Student number: 2119121

Program: Photography in the Arts

Module: ADAA5004

UNANTICIPATED PICTURES

Book Project by Maja Lukaszuk

Chapter 1 Intro

I started my research by watching various videos on YouTube about how to start a photography project, how to find ideas and how to make zines. Most of them were about exploring a place or history of a place; advises from the artists making the videos were, in a nutshell, to "go out, find something interesting and explore and shoot". One of the videos was of Kyle McDougall (link in the sources). His words have influenced me and made me have a documentary approach to the project even though I wanted it to be more "art related".

Intro and intention:

"Travelling to Wales, as a person living both in Poland and Norway, I was expecting the "typical" of that place. When travelling to Norway, I didn't have any expectations. Obviously, that place surprised me in some way, but gaining experience was as writing words on a clear paper, without previous notes. Whereas, while choosing Wales as my destination, I have already had an image in my head. Growing up being exposed to the pop culture of the UK, from films or music I was feeling as if I know it all. The greenery of the hills, castles, cliff beaches and forests were my first associations with Wales. Basically, my expectations were based on diverse productions like Hobbit, Harry Potter or Sex Education. Even though the Welsh nature surrounding Swansea, the city I live in now, will probably not disappoint me, so far, I have come across things that surprise me and made me wonder. Those things might be obvious for some - because of my naiveness they were not. I wish to show my perspective and view on a new place. This is going to be a "documentation" of things I notice that surprised me as a newbie."

Key words: expectation, idealization, naiveness, place, exploration

Examples of artists I may take inspiration from:

Ed Ruscha - the way he photographed usual places of everyday, making them aesthetically pleasing

Image 1. © Ed Ruscha

Rinko Kawauchi - dreamlike images

© Rinko Kawauchi

Jim Goldberg - handwritten notes surrounding the photos

© Jim Goldberg

Trent Parke - industrial landscape in the sunset/sunrise, its impact on the visual environment

Image 4. Trenk Parke ©

Chapter 2 Exploration I

- My first photos were taken around Marine and the beach in Swansea. The beach had a big impact on me, and I was sure that I wanted to take photos of it. I went there before sunrise to maybe catch the colorful skies (inspired by Trent Parke). However, the dawn was cloudy and grey, so I focused on photographing different things around that were the objects of my surprise. I was trying to get the aesthetic of Rinko Kawauchi's art. I shot my photos with Canon EOS 80D.

- That day I took few photos of palm trees that I really liked. I went outside again to shoot more photos of palm trees (and other tropical plants).

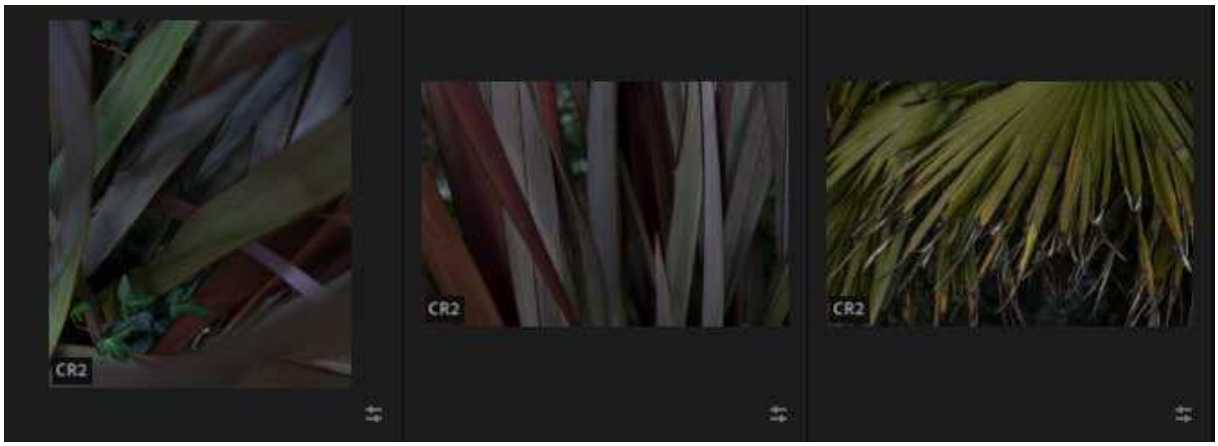
- At the end of those photoshoots, I had many photos of palm trees. After editing them I ended up with a series of them. While walking around my neighborhood I noticed that there is a lot of rubbish bags around, additionally placed in unusual places: under a tire, in the middle of a sidewalk or on the streets. I took photos of them as well. Overall presence of rubbish was something I noticed in Swansea.

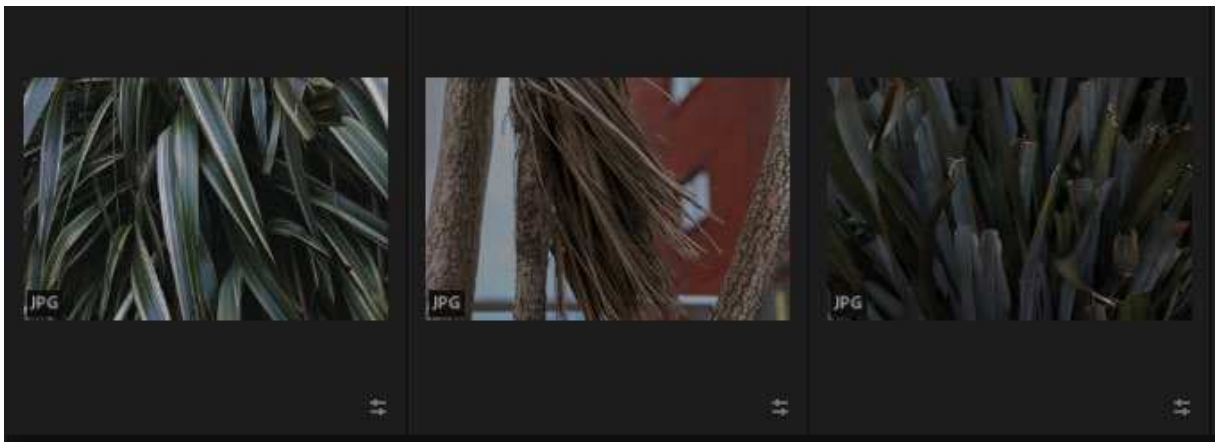
Chapter 3 Base decisions

Tutorial with Ryan:

For the tutorial with Ryan, I showed up with palm trees series and photos from the beach and some other photos of rubbish and building that caught my attention.

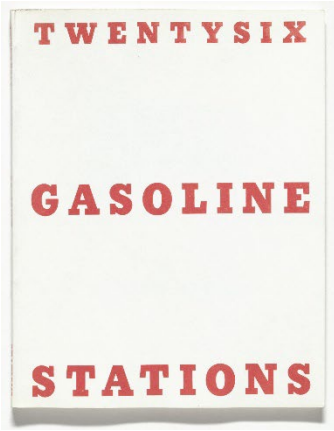
Photos from "palm trees series" that were already edited:

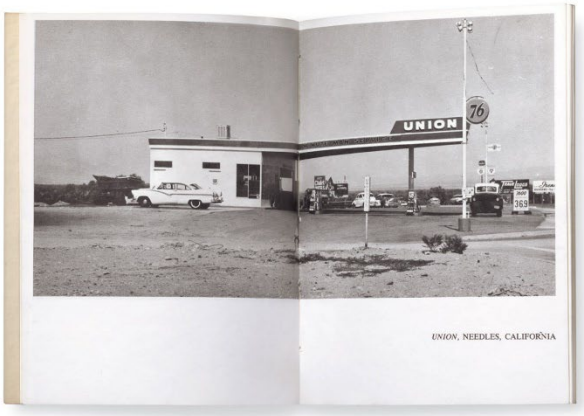




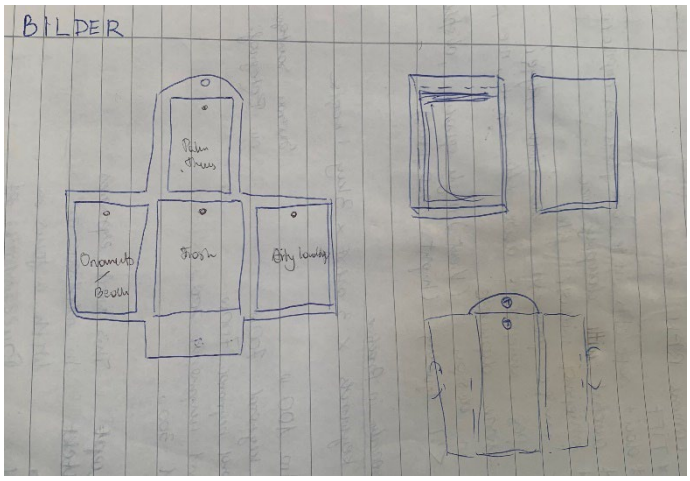
- I had many photos of different things under the umbrella of "unexpected things in Swansea". Since I already had a series of images of palm trees, I got an idea of making my book a series of zines, where each zine would be about a different subject matter.

- Ryan suggested that I can look at Hans Feldmann's work *Bilder*. Since I had Ed Ruscha's work in mind from before it made sense to follow this path. Both Feldmann and Ruscha created a series of images of simple things of everyday. Ruscha would photograph gasoline stations, swimming pools or streets and make a book of a collection of those images. They were straightforward, usually black and white photographs of only the subject matter. However, I knew from the beginning that I do not want to make my images black and white. I am interested in color and how it can determine the viewers perception of the object. Especially when my objects were palm trees: I do not want to take away the natural attributes of the plants.





- While going away from the black and white factor of Feldmann's and Ruscha's works, I wanted that the style in which their works were presented remains alike. The idea was to make the zines look "old", as if they belonged to the 60's or 70's.
- I had few ideas of how to present them:



- My initial idea was to make 4 zines, thinking about groups of things that surprised me here: palm trees, trash, contrasts of city architecture and the beach.

1. City/buildings

2. Palm trees

3. Beach

4. Trash

- Ryan also showed me artworks of Mårten Lange. Mårten's images are simple and poetic. The object is usually placed in the center of the photograph and there is a visible focus on the form and shape of the thing photographed. Big part of his works are images of nature and observed landscapes. This fit what I am working on, so I researched his work.

Image 7. © Mårten Lange

Later, I was inspired by Lange's photograph of the city to make one of my zines "city landscapes". Seeing his images of buildings and metropolitan areas, made me recognize that subject matter and made me consider them as interesting to work with, as well as aesthetically pleasing.

Image 8.

Image 9.

Image 10.

© Mårten Lange

- After the tutorial I had a plan to execute shoot more photos of same object to get the best one (that works the best), to not try to make a composition (to make it more appealing) but also not do snapshots.

Chapter 4 Exploration II

In the next stage of my book's creation, I took more photos of the rubbish on the streets, as well as the buildings that I find "interesting". Places that had the biggest impression on me were polish grocery store "Biedronka", that is a chain of superstores in Poland, and Swansea Castle that is right in the foreground of 2nd tallest building of Swansea that takes away the charm of the historical ruins.

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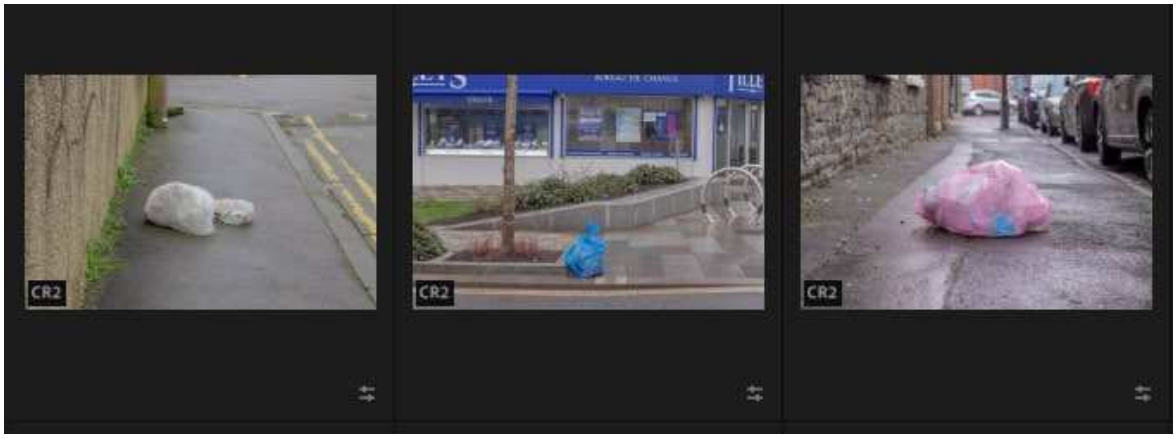
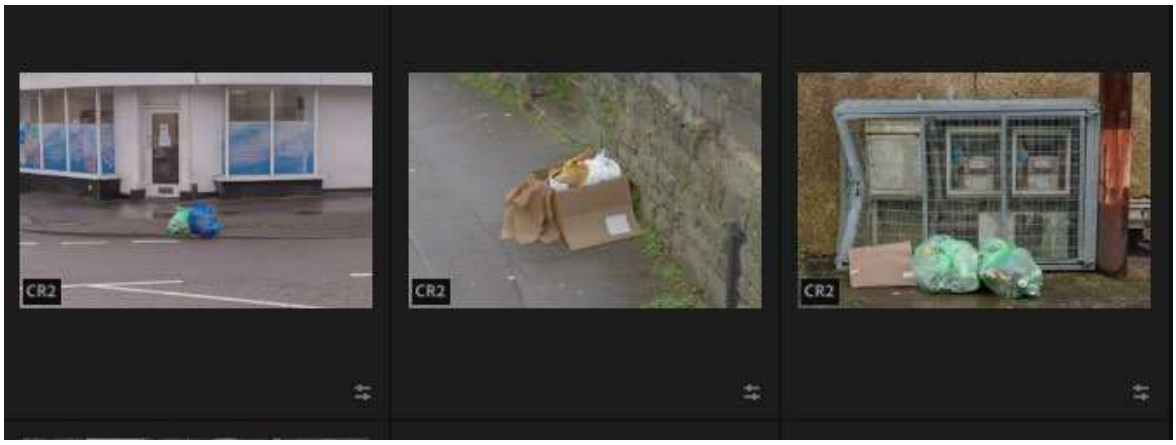
Before the deadline for the first book dummy, I managed to assemble photos for another series: rubbish bags.

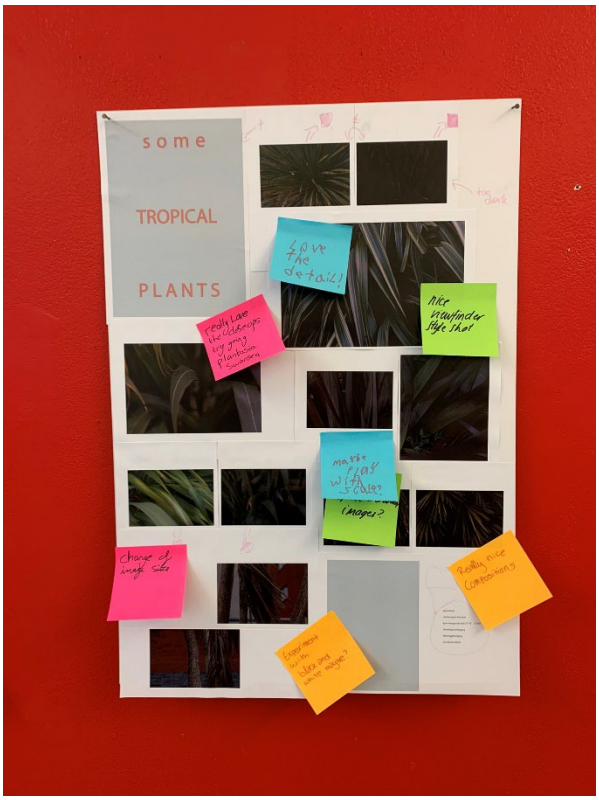




Chapter 5 Layout and Design

Workshop with Dafydd:

We were looking at our photos in relation to each other and seeing how they may look together and how they can be placed in the book format. For this workshop I used, now "tropical plants" series. (The title has changed because some of the plants were not palms so the word *tropical* represents the photos better). By placing the photos physically on the board, it was easier to imagine it in a book format. That opened up for new insights and ideas of how to present them. All students in the room were giving each other positive and negative comments on the layouts and images.



First, I was planning my images to face each other in my book (this was an experimental approach), but after looking at the comments I noticed that my images might need more space. So, I decided to implement the traditional layout of photobooks, where there is a blank page in the left and an image on the right side. The photos were too dark, but I wanted to stick to my editing. The cover is visibly inspired by Ed Ruscha photobooks' covers. As I have mentioned, I want my zines to be in the style of the 70's, so I thought copying the style of Ruscha's covers is a way to go (besides the fact that the idea of the project is alike). I wanted to make it more playful by adding more color (green and orange). However, in the later process the green color of the background of the covers did not work well with other themes than plants. On the first page there was supposed to be names of plants in latin (equivalently same would happen to the other zines, I was not sure what the text would be). There is "*some* tropical plants" because it was hard to tell how many I actually photographed.

Image 11.

Chapter 6 Book Dummy I

For my first book dummy I made a box of white card. I had troubles printing out my booklet, so I printed out pictures and glued them onto an A5 notebook. My book was supposed to be A5 from the beginning. I wanted it to be handy and not formal. I handed in two zines "some Tropical Plants" and "sixteen Garbage Bags". This time I again had an experimental approach to the presentation of the images. "Unanticipated Pictures" became the title of my work. I wanted it to be something that will simply yet precisely describe my work. Other options were for example: *unexpected pictures, Nice to meet you, Hey Swansea, Swansea Surprises.* At the end *unanticipated pictures* seemed most meaningful and fitting to what I was exploring in my work.

SIXTEEN
GARBAGE
BAGS

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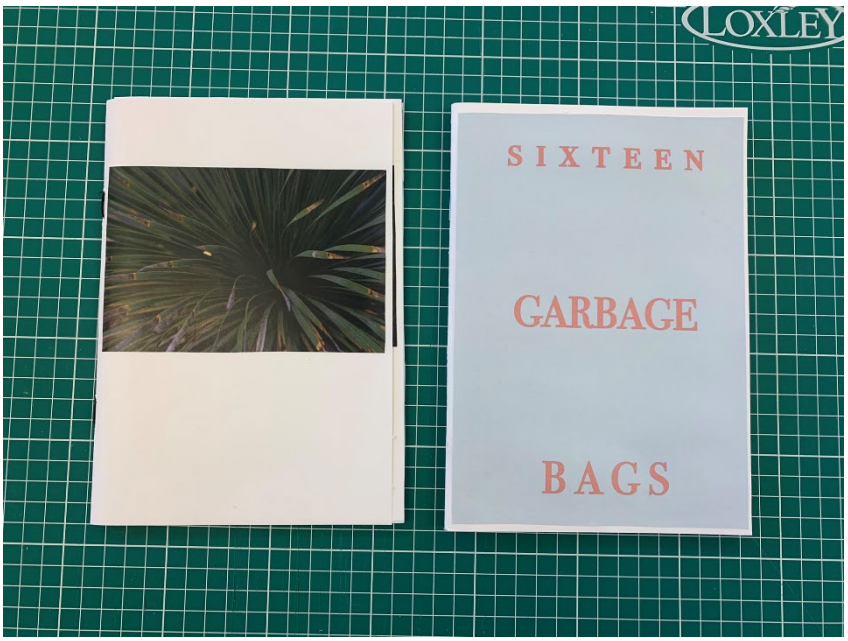
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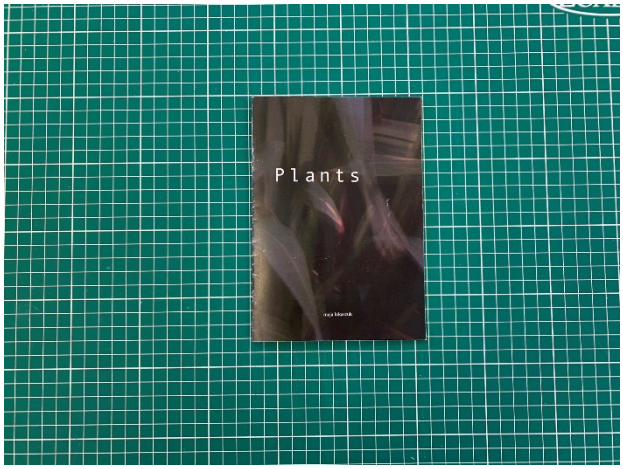
Chapter 7 Folium Workshop + Feedback

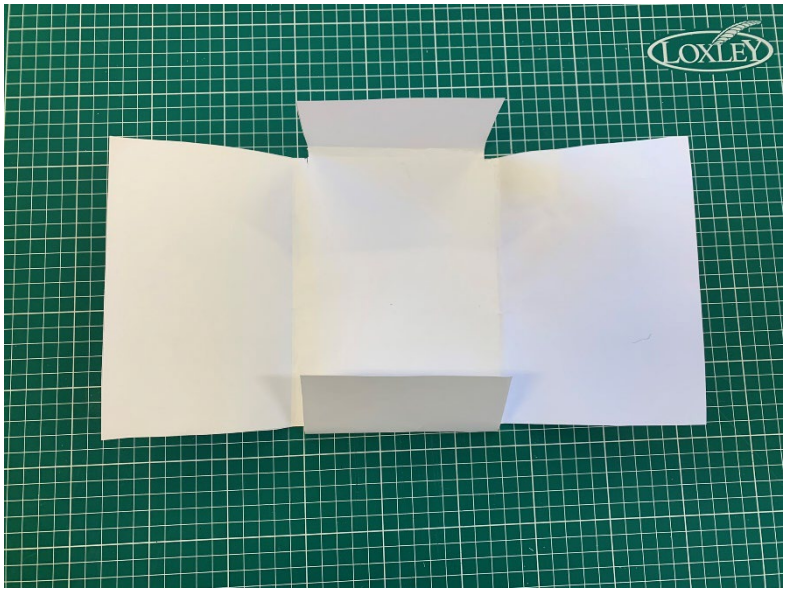
During the workshop about zine-making with Folium I learned all the basics needed to make InDesign document ready for printing, printing a booklet and binding it. That became my technical base for further work.



Feedback on my book dummy:

- Comment from Folium regarding the margins in my zines, made me realize that I need more space and consider "margin of error", by adding some extra room.
- They also made me cautious about having an image, where the main object is in the middle, spread on two pages. Then the main point of the photo will be disturbed.

- Sian suggested that I could emphasize the fact that there are many rubbish bags around by making my images more repetitive. After that comment I decided to change the size and dimensions of my pictures so that all of them are the same. I also added more photos, by being less selective to the fact if the image is "pretty" enough.
- I changed the word "garbage" to "rubbish" after being corrected about the word's usage.
- Seeing works published by Folium I got another idea of how my zines could be presented. There was a book that was inside folded paper with a paper pocket - I made one wrapper like that to see how that works for my book.



- In the meantime, I made another box, in the colors that I wanted it to be at the end. The brownish color of the card gives less sophisticated and informal feeling to my work. Sian said however that the box I am going to present at the end should be more professional than that. Then I decided to purchase a box.

Chapter 8 Exploration III

My 3rd zine was supposed to be about city and the buildings around it. As mentioned, before I found some of the landscapes around the city surprising. The contrast between the buildings and the lack of continuity became my focus area. After having more conversations with students and listening about Swansea's history it became clear that what I noticed is a thing - which made the exploration even more exciting. Thinking about the aesthetics of Mårten Lange's art I shot photos of the building I see walking in the city.

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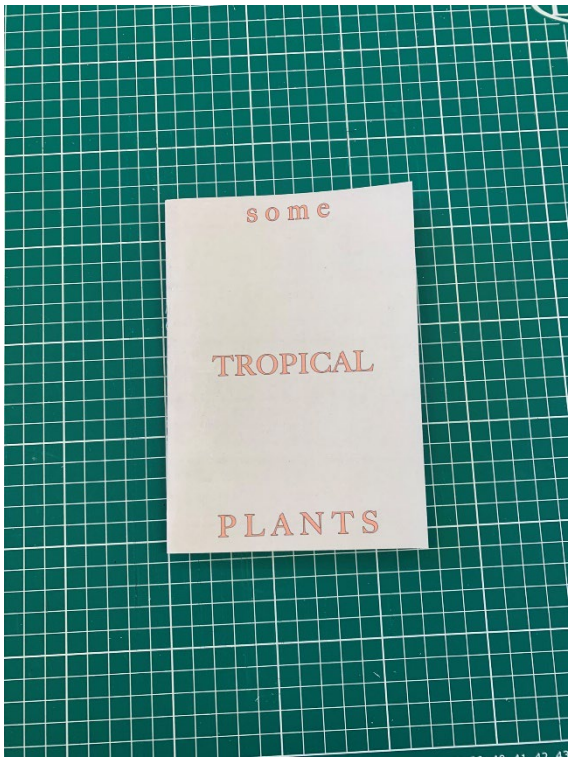
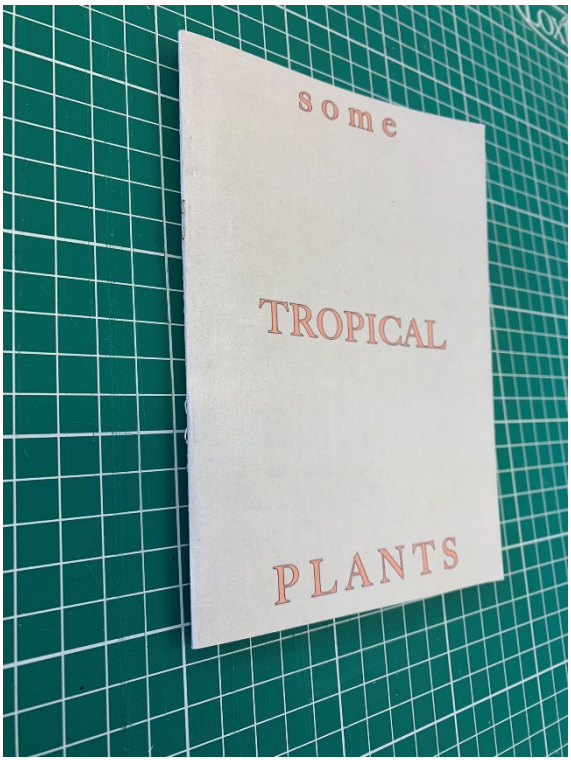
Chapter 9 Book Dummy II





As mentioned before, the green color of the cover that was first created, did not fir well to images from other zines. I changed the design and went for more neutral greyish color. I added darker outline for the letters so that there was more contrast. For better outcome I also decreased size of the text - it made it look more classy, less flashy. When it comes to content, I did not change much; there was no need for any order of the photos, so I stayed with what I created in my first dummy (plant zine). I tried making my cover in black and white, but it did not give the same feeling as the grey one.

By the time my book was coming together I dropped the idea of having 4 zines. The “beach” zine was falling apart, and I would not have enough things I wanted to show. Also, the time pressure was affecting me.

My zines are 24-32 pages long. Printed on a laser printer as a booklet and stitched together by a simple binding.

Chapter 10 Wrapping

Gareth Phillip's feedback:

- When Gareth Phillips was commenting our work and giving feedback, I found it very inspirational how he encouraged us to push our ideas further and further. He talked about experimenting and trying out different options. For my work he said that it would be good to try to implement some parts of the objects I photographed to physicality: to make my work more sensorial. After, I was considering using garbage bag as a thread for my book. I left that idea when I got my box delivered: the box was wrapped in a paper to secure it. I found the paper interesting and thought that that could be the wrapping for my books; it would give the feeling of "trash" before someone gets to see the actual pictures of the bags in the zines. On my way home I grabbed some dried leaves of palm trees and their hair. I thought that I could use them too.

Initially I wanted to make the title of my work on the box using letterpress. When I learned that it's impossible to do without flattening the box, I changed to idea of making letter pressed text on the paper pocket that was going to hold my zines together. I went to the letterpress workshop, tried out few type types and made many copies of the text on different colored paper to be able to get the best results.

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Chapter 11 Finishing Touches

At the end there was few last things I had to decide: choice of paper, printing, presentation.

Choice of paper:

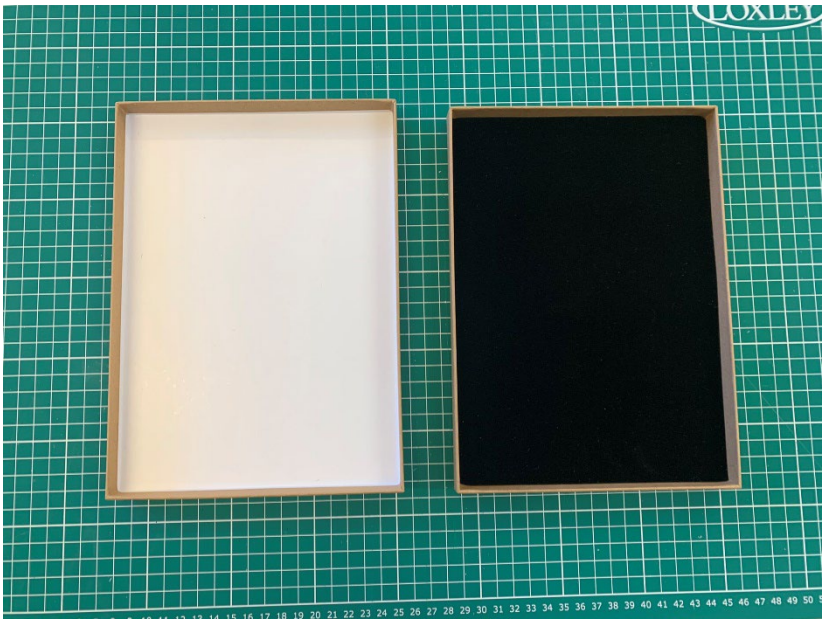
- From the beginning I wanted my zines to be printed on a thin, matt paper. My dummies were printed on a paper 120gsm, and I still wanted it to be thinner. I got help from Dafydd with paper choice: I discover that I liked paper that is primarily used for Inkjet Printers (I couldn't use one because they do not print booklet format). They were textured and made the ink shine. The texture of the paper complements my pictures: it makes them feel more real. I purchased Laid White paper (Inkjet Paper) with strong texture, 100 gsm. I was really happy with that paper; however, I was worried that the quality of my images is not the best. Ryan and Dafydd dispelled my doubts.

Printing:

- I was printing my zines at school. For technical reasons I had to divide my already short zines into 2 chapters each. That made my outcome much different that I imagined. But, I managed to stitch the chapters well together with the simple binding and the end result was good.

Presentation:

- I was struggling with the way of presenting my book. I had many options: creased paper wrapper, thin paper wrapper, thick paper wrapper and the box.



- After tutorial with Ryan my idea became clearer. I decided not to use the palm hair, because they looked too much like human hair. I dropped the idea of creased paper wrapper, because it was very challenging to tame and control it. The rest of the wrappers I can use for other editions of my zines. For my final project I decided to use the box and the brownish pocket. It was a choice based mostly on color and contrast between my work and the box and the wrapper.

- I placed a tracing paper with the title on in the box, so it became a background for my work. I also added a small note in the pocket to provide some context to my work as well as create an even surface behind the paper pocket.

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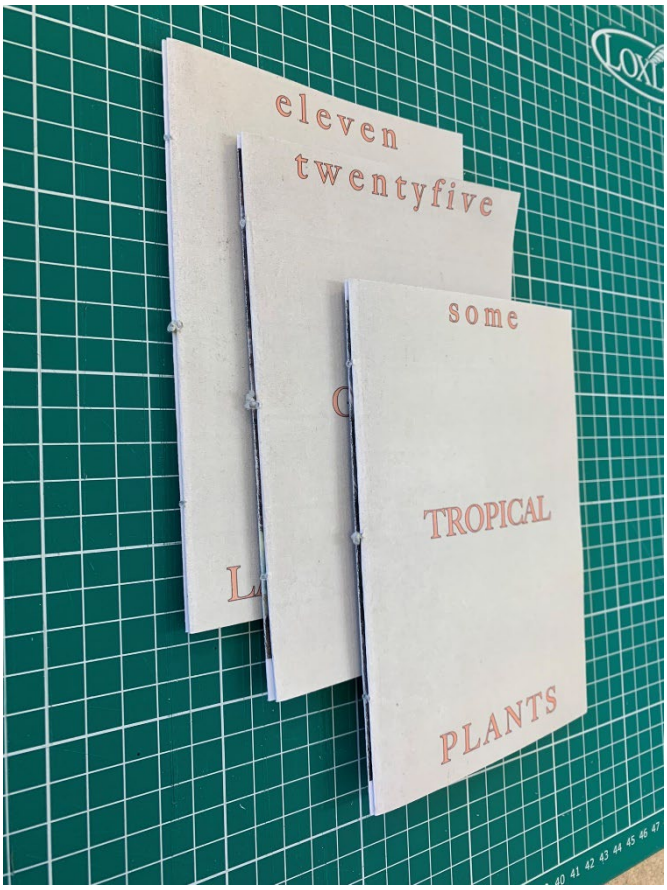
Chapter 12 Final Result



UNANTICIPATED
PICTURES

some
TROPICAL
PLANTS
UNANTICIPATED
PICTURES
This is my collection of images picturing things that surprised me in Swansea.
Maja Lukaszuk

Sources:

- Image 1. https://gagosian.com/artists/ed-ruscha/
- Image 2 http://rinkokawauchi.com/en/works/
- Image 3 https://www.nytimes.com/2014/07/27/arts/design/jim-goldberg-hopes-his-pictures-still-make-a-difference.html
- Image 4 https://www.magnumphotos.com/theory-and-practice/the-crimson-line-trent-parke/
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