

Visual Enquiry 2

What is a Photobook?

According to Tate (Tate, n.d.) ‘A photobook is a book of photographs by a photographer that has an overarching theme or follows a storyline- a convenient and reasonably cheap way of disseminating the work of a photographer to a mass audience.’

Tate (n.d.). *Photobook – Art Term*. [online] Tate. Available at: <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/p/photobook>

Google’s definition states a ‘Photobook is a curated collection of photographs, often with minimal text. Bound together to tell a story, document an event, or showcase a portfolio, where the visual content acts as the primary medium.

A photobook is created by considering the different elements within the book. These are:

Theme

Layout

Form

Function

Audience



Regener, Schiller
Königsberg



Carlson, Berlin



Hand of a woman
The artist's hand



The artist's hand



Hand of a woman
The artist's hand



Example Photobook 1 (from session PowerPoint)- Layout and Function

Hannah Hoch- *Album Scrapbook* (1933)

During a recent lecture we were shown this photobook. The photobook was named *Album* in which it included a range of raw materials put into one scrapbook in a collection of collages. From looking on Google Books (Google Books, 2026), they state that this photobook is 'an important representative of the Berlin Dada movement.' From more research, I discovered that the Berlin Dada movement was a political charge, anti-art movement that was made after WW1 in which one of the leading artists was Hannah Hoch. Hoch and others presented images through collages to create a social critique of the world.

What caught my attention about this example was the way a larger image was produced by layering the images on top of each other. Small pieces of text help to connect the images further creating a wider narrative of the pages. The images are made more cohesive as they are all monochrome.

Hoch's use of the centre of the double page to split the image of the hands was something I thought worked particularly well and enhanced the effectiveness of the image.

Although it looks like the images have been randomly placed, it is clear to see that Hoch has thought a lot about which images she wanted to use and what she wanted the images to portray.

Although it looks like the images have been randomly placed, it is clear to see that Hoch has thought a lot about which images she wanted to use and what she wanted the images to portray.

I particularly liked how Hoch has used multiply images on one page which has given her the chance to display a wide variety of images from her project archive. By looking at this photobook, it gave me ideas as to how I wanted to lay out my own as I will still be unsure on how I wanted mine to look in the end. Hoch used all black and white images and placed them in an interesting way which encourages the viewer to look carefully at the pages and ask questions about what is happening. I believe this worked well in Hoch's work and has made me think carefully about how I want to order my images and to think about what will be on each page, mixing coloured images and black and white images.

Aswell as the placement of the images Hoch's photobook has encouraged me to look at what size photos, I want to use and where I want to place them on the page. By observing the detail Hoch has put into the presentation of

the images it has made me further consider about the placement I want to achieve.

Example Photobook 2 (from session PowerPoint)

Hannah Hoch- *Cut with the Kitchen Knife* (1919-1920)

I chose to pick another one of Hoch's works as I really like the first one about the meaning behind it as well as the layout of the images. This image is very different however as this is more of a collage whereas the previous one was images placed in a layout on the pages.

The main thing that stood out to me was how she put words within the collage hinting to the background of what the work is about. However, after researching the book, I didn't understand the work and therefore I am writing about it more about the layout of the photos and how all the photos' links. The way that the photos are placed, represent different things while making one big image as a whole. For example, there is a guy placed above 2 others to represent power over them while also being surrounded by dissembled bodies and bits of machine parts telling the viewer more background info to the work. Looking into the research, I found out that the image in the bottom right hand corner is a map of where women had the right to vote which I think relates to the theme of identity because it is giving women a right to speak about what they want and their opinions. The idea of manipulating many images to place together in a collage together to make a bigger picture works really well and I hope to look more into it moving forward.



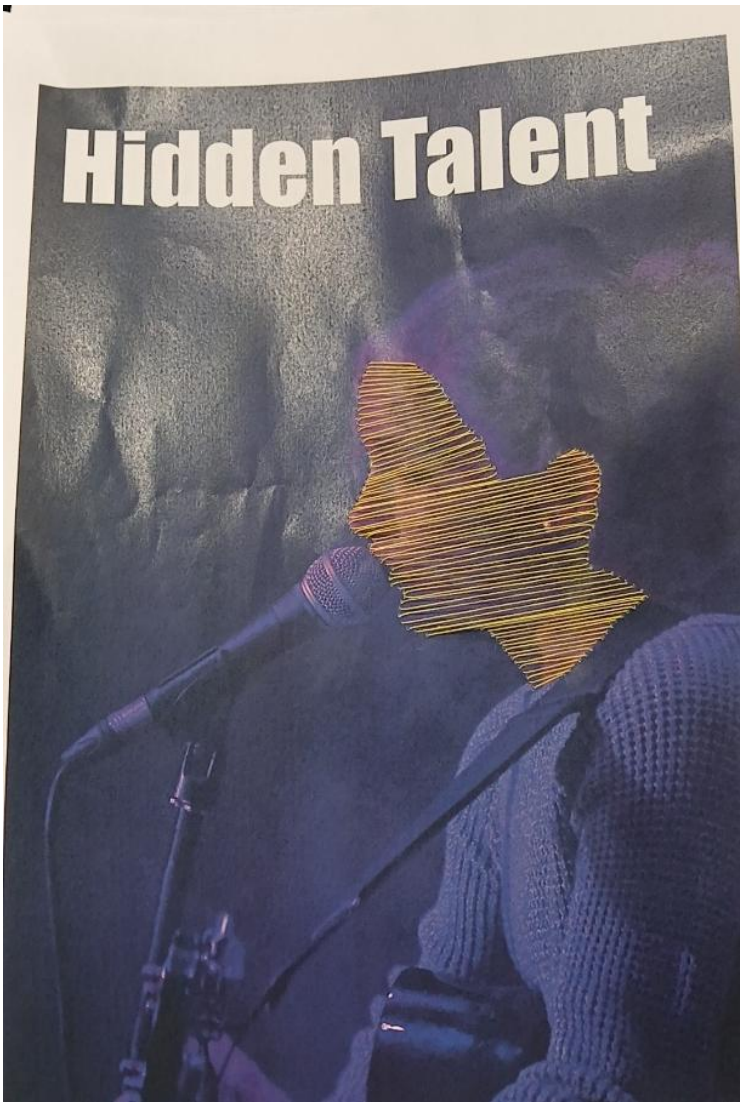
Example Photobook 3 (from session PowerPoint)

LaToya Ruby Frazier- *The Notion of Family* (2001-2014)

When I saw this photobook in lesson, I immediately remembered it from last year when studying a different module. Luckily, I didn't need to do research as I still had previous notes on the work I had done. This photobook was made by Frazier to document and show different generations of her family in which they lived in an area where there was environmental pollution, along with industrial decline in the town and racism. She wanted to create the book to show the impact on families through her family on the effects of the town problems.

The image above shows Frazier with her grandmother in which they were looking after her grandmother's dolls in which she cared for a lot. The picture was taken without planning making it natural with the emotions and the background of the image. This gives the viewers of the book a more realistic view into their lives living in the town without forcing the images in posing and the background set up. This part of the book is what stood out to me and made me love the idea as it shows people for who they are. This links to my theme of identity which I want to look further into. I also like the use of black and white imagery as it gives viewers a sense of time period, but

it could also be emotion toward what the photo is representing/ who is in the photo.



Initial Ideas for Photobook

For my photobook I have come up with some key elements that I want to include within the book:

- Material: Thread, Thick Paper
- Binding: Simple, Small, Hidden
 - Theme: Identity, Hidden

For my first book dummy I decided to use some old concert photos I took and sew over the faces of the children. This will link to the themes of Identity and Hidden. My plan is to sew over the children's faces to protect their identity and keep it a mystery on who they are. I really like the idea of sewing over their faces as it brings one of my many hobbies into photography along with making the work unique and different from other photobooks.

Feedback on Initial Photobook Ideas

I decided to share my work with some peers first to get their opinion as I prefer to have many views from photographers and non-photographers to understand how my work is viewed. The majority of people who I asked said that they really liked the concept of the sewing and it works really well with hiding identity.

After my lecture with Ryan, Joe and Lucy, I found that their main opinions are that they like the concept and theme however they didn't like the images that I had chosen. This was due to there not being a good reason for why I used them.

They said that my next steps should be to look at other subject matters like street view, AI, and missing people.



...the Portico Park and
...in January 2000, but
...dedicated to her hus-
...with required a move
...the first official UK
...six grandchildren
...as GG. The
...more.

Example photobook 4- Class Homework

Emily Hutchinson- *To Those We Love*

This photobook was a university project book for Hutchinson which was started in 2020, but she didn't complete it until 2021. She is a photographer based in Gloucestershire. Her concept for this book was to photograph memorial benches dedicated to people who had died.

What started out as a collection of photographs of memorial benches soon became a larger project as Hutchinson contacted the families of the people the benches had been dedicated to and talked to them about the people, she also asked for photographs of them which she then included in her photobook.

Hutchinson produced a hardback book with seamless stitching. For each picture Hutchinson placed the image in the centre of the page and has used the opposite page to add the text explaining each image.

Hutchinson used a couple of double pages showcasing the benches. The images were all taken from the same angle and positioned carefully to enhance the inspiration for the photobook. Then the following pages show an image of each person and an overview of their life.

I feel that this project produced by Hutchinson was an inspirational way to show why people want to remember loved ones in this way and how it brings their story to life again.

I feel like this connects well with my photobook as my chosen focus was on victims of crime. By allowing people to see the photos of these victims they become human again instead of a statistic. My thought for the book is that I want people to look at each image then when they have reached the end and read who they were, the viewers then go back and realise how their feelings change when relooking at each individual.

I particularly like how Hutchinson had displayed the photos in the middle of each page leaving a large border, making the viewer take a closer look at each one. It is not as easy to skim through a book of images that do not take up the whole page as its harder to see the image when small on each page, along with where they are placed on the pages. For this reason, I have decided to print my images the size of a stamp because this will force the viewer to turn each page carefully to be able to view the images.

Photobook Changes

After a week of thinking about ideas to make a new photobook dummy, none of the ideas that were given to me stood out and matched my type of work. I chose to start over with a brand-new idea linking to things I love. One of them being learning about crimes and famous criminals.

With many famous criminals in the world, I don't think I could pick just one and so I have chosen to choose 23 in total. 12 women and 12 men. I plan to make a double spread of each criminal and showing the victims that were involved.

However, I don't want to make the criminal the main centre of attention, I want to make the victims and the lives lost known. This will link to my theme of identity, but the hidden theme is changed to making the hidden visible. As when looking at a crime the offender is the most known from it whereas the victims as normally hidden and not given any attention and I plan to change that with my photobook.



Photobook examples based on changes

Martin Seeds- *Country for Young Men*

This book was actually a broadsheet newspaper which went along with an exhibition piece named *Country for Young Men* (Seeds, 2020). The exhibit and newspaper aimed to reflect on young people and the impact of the troubles that they face in Northern Ireland. It shows 36 pages of 13 portraits from a school yearbook in Belfast from 1965. From a website that talks about the work and sells it, (Seeds, 2020) they state that ‘the use of child imagery during the Troubles; childhood, time, and gender’ was to reflect on different viewpoints such as ‘a personal account of Northern Irish school days in the 1960s.’

This work stood out to me due to the theme that they focused on as well as how they presented each photograph of the boys on the pages. The idea of focusing on past events and reflecting telling the stories of others lives who couldn’t matches to my newest idea of wanting to show the victims of crimes who never got to explain their side and get the recognition they deserve.

In the exhibit, they placed the images at a large scale on the wall with the boy’s eyes being at the viewer’s eye level forcing them to look them in the

eye. They also followed this technique within the newspaper pages, as they enlarged the images, so they are near to full bleed on the page however left a small border around them. I really like this because it makes the images similar size to if they were in the room, as well as the fact that when looking through the book, the viewers wouldn't miss the images. Although I don't like the idea of making the images full bleed on my pages for the photobook, I love the idea of having one person per page allowing each individual to get the attention and recognition they deserve.

New ideas from sessions

Before the session took place, I made sure to touch up any final touches, like making sure the edges were cut neatly. I presented my work after changing the idea fully in hopes to get better feedback then before which links more to my practice of choice. This time I did.

The first piece of feedback was to not do all 22 crimes with the victims, pick one and just focus on that one crime. This way I was able to put all my attention into what made that crime so horrific and why it got so famous. For this I chose to do John Wayne Gacy who raped and murdered at least 33 boys.

Another piece of feedback I got was to not include the offender on the page with the victims. This is because I want to focus more on the victims and not the offender and so by showing him in the book it leads the attention and focus back to him and not giving the victims the attention they need. After all the victims were human too but are treated like they never existed by all the focus on the crime being directed toward John Wayne Gacy.

For the next book dummy, I was asked to create 2. One in which goes back to my first idea of concealing identity in which I would sew over the victim's

faces hiding who they are. However, I do not plan to go forward with this as my aim is to make them known, not hide them even more.

The second book dummy will involve me cutting down the images of the victim's faces to only their eyes and foreheads. This makes it more impactful on the viewers as the eyes are the first thing they will see and the only thing that gives the victim's life in the images after being cropped down. Ryan and Joe wanted me to leave the foreheads in so that the hairstyles would be visible, allowing the viewers to get a sense of the year the crimes took place.



Week after lecture with Peter Finnemore

Sadly, I forgot to take images of this lecture due to myself becoming overwhelmed and stressed by the end of the session.

I presented my 2 book dummies which I had made from the feedback last week (these are found in the plastic wallets) to Ryan, Joe and Peter to see their reactions and opinions on what is working. I showed them a book dummy of the eyes and foreheads of the victims as well as sewing into one of the faces of the victims to try hide their identities. However, after the session I realised that this was not what I wanted to convey and I wanted to make the victims known rather than hiding them.

I had also printed out small images of the victims around the size of a standard stamp. At first, I didn't know how the idea would turn out although after printing and cutting them out, I feel as though it was the best as it makes the viewer stop and look closer giving the victims more attention rather than giving them a couple seconds and move on.

I became very confused after presenting them as they were throwing ideas around trying to help me however it was unclear to me what ideas they were giving me as they kept changing them or developing them before I could grasp what the idea was. This was on me due to not asking them to clarify however, luckily the Tuesday after the session,

Ryan was able to do a tutorial with me to help me understand what to do next.

26/33



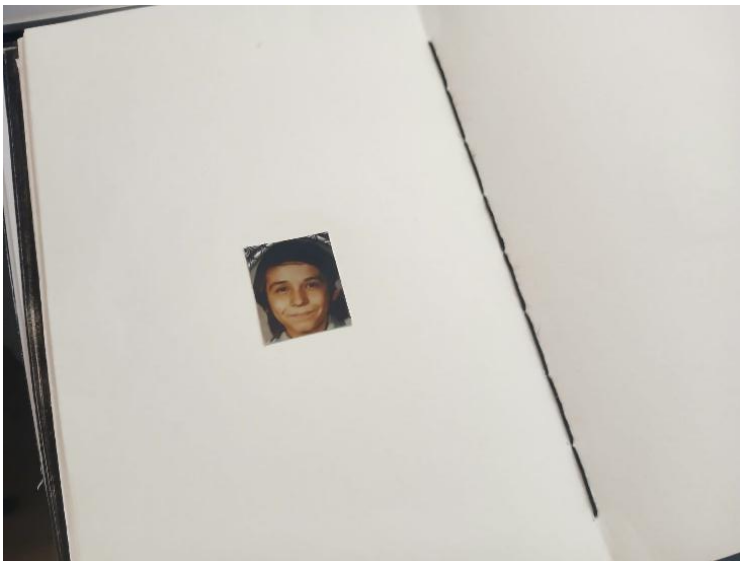
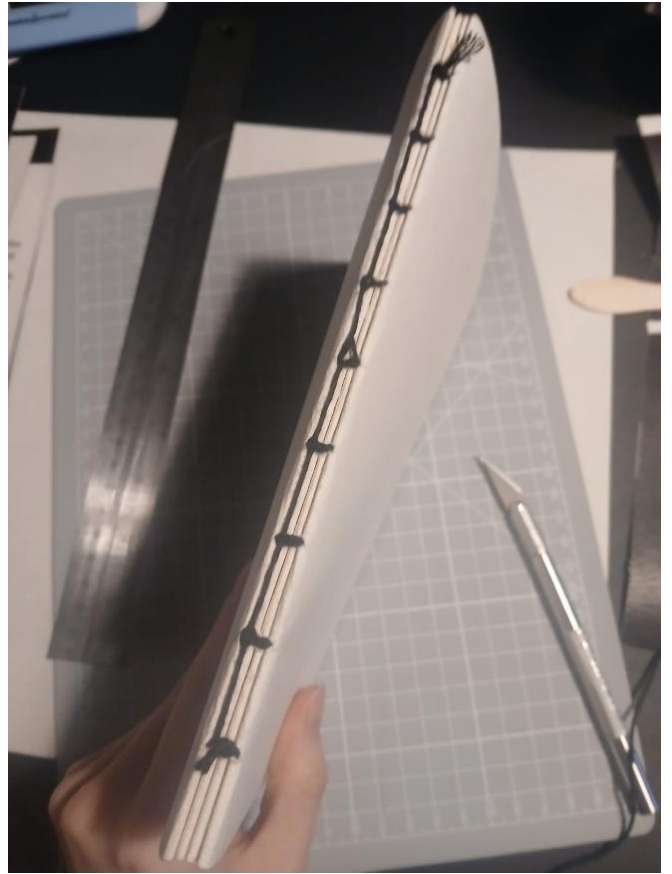
Next Photobook

While creating my next photobook dummy, I realised that I didn't like the paper type I was printing on because the colour of the paper was too bright white which stood out too much against the photos. While working on another hobby of mine, I came across my old sketch book in which I loved the texture and colour this was because the colour was a yellowy colour while having a rough texture to it hinting to the roughness of what the topic is about without being too obvious. With this it also allowed the photos of the victims to stand out more due to the material I am planning on printing the images out on.

Along with this, during the tutorial with Ryan, we decided that printing the images at stamp size was the best. However, with this being said I wanted to put more effort into the book rather than just printing the images off on the paper, I instead wanted to stick the images onto the paper. When making this dummy book I used vinyl. It was also in the tutorial with Ryan where I came up with the title for the book, this being 26/33. This refers to the fact that only 26 out of the 33 victims were identified, leaving the other 7 to be hidden from the world. I chose to still represent those 7 people by presenting blank pages spread randomly between the pages with the photos on.

Although I was happy with this version, I felt as though there was still some things that it was missing such as a front and back cover along

with splitting the pages into chapters to try help the book be flatter and easier to flip through. Although I like using vinyl to stick the photos in, unfortunately the images didn't stand off the page as much as I wanted them too because I wanted them to be more in the viewers face while not being too big that people can just skim look through the pages. Finally, I need to make sure I give myself enough time making the book, as I need to ensure the edges of the book are clean and straight along with centring the images on the page and making them straight as well.



Final Book

From my last photobook, my first thing to do was create a front and back cover. Although I loved the plain look of the front and back I felt as though it needed something else, and while in my tutorial with Ryan, he recommended that I zoom in on one of the images and add grain to it, distorting the image so its harder to tell what it is of. With having a darker front and back cover, I also included a spread of blank black pages inside before and after the content of the book, to help separate the cover and the work a bit more.

Another thing that I had to change was the font used for the title and synopsis of the book. Feedback from previous books, suggested to look toward a grave font used on the gravestones, however I was unsuccessful within finding an exact one to do the variety there are. Luckily while making the front cover, I came across the font Rockwell in which resembles gravestone fonts and backs up the theme of the book without being too obvious like the paper type I used for the base of the book.

Like I said earlier, I wanted to split the pages into chapters, to do this I split the pages into 4 signatures in which I binded together using black thread due to the fact, I didn't want the binding to take away attention from the work inside. To bind the chapters together, I decided to look up a YouTube video as I learn things better by watching others and

being able to go back over parts I don't understand. While organising the pages into the signatures, I decided to give my book a cleaner look by having the front cover and 2 other double pages wrap around the chapters covering the stitching I did for the signature binding. To connect the outside 3 pages, I stitched the outa 2 signatures through the 3 pages and kept it neat and simple.

After discussing with Joe, we ended up finding a different material to print the photos on rather than vinyl. This is smooth cotton and so the smooth top of the images contrasts to the paper type making them stand out as well as sticking up from the pages more then using vinyl. Along with the paper change I decided that it would be better to change how I represented the 7 victims who weren't identified. I did this by using the same paper as the other photos but having them blank while at the back of the book, writing the names of the victims including unidentified male in the order of how the photos are in the book.

After the name list at the back of the book, I wanted to include my synopsis of the book in which I put my name there. I wanted my name at the back as I didn't want it to be in the way of the work, and I wanted viewers to focus on the victims more then who created it. The reasoning for putting the synopsis at the back was to make viewers go back through the book with different views on what they see and understand the context more. I tested this during my exhibit in which people liked the concept of the photos and made jokes until they found

out the story behind them and their emotions toward the photos changed.

I decided to stick the images in last to ensure that the pages were the correct size and I wasn't going to end up chopping the edges more and making the images off centre. Since all the pages are in different spots in the book, I had to measure each page individually.

Looking at the final product of the book, there are a couple of things I wish I could improve on if I had more time. The first thing is making sure I have the correct measurements for the outside pages including the title and synopsis. This is because the synopsis is very off centre along with a couple mistakes in it leading me onto the next thing of proof reading and leaving enough time to check everything over to ensure I didn't miss anything or make a mistake. Finally, I would improve the outa binding of the book as I had lost the tension on the thread causing some of the stitches to be loose. This is bad because it can cause the out pages to become loose to the chapters making it hard to look through without risking damaging the book such as ripping the binding holes by accident.

Conclusion

Overall, I have really enjoyed this module because it has taught me a lot of new things like InDesign along with things about myself. This was seen when I was stressed out by not knowing what to do next with the work one week, in which I need to learn to trust myself more with my work that I produce. Another thing is that I need to start breaking the work down into smaller sections and so it's not too overwhelming when trying to start the work. I really enjoyed being able to bring my other hobbies into this module as it made the work more enjoyable as I knew what I was doing while still learning new skills. I am very happy with how my book turned out especially after all the changes I had gone through, I am proud of my work as well as proud of myself for sticking with completing the work.

Bibliography:

Barber, K. (2020). *Hannah Höch, Cut with the Kitchen Knife Dada through the Last Weimar Beer Belly Cultural Epoch of Germany*. [online] smarthistory.org. Available at: <https://smarthistory.org/hannah-hoch-cut-kitchen-knife-dada-weimar-beer-belly-germany/>.

Google Books. (2026). *Album*. [online] Available at: https://books.google.co.uk/books/about/Album.html?id=qx3BAAAACAAJ&redir_esc=y

Hutchinson, E. (2023). *Emily Hutchinson - To Those We Love*. [online] Myportfolio.com. Available at: <https://emilyhutchinson-photography.myportfolio.com/to-those-we-love>

Seeds, M. (2020). *No Country for Young Men*. [online] Martin Seeds. Available at: <https://theshap.martinseeds.com/product/no-country-for-young-men>

Tate (n.d.). *Photobook – Art Term*. [online] Tate. Available at: <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/p/photobook>