Photobook Proforma

Student Name: Katie Hill

Knowledge and Understanding Skills: 20%
Guidance specific to task (from the brief): Your evaluation should show clear understanding of the history, function, practical development and production of the photobook through a range of critically understood examples. The analysis of these will highlight the functions and strategies employed by the photographer and your interpretation of their communication of meaning through the publication.
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) A photobook is a book where photographs are the main content and arranged typically in a way that can tell a story, explore themes or create an experience. Photobooks are designed with an artistic intension where every image and layout choices matter. Photobooks are important as they have enabled photographers to present their work to audiences without an exhibition. Over time, photobooks have become a way to show new ideas, document cultures and test the boundaries of telling a story visually. Sally Mann – Immediate Family Immediate Family is a photobook that features black and white photographs of her three children taken at their home in Virginia. Within the book, Mann explores childhood, family, innocence and vulnerability. This book has created a lot of controversy due to the nudity of her children bearing in mind her aim was to show the natural closeness and comfort she has with her children. This book was published in the 1990s, which was a time when personal and subjective photography were quite distinguished. The main function of the book is a combination of artistic and documentary photography. Manns creates a poetic exploration of childhood and family life, instead of making political statements. This wasn't how it seemed though as there were debates around the privacy and consent which challenged how the work was perceived. The book follows a loose chronological order, moving through

the different stages of her children's growth, emptions and experiences. The images are mainly shown as one per page or as a double spread which allows each photograph to grab the viewers' attention. Mann uses the large format of an 8x10 inch glass plate negatives, creating high quality images. The quality brings out the clarity of the tones whilst the book itself has a simple design which complements the classic feel of the work. Mann uses the large format camera with the soft focus and rich contrast which create images that feel ageless. The progression of the images shows the fleeting moments of childhood, going from playful innocence to more introverted moments. Leaving the viewer to interpret the emotions and story from the photographs, Mann keeps the text minimal, keeping it for identifying her children or situation.





Erik Kessel's – Muddy Dance

Muddy Dance is a series of photographs featuring football players covered in mud during a match, jumping, slipping and sliding around. The players in the book are shown frozen in moments of exhaustion awkwardness and poses like ballerina caused by the muddy conditions. This book is from the early 21st century, in the conceptual period of photobook history. This time period highlights the reuse and curation of the images rather than creating new images. Muddy Dance is an artistic book with a sense of humour and absurdism. Though it can seem documentary styled, it isn't a traditional type of documentary photography as there isn't a political look on it as the main focus is the humour, awkwardness and unpredictability the book brings. The images are sequenced together to emphasise on movement, action and physical chaos. It goes in a loose and free order instead of a strategic chronological order. Kessel's places the images in a clean layout, centred on the page with plenty of white space to highlight the dance gestures. The book also has a combination of repetition and variation throughout. Keeping it clean, the design is minimal like most of Kessel's books usually with softcover and approachable formats that don't strongly finesse the rawness of the images. The flash lit and sometimes blurriness makes the images feel a little clumsy but yet helps to make it feel relatable

and authentic. Kessel's orders the images quite similar to the rest, with the same body positions, falls, jumps which create that humorous rhythm through the book. In addition to these elements Kessel brings, he uses no captions allowing viewers to create their own narratives.





Sally Mann's Immediate Family and Erik Kessel's Muddy Dance show the changing role of the photobook in contemporary art. Whilst Mann uses her carefully composed images to explore the themes of family, memory and vulnerability, Kessel's reinterprets found photographs to create humour and imperfection. Both of these books show how the photobook has evolved into a dynamic platform for personal, conceptual and artistic communication, moving away from traditional documentary photography to create a diverse range of strategies.

Cognitive and Intellectual Skills: 30%

Guidance specific to task (from the brief):

Your research report should critically analyse the theories and concepts explored in your photobook, as well as the techniques it employs. Focus on developing a reasoned and informed debate rather than simply describing the work. Your analysis should lead to clear, valid conclusions, considering the form of the book, the reading experience it creates.

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)

Through the use of manipulated childhood images, removing everyone within the image except young me, Linger is a book to which reflects on the nature of memory and the shifting of time. Linger is not placed into any specific order an instead focusing on the disruption of traditional family archive, raising the question of presence, absence and cherished connections.

The act of the erasure of figures, is done to reveal how photographs are open to personal and cultural reinterpretation. In this context, the traditional purpose of the family photo album is overthrown. Instead, it creates a fragility of remembered relationships. In result, remains a portrait of the self-detached from social ties from a presence we can assume was there but is perhaps forgotten. The book, therefore, explores not only is what remembered but how memory is encountered through change and erasure.

Linger comes from the research undertaken of the Erik Kessel's, Muddy Dance. As Kessel's take an ordinary archival series of images of a football match and transforms them with an act of manipulation, he creates a performative dance series with a rhythm about it changing the whole narrative. This links in with the idea of Linger.

By asking "If a photo is changed, does the memory change with it?" and "If the memory remains, does the photo even matter?", Linger challenges the assumed role of photographs. The use of AI is not just simply a tool but is also a symbol of the contemporary anxiety around the authenticity of images. By erasing people from the photographs, the technology performs a memory editing that is disorienting. From the tripping of content within the images, they start to feel more emotionally charged. Linger explores the passage of time through the emotional fade visible in each manipulated image. The self becomes a kind of loss, witnessing the vanishing of others through time.

The form of the photobook itself, a medium sized personal narrative, deepens the conceptual concerns. As opposed to a self-isolated gallery image, the photo book brings the personal encounter with the work. Each page makes you question what should be there and also mimics a forgotten presence. The emptiness of the images, alongside the questions at the start of the book, asks the viewers to engage with the book imaginatively and to fill in what has been lost. The sequencing of the rhythm of repetition and absence, mirrors the reoccurring nature of memory.

Importantly, the project doesn't aim to give clear ending or provide answer. The images stay open to interpretation and feel uncertain. The lack of resolution reflects on the idea that memory is always changing, and personal history can't be perfectly recovered. In this book, Linger, questions photography itself, challenging the idea that photos can reliably maintain the past. It shows that photos can never fully capture how complex memory really is.

By showing myself as a child alone in each image, the work encourages the viewers to think about how identity is formed. Childhood is typically seen as a time formed by relationships with family and surroundings. But with the lonely child, it becomes a combination of one being looked at and one doing the looking, reminding viewers that identity is something built through memory and images. This connects to the idea that the self is made up of many parts and always changing, shaped by stories, pictures and language. The use of AI to erase others becomes a symbol for how we don't just remember who we are but also reshape and sometimes distort that identity.

Overall, Linger is more than just a collection of personal photos. It is a thoughtful look at how fragile memory is, how unclear photos are and importantly how absence can shape what we feel is present. By combining the emotional power of family photos, with the effects of AI edits, the work questions how much images can be trusted and sets a reminder of the human urge we have to hold on to what is slipping away. The book becomes a place where memory and time blend together and what stays with us is not what we see but what is missing.

Practical Skills: 40%

Guidance specific to task (from the brief):

Present your book professionally, carefully considering how you deploy methods, technical processes. Your methods should synthesize the form of your book and the context/meaning of your subject. Your book should demonstrate proficiency, selection in editing and flair. The decisions you make should be as product of significant research into book production and design. Within your evaluation, ensure to provide examples of book dummies to show the developments in your practical

processes. These decisions should be as product of significant book design planning including alternative idea generation.

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)

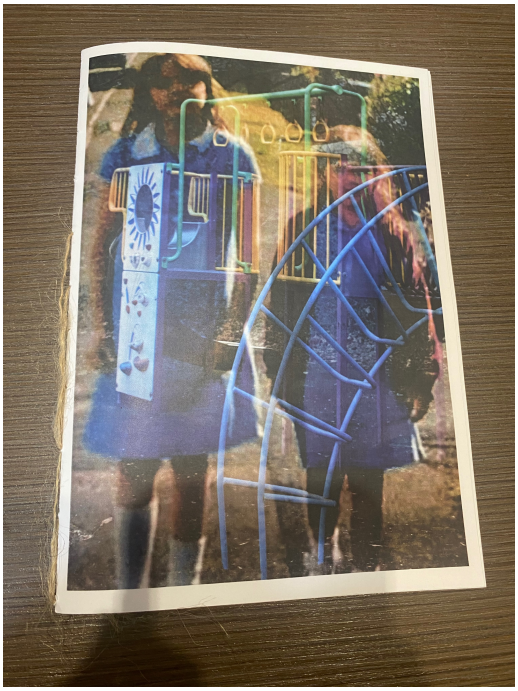
Within this body of work, I explore the themes of childhood, memory and passage of time. Over the past semester, I have developed a photobook that aims to remind viewers of shifts of time through edited childhood using AI. This evaluation reflects on the methods and technical processes used to produce the work. This includes, image making, editing, designing, formatting and layering. In addition, it also looks into how these decisions support the communication of the subject and show the progression of the book through mock ups made through the term.

Through the editing process, from a selection of digitally printed images from my childhood, or pictures saved on computers, I shortened down all the images from my collection to 21. My selections were based on the idea of having family members within the image, so I could purposely remove them, having the viewer recognise something isn't quite right.
I wanted the sequencing of this book to be in specific order, as they all provide the same purpose and have no clear start or ending. The only positioning of a photo I purposely intended to have been the centre image. This goes down to the unintentional composition of myself as a child. As I am facing into the direction of the balloon, it shows I am looking out to nothing. In comparison to the original image, where there are other family members and I am joining in, it now reflects on the reality on getting older and becoming independent. Therefore, I found this image works well as an impactful centre image on a double page spread.
From this I found that the process of removing other subjects in the image helped the work to feel more open ended which supports the idea of passage of time and memories.

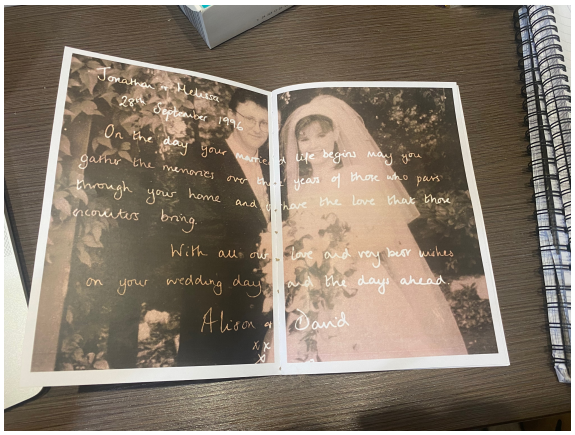
The final photobook is roughly a 20cm x 20cm, Japanese bind and tape bind book with 24 pages printed onto 160gsm cream – beige coloured paper. This scale creates an intimate viewing experience, encouraging close engagement and the colour of the paper helps to give it an archival look which helps with the use of childhood imagery.
The typography was kept minimal using Laro Soft. By keeping the text minimal, it focuses the viewers' attention more on the imagery content within the book but using the text to reflect on throughout.
In similar reasoning to the typography, I kept all images on the right side of the book in full bleed, keeping the left side blank to keep the viewers interaction directly with the

images alone. The consistency of this created a strong balance, while breaking it in the centre for tension.
I decided to go with a Japanese style binding method to hold the book together, as I found it was a strong way to keep the book looking neat and tightly compact. Finishing the overall look with a black binding tape to wrap over the thread, giving a clean and tidy look.
These elements of the design are intended to create a book that encourages viewers to reflect, question their own memories, and come to term with the realisation of times passage.

Over the semester, I created a total of 8 versions of the photobook including the final result. The first one was digital imagery onto plain paper and bound with a stapler, which purpose was to test overlays with the combination of old imagery and new. However, I knew this was not the direction I was ideally going in, which I later went onto to experiment with AI.





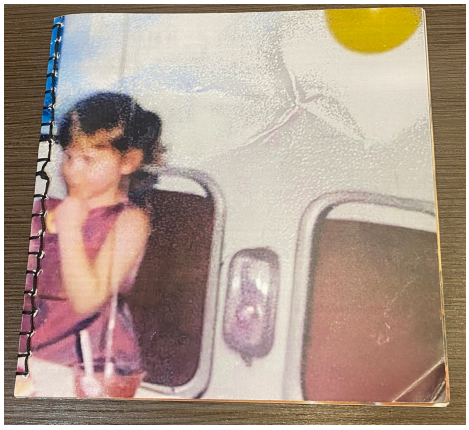


The next 6 book dummies were specially to test different binding options and sizes. These consisted of printing on A3, A4 paper and experimented binding with Japanese binding, back stitch, a square type binding, a continuous loop and binding tape. Within these set of books if also a slight shift in choices of imagery, as I started put by using the original childhood image, followed by the AI version, to which resulted in only using the AI images, as it leaves the viewers open to their own interpretation. In addition to this choice, I found that printing as a booklet on A3 paper at a 20x20cm size using Japanese stich binding, worked the best. I also determined the name of the book, being

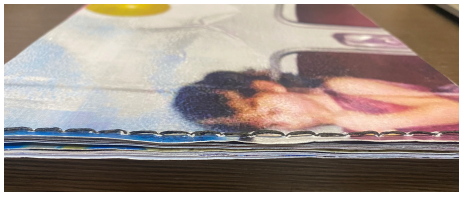
Linger. Linger, being due to the idea of the young self, left “lingered” and is all alone, hoping to already give the viewers an idea of what the book might entail.

Japanese style binding





Back stitch

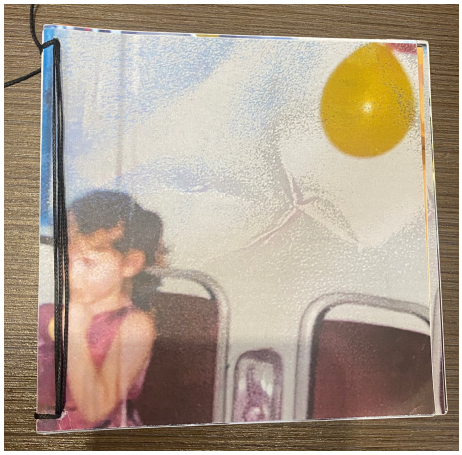




Binding tape

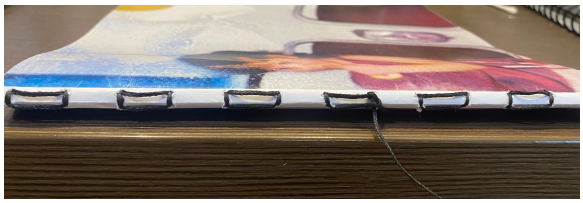


Loop thread



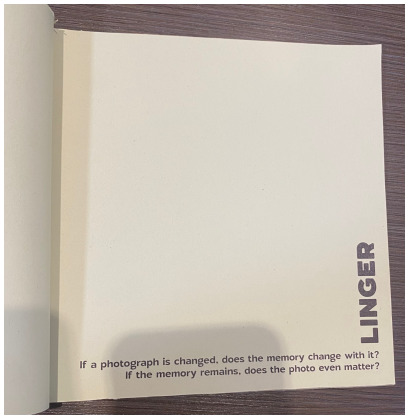
Square styled binding





The final result incorporated all of the elements of typography, print quality, binding and imagery choice. These were all essential in developing both the conceptual and tactile experience of the final book.







Overall, the process of making this photobook was a way in which I was able to help refine how I was going to communicate the themes of memory and passage of time. Through the decision-making including editing, sequencing, materials and typography, I created something that enlarges the emotions and conceptuality of the work.

Transferable Skills for Life and Professional Practice 10%

Guidance specific to task (from the brief):

Your photobook should meet industry standards in design, development, and production. Plan your workflow according to your chosen publication method to ensure timely completion. Active participation in sessions is essential for sharing your work, engaging in discussions, and demonstrating both employability skills and a strong grasp of the module content. Your evaluation should reflect on your learning throughout the process and highlight the transferable skills you have developed.

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

Over the time of developing my photobook, I have engaged with a range of creative, conceptual and technical challenges. This has led me to grow within my photographic practice and widen skills that can be used across the creative and professional areas.

This evaluation reflects on what I learned throughout the book. This includes, research, image-making, editing and book production. It also highlights the skills that I have developed, including critical thinking, design thinking and project management. These are areas that can help support future career pathways, regardless of whether that is within the creative industry.

One of the areas of growth was developing the conceptual framework for my work. Initially, with working with the themes of childhood memories I found I was forcing myself to use the archival images without altering them. However once exploring the use of AI and the inspiration from artists like Erik Kessel's, I began to refine my ideas. This process has taught me to evaluate whether an image or design choice actually supports the concept, or if it is just aesthetically pleasing. Due to this, I became more intentional in my decisions, learning to prioritize the meaning over visuals. In addition, this has improved my ability to read and construct visual narratives, which is useful in any creative communication, not just photography.

From a technical perspective, I progressed into comfortably using InDesign and bookbinding equipment, which were essential in creating the final work.
In addition, creating multiple book dummies helped me to understand how material choices can affect viewers engagement with the book. These types of decision making are relevant in many professional areas.

Making the photobook required organisation and time management. This involved planning photo shoots, editing images, building book layouts and managing deadlines for critiques, one to ones and printing. This helped me to develop key project management skills. It also gave me the pressure of decision making,

especially with any print issues, or last-minute idea changes that came about late in the process. This helped with the ability of prioritising and solving problems, skills that are useful in a workplace setting.

Throughout the semester, I participated in group critiques and one to one tutorial, helping with constructive feedback and how to explain my ideas visually and verbally. In addition, the group critiques were a place I was able to understand different perspectives, something which is useful in any role that involves teamwork and interaction.

Looking back on this process, I feel more confident in not only making photobooks, but also approaching future creative projects. The transferable skills that I have developed, from critical thinking to the design execution and time management, are skills that I can use in not only the creative industry but into any type of job the future holds.

Going forward, I aim to continue working roughly within the same field of themes, creating work that is personal to myself and others. In addition, with the knowledge I have gained from the process, it can allow me to continue working and experimenting with different materials and expand my photographic practice.

