

The Gaze Reframed

Key words & Provide a short summary of the proposed project: 100 words

Objectification

Feminism

Male-Gaze

Reclamation

Control

The Gaze Reframed will be a project that explores and works to reevaluate the way in which women are presented in art. I will explore and research how women have been misrepresented and objectified for the male gaze.

I will also work to curate a body of work which represents women in a more respectful manner. Throughout history, women have been portrayed in ways that are sexualising them for the male gaze; my hope for this project is to celebrate women in a way that proves they don't need to be objectified to be appreciated in art.

Provide a detailed description of the proposed project (250 words)

The Gaze Reframed will explore the representation and objectification of women in art, I will particularly focusing on how the male gaze has shaped these portrayals. This project will aim to 'reframe the gaze' by creating work that celebrates and respects women, rather than sexualising them for someone else's pleasure. I am motivated by a desire to challenge the historical, objectifying depictions of women in art culture, and to create alternative portrayals of women which empower and show the beauty of womanhood and femininity. I want to encourage viewers to reflect on how women are represented and valued in art, and to 'reframe' and reshape this view to a more respectful and less sexualised image.

I plan to primarily work with photography and prints, because I like the idea of the images being powerful enough standing alone on a wall to convey my message. I also plan to use post production editing to add interesting affects to also aid the communication of the theme.

For this project I will be employing methodologies that include research, reflection and experimentation. I will start this process off with research, I plan to look into how women have been represented in historical art, I will focus on the idea of the male gaze, and how this changes how we see art. This research will include looking at feminist artists, theorists and people who have challenged these ideas. Alongside this research I will conduct photographic and post production experiments to explore different ways of portraying women and how is best to present this work. Throughout this process I will regularly complete self reflection and critical analysis, while also seeking peer feedback and feedback from lecturing staff, this will help me fine-tune my methods and work.

Timeline

Week beginning	Activity
06/10	Decide on name of project/ideas
13/10	Secondary research, review artworks related to topic, theorists etc
20/10	First shoot, review and edit
27/10	Research advertising and media
03/11	
10/11	Peer review existing work/ideas.
17/11	Engagement shoot / Portrait shoots/ AI experiments
24/11	Women in work shoots
01/12	Barbara Kruger inspired work
08/12	Edit and review work / Plan for the next Semester
15/12 – 05/01	Christmas Break – Photograph family at home/ family gatherings
12/01 – 26/01	Review/edit images / research existing artworks
02/02 – 23/02	Print work and experiment with how to display
02/03 – 23/03	More portrait shoots/ peer review
06/04 - 13/04	Easter break – finalise images
20/04 – 04/05	Printing/ Mounting / Install Swansea Show

Budget

Cost	Description
£2,349 + £1,295.99 = £3,644.99	Canon r6 + Lens
£239.99 + £219 = £458.99	Nikon D3100 + 18- 55mm lens + fixed 50mm lens
£66.49/ month = £797.88/ year	Photoshop/lightroom (adobe creative cloud suite)
£4,499 + £1,289 = £5,788	Canon r5 + lens
9 x £36 = £324	Printing for degree show onto vinyl estimate 3x3 A1 prints
£11,013.86	

Ideas

The Gaze Reframed is a project that explores and works to reevaluate the way in which women are presented in art. I will explore and research how women have been misrepresented and objectified for the male gaze.

I will work to curate a body of work which represents women in a more respectful manner, rather than sexualising them for someone else's pleasure. I am motivated by a desire to challenge the historical, objectifying depictions of women in visual culture.

Describe the developmental opportunities, experiments and processes you have undertaken, what did you get out of them, and how will you use them to support your proposed project? (200 words max)

Throughout this developmental stage I engaged with a range of opportunities , experiments and processes that helped shape the direction of this project. I explored different approaches to portraiture, including photographing people in their homes, workplaces and more. Photographing people in different locations allowed me to see how the environment around them affects the way that they act and the way it impacts how the viewer perceives their identity.

I took up the opportunity of photographing a friends engagement, which helped me experiment with capturing emotion in real time, and responding to unforeseen weather and therefore changing lighting conditions, which have strengthened my portrait practice overall.

I have also experimented with taking inspiration from well known established photographers and attempting to replicate their styles. This helped me finetune my style as a developing photographer and find my own niche and aesthetic.

Technically, I have developed my digital skills, I have learnt to use different cameras which is a great transferable skill to take into my professional practice. I also learnt how to use lightroom for ease of editing bulk images.

Research into women being represented in visual culture and the male gaze has helped shape the way I have photographed them, it deepened my understanding on how visual choices can either reinforce or challenge the objectification.

What are the main risks and challenges to your project meeting its aims? What will you do to manage these risks?
Mitigation (100 words max)

The main risks to my project include subjects feeling uncomfortable being photographed in personal spaces, which could limit the authenticity of the images. There is also the risk of upset in the sometimes sensitive nature of photographing someone with the overarching theme of objectification and the male gaze. Time management and the unwillingness of people allowing me to photograph them in a sometimes vulnerable place or way are also risks that I must consider. To mitigate these risks I will create a strict timetable which includes a mix of research and practical image taking, I will also only photograph people who I have built a relationship with. I will build a trust with participants and make it clear that if at any point they are uncomfortable we don't have to continue, I will also explain how the images will be taken and what they will be used for afterwards to ensure full transparency.

Practice Based Experiments

Research – Objectification in advertising



While researching this project I came across many adverts that blatantly objectify and commodify women. These adverts sexualise women to sell a product, they portray women as a passive object to be enjoyed and not as a human being. John Bergers idea of women being depicted to be looked at not act is particularly noticeable here.

These ads bring to mind the question of who is looking at these? And who is being looked at? Or who is the target audience? It is clear that these have been designed for the male gaze.

Research

John Berger 'Ways of seeing'

'One might simplify this by saying: men act and women appear. Men look at women. Women watch themselves being looked at. This determines not only most relations between men and women but also the relation of women to themselves. The surveyor of woman in herself is male: the surveyed female. Thus she turns herself into an object – and most particularly an object of vision: a sight.'

Shoot idea

A way in which I would like to encapsulate my idea of 'reframing the gaze' is by capturing images of my sister. Her story is that shortly after getting married she fell very unwell and was told that she couldn't get pregnant under any circumstance while she was unwell, this was heart breaking news for her as her condition isn't something that can be cured and she has dreamed of becoming a mum since she was very young. Shortly after becoming unwell herself, her husband also fell ill and became unable to work at the time, so she had to continue working through her being very unwell so they could afford to live. Her illness came in waves over the past 3 years and it was starting to look like she was never going to be able to have children of her own due to the strong medications she was on.

However, the beginning of this year (2025) she was able to find a medication that both kept her symptoms at bay and would allow her to have a baby. So now (November 2025) she is 6 months pregnant!

Her story has inspired me to 'reframe the gaze' on how women are encapsulated in visual culture because she has shown immense strength and resilience over the past few years, and I think her story shows how I would like to represent women in my images.



These images along with those on the next page, were successful as a shoot, however visually they seem very bland to me, they do not capture the depth of her story or the idea that I was trying to convey.

In my next shoot I want to capture something more exciting and inspiring.



Shoot idea

I have the privilege of capturing my friends engagement, and think it fits in with this project very well. As a man proposing to a woman can nowadays be seen as an archaic tradition rooted in patriarchal oppression. I want to capture it as something immensely joyful and empowering rather than something negative.



Seen here are two triptychs of images, these images encapsulate the pure joy and excitement captured in this moment. I like the idea of presenting them in this way as it seems to show a narrative of the moment of the proposal and immediately afterwards. These images do not show any objectification to me, they show only pure, natural joy. This is something that I love about these images and hope to recreate again.





Daniel Meadows

Daniel Meadows is a documentary photographer who specialises in street portraits. His images are black and white and contain often 2 individuals positioned in front of a largely plain background. I am inspired by the simplicity of these images and the lack of context on who is pictured and why? I also am interested in how these images do not seem to have any signs objectifying tones, the way he photographs men and women in the same way achieves my idea of the reframed gaze.



Next steps...

My next shoot idea is to photograph the same girl who got engaged in her nursing scrubs to show a stark contrast between her week vs weekend life. I am taking inspiration from Daniel Meadows' style of portraits by using a plain background and experimenting with using black and white editing.

Contact Sheet



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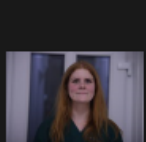
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These images show a mixture of emotions and organic reactions. I love the variety of emotions and feelings captured. I wanted to show the stark contrast between this woman in her engagement (a very important day) and her in everyday life. I feel that I have achieved this here.



AI Generated Portraits

generate me an image of an empowering woman which fights against Laura Mulvey's idea of the male gaze

I wasn't able to generate the image because DALL-E ran into issues during the creation process.

If you'd like, you can send a **new request**, and I'll generate it again.

You can also tell me if you want the image to look:

- more realistic or more graphic,
- more dramatic or subtle,
- set in a studio or in a specific environment,
- or if you want the empowerment theme shown in a different way.

After photographing Lee in her scrubs, I had the idea to turn to AI and ask it to generate images of empowered women who are fighting against the male gaze. The first prompt I tried came back with an error message (seen above) so I reworded it and tried again. The image in the middle of the page is what was generated, I didn't like this image as I felt it didn't encapsulate the empowerment I was looking for.

generate me a realistic image of a woman who is empowered and fights against the male gaze



more explicitly resisting the male gaze and more empowering for women



To encourage the AI software to produce a more empowering image I gave another prompt which asked it to be more explicit in its theme of resisting the male gaze and empowering women. Although ChatGPT provided this, I am unhappy with the outcome. The images look too polished and unnatural which seem to not fit in well with this project and what I am hoping to achieve.

Next steps...

Although the AI experiment was a fail, it inspired me to look into capturing women in their personal spaces like their home or work.

Another inspiration for this idea was Larry Sultan's project entitled 'Pictures from Home'. In this project he captures his family going about their everyday lives in their home. I love how although the images are of mundane tasks, they are still intriguing and attention grabbing. He photographs people he knows and loves in places they are all familiar with, this familiarity was something that I wanted to use and replicate.



<https://www.larrysultan.com/gallery/pictures-from-home/>

Contact Sheet



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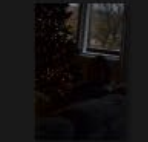
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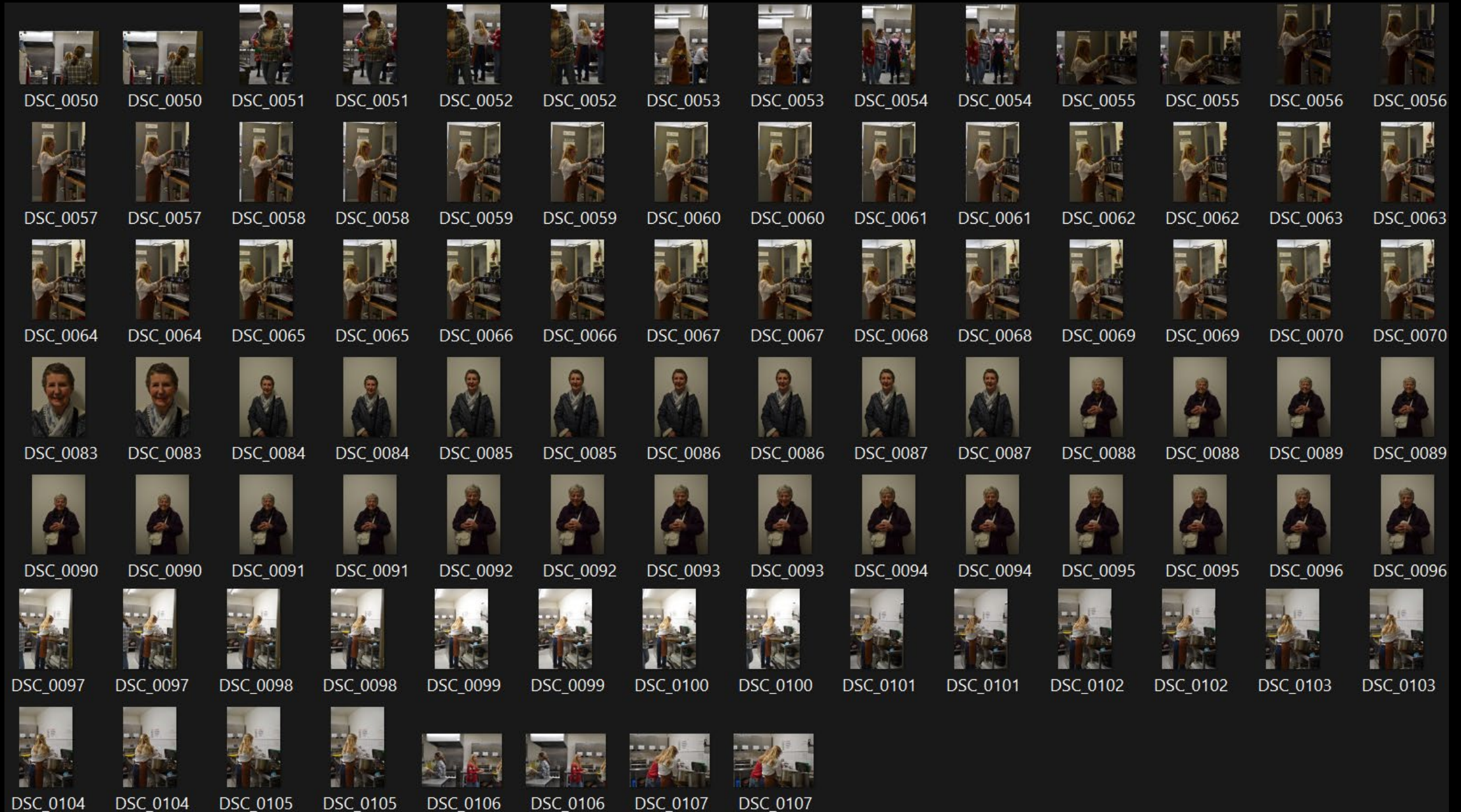
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These images are of a woman working from home, although at first glance they may not seem empowering or overly feminist, they are candid images of a woman taken by a woman. She hasn't been posed or made up in a way to attract male attention, she is simply sat working in the comfort of her own home. These images, and those that follow this page, encapsulate my idea of capturing women in a way that 'reframes the gaze'. If I were to recreate this shoot I would shoot a woman in a more obvious work place to explore the empowerment of women in a work place.



Women in the Work Place – Contact Sheet



Women in the Work Place



Following on from the previous shoot, I decided to photograph my place of work, a café owned by my mother and her business partner. Photographed here are my mother and some volunteers who helped her serve Christmas dinner to the café regulars. I love how these images are candid, unposed and only lightly edited so it creates the effect that the viewer is there in the kitchen with them.

More Women in the Workplace images

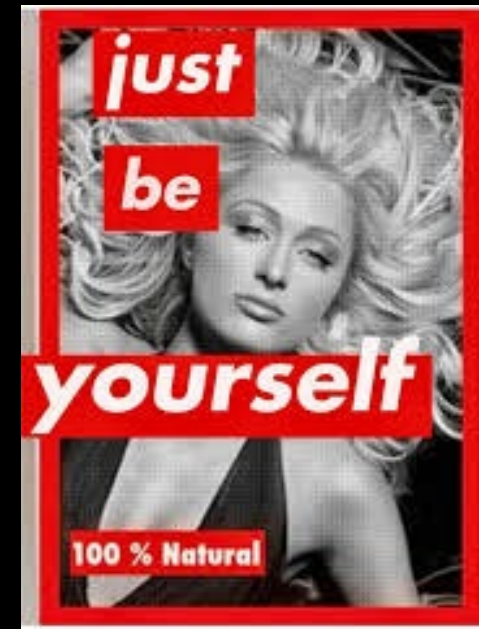
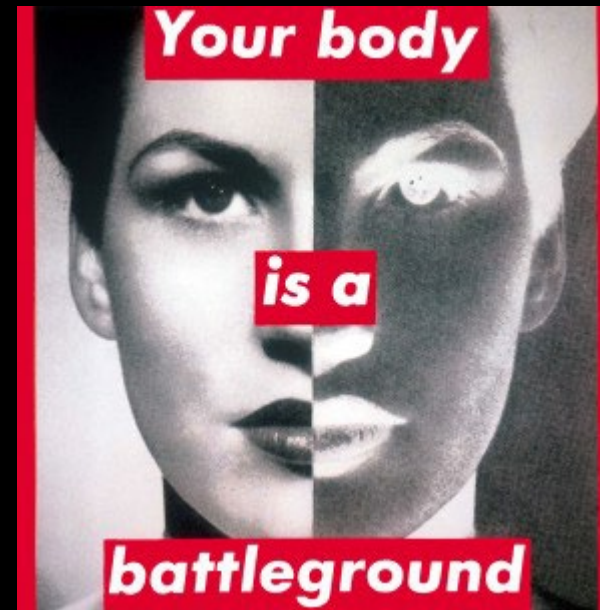


Barbara Kruger

Barbara Kruger is a portrait artist who uses pop art style images and text to convey her message of critiquing power, gender and consumer culture. She is well known for her easily recognisable style of black and white heavily contrasted images with bold red and white text overlaid. Her work is very powerful and clearly conveys her message.

Next steps...

Following this research, I would like to experiment with using Krugers style of text overlaying images.



<https://www.thebroad.org/art/barbara-kruger>

Barbara Kruger



Here I took images from different shoots within this project and edited them in a style that matches Krugers work, I made the images black and white with a higher contrast, I then layered over text which links to my project idea of objectification and the male gaze.

I like these images and think that I achieved the Kruger style well, however I do not like the aesthetic of these images in relation to my project, this experiment confirmed my liking of social documentary style portraiture

Next steps...

After experimenting with photographing women in their workplace and Kruger style editing, I wanted to go back to the Larry Sultan inspired work, of photographing people in their homes pottering around. His work often includes bright colours which is something that I am inspired by and love as it makes his images very inviting and eye catching.

In this shoot I photographed a good friend called Aimee in her home doing everyday things. An interesting layer to these images is that her husband answered the door to my knock wearing a pair of pink rubber gloves, Aimee had just come home from a day of work to her husband cleaning the house. I mention this because it adds an almost comedic contrast to the stereotypical marriage in our patriarchal society, it also adds to my overarching theme of feminism and female empowerment.







Here I was experimenting with the idea of presenting this as a triptych, I like the idea of presenting my work in the form of a triptych because it gives the viewer the opportunity to view multiple moments and views simultaneously. The three-panel format gives the images a flow that allows the viewer to notice subtle changes to the lighting or expressions that wouldn't necessarily be noticeable at first glance.

In the future I would like to experiment with photographing a few different women in this same position and place them in a triptych together.