

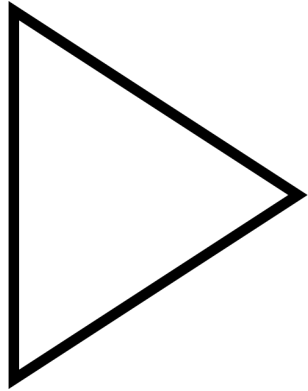
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Programme of Study. Documentary Photography and Visual Activism

Module. ADAA6001

Lecturer's Name. Ryan Moule



All images with this symbol are moving images.

Please, if the work does not start on it's own, click on the image to make it play.

This diary was made to be viewed in full screen.

Thank You

Sarah Grounds

Visual Diary



THOUGHTS ABOUT EXHIBITIONS (4/11/2022)

The more I think about the presentation of my work the less desire I have to present my work in a conventional gallery way. Frames, mounts, squares, endless squares, scattered across the walls. How can you REALLY make someone interact with a work, on an emotional level? Can that really be achieved in a gallery? How can I recreate the intimacy of a solo performance on a stage, in an image? Can that electricity be ignited between the art and the viewer?

We are always talking about how the screen has devalued art and the interaction with art. But the most profound and moving interactions I have had with art, are through my screen. Immersing myself in the work, blocking out all other stimuli. Zooming in and feeling the intricate details, zooming out and seeing it as a whole and that is all I see, nothing else. Can that be achieved in a gallery? How?

Opening nights are awful, I can't view peoples work in those kind of atmospheres. How many people go back the next day and BE with a work?

Work in permanent collections can enjoy this. You can BE with them, is that what continues people's love for these works? How can an unknown artist, in a week or two long group exhibition, achieve that kind of intimacy?

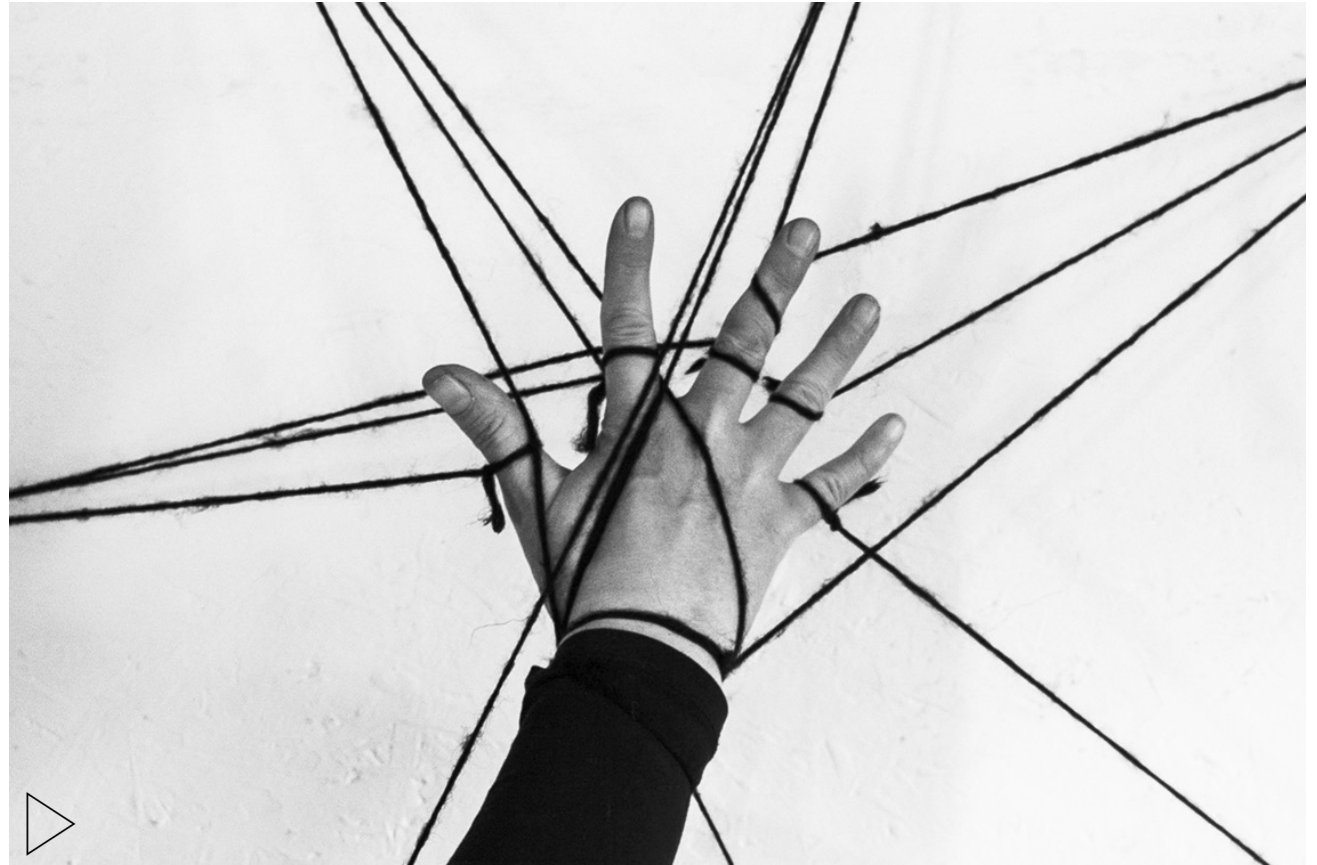


LINKS is a project looking at structures in our society. Using ideas from Social Ecology, The Rhizome Theory and Permaculture.

I have been expressing my ideas about our society by using links since the beginning of the first year. I have also always been expressing it through installation, long exposures and moving image. I was concerned about how I would be able to combine all the different strands of my practice for my final degree show. But now I realise that all my strands have been combining right from the start. And I didn't have to be worried.

For this module I am going to explore the different ways I can express my ideas and how the process affects the outcome. I will also be exploring how to present my work and how that process also affects the outcomes.





I had begun exploring my ideas in my home at the end of the second year and this is something that I am I am very excited about and want to explore more.

I am discovering a lot of artists, who base their work on themselves and their own homes but are creating work that talks of wider issues and our society as a whole.



The two photographers met at a photo club in Santa Fe and hit it off immediately. They decided to create a project together in Marcia's backyard. They constructed sets and documented each other in them. Making work about how they feel and things they have gone through in their lives. The project was called TRIALS (2020).

I find this project very interesting. The age difference in the artists, Marcia was 74 and Andres 23 creates an interesting dynamic. Also the fact all the work is created in Marcia's home and using everyday items.

MARCIA REIFMAN & ANDRES MARIO DE VARONA



SUMMER HOLIDAYS

A quick look at some of the things I got
up to over the Summer holidays.
This is just a small amount of the work
that I produced over the Summer.





Over the Summer I explored creating Links installations in my own home and recording the performance through photography. I also attempted to create some stop motion, but this did not come out well and I did some long exposure work with the installation.

For the work at the kitchen table I linked everything on the table after having lunch, including the table, chairs and myself. I led the links to the ceiling with the vision of it then being connected with other people, at other tables.

I liked the outcomes of this work and am excited by the idea that I can create installations at home but then link them to the outside World.



EXPLORING THE IMPACT OF **WHERE** THE PHOTO IS TAKEN



I also continued to explore creating emotional work at home without being in front of a plain backdrop. I realise that I perform differently when in my own environment rather than creating in an anonymous space. When I am in the project room I can completely release myself emotionally and physically but I wonder if maybe that is too much and creates an extreme version of me. In my home environment I feel I express myself more purely. I do have a very manic, intense side, especially when away from my home environment. But when at home, I am very quiet and complete. This is my safe space where I can recover from the strain and stress of being in the World. I think that is reflected in the work I create at home.

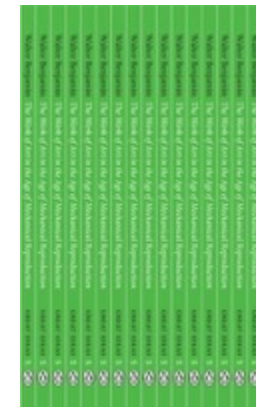




THE INTAMACY OF HOME

Improvised stop motion with no editing

My work is very strongly based upon improvisation. This has always been the case, since I was a child, when I was encouraged from a very young age to express myself through dance and music. I realise now, that this training, from my Mother, who was a dancer and my Father who is a Jazz pianist has really empowered me in my art practice and is actually fundamental to it. I believe that by approaching my work through improvisation I create much more real, honest and intimate work. I misunderstood for a long time what we were being taught about creating work and thinking about it. I thought that everything had to be planned, with no space for improvisation and going with my feelings at the time of creating. Now I understand, I am very excited to be able to freely incorporate my improvisation skills into my work. I have been experimenting then with creating improvised stop motion performances.



Walter Benjamin
talks of film
making being
broken up
through editing
and so losing it's
essence.

GETTING POLITICAL

Fundamentally, I am a political artist. But as my work becomes more and more based around me, I do panic about the political message still being heard.

My reading for my dissertation is extremely politically based and this inspired me to start going to RMT rallies and also to the March for Independence in Cardiff.

Even though I now know that my final work as an artist will not be what is seen as classic documentary work.

The process of going to these kind of events and documenting them is extremely good for my practice. It keeps the fire in me burning about politics, it is good for my photography skills and it is also really good for my communication skills. I now feel confident to go to these kinds of events and tell people that I am a documentary photographer. I also contacted local newspapers about the RMT rallies I went to in Swansea. They liked the images but they were not used, I think because it would have been such a political statement for the local newspapers to publish articles about the strikes. I shall continue to attend local political events and approach papers with the work.



SHARON HAYES INSPIRED

Whilst writing my dissertation, I read about Sharon Hayes, a political artist, activist and professor at University of Pennsylvania.

Seeing this work inspired me to create some of my own political signs, talking about current events happening in the news.

I think I will always be jumping between little projects and big projects. This was a nice little project to do over the Summer and I shot it on my phone using the RAW feature.



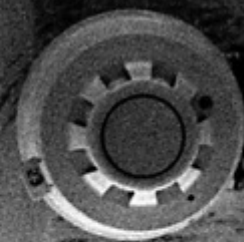


Documentary Work

Since I started doing photography I have tried to keep a strict practice of shooting every day. I strongly believe this is very important as an artist, to hone my skills as a photographer will empower me as an artist. My main form of doing this is at home on my farm.

I take photos of my family and also walk around the land. I have always had this vision that my documentary work and my self portraits would be presented together in exhibitions and this is something I want to really explore. The images make sense to me to be together. But working out how to make it make sense for others is the challenge.

BACK AT
UNI



I was very lucky to get the chance to do my first proper installation in Stwdio Griffiths. I was unsure of the space I would have, so this was a challenge in creating the templates for the images. I also decided to make the background of the images white, so the bodies would look more like they were floating. I had never had my work printed on vinyl before, so this was a challenge to work it all out. I also had to check with the printers that they were ok with printing nude work. They were very friendly and helpful and I would use them again.

The installation took me seven hours to install, which was a real learning curve. I had submitted the idea to a few open calls, one of which told me I was short listed. I am very happy that it was not chosen though, as I would not have been able to produce it like I had thought and I would have needed a team of people to help me.

This installation was based on two walls, which didn't work as well as my practice on three, also the wool was a little thin. I didn't like the installation with the dark floor and would have wanted it with an all white background and no ceiling vents etc. But I did get a lot of good feedback from people about the work. What was interesting was that a lot of people said they found it almost hypnotising and they wanted to get in the installation, to be a part of it. This is something to think about for future installations.



Practice installation on three walls.



LEARN ANALOGUE

One of the main things I have decided to do in the third year is learn analogue photography. I bought a OM1n in the beginning of the first year, which was a model recommended by an Instagram friend. I used it once and then left it.

I feel that is a big gap in my knowledge as a photographer. One of my ideas for work as a photographer is to work in a University, either as a lecturer or technician. If I want to do this, then I really need to have a good knowledge of analogue. This is the driving force for me to learn. I also think it would help my confidence as a photographer.



PLEASE VIEW MY
ANALOGUE PHYSICAL
FOLDER TO SEE MY
DIARY OF MY
PROGRESSION WITH
ANALOGUE
PHOTOGRAPHY.





SHEEP, RAIN, TRAIN

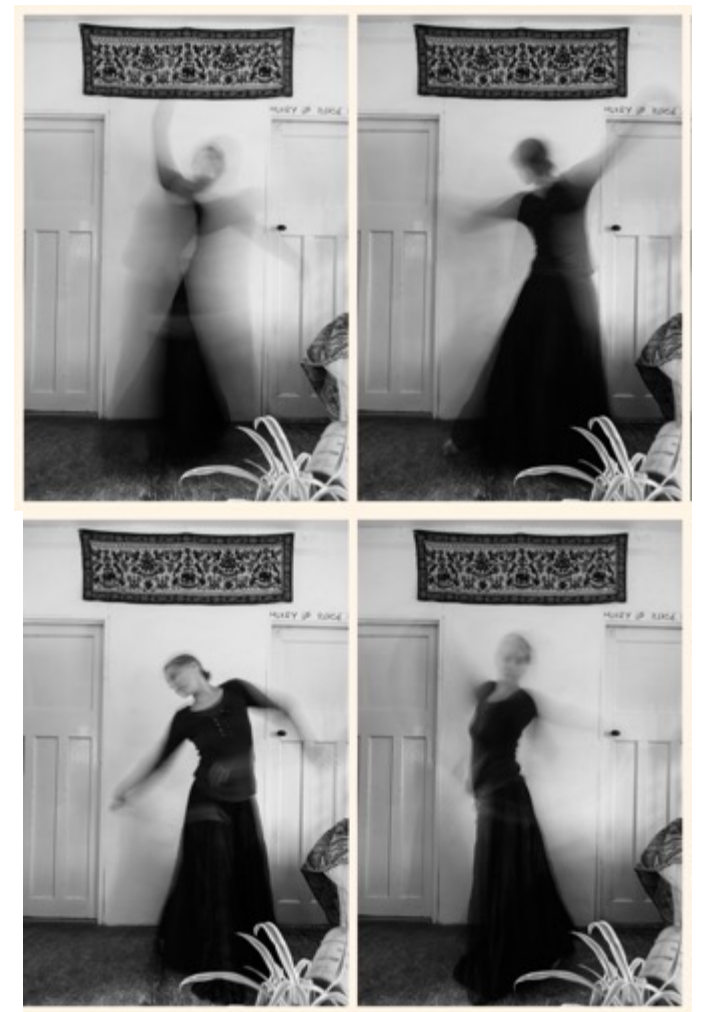
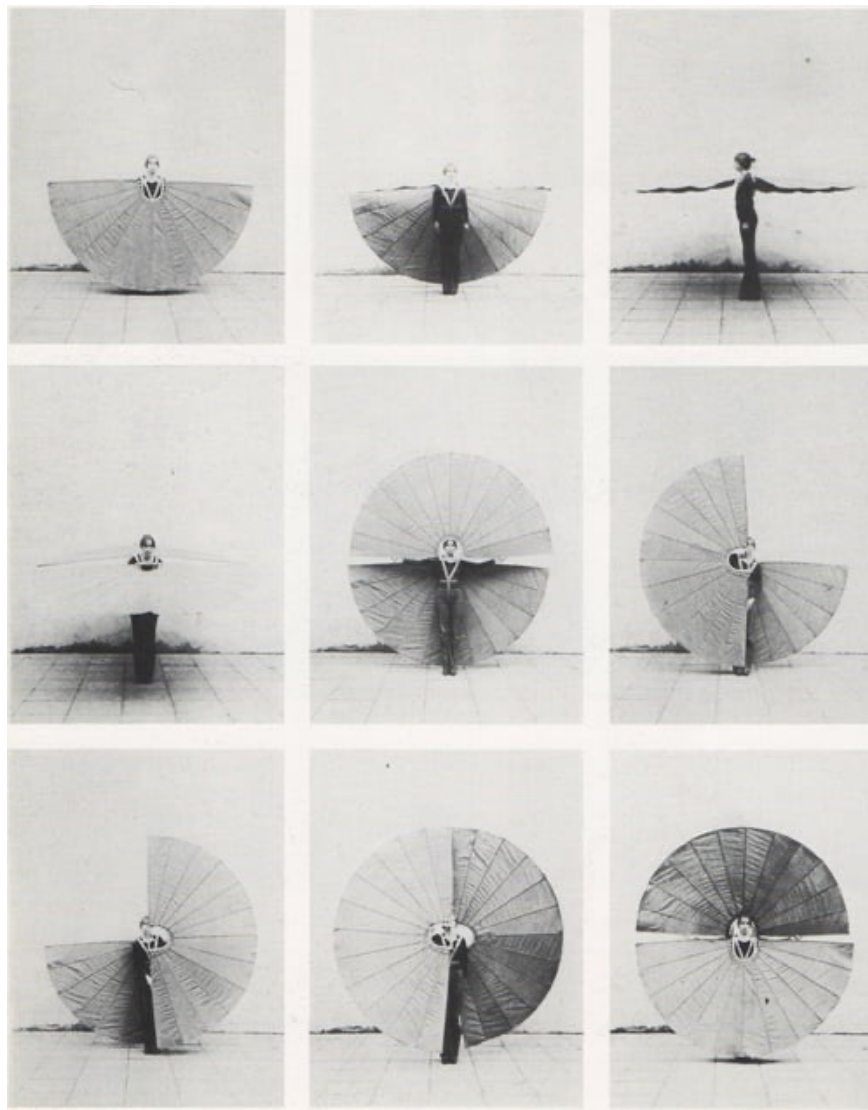
I made a stop motion with my phone whilst travelling into Uni because everything was so beautiful.



REBECCA HORN



DUANE MICHALS



SEQUENCING

Having discovered Duane Michals work I discovered his sequence images. I have looked at sequence work before, but Michals work really moved and excited me. I realised my stop motion work is sequences and so have thought that I may experiment with presenting my stop motion as sequence work rather than presenting them as a moving image. So far I am not enjoying it in my own work but I have only tried with already created work. Michals created sequences that tell a story, so I want to try creating a work specifically as a sequence, still image work.



FINDING UTOPIA

I made a stop motion in the bath about how I feel at peace when I am in the bath. I felt it was a nice simplified analogy to my desire for a different society. Somewhere more peaceful, a rest from the craziness.



SWANSEA

A spur of the moment stop motion I shot in town.

I like making these very much. I view them as

Documentary art stop motion.

Stop motion takes the normal and turns it magical and shows people how amazing everything around us is.



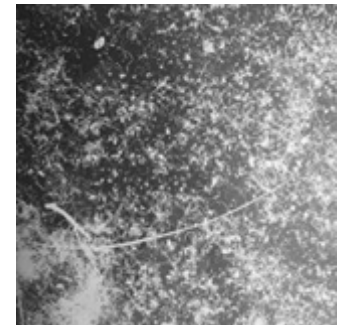


I have not done much street photography lately but I saw this lady on the train and I had to take a photo, as she was so beautiful. I was very chuffed that a Female street photography page on Instagram featured it.



Workshop with Joe

We had a workshop with Joe and he gave us the homework of using tape to pick up dust, skin etc. I decided to make a stop motion, as I was finding the process of removing my skin cells to create an image very interesting. I also documented all the places I got samples from. We then made photograms from the tape.





My work featured in a magazine. This is the first time I have seen my work in a physical publication. I was so excited I made a stop motion.



Fujifilm gfx100s



The Uni had bought a new medium format digital camera, so I thought I would give it a go. I had borrowed the Fujifilm gfx50 in the second year, which I did not like, so was not expecting to like this. Surprisingly, I loved it at first use. I wonder if maybe I just wasn't ready for this camera last academic year.





I ended up being ill when I borrowed this camera. So I spent a lot of time sat on the sofa working out the settings on it. This is when I discovered that it can do up to 1 hour long long exposures. I wonder what that looks like? Can one create a whole performance in one image? I did some little experiments and discovered I loved the sound that the gfx100s makes when doing long exposures. It made me feel more linked to the camera, enjoying the sound it makes, almost like a purr. I decided, despite feeling ill, to do some experiments with long exposures. The longest long exposure I had done was 30 seconds, so I decided to start small and tried 1 minute. There was nothing there, I realised that I would have to start from scratch so went to 30 seconds, still nothing :D So I tried quicker ones from 1 second. These were better but still not up to the standard of image I am used to producing now with my Canon. People have talked of building a relationship with a camera and I realised that that is what I have done with my Canon. Knowing it's speeds, sounds and working with that, has become second nature to me in a shoot. So I need to build up a relationship with the Fujifilm. This is going to be a long process. So I have decided to try and borrow it every other week. I think, in the long run, this will be the camera I use for my slow self portraits. I can not use it for my more energetic images, as it is too slow. But the speed of the camera reflects the energy of the image, which is lovely.



I also took the Fujifilm outside to try doing some more documentary style photography with it.



LADY CROSSES ROAD

I noticed an interesting affect with a mirrored window, looking outside at Uni. So I made a quick stop motion with my phone.



Site Specific Stop Motion Projected Back Into The Space Created



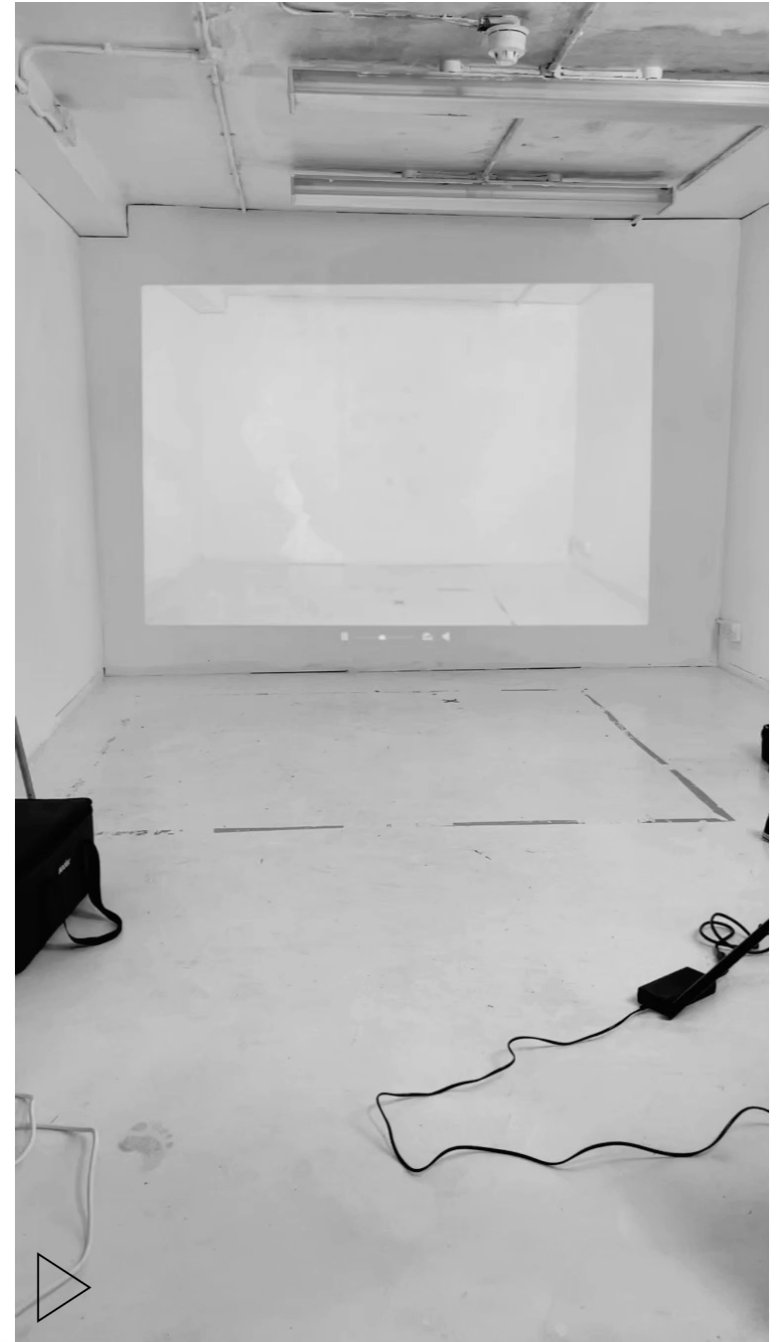
I have been thinking a lot about how I can present my stop motion work in an exhibition environment. A lot of my stop motion is about release, freedom and self expression and it feels wrong to present it boxed in, on a screen. I decided then to try using a projector and freeing the work. Once I had decided that, the idea of creating site specific work came quite quickly. So I needed to investigate if I could then project it exactly back into where it was created.

I booked the project room, a light so I could create long exposures in the room, the Canon 5Dsr, so I could create large file images and a projector. I had a little workshop with Daf to work out which projector would work best for my needs.

I ended up borrowing the new Canon camera as the 5Dsr had not been returned. But I do not like that camera so ended up using my own 5D Markii for the session.

Making the stop motion was easy but projecting it back into the space proved to be a lot harder. The projector I borrowed was good for the fact it could be put on a tripod, which meant I could position it exactly as I needed. But it had to be so far away from the wall it was projecting onto, that I ended up with it outside the room in the corridor. Even then, the projection was no way near fitting back into the space. I decided to try making a more close up stop motion, in the hope that that would be easier to present back in the room. But that was also disappointing. I decided to try the other projector that projects wider nearer the wall but has no ability to go on a tripod.

This ended up being better for fitting back into the space, but it still wasn't a good fit. I will have to experiment in a larger room I think. But it did give me an idea of what it would look like. When I made the stop motion I intentionally tried different things, like dancing across the room, twirling in one space and walking across the room. Projected back, I particularly liked the walking and will try making a video of just that.





I did try making some different stop motions for the space. But none of it worked well and I decided I was hurrying doing these and I should stop and let my self mull it over for a bit. Try again another time.



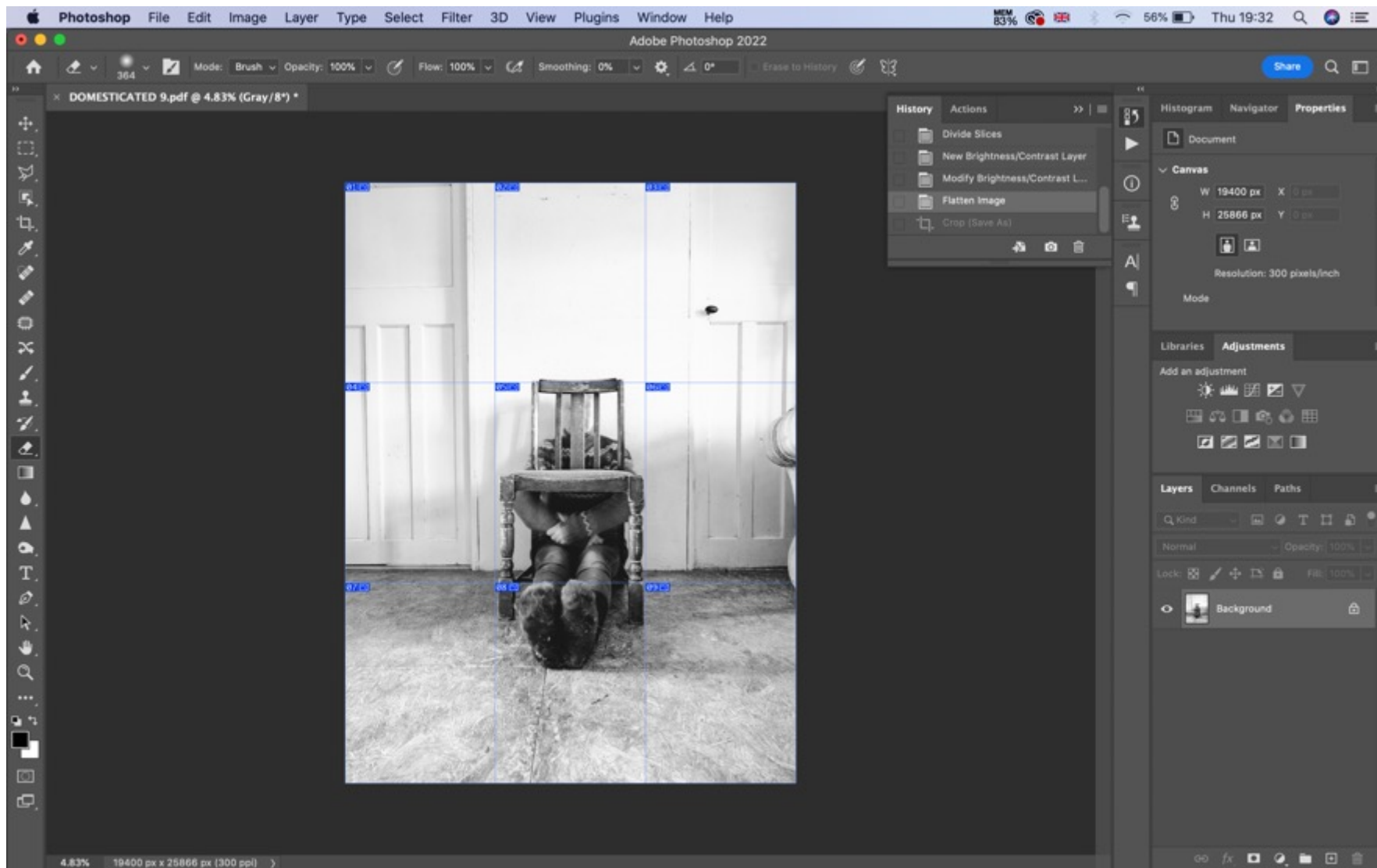


LARGE IMAGES

For my next experiment in the Project room I needed to shoot some large file images. So I borrowed the Fujifilm again. I wanted to see what an image would look like printed on multiple A4 sticky labels. The images as such, were not important for this, so I just jammed off of my thoughts about humans being domesticated. That we are animals put into alien spaces. It was also another opportunity to practice with the Fujifilm. I actually quite liked the images that I made in the end though and they worked very well for my installation practice.







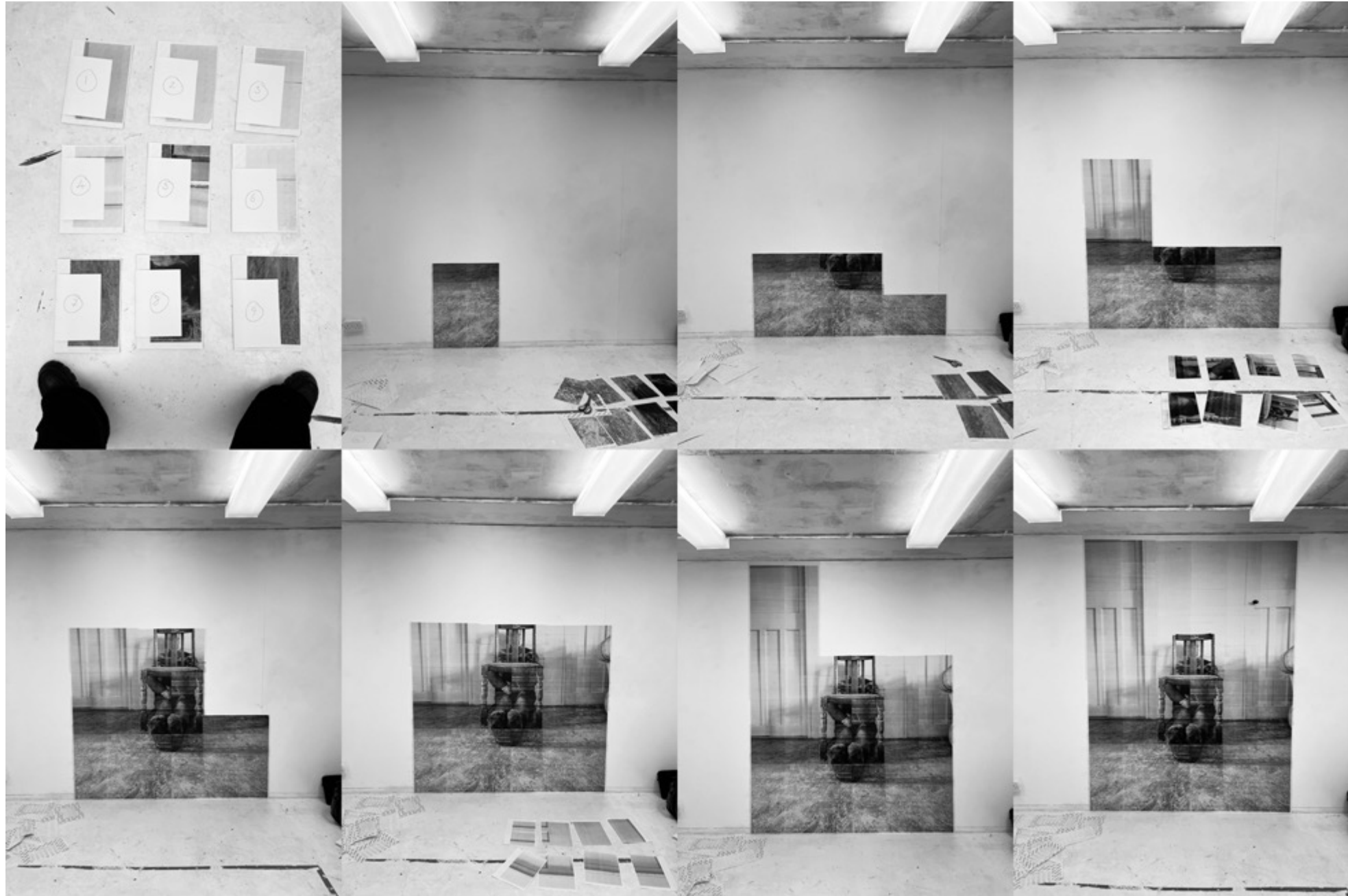
The next thing was to print up the images. I wanted the images to be the height of the wall or larger, so I measured the walls in the project room and adjusted the sizes of the images in Photoshop. When I went to print these up, the Canon Laser printer in Uni could not handle such a large file, the largest image was 120 pages. So I decided to break the images up into smaller images. I searched on Youtube for an easy way to do this but all the results turned the multiple images into jpegs, which would be too small a file for the final print. But I used the idea of using the slice tool to break up the image and then just cropped into each section and saved them as

separate files. I also decided to just do one print and make it just the height of the wall. This meant I ended up with 9 images, each of which took 8 pages to print.

The Canon laser printer liked this much more and the print out of the image went very smoothly. I had some labels left, so I also experimented with printing up some images in A1, A2, A3 and A4.

I carefully filed each set of 8 images as I printed them as I could foresee it getting very confusing if I didn't.

For putting it up I decided to start at the bottom and trimmed the images as I went along. I left a white edge around the image but trimmed any other white away. Putting the work up was surprisingly easy and I had the whole image up within an hour, which really pleased me. I had measured the wall and set the image to fit exactly, but it ended up being 5cm too short. This must be because the slight shrinkage when you print, so will add 5cm to the image size next time.



THOUGHTS ABOUT THE IMAGE

I was really pleased with how this experiment went. I like the way that the pages are printed in quite a messy way. The ink is smudged, or missing in some places. This works very nicely with the general concept of my work, which is an honest documentation of myself, warts and all and also suits my photographic style.

I like how, this random destruction of the image will be different every time. So every time I create a large image like this, the image will be different even though it may be fundamentally the same image. This is also something that cannot be reproduced and also needs to be seen physically to really appreciate the image. This is something I think about a lot, why the spectator would want to come to an exhibition of mine rather than just view my images on the web or in bought prints. My installations are heading into a direction of site specific, one off, have to be there to really see it, way. Which I am very excited about.

For my dissertation I looked into Pointillism and it's radical concept. I wonder if I may be able to do something similar with this idea? I certainly want to go larger. Could I fill a whole room with an image? I could also mix up images to make new images. As it is such a cheap way to produce large images, I am planning on doing a lot more experiments with this in the future. I am also happy to say that it comes away from the wall really easily too.



RAZOR SHARP (CUTTING)

I was starting to feel anxious that I wasn't practicing very much. So I made an improvised stop motion using the packaging that holds razor heads. I was thinking about people cutting me down as they don't understand me, whilst I was making the work.





VOMIT

As putting up the large image was so quick I decided to try adding the projection to the room too and put up the extra things I had printed. I had not borrowed a light for this session and realised that was very silly. As I had to turn off the ceiling lights, which are very bright, to see the projection. When I mix up projection with still images, I will have to be very thoughtful about positions and lighting and will experiment with this in the next term.

I did have an idea for this experiment to create an installation about how I was feeling writing my dissertation. I created a close up image of my head screaming and I was planning on printing it larger than the wall. I was then going to have links spewing out of my mouth to other things in the room. To represent all the information I have read, too much, I feel, to process properly. And I am just randomly vomiting it back out into the World, a mess of knowledge and confusion. That is how I feel in general, living my life. I realised that this was too big an installation to create from scratch in a couple of days. But do want to experiment with adding links, nails, words, paint and whatever else I feel, to the installations too.





BACK IN THE BATH!!

I experiment with my phone and camera movement a lot when I am in the bath.

Probably every time :D

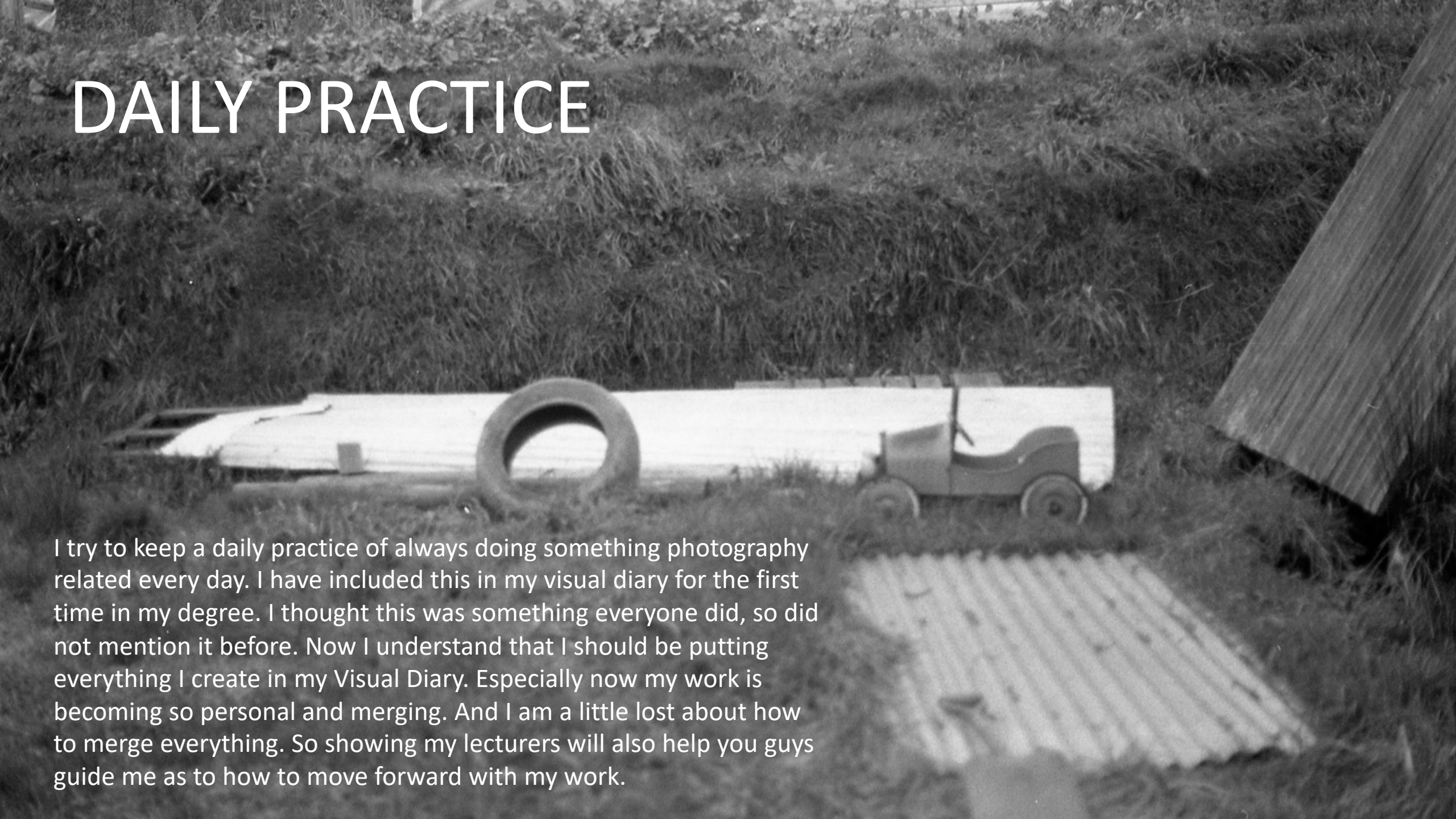
Mostly I just delete it, but sometimes it works really nicely.

KATE WILSON

I follow quite a few Large format and pinhole camera photographers on Instagram but one that always stands out for me is Kate Wilson. Her work is absolutely stunning and she really knows her camera and her process. Most of her work is based around her son, who is autistic. But she also explores herself and photographs others. She takes a lot of shots in nature and as my work is really beginning to combine with nature, I am going to try this too.



DAILY PRACTICE



I try to keep a daily practice of always doing something photography related every day. I have included this in my visual diary for the first time in my degree. I thought this was something everyone did, so did not mention it before. Now I understand that I should be putting everything I create in my Visual Diary. Especially now my work is becoming so personal and merging. And I am a little lost about how to merge everything. So showing my lecturers will also help you guys guide me as to how to move forward with my work.

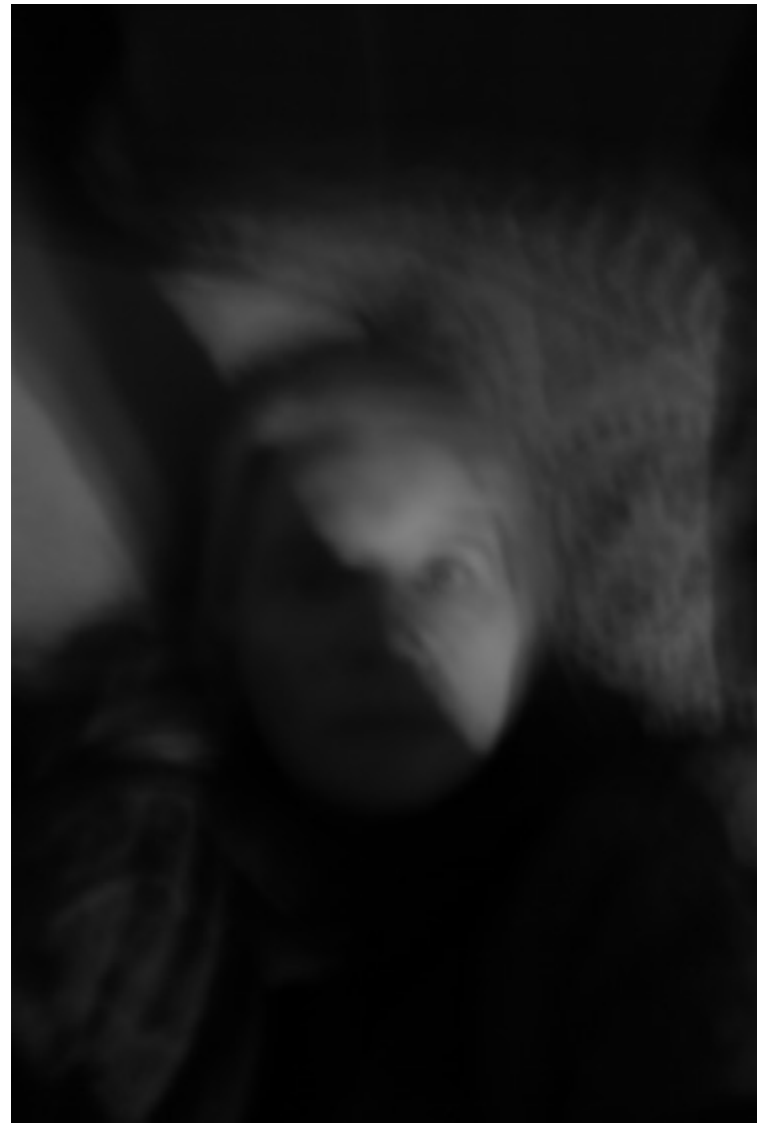
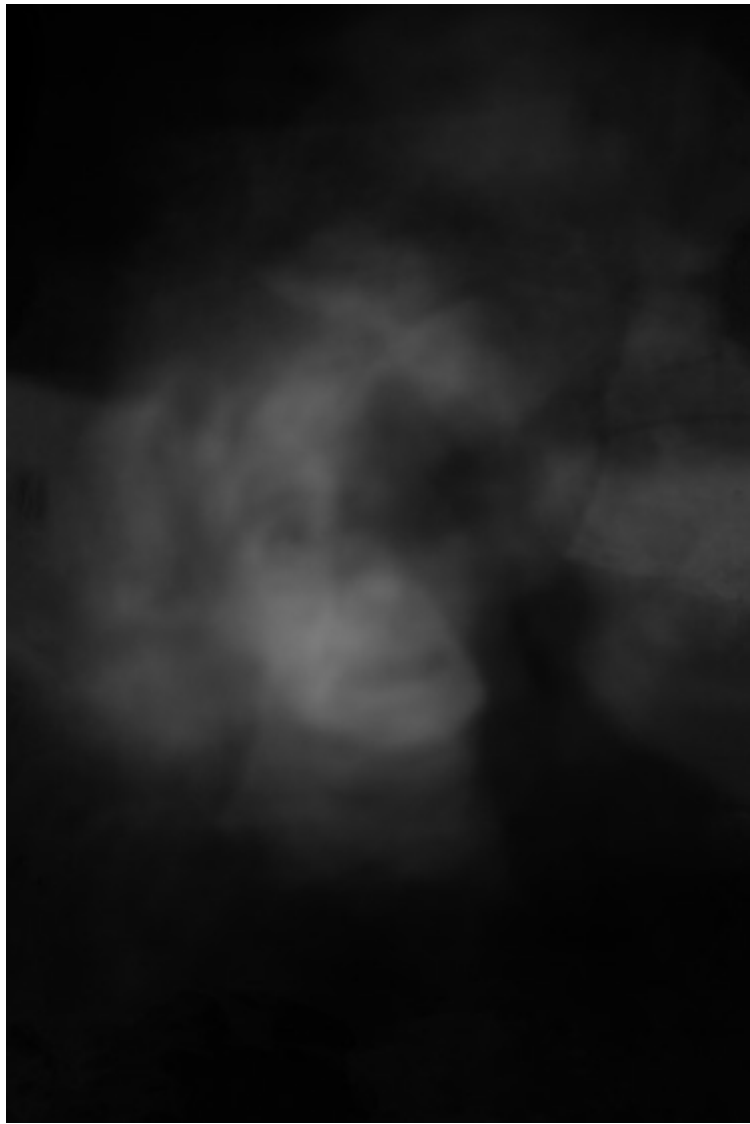


Canon 5D Markii



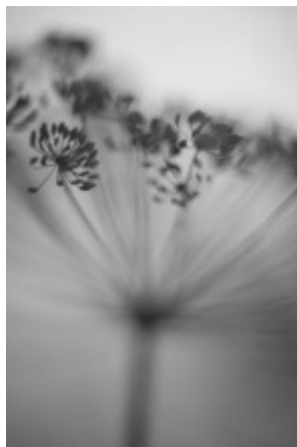
PRACTICE





GETTING TO KNOW A NEW CAMERA

AS my 5DMarkii died I borrowed one from Uni for the holidays. But even though it is the same model it is a different camera, so I started doing experiments doing long exposures with this camera.



Study of Dill
Seedheads
SOFT





Study of Dill Seedheads HARD





Canon 5D
Markii
PRACTICE



BEING WITH THE CAMERA

One of the main reasons I borrowed the Fujifilm gfx100s over the Christmas holidays is to explore being with the camera using Long Exposures.

I am on a pursuit to try and be as purely me as possible in my work. I often just stand and take self portraits, just looking straight at the camera. I try to open myself up as much as possible when I do this, to see if my honesty, my essence, comes through in the photo. This has led me to wonder if maybe, through long exposures, I would be able to express a more pure me.

This attempt was 2 minutes.

I realised I needed it to be darker to achieve a longer time.





I then improvised off of the line “I feel stupid and contagious’ from the song Smells like Teen Spirit by Nirvana. Which I have always pondered upon as I relate to it and feel like that often.



Canon 5D Markii



PRACTICE





MERRY CHRISTMAS

I always make a little Christmas piece for my Instagram page every year.

This year I made a fun shadow stop motion with my phone.



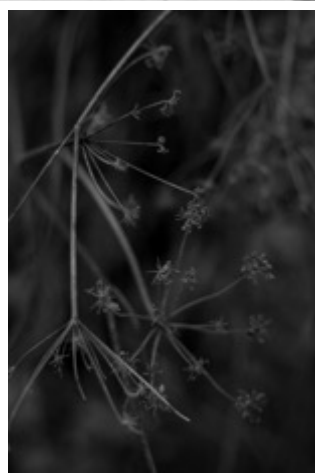
Christmas Day Canon 5D Markii practice, doing what I love. My older children do not like me taking their photos. So that is good practice too. Taking a photo but not.





As I live off grid, my electricity kept going off. So I decided to do some experiments with a candle and the Canon 5D Markii
I like the tone of light very much and will try this again.





Canon 5D
Markii
Practice





BEING WITH THE CAMERA

I decided to try doing a long, long exposure in the evening. We had no electricity so I thought the light from the fairy lights on my bed might work well. They ended up being a bit too much.

This is a 4 minute photo using the Fujifilm gfx100s.



Experimenting
with how dark an
environment can
be using the
Fujifilm gfx100s





PRODUCTIVE DAY

Sometimes I get into a frenzy of creativity. This day was one of those days :D It was the day before New Years Eve and thinking about the next year and how it will be, I think added to my creativity. I started with a walk with my dog Murray and a Canon 5D Mark ii. I knew as soon as I started shooting it would be a good day as I was SEEING so much. I also shot two stop motions on this walk.







STAND



TALL

Then when I got home I decided to finally have a go at doing some sequence work. I jammed off of Duane Michals work, as I had not thought of anything I really wanted to make myself.

To make this I needed a wireless trigger, so I used the Canon 5D markii. I had to clear the table first and I thought that would be a nice stop motion to make for the New Year. I made this using one second long exposures and the remote trigger in my hand.

I then took some practice shots to get an idea of positioning before starting. I mainly wanted to try to create a work where I am walking away from my body. So this meant using a long exposure of 30 seconds. 15(ish) seconds lying down and then 15 in the next position. I was going to do it from the sofa, but my daughter was sat there, so I used the table instead :D





It didn't work very well, I think there is too much happening in the shots to get a clear feel. But I had lots of fun making it and feel good that I have at last started trying to make some sequence work that was intended as sequence work. I do have the feeling that I will keep wanting to turn these into stop motions. But I keep seeing sequence work I really like, so do want to try and create something similar. Practice, practice.



As it was a grey day, I thought I would try being with the camera, at the end of the session. This shot is 8 minutes. Since I last borrowed the Fujifilm, someone has turned all the sounds off and I can't work out how to get the nice sound it made back. I will sit and try and find it. I actually sat there for ten minutes, as I could not hear when the shutter had closed. So I know I can go longer. I am excited about this but I have realised I need to be in complete control of the lighting to go any longer. I did think I could maybe try in the studio but this work does not suit such an anonymous environment. The longer the exposure, the older I look. Discovering photography when I am older has been a bit gutting :D and difficult at times. But that is good for me to see and for me to share.

IMOGEN CUNNINGHAM

I love all of Imogen Cunningham's work. But at the moment I am particularly interested in her botanical work.

I find it fascinating, her images of plants are more than just images of plants. They are sexual, meaty and scream life to me.

The fact you can take photos of a plant and have such an emotional message in it, fascinates me. I keep experimenting with this myself. I have found I am getting the best results with my OM1n. I will try this with an analogue medium format in the next term.





Walk with the Canon 5D Markii

I have really enjoyed getting back to shooting with a dslr over the Christmas holidays. It has reminded me of just how much I love taking photos. I have enjoyed using my OM1 and the Fujifilm camera is obviously amazing. But just going out and looking and being with the world with a dslr is so good. I have a couple of documentary projects starting in January and I am now really excited about them and very keen to get out and work with people.





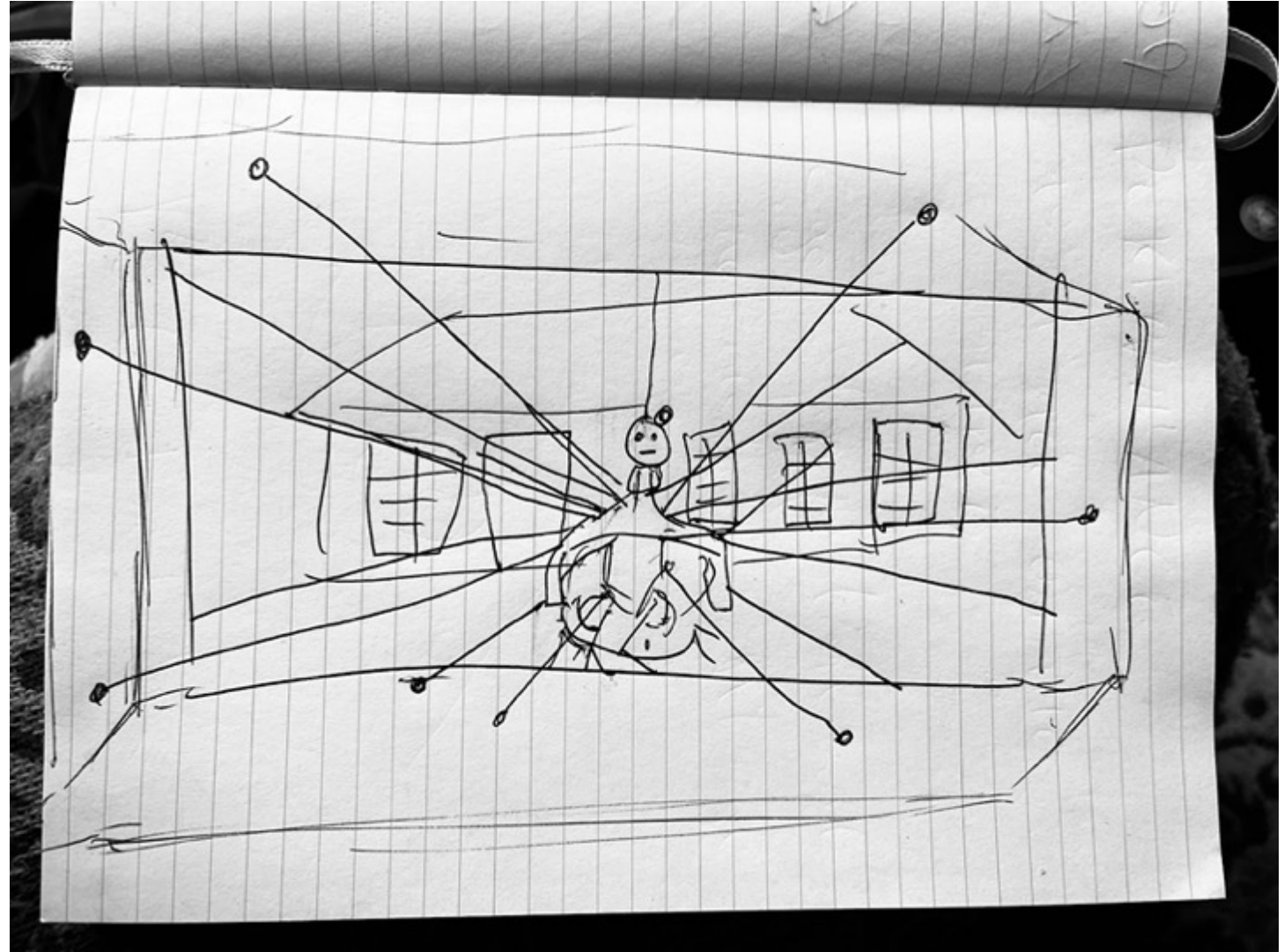
My confidence in myself as a photographer has grown a lot over the past year which I am really happy about. For these sessions I have concentrated on trying to make my images a bit darker and all composed and framed correctly in camera. I don't like editing images too much and feel the tone etc that you shoot in, captures the feel of the moment and shouldn't be an after thought.

EXPERIMENTS TO DO

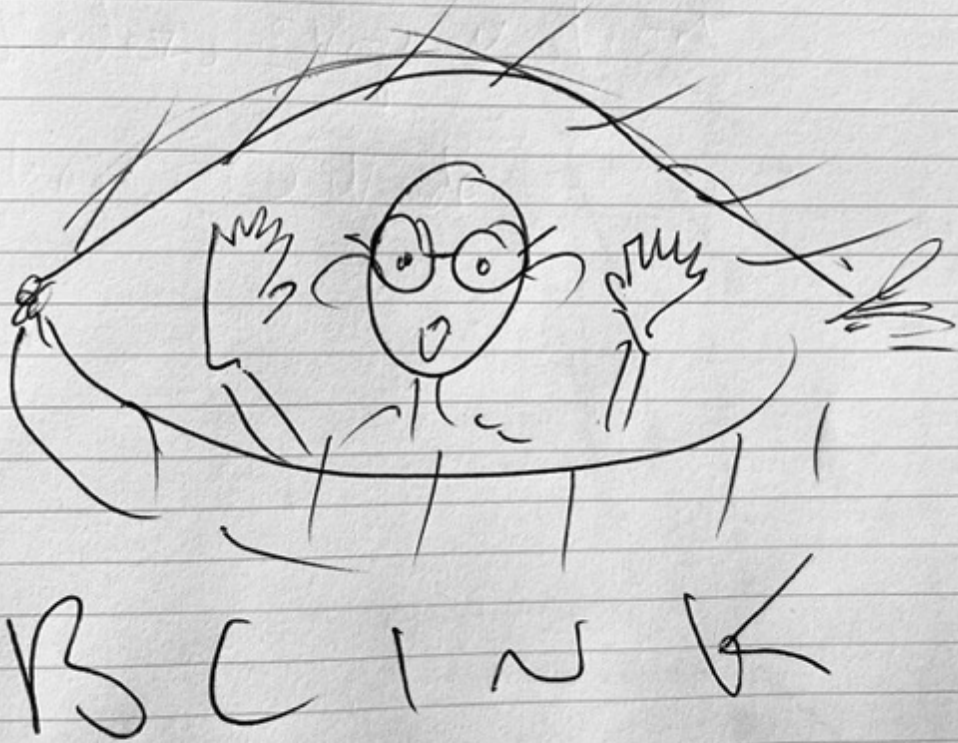
I have lots of ideas for experiments to do. My next experiment is taking a self portrait sat in front of my cabin with links connecting me to everything. The image will be landscape, as I want to see a landscape shot on the wall. I will shoot this with the Fujifilm. I will then print it up on multiple A4 labels to fill the whole wall in the Project Space from floor to ceiling. Then I will add links that come out of the image and connect to the room.

I think my experiments need to start mixing media up now. So I need to start trying to add links, paint, nails etc to my images on the walls. Also, over lapping with projections.

I am a very visual person but you can't beat actually physically doing an experiment to feel what it would be like in a space.



Eye Stop Motion with
me inside giant eye



I also want to try making large prints of small things. Like my hand and put it on the floor, so when people walk in, they walk onto the palm of my hand.

I also want to do eyes etc and thought that a projection on the wall of an eye opening and closing would be interesting.

I also want to experiment with creating stop motions based around doors and windows. So then the window or door is projected into the gallery space

but it is like you are looking into another place. All of these ideas speak of seeing something that maybe you shouldn't or a revealing of something more.

I also want to try making more organic shaped images.



Ignore quality of drawings :D



CONCLUSION

I now know for sure that I am an installation artist .

The idea of creating large scale images made up of labels feels very right to me. If an image of mine is ever framed, it will be for a conceptual reason.

My work is also becoming more and more improvised and I feel that I may end up creating improvised installations. Reflecting how I feel, the place, society, in the time of making. This idea is both super exciting and super scary to me :D

My confidence has grown so much in the last year but I have also really realised that I am just at the start of my career as an artist. I have so many experiments to do, to perfect things, to become accomplished in. In the first year, I thought that my final degree show would be the showcase of my work. But now I feel it will be a hint as to what is to come. I am very excited about what kind of artist I will be in ten, twenty years time.

I have so many ideas, my big challenge now, is to hone down on one idea. An idea that will be achievable within the time frame, space and budget that I have.

I am very excited about working with my lecturers on this. I am going to need a lot of help :D