

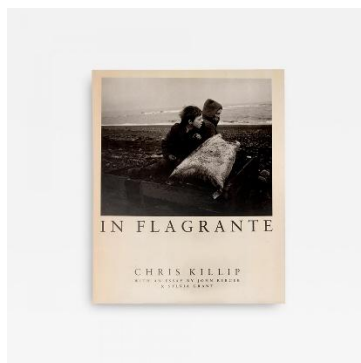
Student Name: Adam Cole

Knowledge and Understanding Skills: 20%

Chris Killip – *In Flagrante*

Published in 1988, *In Flagrante* is a deeply evocative photobook that documents the lives of working-class communities in Northern England during the industrial decline brought about by Margaret Thatcher's economic policies/constituency. Killip's sequencing is deliberately fragmented, rejecting traditional linear storytelling and instead encouraging instinctive engagement. By presenting his images without a clear narrative structure, he forces the viewer to interpret the work naturally, immersing them in the uncertainty and hardship experienced by his subjects. The absence of captions and direct explanations further reinforces this approach. His strategy highlights the power of sequencing within photobooks, demonstrating how structure, pacing, and omission can shape emotional and political resonance. The physical format enhances the weight of the work, ensuring that the images function not as isolated moments but as a collective experience of a time and place undergoing transformation.

Killip's approach exemplifies how photobooks function beyond documentation—they become immersive objects, shaping perception through design and sequencing. His rejection of imposed narrative aligns with contemporary explorations of abstraction and ambiguity and the photobook itself is a strong example of the ability to communicate social, economic, and political themes through its structure, subjects, and format.



John Gossage – *The Pond*

In the mid-1980s, the photobook was experiencing a major shift. Photographers began to challenge the traditional narrative and linear sequencing that had characterized documentary work, aiming to create a more interactive experience for viewers. In Britain and beyond, artists and photographers were reconsidering the

photobook's role as a tangible object and instead recognised that its design, layout, and material choices were essential to its significance and meaning.

The Pond, published in 1985- exemplifies this social change. Influenced by the environmental and political issues of the time, Gossage views and portrays landscapes as not just subjects of beauty but as active spaces where nature and human impact intersect. His work reflects the broader trends of conceptual photography, where the book itself serves as a narrative tool that encourages ongoing engagement and introspection from its audience. Known for his meticulous attention to detail, Gossage gave a lot of focus towards the smaller details such as the paper quality, the size of the book, and the absence of vibrancy. Furthermore, this absence of colour and tone only enhances the photos as timeless scenes. This enduring response adds emotional weight while allowing the viewer to focus on the light, shadows, and texture rather than vitality shown through vibrancy. However, the front and back cover of the book display a solid blue background. This highly contrasts with the lack of colour inside of the book while also resembling scenery such as the sea or the sky, reflecting to the theme of the pond. The typography is large scale to capture the viewers' attention and is partially obscured off the page which reflects the fragmentation and impermanence seen within the pages. Moreover, this element could also invite viewers to engage more with the book. With an incomplete title on the front cover, I believe Gossage wanted viewers to curiously open the book to find clarity.



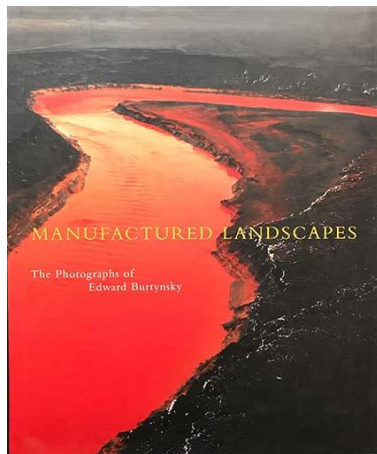
Edward Burtynsky – *Manufactured Landscapes*

Burtynsky's *Manufactured Landscapes* was first published in 2003, a time where global conversation around environmental degradation and industrialisation was gaining momentum. This photobook marks a pivotal moment in the history of environmental photography while highlighting the tension between progress and destruction. Through the book, Burtynsky brings attention to the scale of human industrial activity, showing landscapes that have been deeply altered, often irreversibly, by humans. The photobook also functions as a cultural artifact, reflecting the concerns of the early 21st century about globalization on a global level by displaying scenery from different continents.

To start, the front cover features an image of an industrialised landscape along with a vivid orange river running through it. Here, Burtynsky highlights the interplay and contrast between human activity and natural environments. The imagery is set in warm, dark tones of deep orange and red, reflecting the dual nature of the beauty and the danger in the interfered land. The typography atop of the image is in a golden

yellow, which helps provide a dark contrast against the image behind while also improving readability. The shape of the river creates a strong diagonal line, leading the viewer's eye through the image and adding a sense of movement.

The format of the book is large-sized, essential in conveying the scale of the subjects and landscapes Burtynsky photographs. Furthermore, this scale aids the viewer in realising the proper scale of the industrial buildings- something not possible with a smaller format. Burtynsky's use of multiple countries around the world amplifies this idea of global industrialisation and the direction we are heading in as a species- our collective relationship with the world around us is spoken through this photobook and it will remain an important photobook within photography.



Cognitive and Intellectual Skills: 30%

The photobook in which I have produced deliberately operates as an interrogation of ambiguity, interpretation, and the interplay between abstraction and the familiar. My intention is to encourage viewers to engage with its themes—not through passive observation but through active interpretation, transforming the reading experience into one that is both cognitive and emotional.

At its core, the photobook explores the tension between clarity and ambiguity. By leveraging the concept of the sublime and rejecting representational imagery in favour of abstraction and dynamic tones, I align my work with theorists such as Phillip Shaw and Edward Burke, who question the stability of meaning. My interpretation of the sublime is fluid and subjective, which I aimed to portray here. I capitalise on ambiguity as a productive mode of thought to suggest that meaning is not inherent but co-generated by the viewer's encounter with the photobook. This approach resonates with reader-response theory, which posits that the viewer plays an essential role in creating interpretation. Although the level of ambiguity might alienate viewers who seek clarity and coherence, I argue that such discomfort is integral to the work's conceptual framework—it forces viewers to confront their own biases and assumptions about meaning. In this way, the element is not a limitation but a strength, transforming viewing into an active, participatory experience that reflects the complexities we face in our desire for meaning.

In rejecting a singular narrative, I align the photobook with contemporary debates on perception, operating under the idea that human recollection is inherently fragmentary and subjective. I deliberately disrupted the chronological order to reflect this notion. My chosen production techniques—high-quality gloss printing, tactile binding, and thoughtful use of space—are not solely aesthetic decisions but intentional measures that render the reading experience immersive. This is further expressed through the use of full-bleed image cropping, encouraging an engagement that privileges slow, deliberate contemplation over instant gratification.

By resisting linearity, clear narrative endpoints, and exposition, I democratise the act of interpretation and compel the viewer to assume the role of co-author. Depriving the viewer of authoritative context might render the message overly ambiguous, yet I would argue that the pure visual and material elements, combined with the absence of typography- entrust the viewer with generating layered interpretations based on their own experiences and contextual knowledge. Moreover, my choice to omit text aligns with the post-structuralist theory of the death of the author and serves as a critique of modern media's over-reliance on captions and texts that typically confine images to narrow contexts.

Altogether, each element serves not only a formal function but also participates in a broader dialogue—challenging traditional narratives and inviting viewers to engage actively in the process of making meaning.

Practical Skills: 40%

Guidance specific to task (from the brief):

In assembling this photobook, my approach was to carry out extensive research into book production and design. Every Decision, from how the images are sequenced to the selection of photos- was made after careful experimentation and creative development. Through the process, I produced a few book dummies, each representing an evolving stage in my understanding of the photobook as a medium.

Firstly, my work began with research into theoretical frameworks prevalent in contemporary photobook design. Research included key texts and works by theorists who interrogate the concept of the sublime and ended up laying the groundwork for my decision to step away from traditional elements such as narrative forms and instead, embrace a design that is open-ended.

Instead of planning my photographs, I decided to get hands on and see what images my medium could produce. Originally, I wanted my photobook to have segmented images that could be flipped individually to create a collage of different combinations of photos- I abandoned this as it was an artificial frame around my images which was not something I desired.

The selection and editing of images is one of the most critical aspects of photobook design that I continually refined through my dummies. I approached image selection not just as an act of curation but as a process to create a dynamic dialogue between visual content. The editing process involved trials to determine the optimum sequence that would echo my themes. I experimented with varying image sizes, overlaps, and negative space until the desired tension was achieved. I critically evaluated the choices made and adapted them to better align the final product with the underlying themes.

After refining the conceptual and practical approach through multiple prototypes, I moved to the final production stage. A decisive moment in the process was choosing to print the definitive version externally with a professional company using gloss paper. This choice was driven by several factors such as paper that provided a surface that rendered colours vividly and consistently, essential for the dynamic tones and abstract imagery that characterize the photobook. Furthermore, the smooth, reflective quality of gloss paper reinforced the tactile dimension of the reading experience while accentuating the interplay of light and colour in each image. Throughout the external printing process, precise attention was paid to maintaining full-bleed images and ensuring that page transitions were seamless. The professional printing also involved consultations around binding techniques. I opted for a binding method that allowed smooth page-turns while preserving the quality of full-bleed spreads. However, in the future I will opt for a lay-flat spine to allow the photobook to stay open. The editing refined the balance between abstraction and recognizable form, ensuring that the collective sequence of images- though non-linear, maintained a coherent dialogue and colour palette. My approach to image selection and editing was guided by a rigorous selection process- every image was scrutinized not only for its visual quality but also for its ability to relate or juxtapose the opposite image. Personally, the best example of this is the front and back cover. I employed these two images as they both contained straight diagonal directions that are symmetrical in their appearance.

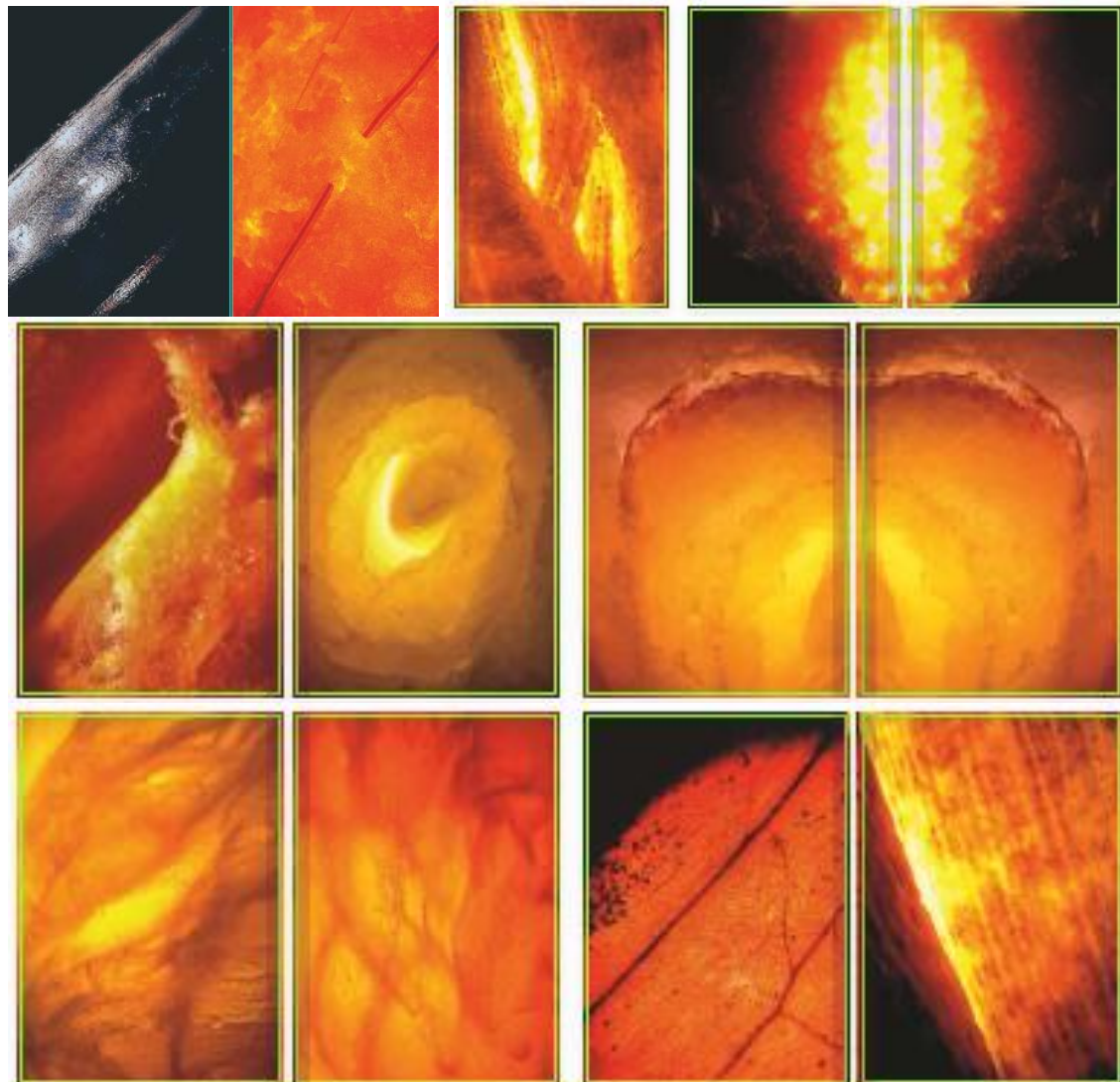
Every method and technical decision throughout the process of this photobook was made in dialogue with its conceptual context. The editing, design, and format were

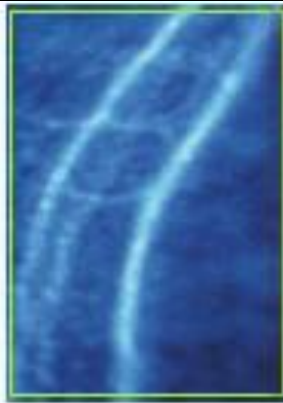
not isolated features and/or choices; they operated as a cohesive system that further elevated the work. They enabled it to speak to themes such as ambiguity, perception, and construction of meaning.

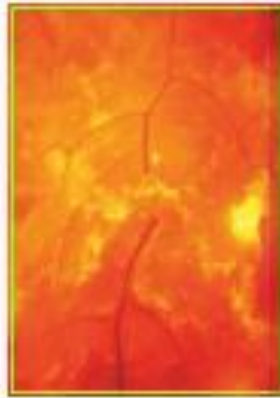
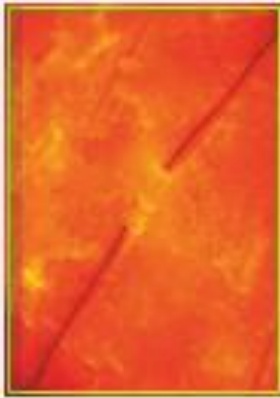
In evaluating the methods and technical processes in which I employed in the creation of this photobook, it is clear to me that the final product is that of deep inquisitiveness, iterative development, and thought behind the form with context. The journey from the earliest images and book dummies to the final print was that of a big one. From the choice of gloss paper to the image sequencing, high production quality not only enhances the visual impact but also relates to this organic vs industrial theme seen in the photobook.

To conclude, the successful external printing and meticulous editing/sequencing reflect a commitment to growth in both practice and theory. The photobook not only stands as an artistic expression but also my own personal growth as a photographer and cognitive being. During the project, my personal knowledge on art and photography history grew greatly, along with my interest in philosophical ideologies within art. At the end of the project, I wanted my work to reflect my emotional state as a person and my own interpretation of the objects we see around us.

(Front/Back cover and Pages 1-32)







Transferable Skills for Life and Professional Practice 10%
Guidance specific to task (from the brief):

The design and creation of my photobook was both a creative journey and a professionally rigorous process. I spent countless hours sifting through hundreds of images to identify pieces that would best collaborate and contribute to a compelling narrative. Throughout the project, I was constantly challenged not only to craft an engaging visual story but also to manage my time effectively, collaborate during discussions, and refine my techniques. This journey has been transformative in my development as a photographer- not only in terms of artistic approach but also in nurturing a set of transferable skills that I can carry forward into diverse professional contexts. After experimenting with different mediums, I can confidently say that this method of creation is one I will continue to explore in the future, whether as a hobby or a career.

One of the most significant lessons I learned is the importance of planning and project management. From the outset, I mapped out a workflow inspired by my creative vision. I also discovered that every intentional visual element contributes to a larger picture, not only within photobooks but in everyday experiences. A crucial area for improvement in future projects is embracing an iterative development process that values experimentation and reflective practice. I found that critical feedback greatly benefited my work, and my creative output would not be the same without it. Additionally, developing technical proficiency throughout the design process was a prominent element of my growth. Learning to use programs such as InDesign was a new step for me, but I adapted quickly and became proficient. This level of technical engagement is highly valuable in any field that deals with product development, publishing, or digital content creation.

Working with an external printing company further enriched my experience by providing practical insights into the nuances of material quality, image reproduction, and the impact of tactile finishes on the overall visual effect. I learned how to evaluate samples carefully and ensure that the final output faithfully represented my vision.

Equally important was the development of my communication and presentation skills. Active participation in design review sessions allowed me to share my progress and defend my decisions. These sessions, in which I engaged in constructive debates about the work, improved my ability to communicate complex ideas clearly and concisely. The feedback and discussions were instrumental in refining my creative process.

In conclusion, the process of making my photobook has equipped me with a diverse array of skills that extend beyond the realm of art and design. Through meticulous planning, iterative development, technical proficiency, and active communication, I have developed transferable skills essential for any future professional production. This project has reinforced my commitment to a reflective, research-driven approach to my creative work and has prepared me well for the demands of a career in photography.



