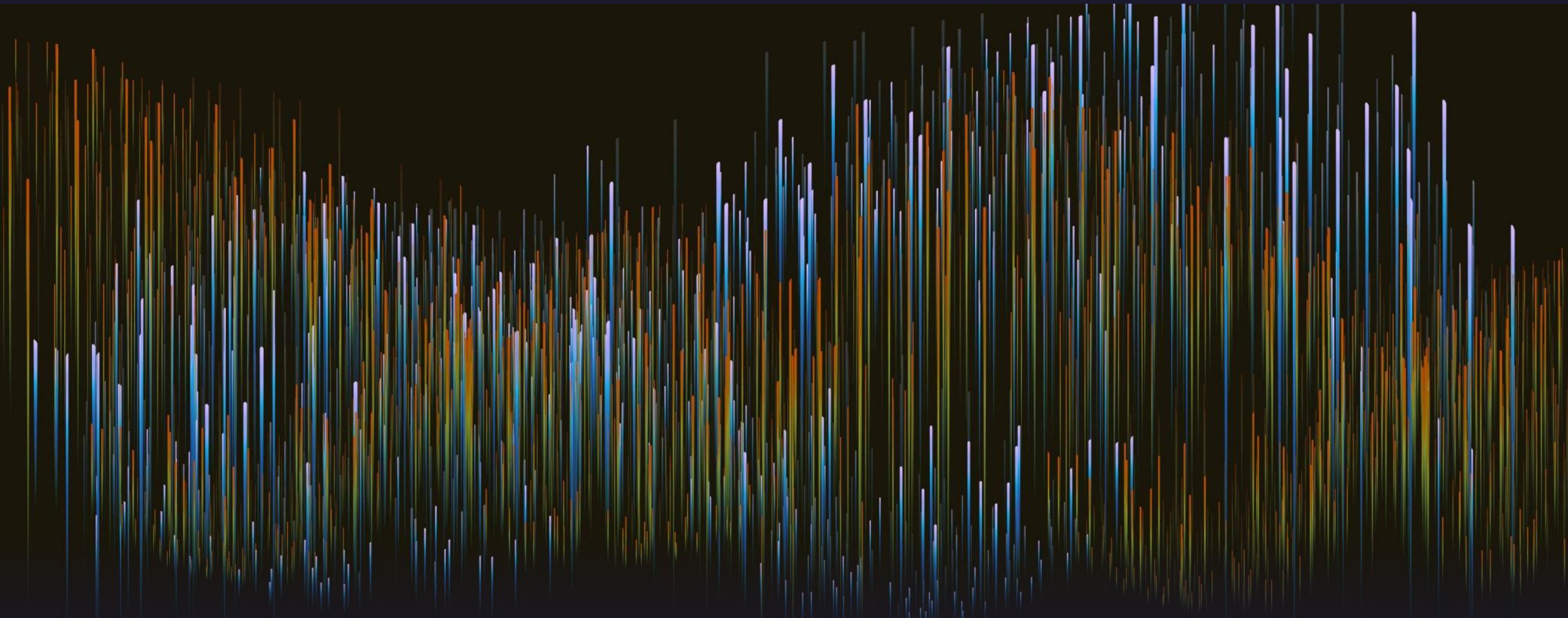


Visual Enquiry 2

Joseph Allen

2404792

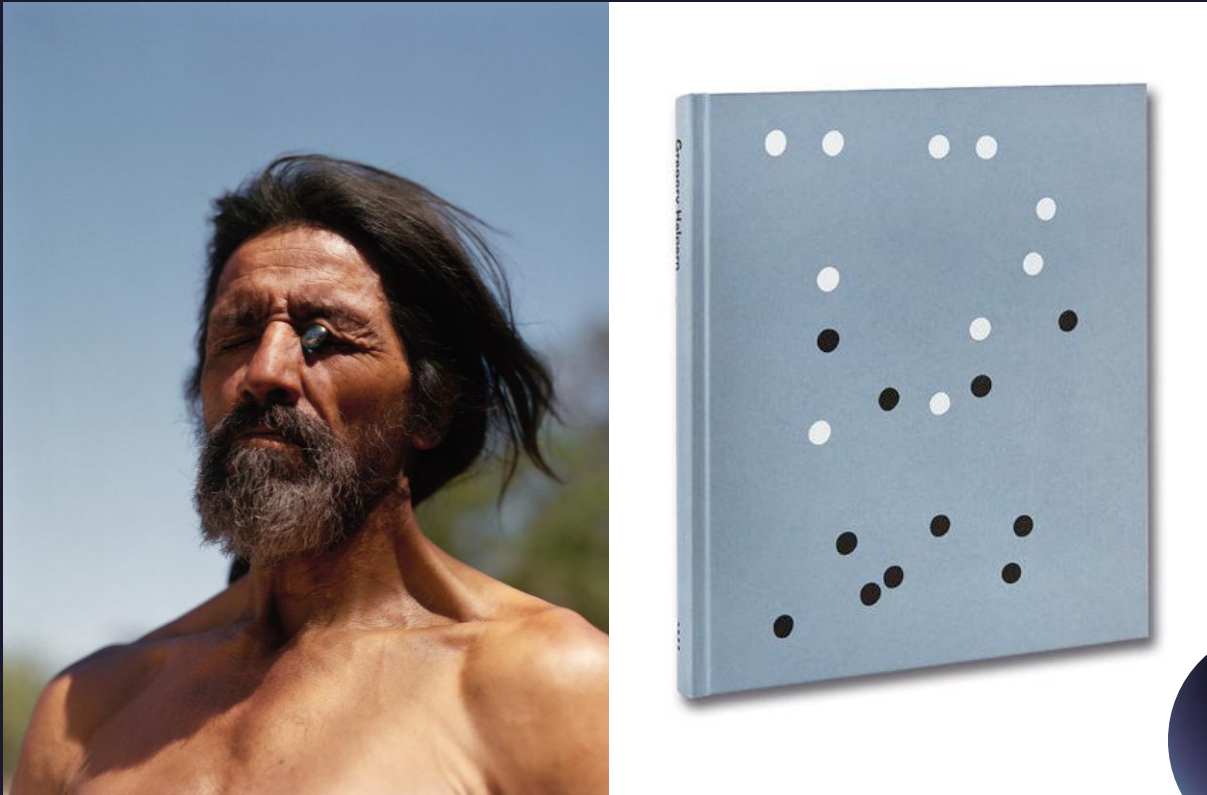




Literature Research

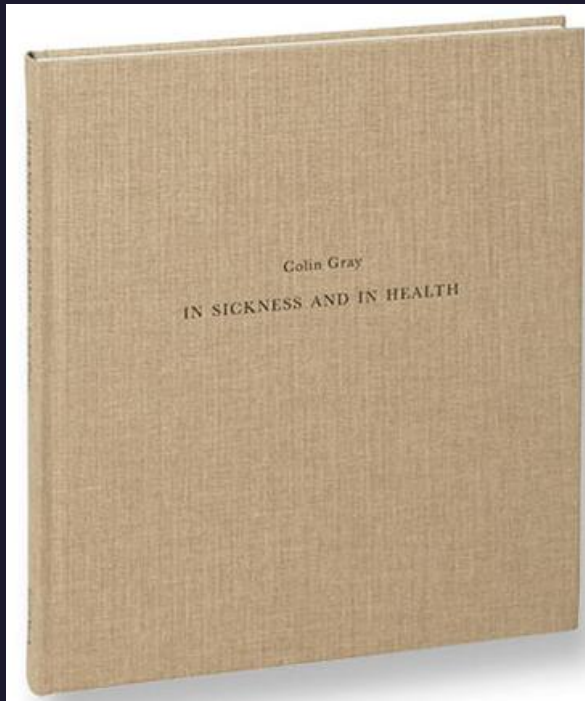


Book 1 – ZZYZX, Gregory Halpern



ZZYZX follows Halpern through a journey west from Los Angeles to the Pacific, photographing people, culture and histories that both contradict and coexist with one-another. He shows this through the layout of images in his book, sometimes places pictures together and then sometimes parting them with blank pages, places the beautiful next to the ugly, and vastness next to nothingness. A well thought out and digestible format, this is helped with the way that he has made is book too; the book is hard back, bound in silkscreen for a soft touch and sleek finish, a pattern of dots on the front and the books name laid on the back. It is a very simple but effective stylistic choice and something that is widely praised. The photographs themselves are wonderful, high contrast, very vibrant, well shot and balance the book out perfectly. The colour of the book is also put into all the photos almost as a colour scheme for the whole book, almost all the photographs in the book follow this with blue skies and blue clothing and a blue hue flowing through all of the photographs.

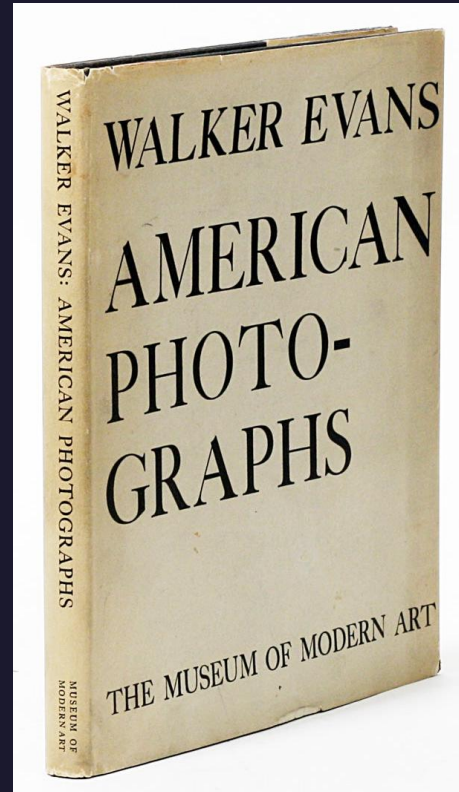
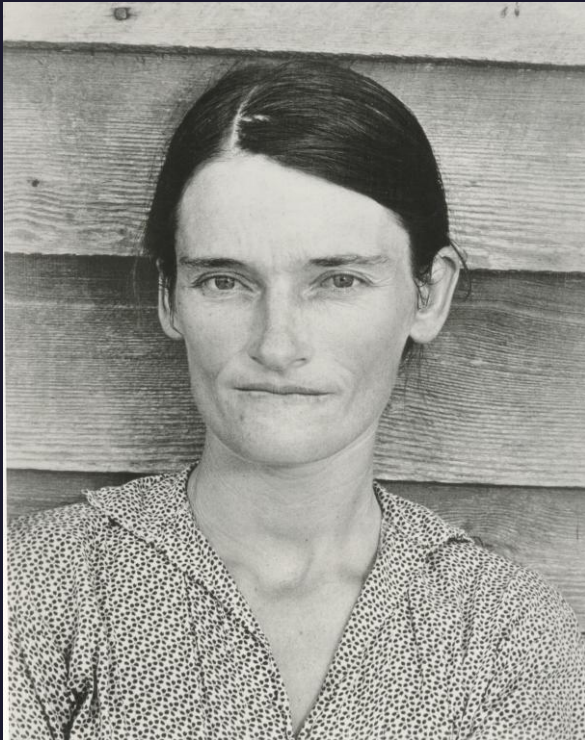
Book 2 – In Sickness And In Health, Colin Gray



In Sickness and In Health is a very personal and private photobook. It obviously isn't because it's been published but it feels like you're looking into the personal life of someone going through the most private part of their life, the death of a parent. This book follows Gray's parents through the slow and gentle deterioration of his parents which sadly ends in the death of his mother, you get to see everything in this book, hospital appointments, church visits, moments of deep grief, moments of loneliness and everything between. A true documentation of a wife's road to death.

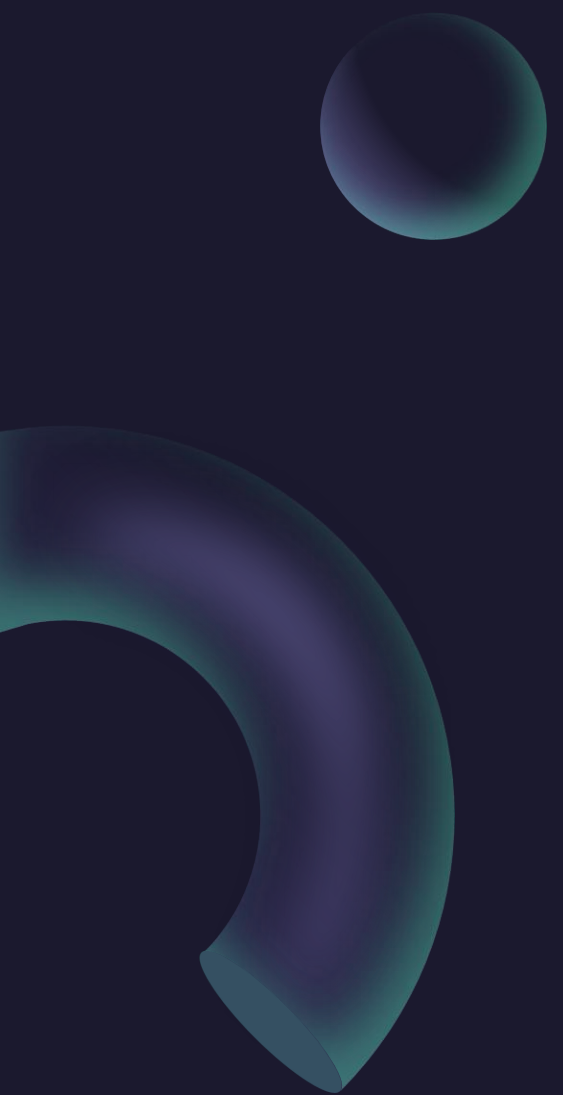
The book itself gives off this private feeling too, instead of going with a bright, vibrant cover they have gone for a beige hardcover which sits softly in your hands, both delicate and strong at once. The lettering is simple and to the point, straight down the middle of the front cover. The choice of material and form here clearly suits the book well and works with the photographs to create a very immersive experience as you are thrust into the world that Gray has laid out for you.

Book 3 – American Photographs, Walker Evans



American photographs is a very old and very influential book for photography. Showing ranges in photography from portraiture to family photos, vast landscapes to the fronts of houses. Simply showing American life, with an exception of two photographs which were taken in Cuba. The fact that there are photographs in this book from Cuba tells us that Evans is not attempting to document American life, and that he is not trying to only show us American photographs. An ambiguous and misleading title it can become as you look through the book. We do not know his definition of American and can only glean some of it from this book; is it family, the people, the architecture, the land, the culture? He doesn't say.

The form of this book is very simplistic and rigid. It is a white cover hard-back book with large black lettering on the outside, stating the name of the book, author and from where the book was published. A simple book for unexplained black & white photographs. I think the arresting directness of the title works against the white hardcover, it feels like it is trying to tell us fact, this book *is* filled with American Photographs. But it doesn't tell us what is specifically American about them, this is contradictory to the cover, yet it works very well.

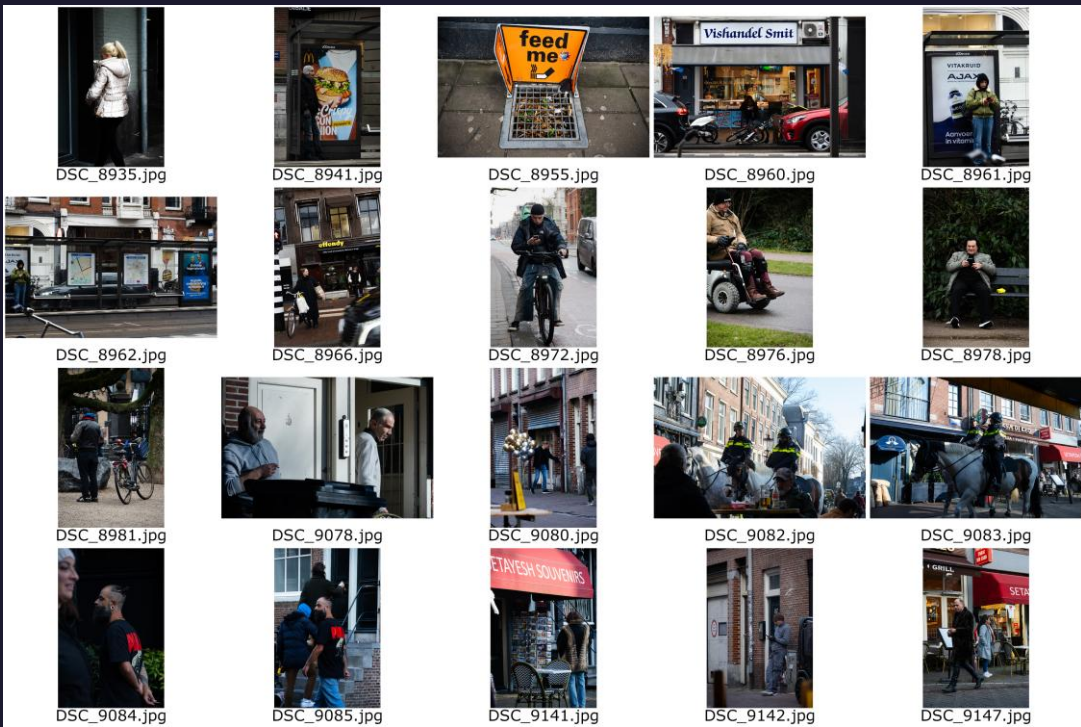
An abstract graphic on the left side of the image. It features a small sphere at the top and a larger, thick ring below it, both with a blue-to-purple gradient and a subtle glow effect.

First Book Dummy

Photographs Used

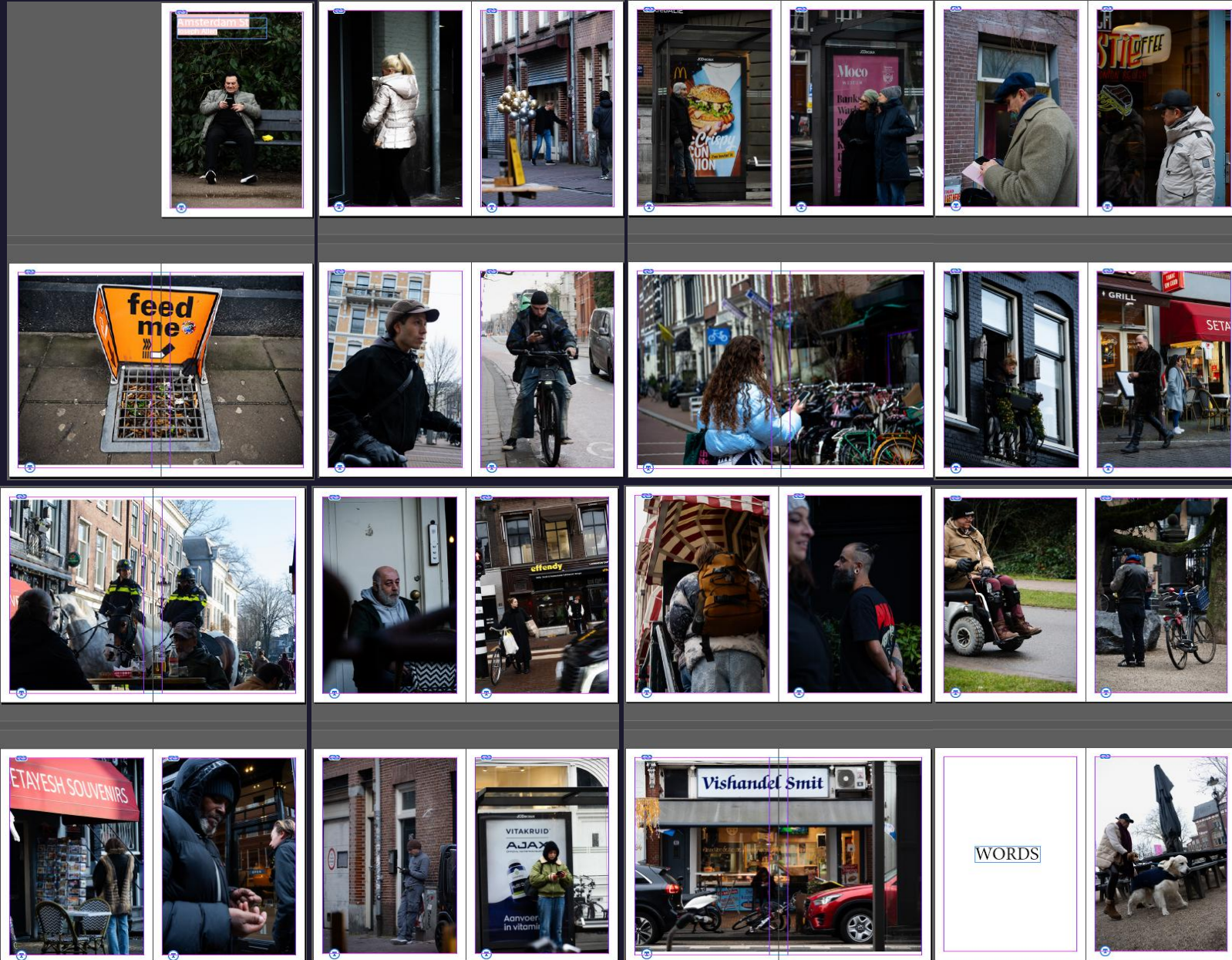
During a trip to Amsterdam, set up by the University, I decided that I would collect a good number of photographs of people so that I could do a street study for the book. Whether I would keep all the photos for the final book or if I would take some more after the feedback session with Ryan and Joe.

I took these photographs the same way that I would take any street photographs, getting close to the subject without interacting with them so that they would continue to be natural. These kinds of photographs always excite me, being able to capture someone doing something that they find routine and normal.

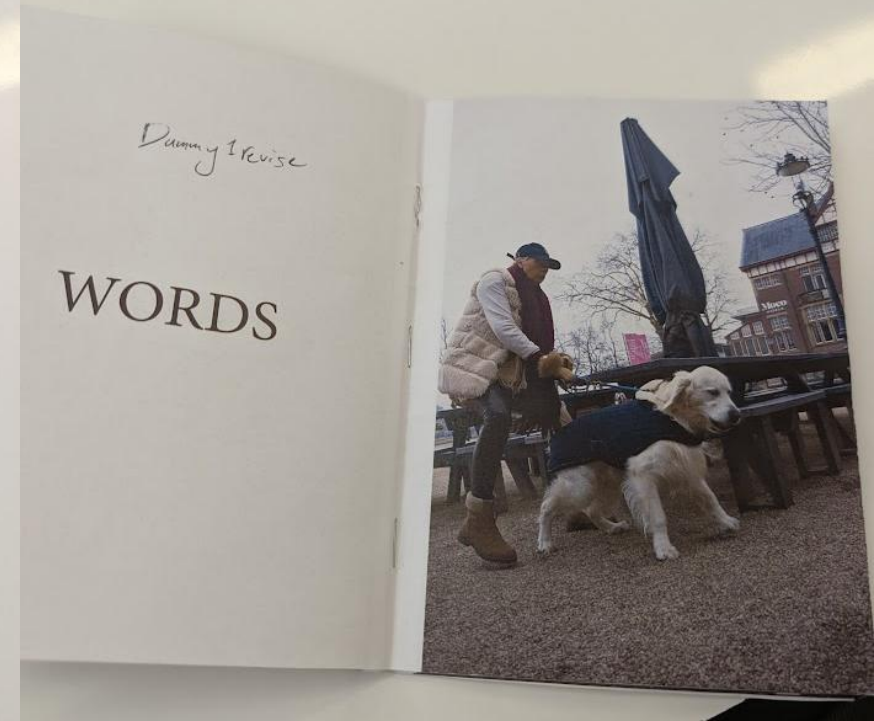
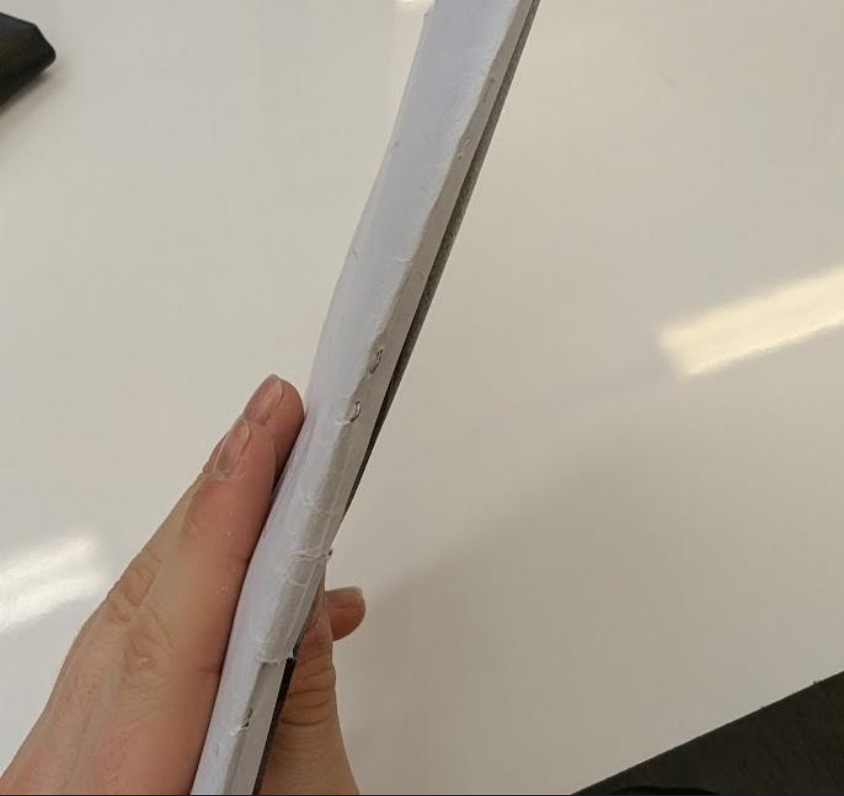


The Dummy – Using InDesign

This is the layout for my Dummy book. I decided to go with a small Zine for the first time just so that I can get a feel for laying out pages and printing a Zine. I bound the Zine with staples and printed it onto normal A4 printer paper. It took me a couple of attempts to get it to print correctly but after attending a workshop with Ann I was able to figure it out and print a decent first attempt. Ann also helped me figure out how to lay out my pages in InDesign correctly so that printing would be simple.



Book Dummy 1 - Form



- This is the outcome for my first attempt at a Zine. I named the Zine *Amsterdam St* because the photographs used in the book were all taken in one shoot during my trip in Amsterdam. I am showing in these images; the front, the middle of the book, and the binding of the Zine. As mentioned before, the binding was done with staples for simplicity's sake, this dummy is a focus on layout and content rather than binding. I intend to focus on binding in my next iteration of my Zine. I show the middle of the book to show how I intent to have writing in the book, maybe not in the middle now that I've thought back on it, most likely the information will be at the front or the back of the book. Allowing for a fluid flow of photography with no breaks.

Book Dummy Feedback

When speaking with my lecturers about my Zine, I found that I didn't really understand why I was taking photographs in the way I was. Why I was taking photographs from the hip instead of going up to people and ask them for a photograph. My thought process when taking these photos is to capture people in their most natural state, completing routines or just moving through space. But I only captured a couple of these instances in a way that was interesting to the viewer.

These two photographs are sat side by side in my Zine and they jumped out to Ryan and Joe as not only good pairings but interesting photographs too. These are the kinds of things I should be photographing not just taking photos of every person I see and hoping that they were doing something interesting in the frame. This made me realise that I need to think more about who I am photographing and even where they are in space.



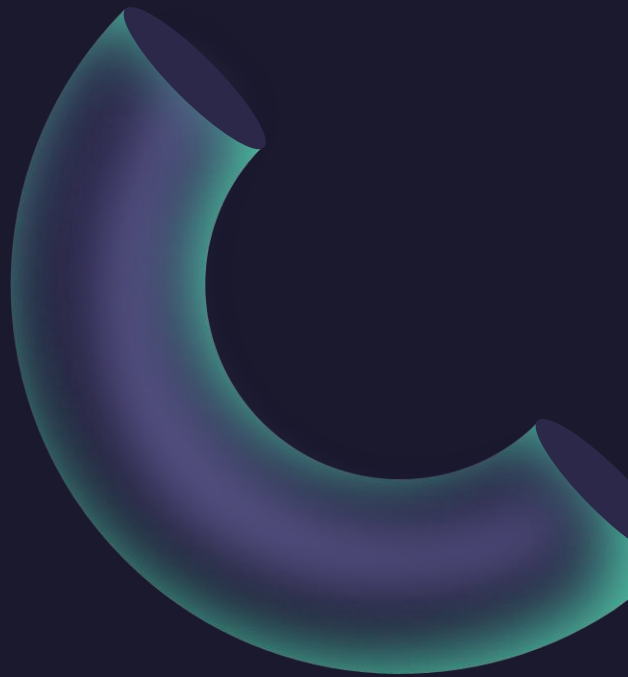
It has been suggested to me that I go into a single area, most likely in the middle of town, sit somewhere and photograph interesting people moving through that space, this will allow me to create an interesting study of people doing routines without the randomness of my last street shoot. Something that captures the normality that I want to show with more structure and form.

Dummy idea 2, Swansea street study.



For this shoot I wanted to continue my study of people but with a genuine idea behind it. Showing my last shoot to people, I found that the photos themselves were good, but the reasoning was quite empty. So, I had a think about it, spoke to my lecturers and found that making some sort of intervention in the normality would be much more successful. To do this I intend to go into town and intervene by stopping the person I am photographing, speaking with them for a short amount of time, taking their photo and then continuing onto the next person. I will also be taking some wider shots from further away to give a sense of space in my photos, an acknowledgement to where I am taking the photographs. This will also help to break-up the layout of the photographs.

I will also be using my Pentax 645Z as it is my preferred way of taking portrait photographs. It also allows me to increase or decrease a photos exposure after the fact without having to worry too much about noise due to its large sensor.



Photographs taken/used, shoot review



The shoot didn't go too badly. There was a couple of people that said no to a photo but the people that I did photograph were very interested in what I was doing and enjoyed the chat I had with them. I think I will need to go for another shoot before I can say that I am happy with the total outcome of this project.

I think some of the photo's work with what I wanted to do. The photos where the people look into the Lense make more sense as an *interruption* in someone's normal day to day routine. I think I will need to show these to my lecturers before I'm sure that this works with the context and before I can go for another shoot.

For my next shoot I intend to look at other aspects of people, specifically their hands. This gives a more interesting aspect to the shoot, a more invasive study of people in Swansea.

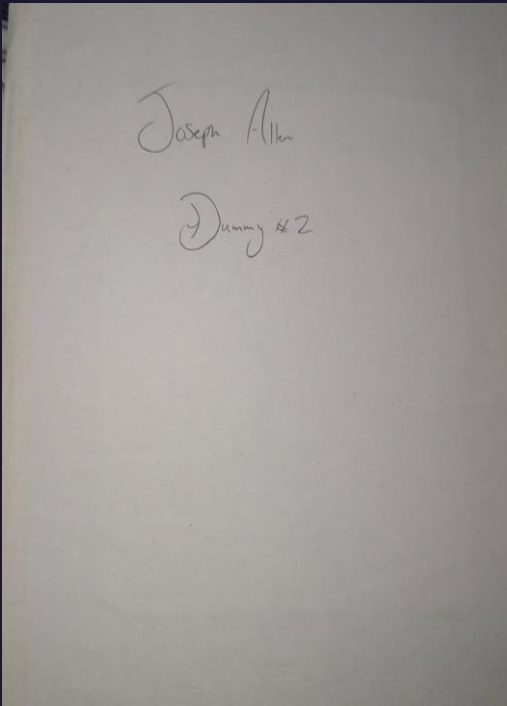
Creating a hardback book.

My hardback book was created using an online tutorial. This tutorial consisted of 15 steps, each explaining how to cut the paper to size, picking fabrics, measuring the spine, what glue to use, etc. When using this tutorial, I realised just how impatient I can be when left on my own with a small 'how to' booklet, making guesses, going ahead two steps and just trying things my own way. This impulsiveness created lots of problems for me in the production of my books.

Link: <https://www.instructables.com/How-to-bind-your-own-Hardback-Book/>



Book Dummy 2 - Form



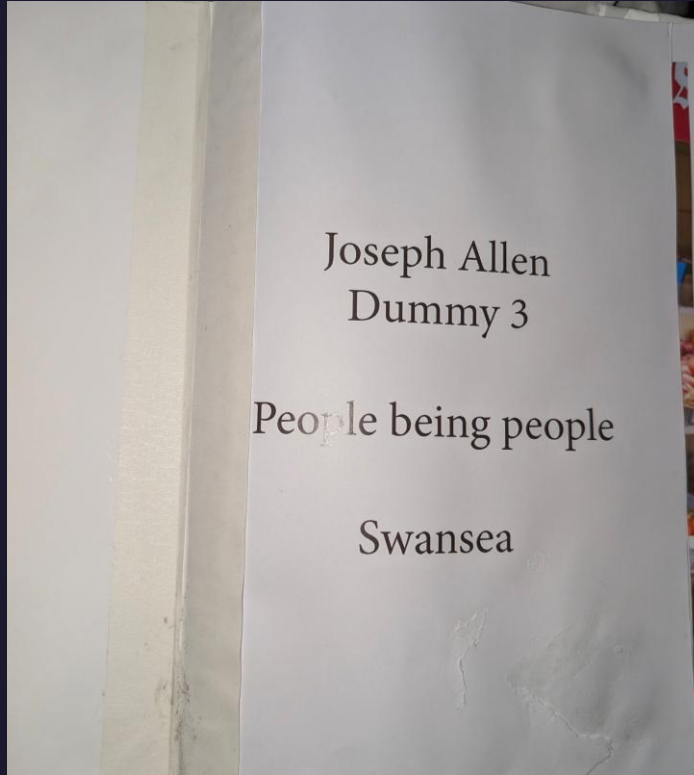
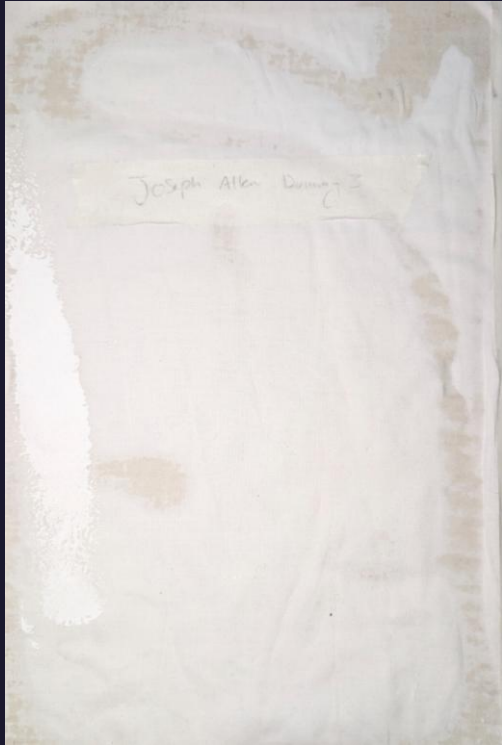
Notes made about this dummy for improvement when I try it again.

- Use thicker fabric
- Leave pages to use as covering pages.
- Use better glue
- Take more time when measuring
- Use better knife when cutting
- Take more time in general

My second dummy is my first attempt at a hardback book. It was surprisingly easy in some ways, and surprisingly difficult in others. The binding and printing of the book its-self was easy, but using a fabric with the correct thickness, utilising the equipment I had on hand, taking my time and following instructions correctly is where I found it difficult. Not having the correct fabric meant that glue would seep through onto pages of the book and stick them together, ripping pages.

The photos when printed into the book didn't look very bad, I found that I preferred them in this format instead of on a computer screen. It gave them a much more apparent meaning than when I was flicking through them in lightroom.

Book Dummy 3, Hardback attempt 2 - Form



Notes made about this dummy for improvement when I try it again.

- Use even thicker fabric
- Use thinner paper for binding paper
- Try putting the paper into the spine without stitching it and only glueing it in
- Take more care with how much glue to use in the future.

This is my second attempt at the hardback book for my documentary study. This went better in some places and much worse in others. When binding a hardback book, you are supposed to glue small pieces of paper to the backs of the first and last page so that you can fix the pages to the cover and back of the book. But when I did this, I decided it would be a good idea to use the stiffest paper I could find, in doing this I made it very difficult to turn the first and last pages of the book. Something that I made note of in the back of my book.

I also used photographs from my Amsterdam shoot to fill out the book more and give it more thickness, as the first attempt was much too thin for a hardback book. I would say the minimum is 32 pages of A4.

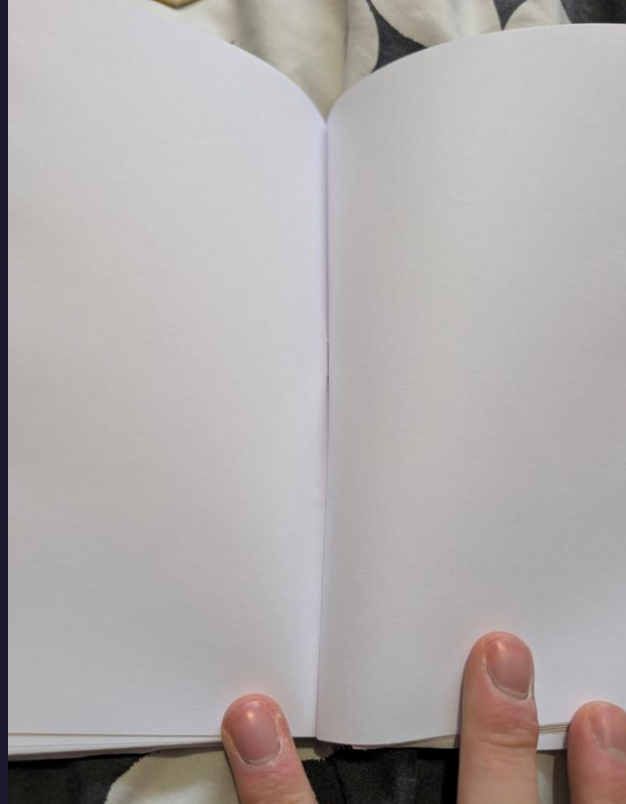
Hardback book attempts 3&4

These books were just me attempting to get better at creating a hardback book. Following the notes that I had made on my last two versions to improve these dummies. I am sadly still making mistakes,, whether I am not understanding the process of making these kinds of books, or if I am not taking my time, or if I am just not good at it and haven't practiced enough yet I am unsure. But I will continue to attempt these until I am confident that I have done a good job at it.

One of the biggest changes I made in these attempts was the use of fake leather instead of a fabric. This gave the books a much more professional look and allowed for easier glueing when preparing the casing for the book. I was still struggling with inserting the pages into the book but the fact that I am getting good at the casing means that I can focus on the binding and printing of the actual pages. I am still following the same tutorials for creating this book, as they are informative and very easy to follow, I just need to follow them perfectly and not take any guesses or shortcuts as I have been in these attempts, It seems my impatience has been getting the better of me.



Dummy 3



As you can see this book is immediately very messy, specifically the binding. Very loose, taped together and badly glued to the spine. The idea for this dummy was to focus on the fake leather and to get better at sticking the casing together, whilst that was done rather well, the actual binding was left scrappy and messy. I attempted to fold the pages into chapters to create a thicker spine, but I did not learn how to place them together so they would not come apart, I also attempted to staple the pages together.

Overall, a sorry attempt at creating a dummy that would be useable.

Dummy 4



This is my most successful attempt yet. The binding is a little loose, but the pages turn well and sit smoothly in the casing. The leather is stuck down properly and has no leaking glue like the last Dummy's, and I was able to do a nice stitching which allowed double spread pages to line up properly without the photographs looking wrong. Overall, a great attempt in comparison to the others.

I will still need to work very hard to get this perfect, but for now I can be happy with this attempt.

I will be working at the binding, the sticking of the leather, the folding of the leather around the cover, the measuring of the spine, the cutting of the pages, the spacing of the images when printing onto A3 page and experimenting with softer card for the covers.

Refined and New Idea for the Book

My new idea for my book (and my exhibition) is much more in-line with my studies and what I want to pursue. The idea is to do a documentary piece addressing the divide that politics has caused in modern day society by documenting the day-to-day life of two people. These people are my cousin and my mother. My intention is to show similarities through photography whilst addressing the differences. Obviously two people living different lives will not be doing the same things, seeing the same people, or going to the same places. So I will be asking them the same questions throughout to create a dialogue/ conversation between them,, their difference in answers will inform the viewer of them as people. I will not be disclosing political sides in this either, to further remove this divide that is prevalent in society today, and specifically in Swansea.

The reason I have chosen family members is both due to time constraint and also the ability to photograph them in spaces that a stranger may not allow me to photograph, places such as living rooms, cars, bedrooms and such. Personal spaces that only someone very close to them would allow. I am currently in the process of getting permission for this shoot from these people, but I intend to take photos like this to portray the similarities and differences in their lives. How does their views inform the way they live? Where do they go? Who will they see? Who are the people most important to them? What's their favourite crisp? Simple questions that may lead to relatable answers.

In conclusion, I wish to remove this divide that has been created through politics and allow a conversation between two sides of the coin.

Idea mishap

I started to contact my cousin but, sadly, as I started to explain how I would be photographing him and the questions I would ask he very quickly backed off and decided that he preferred to keep his privacy private. This is of course understandable but it has put me in a difficult spot. As my whole idea worked off the back of him wanting to be part of my documentary piece. I have been racking my brain for a couple of days and have found that my brother's friend shares the same views and opinions as my cousin does, so I will be documenting him instead. I feel that this will work just as well and won't cause any other problems for me.

He has also already agreed to do the documentary, so I won't have to go off any false hopes and won't have to plead for him to let me take photos and ask him questions. The next step is to interview my mother and my brother's friend, find out places that I can take them too, photograph them and then exhibit it. It is now 2 weeks to the exhibition and just over a month till the book needs to be handed in, I need to get a move on.



Shoot one , plan, my mother.

My plan for the first shoot is to take my fully charged Pentax 645Z and photograph my mother from when she wakes up to when she finishes her day. I intend to ask her a myriad of questions throughout the day, documenting the answers and taking photographs along side them. I hope to not lead her into any places or answers as to get as pure a documentation as I can of her day-to-day life. I may take photos over one or two days just to make sure I have the photographs I want and that I have asked all the questions I want.

I intend to frame her in the photographs using the rule of thirds, taking care to follow a grid pattern so that when I photograph my cousin, I can position him in the same way, creating a mirrored effect when presenting the photographs. This will also allow for some relation to be drawn from photo to photo. Even if they are in different places, they are still in the same place in the frame. An example of this would be to position my mother on the right-hand side of the sofa in her living room, then to do the same with my cousin in his. Creating an overlap and visual relation.



These kinds of photographs will be taken throughout the day, and I will be making sure to take as many as possible. Making sure to frame properly and take note of positioning to refer to in my second shoot.

Interview with my Mother

I have sat down with my mother and asked her 15 questions which I think would be asked in a conversation and show parts of her character. I will be asking my brothers friend the same questions to create the feeling of conversation and common ground between them.

Questions:

- 1.What is your favourite flavour of crisps?
- 2.How long have you known your best friend?
- 3.Who has been your biggest influence in life?
- 4.Where is your favourite place to go with friends?
- 5.Favourite place to go on your own?
- 6.Favourite genre of music?
- 7.Do you watch the news? What channel?
8. Where is your dream place to live?
- 9.Favourite takeaway?
- 10.A place that means a lot to you?
- 11.Are you happy with how you live?
- 12.Do you give to charity?
- 13.What do you like about where you work? Where?
- 14.What are your hobby's? When did you start?
- 15.Greatest accomplishment

Answer:

- 1.Ready Salted
- 2.The girl I run with, around 50 years
- 3.My P.E Teacher
- 4.'Queens, a pint and a curry
- 5.The beach
- 6.80's
- 7.Yes, I watch the BBC
- 8.It would have to be Australia
- 9.An Indian
- 10.Home
- 11.Yes
- 12.Yes, I give to many, and I give when I can
- 13.I work in a school, the children
- 14.All my hobbies are around sports, and I started sports back in primary school
- 15.Either my children or playing in the netball world championships in 1991 in Australia.

Places to shoot:

- 1.Living Room
- 2.Queens pub
- 3.Beach
- 4.Around House
- 5.Ready to go to work
- 6.Doing sports
- 7.Ready for Netball outside the LC2

Interview with my brother's friend

Questions:

- 1.What is your favourite flavour of crisps?
- 2.How long have you known your best friend?
- 3.Who has been your biggest influence in life?
- 4.Where is your favourite place to go with friends?
- 5.Favourite place to go on your own?
- 6.Favourite genre of music?
- 7.Do you watch the news? What channel?
8. Where is your dream place to live?
- 9.Favourite takeaway?
- 10.A place that means a lot to you?
- 11.Are you happy with how you live?
- 12.Do you give to charity?
- 13.What do you like about where you work?
Where?
- 14.What are your hobby's? When did you start?
- 15.Greatest accomplishment

Answer:

- 1.I don't like them, never even tried them
- 2.Around 13 years, since primary
- 3.No one in particular
- 4.The Union, I've been going for years
- 5.The Cinema
- 6.POP 80's Music
- 7.Yes, I watch GB News
- 8.Yeah, Vietnam
- 9.Thai food
- 10.Swansea, Marina
- 11.Yes, I am, no-one tells me what to do
- 12.Yes, I do, I give to dementia UK
13. I work in Tesco, so my colleagues
14. Drinking and watching films
- 15.I'd say finishing university and when I helped build an orphanage in Vietnam

Places to shoot:

- 1.Living Room
2. The Union
3. The Marina
4. At work
- 5.Ready to go to work
6. With friends
7. At the Cinema

Shoot one, outcome, my mother

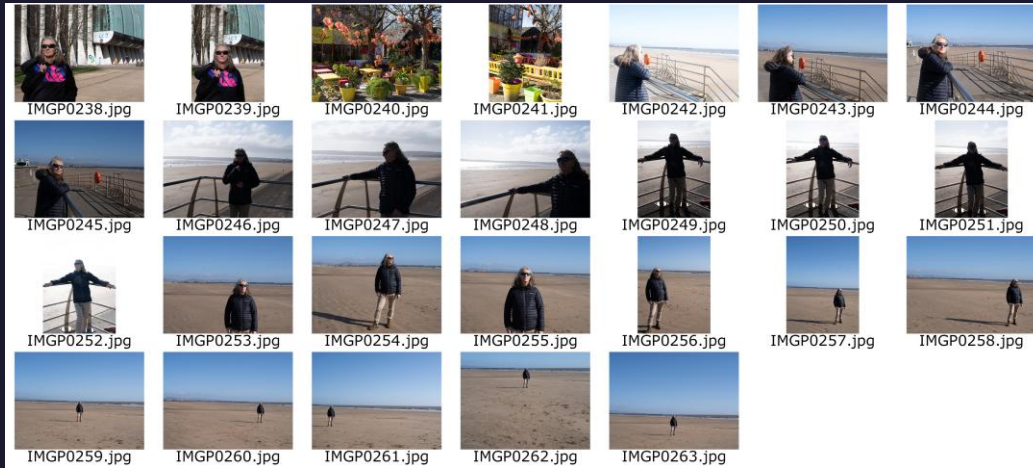
This shoot didn't go too well in the end. I think I could have taken better pictures if I had more confidence on how I was going to take the photographs, how to pose my mother and where exactly we would take the photographs. But the photos that did turn out well I am very happy with, I think for the rest of the week (it is Wednesday) I will keep taking photos of my mother in the house, when she comes home from work, when she is going out somewhere just to make sure, I have all the photographs I want.

Overall, successful but not to the standard that I expect myself to work to.

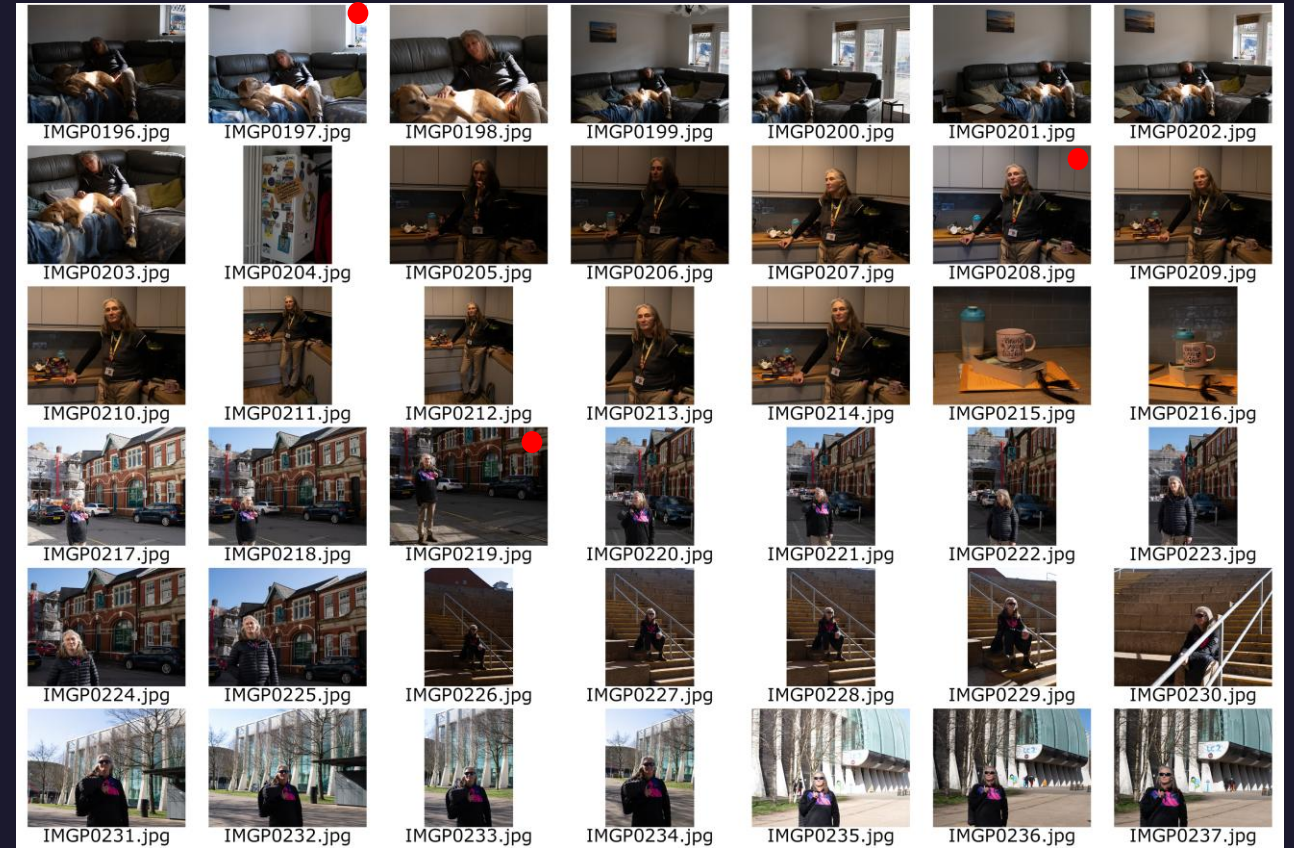
After completing this shoot, I found myself realising that maybe I don't need a photograph for each question, but I just need a couple of photographs which may show the answers to multiple questions. Maybe 1 photo can show the answer to 2 photographs or give insight into other aspects of that person's character.



Contact sheet - Mother



These are the contact sheets which include all the photos I have taken today of my mother. I have picked and edited a couple that I like and will continue to look at them and figure out the ones work the best.

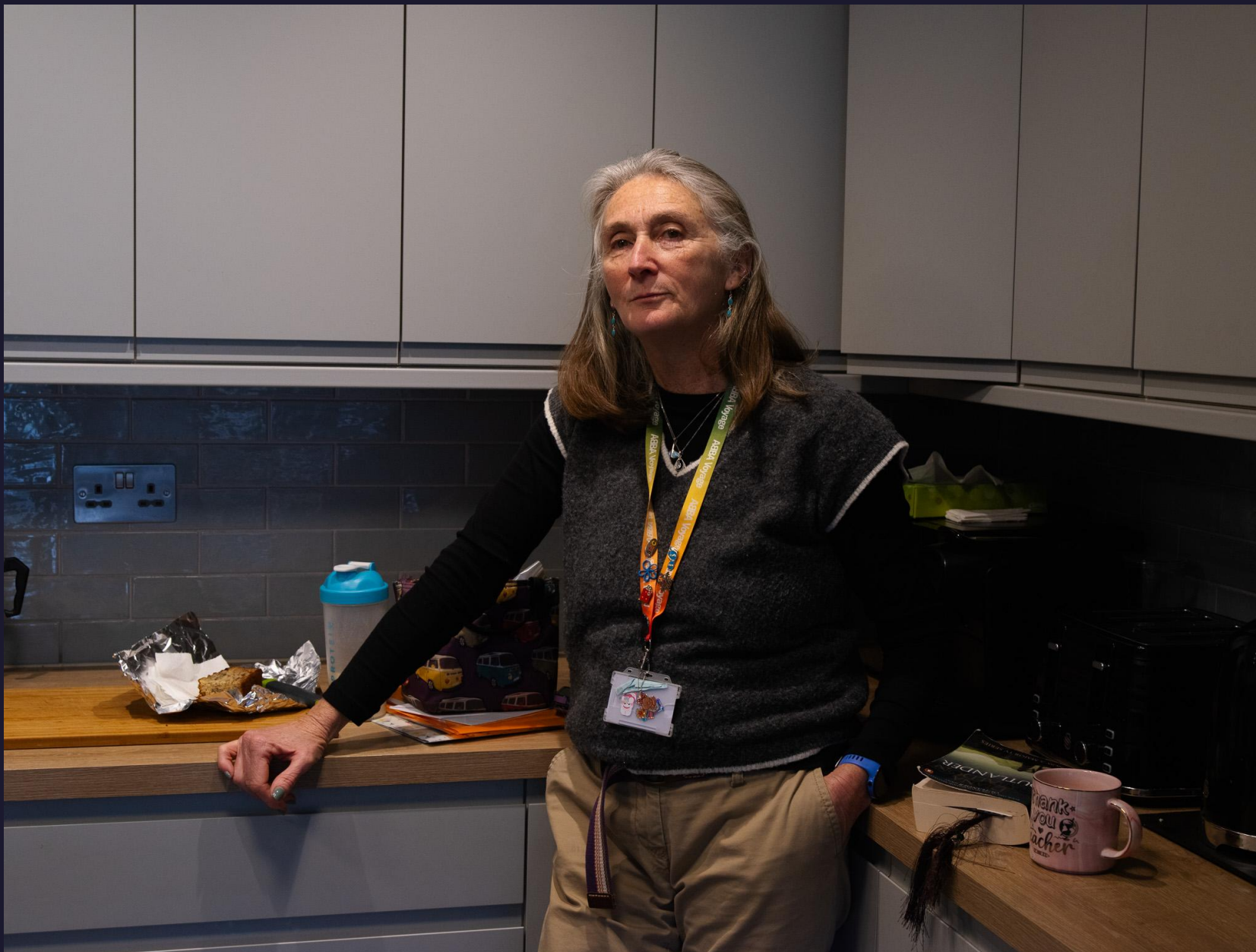


Stand-out photographs





“What is a place that means a lot to you?”
- “Home”



“What do you like about where you work?”
- “I work in a school, the Children”



“What is your greatest accomplishment?”

- “Either my children or playing in the netball world championships in 1991 in Australia”



“What is your greatest accomplishment?”

- “Either my children or playing in the netball world championships in 1991 in Australia”

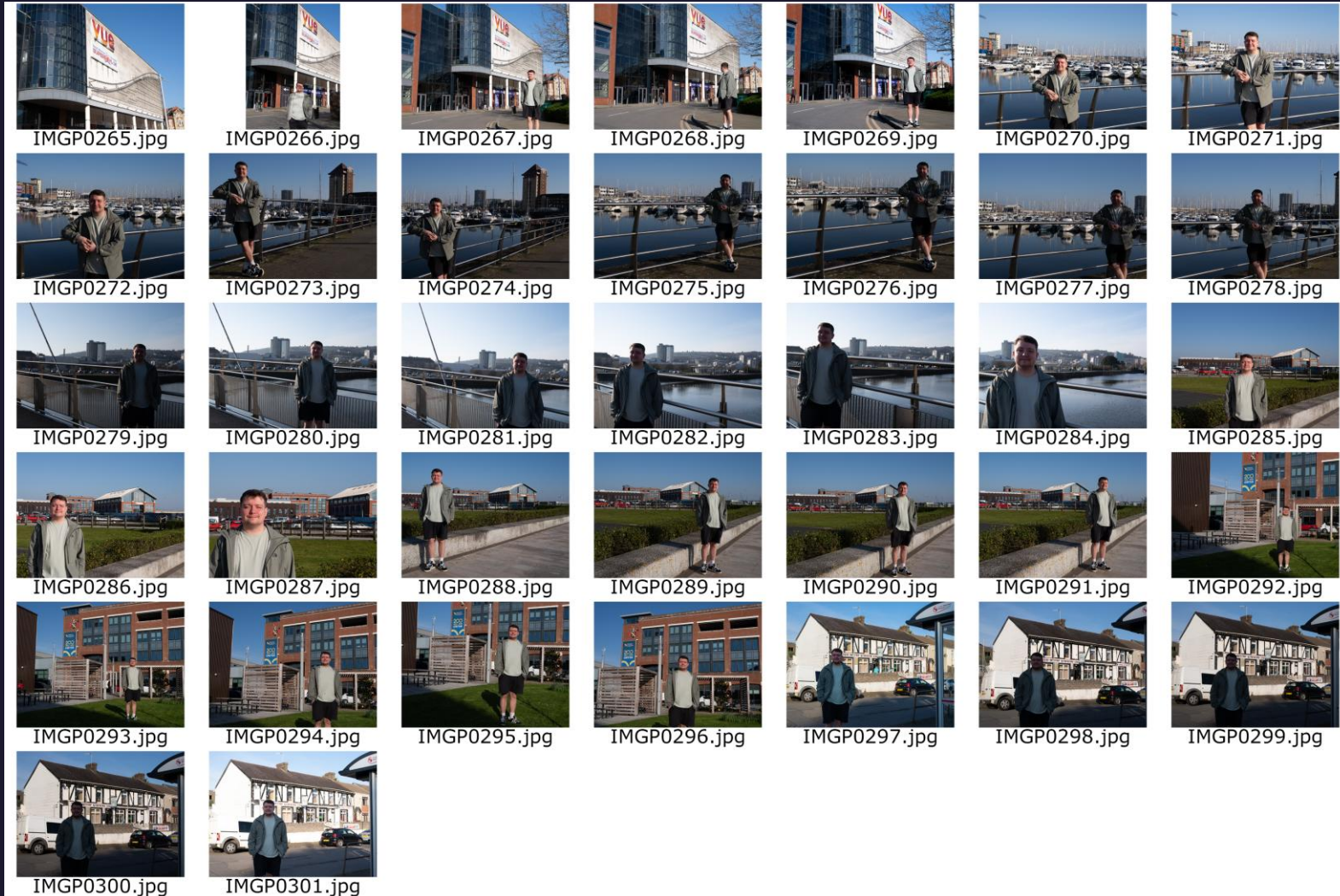
Shoot two, outcome, my brothers' friend

These shoots went well; I got a decent number of usable photographs but there was sadly many bad photographs too. I make this distinction because the bad photos are completely unusable for this context. At this point I am wondering if I will have enough photographs to fill out an entire book. This is something that I will be planning for from here on and will document any changes in ideas. But overall, I was able to get some useable photographs and am happy with those ones. As far as the efficiency of the shoot goes, I had to take two days to get the photographs that I need due to lack of confidence from me and my brother's friend. Neither of us seemed sure of where we were going, what photos we were taking, and I was very unsure of how to pose him. But after working around a bit we were able to get something that looks the part.

I was also not able to go to all the places that I planned to, either because of time or because he just didn't want to go. This made it much harder to get the photos that I needed.

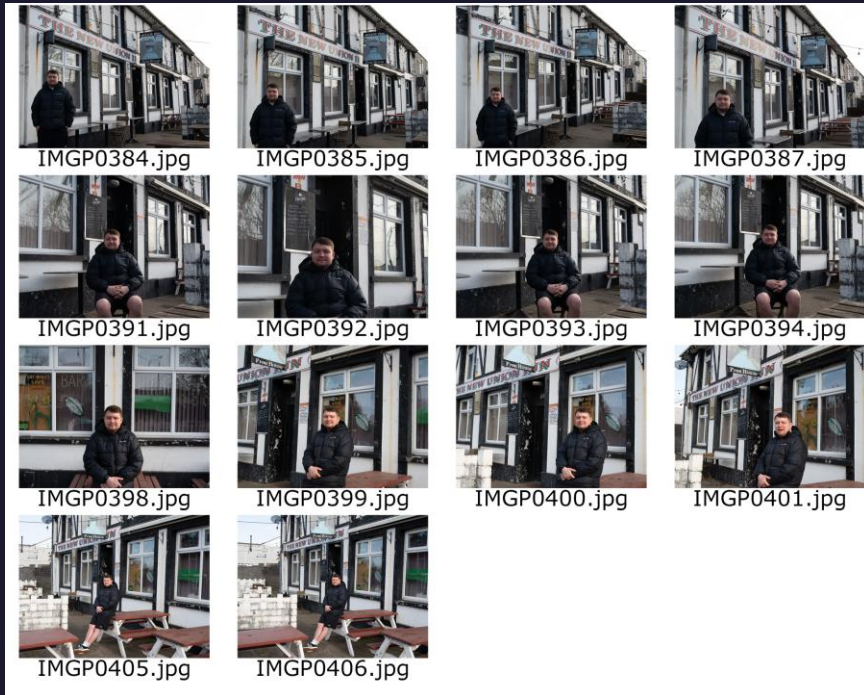


Contact Sheet 1, Brothers Friend

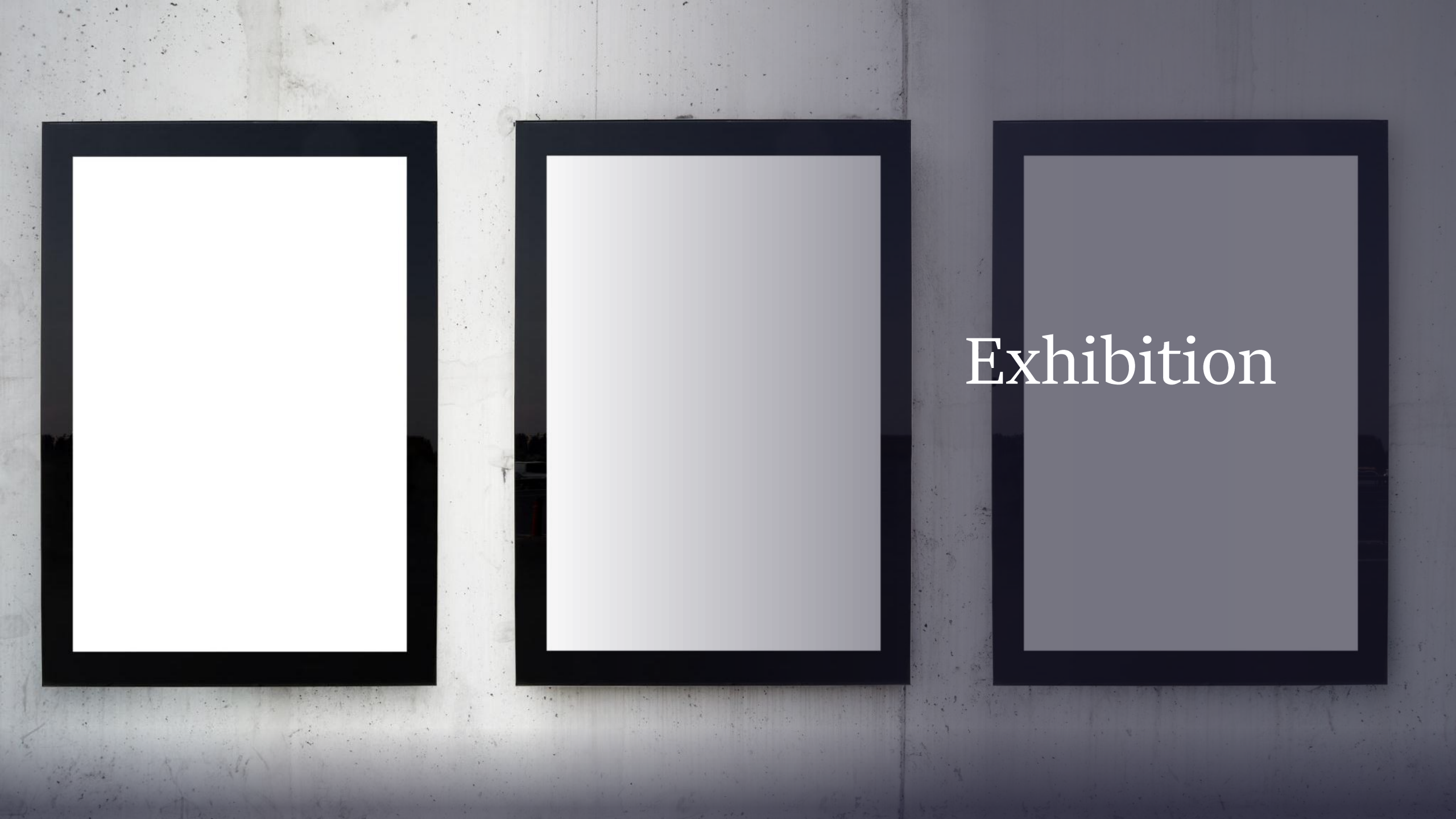


This is the first day of shooting, I don't think that I am going to be using any of these photographs for the book which is why I am beginning to feel weary about having enough photographs for the book. I am still planning on using some photos for my exhibition, but these photos will not be any of them. The main problem with all of them was that the best photos and best posing that I could do meant that he would be facing the sun, which caused him to be squinting in almost every photo, rendering them useless.

Contact Sheet 2, Brothers Friend



These are the photographs from the second day, I decided that one of the main places that we went to that plays much more into the book was the pub, I was hoping that we could go in and take some photos but they were closed and going in on an off day was not possible. So, we had to just take photographs outside. These photographs are all too similar, not very interesting and have no real narrative elements as a series, even if I were to make a series with these photos, the photos from the last shoot and the photos of my mother this book would be maybe 8 pages long. I am going to have to think of another idea for my book project. Luckily, I have something in mind.



Exhibition

Exhibition. Displaying and interaction



For the exhibition I used the photographs that I originally intended to use in the book but due to the low number of photographs could not. They are printed on a thick paper, much like vinyl and then nailed to the wall. Beneath them is the questions and answers from the short interviews that I held with them printed onto small cards of a heavy textured paper. The intention of this is for people to look at the photographs, assume the meaning and then read the cards and begin to build an understanding of the relationship between these two people. Their similarities and differences. Like what I would have been doing in my book but on a larger, and in my opinion, much more successful way. I feel that having the Q&A on the pick-up cards allowed thee photographs to be enjoyed without feeling like you must read a wall of text too, you have the option too either stick with your judgements or learn more about the people that you are viewing.

I was very happy to see people coming up too my work, inspecting the photographs and then looking at the cards that I had placed on the plinth to understand thee work more, I was upset to see no-one picking them up, but that is to be expected in an exhibition, no one wants to touch anything out of fear for ruining something. This ended up being a good thing because that meant that the whole time that the exhibition was on, there were papers beneath the photos for people to read.

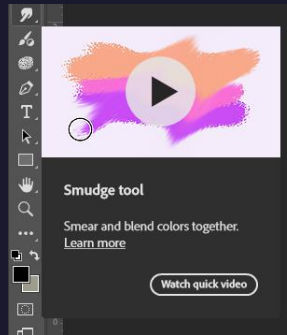
The new idea for the book. 'Experience'

Looking back at different shoots that I've done over the past year I started to realise that I couldn't remember taking many of the photographs. And when I did remember taking the photograph could only remember parts of it, the jacket someone was wearing, the face someone was making or maybe just their silhouette, these were the things that helped me remember when I had taken the photograph. Doing this made me think of how I could display this in a book form. Once I started looking through the different shoots I landed back on the Amsterdam shoot, it was recent, the photos were good, it was a great experience and most important of all, I remembered none of it. Not for any other reason but my own terrible ability to keep memories. I think I will start looking at how I can use these photographs or edit the photographs in a way that will allow me to display a loss of memory.

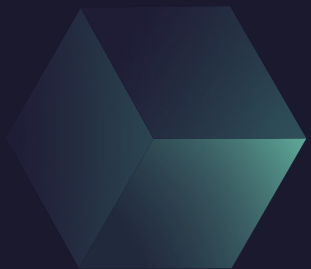


Editing photographs

This is how I have decided to visualise the memory loss in the photographs. I found that making the photos look distorted using the smudge tool in photoshop in the places that I personally paid no attention too and creating an effect that looks like what I see when I look back these photographs as memories of experiences.

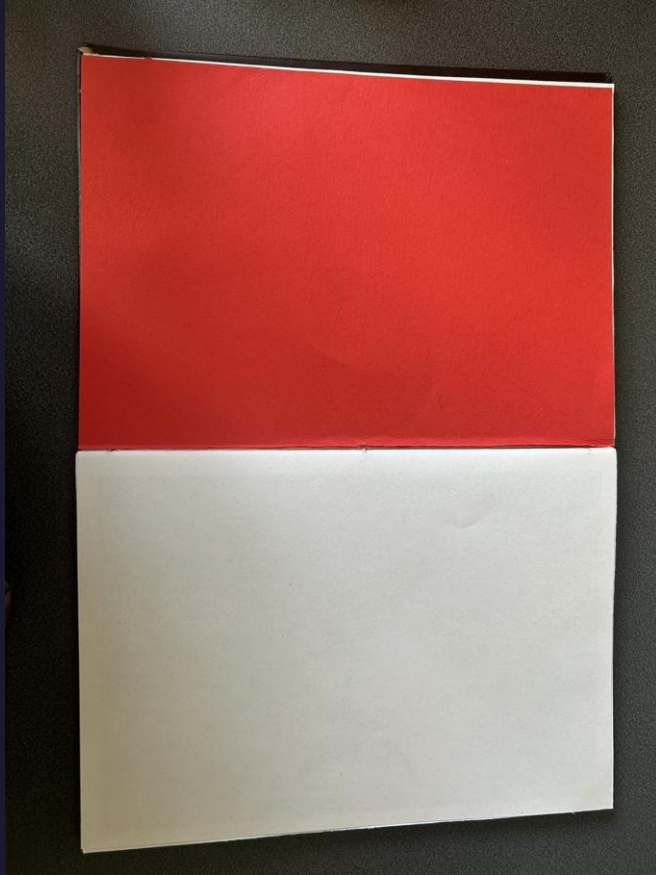


As you can see in the photo on the right, I have used the smudge tool to create wave like effects in the car and on his clothing. I have done this because I do not remember what he was wearing or what car was driving past, but I do remember that he was riding a bike and looking at his phone.



Making Final book

Making the final book / Process



The process of making this book was the same as when I made my other books, but I took my time to make sure I didn't make any mistakes. Of course, I still made some, but I am extremely happy with the outcome. I went with a traditional 2-up stitch to keep the pages together, something that at this point I had done several times, and a white cover page which was stuck to the inside of the front and back cover which solidified the book into the cover. The white page is where I had made my mistake, once I looked back at my finished product, I knew that it should have been red card, not white. In an attempt to fix this mistake, I found some red card, cut it to size and stuck it onto of the white card, sadly leaving a clear outline, making the book look messy. This is not a huge problem though, the book is functional, the binding is correct, the pages turn, the book closes and I am happy with this being my final attempt.

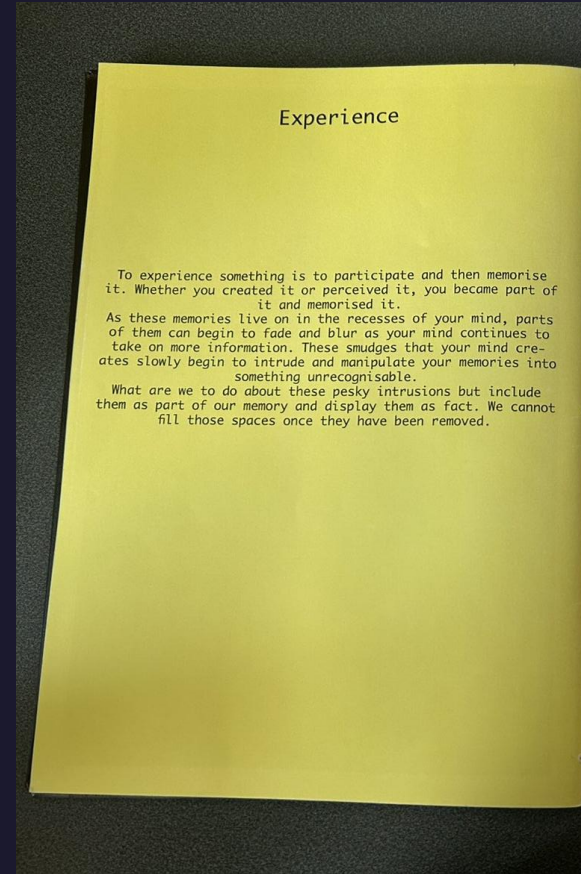
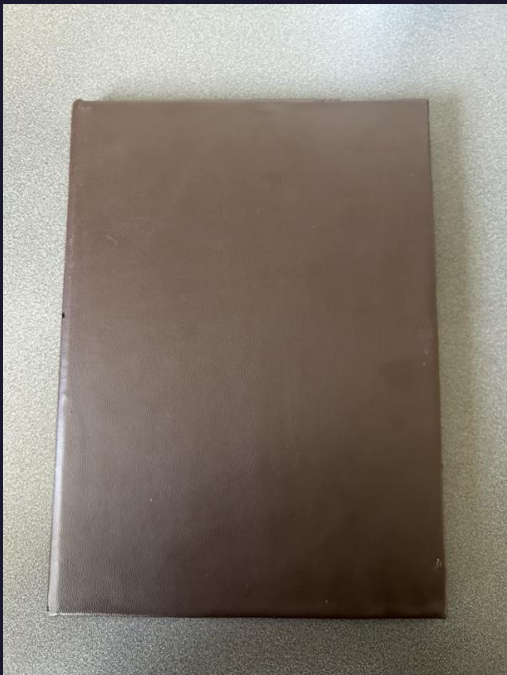
If I were to do it again, I would start with red card to avoid having to try and stick it in afterwards and I would try another stitching technique like chain stitching to try and get a flat spine rather than a rounded one. I am overall ecstatic with how my final book looks and feels.

Page layout/ book size



I decided to stick with my original idea of having the book be around A4 size, single photos on each page and a leather-bound hardback. I have decided that with this book I won't be having any double page spreads to keep the feeling of a consistent series with no breaks, this is the same reason that I didn't put any blank pages or writing in-between photographs. I will also be leaving the outside of the book clean so that I can create a feeling of mystery and interest when looking at the book, making it more enticing.

I feel that having the photographs laid out like this allows each of them to be looked at and understood fully without any interventions.



I did want some writing in the book to help the reader understand what exactly they were looking at, and to do this I decided that I would have a yellow page at the very end of the book with an odd font that almost looks handwritten, making it look out of place. (What I have written is shown in the photograph on the right of the slide). The page explains what you have just experienced and talks about the meaning behind these intrusions and why they are important to the book, after a confusing and messy read of this book you are greeted with a sense of clarity, allowing you to read back through the book and create a new experience for yourself. The name of the book 'Experience' is also first mentioned on this page, giving the reader a name to hold next to this memory that they have now created.

Look at final book

