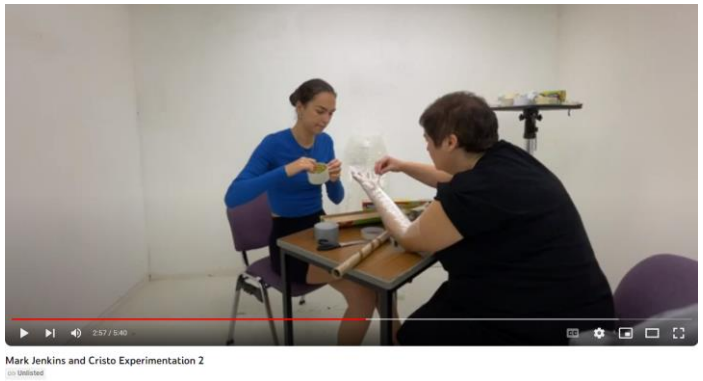




We thought about the option of making a performance in the space for the day of the exhibition. We built some kind of mannequins using tape, with the idea that they could symbolize, the remnants of the abandoned shops, the people that are not there anymore, and we could play with light, or even fill them up with forgotten objects from Debenhams. We recorded the process thinking that maybe we could project a performance of the process of creating the mannequins during the exhibition.



https://youtu.be/oYUmfoa4QnY?si=-b_NVVIiKiJxNGKb



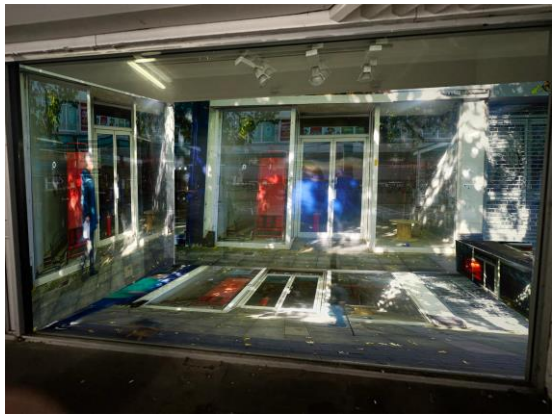
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pFNG-lQI5rI

When we finally had access to the place, we took photographs and videos inside the place. The place was empty but with some abandoned furniture, tills, beauty products, and mannequins. The visit was short, and we were accompanied by a person from the council. He was on board with the project and happy for us to use the stuff from the shop if we needed it for our project.

From this first short visit, we gathered enough material and ideas. We thought about printing images signifying the close of the shops onto vinyl paper and sticking it onto the window with a small opening out to see inside. Maybe images of the mannequins as remnants of the shops, show the inside of the abandoned place. If we vinyl for the window we would need lighting, maybe projectors. We had different options in case we could use a portable projector or not.

With projector

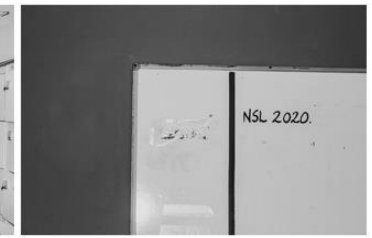
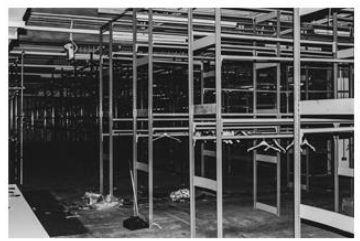
Without projector



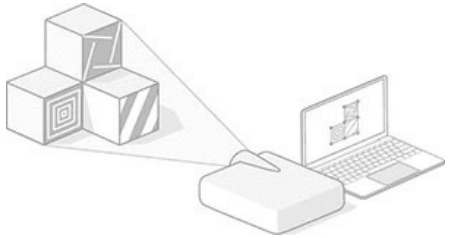
During this process, constant communication with the council was a big part.
After our first meeting with the person in charge, we prepared a proposal with images of our ideas. And a risk assessment that was quite important because of the possible hazards of being in an empty place.
We went inside again, always accompanied. We took videos and photographs to have good printing material.
We made a first selection, and in my case, I edited them in black and white trying to transmit the ghostly feeling when you walk around inside this abandoned space.

Work hard

Stay positive


NSL 2020.


We were allowed to take one mannequin out of the premises to practice. We thought about the possibility of using projection over the mannequins. So, we practiced with the portable projector and our selected images. We researched tutorials about project mapping and different artist that use projection as part of their artworks.



We just needed the proposal to be approved, and we could be on our own inside the building and work making the sculptures, with the projector, print on paper, and start experimenting.

The first setback, was when the head of culture communicated directly with the University asking about our project. One meeting was arranged on a Friday with Ryan (our head of the program), Kate (from the council), and our group. In that meeting was clear the concerns of the council were that they have been working to improve and revitalize the center of Swansea and that our work was too focused on the dead of the high street, and it was perceived as contrary to their efforts.

After the meeting, we decided to adapt the project and when not lose the original idea, this time we will give a more positive light.

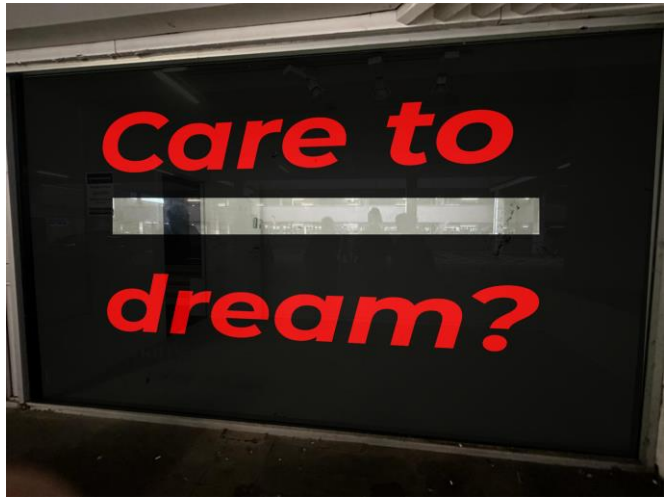
The new project proposal was prepared during the weekend and sent to the council first thing Monday. This new proposal supported a positive, community-centered portrayal of the regeneration of the city center. Aimed to create a body of work that allows everyone to have a voice, through coming together as a community where we could share our dreams and aspirations for the city.

We prepared a survey to ask the people about these questions.

Access our survey through the QR or link:
https://forms.gle/pUkj6NDTujrqiVEd6 .

We were planning on creating posters and flyers to hand out in Swansea city center for people to access the survey and collect a range of results.

Care to dream was the title of the exhibition, we feel it is an inviting title for people to be inspired to consider what's next for the regeneration of the city; real or metaphorical. This text would be printed onto vinyl paper and stuck onto the window with a small opening out to see inside.
Inside there would be a large QR code linked to our Instagram where we will display the positive feedback received from the survey. The walls, the ceiling, and the floors would be covered with black and white images of the inside of Debenhams symbolizing the past and the transition into the future. These will be faint and more difficult to see compared to the QR code to show how they are fading away.



While waiting for the response we focused on choosing the images, we could use, the font (Montserrat Bold/Be Vietnam Bold) the printing on vinyl, for Instagram, how to make the flayers for the handouts, and how to make the survey known before the exhibition so we could have a great range of answers. We even thought about the possibility of printing some of the answers in the space.

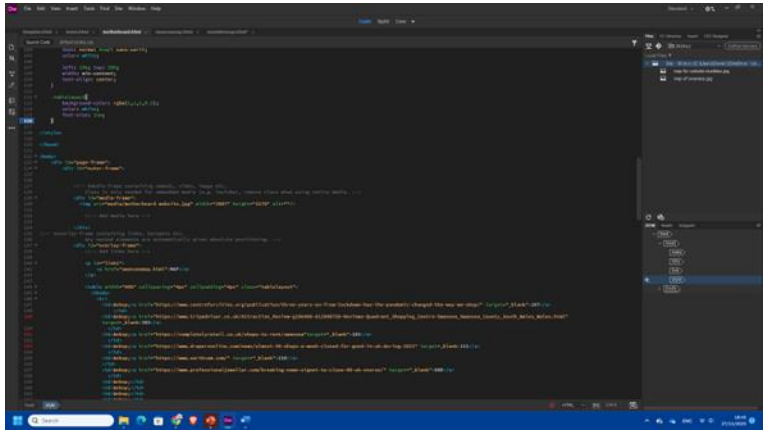
However, in the middle of this process, Ryan told us that the council did not approve our proposal.

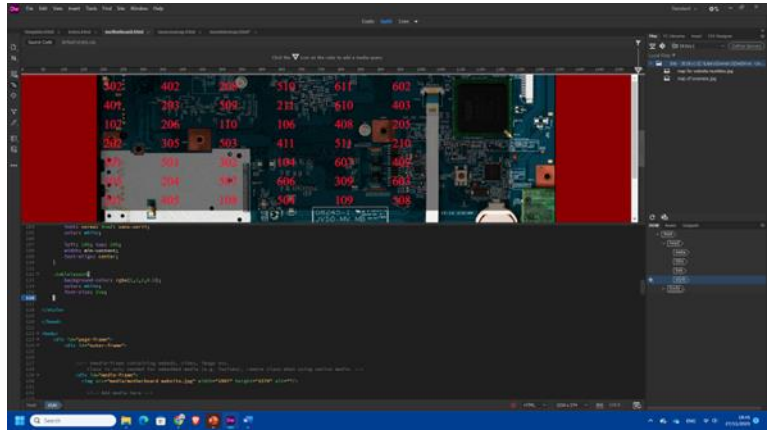
This was hard for all of us. How are we going to make a site-specific exhibition if we do not have the site? Could just take another place and transform the idea? Should we renounce our ideas? We were in shock. But Ryan and Joe organized a meeting with us. And in that meeting, we started to think about a new change in the project. Following the same theme of the original proposal "…of how we interact, connect, and navigate a world increasingly shaped by digital technology" our new site will be the "digital space". That meeting was a great brainstorm.

After that, we had 24 hours to do research, think of a new approach, and all the time without losing the "soul" of the project.

We had a fabulous second meeting where we shared a new approach to the exhibition.

From that meeting, we decided to use a website as a base, as the connecting point. This website was built from scratch because it was the best way to make a “subtle intervention” in the site. Not just a last-moment resource where to chuck everything in.



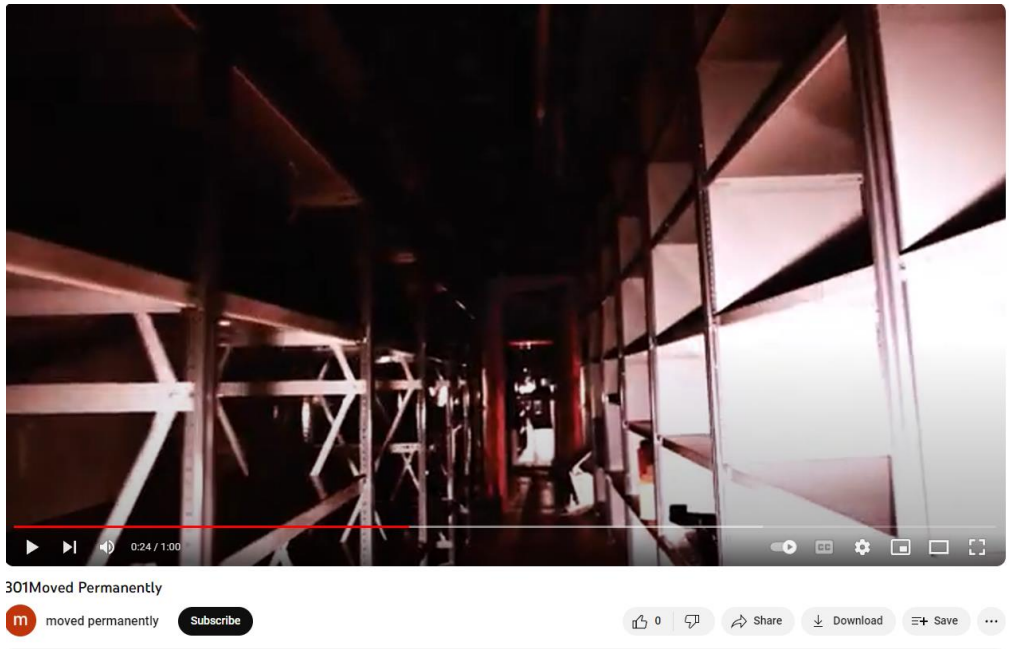


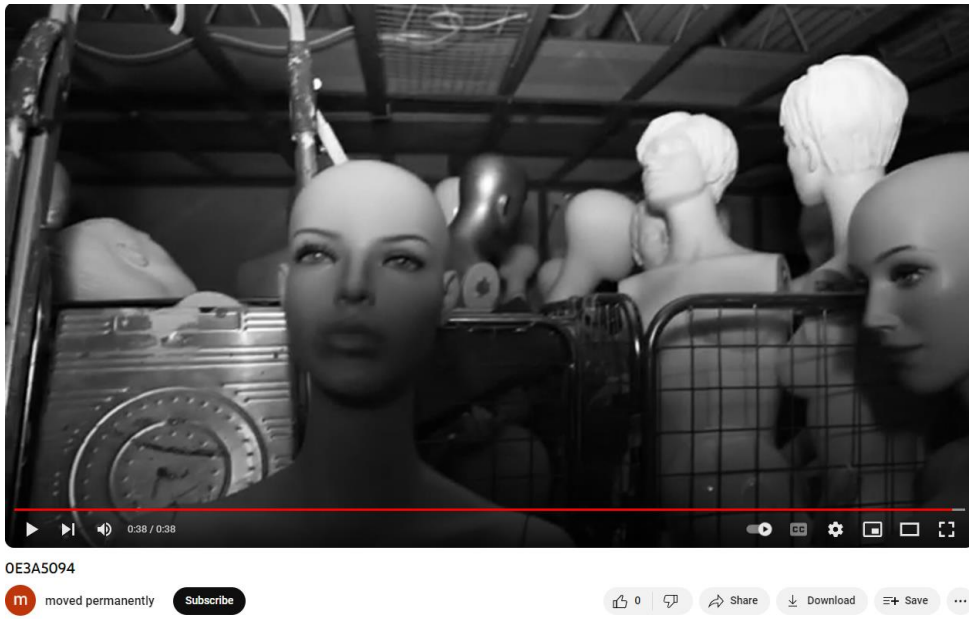
To name the project we researched the HTML codes and their meaning, and we finally decided our code.

301 Moved Permanently.

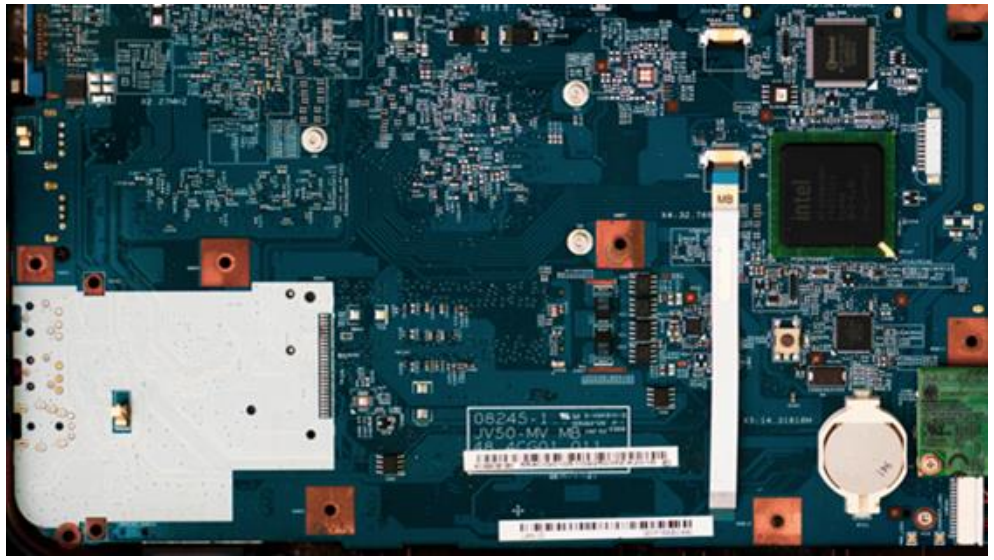
It fits our project because we wanted to make one site-specific project, we chose a physical place, but we were permanently removed. So, we went online

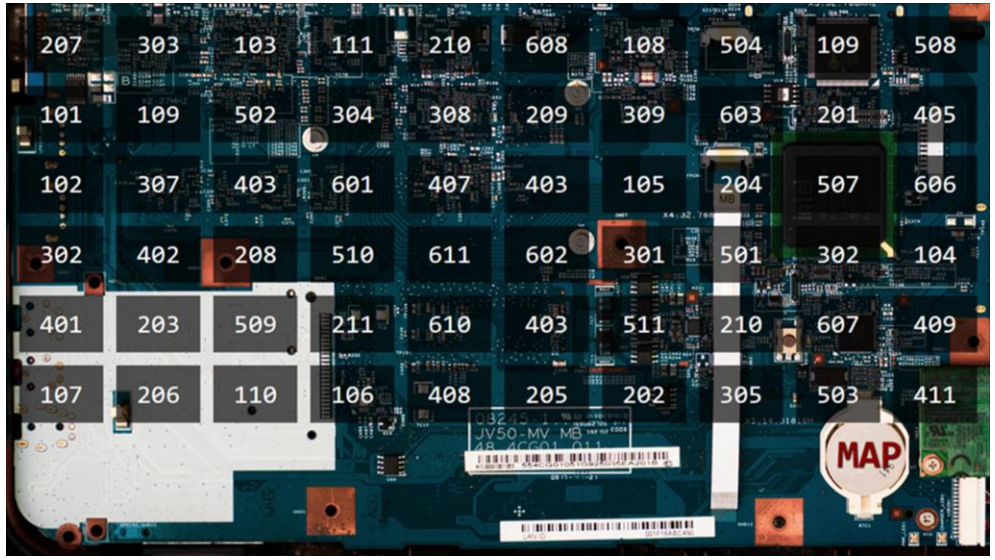
With the material from Debenhams made a short video for the main page of the website that shows what is left behind, the past, the old ways, and the empty spaces. We opened a YouTube channel to host two of the videos to be able to upload to the website when needed. And we created an email account moved301@gmail.com because we thought that the invitation to the exhibition should be digital too.



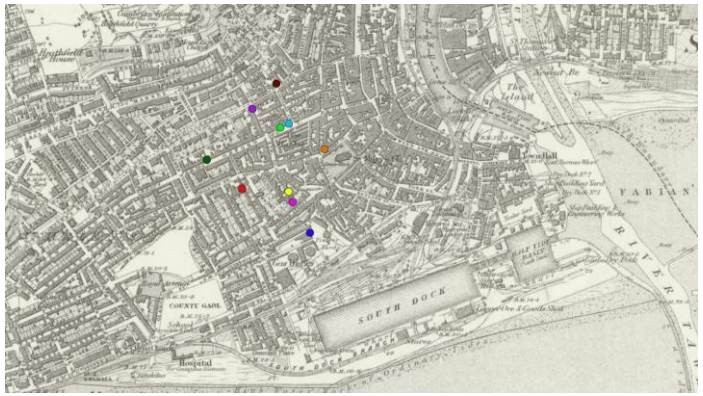


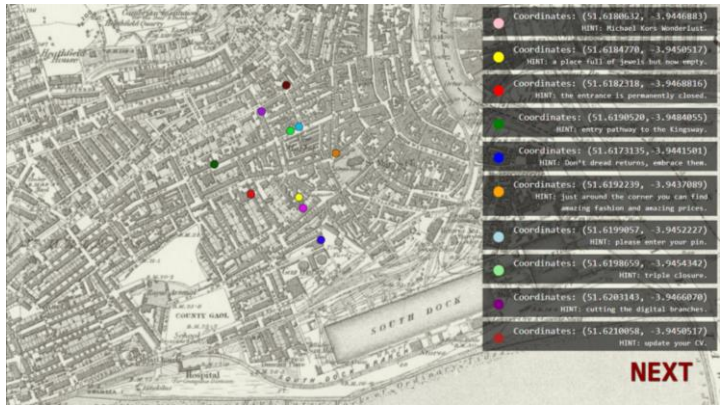
We thought about using a motherboard image as a representation of how we connect online, the physicality of the internet. We say we upload to the cloud, but there is a physical element, we need the device to connect, and there are giant warehouses around the world where the data are collected. On the top of the image of the motherboard, we add the external links related to the theme of the project.





Speaking of physicality, we decided to make a treasure hunt, to connect the city with the online world. We used antique maps from Swansea, and we added the coordinates and hints to find the physical codes placed across the city.

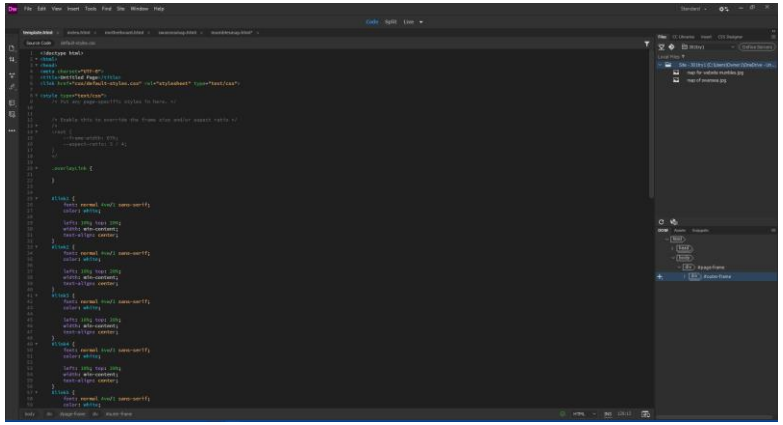


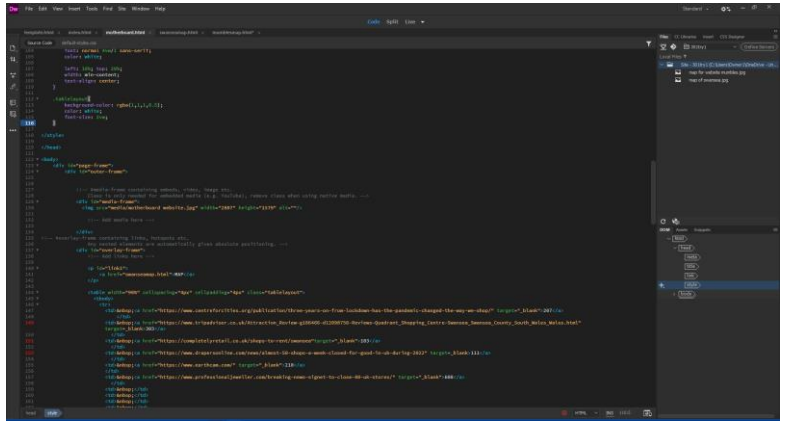


The final QR was in Mumbles and connected with a 'live stream' where you can see yourself being data.

We decided to use Instagram to create expectations before the exhibition and while the website was getting ready.

The website was more complicated and time-consuming than we thought. We contacted Adam D Shailer (Principal Technical Demonstrator), he helped us to build the website from scratch, without his implication we could not manage to finish on time.





Images of the coding for the website.

For this project, we have been influenced by many artists and artworks.

The work of Mark Jenkins, a street artist making sculptures using tape as a casting medium, was a direct inspiration for creating our objects. His works are thought-provoking.

Mark Jenkins, *Street art installation* (Washington DC)

Mark Jenkins, *Street art installation*

Mark Jenkins, *Still Life,* Fabien Castanier Gallery

Mark Jenkins, *Street art installation*

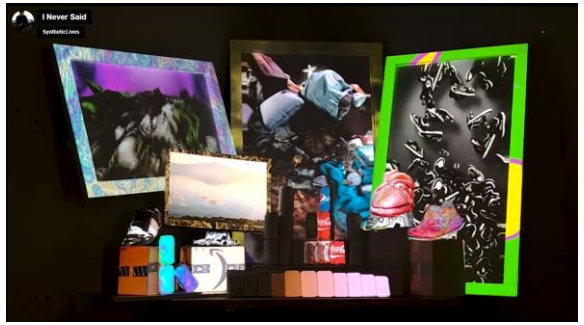
Tony Oursler is an artist who uses projections as a main part of his work. His works with speaking faces are quite unsettling.

Tony Ousler, *Lehmann Maupin*,(2023)

Tony Ousler, *The dark side*, (2019)

Cody Healey-Conelly uses projections in her work. Using some humbles materials, create sculptures and give them life with the projection. Some of the works are just white objects and one projector.

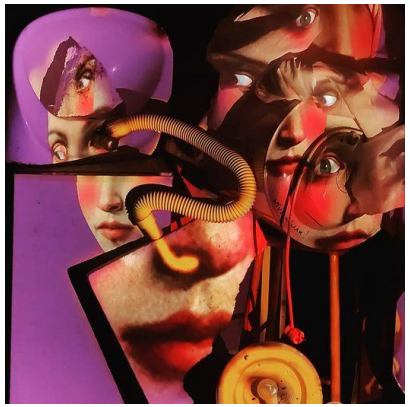
Codey Healy-Conelly, *I never said*,(2023)



Codey Healy-Conelly, *I never said*,(2023)

Pani Pawlosky and her works with projectors, mapping on sculptures made of everyday objects. Some of her works are with the use of just one projector.

Pani Pawlosky, *Trash Mapping*, (2023).



Pani Pawlosky, *Trash Mapping*, (2023).

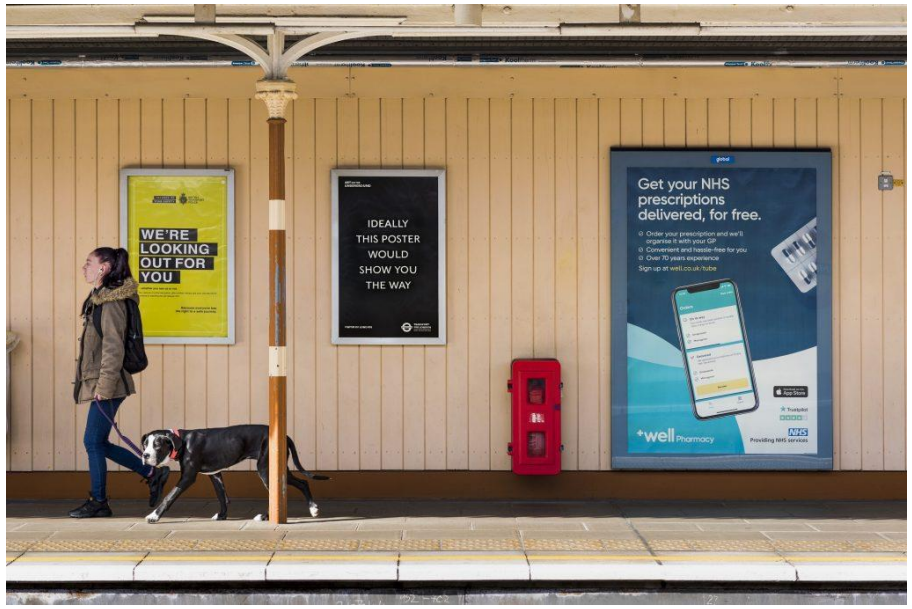
Christian Boltanski and his Theatre of Shadows, how using a few lights and objects positioned strategically can create a world of fantasy.

Christian Boltanski, *Theatre of Shadows*,(1944).

Christian Boltanski, *Theatre of Shadows*,(1944).

Laure Prouvost and her use of words for the works in the Underground using text. Subtle and powerful. She used the recognizable Underground Johnston typeface. Her intervention is subtle.

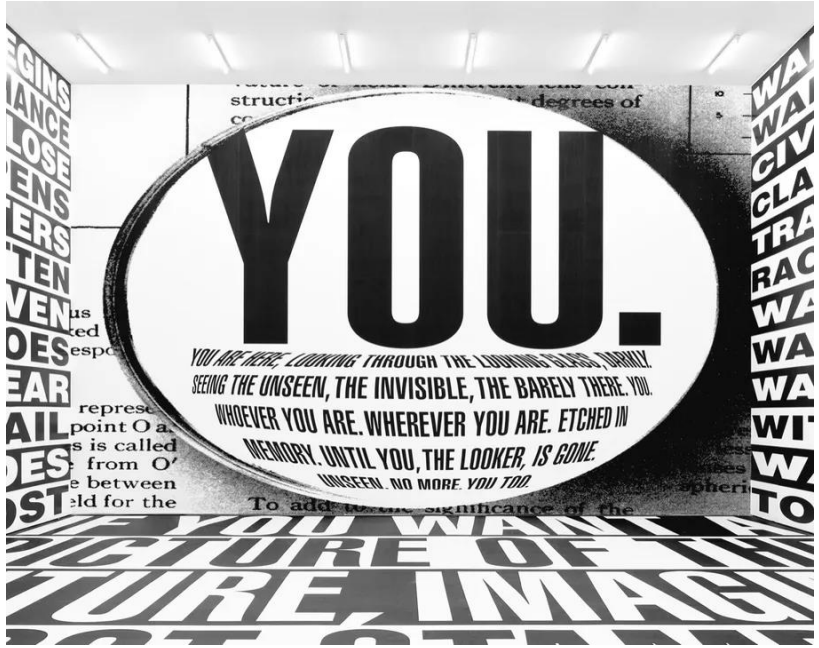
Laure Provost , *You Are Deeper Than What You Think*, (2019).



Laure Provost , *You Are Deeper Than What You Think*, (2019).

Barbara Kruger and her combination of words and images. She uses Futura Bold Oblique and Helvetica Ultra Compressed typesets across her work. Her works go out of the academic space, to the street speaking with the public and questioning them.

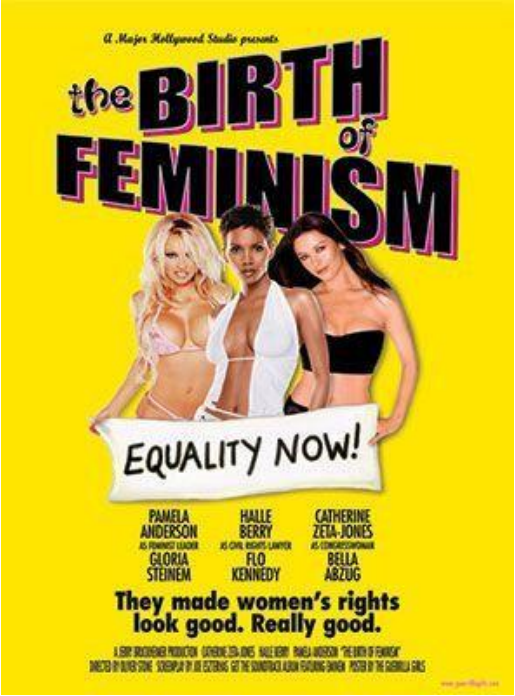
Barbara Kruger, *Untitled (I Shop Therefore I Am)*, (1987).



Barbara Kruger, *Untitled (Forever),* (2017)

Guerrilla Girls for being a collective, that stands for the conscience of the art world. They work collectively use a sense of humor and are unapologetic. Their works shout, giving voice, a powerful voice. Bold fonts, bright colors.

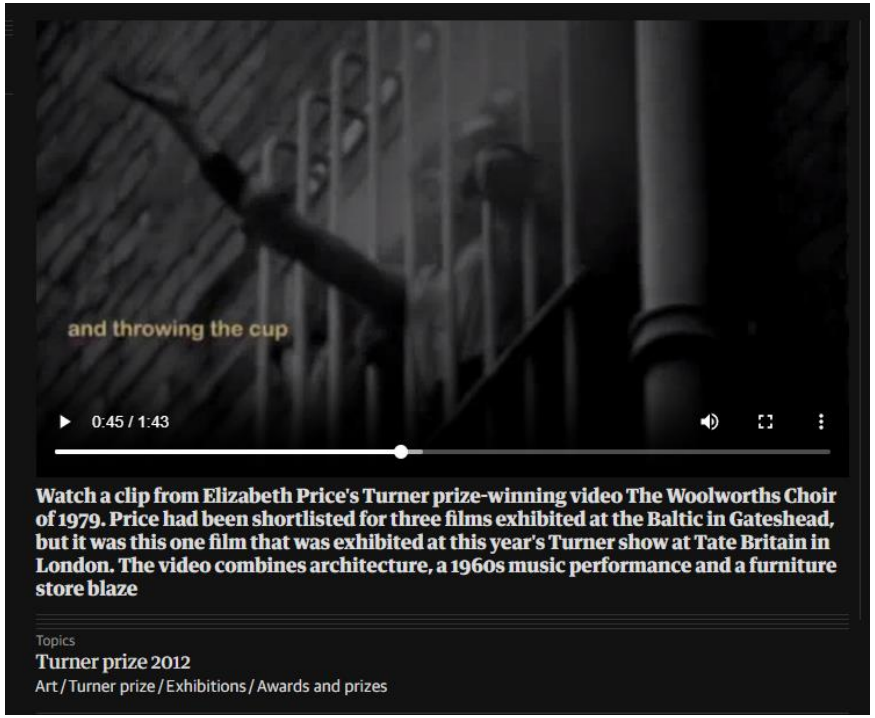
Guerrilla Girls, *Do women have to be naked to get Into the Met.Musem?*, (1989).



Guerrilla Girls, *The Birth of Feminism*, (2001)

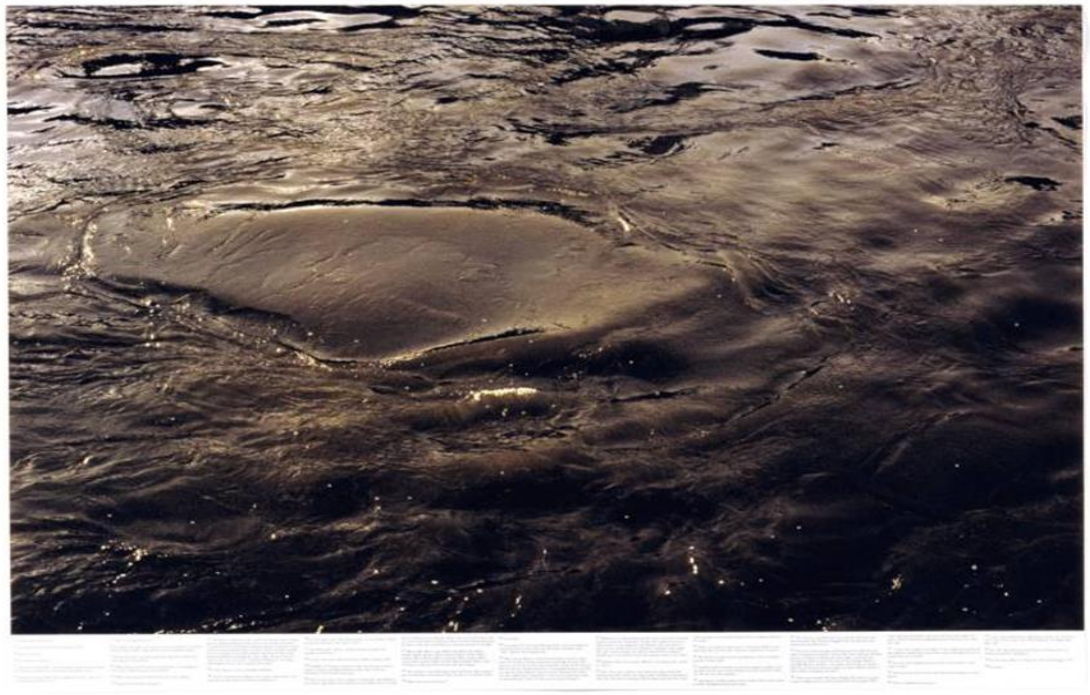
Elizabeth Price and her work Woolworths Choir of 1979. It is an inspiring editing, how she mixes archive videos, words, and music.

Elizabeth Price, *Woolworths Choir*, (1979).



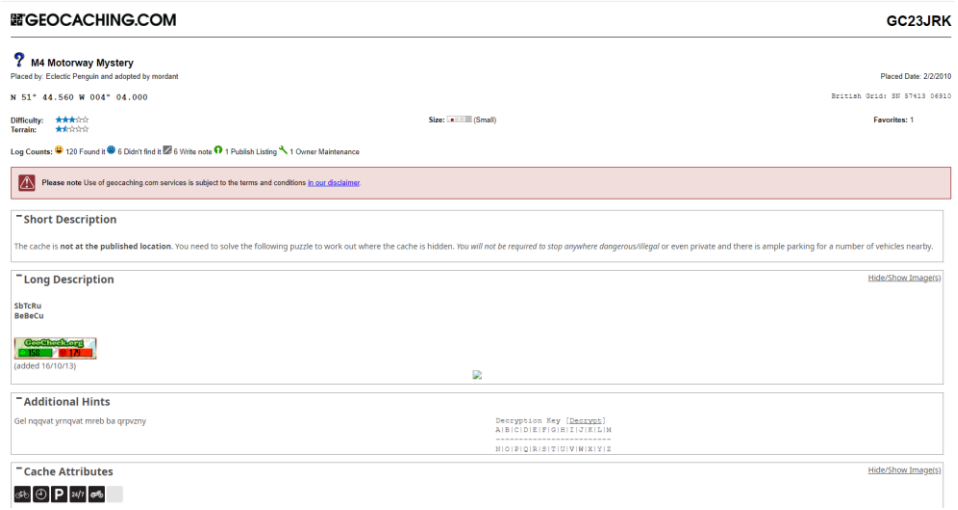
Elizabeth Price, *Woolworths Choir*, (1979).

Roni Horn and his work Still Water. In this work, there are tiny numbers in typeface and these numbers refer to footnotes printed along the lower edge of each image's white border. An image as support of many meanings.

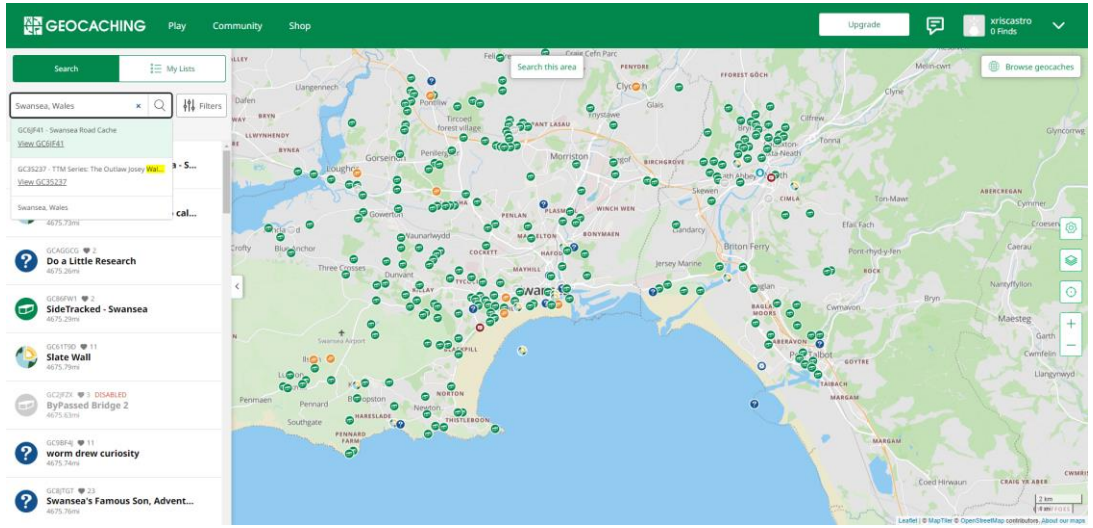


Still Water, The River Thames, for Example, (1999).

Geocaching is a real-world, outdoor adventure that is happening all the time, all around the world. There are hidden objects and to locate them you need to connect online and find the locations with the help of hints. A real treasure map using technology to interconnect physicality, the internet, and the community.

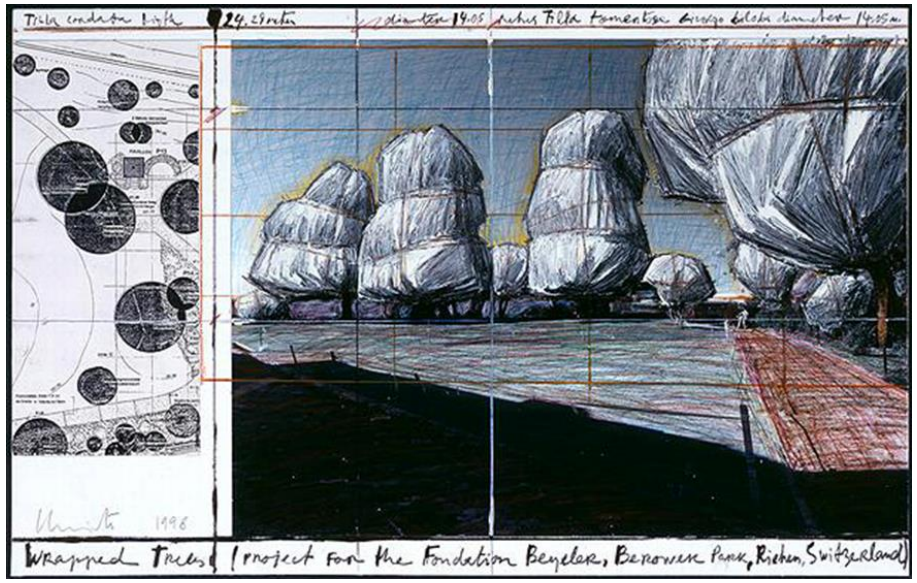


Screenshot of Geocaching

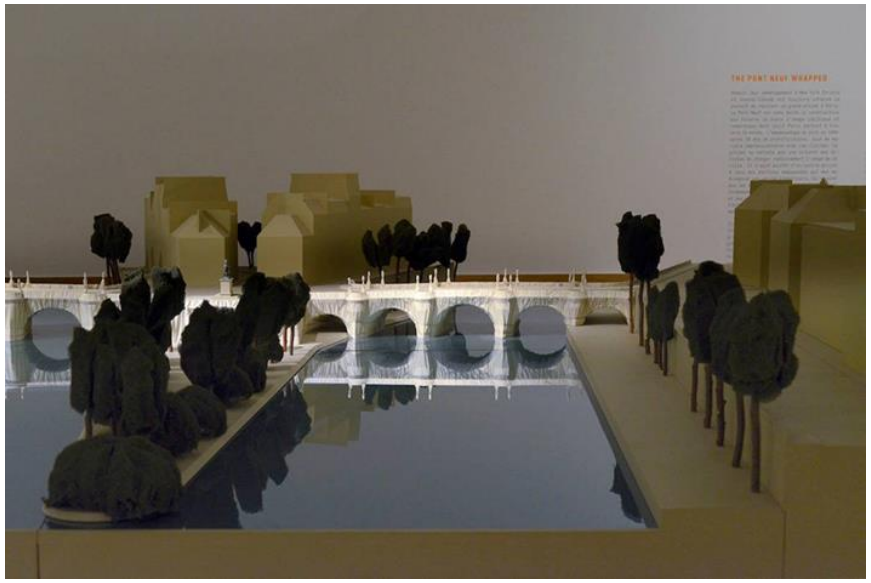


Screenshot of Geocaching

Christo and Jean-Claude and how the documentation is vital, not just for recording the journey but as a valuable object in its own right.



Christo and Jean-Claude, *Wrapped Trees*, (1997-98).



Christo and Jeanne-Claude, *Maquette The Pont Neuf Wrapped*, (1985).

Sophie Calle and her works on stalking. With the cameras on our phones and the use of social media, the concept of stalking is more relevant. The images of the treasure hunt of the lectures have a component of stalking.

Sophie Calle, *Suite Venitienne*, (1979).

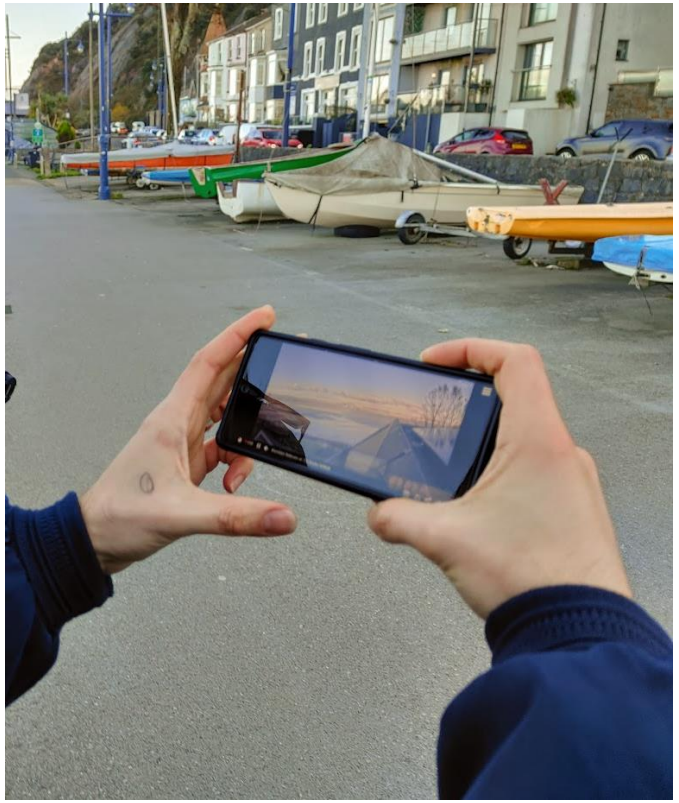
To produce this body of work, we developed diverse techniques:
-We shot photographs and videos inside Debenhams using a CanonR5 and continuous light in an environment with challenging lighting conditions.
-We used Photoshop to enhance the quality of the images, edit the maps, and create window visuals.
-We used Premier Pro to edit videos.
-We wrote the code for the website with Dreamweaver.
-We opened an email account, a YouTube account, and Instagram for the project.
-We used a portable projector to experiment with it.
-We create objects out of tape.
-We used FireFly, an AI image generator, to create some images to upload to Instagram.

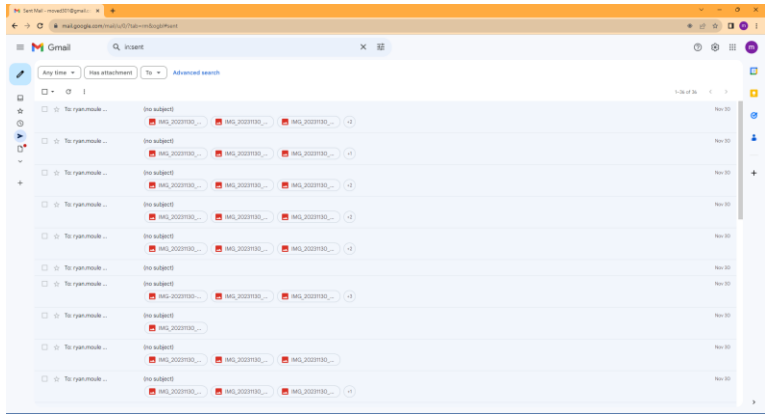
The main learning through this process has been to persevere, to adapt, to think on our feet without losing the spirit of the original idea. The great quote of Christo and Jean-Claude: "The difficulties become strengths". Was helpful when we suffered seatbacks, and we had to reinvent the project while the other groups were already printing and getting ready for the final touches.
The importance of the process and how crucial is to record it (the visual diary). We never know what is going to be used at the final stage of work and what could be used on a future project.
To work in a team is complicated and more complicated when not everybody is involved with the project but is amazing when you find people who do the work, is great to see how the project grows and becomes itself thanks to the combination of different personas. I had the pleasure of working closely with Esme who played a crucial role in communication with the council and the lectures. Molly is another member of the group who demonstrated a great work ethic, readily taking on tasks and contributing with thoughtful ideas. Their collaboration significantly contributed to the success of our project.

I learned that if we ask, we can access more people and places than I thought. We could not indeed use Debenhams building, but we had access to an amazing place that in no time will change.
In the sphere of technical skills, the hardest for me has been to make the website. I learned a bit about websites, almost ten years ago, and to go back to try something so complex with no time was too hard. We could do it because the person who offered his help was amazing and supportive

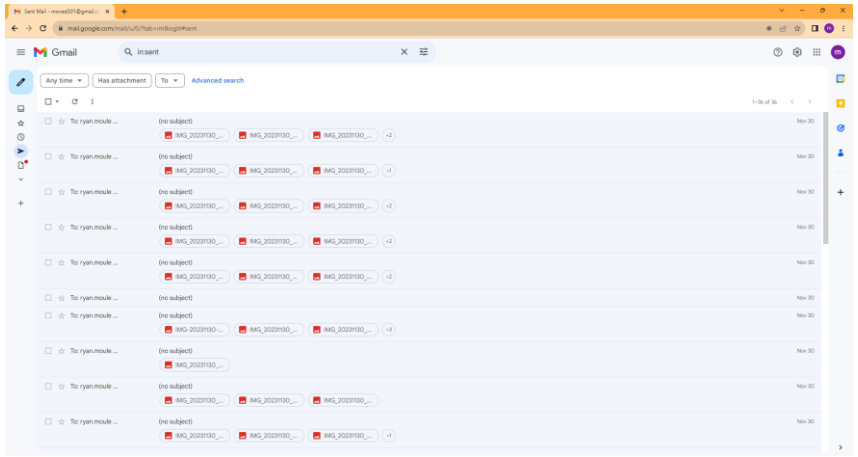
During this project, I did a bit of everything, research, ideas, video editing, visual representations, etc. It could be said that my principal role was putting everything together being sure that the project was done.
However, in the final week, we had a clearer division of tasks because it was too much to do, and we pressured all the components of the team to work knowing that if they did not do their part it would show.
In the final days, my main task was to build the website give coherence to the final project, and make sure that everything was done on time.

The exhibition per se was fantastic, it was a different way to experience the city. I enjoyed the treasure hunt. I love gamification. While they were on the walk, we just followed the lectures while I was taking images and sending them from our exhibition account email, spanning them with the images




Gmail
in:sent
Any time
Has attachment
To
Advanced search

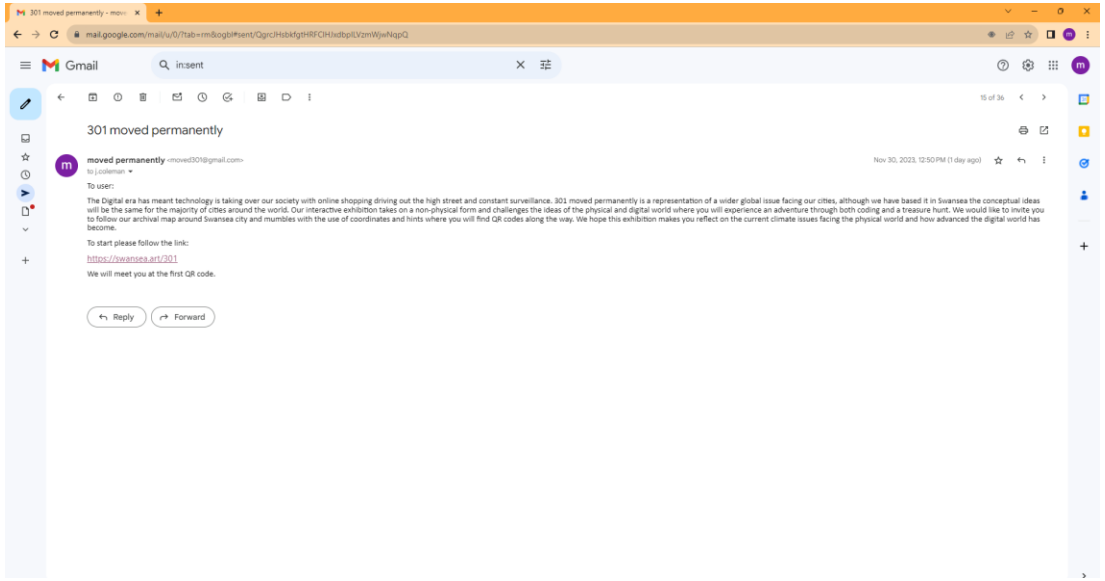
MIDAS
SUNGLASSES

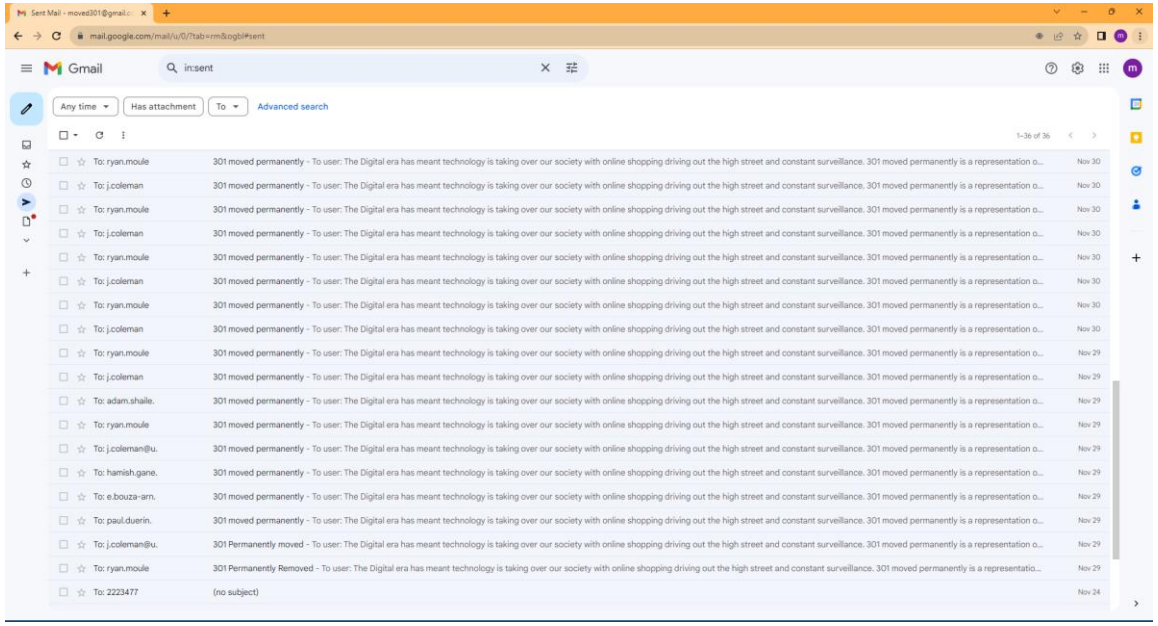

Gmail
in:sent
Any time
Has attachment
To
Advanced search

Clarks

ONE HOUR SERVICE AVAILABLE
FREE!

The invitations to the exhibition were sent by email playing with the idea of spam.





There are ways to improve the exhibition, with more time and knowledge. I would love to work on a better design for the website, for example, the initial page and how to use the video as a background without needing to go to YouTube, add many more links to the motherboard, and not just external links but links inside the website as images, pdf, and videos. We could add some kind of instructions for the people to make maps from their cities and upload them to the website. Or to upload images as a record of their finding. We could use Instagram earlier in the process and give it more relevance.

The next steps are to decide when to finish the treasure hunt and record the disappearing QR codes.

After Christmas, we will create a booklet with the four site-specific exhibitions. I proposed to members from the other teams, and they embraced the idea.

The most important of all this process is that I feel that we are onto something, a formula, a method to address different issues. I spoke with Esme about doing something during the summer break. We could create collective artwork based on this method. We will have a meeting to brainstorm ideas and carry on working with this to see where it takes us.

The main learning through this process has been to persevere, to adapt, to think on our feet without losing the spirit of the original idea. The great quote of Christo and Jean-Claude: The difficulties become strengths. Was helpful when we suffered the seatbacks, and we had to reinvent the project while the other groups were already printing and getting ready for the final touches.

The importance of the process and how crucial is to record it (the visual diary). We never know what is going to be used at the final stage of work and what could be used on a future project.

To work in a team is complicated and more complicated when not everybody is involved with the project but is amazing when you find people who do the work, is great to see how the project grows and becomes itself thanks to the combination of different personas. I had the pleasure of working closely with Esme who played a crucial role in communication with the council and the lectures. Molly is another member of the group who demonstrated a great work ethic, readily taking on tasks and contributing with thoughtful ideas. Their collaboration significantly contributed to the success of our project.

I learned that if we ask, we can access more people and places than I thought. We could not indeed use Debenhams building, but we had access to an amazing place that in no time will change.

In the sphere of technical skills, the hardest for me has been to make the website. I learned a bit about websites, almost ten years ago, and to go back to try something so complex with no time was too hard. We could do it because the person who offered his help was amazing and supportive.