

Photobook Proforma

Student Name: Claire Forshaw

Knowledge and Understanding Skills: 20%

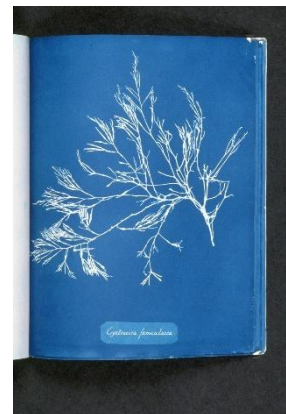
Guidance specific to task (from the brief):

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

The photobook is primarily a book which features photographic work, but the photobook book can also be more than just a container for the photographs, the book as an object can have as much importance to the overall narrative as the photographs within. When considering its form, layout, materials and scale, a photobook uses all these elements to successfully present its narrative to the audience.

Anna Atkins (1799- 1871) was a plant biologist and photographer who created one of the very first photobooks titled *Photographs of British Algae* in 1843. Atkins created her book mainly for documentation purposes and this can be seen within the form and layout of the book.

The layout of the book was kept simple. It consisted of a single image with name on each page and the images were put together in alphabetical order so one could easily navigate the book, find what they were looking for quickly. This layout would have been important to the audience who at the time would have consisted of other plant biologist and the scientists. For them the book would have been used not only just to catalogue Algae, but for referencing other specimens.



(figure 1 Anna Atkins 1843)

Holy Bible is a photobook created by artists Oliver Chanarin and Adam Broomberg in 2013. It consists of photographs, found and collected within the Archive of Modern Conflict (AMC), printed directly on top of the text within a King James Bible. On each page a line within the text is underlined. This text is loosely related with the accompanying photograph.



(Figure 2 Holy Bible 2013)

The physical layout and form of this photobook is the key component. The use of the Bible combined with the photograph creates the overall narrative. The book is as important to the concept as the photographs. It isn't just a vehicle for the artists to showcase their work. Pairing the text and the photographs outside of the Bible wouldn't work the same. Not only would it lose its shock value, but it would also lose its voice.

Holy Bible is about catastrophes, conflict, punishment, and the growth of modern government, basically the theme of The Bible. Pairing both bodies of work voices both narratives. The photography gives a visual to The Bible, and The Bible adds context to the images. Together they show how catastrophes, conflict and punishment have always been a huge component within society.

Whereas Atkins' book form and layout was designed to catalogue scientific images for fellow scientists, Holy Bible uses a design which uses shock and surprise. Holy Bible uses a design which is already universally recognised as being one of the world's most important books. Because of this and because of the religious nature of The Bible, by using it as a vehicle to showcase work, this adds a layer of rebellion, a layer of vandalism. This in turn adds a shock value to the book.

Both books consider their audience and their narrative, and use form, layout and materials to help communicate their narrative.

Figures

Figure 1 - Atkins, *Illustrations of British Algae: Cyanotype Impressions*. New York Public Library Digital Collections Image ID 419696 (2014) *history of information*. Available at: <https://www.historyofinformation.com/detail.php?id=2885> (Accessed: 02 March 2025).

Figure 2 - *Holy Bible* (2013) *Archive of Modern Conflict*. Available at: <https://archiveofmodernconflict.com/holy-bible/> (Accessed: 06 February 2025).

Cognitive and Intellectual Skills: 30%

Guidance specific to task (from the brief):

Avoiding description, critically analyse the theme/ context you explore within your photobook. Your critical analysis should demonstrate your cognitive and intellectual skills in how you have understood the subject and made work as a response to it. Consider how the form of your book communicates meaning in relation to the subject of exploration. (500 -1000 words)

Taking on the symbolic themes of a Book, I wanted to create a piece of work focusing on creation (art), education, and protection.

After doing some research into art and education I found that in recent times, within the state educational system, Art as a GCSE, has seen an enrolment decline of around 40% since 2010. I wanted to use my work to highlight the importance of art within the educational system whilst using the theme of the book to convey the message of how art should not be looked at as separate discipline to those such as maths and science, but as a medium that is intertwined with the other 'compulsory' subjects.

I achieved this by firstly exploring the relationship between art and science.

After spending some time at a medical lab as part as my external research, I quickly found how art and photography had an important role within medical science, from the advanced cameras they used to view specimens to creative thinking they had to use when being involved with any type of experimenting. I was also made aware of how so much of their work was visually so artistic and engaging.

It was this time spent within the lab that inspired the final form and layout of my book. To voice this relationship between science and art I used both scientific and artistic methods to not only create a body of work but also to combine all elements together into a book.

The images within my book are results from experimenting with the cyanotype process. I created cyanotype images onto agar agar which were placed inside petri dishes. The images are all different, but the layout and colour are repetitive like that of most scientific experiments. Science and art both use the process of experimentation, which is often repetitious, and to show this visually I kept to a layout that was recurring and unvarying.

Experimentation is repetitious but it can also be playful, especially within the arts. I wanted to add a layer of playfulness to my book and did this by adding a page between each image with a cutout circle. This circle represented the view through a

microscope which created a small window for the viewer to see not only what was coming next, but to have this experience of seeing only a section of the image like one would when viewing a specimen through a microscope.

It is important that when one's narrative involves the combining of two subjects, that the whole experience of the work has a good amount of each subject thrown into it. To create a book about art and science but only having elements of one subject, the book would lose its overall meaning. It is for this reason that I wanted to create my own experiments to generate images, and to add this playful performance so one can experience something beyond just viewing pretty pictures.

The experience one has when travelling through this book is playful, but it also feels seamless. The combination of elements work together harmoniously, communicating how easily and naturally art and science work together.

Practical Skills: 40%

Guidance specific to task (from the brief):

Evaluate the methods and technical processes you have employed in the making of this body of practice. Explain your process for making your book, consider how editing/ design/ typography and format speak to the subject matter you have explored. Provide examples of the book dummies you have created over the past semester to show developments in your practical processes. (800 – 1500 words)



(first book dummy)

Creating my first book dummy not only gave me the opportunity to gain further experience in InDesign but it gave me a chance to play around with ideas regarding form and layout.

The imagery within my book dummy consists of moments taken from my daily family life, as a family of three. The images show moments of connection between my daughter and her father from my viewpoint as the photographer. Being the photographer naturally I am mostly absent from these family portraits though I am present with the moment. I titled the book 'The Three of Us' to give the observer a clue to the overall narrative. I also added images in which I am being acknowledged by the subjects, either with just a look or by gestures that are willing me into the scene.

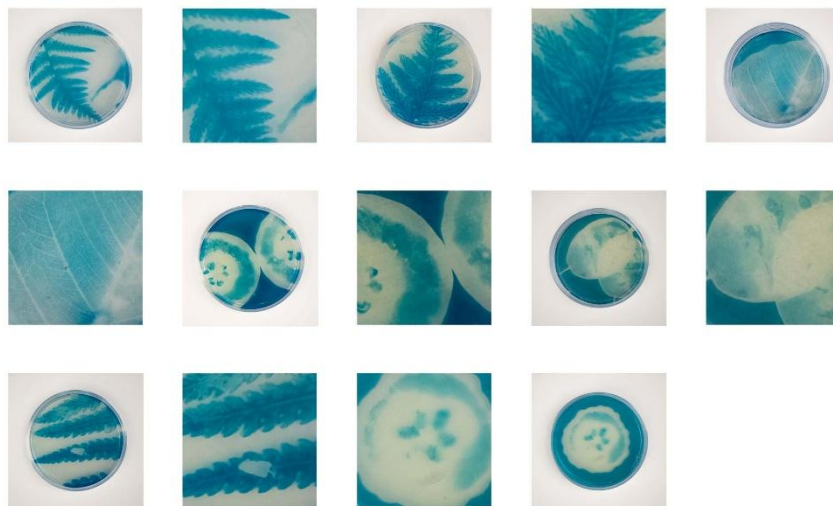
The ideas around the cover and layout of the images are based on traditional family photos and photo albums. The size of the book and the position of the images on the cover and the internal pages replicate the vintage square polaroid. The polaroid gave people the opportunity to create instant, on the go, candid images which aesthetically works well with my snapshot, documentary style family images. I chose a dark green for the colour of the cover because it is a colour found on traditional family photo albums.

This book dummy was a simple, quick idea which granted me the chance to experience the work that goes into creating a book. The theme is relevant to some of my past work but taking inspiration from other photobooks like that of the Holy Bible by Broomberg

and Chanarin, and The Map by Kikuji Kawada, I am motivated into creating something a little more unique, more intriguing, something with a little more 'voice'. Both publications are unique in the way of form and layout, Holy Bible with its use of an actual Bible and The Map with its added interest by using fold out pages.

Taking on the methods I used with my first book dummy, and once I had an idea of the direction I wanted to take this project, I began experimenting with ideas. I wanted my work to highlight the importance of Art within the educational system, and the importance of art within other subjects like that of science and maths.

To achieve this, I carried out some external research. I got invited to a biomedical science department at Swansea University. This visit gave me my real starting point for ideas. I was going to create a book that perfectly combined art (photography) and science, to show the importance one has on the other.

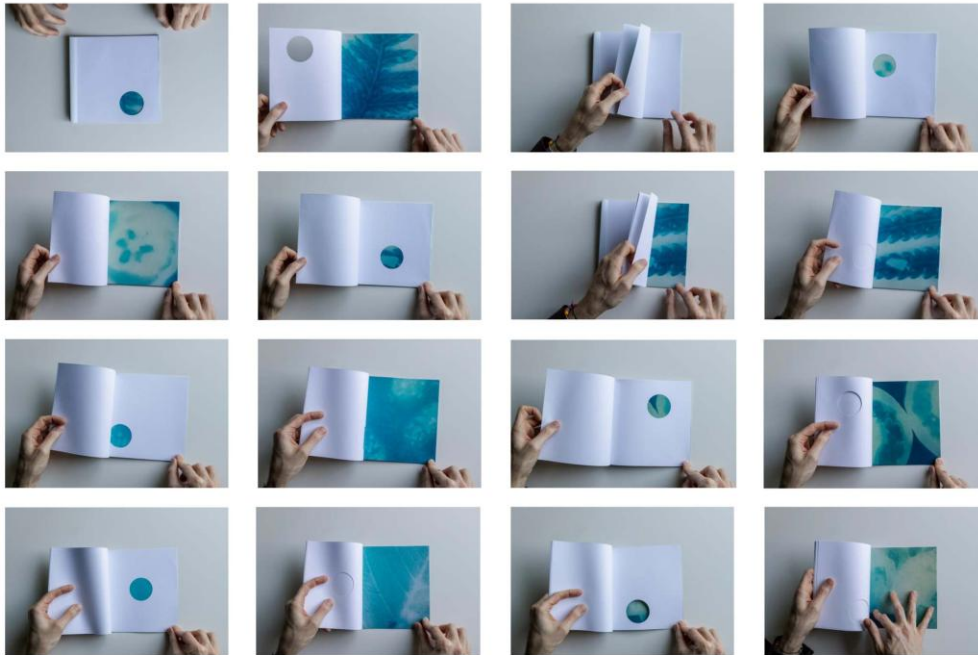


(2nd book dummy)

To combine art and science within a book I created some artistic experiments using both photography and scientific processes. I created images of plants, seeds and food in a way that would make one question if the image was a biological specimen from the medical lab. I experimented by processing the images onto microscope glass slides and petri dishes using the process of cyanotype. I then photographed the results and began think of ways of how I would use these images to compose a book.

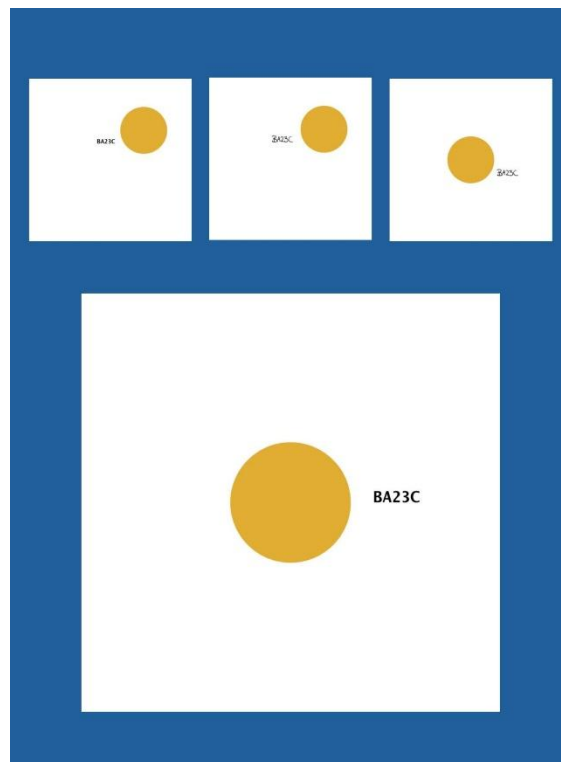
I printed images of the petri dishes and also some close-up images of each dish so I could observe both and see how well they worked together in book form. After seeing the abstract images together with the full dish images, I decided that I preferred the abstract images by themselves because they look more surreal, more engaging and more relevant to the look I am trying to achieve. It was easier to question the origin of the image. I did feel like they had lost that science lab look to them without seeing the petri dish, so I thought about recreating the idea of looking through a microscope. I

achieved this by placing a plain white page before each image, that had a cut out circle, so that a small part of the image behind could be seen before turning the page to reveal the full image. This would give the observer a sense looking through something and creates a playfulness to the book. Like the idea of performance achieved within Kawada's book, *The Map*, with its pages that fold out, I wanted to create a movement which keeps the viewer engaged but also in control of how they want to travel through the book. I do feel that adding this extra page between each image does slow down this journey through the book, giving the observer space to question what is coming next.



(3rd book dummy)

I created the 3rd book dummy to see how well the book works with the cut-out circles. I decided to cut the circles the size of the petri dishes as this acts as a reference to them. I cut them out at random as when one takes that first look through a microscope, that first observation will be unpredictable. I chose to bind the book with a white, plastic binding bar, this not only keeps this clean clinical look, but also creates a sense that this book could be a stack of scientific papers one quickly binds within the lab. I also enjoy the fact that by using this bar, the book itself is not permanently bound together, and that the viewer could, if he or she pleases, rearrange the pages, changing where the cut outs sit before each image. The observer could change the way they view the book. This adds another level of creativity and exploration towards the viewer.

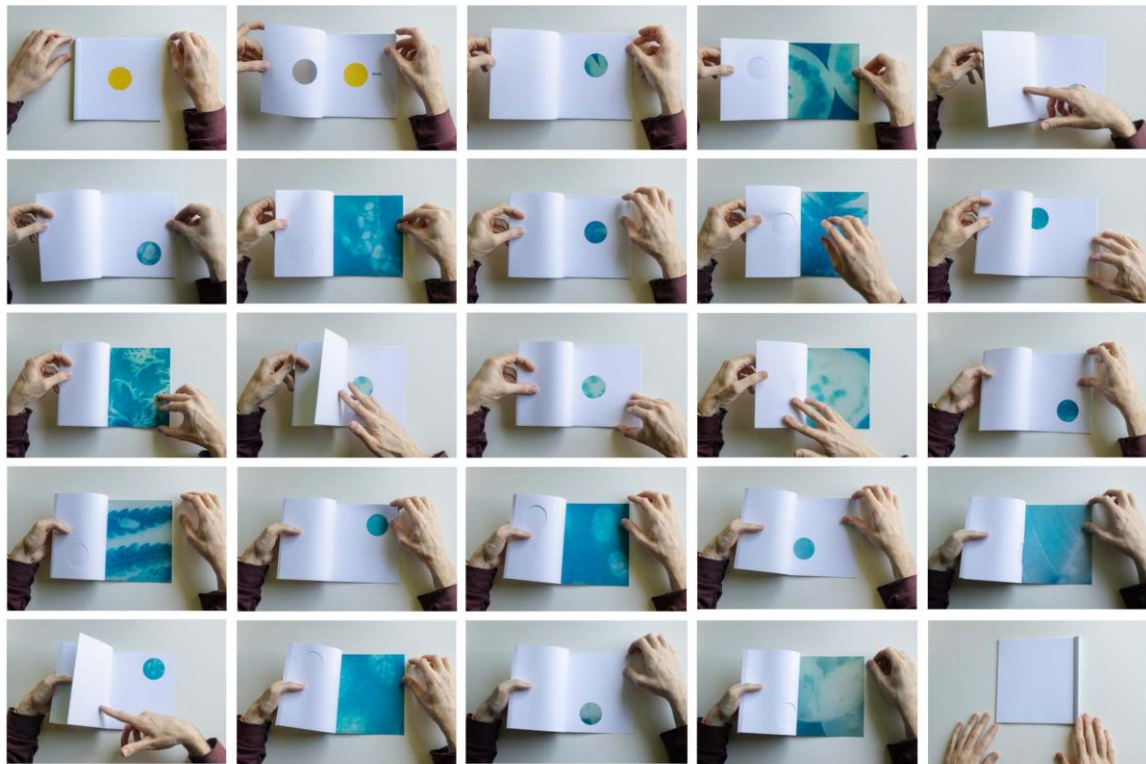


(Covers)

I created a few different versions of the front cover, some with handwritten text and some with a bolder cleaner looking font. I originally wanted to use handwritten text because all the samples within the lab were labelled with handwriting, but once printed, I felt that it made the cover appear messy and took away from this clean, clinical mood which I am trying to present. I also played with positioning of the circle. Having the circle completely central was visually more pleasing.

The title of the book BA23C has multiple meanings. I wanted to create a title that combined the topics of science and art, so I began by looking into different areas of the brain and how scientists label the brain specimens. I found out that it is the cerebral cortex that has functions which include intelligence, learning, conceptual thinking, problem solving, memory and creativity, all that relate to this body of work.

Korbinian Bodmann (1868-1918) was a German neuropsychiatrist who was responsible for mapping out the 52 different areas of the cerebral cortex known as Bodmann Areas. These are labelled BA1 to BA52. I chose BA23 not only because this is one of the areas that is specifically responsible for memory, but the number 23 adds a personal touch as I came into this world on the 23rd. The C represents me as the author, the creator of the book. I also enjoy the coincidence that BA also stands for Bachelor of Art.



(the final book)

The images within my book are all different, but the layout and colour are repetitive like that of most scientific experiments. Science and art both use the process of experimentation, which is often repetitious, and to show this visually I kept to a layout that was recurring and unvarying. I also followed this pattern with the cover, to which I also added a plain white page, with (cut out) in front of main cover image with title.

Experimentation is repetitious but it can also be playful, especially within the arts. This is why I wanted to add a layer of playfulness to my book by adding the page between each image with a cutout circle. This circle represented the view through a microscope which created a small window for the viewer to see not only what was coming next, but to have this experience of seeing only a section of the image like one would when viewing a specimen through a microscope.

The experience one has when travelling through this book is playful, but it also feels seamless. The combination of elements works together harmoniously, communicating how easily and naturally art and science work together.

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Transferable Skills for Life and Professional Practice 10%

Guidance specific to task (from the brief):

Evaluate what you have learnt throughout the process of making your photobook. Pay particular attention to the transferable skills you have developed. (500-1000 words)

Research played a huge part in the process of making my book, especially research done through artist talks and external research.

Fernanda Fedrizzi joined a lecture and gave us a presentation of her work. Fedrizzi is a publishing artist and PhD candidate visiting the UK from Brazil. By showing us her publications, like her badges, Fedrizzi really opened my mind that a book can look like. Fedrizzi had 50 identical badges made all with the ISBN printed on. The idea is that she would find 50 people (who I am now one of) to become a part of her publication by accepting one of her badges. She takes a photo of each person with their badge which will eventually go into a book. We become the living walking pages of her book. Each page with their own story. Without her talk, I may never had understood how far you can push the limits of what can be called a book.

Dr Angelini is a Doctor of Biology, who currently specialises within the study of the human brain, specifically neurons and their role within diseases such as Alzheimers. For my external research, I was invited over to the university to come and witness one of his lab meetings and to take a look around his lab where I could use the equipment to view different parts of the human brain. This visit triggered my ideas. By being in the lab, I was able to really get a sense of the atmosphere and really see first hand a side of a subject I wanted to explore within my work. I wanted to combine art and science and I feel this was achieved primarily, because of this visit.

Both of these research methods were highly beneficial in different ways but they both taught me the importance of undertaking different methods of research. The lab visit taught me that if I want to learn more about something, then go out and find someone who can help you. Find a way to put yourself within the right environment to gain the knowledge you need.

Unfortunately, during this module, I missed a few lectures due to illness. This is the first time I've missed so many, and I did feel how the lack of being able to talk and share my work with others effected my confidence, as did not being there to see what others were doing and learning from them. I missed a few one-on-one tutorials which constantly left me guessing if I was on the right path with my ideas. I did get through it and just trusted myself and the process, and I believe I created some good work. As much as this does give me the confidence to know what I can do it alone, at this point in my degree I know that being around the other students and having the advice and guidance from the lectures is still highly important for my practice.

Although I didn't use InDesign for my book, I did gain experience using it whilst creating my first book dummy. Gaining this experience will be highly useful going further into my degree.

I really enjoyed this module and I have gained experience in using software like Powerpoint, lightrooms, photoshop and InDesign. I was able to attain experience in

graphic design through working on layouts, forms and typography especially in areas such as book covers and even within my visual diary.

This was the first time I have used PowerPoint for my visual diary. I enjoyed learning how to use the software and found that although I do enjoy creating visual dairies within a physical sketchbook, using PowerPoint was more time efficient and I was still able to make it look (to what I think) presentable while interesting. I do think I will continue to use PowerPoint going forward.

This module showed me that as photographers/artists, there are other methods we can use to get our narrative across; and that exhibitions are not the only way to put work together and get work out there. Going further into my degree I will definitely consider using the photobook as a way to assemble and showcase my work.

