

Project 10: Completing and Concluding

Exercise 5

Use the [Assessment Guidance](#), and the feedback you have received from your tutor to **select work** that meets this course's Learning Outcomes.

A Selection of My Work to Evidence the Learning Outcomes for Photography 3.3: Major Project, PH6MPT

I show a series of posts to illustrate the progress I have made through this final unit in my undergraduate study. As is normal when showing a series of blog posts, these are arranged with the most recent post first and the oldest post at the bottom.

Part i

The items in this part of my Learning Outcomes examples refer to posts made for Project 4: First Edit in May 2024. <https://richarddagleish.net/category/oca-photo-blog/photography-3-3-major-project/project-4-first-edit/>

Where I feel the need for additional posts, I will list this under the specific learning outcome.

LO1 Design a distinct practice-based project or projects.

In the posts for Project 4, I show an early edit of my work. This selection is based on a refinement of test pieces I created over the months leading up to this point in my study. This early edit raised many questions for me in how I resolve my creative ideas to create a body of work which makes sense to an audience, how I translate my ideas and emotions into a cohesive whole and identify how I use visual art to express and restate the content of last year's dissertation which I titled, "*How Our Dead Are Remembered Through Photography*". I should also add that my project was based on planning for step-by-step progress through this unit and also where I identified a roadmap for the skills I thought I would require to

complete this final major project. A post showing an early iteration of these plans at Project 4 is shown below:

<https://richarddalglish.net/planning/>

LO2 Produce a meaningful and individual body of work that draws on your strongest ideas.

My concept for my project was initially broad, I wanted to explore and visually express the liminal spaces between life and death using my own experiences with the illness and death of my daughter as a lens through which to focus on my task. I didn't know, at this stage, how much, if any, of my daughter, Rebecca, should feature in my work or whether my body of work should aim at the general concept of the universality of death, which impacts everyone. My tutor said of my dissertation that it is a Memento Mori, albeit one which took a long time to conceive and produce. Should my major project also explore my sense of Memento Mori? If so, should I use straightforward physical works with a direct and obvious connection to death or more contemplative and conceptual works which ask more of the audience? I use very personal experiences, turning them into visual artworks which, at their best, might trigger responses from my audience and make them stop and think. At their worst, my work might make people turn away. My initial edits show my doubts about how to merge these to form a cohesive body of work, along with my first conception of how to display

LO3 Critique contextual and practical knowledge to inform creative practice.

Using my research and expanding contextual knowledge as a foundation, I want to use my creative works to ask questions of my audience about their own mortality using my expression of the liminal space as a literal gateway into this subject. Is part of this about educating my audience about loss viewed from historical, socio-political and cultural standpoints or am I overthinking what my audience will take from my work? An example of my research into how death practices and funerary rites are influenced by culture, history and tradition is shown in my research into death and memorial in Scotland.

<https://richarddagleish.net/death-and-memorial-in-scotland/>

My research does not sit apart from my creative works, and these are bonded together. When I present creative works to an audience, these works have their roots in my research. I aim to ask my audience to consider what death means, not only for those we are about to or have already lost, or for our own deaths, but for those who will live on and carry memories of their dead with them.

LO4 Evaluate your practice critically presenting the results via applicable mechanisms.

In March, I asked for some critique of the works I had created so far. These works and the feedback I received were a starting place when I was building the first edit shown for Project 4. The works I showed made use of physical objects, as well as a series of found album photographs which I had worked on. These objects and photographs spoke to me of loss yet didn't feature Rebecca. I spent time describing my project to my peer group which prompted them beyond the level I would expect of a normal audience. I asked questions about whether my work communicated death or if it was too challenging. This critique session was a valuable opportunity to test audience reaction to my work to date, noting that my work is still very fluid. It was interesting to see how well some work was received but, at the same time, to recognise that the important metric is not whether a work is 'good' or is appreciated but that it fits into my body of work.

The post for the feedback session is shown below:

<https://richarddagleish.net/critique-of-creative-works-march-2024/>

Part ii

In part ii, the examples I give refer to posts made for Project 6: Momentum and Engagement in July and August 2024. <https://richarddagleish.net/category/oca-photo-blog/photography-3-3-major-project/project-6-next-steps/>

Where I feel the need for additional posts, I will list this under the specific learning outcome.

LO1 Design a distinct practice-based project or projects.

The ongoing design of my project shapes questions for me, such as how my final work should be presented, whether as a book or a physical exhibition, or as an online digital exhibition, and the reasons for my choice. The exhibition could be thought of as a brief glimpse into my work, which mirrors a life lived and then lost suddenly. A book or even a digital exhibition has a different feel in terms of time. This month, I made my first contact with a potential gallery for displaying my work. I have also been thinking of using a non-traditional space, such as an abandoned building, for my exhibition. Having a real gallery in the frame provides a sense of focus, and the differences between different choices and how this choice might impact my narrative tend to steer me away from a book and focus my energies on finalising my body of work for an exhibition.

LO2 Produce a meaningful and individual body of work that draws on your strongest ideas

One of the key points I considered this month was the order in which I presented my work. The order fits with the narrative and flow and helps to identify duplications and gaps in my sequence. The order of my work and how this communicates my story is such a vital component that I wonder why I didn't consider this before. The focus on narrative started when I received feedback on my work during the artist's residency (see LO4 in this section). At first, this shocked me as I hadn't considered that my work lacked a structure and sequence which told the story of the experiences and emotions at the heart of my story. When I reflected on this after a few days, it made lots of sense. I went on to test this view on

narrative with my tutor and peers. Was my narrative mostly an idea in my head and was not expressed in enough detail when it should have been at the front of my body of work?

LO3 Critique contextual and practical knowledge to inform creative practice.

My practical knowledge of my area of specialisation that forms the basis for my body of work is my personal experience with illness, death and the feelings which surround loss, such as grief and the physical impacts on health caused by the stresses during such moments. The conceptual knowledge that comes from my research expands, and I try to fix my view of the personal realities of loss within this learning. As the liminal is key to my work, I conducted some research into this concept to help me make sense of what I was trying to create with my major project.

<https://richarddagleish.net/liminality/>

LO4 Evaluate your practice critically presenting the results via applicable mechanisms.

In this period of study, I applied and was accepted for an artist's residency in Italy. Although this didn't fit with the schedule of my OCA work and meant I had to reshape my planning around this activity, this was a valuable period for me which allowed me to think about my art away from the distractions of home life and to consider valuable opportunities to learn away from the OCA. I used this time to experience life away from home, to look at how death is treated in a different culture to what I am used to at home, create work, join in collaborative projects and build my circle of contacts. One area of particular value to me was when I asked for feedback on my work from other people at the residence, far outside my normal circle of people I would ask for opinions from. This produced an outcome which was unexpected in that I needed to think about what I imagined my narrative to be and how I was communicating this. In thinking about the narrative or flow of my major project, I found that this was a key to unlocking how to think about my work and how to present it in a coherent manner. A post related to my time in Italy is shown below:

<https://richarddagleish.net/review-of-my-artists-residency/>

Part iii

In part iii, the examples I give mostly refer to posts made for Project 8: Mock-up I worked on in September 2024. <https://richarddagleish.net/category/oca-photo-blog/photography-3-3-major-project/project-8-mock-up/>

Where I feel the need for additional posts, I will list this under the specific learning outcome.

LO1 Design a distinct practice-based project or projects.

The development of my work continues. I feel that this development is not always about bringing new works into focus but is also about a strict editing process where works which do not fit with my chosen narrative can be removed from my sequence. The best advice I received was to think of the narrative as a way to identify repetition as well as gaps. Another way of expressing a similar idea is to say little but to say it well. My developing image sequence is well shown by the progress I made between August and September when I moved from Project 7 to 8. I show my post for Project 7 below:

<https://richarddagleish.net/2024/08/22/exercise-3-image-sequence/>

I considered many pieces which might feature in my project but which I wasn't sure about. A key consideration was to ask myself whether works were general and which didn't speak of my story with Rebecca or if they were central to my narrative.

LO2 Produce a meaningful and individual body of work that draws on your strongest ideas.

For a long time in my process, I was worried about my audience. One example of this is in this month's submission, where I gave my peers a series of notes in addition to the introductory text and my titles. Unconsciously, I was trying to make my work easier both in terms of emotional impact and understanding. How might they respond to my emotive and personal work? Was it too much to ask of strangers? In thinking of the impact of my work, I

rejected exhibition spaces such as hospital corridors or church halls where people might stumble across my work while in the wrong state of mind. I wanted my audience to make a choice of whether to view my work, having read what the exhibition was about. The process of showing my work, the feedback and my retrospective review of the experience allowed me to start to change my mindset and stop worrying about my audience's reaction. A firmer attitude similar to that used during editing was to consider that if people don't like my work then not to worry.

LO3 Critique contextual and practical knowledge to inform creative practice.

When I was considering my approach to narrative, I did some research into semiotics and the visual image. I was interested in how text works with images and how text can influence how we respond to what we see. This was a useful exercise to allow me to consider whether the text or the images in my work are the most influential components. My post is shown at the following link:

<https://richarddalglish.net/semiotics-and-the-visual-image/>

LO4 Evaluate your practice critically presenting the results via applicable mechanisms.

I wonder how much of this project is about me as the artist/creator and how much is about my daughter as the subject. Maybe, from my perspective, both. Might my audience see themselves in my work? This sense of perspective shifts depending on our experiences. This shifting perspective is something which was ever-present when I was researching and constructing my major project. I also wonder whether my major project represents an end to my grief or whether it is another staging post on my journey.

Part iv

In part iv, the examples I give in the main refer to posts made for Project 9: Final Draft, which I completed in October 2024. <https://richarddagleish.net/category/oca-photo-blog/photography-3-3-major-project/project-9-major-project-final-draft/>

Where I feel the need for additional posts, I will list this under the specific learning outcome.

LO1 Design a distinct practice-based project or projects.

I have spent a long time thinking about my project, considering what it was about and even at this late stage, asking myself whether Rebecca should feature in this work. I came to the conclusion that using Rebecca's image would immediately make this a much more emotional project, using and linking her so obviously with loss and grief. I worried about the impact on me. How my project would be seen, and if I could communicate the idea of death awareness to others using Rebecca's image. Might I have lessened the impact of this work, making it about her and asking for feelings of pity, which is not what I wanted?

LO2 Produce a meaningful and individual body of work that draws on your strongest ideas.

I have added a further post to this selection where I show my late design choices for my see-saw, which is at the blacksmith's and which has eaten up a lot of my time. I also look at choices for printing and which materials to use for my mounts, which I want to be plain yet modern, without an obvious border or traditional frame.

<https://richarddagleish.net/late-work-and-choices-for-exhibition/>

LO3 Critique contextual and practical knowledge to inform creative practice.

My concept in this major project is to present my view as Rebecca's father of what her death meant and of how I continued to live. I have said in my introduction that Rebecca's essence runs like a thread through my work, even if I choose not to show her face directly. It took me a long time to fix in my mind what my project was about and what story I was trying to tell. This deeply personal view is tied closely to how my emotions run when coping with her loss. My concept is a project of opposites. The living and the dead. Art and Life. The introspection of dealing with loss and the extrovert side of creating work to be seen and experienced and maybe enjoyed.

LO4 Evaluate your practice critically presenting the results via applicable mechanisms.

I was surprised that even after Project 9, Final Draft, my choices for my final project were not set in stone, and I was still creating, reflecting on my work and listening to feedback. My image selection, recreating my video piece, reshooting my image of a cliff, and my promotional newspaper/zine all were to be finalised. Crucially, even my project title was not set. It is interesting to consider how much happens late in the process and to bank the experiences gained in making this major project and putting together an exhibition for future exhibitions.

Part v

My final set of examples for posts to illustrate specific learning outcomes comes from posts made during Project 10: Completing and Concluding, which brings this document up to date as this work was done this month in November 2024. This brings closure to my Major Project for the 3.3 unit, although my exhibition will take place after the end of my studies.

<https://richarddagleish.net/category/oca-photo-blog/photography-3-3-major-project/project-10-completing-and-concluding/>

Where I feel the need for additional posts I will list this under the specific learning outcome.

LO1 Design a distinct practice-based project or projects.

My final choice for my major project is now eight photographs, one video piece and one installation of the see-saw. This feels very pared down and concise from where I started my editing process. This editing seemed to go against my natural inclination to include more pieces and to over-explain. My working title for a long time was "*Epitaph*"; then, late in the process, I changed it to "*Art From the Edge of Death*", which, while it explained the project, in discussion at my project 9 feedback session, was thought too literal. Instead, I chose a title from one of my works, "*Scatter*" which refers to the scatter of ash but also speaks to the emotional process of living through loss.

LO2 Produce a meaningful and individual body of work that draws on your strongest ideas.

Although I said that I feel that my selection is minimal, I think that this final edit presents a very strong project for public consumption. I mentioned that I wanted to feel proud of my efforts, not just in terms of educational achievement, although that is important, but also a work which is a suitable memorial to Rebecca. I think that my creative work and selection process has been justified, although I recognise that for a true sense of how well this has worked, it isn't enough for tutor and peer feedback; I will also review the comments made in my visitor's book at the end of my exhibition.

LO3 Critique contextual and practical knowledge to inform creative practice.

My project is about the loss of my daughter. Could I have created this body of work without the knowledge gained from my research, my reflection and testing my ideas through a series of creative processes? My project came into being through my experiences of loss and because of how I tried to unpack the feelings using education and art and, of course, through the passage of time. Even now, I am amazed at what I have achieved. This learning outcome maps to an aim which says, "*initiate and manage outward-facing aspects of your project*" I find that this idea of facing outwards always comes with a sense of looking inwards. I cannot create my art nor place it in the public domain without the inward struggle that has gone before. These two faces represent a key part of how I have understood my sense of loss and how I have moved onwards to create a sense of my Memento Mori.

LO4 Evaluate your practice critically presenting the results via applicable mechanisms.

I wonder if a project ever feels 'ready' or if the artist/creator can always do another edit, create another word, adjust words and change a target audience. I felt this same way when doing final edits for my dissertation. I could always change a word here or recraft this paragraph. I have come to a point where it is necessary to step back. In stepping back from my work this has another sense where I step back from grief. It is time to reflect on all I have done, good or bad, and to look at how far I have come. Stepping back does not mean I abandon my memories nor leave my major product to grow mouldy. These can be revisited at any time, rethought and recrafted to be used for a future project.