

PDF Reflective Journal Overview

Unit Title: Explore and Experiment – part 1

Complete the form and submit in addition/within your PDF REFLECTIVE JOURNAL. As a guide, to complete this document sufficiently you should be writing 1000 words across each of the sections below (approx.100-200 words for each question)

Summary of Requirements

The Reflective Overview is a summary of your thoughts and reflections on your studies. This should identify and focus on your developing analytical skills and your developing critical understanding of contemporary and historical photographic practices. These are aspects of what we might consider as research and are applicable for both of your response projects.

This summary should be an analysis and reflection on the material gathered during Block 1 activities.

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(This should be your up-to-date Professional website that you started over the summer break. This will likely consist of past work with some new work. However, it is not essential to present work from Explore and Experiment part 1).

1. What new things did you learn during this unit? How would you like to build on this as you progress on this course?

New things I learned during this unit are (on a technical side): how to make cyanotypes and salt prints, got more accustomed with printers on the Village Green, learned how to use phase on tethered shooting, digital medium format camera Fuji GFX. I learned what photogrammetry is and the basics of using it, how to use scanning bays and a Hasselblad scanner, I learned about studio portrait photography (different light and effects), flashguns, and general studio usage. Large-format camera 5x4 and most of all - film processing, which I have been doing frequently since the induction. I also learned how to colour print and use the pitch-black bays and the colour printing area.

On a non-technical side, I learned how to think outside the box, how challenge and confusion are good things that I welcome with open arms. I discovered how to collaborate with chance and listen to the inner voice which is full of unexpected ideas and follow through with them. I learned to push on, even when things are not going exactly according to the plan, and not get demotivated by mistakes, which are just a natural part of the learning process.

Building on gained experience and knowledge on this course, I see myself experimenting further and developing new and old skills. I intend to progress my darkroom skills, and after this unit, not just print photographs but explore the possibilities of that space and photographic paper through camera-less photography and alternative processes. I also plan to familiarise myself as much as possible with a 5x4 camera as it's crucial to my progress.

2. Which Photographers and artists you have used to support the development of your work and ideas? List and give a brief summary of their relevance and influence on your practice and thinking about photography.

The essential artists that influenced me over this unit are Anton Bragaglia - massive respect for pushing photography as an art form when it was not considered one, moreover, for visionary work in abstract photography. Erwin Blumenfeld - I adore his use of objects to modify the photographs, creating simultaneously elegant, bizarre and classy images, something I aim for in my work and find relevant. A multidisciplinary genius László Moholy-Nagy inspires me in every way possible, I treasure everything he produced and aspire for an artistic drive of his sort. From contemporary artists, I noted Hiroshi Sugimoto, especially his series 'In Praise of Shadows' and 'Joe', and Chiharu Shiota - I connect with her artistic outlook, and her installations are out of this world, the kind of mystical emotion I would love to evoke in a viewer.

But if I had to choose one artist, not just of this unit, but probably of this year, it would be a Czech avant-garde photographer Jaroslav Rössler. From the moment I found his work, I was amazed, mesmerised, and found myself thinking about his photographs a lot. I even bought two books on him, one coming from America. Rössler's abstract, geometrical creations with light and shadow are timeless, and to me, they are a phenomenal source of inspiration. His work motivates me to experiment more and push beyond my boundaries.

3. What are the main written resources (writers you have used to help you develop your work and ideas? List and give a brief summary of their relevance (essays/writers/articles/theories you have been useful during this unit) .

My primary written resources were:

Futurism & Photography: Giovanni Lista

Dada and Surrealism: Robert Short

Experimental Photography a Handbook of Techniques: Marco Antonini, Sergio Minniti, Francisco Gomez, Gabriele Lungarella, Luca Bendandi

John Blakemore: British Image nr 3 John Blakemore

Czechoslovakian photography: Jaromir Funke, Jaroslav Rössler

Articles from: Artnet, MoMA, Tate, The Guardian

Theories: Sigmund Freud theory of the unconscious

All the books, articles and theories relate directly to my field of interest - abstract and experimental photography, surrealism and Dada. They influenced me tremendously and are a constant source of inspiration.

4. What are the most important 'other' sources you have used for your research for this unit? List key /websites/blogs/on-line magazines/online exhibitions/YouTube clips.

My other most important resources are articles on Artnet, Artsy, The Guardian, Moma, Tate, Vimeo and Youtube channels that I use for technical knowledge and inspiration/getting to know artists, movements and anything else that stimulates me. I created two extensive playlists, 'Photography' and 'Photography related art stuff', where I save all my findings for future reference. I have also signed up for a free year subscription to 'Source' magazine offered by the University. I follow 'Nowahala' magazine and several collectives on Instagram, where I search for opportunities and seek engagement as well as use them for research (Museum of Half-Truths, Easy Peel Studio, Red Eye, The Dazzle Club, Barbican Centre). One of my most important sources is the Experimental Photo Festival website and Instagram. I have also been engaging with Islington Mill and Salford Makers, where I meet artists of all spectrum of practice. I consider it a great resource as when I am there engaging with people, I always find out about something I didn't know before, broadening my horizons.

5. Please identify specific areas of your practice that you would like to develop as you progress in your studies.

I plan to focus on analogue shooting and printing, especially the 5x4 camera and medium format. I want to explore the full potential of these cameras for experimentation processes, double and multi exposures, intentional camera movement and others. In the darkroom, I intend to refine my film processing and printing skills, also study and utilise alternative processes (especially solarisation). Furthermore, I want to experiment with overlaying negatives and continue improving my photograms. I aspire to get a studio to explore abstract photography in a setting when I am not dependent on sunlight, as, in the past, it has set my work back heavily. Additionally, I reckon that a place to focus my ideas could be highly beneficial for my practice.

6. Please identify specific areas of your research that you would like to develop as you progress in your studies.

I will continue my research on Dada and abstract photography. I will read 'On Photography' by Susan Sontag (and her other books), Camera Lucida by Roland Barthes, John Berger 'About Looking' and Magdalena Droste 'Bauhaus'. I want to investigate the subject of geometry (in general and in arts) and expand my analysis of Sigmund Freud theory of the unconscious (read books by him on this subject). I believe that a proper investigation of my field of interest will deepen my perception and artistic awareness. Consequently, it will have a positive influence on my practice and support the evolution of original ideas. Additionally, I aim to do more

hands-on research and attend shows and exhibitions where I aspire to meet and get involved with like-minded people.

7. State which CP2 Option you have enrolled on. How do you see this informing your research/practice in Block 3?

My CP2 chosen option is The City: Architecture, Art & Society. I want to explore the notion of architecture being the ultimate artwork accessible for everyone. While sculpture, photographs and paintings are often locked away in the museums and galleries for only some to see, the architecture reaches everyone. I find that concept very appealing. I first heard about it when researching Bauhaus - that had a significant influence on me, and I think investigating it will benefit my worldview and approach towards my future work. I believe that exploring design, geometry, and symmetry would be highly advantageous for developing my practice of abstract photography. Also, I am excited to research how architecture is a reflection of society which will broaden my horizons and, hopefully, help me to understand humans as a collective.

8. Any other points you would like to discuss?

Over one year of studying, I feel like I've grown as an artist. I really appreciate the stress this year on our own engagement. I believe it's very beneficial and allows me to explore the themes I am interested in while following the program. I think I could advance considerably with mentorship and intend to explore my options in this area in the future.