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Exhibition 2 (ADAA5010)

Exhibition Evaluation

1084 Words

This semester, we were presented with the task of creating a photobook. Delving into our own areas of interest in order to select the subject of our work, I discovered the origin of my book within a poem by Walt Whitman entitled *As Consequent Etc.* In the writing, Whitman expresses the metaphor of the mouth of a river at the sea, signifying the end of journeys, of life and acts as a conclusive destination – "Or from the sea of Time, collecting vasting all, I bring" (Walt Whitman, *As Consequent Etc*). As my project developed, I found myself considering the comparison between of the journey of a river and that taken through the human lifetime and found myself intrigued by the depiction the two ideas mutually reflect of 'the end'. As a result, the ultimate results of my project were a series of photographs, entitled *Terminus,* that delved into the profound narrative of life's journey, portrayed through scarred rock faces and imperfect surfaces. Sourced from local coastlines, these images mirror the scars accumulated throughout human life, each pockmark telling a unique story of resilience, endurance and growth.

My initial proposal for the presentation of this work within an exhibition setting was similar to that utilised within my photobook, that being ring-binding that the viewer was able to open, remove, reorganise and take individual images away from if they wished. My main point of inspiration behind this idea was the work *Comme Il Faut Interactive Timeline* by Michal Granit. The timeline is composed of "images from campaigns and photo shoots since 1988" (Granit, 2012), and are displayed as small ring-bound booklets, arranged in a line around the exhibition space in order to signify the direction of time. An interesting element to this exhibition, is that the audience were "invited to select their favourites and collect them into envelopes they received when they arrived", which I feel that in addition to the inevitable 'leafing-through' of the work provides an opportunity to build a more personal link with the installation. Although I was able to progress with this concept through the making of my photobook, which went on to contribute greatly to the final product, I continued with the format of my exhibition contribution in a slightly different manner. I took into consideration a recent installation in Centrespace Gallery by one of my lecturers Joe Timothy Coleman, within which he mounted risograph-prints of deconstructed text – via AI software – to the walls of the gallery space with pins with the intention of encouraging audience engagement. On his website, Coleman writes "Come down to Centrespace, tear it down and take it away. Joe will replace it with the next in the edition" (Coleman, 2023), a statement I found to be a particularly interesting call for viewer contribution to the artwork. Following this, I considered the idea that the interaction and removal of my own work within an exhibition setting didn't necessarily have to amount to a gentle 'leaf-through' as seen in Granit's work, but instead could serve as a direct link to the tones of scarring and finality I

had already built on within my project. This being said, my final arrangement of work contributed to the UWTSD Second Year Photography and Fine Arts exhibition *Comma,* was a nod to both of these artists, with a heavy emphasis on the 'work-altering' nature of Coleman's work.

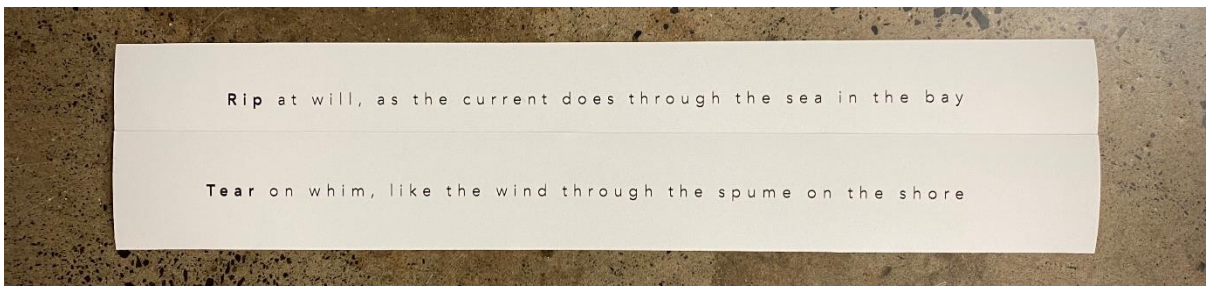
(*Comme Il Faut Interactive Timeline*, Michal Granit, 2012)

(*Sand Time And File Space,* Joe Timothy Coleman, 2023)

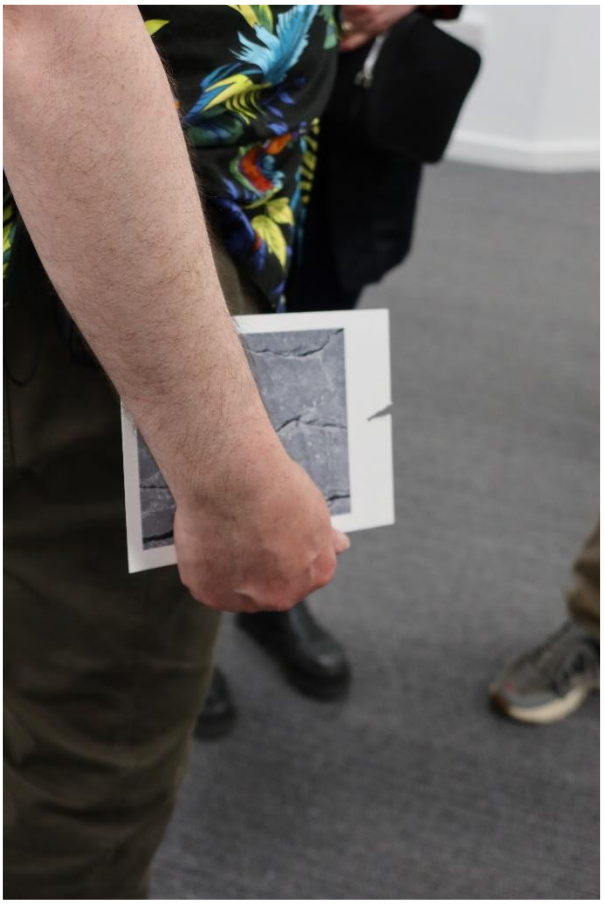
I chose to mount the 28 images of *Terminus* on a support beam/post within the Stiwdio Griffiths gallery space, using a single 20x3.0mm Clout Nail to hold each print in place. I felt that this choice of location would more likely allow the opportunity for viewer interaction, as the audience may be less opposed to the act of removing work if the space used has a less 'familiar' or typical gallery space appearance. Due to the nature of these nails, those who chose to interact with the work by removing an image, ultimately had no choice but to rip or alter the state of the paper in some way, with the nail heads preventing a 'clean' removal. This was an intentional choice that provided an outcome I was very pleased with, as whilst I was not looking to force an interaction, if an interaction did occur the individual was still forced to add to the 'scarring' in some way. This was my way of furthering the 'journey' of *Terminus* through audience participation.

Along with the images, I also chose to form a series of 'poetic' instruction to accompany the work on the pillar. Whilst not wanting to directly instruct the viewer simply through commands, I chose to write two sentences that suggest the intended procedure; "Rip at will, as the current does through the sea in the bay. Tear on whim, like the wind through the spume on the shore." I mounted the phrases on an 8x130cm vinyl banner, which wrapped around the pillar, at about 4ft off the ground. I felt this would encourage viewers to complete a full circuit of the installation, and through observation on the opening evening, I believe this had the desired effect.

Throughout the course of the exhibition, I found that there was a great variation in the interaction between the audience and the work. I had a few people approach me to say that they just couldn't bring themselves to remove the work, whilst I had others express their excitement at being able to touch and take the work themselves. By the end of the evening, all 28 prints had been taken, which I very much see as a positive outcome, however, at the same time nicely leads me on to a specific point for improvement I discovered. Due to printing demand at the time, I was not able to print another copy of the series to replace the first ones mounted, as I initially planned to in my proposal. However, whilst initially I saw this as a shame, I also found potential for this to simply add to the theme of 'endings' and 'finality' within the work. Among other elements within this project, this has proven to me the importance of simply testing an idea and developing on it, and how the progression of ideas can come from mistakes and shortcomings as well as successes and meeting of goals. Overall, I feel that the experience of this exhibition and the process of creating the work displayed within it, was very positive and allowed me to gain a great insight into the more interpersonal side of publicising artwork.



(*Terminus,* Nia Jane, 2023)



(*Terminus,* Nia Jane, 2023, in *Comma,* Stiwdio Griffith UWTSD Swansea)