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For my dissertation I will be looking at 3 key words that I think will be interesting to link with my project. For my topic I would like to focus on Identity through photography and here are some things that I may look at within this project. How easy it is to manipulate people; I want to look at this because social media/the internet has a way of manipulating people, you never know what truth is and what is not. Mental health is a big part of some people's identity as you do not really know what they are going through and I would like to look at this as it is a big part of me as I suffer a lot with this. Another is Identity, capturing people and their emotions, expressions, showing their culture, body, personality and their true self.

Manipulation

Manipulation within photography is basically the transformation of a photograph by experimenting with different techniques and methods to receive a good outcome. Some photograph manipulations can be very good, skilful and artistic but others can be false and horrible as some are used to deceive the public eye.

Eric Johansson a photographer and a visual artist from Sweden. His work is described as surreal world created by mixing different photographs to make one photograph. His goal is to make his photos look realistic as possible even if it has impossible elements.



Stuck Inside, 2020

Manipulation has become a thing in this world today in different ways as the social media tend to show fake photos of people which manipulates people to thinking that they really look

like that. Celebrities tend to have their photographs taken and uploads them onto the social media app called Instagram, but I've noticed they wouldn't upload an actual photo as they would have to edit their photo first before deciding whether to upload or not. Editing your photos by enhancing them to make them feel more real to others might be unacceptable but it depends on the way you edit them. There's an Instagram account called @themittenmutt which is a dog-based account where the owner of the account Drew Mason takes photos of his dog and uploads it onto the account. The way he edits his photos is by enhancing the image so the colours pop more which changes the whole image.

Figure 1



Image by Drew Mason | www.instagram.com/themittenmutt

In image one you can see that it was taken on a camera possibly on a tripod, but the photo is simple, has no filter and it's not edited.

In image two you can see where Drew has edited the photo to where you can see it how much its edited. All he did was enhance the image so that the colours pop more and it's stands out.

Figure 2



'Fake news'

During lockdown 2020 a Danish photo news agency set two of its photogs with creating a series to show how simple it is to lie through photography. This shows how one photograph from one simple angle can manipulate the whole world through one easy photograph. There are lockdown rules where you must stay at least 2 metres away from people and on one of these photographs you can see that from a certain angle it looks like they are all sitting together really close which made people angry as they were breaking lockdown rules. On the other photo you can see that the photo was taken at another angle and it clearly shows that they are 2 metres away from each other just chatting.

A celebrity named Khloe Kardashian had one of her photographs leaked which was herself in a bikini with no filter or edits added to it. Khloe has always edited photos then uploads them which has manipulated so many people in to thinking that her body is “perfect”, but it isn’t. She received a bunch of hate as soon as this photograph got leaked as it isn’t an edited photo of her so you could see the real her and her body, but when she uploads an edited filtered photograph of herself, she receives so much love. I don’t agree with body shaming as it’s hurtful and it’s such a horrible thing to go through, but she has manipulated a lot of people by uploading edited photos of herself looking perfect when she really doesn’t need the photoshop. Khloe explained why she edits her pictures and would continue to do so as that’s the way she likes to present herself to the world and she wants to be seen that way. *“My body, my image and how I choose to look and what I want to share is my choice. It’s not for anyone to decide or judge what is acceptable or not anymore.”* (Khloe Kardashian, 2021) It is her

life, her decision on what she can and can't upload and no one can stop her, not even the trolls. I do agree with editing photographs to make herself look more presentable to the world and how they want people to see her, as that something I would do. I tend to add filters or at least edit photographs of myself as without them I feel disgusting, and I couldn't upload them without it.

This just shows how many people and celebrities rely on filters and photoshop as they don't want to show the real them so to them, they want to be perfect but that means manipulating others on what they want them to see. Filters aren't a bad thing as they were added to apps to have a laugh, experiment and build up some confidence, if it were bad, they would have removed it. Khloe never photoshopped her body to the point where she would have been "unrecognisable", a lot of celebrities or fashion models do photoshop themselves to the point where it looks nothing like them.

Another example is the photograph of Kate Middleton and Prince William presented the third royal baby to the world.

The dangers of a one sided story



Here are two photographs of Prince William which are both taken from different angles. This really does show on how much angles are important during photography as if the second

photograph weren't taken it would have caused so much drama as in the first image it looks like he is sticking a middle finger up to people, but he stuck up three fingers as it's the third royal baby. This is another way of manipulating the truth as people tend to believe images if they don't have another image or proof to back it up. So many people post fake news of people and I love how these images shows everyone that there are two angles, two different views not just a one-sided story.

Mental Health

What is mental health? Mental health or in other words "emotion health" or your "well-being", it affects on how we feel, act and think. It can help the way we handle other people, relate to others, handle stress and make choices.

Katie Joy Crawford a photographer who did a project called My Anxious Heart and it identifies how emotionally, and physically general anxiety disorders can be. She has carried anxiety through out her life so decided to interpret her roles as both instigator and victim through self-portraiture. She expresser herself through photographing herself and her photographs really does show that symptoms of how true anxiety is and how it can really affect someone.

Figure 3



"They keep telling me to breathe. I can feel my chest moving up and down. Up and down. Up and down. But why does it feel like I'm suffocating? I hold my hand under my nose, making sure there is air. I still can't breathe." (Katie Crawford)

Photography is a big must for mental health as it gives people a good well being as it helps boost their self-esteem, their confidence, memories and it helps you with focusing and staying calm. Photography is used as an alternate therapy to help people with anxiety or depression as photos can be used to show emotions, thoughts and express their feelings but it is also a hobby for quite a lot of people as it gives them something to do. Doing photography doesn't mean you'd need an expensive camera, you can just use a mobile phone, a tablet or anything that has a camera on it. Her photographs stand out a lot to me as I struggle a lot with my mental health everyday and ever since lockdown, and it's probably not just me and my family dealing with this as lockdown has messed up a lot of peoples mental health as no one was able to get out of the house, meet each other and see families.

Identity

What is identity? Identity is how you express who you are and how others see you. It helps us make important decisions and teaches us how to behave so that you don't forget important things like being open-minded, saying the truth and being kind to one another.

There's a lot of ways to show identity and here are some ways, gender, body image, religion, beliefs, make up, clothes, tattoos etc. Identity is such an important thing as it's who you are and those are some ways of how identity can be shown and ways of how people express themselves with their culture, relationships and their interests.

Figure 4



Identity Series (Michalina Wozniak)

Photographer Michalina Wozniak is a self-taught photographer based in Poland. She likes to share her deep and dark emotions to show how disturbing they are. She wants to be able to feel strong connections and between herself and other worlds but also wants to be able to touch it somehow. Her identity series are based on a girl wearing a mask where she hides her face using a mask, looking into a mirror or just hanging masks. I believe she used a mask as she wanted to hide who she was, she wanted to be too anonymous so that her identity could be hidden. This shows that she could be keeping her emotions hidden so that no one can see them. The black and white images make the photographs darker, shows me

emotions to the actual images as it gives a very dark feelings as there's a lot of stuff going on, but the audience can't see it as we're not the one behind that mask.

The reason behind identity is that to me is that everyone is different in their own ways and shouldn't be afraid to show their true self. Everyone tends to keep them selves to themselves as it's an easy thing to do and people don't really tend to think about it. I'm a person that will keep stuff hidden as I don't really like to share stuff with other people, I suffer a lot with body image on myself as I've put on quite a bit of weight and it's made me less confidence and I've lost the real me. As a person who suffers a lot with identity, I would love to base my dissertation off that as I want to show people the REAL me because I'm not sure on how to change myself, but I know with photography it will help me be more open.

Overall, I feel like these 3 keywords manipulation, mental health and identity will work better for me and the dissertation as it focuses on how you can see identity through a photograph. So, my question is that can you see the real me? I chose this question because I believe that not a lot of people show the real them, so I want to show the REAL me, no photoshop, no filters, no edits just the real me. I want to express my self through photographs, I want to be artistic with them, I want to be REAL. So, I believe that these keywords really do mean a lot to me, so I want so show others that I suffer with mental health through photographs, my body isn't perfect, but I want to show others on how it's okay not to be perfect and how having filters, photoshops, manipulating people is so easy. We are all different in our own ways and I think its about time that everyone understands that.

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