

ABOUT THE PROJECT

Full name:	Serena Killen
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Proposed name of project:	Where it all begins
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Describe your project using 5 key words:
Documentary,
Historical
Memories
Legacy (new times)
Evolving (music venues)

Provide a short summary of the proposed project: (100 words max)

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

What is the subject/concept/theme that you are exploring? What are your motivations behind making the work? What are the medium(s) in which you will work? What are the methodologies you will be employing?

This project will explore and document the music scenes in Swansea, showcasing both black-and-white and colour photographs that capture the raw energy of live performances and intimate fan moments within the city's music venues.

The aim is not just to document, but to celebrate Swansea's vibrant music culture and invite everyone to experience its unique charm. In this investigation, I seek to uncover the connections and key individuals behind the grassroots music movement in Swansea and what makes these venues so unique.

My participation in the Swansea Arenas House Party event in December 2023 showcased the collaborative efforts between Swansea Arena and the Music Trust to support struggling music venues in the UK. This partnership emphasizes the importance of grassroots bands in revitalizing local music scenes.

I want to highlight the ongoing change in Swansea's music culture, viewing this not just as a project but as activism. By raising awareness about challenges such as inadequate late-night transport and rising operational costs, I aim to foster community discussions.

I'm particularly interested in exploring the significance of stickers in these venues. Are they merely decorative, or do they reflect the venue's identity? This curiosity will guide my project.

The project will focus on the evolving music scene in Swansea and the cultural resilience shaped by grassroots bands and local venues. I will spotlight the efforts to

sustain these cultural hubs, emphasizing the partnership between Swansea Arena and the Music Trust.

To examine adaptive strategies used by venues, I'll investigate the role of stickers, asking whether they are playful, markers of ownership, or symbols of identity.

The project will feature a multi-sensory installation with a visual archive of sticker designs, photography of local venues, and soundscapes of live performances. I will repurpose reclaimed materials from venues into sculptures.

To enrich the project, I will engage with venue owners, musicians, and audiences through interviews and workshops to collect stories and artefacts. This initiative seeks to advocate for the preservation of local music culture and spark dialogue within the community.

STRUCTURE

Timeline and milestones

Include a breakdown of the plan and milestones of the proposed project for the academic year. Consider the tasks, processes or activities necessary to complete in order to create the proposed body of work.

START DATE	END DATE	ACTIVITY OR TASK DETAIL
01/10/2024	03/10/2024	Book out a Hasselblad camera
03/10/2024	03/10/2024	Processing 120mm film and scan images
05/10/2024	12/10/2024	Speck to James from Swansea Arena for contact info for music venues like The Bunk House
07/10/2024	08/10/2024	Visit the darkroom to experiment with images taken on the 120mm film
10/10/2024	11/10/2024	buy a 35mm film camera
11/10/2024	11/10/2024	Visit Crains, the old music store in Swansea; I wanted to go there as there is a door with stickers related to music. The idea was to photograph this door.
13/10/2024	15/10/2024	Do some research into stickers and what they are used for.

18/10/2024	On going	I will look into my archive of images I took back in February 2024 at the Swansea Arenas House Party event.
21/10/2024	21/10/2024	Visit some of Swansea's music venues
24/10/2024	24/10/2024	Hopefully will have 35mm film and go along to The Bunk House pub. Although it might be closed as it's daytime, I might take some pictures of the outside of the building instead.
25/10/2024	26/10/2024	Take my undeveloped 35mm coloured film to be processed. Once ready I will scan the images into the computer to see if came out without being over or under-exposed
29/10/2024	29/10/2024	Scanned in the images taken outside The Bunk House.
04/11/2024	04/11/2024	Have a chat with David Bird who is from UWTSD and the sound department as he would like me to go along and video an interview he was conducting
05/11/2024	05/11/2024	Get a bus into Swansea to film at Swansea Arena using a Canon R5. Filming a music artist interview.
06/11/2024	06/11/2024	Uploaded the video to my computer to see if they came out of and edit them to send back to David Bird
08/11/2024	08/11/2024	Had a chat with one of the musicians who goes by the name Guy who explained why he uses stickers and what are significance of them
11/11/2024		take a train into Swansea to take pictures of the outside of Swansea music venues. To get some inspiration.
14/11/2024	14/11/2024	I will experiment with wet plate collodion, this is to test if it could be something that could be incorporated into my final piece.
18/11/2024		Experiment with acetate – take a few images and pop them onto acetate using the Epson printer see how they come out
25/11/2024	25/11/2024	Take a trip to Swansea and visit Flicker Light Pub the outside of this building has Graffiti and stickers around the door.
28/11/2024	28/11/2024	Experiment with acetate paper and a back light to see what effect it has by layer images on top of one another.
01/12/2024	03/12/2024	Buy some acetate stickers and matt sticker paper to make stickers.
04/12/2024	05/12/2024	Printed onto the sicker acetate and the sticker paper.
06/12/2024	06/12/2024	Investigated by applying the printed stickers onto objects starting by using a sheet of paper. then tried the same process on clear acetate.

		This is to compare an idea of the type of format to use
12/12/2024	12/12/2024	Visit Swansea Arena for a music event celebrating Swansea's emerging musicians for a VIP mainstage session. This will be a behind-the-scenes photoshoot, but you also will get the chance to talk to the musicians to get some information about grassroots music venues.
13/12/2024	13/12/2024	Will send an email to James Morgan in regards to any other events planned based around the Swansea Arenas House party event
14/12/2024	20/12/2024	I will edit all photos taken at the event from 12/12/2024. After this has been completed, I will send them over to James Morgan to use.
06/01/2025	10/01/2025	Will aim to be in contact with some of Swansea's music venues and be involved with documenting The House Party event.
13/01/2025	24/01/2025	Should be involved in an exhibition held in the volcano gallery based around this project involving Swansea's music venues and band. The plan will be to document this event daily as more and more artwork is added to create a then-and-now movement
27/01/2025	31/01/2025	Will go through all the images taken from the exhibition
03/02/2025	24/02/2025	It will be a busy month documenting The House Part Event as it will be a month-long project that will be taking images of behind-the-scenes showcasing the vibrant music venues.
03/03/2025	21/03/2025	Start arranging images to use in the exhibition and what will be included, finalising all images ready to print.
10/03/2025	14/03/2025	Make a 3D floor plan of my opposed gallery space using cardboard and making smaller versions of planned images. This will be to better understand what would work within the space.
31/03/2025	09/04/2025	Send images off ready for printing this will be booked in advance at an earlier date to ensure they are back in time ready to begin install
10/04/2025	10/04/2025	Check all prints to make sure that if anything needs adjusting I have time to correct it before the installation can begin
11/04/2025	15/04/2025	Install days making sure walls are free from holes by filling these then once dried they will be sanded and ready to be painted.
16/04/2025		Swansea Exhibition Opening

Budget

Add the expenditure and appropriate details of your proposed project on this page. Provide information about the quotes for services/ products/ fees in the description field. Though we cover your printing costs within the department for anyone wishing to use print as a final form for their major project, please cost them based on real world cost.

Description	Cost
35mm film x 3	£30
Photographic paper	£13
Inkjet sticker paper and acetate sticker paper	£21.98
Collodion wet plate kit	£250
Analog camera	£35 - £40
Printing 2 x A0	£26.50
Hardwood Plywood (L)1220mm (W)607 (T)12mm x3	£47.91
Acetate paper	£10.00
Clear Perspex pack of 5 600mm x 400mm x 3mm	£84.00
Lighting kit	£155.95
Adobe software	£119.09
256gb Sd Memory Card	£28.99
Travel costs	£50.00
Epson V850 pro scanner	£855.00
Epson photo xp-8700 A4 multifunction wireless inkjet printer	£136.00
Matt White Paint 10L	£16.00
Polycell quick dry white ready mixed filler, 330g	£4.50
Sandpaper	£6.50
MacBook M4 pro	£2,499.00
Canon R5 and lens	£2,349.00
TOTAL COST	£4,197.42

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)

To prepare for this exhibition, the I will engage in various developmental opportunities, experiments, and processes that have significantly shaped my approach. The plan is to attend photography workshops focused on composition and storytelling. The hope is to learn techniques to evoke emotion and craft compelling narratives through visuals. I also will be exploring different photographic styles, experimenting with lighting setups, post-processing techniques, and alternative mediums like film photography to diversify my creative repertoire.

A pivotal part of their process involves conducting a series of test shoots. These sessions will allow me to refine them thematic ideas, experiment with unconventional perspectives, and discover what resonates most with the vision and audience. Peer feedback sessions will be invaluable, offering diverse insights that will help with a different perspective and help curate my work.

Additionally, I will research curatorial practices by visiting galleries and studying how visual flow impacts audience engagement. This research will inform the decisions on sequencing and presentation, ensuring that the exhibition conveys a cohesive story.

Through these experiences, the hope is to deepen a better understanding of the creative process and equip myself with practical tools to execute my project. They plan to apply these learnings to design an exhibition that not only showcases all the hard work but to also foster a meaningful connection with the audience through thoughtful curation and impactful storytelling.

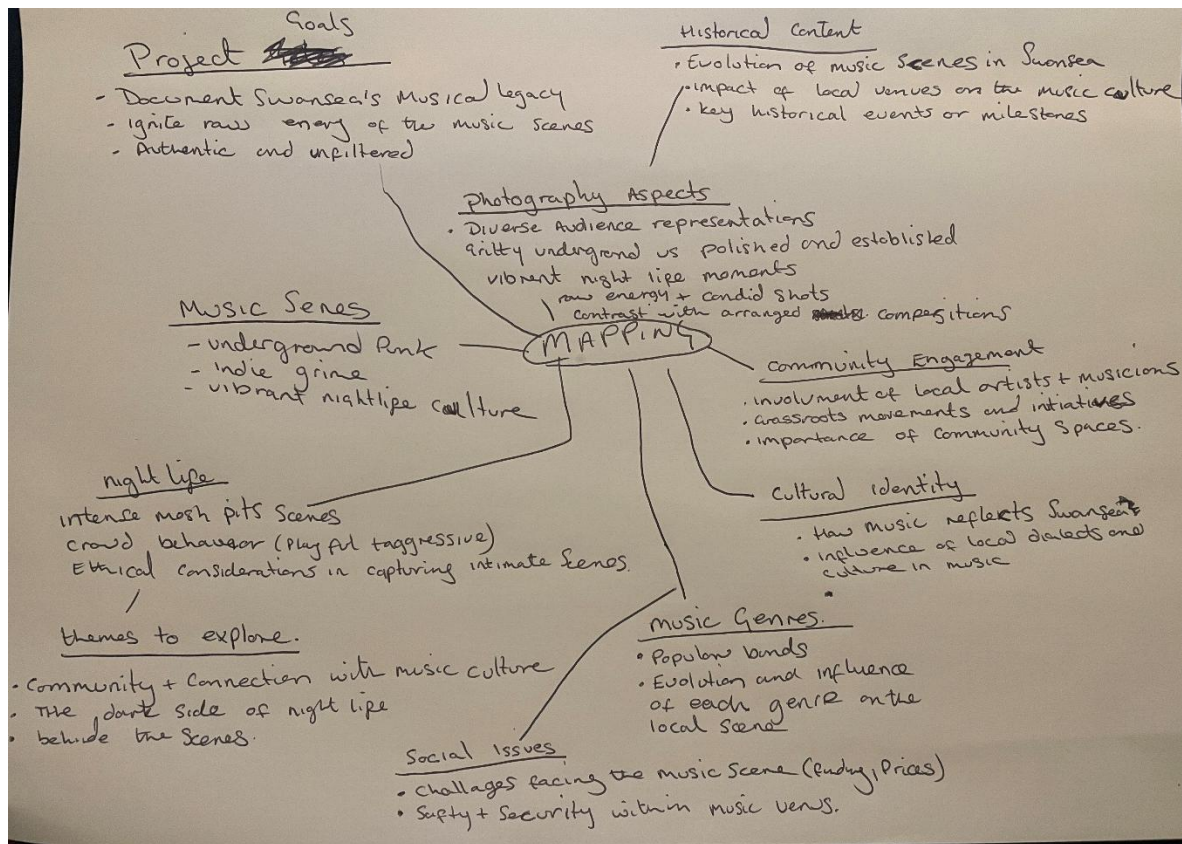
What are the main risks and challenges to your project meeting its aims? What will you do to manage these risks? (100 words max)

The main challenges include limited access to music venues during the day, unpredictable lighting conditions, and the fast-paced nature of live events, which can affect shot composition. There's also a risk to camera equipment from spills, crowd interference, or accidental damage. To manage these, I will secure access permissions in advance and scout venues for lighting setups, preparing appropriate gear such as fast lenses and external flashes. To protect my equipment, I'll use weatherproof covers and position myself at a safe distance, employing a wide focal lens to capture candid shots while minimizing physical risks in crowded environments.

PRACTICE-BASED EXPERIMENTS

Include examples of your practice-based experiments, that you have developed during this project. (add to this pdf between 20-30 pages) include photographs, screenshots, process images, texts, notes, references, links to videos made, audio files or other files.

Beginning of ideas

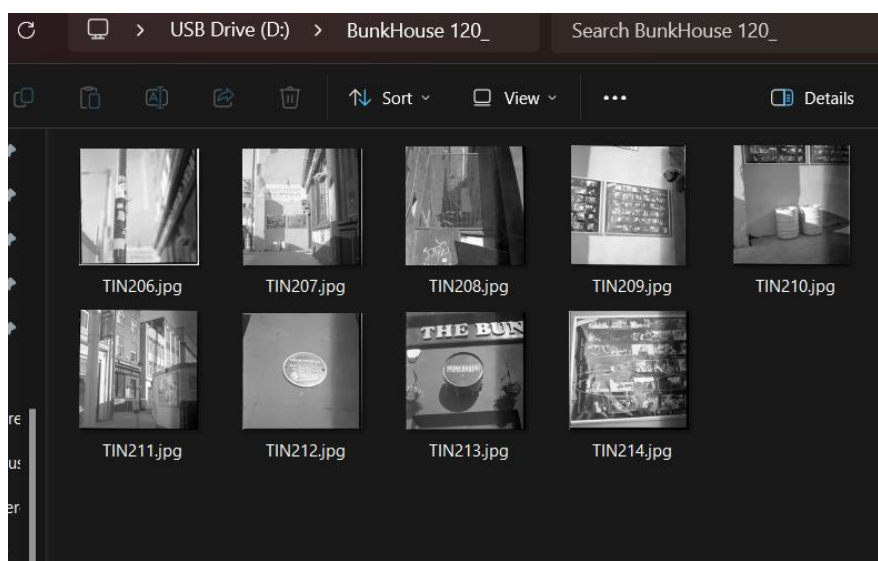


- Research the history and evolution of Swansea's music scenes, focusing on key genres like underground punk, metal, indie, and grime.
- Investigate local venues that have impacted the music culture and note any significant historical events or milestones in Swansea's music history.
- Explore the works of influential photographers, specifically Ewen Spencer, Tom Wood, Jessica Craig-Martin, and Derek Ridgers, to understand their approaches to documenting music and subculture.
- Analyse various music genres prevalent in Swansea, identifying notable artists and bands and how each genre has shaped the local scene.
- Document the vibrant nightlife culture in Swansea, highlighting different venues and their unique atmospheres.
- Examine themes of community and connection within the music culture, considering how local artists and grassroots initiatives foster a sense of belonging.
- Observe and document audience behaviours across different genres, noting any differences in engagement and participation in events.
- Capture raw and candid moments that depict the intensity of nightlife, including mosh pit scenes and quieter social interactions outside of venues.

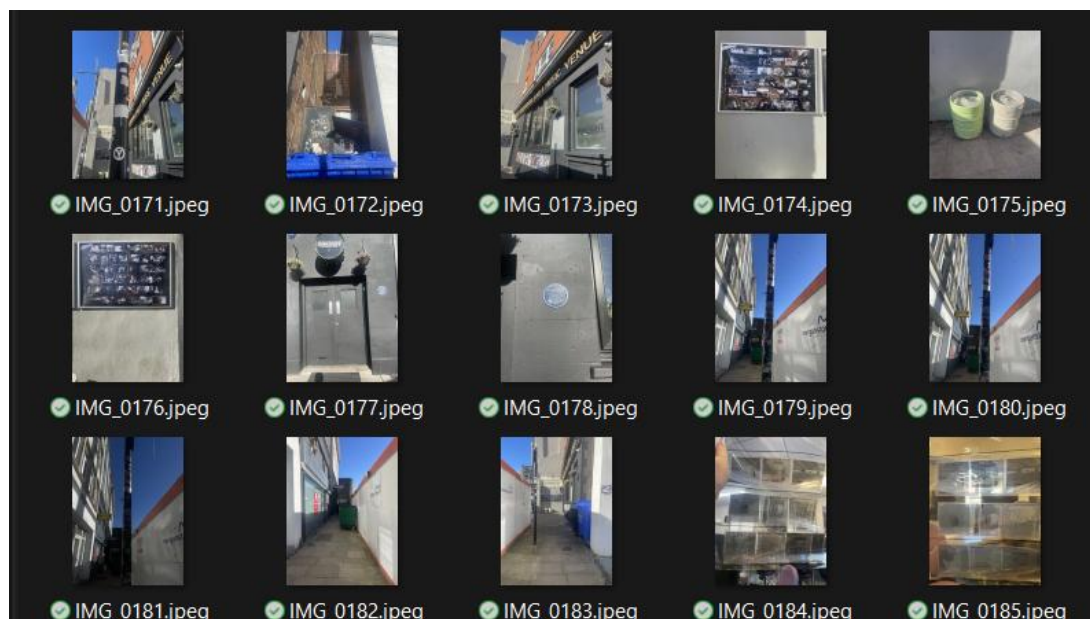
- Address ethical considerations in photography, particularly when capturing intimate moments, and reflect on the potential impact of exploiting these scenarios.
- Compile personal stories and interviews from regular attendees, musicians, and venue owners to add depth to the narrative of Swansea's music scene.
- Analyse the visual aesthetics of nightlife photography, including lighting, colour palettes, and the balance between candid and staged shots.
- Research current social issues affecting the music scene, such as gentrification and funding challenges, along with their implications for local artists and venues.
- Investigate promotional strategies used by local artists and venues, including the role of social media, grassroots marketing, and collaborations with local businesses.
- Explore the future prospects and emerging trends in Swansea's music scene while identifying potential opportunities for new artists.

While not every idea may be touched upon, this text is valuable as a starting point for exploration and creativity. The aim is to gather a diverse range of footage, images, and interviews, which will ultimately contribute to the development of a compelling exhibition. My goal is to create an experience that is both informative and inspiring, one that sparks meaningful conversations among visitors. By presenting a well-rounded perspective, I hope to engage the audience and encourage them to reflect on the themes explored.

Contact sheet from using the hasselblad 120



Here is a recent contact sheet that was taken from the outside of the Bunk House. I'm excited to share that my experiment with film has been a success, thanks to the help from Ann Dineen who explained a way to ensure each image had a better focus. Now that I have these clear images, the next crucial step is to take them into the dark room for processing. This process will allow us to further experiment with film, using a 35mm camera to capture images from inside the venues.



Contact sheet from the same day. The reason for this contact sheet is to compare the mix of black and white analogue images and the coloured images taken of a mobile phone. This also gives a point of reference to look back on Dew to The Bunk House being closed. I had to decide what to do, so as not to waste the opportunity, I decided to take pictures of the outside. These will resonate with anyone who knows this venue. I've tried to capture similar images so that I can compare them side by side this will allow me to see the comparison of the images could be improved for example below is the image of two kegs that can often be found outside or inside The Bunk House

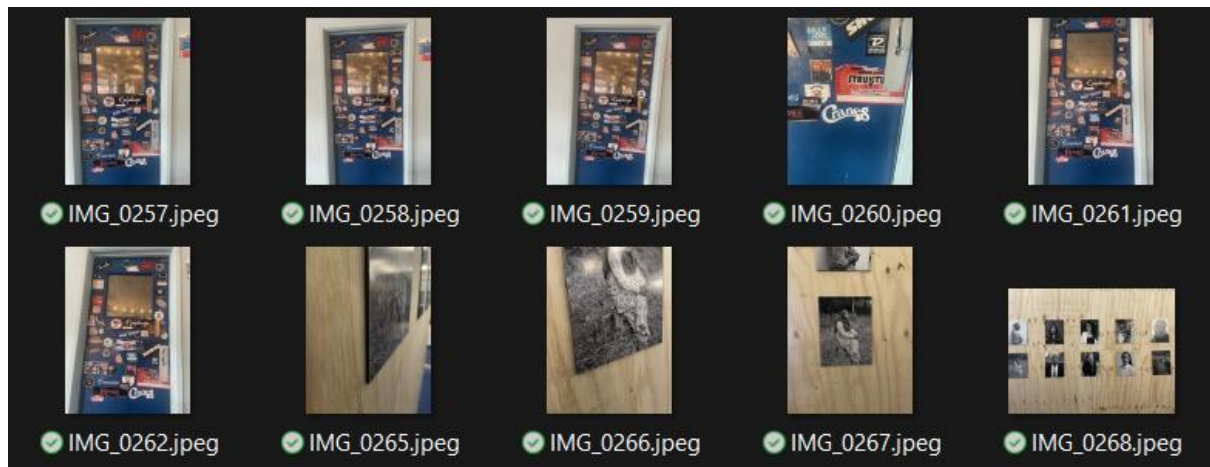


fter my last visit to the bunkhouse, I returned a few weeks later and noticed that one of the beer kegs had been moved. Someone had also painted flowers on it and added a sticker, which I found quite interesting.



Made a visit to the old Cranes store to see an exhibition that Ffoto Gallery had in the old Cranes Music store in Swansea I had wanted to go a long to see how they had arranged their photography exhibition I wanted to see the different types of mediums. They had used it while visiting; I noticed a door towards the back of the room that had stickers on it. I continued to look at the work on display, and due to the lack of time, I decided I would return but would ask if they would mind if I took a couple of images of this door. While taking a closer look on the door there was a couple of stickers with the name of the old music shop that had been there for many years.

This made me think that maybe the stickers are a form of tagging. But this also inspired me to think of different ways we use stickers and the connections.



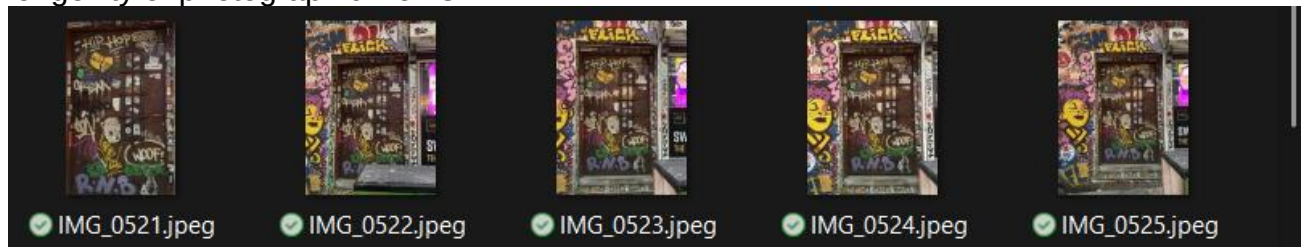
While I was there, I spotted these images in the exhibition. These were simply framed and popped onto a moveable wooden stand. I liked this concept of a moveable panel as it's easily moveable but also would be able to be placed anywhere you wished meaning if I go with this idea I would be restricted to a wall; this could be placed in the middle of a room and would have the space to take advantage of both sides.



Here is a closer look at some captivating images that truly drew my attention at the exhibition. I was particularly struck by the pristine aesthetic of each photograph, which has been meticulously mounted onto foam boards or thin plywood. The clean lines and smooth surfaces of the mounting materials enhanced the visual appeal of the images, allowing them to stand out beautifully against the backdrop.

It appears that the photographs adhered to each board, creating a seamless presentation highlighting their details and its and colours. The careful craftsmanship involved in the mounting process added an elegant touch, ensuring that each image complements and elevates the overall composition.

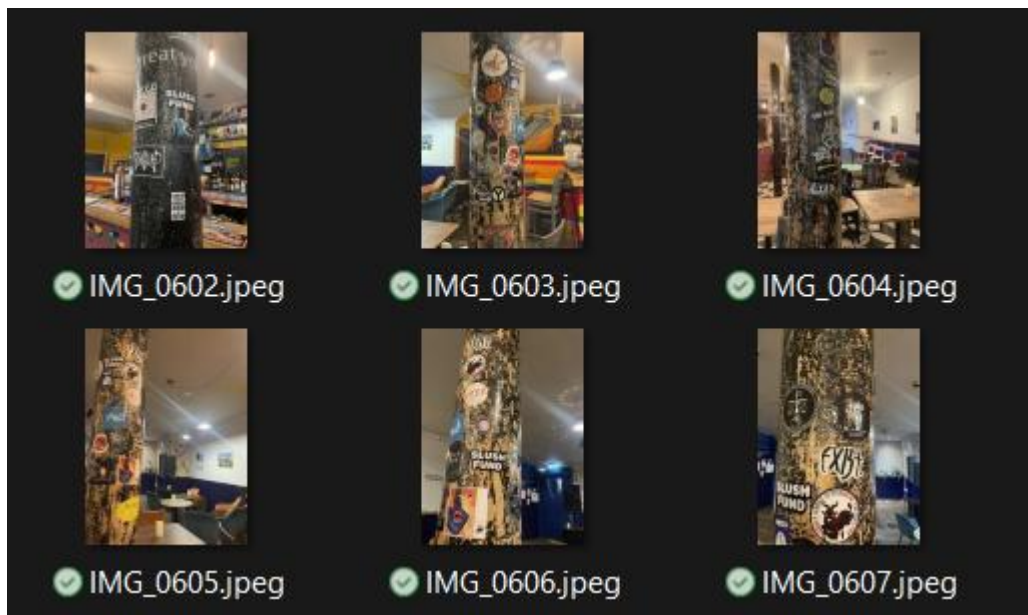
In the coming days, I plan to research on various mounting techniques for photographs. I'm keen to explore different mounting substrates, including foam boards and wooden boards, to understand the advantages and aesthetic qualities of each method. I aim to discover how these choices can impact the presentation and longevity of photographic works.



During my daytime exploration of Swansea, I strolled along Wind Street, I stumbled upon a venue that, while not known for hosting grassroots bands, piqued my interest. The front of the building was a captivating canvas of graffiti and stickers, reminiscent of a door I had previously discovered in Cranes.

Though I hadn't brought my camera, I was fortunate enough to have my mobile phone on hand, allowing me to capture this artistic display. The vibrant mix of colours in the contact sheet immediately draws the eye, inviting a closer inspection of the door's diverse array of stickers. Some appeared to be new, their colours fresh and bright, while others suggested a long history, the edges worn and curling with age. Each sticker seemed to tell a story, contributing to the unique character of this unexpected find. Below is a closer look at the door.





While assisting with an exhibition in Elysium, I was captivated by the vivid imagery presented on a pole, serving as an unexpected canvas for a series of stickers. Each sticker, an embodiment of urban expression, sported a distinct colour palette and typography that drew the eye in much the same way a striking photograph might.

The light and shadow danced across the surface, highlighting the textures of the adhesive and the rough grain of the pole beneath. These stickers echoed the familiar concept of 'tagging,' reminiscent of the ubiquitous 'I was here' phrase accompanied by a date, yet they diverged in their bold declarations each one a small piece of art infused with unique political or advertising messages.

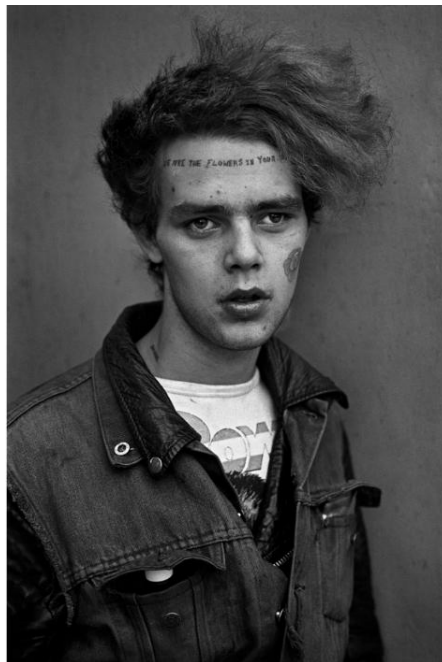
The close-up patterns, vibrant hues, and layered compositions created a dynamic visual narrative, inviting viewers to engage with the underlying stories and emotions represented in the bold graphics. This assemblage of messages transformed the pole into a tapestry of voices, a silent yet powerful commentary on the world around it.

Inspirational artist

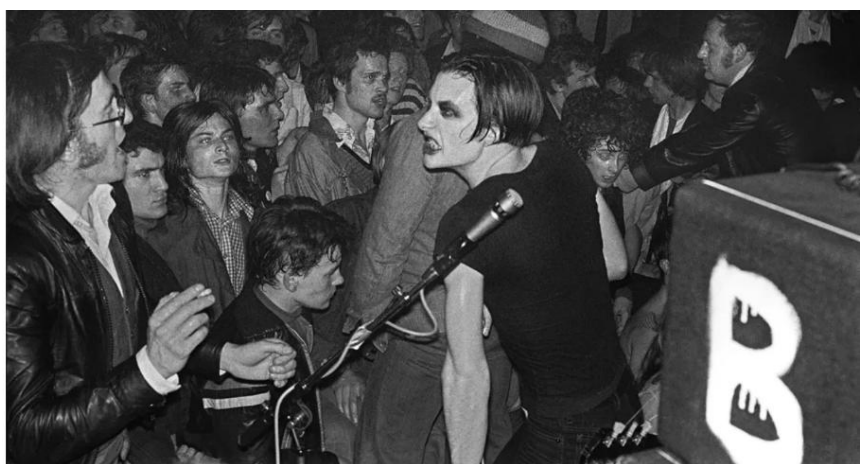
Swansea has a rich musical heritage, ranging from its underground punk and metal gigs to its vibrant indie and grime scenes. My goal is to document this legacy and ignite the same raw energy that defines it. To draw inspiration, I look to artists like Ewen Spencer, who has captured the essence of the UK grime and garage scenes. His photographs evoke a sense of anticipation and excitement, much like the atmosphere found in Swansea's music venues. Spencer's work reflects his involvement in youth centres, pirate radio stations, and raves in East London, resonating with the dynamic spirit of Swansea's own music scenes.

Tom Wood's exploration of working-class life will be mirrored in the depiction of Swansea's diverse audience, emphasising the communal spirit within the city's venues. Similarly, Jessica Craig-Martin's satirical portrayal of New York's elite can be adapted to document the various layers of music-goers in Swansea, whether gritty and underground or polished and established. This will showcase the contrasts found in different venues and experiences.

This project will be inspired by the photographic works of Derek Ridgers, Tom Wood, Ewen Spencer, and Jessica Craig-Martin. These renowned photographers are known for their intimate documentation of subcultures, providing a framework for portraying the energy of nightlife through an authentic and unfiltered perspective.



Here are a few examples of portrait images that capture a diverse array of individuals. In image 3, the raw energy of nightlife is vividly portrayed, highlighting a scene where two people appear intoxicated. This stark contrast to the more candid or carefully arranged shots in the preceding images suggests an intriguing angle for capturing the vibrant atmosphere of music venues during bustling nights.

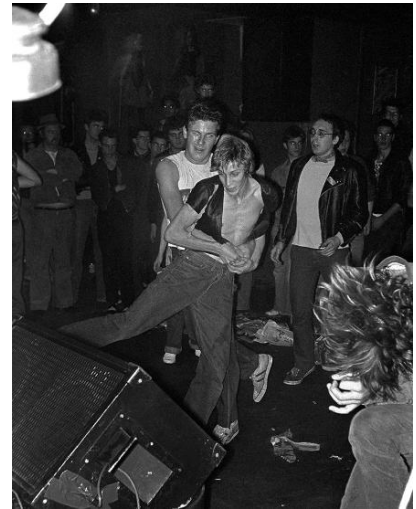


While these images delve into the more exuberant aspects of nightlife, they also reveal the darker side of music venues. The mosh pit environments often depict intense moments where crowd behaviour can escalate to violence.

These scenes can range from people playfully pushing each other around to more aggressive encounters involving throwing drinks or even punches. It's important to acknowledge the potential risks involved in photographing these chaotic moments, as participants may resort to using objects as projectiles, posing a genuine hazard for anyone nearby.



The images vividly document life beyond the event venues, showcasing of human interaction. Groups of friends huddle together, while others are reclined on the ground, others visibly affected by intoxication or substance use. This contrast of chaos and companionship creates a compelling narrative.

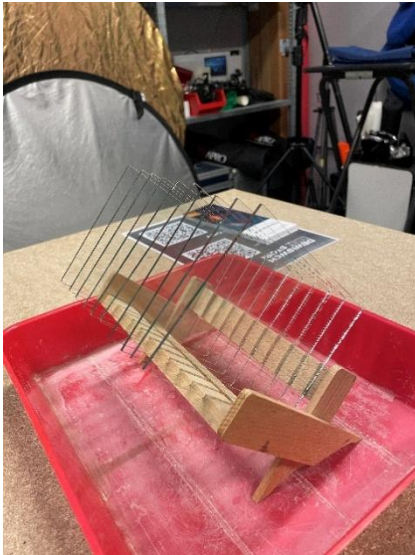


Amidst this dynamic atmosphere, fleeting moments of intimacy emerge; couples are captured in soft focus, as they share tender kisses or engage in private gestures. These intimate vignettes, however, can carry a weight of sensitivity. Approaching such scenes with a deliberate perspective is essential; a wide aperture might render the background softly blurred, isolating the couple and emphasizing their connection, yet the photographer must tread lightly. Capturing these intimate moments requires a mindful awareness of the context and the emotions, and it may be wiser to opt for discretion, potentially steering clear of these vulnerable encounters altogether.



Wet plate collodion workshop

Here is the The outcome of the wet plate collodion process hinges on meticulous attention to detail and concentration. To begin, take a 5x4 inch piece of glass and ensure it is impeccably clean and free of debris, as any imperfections will negatively impact the final print.



Carefully hold the glass by its edges with your fingertips, and then swiftly but gently pour the collodion into the centre of the glass. It's essential to perform this step quickly to prevent the collodion from starting to set. Once poured, tilt the glass slightly to allow the collodion to coat all corners, ensuring a complete and uniform layer. Any excess collodion can then be returned to the bottle.

Allow the coated glass to dry; you'll know it's ready when it develops a slightly opaque whitish hue. The next step involves holding the edges carefully while immersing the glass in silver nitrate solution. Once submerged, turn off the lights to create a dark environment, which is critical for this sensitive process. After sufficient exposure to the silver nitrate, carefully

lift the glass out of the solution and place it into a light-tight holder. This holder is then inserted into the back of the 5x4 camera. Once everything is in position, raise the protective plate to expose the glass during the exposure. After capturing the image, lower the plate to block any light from reaching the sensitive surface.

Next, remove the glass plate from the holder, supporting it from underneath. Over a tray, pour developer solution over the plate, watching it turn a milky white, revealing the latent image. Once the image appears, rinse with water to wash away any residual developer.

Now, you can safely turn the lights back on and place the glass into the fixing solution. After the fixing process, rinse the glass plate again in water to ensure it is thoroughly cleaned, leaving it ready for drying.



Here are the final steps we took to complete the prints.



The wet plate collodion process creates images that are truly distinctive, defined by their unique aesthetic and rich tonal qualities. When examining a collodion

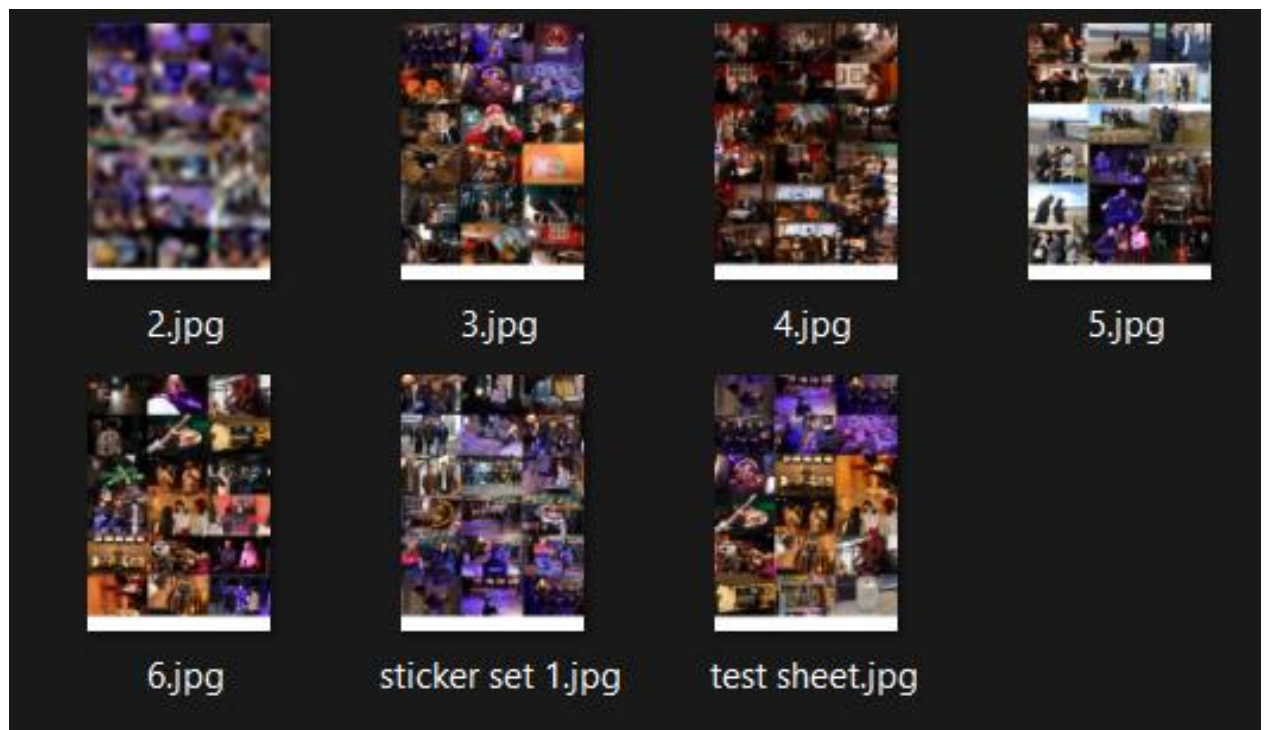
photograph, several remarkable details become apparent. I was genuinely impressed with the wet plate collodion technique; the experimentation was enjoyable and provided insight into historical photographic practices.

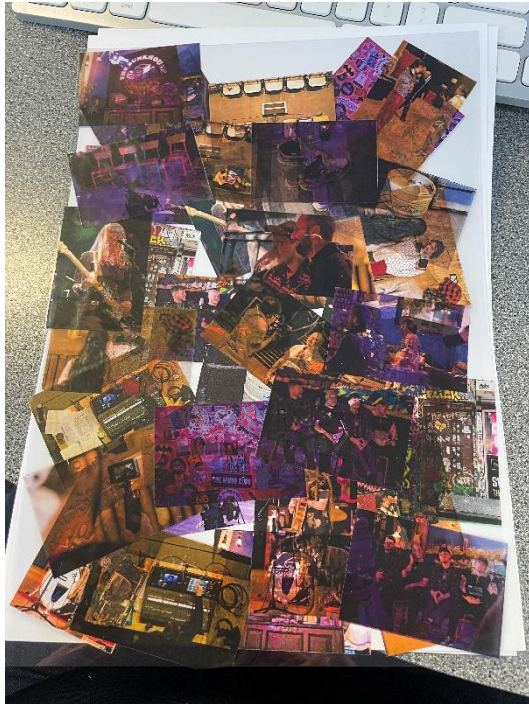
The level of detail captured in these images is astounding. The sharpness, intricate textures, and well-defined facial features stand out prominently. Each photograph carries a historical essence, evoking an antique feel, while the inherent imperfections add character. During the process, a lack of caution can lead to the image lifting from the glass plate, highlighting the fragility of these prints.

Collodion images typically exhibit deep blacks and bright whites, resulting in high contrast that draws the viewer's attention. The tonal range is beautifully rich, providing a nuanced gradient that adds depth to both highlights and shadows. The glass surface of each plate imparts a glossy finish, which can also reveal subtle imperfections, enhancing the overall character of the photograph.

I observed that even after the collodion has dried, the glass plate remains extremely fragile and susceptible to scratches. The dry film may flake off like powder, further emphasising the delicacy of the medium. While I may not incorporate this technique for my upcoming exhibition, it is definitely something I would love to explore for a future project.

Sticker Experiment





I went into my archives of the Swansea Arena House party and selected a variety of captivating images to craft sheets of stickers. For this project, I utilized A4 label stickers, as well as A4 acetate sheets designed for sticker printing.

Using Adobe Photoshop, I meticulously curated a collection of behind-the-scenes photographs that encapsulated the excitement and energy of the event. These images featured the talented bands that performed, all in support of raising funds for Swansea's music venues. Each photograph was chosen not only for its aesthetic appeal but also for its ability to convey the vibrant atmosphere of the evening.

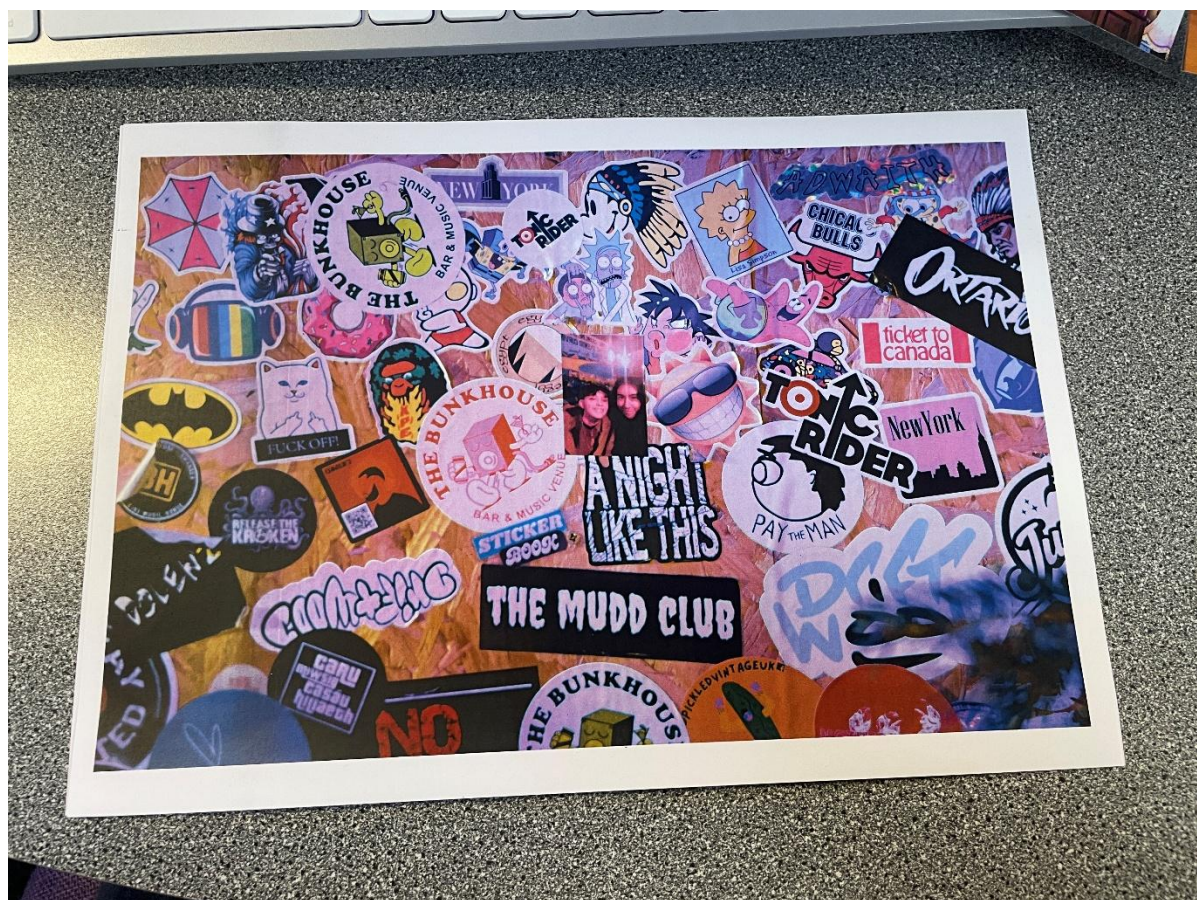
Once I had printed the images, I arranged them onto an acetate sheet to help visualize how the final stickers would look when displayed. This layout process allowed me to experiment with different configurations and designs, ensuring that the stickers would be eye-catching and reflect the spirit of the performance. The result was a stunning collection that pays tribute to the artists and the lively community that came together for this meaningful cause.

The experiment I conducted using the acetate sticker sheets yielded intriguing results. The photos were printed using an Epson Canon laser jet printer, and then carefully cut out each design to create small stickers. However, I quickly noticed that the images were quite fragile, as they scratched off the surfaces easily. To effectively utilise this method in the future, I will need to devise a strategy to protect the images from damage.

The layered acetate sticker sheet showcases an eclectic collage of vibrant photographic images, arranged in an overlapping and dynamic layout. The photographs exhibit a mix of shallow and deep depth of field; portraits and close-up shots have beautifully blurred backgrounds that draw the viewer's attention to the subjects, while wider shots, such as group photos and venue scenes, present greater clarity across the entire frame.

Framing techniques vary throughout the collection. Some images are tightly cropped, focusing intently on faces, instruments, or expressive gestures, whereas others adopt a wider perspective, incorporating more environmental context like concert stages or graffiti walls. The lighting in these photographs also contributes to their appeal, ranging from dramatic low-light scenes illuminated by stage lights and neon glows to natural light captured in candid street-style shots. Warm tones dominate, enhancing the vibrant and energetic atmosphere conveyed.

Each photograph possesses a clear focal point, whether it be a musician, a camera operator, or a graffiti-covered wall, often enhanced by techniques like leading lines or selective focus. This collection tells a cohesive story about a vibrant creative space, possibly a music venue or event hub, illustrating key elements such as musicians performing, audience engagement, and atmospheric venue shots.



Capturing a consistent depth of field, the image ensures that every sticker is sharp and in focus. This uniform focus creates an immersive experience, drawing attention to each sticker's intricate details, text, and graphics. The lighting is even and well-distributed, minimizing shadows while allowing the vibrant colours and designs to

stand out. The natural diffusion of light from soft ambient lighting ensures clarity without harsh reflections.

The colour palette boasts highly saturated, bold hues—reds, yellows, blues, and blacks dominate the scene, creating a strong contrast against the wood-textured background and ensuring each element pops visually. Certain stickers employ monochromatic designs, such as black and white text logos, which balance the vibrant multicoloured ones.

In terms of texture and detail, the stickers present a tactile experience, featuring glossy finishes alongside matte designs. Details like handwritten text, iconic pop culture references, and gritty DIY aesthetics are captured crisply. The underlying wooden texture of the DJ booth subtly bleeds through, adding an organic backdrop to the synthetic feel of the stickers.

Interestingly, there is no singular focal point; rather, the viewer's eye is drawn across the composition organically. However, larger and more vibrant stickers, like the "THE BUNKHOUSE" logo or cartoonish graphics, serve as visual anchors. The overall mood and tone of the image evoke a gritty, urban, and rebellious energy, embodying the spirit of underground music culture. Each sticker, telling a unique story or representing a personal mark, conveys a sense of community and individuality.

To recreate this sticker-covered DJ booth scene photographically, I could start by preparing a wooden or plywood surface with visible grain as the backdrop. A variety of bold, colourful stickers with themes ranging from logos to abstract designs should be gathered. When applying the stickers, layering them in an overlapping fashion with some peeling edges adds authenticity.

Using a standard lens, like a 35mm or 50mm, will minimize distortion when capturing the image. A narrow aperture, around f/8 to f/11, ensures everything remains sharp and in focus, while keeping the ISO low—between 100 and 200—reduces noise. A tripod can be utilised for slower shutter speeds if necessary, ensuring consistent lighting.

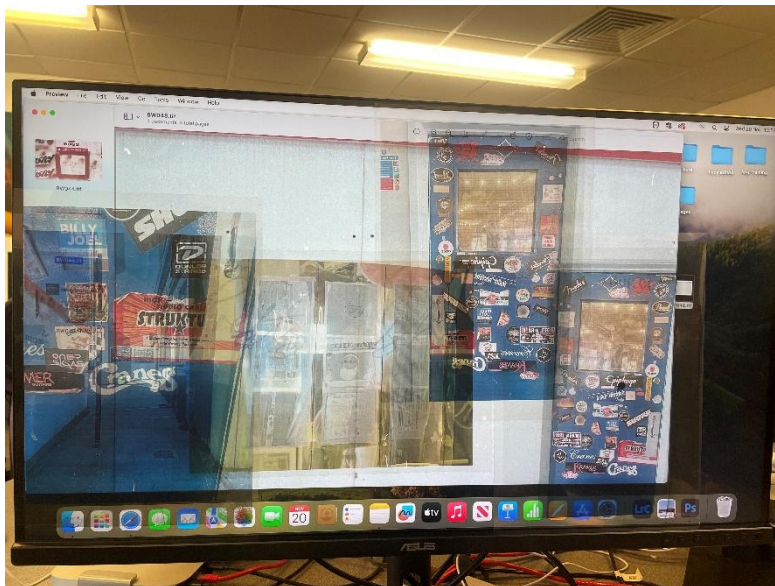
For lighting, employing soft box lights or diffused natural light minimizes shadows and reflections. It's best to avoid harsh directional lighting that could cause glare on the glossy stickers. A straight-on, flat-lay angle is ideal for capturing the stickers without distortion, although experimenting with a slight tilt can add dynamic energy.

In post-processing, enhancing saturation and contrast in editing software like Adobe Lightroom or Photoshop will bring the image to life. Adjusting sharpness will highlight the edges and textures of the stickers, and considering a slight vignette can subtly draw attention to the centre of the composition.

Finally, the image can be printed on high-quality, glossy photo paper for vibrant reproduction. Optionally, layering the final image on acetate sheets creates added transparency and a tactile mixed-media effect. By combining thoughtful composition, attention to lighting, and meticulous post-processing, I can create an impactful photographic representation of this sticker-covered DJ booth, effectively retaining its chaotic and expressive essence.

Acetate experiment continued using lighting

Backlighting acetate images creates a visually striking and dynamic effect, profoundly transforming the way viewers perceive the layered visuals. When illuminated, the translucent quality of the acetate material takes center stage, creating a luminous glow that draws attention to the interplay of light and shadow. The contrast between the brightly lit areas and the shadowed sections enhances the overall visual experience, making fine details such as textures, overlapping designs, and even faint imperfections much more noticeable.



This technique also emphasises the layering effect inherent in acetate images, adding a compelling sense of depth. Layers that would appear flat under standard lighting take on a three-dimensional quality as light passes through varying densities of acetate and ink. The translucency allows elements from deeper layers to subtly bleed into the foreground, producing a dreamlike overlap that captivates the viewer's eye.

The colours within the acetate become more saturated and vivid when backlit, especially with translucent inks. Warmer tones like reds, oranges, and yellows radiate outward, while cooler tones such as blues and greens gain a sharp clarity. Light diffusion and ink opacity create a stained-glass effect, bringing vibrant life to the composition.

Fine textures within the acetate, including printed patterns and graphic details, are further highlighted by the glow from behind. Minute features like the edges of stickers, dust particles, or slight scratches come to life, adding a tactile quality to the image that invites deeper inspection. Areas with denser ink or overlapping layers naturally become focal points, diffusing light differently and standing out boldly against the luminous backdrop. This visual stratification guides the viewer's eye to the key elements of the artwork.

The benefits of introducing backlighting also evoke a cinematic atmosphere, stirring emotions of nostalgia, curiosity, or even a sense of mystery. The warm glow creates an intimate, immersive experience as if the viewer is peering into a secret illuminated world. The tone of the piece can shift dramatically, ranging from playful and energetic when bright colours dominate to moody and contemplative when shadows and silhouettes prevail.

The dynamic nature of light passing through acetate encourages engagement; viewers often move closer, tilt their heads, or adjust their perspectives to observe how the light interacts with the different layers. This effect is visually arresting, often capturing the viewer's gaze for longer than a traditionally lit image would.

To enhance this backlighting effect, one can use a diffused light source positioned behind the acetate to avoid harsh hotspots and experiment with varying light intensities to control the glow while balancing details.

Backlighting transforms acetate images from flat compositions into luminous, layered artworks that exude depth, colour intensity, and emotional resonance. This technique creates an almost ethereal experience, inviting viewers to explore the image in greater detail and appreciate its intricacies.

Swansea Arena VIP grassroots bands



The stage performance witnessed was visually captivating, showcasing stunning colours, lighting, and composition that immediately drew attention. The atmosphere was dominated by low-key lighting, with intense blue ambient light enveloping both the audience and the stage. The projected visuals on the translucent screens introduced contrasting warm tones—fiery oranges and yellows—creating a dynamic interplay between warm and cool colours.

What stood out the most was how the lighting design crafted poignant chiaroscuro effects. Bright areas sharply contrasted with deep shadows, particularly around the audience, adding an air of mystery and depth to the scene. Directional lighting emphasized the vertical screens, creating an immersive focal point that was hard to look away from.

In terms of depth, the performance was beautifully layered. A deep depth of field ensured clarity across both the audience in the foreground and the performer with the screens in the background. The lighting contrast subtly isolated the performer while the translucent screens acted as a majestic backdrop, adding intriguing dimensions to the entire composition.

The composition itself was striking. The performer was centrally positioned, expertly adhering to the rule of thirds, which naturally drew attention. The vertical lines of the projection screens guided the gaze upward, lending a sense of height and grandeur to the performance. The silhouettes of the audience framed the scene, enhancing the feeling of immersion and connection to the experience. The rows of chairs and the slight diagonal positioning of the screens created a leading line effect, guiding the eyes into the heart of the action.

Colour played a crucial role, with the cool dominance of blue tones contrasting sharply against the warm hues of the visuals. This complementary colour scheme created visual harmony, keeping the focus firmly on the stage. The shadows in the foreground balanced the vibrant light sources, preventing any sense of visual fatigue and maintaining intrigue.

The mood and atmosphere were simply enchanting. The dim ambient lighting, with its intimate, ethereal feeling, created an environment ripe for focus and immersion. The still silhouettes of the audience added an element of reverence and quiet anticipation that was palpable in the air. The surreal quality of the lighting and projections heightened the overall emotional engagement.

As the scene unfolded, different focal points became evident. The performer at the centre was the star, while the vertical projection screens served as secondary focal points, drawing attention upward and outward. The audience's silhouettes in the foreground acted as visual anchors, skilfully balancing the composition.

In photographing such a mesmerising scene, a mirrorless camera suited for low-light conditions would be essential. A standard zoom lens with a 24-105mm focal length, combined with a wide aperture, ideally using around f/2.8, would capture ample light while using a shutter speed of about 1/30 sec to retain ambient light without motion blur. A moderate to high ISO of 800 to 1600 would maintain light sensitivity while minimizing noise. Setting up the lighting would be crucial, utilizing projectors or LED panels for the translucent vertical screens, ensuring the stage is lit with deep blue ambient lighting, complemented by warm projections on the screens. Incorporating backlighting for the audience members' silhouettes would enhance the overall scene.

When it comes to composition, positioning the camera slightly behind the audience could capture that immersive perspective. Aligning the performer with the rule of

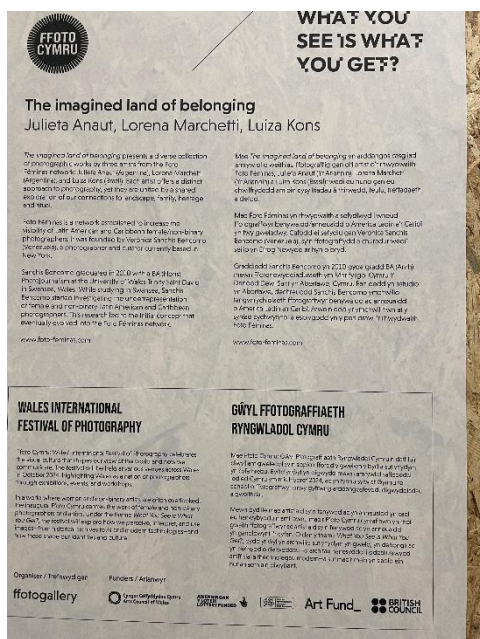
thirds would naturally draw the viewer's attention, while including audience silhouettes in the foreground would add depth. Experimenting with a lower camera angle could emphasize the vertical height of the screens.



For post-processing, enhancing contrast and saturation would make the blue and warm tones pop. Adjusting shadows and highlights would help maintain detail in both bright and dark areas, and a slight vignette could effectively draw focus toward the performer and projections.

Lastly, allowing for some creative experimentation could prove valuable—perhaps a long exposure shot to capture light trails from the moving visuals or a wider shot to include more rigging and ceiling structure for added context. A black-and-white version could also be attempted to emphasize the striking lighting contrasts.

Capturing this performance photographically hinges upon balancing lighting, composition, and the art of post-processing. The magic lies in the careful contrast between warm and cool lighting while maintaining clarity and depth throughout the mesmerising scene.

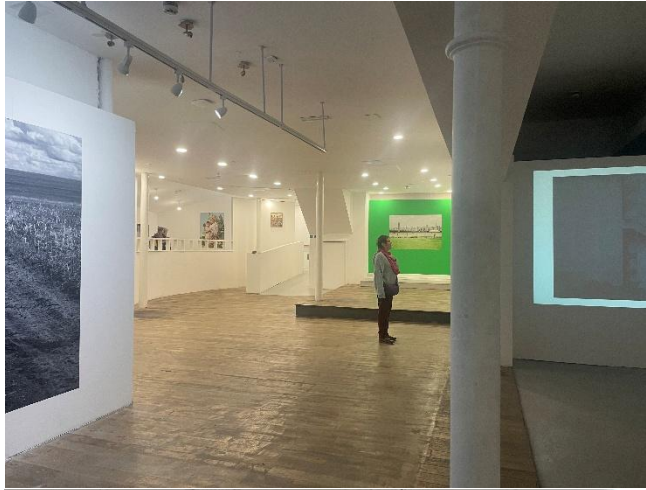


WHAT YOU SEE IS WHAT YOU GET

I recently had the pleasure of visiting the "What You See is What You Get" exhibition at the Elysium Gallery, a unique venue nestled within one of Swansea's vibrant music spaces. My curiosity led me to this exhibition, not only to experience the artwork on display but also to observe how Elysium is creatively adapting its space by incorporating a pub setting. I hoped to gain insights into how other exhibitions maximize their environments.

To my delight, I discovered that the gallery is not just an exclusive space; it is welcoming to everyone. For those interested in hosting their events, the gallery offers hire options, with a

basic rental rate of £300 per week or £100 per day. The gallery operates from Wednesday to Saturday, between 12 PM and 5 PM, with flexible hours available upon negotiation. This open approach truly embodies the spirit of community engagement and artistic expression.



During my visit to the exhibition, I discovered a lively and creative atmosphere filled with inspiration. The workshop that day invited attendees to transform magazines into stunning collage pictures, and I eagerly took a seat around a large communal table, intrigued by the prospect of enhancing my skills in layering images.

As I engaged in the creative process, I found myself immersed not only in art but also in delightful conversations with those seated around me. To my surprise, many participants were regulars at these workshops held at the Elysium, each person bringing their unique perspective and experience to the table.



I struck up a conversation with one of the volunteers who was assisting with the workshop. She shared with me the importance of these initiatives in fostering community connections through the arts. Many participants, she explained, attend not just to hone their artistic skills, but also to seek social interaction with like-minded individuals. Others came to enjoy live performances from up-and-coming grassroots bands, further enriching the experience at the venue.

Hearing the uplifting stories about the growth of the arts scene in Swansea, I felt a renewed appreciation for these adaptable spaces. They not only showcase creativity but also serve as vital hubs for community engagement and connection, fostering a thriving cultural landscape.