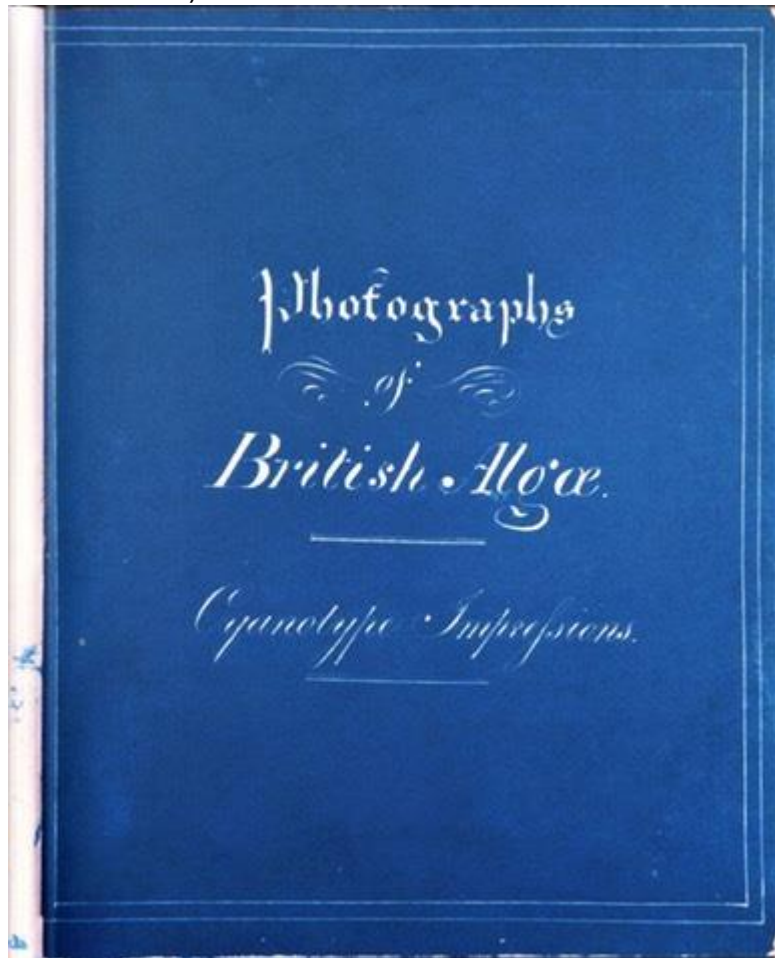


Student Name: Cae Phillip Leslie (2410000)

Knowledge and Understanding Skills: 20%

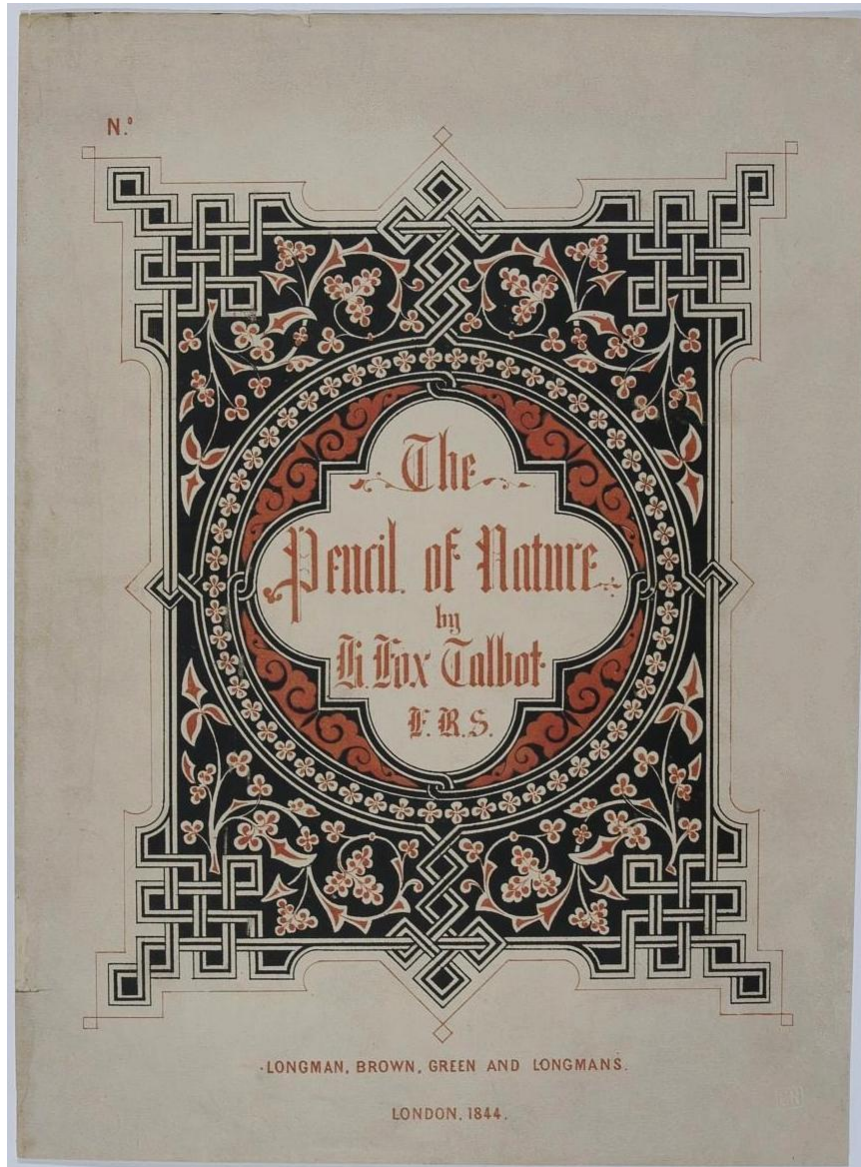
Using examples (3 max), explore your understanding of the history, function and practical development of the photobook. Your analysis should highlight the strategies used by the artist/photographer to communicate their message. Include visuals (500 – 1000 words)

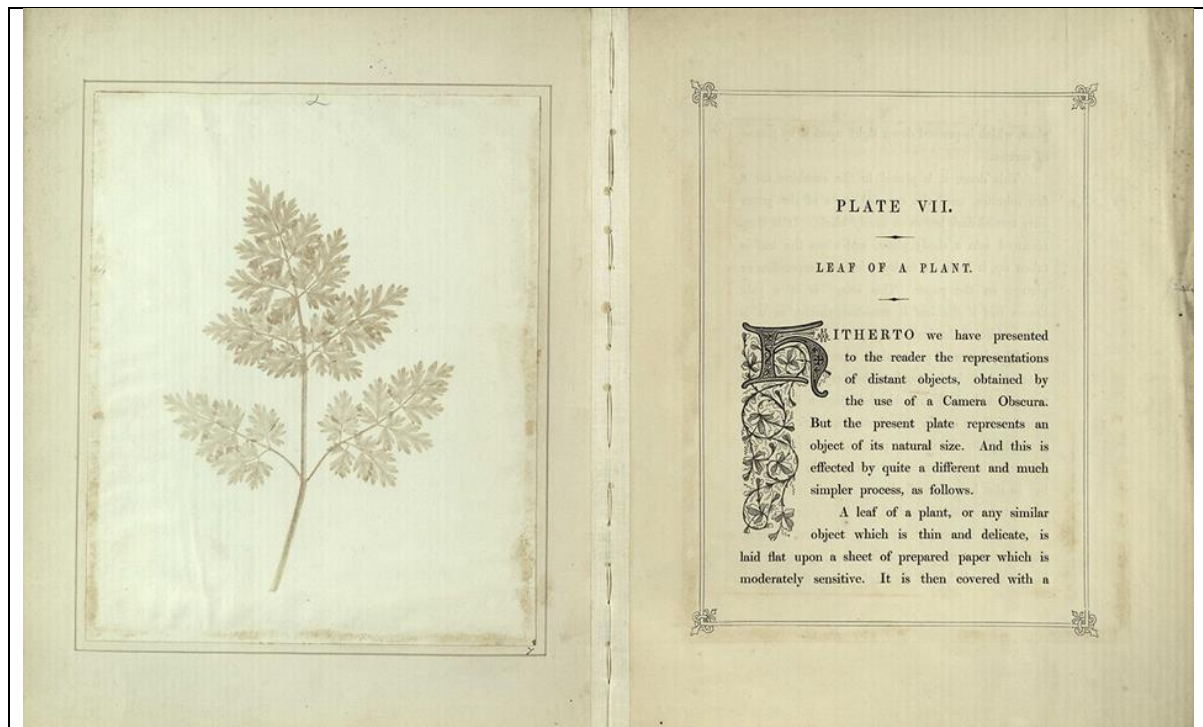


Photographs of British Algae: Cyanotype Impressions, 1843, Anna Atkins.

Anna Atkins' *Photographs of British Algae: Cyanotype Impressions* is considered to be the first ever photobook, created between 1843 – 1853, it is a documentation of British algae with over 400 cyanotype impressions. The photobook was purpose built to be a scientific documentation of botanical subjects, before the invention of photography artists and illustrators were used to create and record the visual aspects of scientific subjects and practices, in botany to create accurate visualisations of plant life for scientific use. Atkins' cyanotype impressions blended a new medium between two practices, science and art. Whilst not specifically trying to communicate a message, *Photographs of British Algae: Cyanotype Impressions* appearance and publishing choices convey its scientific message/purpose/origins,

coming at roughly 260 x 225mm and in a deep blue colour likely out of necessity due to the blue cyanotype impressions, the photobook despite being handmade is professional, simple and straightforward. The importance of Atkins' work cannot be understated, not only developing the first ever photobook and giving an increase to the popularity and attention of the photographic medium but also revolutionising how people would go about documenting and recording botanical specimens for scientific use.





The Pencil of Nature, 1844, William Henry Fox Talbot.

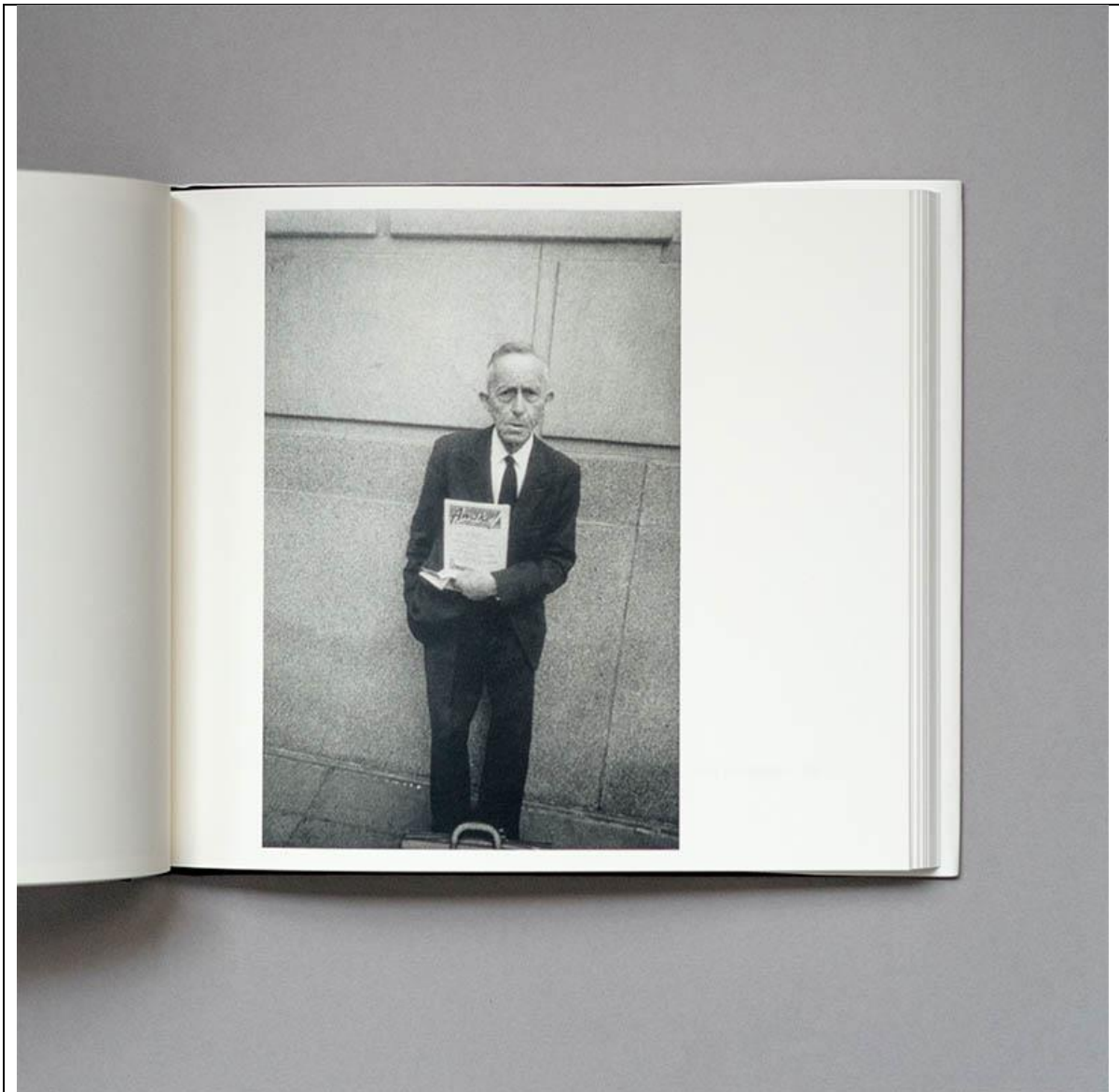
The Pencil of Nature by William Henry Fox Talbot is the first ever commercially published photobook, created between 1844 – 1846, the book is fanciful and beautifully stylised in its design. Holding 24 Calotype prints, pasted by hand of various subjects including a shelf of bowls and plates to a photograph of the side of a building. It is regarded as one of the most popular and influential works in photography, ironically at its time of publishing the project was terminated due to a lack of interest with only six instalments being created. “The cover page of *The Pencil of Nature* eclectically clashed the Baroque, Celtic, and Medieval styles, as was characteristic of the Victorian era.” (Wikipedia, 2026.). Whilst having a semi standard design choice for its time Talbot’s photobooks design is very interesting in how it conveys its purpose and message. The main purpose of this photobook being to demonstrate the wide variety of potential uses of photography, to this effect the physical and visual design of the photobook grabs the attention of readers easily with its intricate and colourful cover design, for the design of the contents of the book they provide a standard and a stylised professional look with the image on the left side and a piece of highly stylised text to its right.

THE AMERICANS



PHOTOGRAPHS BY
ROBERT FRANK

INTRODUCTION BY
JACK KEROUAC



The Americans, 1958, Robert Frank.

The Americans published in 1958 by Robert Frank is one of the most important and influential photography books, being a collection of 83 black and white images taken during a 1955 – 1956 road trip, Frank during this time shot 27,000 images using a 35mm Leica film camera. The key themes of *The Americans* are those of social and class inequality and the breaking down of societal perspectives on the high- and low-class people of America, it serves as an interesting perspective on post war American society. Frank's photobook does not follow a chronological sequence with its images, rather it puts together images that 'flow' with each other, being sequenced by visual or emotional similarities. The cover of the photobook uses an illustration rather than a photograph, an interesting choice for a photobook, the drawing done by Saul Steinberg breaks the expectation of a strong, clear and attention-grabbing image to draw in attention rather it feels detached and almost out of place. *The Americans* visual style undermines the cohesive, unified and optimistic America that was portrayed during the time post World War II.

Cognitive and Intellectual Skills: 30%

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)

The themes and contexts explored within my photobook are those of humanity, human ingenuity, creativity, the need to create something greater than oneself, architecture and monuments and how they represent specific parts of human nature and human creation.

In response to the themes listed above, I first researched locations of monuments and various types of architecture mainly dating to the mid and late 1800's and the early 1900's. After finding a number of accessible locations across the valleys and the vale and most of South Wales, I began to research specific sites, monuments and structures themselves for their history and cultural impact in the places they reside. I then began to produce the work in ways that would convey the themes and contexts of the project, when planning shoot days and then enacting said days I chose bright, sunny days with harsh natural golden lighting. The brighter images better represent the positive aspects of the themes being explored and give a more visually in depth and impressive set of work. The use of colour as opposed to black and white images gave the work more of a contemporary feel rather than purely documentary and helped to further establish the positive aspects of the themes, in specific the use of colour photography ties into the themes of creativity and inspiration, the natural mashing and shading of colours that can be found in every aspect of life have been throughout human history a large direct and indirect inspiration for the creation of iconography, art, monuments and structures. A large portion of the photos are angled in a way that the structures and monuments are positioned above the viewer/ camera, the structures and monuments often tower over us, they stand great, demand attention and impose on our field of view. I chose to shoot primarily from below to replicate the feeling of finding and seeing such monuments and structures in person and to encourage thought on how these subjects are perceived and what impact they leave on those who have seen them.

The form of the photobook itself ties into the contexts and themes of the subject. The use of full bleed rather than windowed images and the decision to have it a mainly landscape photobook with landscape images and opening upwards away from the reader rather than side to side was to give the subject and the images more weight and visual importance to readers and to present the work in a way that was more akin to how the subjects would be viewed in person, with no border, seemingly spilling to the edge of our fields of view. The cover of the photobook being portrait as opposed to the landscape main works creates a more in-depth dynamic of human interaction and personalised experience with the work, having to flip the photobook around at

the beginning and end of it to view the work. With the cover images there is the accompanying title of the photobook in the font American Typewriter, this font was chosen to its closeness in visual style to the fonts often used on memorials and monuments while not directly using/ stealing the font as to stay respectful to the importance and uniqueness of the genuine font. With the various binding choices of using string, twine stitching or metal rings or simple staples left me desiring for a better binding design to compliment the photobooks design and themes, in the end I opted to use simple, small and industrially made staples to give a polar opposite feel to the rest of the book. With more time and experience I would have ideally and liked to explore a wider range of binding options to find one better suited for the photobook.

Practical Skills: 40%

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)

Through the course of this semester the process of developing my photobook and the ideas of what it would contain and represent changed and varied as I learnt new and implemented new design choices and themes for the work. At the start of development my methodology was to research and experiment early in the semester to gather a definitive idea on what the themes of my work would be and then how to best represent them in the photobook. The early process of developing the photobook dummies and experimenting with new design ideas was to create multiple iterations per series with slight to drastic changes between each of them, and then to compare each iteration within a series and choose a best version to then continue down that path of development. The first series of photobook dummies were printed onto A4 sheets then folded into A5 booklets, they were stapled together as an initial way of binding, with some being stapled at the centre, some being stapled at the top and bottom and some being stapled at the bottom, centre and top, this tried to simulate the difference between hardback and softback and to see how the photobook would look and act if it was able/unable to open flatly. They were printed on standard A4 white paper with the images varying in size and each having a differently sized white border.

The second series of book dummies were larger in size, being printed at A3 and then folded into an A4 booklet. The first iterations followed similar design as the previous series with white bordered images though this time the images being the same sizes throughout. Using the same staple binding and same paper stock this set was mostly experimenting with the size of the booklet and the sizing and placement of images within it. The second set of iterations of the second series saw some more design changes, switching from windowed images to full bleed images and printing solely landscape images with the photobook itself opening upwards away from the reader

rather from side to side. The decision of using full bleed images was in part due to the connection of how the human views the monuments and the photos of the monuments, when seeing them face to face these structures have no border, no window and no limitation, they only stop where they stop because they are finished not because they can be built no bigger. The larger size of the photobook and the images follow the size and scale of the subjects in the photobook, the monuments being usually quite large but also for such large structures to be shown through a much smaller medium show the differences in how we perceive and interact with these monuments, often only seeing them as structures rather than what they truly are, monuments to humanity.

The third series of book dummies stayed with the same size A3 printed to A4 folded, full bleed, landscape images that opened upwards away from the reader. In the first few iterations I explored with turning the images black and white through Adobe Lightroom and then using an off white/eggshell coloured card like paper with natural graining to simulate film images rather than adding grain to the images directly I put together a full black and white version of the photobook. The second iterations of the third series went forward with the same format but in colour with a new type of paper stock, landscape, full bleed images on an A4 booklet with a thicker and glossier white paper. These final changes set the final design choices for the photobook, thick white glossy paper, colour images, full bleed, landscape with the book opening upwards. The experimentation with black and white on grainy off-white coloured paper while aesthetically pleasing did not fit well with the majority of my images and did not connect with the themes of the photobook in the ways that I wanted/intended. The decision of continuing with colour images on a thicker white paper worked well with the positive and hopeful themes of human creativity and idealism, the bright and vibrant colour and harsh sunny spring lighting works with the inspirations that those who created the monuments and structures worked off of, during times of incredible human ingenuity and motivation. The coloured images do the subjects more justice than if they were black and white along with conveying those themes of hope, happiness and greatness that the monuments and structures were created from, a praise of humanity in awe of our genetic need to be a part of something or create something greater and beautiful.

The final part of development was the front and back cover of the photobook, I decided to go with a simple windowed portrait image for the front and back covers to with text at the top and bottom of the border to denote the title with the text font being American Typewriter. The dynamic of having the reader flip the photobook after the portrait cover to landscape content brought out a better level of human interaction that connects to the process of how these monuments and structures were made, with hundreds if not thousands of sketches, plans and detailed documents made to facilitate the construction of these subjects, with those documents having passed through many hands and many mind and then saved and stored for historical purposes. They have been and still are interacted with in so many different ways by so many people in so many contexts.

Transferable Skills for Life and Professional Practice 10%

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)

Over the course of this module, I have developed several skills to create my photobook and the work to go with it. Firstly, I have developed my planning and preparation skills through the project cycles and planned shoots that I have done for the module, for the shoots I researched locations that would be accessible and have what I needed for my themes and contexts, this would then be followed up with choosing a day to dedicate solely to shooting in that location. After shooting I would create digital and printed contact sheets, highlight the best images and then evaluate the images and the success of the shoot overall and plan the next project cycle and shoot accordingly.

Secondly, I begun to use and develop my skills with Adobe InDesign and further developed my skill with Adobe Lightroom Classic. Using Lightroom to fulfil an idea of a photobook dummy with black and white images, I changed a selection of digital colour images to black and white to use with grainy paper to give off the illusion of film images. Using InDesign I learnt how to format, design and print a booklet/photobook correctly. I learnt through InDesign that booklets can only be printed in multiplications of four and full bleeds can only be achieved by cutting down excess paper/border. Making use of online tutorials, information and help from available tutors and staff I was able to quickly grasp the basics of InDesign and start to create my photobook dummies and final photobook in more detail and depth while bringing to fruition the ideas for my photobook into a physical piece.

Thirdly, through a workshop, online tutorials and diagrams and through practice I learnt new ways of binding the photobooks together. Making use of staff, my classmates and trial and error, I was able to attempt different binding styles and materials to see how they would affect the look and opening of my photobook along with the impact on the different types of paper I had tried until I found a viable binding material and style for how I wanted to present my work.

Finally, I developed my evaluation skills, with a large part of my process toward creating my photobook, I went through many iterations and dummy series before settling on each aspect of the final. After each new iteration of a dummy photobook, I had to analyse and evaluate the aspects of it, the changes from the previous iteration, any new ideas that were implemented and then if they worked. With this many ideas were scrapped and kept, iterations could continue with small, gradual changes and sometimes with large overhauls of ideas and implementations. The largest aspect of which I evaluated and explored was the idea of whether my final photobook should be a black and white piece using a thicker, off coloured and grainy paper or if it should be a colour piece using a white, smooth, thinner paper stock. This decision was difficult as both worked aesthetically and contextually although with differing results.