

Advanced Creative Enquiry

ADAA6001

Maria Cristina Castro Rodriguez
2223477

ABOUT THE PROJECT

Full name:	Maria Cristina Castro Rodriguez
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Proposed name of project:	Whispers
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Describe your project using 5 key words:
Hauntology
Spectrality
Memory
Fragmentation
Presence/Absence (Echoes)

Provide a short summary of the proposed project: (100 words max)
Whispers explores how the past continues haunting the present, shaping identity and memory through a spectral presence. Drawing on the philosophical concept of hauntology, this project examines how the subconscious mind, like the photograph, carries fragmented traces of past experiences that influence our present selves. Using photography, projection, sound, and physical objects, the work creates an immersive experience where memories and identities collide, fragment, and reassemble—reminding us that we are never truly isolated from the ghosts of our past.
Provide a detailed description of the proposed project: (250 words)
<i>What is the subject/concept/theme that you are exploring? What are your motivations behind making the work? What are the medium(s) in which you will work? What are the methodologies you will be employing?</i> Whispers delves into the complexities of memory, identity, and the spectral nature of time. Anchored in the philosophy of hauntology, the project examines how past experiences and memories persist—not merely as forgotten traces but as active, spectral forces influencing our present lives. This work blends photography,

projection, sound, and physical objects to craft an installation that reflects this interplay between the visible and the invisible, presence and absence. The methodologies include layering analogue and digital techniques, such as cyanotype video experiments and soundscapes, to explore the overlap of physical and digital spaces. The work aims to confront the viewer with their own spectral past—encourage them to reflect on how memories, though ephemeral, continue to echo through time, shaping the stories we tell ourselves and the identities we carry. Ultimately, the project aims to promote awareness of our internal thoughts and the influences that shape them.

STRUCTURE

Timeline and milestones

Include a breakdown of the plan and milestones of the proposed project for the academic year. Consider the tasks, processes or activities necessary to complete in order to create the proposed body of work.

Timeline and Milestones

Start Date: 01/10/2024

End Date: 31/04/2025

Exhibition Installation: 04/05/2025

Phase 1: Research, Concept Development, and Media Gathering

- **01/10/2024 - 31/10/2024**
 - Research themes related to hauntology, memory, and identity.
 - Gather elements: sound recordings, video clips, and imagery that will support the conceptual narrative.
 - Experiment with various soundscapes and digital media (e.g., AI-generated imagery, manipulated found footage).
 - Begin small video projects
 - Experiment with combining video with sound to understand their relationship within your project's themes.

Phase 2: Cyanotype Experimentation and Video Integration

- **01/11/2024 - 21/12/2024**
 - Begin cyanotype experiments, and print on paper. Test different papers for texture and how they interact with the cyanotype process.
 - Continue experimenting with video content: layering sound, visual distortion, and digital manipulation.
 - Test projections using cyanotype prints and small video works. Evaluate how the physical and digital elements interact.

Christmas Break (22/12/2024 - 27/01/2025)

- **Self-reflection and Organization**
 - Organize all gathered materials and experiments.
 - Review and document progress; adjust plans if necessary.
 - Continue experimenting with personal projects, focusing on refining video or cyanotype processes at home.
 - Set up time to plan the next steps in preparation for feedback after the break.

Phase 3: Refining Visual and Audio Elements

- **28/01/2025 - 28/02/2025**

- Refine cyanotype prints, selecting the most successful experiments. Work on incorporating them into video or projection formats.
- Finalize soundscapes: refine audio recordings and experiments with the relationship between sound and visual elements.
- Start creating video collages or projections that blend the cyanotypes and footage with sound.
- Begin editing and sequencing the final videos

Easter Break (07/04/2025 - 25/04/2025)

- **Preparation for Feedback and Final Revisions**

- Ensure all key works are ready for feedback.
- Make final adjustments to videos, sound design, and cyanotype prints.
- Reflect on the narrative and conceptual cohesion of the project.
- Work on any remaining experiments or testing without external feedback.
- Begin organizing the exhibition plan (layout, printing, framing).

Phase 4: Finalizing the Body of Work and Preparing for the Exhibition

- **26/04/2025 - 04/05/2025**

- Finalize all digital content (videos, sound, projections), and physical prints (cyanotypes on fabric and paper).
- Select the final pieces for the exhibition, considering how the different media will be displayed together.
- Plan the exhibition layout, focusing on how prints and projections will be placed to create an immersive atmosphere.
- Design any accompanying materials (e.g., artist statements, exhibition text) that explain your process and themes.

Phase 5: Installation and Final Presentation

- **05/05/2025 - 15/05/2025**
 - Install the works in the exhibition space, ensuring all technical elements (projections, sound, prints) function seamlessly together.
 - Fine-tune the installation for pacing, atmosphere, and flow, ensuring the visitor experience is cohesive.
 - Final check on all works to ensure they align with the intended narrative about memory, identity, and presence/absence.

Milestones

- **15/11/2024: Completion of initial cyanotype and video experiments.**
- **01/12/2024: Finalize soundscapes and start integrating sound with video projections.**
- **15/01/2025: Refine video edits and ensure they align with the conceptual narrative.**
- **28/02/2025: Final selection of pieces for exhibition; finalize editing and sound design.**
- **31/03/2025: Review all works for final tweaks before exhibition preparations.**
- **15/04/2025: Have all pieces ready for feedback and adjustments based on peer or mentor input.**
- **26/04/2025: Submit exhibition materials and finalize installation plans.**
- **04/05/2025: Exhibition installation complete and open to visitors.**
- **16/04/2025: Swansea Exhibition Opening**

Budget
Add the expenditure and appropriate details of your proposed project on this page. Provide information about the quotes for services/ products/ fees in the description field. Though we cover your printing costs within the department for anyone wishing to use print as a final form for their major project, please cost them based on real world cost.

Project Budget List

Photography & Video Equipment

1. Camera (Upgrade or Rental): **£500**

Description: For capturing high-quality video and photographs.

2. **Audio Recorder: £100**

Description: Needed for capturing high-quality soundscapes.

3. **Projector (2 units): £400**

Description: Essential for testing video projections on cyanotypes and final exhibition setup.

4. **Headphones: £200**

Description: For monitoring sound during production and use in the exhibition for visitor interaction.

Software (Annual Subscriptions)

5. Adobe Lightroom: £19.99/month

6. Adobe Photoshop: £19.99/month

7. Adobe Premiere Pro: £19.99/month

Description: For image editing, video editing, and layout design, all necessary for content production and presentation.

Total for software: **£193.82/year (Student Offer)**

Cyanotype Printing Supplies

9. **UV Lamp: £80**

Description: For controlled cyanotype exposure.

10. Acetate Sheets (A4, 500 sheets): £250

Description: Used to create cyanotype negatives.

11. Watercolour Paper (A4, 500 sheets): £250

Description: Chosen for texture and compatibility with cyanotype chemicals.

12. Cotton Fabric: £100

Description: For creating fabric cyanotype prints.

13. Cyanotype Chemicals (10 packs): £200

Description: Includes chemicals and tools.

14. Frames with Glass: £100

Description: Protect and display cyanotype prints.

15. Gelatine Clear: £50

Description: For experimenting with cyanotype on glass (frames).

Printing & Exhibition Costs

16. Postcards: £100

Description: Free distribution to visitors, printing promotional designs.

17. Printing Services: £100

Description: For final high-quality prints to be exhibited.

18. Exhibition Costs: £300

Description: Includes installation materials, technical equipment rental, or shipping.

19. Miscellaneous Supplies: £50

Description: Covers tape, adhesives, papers, or any unplanned expenses for setup or production.

External Storage

20. External Portable Hard Drive: £50

Description: For saving and moving workarounds to show founders and or sponsors.

Total: £3,938.82

Item Cost	Item Cost
Camera (Upgrade or Rental) £500	Camera (Upgrade or Rental) £500
Audio Recorder £100	Audio Recorder £100
Projector (2 units) £400	Projector (2 units) £400
Headphones £200	Headphones £200
Software (Adobe Creative) £193.82/year (Student Offer)	Software (Adobe Creative) £193.82/year (Student Offer)
UV Lamp £80	UV Lamp £80
Acetate Sheets (A4, 500 sheets) £250	Acetate Sheets (A4, 500 sheets) £250
Watercolour Paper (A4, 500 sheets) £250	Watercolour Paper (A4, 500 sheets) £250
Cotton Fabric £100	Cotton Fabric £100
Cyanotype Chemicals (10 packs) £200	Cyanotype Chemicals (10 packs) £200
Frames with Glass £100	Frames with Glass £100
Gelatine Clear £50	Gelatine Clear £50
Postcards £100	Postcards £100
Printing Services £100	Printing Services £100
Exhibition Costs £300	Exhibition Costs £300

Total: £3,938.82

Describe the developmental opportunities, experiments and processes you have undertaken, what did you get out of them, and how will you use them to support your proposed project? (200 words max)

In preparation for my project, I've explored experimental processes that merge physical and digital mediums, including video, sound, and cyanotype techniques. My video work integrates footage from personal and online archives, combining these with new recordings and experimenting with layering and looping in video editing software. These loops reflect the cyclical nature of memory—how it appears, fades, and resurfaces—paralleling identity's fluid nature.

I've also worked with cyanotypes, a process that grounds my project in the physical world. The ghostly, tangible quality of these prints contrasts with the digital nature of video, symbolizing the lingering traces of the past. By using acetate for creating negatives, I've been able to connect the tactile aspects of cyanotypes with my digital experiments, exploring the relationship between these two realms.

Sound is another key component of my work. I've been recording environmental and vocal sounds to build an archive that complements my video and cyanotypes. Together, these elements will form a cohesive installation that bridges the gap between the digital and physical, representing personal and collective memory. These experiments have equipped me with the technical and conceptual tools to realize my project, supporting its exploration of identity and memory through interconnected mediums.

What are the main risks and challenges to your project meeting its aims? What will you do to manage these risks? (100 words max)

The main challenge is balancing the immersive installation's complexity with the clarity of the project's message. While pushing boundaries is exciting, there's a risk that the ambition of combining multiple mediums could overshadow the core concept of connecting physical and digital elements. To manage this, I'll refine the concept continually, ensuring each element serves the main idea without overcomplicating it.

Regular feedback from peers and mentors will help maintain focus and alignment with the project's intent, ensuring it sparks meaningful conversations while staying true to its purpose.

PRACTICE-BASED EXPERIMENTS

This section outlines the hands-on experiments conducted throughout the development of my project, focusing on a combination of physical and digital mediums. These experiments have played a crucial role in refining my techniques and shaping the work.

Experimenting with Cyanotypes and video

During my internship, I assisted with a cyanotype workshop at the Former Cranes as part of the FfotoCymru Festival. This experience sparked my interest in using cyanotypes for my project, particularly due to the physicality of the process. Working with light-sensitive materials to create prints inspired me to explore their potential to deepen the themes of presence and memory.

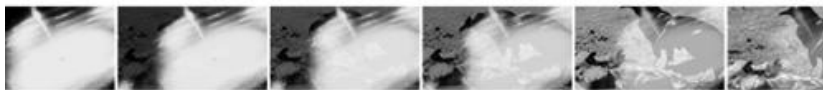
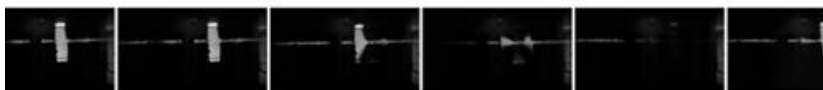
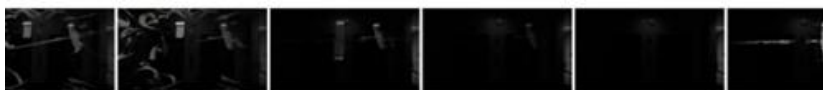
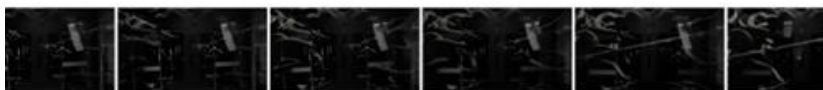
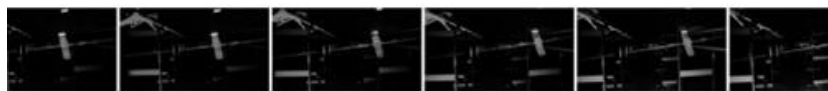
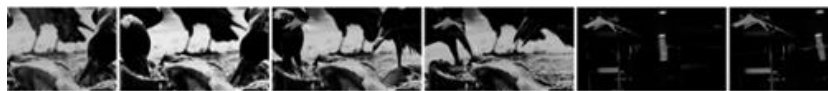
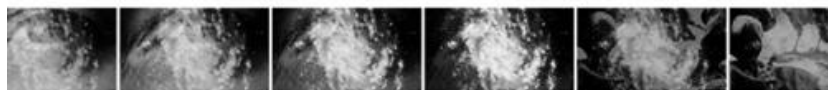
Following this workshop, I began experimenting with cyanotypes at home, starting with watercolour paper. To expand on this, I incorporated video into the process, creating a small video without sound and testing it at different frame rates. These experiments allowed me to explore how the interaction between movement and stillness could enhance the narrative.



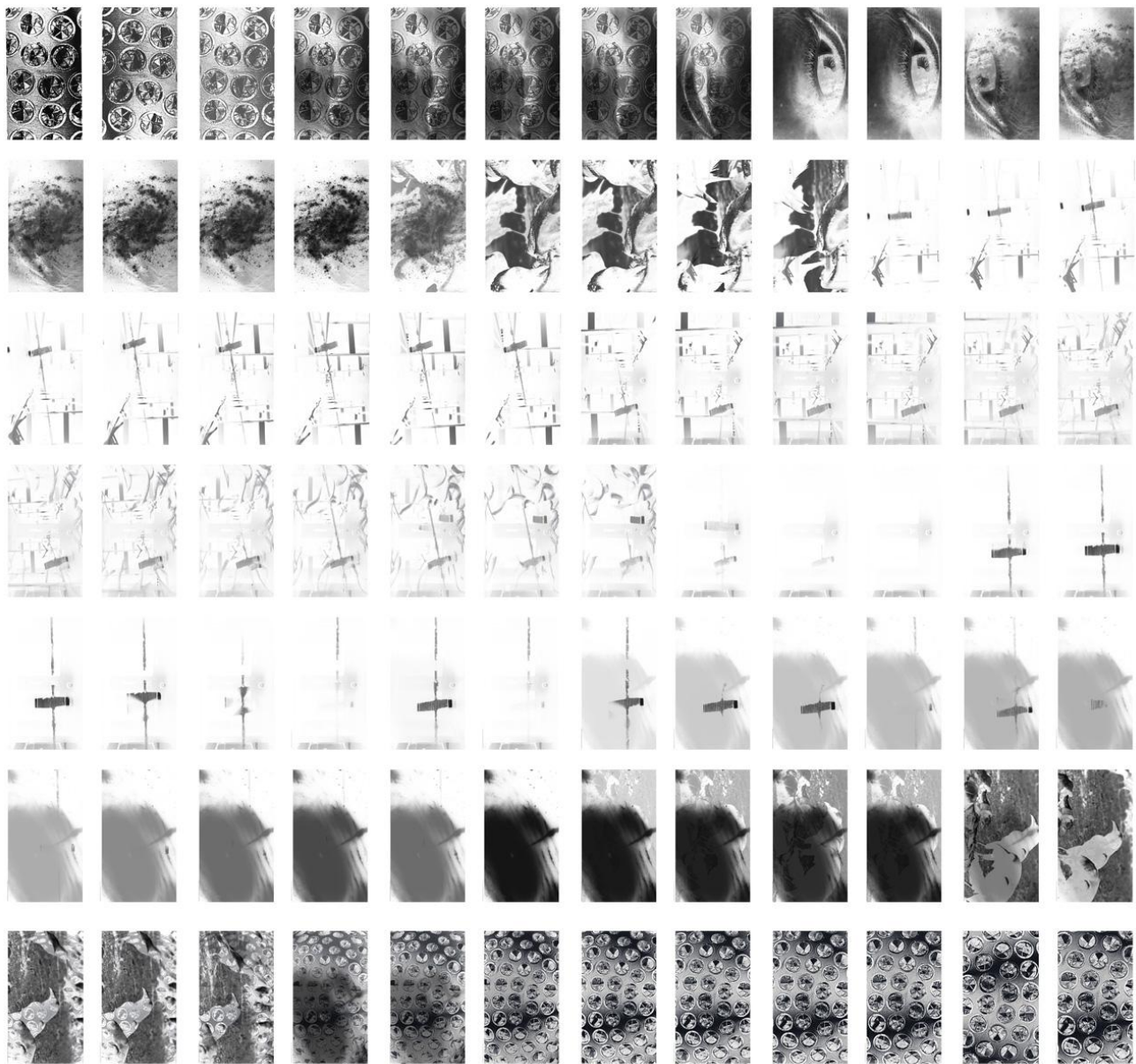
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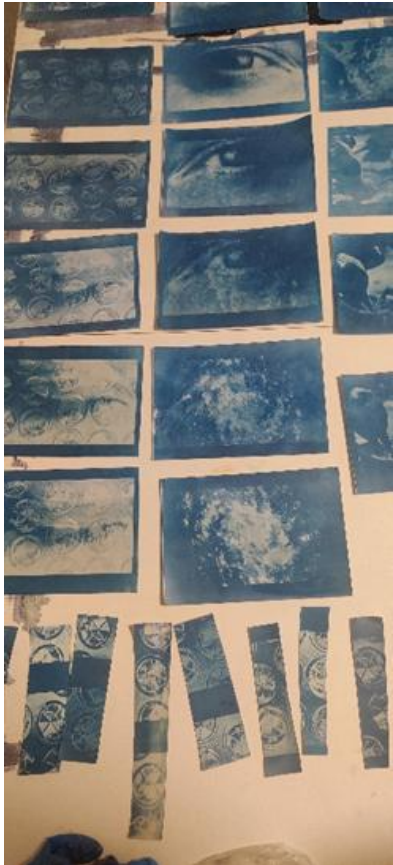


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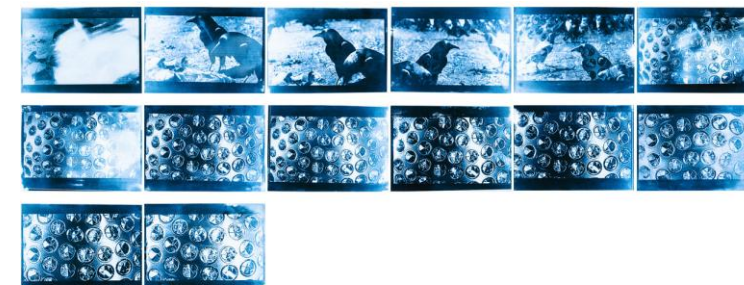


Contacts sheet for cyanotypes (5frames)

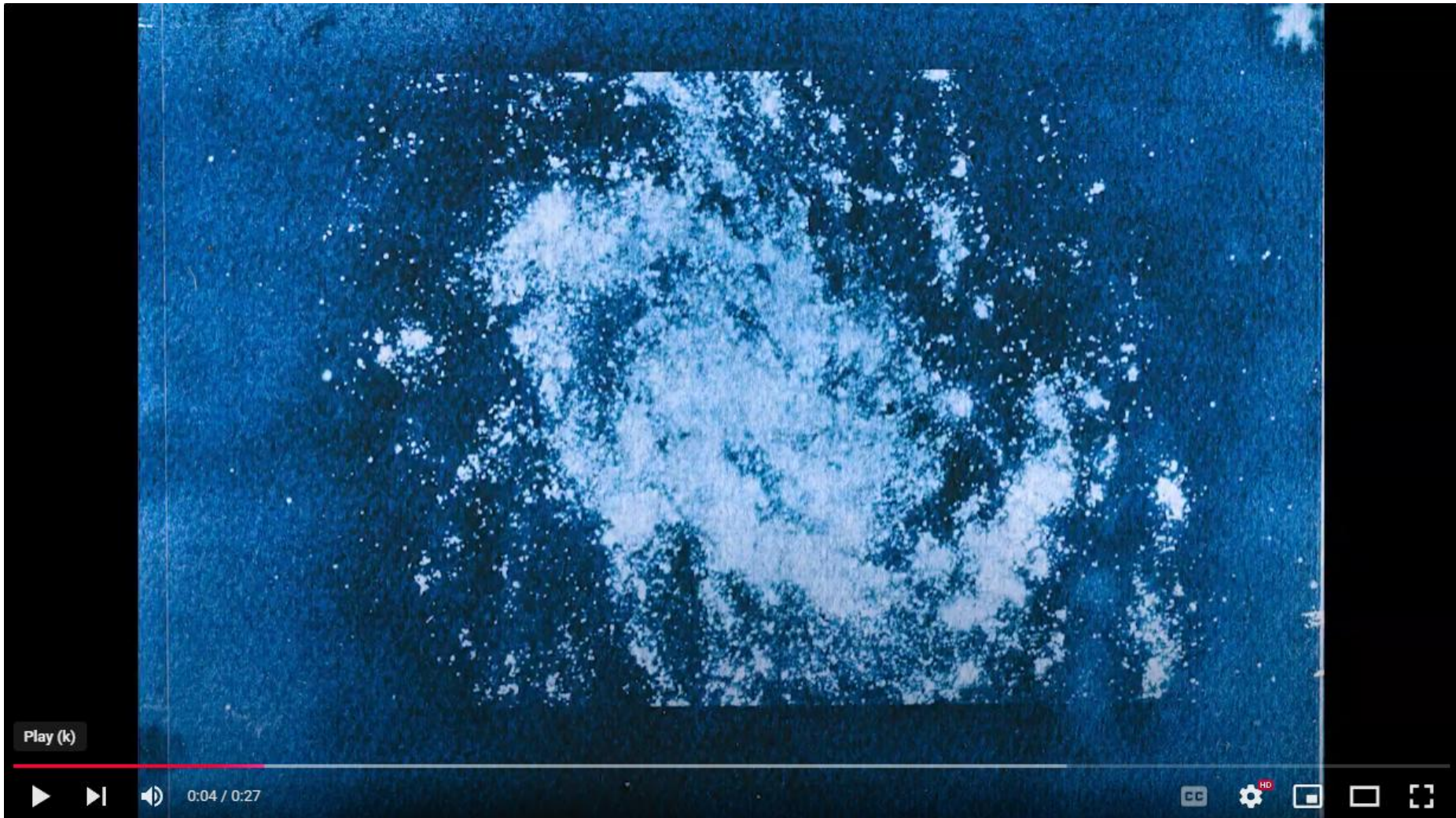




I made cyanotypes of the frames, scanned them, and created a cyanotype video. This process was time-consuming, so I purchased a UV lamp to better manage the volume of prints and speed up the process. This experimentation with combining cyanotype prints and video allowed me to explore how physical and digital elements can coexist to enhance the project's conceptual narrative.



The cyanotypes were created for a video. However, the physicality of the prints made me reflect on how the images are printed and fixed onto a material. The way they are fixed transforms them into objects, making them change and become something different.



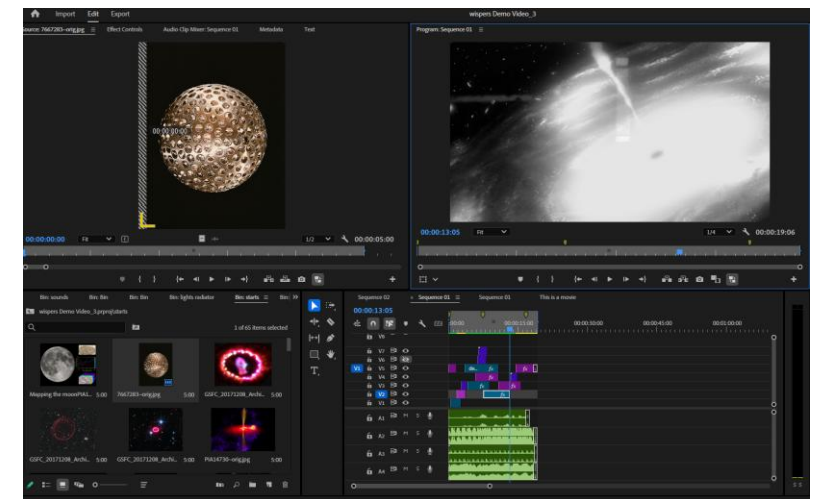
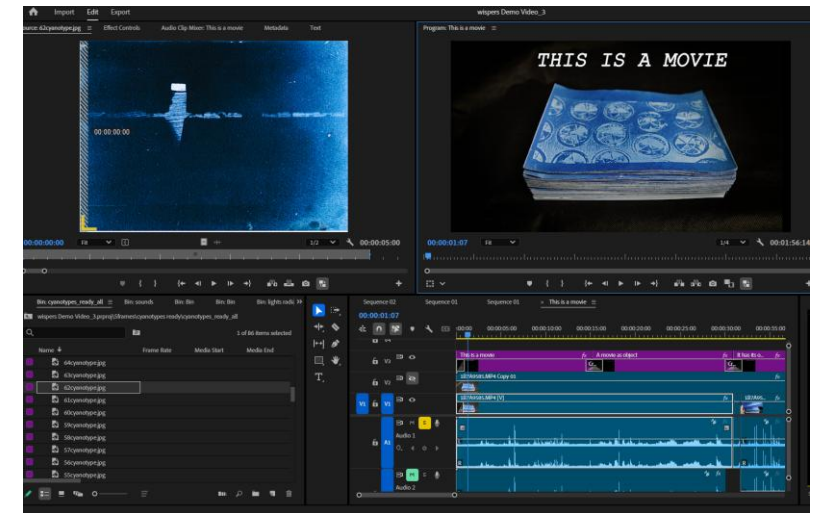
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h92bRPP5sco>

I want to create small videos with a physical presence. The video could play at 24 frames per second, but a paper version—perhaps at 5 frames per second—could be printed on stacks of paper, with some frames displayed on a wall or even rolled up.

After this experience, I realized the importance of being certain about the video I chose for the cyanotypes, as the process is time-consuming and requires paper, chemicals, acetate, and printing. That's the beauty of this process: everything can always be retouched and edited in a digital medium, creating a never-ending cycle. But once the images are printed on paper, everything changes, it is fixed.

Something I've learned is the importance of being methodical with the cyanotypes. I need to write notes on the back of each print early on, as it's too easy to lose track of so many prints.

I've decided to create one small video using cyanotypes to showcase how incredible it is to physically hold a clip or a movie in your hands.



THIS IS A MOVIE



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CK94PIHmCgY>

The concept of piles, each pile is a different movie/clip.

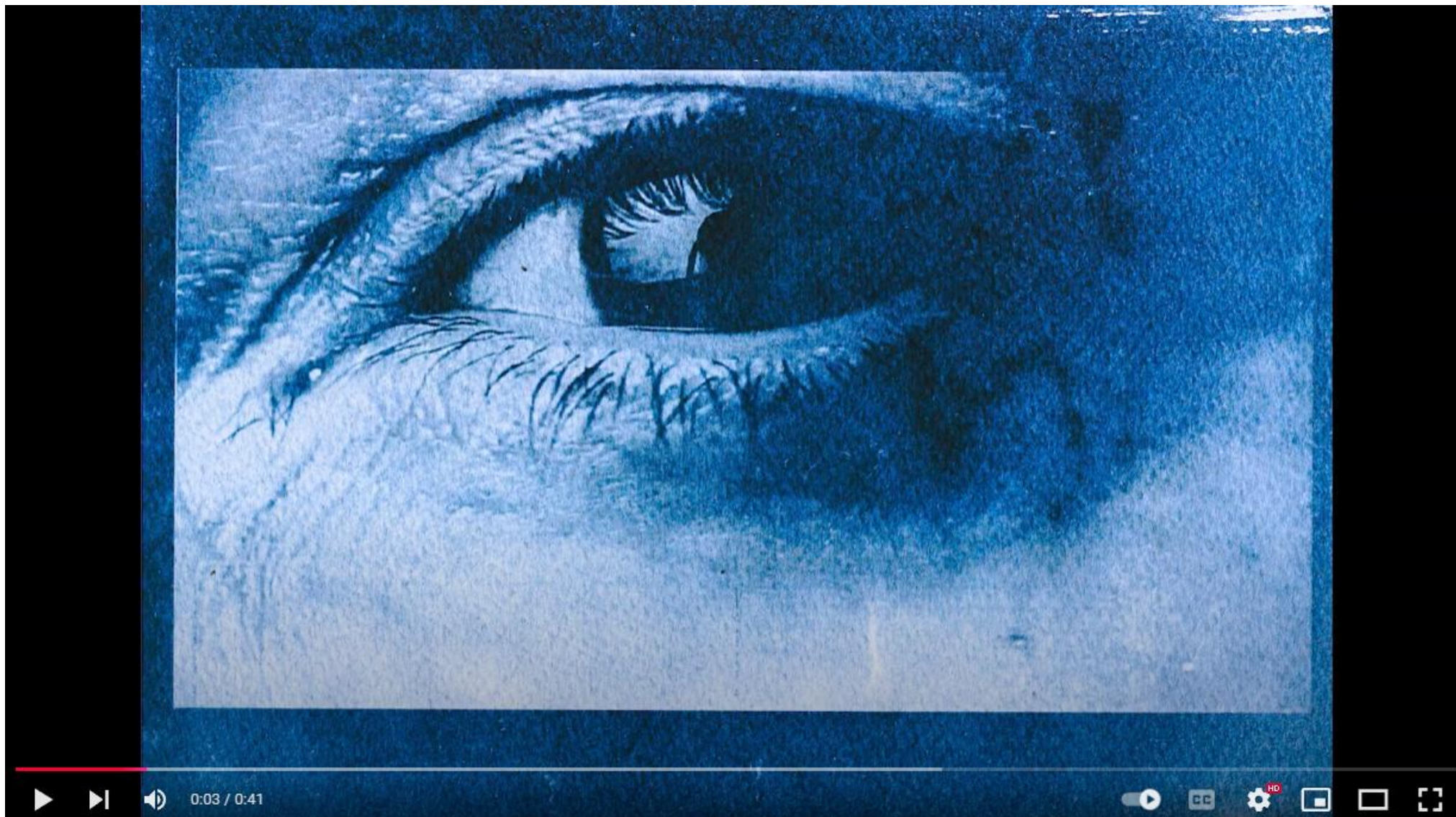
I want to be able to touch it, to wear it (next step fabric). I could make some kind of poncho, or scarf with a movie printed on it. I bought some cotton fabric to experiment with it.

I can imagine one immersive experience with video, audio, and a tactile element.

The next ones are the small demo videos with sound.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AR6UX98yFbg>



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eCkzp9YzzvE>

I think having two projections with different sounds playing simultaneously could work well for the exhibition. One projection would be digital, and the other created using scanned cyanotypes. They would be the same, yet not the same. I'll need to carefully coordinate them, so they complement each other, exploring the idea of time out of joint.

To enhance the immersive experience, I'm considering using cardboard and some kind of structure to create a darkened space for projecting the videos. This setup would need to be adaptable to different venues.

Printmaking Course: Exploring Physicality of Images

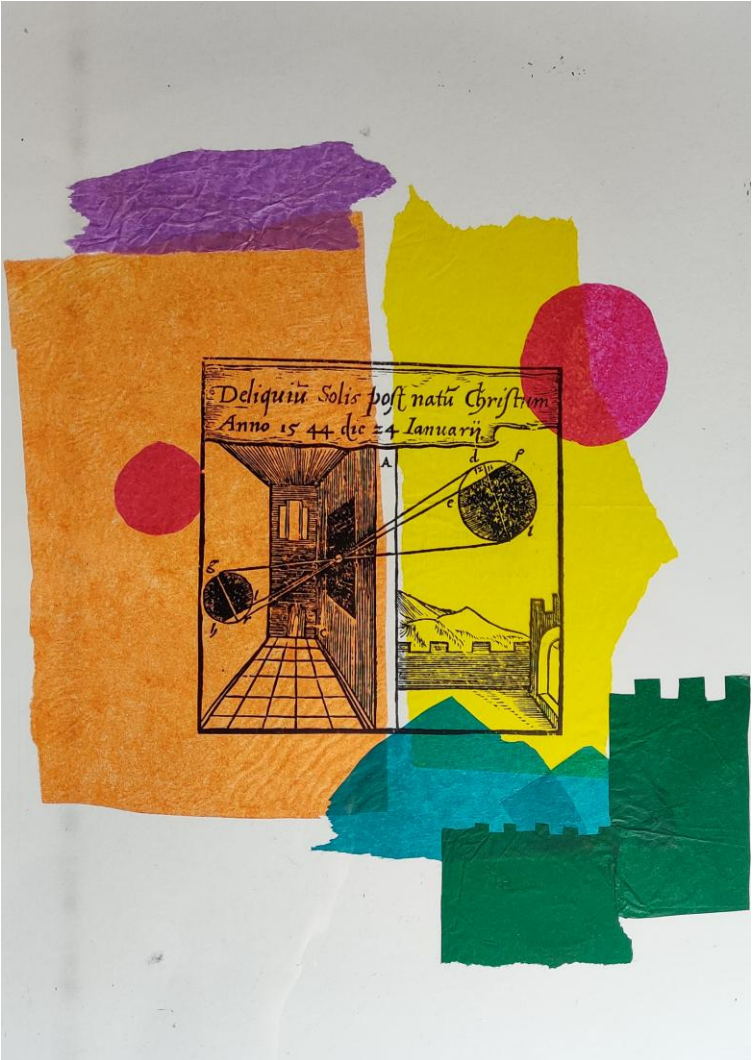
Duration: 10 weeks (09/10/2024 - 11/12/2024)

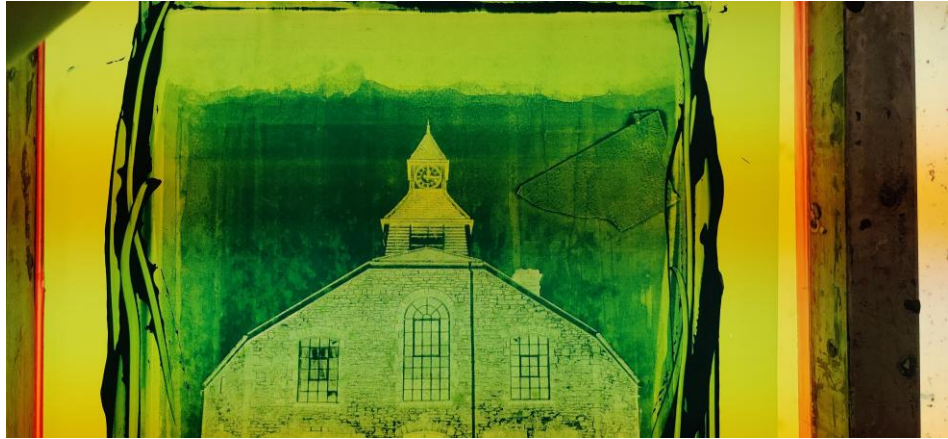
Course Structure: Weekly sessions every Wednesday

As part of my experimentation, I participated in a 10-week printmaking course, held once a week, to explore the physicality of images. The course introduced me to various printmaking techniques, which helped me better understand the tactile nature of image creation. Through this experience, I was able to experiment with textures, layering, and manipulating the physical elements of an image—an essential process for my project.

While I may not directly incorporate printmaking into the final work, this course has had a significant influence on my approach to working with physical materials. It deepened my understanding of how images interact with surfaces and textures, a concept I am applying to my cyanotype experiments. Additionally, the course encouraged me to reflect on the relationship between physical prints and digital elements, shaping how I plan to integrate these mediums in my final project.







Gathering

I have been collecting footage, videos, and audio files, and organizing them into folders for easy access. This process ensures that when the time comes to create the videos, all the necessary resources will be readily available.

Gathering is an integral part of the creative process. It involves not only recording but researching, and jotting down ideas, words, and images that resonate with the project. Revisiting these notes later helps me recall and refine the vision.

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Artist works

Oscar Muñoz: Memory, Ephemerality, and Encounter.

Oscar Muñoz's work influences my project, particularly through his exploration of memory's fragility and the instability of identity. Using photography, video, and installation, Muñoz redefines the photographic medium—not as a tool for preservation, but as a space for transformation and dissolution. His practice embodies a hauntological sensibility, where the past lingers and intertwines with the present, emphasizing the fleeting and spectral nature of existence.

In *Re-trato* (2004), Muñoz employs water as a medium to paint portraits that evaporate over time, creating a poignant meditation on the impermanence of identity. The title, a play on the Spanish words for "portrait" (*retrato*) and "retreat" (*re-trato*), highlights the cyclical process of creation and erasure. As the water evaporates, the image disappears, leaving behind only traces—a metaphor for how memory and selfhood continuously slip away through the cracks of time. This work resonates deeply with my own project, where I aim to create an encounter between the physical and the ephemeral. I draw inspiration from Muñoz's tactile and transient approach, incorporating the physicality of a movie and its temporal layering into my exploration of memory and identity. Like Muñoz's evaporating portraits, my work seeks to evoke the elusive and transformative nature of the self, inviting viewers into a space where presence and absence coexist, and where memory and identity are continuously redefined.



Oscar Muñoz, *Re-trato* (2004)

Elizabeth Price: Memory, Fragmentation, and the Role of Objects.

Elizabeth Price's work interrogates the relationship between memory, identity, and cultural objects, focusing on how memory is fragmented and erased over time.

Through video, sound, and installation, she explores how objects mediate our understanding of the past and how memories decay.

In *Woolworths Choir of 1979* (2012), Price reconstructs a moment of collective memory and loss through archival imagery and sound. The work's combination of preserved trauma and ephemeral memory mirrors my own interest in the fleeting nature of identity and the tension between presence and absence.



Elizabeth Price, *Woolworths Choir of 1979* (2012)

User Group Disco (2009) investigates the relational nature of memory through objects that hold fragmented histories. These objects, much like the images I use in my project, exist in a liminal space—present but ghostly, embodying the tension between memory's presence and absence.

Price's exploration of memory's instability and the spectral nature of objects directly informs my approach, particularly in how I engage with images and their transformative, ephemeral *qualities*.



Elizabeth Price, *User Group Disco* (2009)

Lindsay Seers: The Fluidity of Identity and Memory

Lindsay Seers' work explores the shifting nature of identity and how memory and perception continuously reshape our understanding of the self.

In *Nowhere Less Now* (2012), Seers immerses the viewer in a fragmented narrative through a two-channel video installation and sculptural structure, destabilizing the perception of time, identity, and memory. This aligns with my exploration as the work reflects how memory disrupts the present and challenges the notion of a fixed reality. In my project, I am also using headphones with different audio channels on the left and right, each presenting disjointed voices. This technique amplifies the fragmentation of reality, allowing for a disorienting experience that mirrors the shifting nature of memory and perception.

Cold Light (2022) blends the physical and virtual to show how both internal and external forces influence our sense of self. Seers' work resonates with my project's investigation into the relational and unstable nature of memory and identity, where the self is constantly in flux and defined by the interplay of past, present, and perception. Her immersive installations are something I am eager to explore in my own practice. I plan to create an immersive environment, possibly using structures made of fabric or cardboard, depending on the space and final concept of the work.



Lindsay Seers, *Nowhere Less Now* (2012)



Lindsay Seers, *Cold Light* (2022)

Through the works of Oscar Muñoz, Elizabeth Price, and Lindsay Seers, the photograph becomes a site of encounter—a dynamic space where identity, memory, and time are perpetually in flux.

The encounter, in their practices, creates moments of interaction between the viewer, the medium, and the subject, opening up spaces where meaning is negotiated and contested. This idea of encounter destabilizes fixed interpretations, fostering a relational process where identity and memory are experienced as fluid and multifaceted.

These artists challenge the traditional notion of the photograph as a static representation, transforming it into a medium that exposes the fragility, impermanence, and spectral nature of the self. Muñoz's ephemeral portraiture, Price's interrogation of absence and material culture, and Seers' immersive explorations of memory and identity demonstrate the photograph's capacity to rupture linear narratives and reveal the complexities of existence.

Together, their practices navigate the cracks, gaps, and spectres within the image, reminding us that identity is never fixed, that memory is always subject to loss and decay, and that the act of looking itself becomes an encounter with absence.

In these moments of rupture and transformation, the photograph transcends its role as a mere mirror of reality. It becomes a lens through which presence and absence coexist, memory is continuously rewritten, and identity is glimpsed as a fragmentary and evolving process. These artists help me see the photograph not as a means of capturing the past, but as a space of haunting and possibility—where what is lost and what remains converge to shape how we understand the self in relation to time and memory.

While there are many other artists whose work touches on similar themes, Muñoz, Price, and Seers are especially relevant to my project because their practices align closely with my own interest in memory, identity, and the photograph as a dynamic and evolving medium. Their work inspires me to think of the photograph not as a still moment, but as an active space where time, memory, and identity continuously transform.