

Student Name: Tasha Roberts - 2317127

Personal philosophies

Photography in the arts

Knowledge and Understanding Skills: 20%

Guidance specific to task (from the brief):

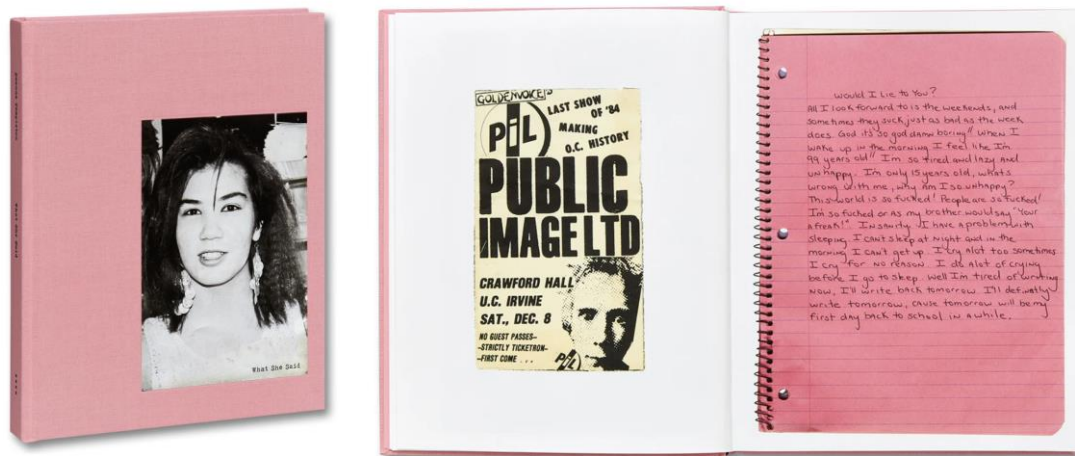
Your evaluation should show clear understanding of the history, function, practical development and production of the photobook through a range of critically understood examples. The analysis of these will highlight the functions and strategies employed by the photographer and your interpretation of their communication of meaning through the publication.

Using examples (3 max), explore your understanding of the history, function and practical development of the photobook. Your analysis should highlight the strategies used by the artist/photographer to communicate their message. Include visuals (500 – 1000 words)

Deanna Templeton's *What She Said* is a deeply personal and reflective photobook that weaves together portraits of young women with entries from Templeton's teenage diaries and gig flyers from the 1980s and 90s. The result is a visual and emotional conversation between past and present, teenage angst and adult reflection.

The way the book is sequenced feels free and flowing, almost like flipping through memories rather than following a strict storyline. There are no dates or locations, and the portraits aren't captioned. Instead, Templeton mixes her old diary pages, filled with handwritten emotions, lyrics, and doodles, alongside her modern portraits of girls she met on the street.

Her strategy is rooted in empathy and identification. The photobook becomes a space of connection, between the artist and her past, between strangers across generations. The design is tactile and scrapbook-like, which makes it feel more intimate. It taught me that a photobook doesn't have to be polished or formal to be meaningful. Sometimes, roughness and vulnerability can invite a stronger emotional connection.



Laia Abril's *on Abortion* is part of her larger project *A History of Misogyny*, and it explores the consequences of restrictive abortion laws across different cultures and time periods. Abril's book is not purely photographic, it combines images, text,

archival materials, and infographics to build a documentary-style narrative. It uses the photobook as an educational and political tool.

Images are placed carefully beside blocks of text that explain each story or case. Some pages contain still life or portraits of objects linked to trauma, like a blood-stained sheet or a discarded tool used in illegal abortions. These visuals create a haunting, respectful distance that invites the viewer to reflect rather than simply react.

Abril's strategy shows how the photobook can be both poetic and factual. She uses visual repetition and minimal colour to create an atmosphere of discomfort, reminding the reader that this is not just history, but an ongoing issue.



Published in 1991, Nick Waplington's *Living Room* is a landmark photobook that documents life on a working-class housing estate in Nottingham. Instead of photographing from a distance, Waplington lived among the families he captured, offering a more personal and intimate perspective. His use of colour, brought a sense of warmth and realism to scenes of everyday life.

The book avoids a traditional narrative, opting instead for a loose and lyrical sequence. Waplington mixes portraits, domestic interiors, and spontaneous moments, creating a rhythm that feels natural and emotionally honest. Rather than focusing on poverty or hardship, *Living Room* highlights humour, love, and chaos within ordinary family life, challenging common stereotypes about working-class communities.

From a design perspective, the book uses full-bleed images and minimal text, allowing the photographs to speak for themselves. This format keeps the focus on the people and their spaces, reinforcing the sense of closeness. *Living Room* is an important example of how photobooks can serve both as social documents and artistic works. It expanded the boundaries of documentary photography, helping to

legitimise colour as a serious tool in the genre.



Cognitive and Intellectual Skills: 30%

Guidance specific to task (from the brief):

Your research report should critically analyse the theories and concepts explored in your photobook, as well as the techniques it employs. Focus on developing a reasoned and informed debate rather than simply describing the work. Your analysis should lead to clear, valid conclusions, considering the form of the book, the reading experience it creates.

Avoiding description, critically analyse the theme/ context you explore within your photobook. Your critical analysis should demonstrate your cognitive and intellectual skills in how you have understood the subject and made work as a response to it. Consider how the form of your book communicates meaning in relation to the subject of exploration. (500 -1000 words)

My photo book explores the theme of connection specifically, the subtle and often unseen ties that link people across space and time. The project is rooted in my personal life, intertwining my upbringing in Wales with my partner's upbringing in Latvia. Although we grew up in different countries, shaped by different cultures and experiences, we somehow arrived at the same point in life, connected, unexpectedly.

The book uses images drawn from our family albums, childhood photos placed side by side without explanation. On the surface, these images may appear unrelated. But it is precisely in this lack of obvious context that the viewer is invited to imagine. The pairing of these photographs asks a question rather than offers an answer: What connects these two people, these two lives?

I'm interested in the invisible connections we all carry, the ones we don't see until later, or maybe never see at all. The ones that thread quietly through memory, across generations and borders, unnoticed but deeply felt. This project doesn't aim to explain our connection, it seeks instead to evoke it. By resisting a literal narrative, the book becomes a space for reflection, encouraging viewers to think about the unseen links in their own lives.

The physical form of the book plays a big part in how I wanted these ideas to unfold. After being introduced to a fold-out book structure during a session with Estafani, I saw a clear link between that physical unfolding and the idea of relationships and histories slowly revealing themselves. I designed my book so that the viewer has to open it piece by piece, navigating it slowly and carefully, just like we navigate memory, connection, and heritage in real life.

The book is sequenced based on emotional resonance and visual similarities rather than following a strict chronological order. This decision was influenced by the process of gathering images for the project. When flicking through old photo albums and loose photographs stored in a box, I noticed they were never organised by age or timeline. Instead, there was a natural randomness to the way memories were stored and revisited. Reflecting this, I chose to pair images through their shared qualities, for example, a photograph of me standing by a car placed alongside an image of him by a tractor. Creating connections through gestures, settings, or moods rather than through time.

The book is held close, turned carefully, revisited in private moments. It mirrors the closeness of the subject matter, the intimacy of family, of memory, of growing up and reaching out across distances. Every detail, the paper stock, the scale, the way the fold-out pages work, was chosen to support that feeling of gentle discovery.

In the end, I didn't want this project to offer answers. I wanted it to ask questions: about belonging, about what it means to be connected, about the many small ways our lives cross and echo each other even without us knowing.

Practical Skills: 40%

Guidance specific to task (from the brief):

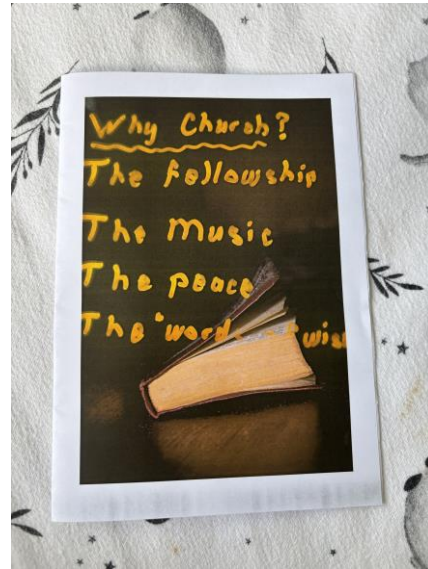
Present your book professionally, carefully considering how you deploy methods, technical processes. Your methods should synthesize the form of your book and the context/meaning of your subject. Your book should demonstrate proficiency, selection in editing and flair. The decisions you make should be as product of significant research into book production and design. Within your evaluation, ensure to provide examples of book dummies to show the developments in your practical processes. These decisions should be as product of significant book design planning including alternative idea generation.

Evaluate the methods and technical processes you have employed in the making of this body of practice. Explain your process for making your book, consider how editing/ design/ typography and format speak to the subject matter you have explored. Provide examples of the book dummies you have created over the past semester to show developments in your practical processes. (800 – 1500 words)

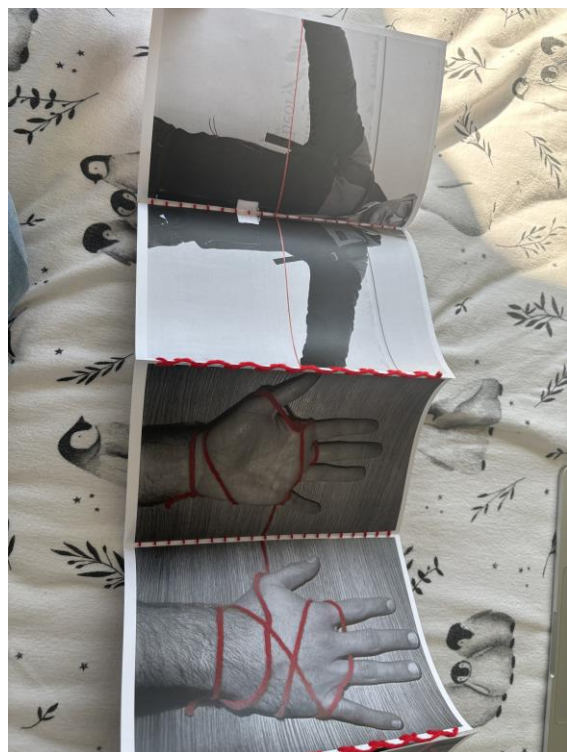
At the start of the module, my initial idea for the photo book was to use a physical piece of string to create a visual connection between images. I intended to weave the string through a fold-out book structure, so that the viewer would physically follow the thread across the pages. I experimented with this in my first dummy, adopting a folding technique inspired by a book shown to me during a session with Estafani. However, as I developed this idea, I began to feel disconnected from the work. The physical string felt too literal and over-engineered, and the folded book format, although conceptually interesting, felt clumsy and forced in relation to the emotional tone I wanted to achieve. As a result, I decided to shift my focus toward using family archive photographs as the foundation of the project. This change allowed the book to feel more authentic, emotionally resonant, and personally connected to the theme of invisible ties across time and place.

After changing my idea, making the photobook became an experimental and reflective process, focused on exploring connection across time, space, and personal histories. From the start, I aimed to keep the work authentic by using methods that kept the emotional feeling of the images intact. I used minimal editing, carefully paired images based on emotional and visual similarities, and spent a lot of time testing different book structures and formats. Throughout the semester, I made several book dummies to experiment with different ways of sequencing images, types of paper, folding techniques, and how the book would physically feel to the reader. Each dummy helped me better understand how design choices, like the final order of images and materials, could support and strengthen the meaning behind the work.

My first book dummy was very simple, I used standard printer paper and selected images from my earlier site-specific project. I stapled the pages together in the middle, creating a basic zine-style format. At the time, I just wanted to get a sense of how images worked in sequence and what it felt like to see them printed and held in the hand. Although it was rough and not refined, it gave me my first insight into how physical form can influence the way a viewer engages with a story. It also helped me realise the importance of materials and structure in shaping the mood and meaning of the book.



My second book dummy moved slightly closer to the concept I initially had in mind. I used images from my first idea, where the red string was a visual and symbolic element, and bound the pages together using actual red yarn. This was an attempt to physically carry the idea of connection through the book, with the thread linking the pages just as it did within the images. While I liked how the yarn added a tactile element and referenced the imagery, the book still didn't feel emotionally engaging to me. It felt more like a visual experiment than a personal one, and I started to realise that I was more drawn to the feeling of connection rather than a literal representation of it. Again, using standard printing paper and while using the red string to bind the pages together in fold out which i feel work well.



For my third dummy, I focused on the family album concept and began testing how these more personal images would work in book form. I used my home printer and basic A4 printer paper, printing the images at A5 size. This dummy used the fold-out method, which worked well in bringing a sense of interaction and discovery to the viewer's experience. However, the scale felt slightly off. A4 was too large for the intimate feeling I was aiming for, and I wanted something smaller and more personal. This version helped me see how the fold-out format could successfully reflect the unfolding nature of memory and connection, but it also highlighted the need to rethink the size and proportions to better suit the tone of the work. This time, the book included a cover design that featured the outlines of both Wales and Latvia, drawn in gold. For the binding, I used a gold-toned wax thread, which felt like a significant shift from earlier dummies. The choice of gold was intentional, not to represent material wealth, but to symbolise the richness of connection. For me, true wealth isn't about money or possessions, it's about having meaningful relationships and being deeply connected to someone. Using gold as a visual and material element helped me express that deeper emotional value.



For my fourth dummy, I used A5 paper from the university printers and continued with the fold-out method. This version felt much closer to what I had envisioned, the smaller size worked well to create a more intimate, personal feel, and the fold-out structure supported the idea of revealing hidden or layered connections. I also used the same gold wax thread for the binding, which added a subtle but meaningful touch that linked back to my themes of emotional wealth and connection. However, like the previous versions, this dummy had limitations due to the printing facilities. I wanted the images to be full bleed to fully immerse the viewer, but I wasn't able to achieve this with the university printers. The basic printer paper also didn't have the right texture or weight to support the emotional tone of the project. Still, this dummy was an important step forward, it confirmed that the format and structure were working well and helped me realise that upgrading the paper and printing quality would bring the book much closer to its final form.



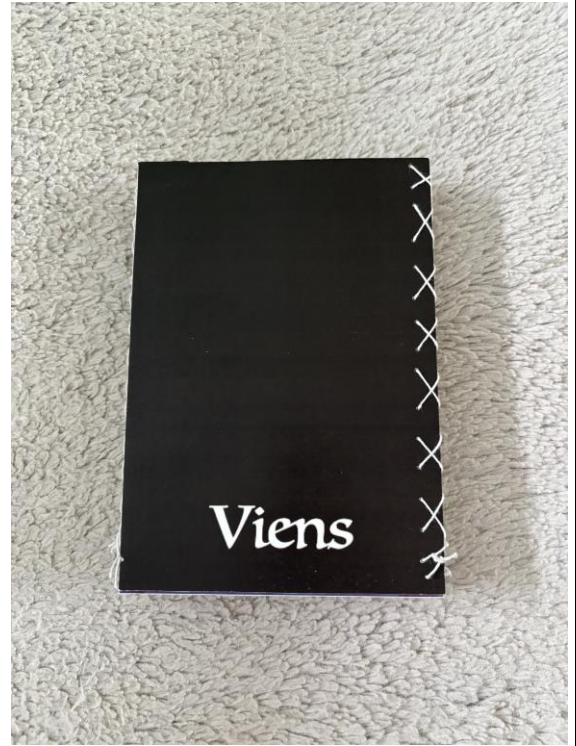
For the fifth stage of the project, as the deadline approached, I didn't have enough time to produce two fully bound book dummies. Instead, I focused on testing paper stocks at home by printing a single image onto two different types: one on card and the other on recycled paper. This quick experiment was really useful in helping me understand how the tactile

qualities of paper affect the mood of the images. The card gave a more solid, formal feel, while the recycled paper felt softer and more aligned with the personal, reflective tone of the project. The recycled paper, with its more natural texture, seemed to connect better with the emotional weight I wanted to convey, enhancing the intimate and raw quality of the family



images

Books six and seven were the final versions of the photobook, both using the same images, sequencing, and full-bleed layout to maintain a strong visual impact and emotional flow. The key difference between these versions and earlier dummies was the refinement of materials. After speaking with Estefani, I decided to change the binding thread from gold wax to linen. While the wax thread had symbolic meaning, Estefani pointed out that it didn't quite match the tone or feel of the book, it felt too much for such a personal body of work. Switching to linen thread gave the book a more subtle, tactile quality that better suited the emotional depth and softness of the imagery. This final adjustment brought the physical qualities of the book into alignment with the themes of connection and memory.



After considering all of the book dummies I made throughout this process, it's clear that it's been a huge learning curve filled with new experimentation. Each version taught me something different, and by the time I reached the last two dummies, I had a much clearer sense of what worked and what didn't. In the end, I chose the version made with card. Although I really liked the recycled paper for its texture and flexibility, it gave the book a soft feel, I noticed that the middle of the book began to droop. I'm not sure if that was down to the way I bound it or the paper weight itself, but it made the book look slightly unprofessional and less polished. In contrast, the card version held its shape much better and felt more solid and finished in the hand. That difference in structure and presentation played a big part in my final decision.

Transferable Skills for Life and Professional Practice 10%

Guidance specific to task (from the brief):

Your photobook should meet industry standards in design, development, and production. Plan your workflow according to your chosen publication method to ensure timely completion. Active participation in sessions is essential for sharing your work, engaging in discussions, and demonstrating both employability skills and a strong grasp of the module content. Your evaluation should reflect on your learning throughout the process and highlight the transferable skills you have developed.

Evaluate what you have learnt throughout the process of making your photobook. Pay particular attention to the transferable skills you have developed. (500-1000 words)

Creating this photo book has been a helpful process in which allowed me to experiment with ideas, refine my creative process, and develop both technical and conceptual skills. Through this project, I have not only explored the theme of connection in a personal and meaningful way but also learned valuable lessons that will inform my future work, both as a photographer and a bookmaker. This reflective evaluation will explore what I have learned throughout this process, focusing on the technical, creative, and transferable skills I developed.

Throughout the process of creating my photo book, I've learned several important lessons that have shaped both my approach to photography and my creative process. First and foremost, I've come to appreciate the value of authenticity in visual storytelling. By working with unedited family photographs, I realised that raw, unpolished images often carry more emotional weight than technically perfect ones. Letting go of the need for perfection. I learned that focusing on the emotional truth of the moment is more impactful than obsessing over every detail. This experience challenged my previous belief that "good" images must be flawless, and I now have a deeper appreciation for the power of imperfections in storytelling.

The process also taught me the importance of experimentation. I tested different formats, paper types, binding techniques, and sequencing methods, which allowed me to adapt and refine my work in response to what felt right for the project. Initially, I was set on a specific structure, but as I worked with the images, I realised that the form of the book needed to align with the emotional content of the photos. This openness to change helped me move away from my original ideas and find a structure that better conveyed the themes of connection I wanted to explore.

Another significant lesson was the power of sequencing to evoke emotional impact. I chose to organise the images based on emotional and visual similarities rather than chronologically or geographically. This approach allowed the book to transcend a simple family history and instead reflect the non-linear and associative nature of memory. It was through this decision that I was able to create a narrative that felt more genuine and emotionally resonant.

Finally, I gained a deeper understanding of technical aspects like typography, paper selection, and layout. I realised that the smallest details, like the texture of the paper and the choice to keep typography minimal, could have a significant impact on the viewer's experience. Overall, the making of this photo book has taught me to embrace authenticity, experiment with form, and pay attention to the fine details that shape the narrative. Besides the technical and creative aspects of the project, I have developed several transferable skills that will serve me well in future projects. These include:

1. **Project Management:** Managing the process from concept to final product required careful planning and time management. I had to balance experimentation with deadlines, making sure that I gave each stage of the process the attention it needed.
2. **Problem-Solving:** Throughout the project, I encountered various challenges—whether related to sequencing, material choices, or binding methods. Finding creative solutions to these problems taught me how to approach challenges with flexibility and critical thinking.
3. **Attention to Detail:** From image selection to the smallest design elements, I learned how important it is to focus on the details. Each choice, no matter how small, contributes to the overall success of the project.
4. **Communication and Feedback:** Seeking feedback from mentors and peers was crucial in refining the photo book. This process taught me how to communicate my ideas clearly and how to take constructive criticism in order to improve my work.

Creating this photo book has been a rewarding experience that has helped me improve as an artist. Through experimentation, reflection, and adaptation, I have developed technical skills, creative confidence, and an understanding of how to communicate meaning through design. The transferable skills I have gained will be helpful in future projects, allowing me to approach new challenges with more flexibility, insight, and problem-solving ability. This process has taught me how my ideas can develop further than I first thought and to not get so caught up in the area in which went wrong at the beginning as it led to a greater outcome.