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AGM62 Photography Research Project Stage 1

Research Dossier Task 2 Submission

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'The Hawthorn, like a grumpy old teacher, reminds us that a prickly personality may hide unexpected virtues.'

(Adams, M. 2018 pp. 178)

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Photography Research Project Stage 1 Overview

Photography Research Project Stage 1 Overview

The foundation of this project was a continuation of my studies and practice carried out for the AGM60 Research & Experimentation module. This module resulted in a Body of Work called *Moments of Eternity*. My intention was to take the photographic knowledge and skills I had gained from my research and experimentation during this module with a view to developing them further. I also intended to understand the subject matter (trees) and their environment at a deeper level.

To focus my efforts, I took into consideration the feedback from AGM60 to prepare for and complete AGM62 Photography Research Project Stage 1. This involved aspects of creative experimentation, technical realisation, contextual understanding, and critical awareness.

These efforts resulted in a Body of Work called *Invisible Trees: Hidden Hawthorns of Bushy Park*, consisting of six final images. The following is an overview of the varying aspects of the concepts behind and processes involved in the making of these images.

Project Concept

Trees have been a subject of photography since the beginning of the medium. In doing so, the original analogue methods have dictated the depiction of trees in specific ways. Digital photographic technology has redefined and widened the scope in how trees can be portrayed.

The key concept at the start of this project was to create an artistic body of work featuring trees. This would be through using my digital photographic technology and equipment. My intention was to use these resources to create and develop my own style of depicting trees and improve my use of this equipment. Underlying my choice of subject matter and methodology were the current and potential restrictions due to Covid-19.

This concept was sparked by my thoughts about the reciprocal relationship between photographer, equipment/technology, and subject. Coming from a purely digital background, I am well-versed in using this technology to produce images. I know how to take, process and print 'photographs', having learnt and used these procedures since 2014. With three out of the six in my class using analogue photography, I was beginning to see first-hand the major differences in how the technology affects all aspects of the taking and making process.

This inquiry was also influenced by looking at other photographer's work based on trees. For example, within the book *Into the Woods*, most of the work featured consists of monochrome images. These images had been produced using analogue photographic and printing methods. These works also have certain conventions in their portrayal of trees (usually either subjective or partial depictions). This contrasts with the work of James Balog, Noel Myles, Terry Evans, and Beth Moon, who all use digital technology to portray trees. By doing so, these photographic practitioners can break these conventions. This aspect is explored further within my Visual Resources portfolio.

Project Starting Point

At the start of the project, I wrote two lists outlining the areas that were important to me, both personally and as a photographer:

Project Passions

- Trees
- Being outside of four walls
- Walking and observing
- Immersion in and connecting with nature
- Impact on both my physical and mental health

Future Directions

- Observations as the seasons change (Autumn & Winter)
- How do these changes affect the montage effect?
- Pushing and refining the technique further
- Trees as a portrait subject, not just 'part of the landscape'
- Exploring 'montage of subject'
- Constructed environment – trees among urbanity

While making these lists, I reflected on the work produced for AGM60 Research & Experimentation. Although I was happy with the outcome, when revisiting my original images and reflecting on my technique, I realised that I was not taking photographs in a mindful way. I also realised that I didn't know the names of most of the trees that I had photographed and wanted to increase my knowledge of this and the trees' environment. In addition, I had to extend my research of tree photographers and images of trees.

Project Research

The research involved three main areas:

1. Trees and their environment
2. Relevant artists and photographers and their work in relation to trees
3. Photography tips and how to improve my image taking and making techniques

Project Parameters

To achieve my goal, I set myself the parameter of just focusing on one type of tree in one location. This gave a more manageable aspect to my choice of subject and its environment. In turn, this narrowed my options to which tree I would photograph.

Project Shoots & Post-Production Methodology

Shooting for Stage 1 involved several visits to Bushy Park, going to several locations at different times of the day. There were 27 visits in total, 19 of which focused specifically on hawthorns. Each shoot had a specific purpose and was planned beforehand so that the relevant equipment could be prepared and used. This planning also involved the time of day and location of each shoot. These purposes were based on the results of the previous shoot, progress made, and the research carried out between shoots.

Post-production involved transferring the resulting files from my shoots (mirrorless camera and/or smartphone) to an external hard drive. I then reviewed the images using Adobe Bridge and Adobe Camera Raw. My first action was to delete any unintentional/irrelevant shots. I then renamed the files according to location and date using Adobe Bridge.

I will continue with the above and develop this aspect of my practice further in Stage 2.

Why Bushy Park?

Part of my research for this project involved the history of Bushy Park. At the start of this project, I realised that I knew very little about the place and needed to know more to understand it better.

Bushy Park is one of London's eight Royal Parks covering an area of 1,099 acres and is a Site of Scientific Interest (SSSI). The park features many ancient trees (such as Oak and Hawthorns), bracken, rough grassland, water features and plantations.

Since 2007, this park has been a very strong influence in both my life and my photographic practice and is very close to my heart. The park has also been a safe sanctuary in which I have found solace. Every time I visit this place I realise and/or observe something new.



Figure 1: Map of Bushy Park

The park is unlike many other green spaces in London and it took me a few years to explore and understand its geography. The conclusion of my exploration and increased understanding is that the park is a contradictory mix of straight lines and chaos, formal and informal, cultivated, and wild.

Most importantly, during the pandemic with its varying restrictions, it is within walking distance from my home. Unless the permitted exercise is taken away, I can combine my walks with my photography while following the current guidelines.

Before I stated my research, I knew that the park was King Henry VIII's hunting ground. This was initiated by Cardinal Wolsey who enclosed farmland adjacent to Hampton Court when he took the up residence. The palace was acquired by Henry VIII in 1529 and constructed a high brick wall that replaced the old oak fences. I discovered two aspects that deepened my knowledge of Bushy Park.

Firstly, the park was originally three distinct areas known as Hare Warren, Middle Park and Bushy Park, until the present boundaries were completed in 1620. The park was further developed at the end of the 18th century by the Duke of Clarence, later to become William IV. The Duke, who was Park Ranger at the time, used Bushy Park to boost his income by enclosing half the park for farmland. This explained the park's irregular shape and distinctly different areas.

Secondly, the park is called "Bushy Park" as a reference to the many hawthorn trees and bushes within the environment. This aspect, along with the relationship of this tree and this environment, was relevant to this project's name and concept as explained further in this document.

Why Hawthorns?

The fact the Bushy Park was named after this tree initiated my focused research of Hawthorns. I initially discovered more about the species while reading *The Wisdom of Trees* by Max Adams. In this book, Adams writes a tale of the Hawthorn. Within this story were details of the tree, such as its mention in ancient charters and boundary surveys, and 'hawthorn' being a common element in place names. Adams also writes about the tree's general attributes plus its contribution to ecology and folklore.

Ancient Tree Inventory

While searching for further information about Hawthorns, I came across the Ancient Tree Registry. Set up by the Ancient Tree Forum, the Woodland Trust and the Tree Register, the Ancient Tree Inventory is a mapped record of more than 160,000 ancient or old trees within the UK. This website is a very useful guide to the characteristics of each main species of tree, including Hawthorns. What was interesting to note is that no Hawthorns had had been added to the inventory when I checked on 19 October 2020.

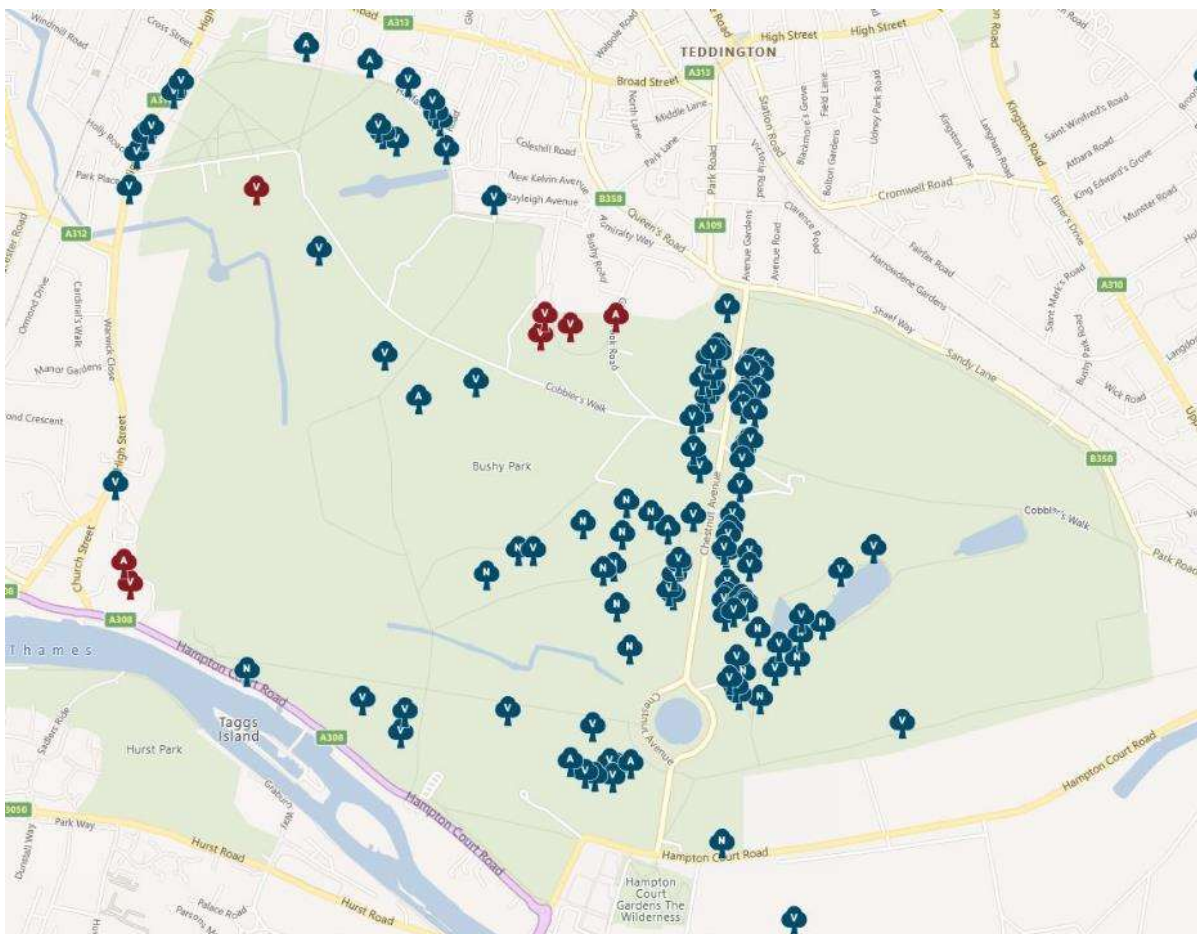


Figure 2: Ancient Tree Inventory Map - Bushy Park 19 October 2020

The Ancient Tree Forum actively encourages the photographing of ancient trees so they can be added to this map for reference.

Mapping the Park

In preparation in working out the different areas within Bushy Park and the Hawthorns in each part, I searched for a map online. In doing this, I came across the Historic England website and discovered I could download an Ordnance Survey map. This clarified the park further.

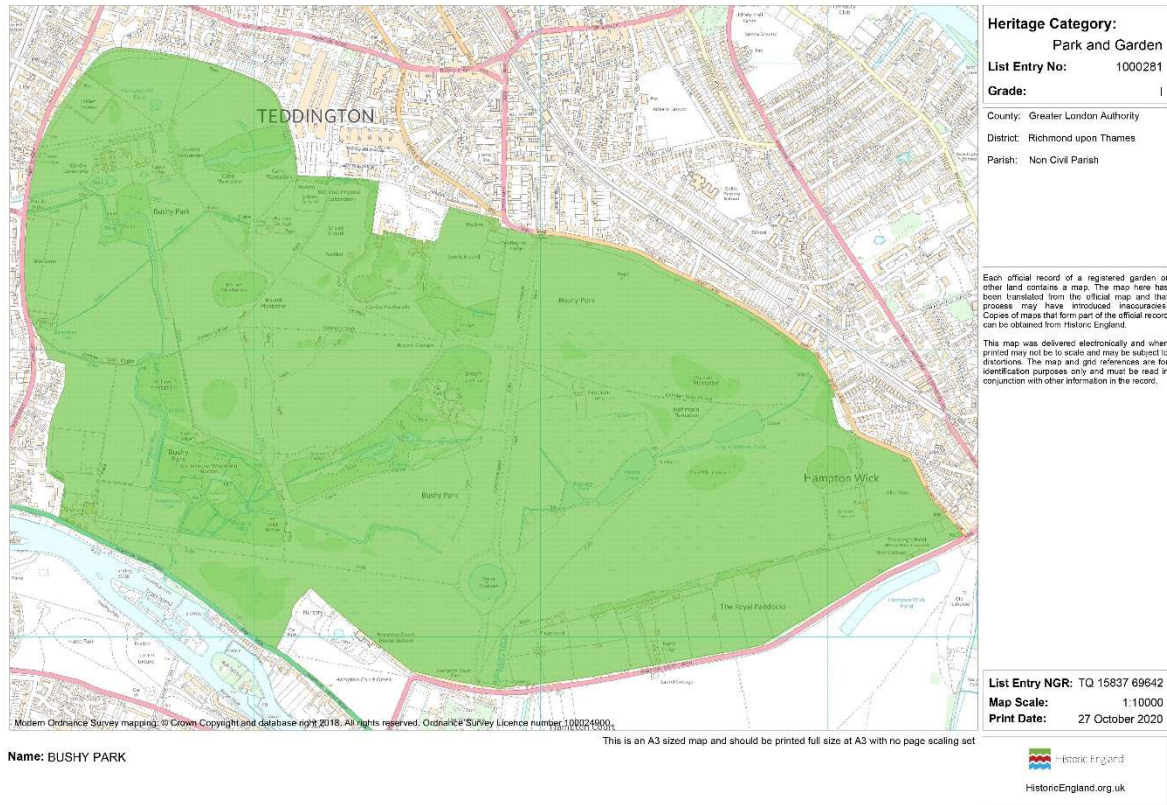


Figure 3: Ordnance Survey Map: Bushy Park, Richmond Upon Thames – 1000281, Historic England, 2020

Additional Research

As well as my specific research on Bushy Park and Hawthorns, I read a variety of sources in relation to trees (both non-fiction and fiction) plus ecology and photography. This included aspects of Critical Ecology, Ontology and Non-Human Photography. Although these were not studied in in depth during Stage 1, each area had a bearing on my work and likely for Stage 2.

Visual Resources Research

During the progress of the project, I researched a variety of photographers whose work involves trees. I also researched relevant artists' work that related to both the visual aesthetics and concepts of this project and those relevant for Stage 2.

This research has been documented within the *Visual Annotated Portfolio of Visual Resources/ Artworks, Etc.* plus the *Initial Bibliography and List of Research Resources.*

Appropriate Technical Skills Research

To enable me to develop appropriate technical skills during this project, I researched aspects of how to photograph trees digitally from planning through to post-processing. This included converting images from colour to Black & White. In addition, I researched tips on improving composition for landscape photography.

Further areas of research in relation to technical skills was how to optimise the use and settings of my mirrorless camera and physicalising images. The latter included the printing, mounting, framing and display of the final Body of Work. The results of my research were applied during this Stage 1 and will continue in Stage 2.



Annotated Portfolio of Visual Resources/Artworks, Etc.

Introduction

The purpose of this portfolio is to support my Stage 2 Photography Research Project Proposal, which demonstrates my understanding of the issues and principles of my photographic practice.

The focus of my visual resource research during Stage 1 was tree photography. This research was founded on the aim to deepen my knowledge of how trees are depicted within photography. A further aim was to improve my own photographic depiction of trees. In addition, during this module, I observed correlations behind my work and a selection of artworks. I also observed and read of similar and other correlations within the work of the photographers I researched.

The following annotated portfolio is a result of my findings.

Spaces in Between



After completing the AGM60 Research & Experimentation module, I realised during the summer of 2020 I knew my fascination with both trees and Bushy Park had not waned. When preparing for the Stage 1 module, one key visual aspect to which I kept returning was the gap between trees and branches.

This reminded of me when I took drawing classes in which we were encouraged to draw the space in between objects, rather than try to draw the objects themselves.

Figure 1: Jennie Meadows, *Moments of Eternity II*, 2020

This concept of looking at the gaps is reflected in *The Hidden Life of Trees* by Peter Wohlleben, who observed that:

‘The average tree grows its branches out until it encounters the branch tips of a neighbouring of the same height. It doesn’t grow any wider because the air and better light in this space are already taken. However, it heavily reinforces the branches it has extended, so you get the impression that there’s quite a shoving match going on up there. But a pair of true friends is careful right from the outset not to grow overly thick branches in each other’s direction. The trees don’t want to take anything away from each other, and so they develop sturdy branches only at the outer edges of their crowns, that is to say, only in the direction of “non-friends” Such partners are often so tightly connected at the roots that sometimes they even die together.’

(Wohlleben, P. 2017 pp. 5)

Michelangelo's Creation of Adam

While taking photos at the start of the project, I noticed there were certain viewpoints that reminded me of Michelangelo's Creation of Adam. This is where the leaves from adjacent trees would reach and just about touch. This also highlighted the 'space between'.



Figure 2: Michelangelo, Creation of Adam (Detail), c. 1512

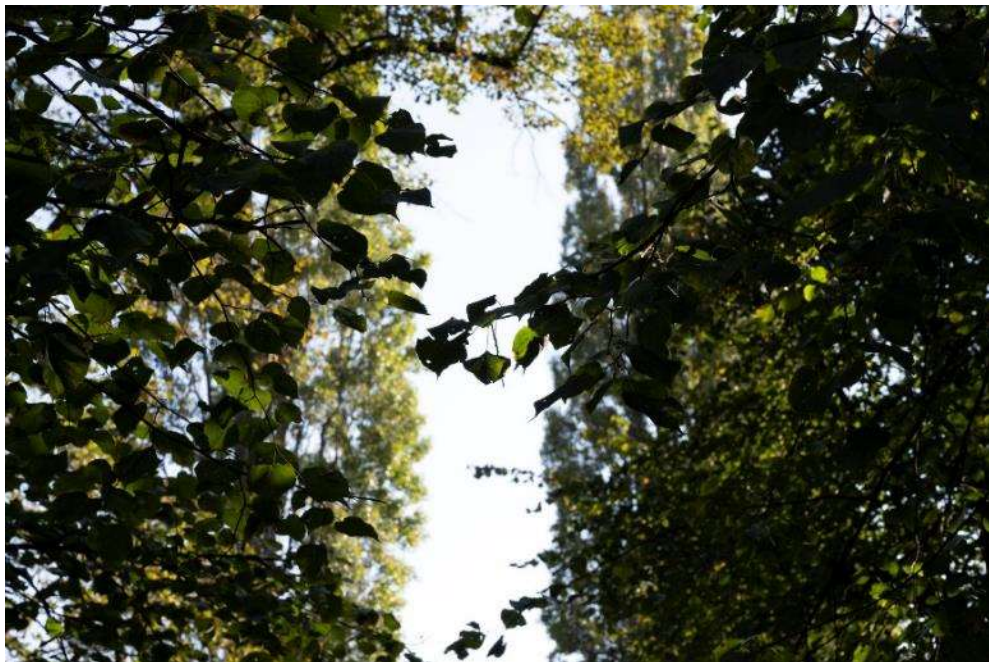


Figure 3: Jennie Meadows, Bushy Park, 9 October 2020

Aubrey Beardsley & Ukiyo-e



Figure 4: E.426-1972 *Salome*, Plate V- *The Peacock Skirt* from a portfolio of 17 plates; by Aubrey Beardsley (1872-98); published by John Lane; English; 1907. Line-block print.

One of Aubrey Beardsley's main influences were the graphic conventions of Japanese woodblock prints (Ukiyo-e). When producing the original plate, Beardsley worked 'in reserve', a technique which would result in prints that leave areas of the white paper untouched. This aspect sparked the same thoughts about the spaces in between. They are just as important as the lines within Beardsley's prints.

This aspect is also reflected in the tree photography of Myoung Ho Lee, Noel Myles, James Balog and Tacita Dean plus the drawings and paintings of Toba Khedoori.

Among the Trees

As my focus was on arboreal subjects, I visited the *Among the Trees* exhibition at the Hayward Gallery on 16 September 2020. Work on display included that of Myongho Lee, Tacita Dean, Toba Khedoori, Jennifer Steinkamp and Eija-Liisa Ahtila.

While looking at the pieces on display, my observations initiated my musings on how individual trees can be portrayed, the gaps between branches and trees, plus the 'white space' within a tree image.

These observations were also reflected in the works of Michelangelo and Aubrey Beardsley.

Myoung Ho Lee & Tree Portraits

Since 2004, Myoung Ho Lee has focused his attention on individual trees in the landscape. This photographer's images are like studio portraits, in which the subject is dissociated from their immediate context. By doing so, this portrayal spotlights their true shapes and forms.



Figure 5: Myoung Ho Lee, *Tree #3*, 2006

Myoung Ho Lee method of choosing his subject is to select each one for their personalities then observes them through different seasons and at varying times of the day. This observation results in how the tree should be portrayed.



Figure 6: Myoung Ho Lee, *Tree... #2*, 2021

The method results with the image of the tree being framed 'naturally' by the tree's actual habitat.

When reading the *Among the Trees* exhibition's accompanying brochure to understand this photographer's work further, I noted that Myoung Ho Lee began photographing trees because they are 'something you see every day, but we often overlook them; we forget their value and just pass by.'

Both Myoung Ho Lee's intention and motivation and results reflect my own regarding the *Invisible Trees* series. Each tree has been subjectively photographed and made visible within its environment.



Figure 7: Jennie Meadows, *Invisible Trees 3 (Original Single Image)*, 2020

Tacita Dean & Ancient Trees

This haunting image of a yew tree was one to which I kept returning. I initially saw this work at *Among the Trees* exhibition. The piece features a photograph of one of the oldest living trees in the UK. Called Crowhurst II (2007), it is one of a series of 'painted trees' that Dean began in 2005.



Figure 8: Tacita Dean, *Crowhurst II*, 2007

The piece is almost life size, printed on three pieces of photographic paper. The paper has been painted with white gouache, so the tree stands out from its surroundings. It is only when you get closer to the work that muted details of the graveyard in which the tree is situated can be seen.

Although a different method is used to that of Myoung Ho Lee's, both photographer's work results in isolating the subject from the background.

Toba Khedoori



Figures 9-11: Installation Shots - *Among the Trees*, Toba Khedoori

In contrast to Myoung Ho Lee and Tacita Dean, Toba Khedoori isolates her subject matter by painting or drawing it on large sheets of waxed paper against an expanse of white.

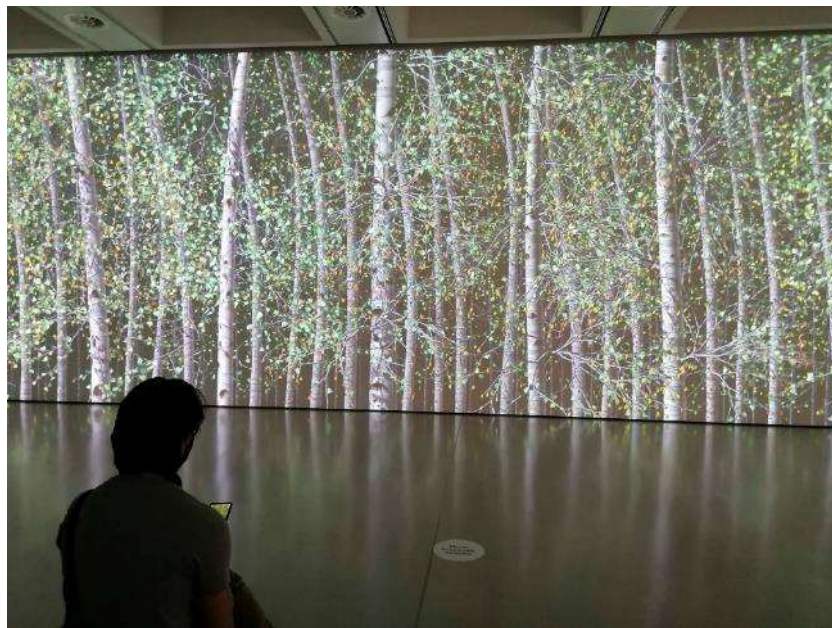
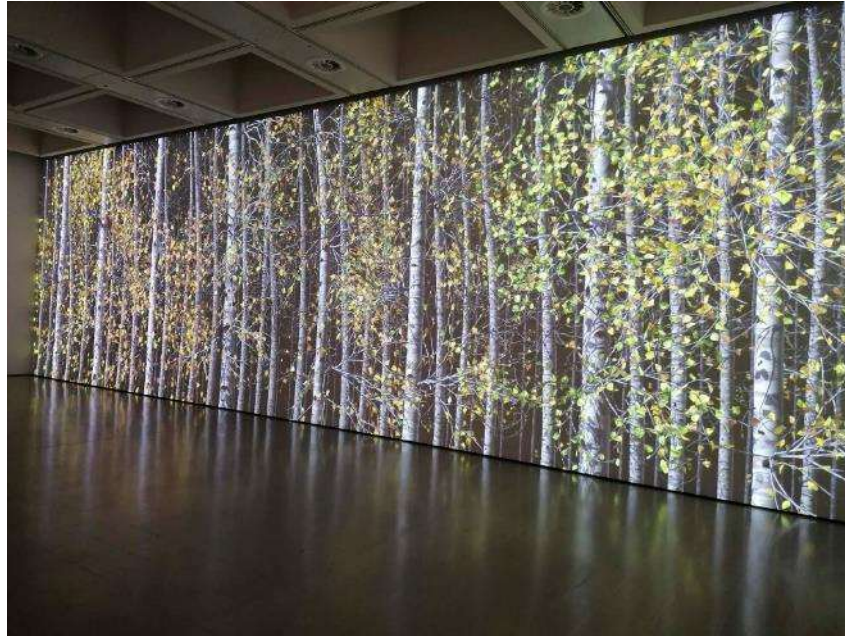
By doing so:

‘The abstraction that results from the withholding of information and context contrasts with the painstaking realism of the artist’s precise rendering, creating an unsettlingly ambiguous image.’

(Rugoff, R., 2020. *Among the Trees* Exhibition Brochure. Pp. 154)

Despite this different method of producing an image, there are similarities in these practitioners’ work. By removing parts of the image, all pieces invite different ways in looking at the subject.

Jennifer Steinkamp & Blind Eye



Figures 12 & 13: Installation Shots – Among the Trees: Jennifer Steinkamp – *Blind Eye*, 1, 2018

Jennifer Steinkamp's *Blind Eye* is a computer-generated animated piece that allows the viewer to experience the change of seasons in the featured trees. The projection is set within a separate room within the gallery and gives an impression of full immersion.

This piece shows how trees can be portrayed at different times of the year, which is one of my intentions for Stage 2. The perspective is also one that I may consider.

Eija-Liisa Ahtila & Horizontal – Vaakasuora



Figures 14 & 15: Installation Shots – *Among the Trees*: Eija-Liisa Ahtila – *Horizontal* – Vaakasuora, 2011

Similar in ratio to *Blind Eye*, Eija-Liisa Ahtila's projection features six filmed projections of different sections of the same tree.

'Soon it became clear how difficult it is to really portray a tall tree because of the size of the film image – its aspect ratio... I want(ed) to somehow make visible to limits, or edges, of human perception and to try to show the idea introduced by Jakob von Uexkull – of the simultaneous existence of different worlds, different times and spaces.'

(Ahtilia, E.L. 2020. Pp. 146)

I realise now that these installations both had a bearing on my *Moments of Eternity* work and the *Invisible Trees* series. With the former, I had created a series of tree portraits using images originally shot in landscape. When reflecting on the Invisible Trees images, I had used portrait images to create landscapes.

Both projects have made me ask the question 'How do you portray a whole tree within its environment within the boundaries of both its size and the aspect ratio of the image?'

This is an aspect that I will investigate further in Stage 2.

Into the Woods: Trees in Photography

While visiting *Among the Trees*, I discovered the book based on *Into the Woods*, an exhibition of tree photographs from the Victoria and Albert Museum's archives held in there 2017. I did visit the exhibition at the time, but the book hadn't been printed yet. This gave a more detailed grounding of how trees have been depicted within photography.

In the introduction, Martin Barnes, Senior Curator, Photographs at the V&A makes a pertinent point about tree photography and the use of, or lack of colour, within tree photography. Initially, this was due to the monochrome methods of producing photographs. Barnes states that although colour processes were available from 1907, monochrome is still the dominant option. This is especially, Barnes observes, when the photographer's focus is on the line, form, texture, and details of trees.

This observation inspired my choice of using Black & White images during Stage 1 and will be explored further in Stage 2.



Figure 16: Benjamin Brecknell Turner, *Causeway Head of the Lake Loseley Park* 1852-4

Compound Tree Photography

Compound photography has become a strong component of my current practice. Through my research and practice, it seems that depicting a whole tree has both compositional and practical issues. By taking multiple images of a tree then putting them together provides the scope for a photographic practitioner to portray a subject in its entirety. It also gives the opportunity to break and reappropriate the conventions associated with tree photography.

There are three photographers whose work involving compound photography I will be exploring further during Stage 2:

- Terry Evans
- James Balog
- Noel Myles

To an extent, their work reflects that of Jennifer Steinkamp's and Eija-Liisa Ahtila's, by making visible different times and space simultaneously.

Terry Evans & American Prairies

Terry Evans is a photographer whose extraordinary work I discovered while scrolling through my Instagram feed. I spotted this post made by the Catherine Edelman Gallery, who represent Evans.



Figure 17: Instagram Edelman Gallery Terry Evans Bur Oak October 2020 No Text

At first, I thought it was just a photograph of a tree. I then noticed the white straight lines on the left-hand side of the image (this detail reminded me of the work of Myoung Ho Lee). However, when I looked closer, there was something different I couldn't put my finger on. My interest was piqued further with the accompanying text:

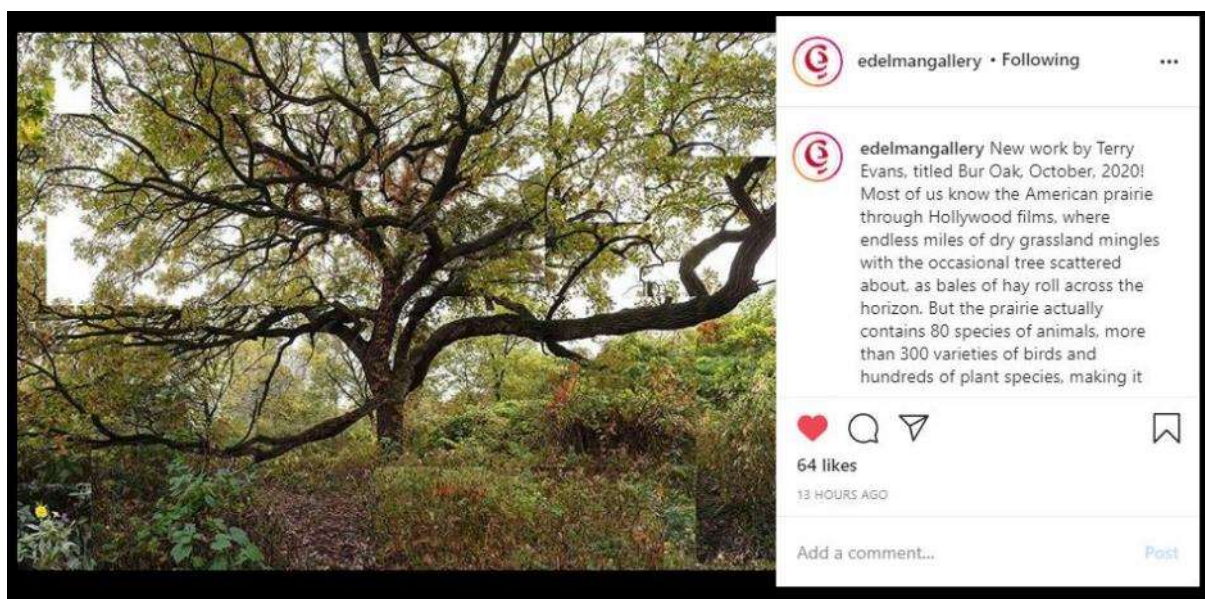


Figure 18: Instagram Edelman Gallery Terry Evans Bur Oak October 2020 With Text

The images are part of Evan's series Ancient Prairies, in which each image consists of a patchwork of individual images signifying the ecological complexity that underlies the depicted landscape.



Figure 19: Terry Evans, Willow Tree – August & September 2018



Figure 20: Terry Evans, Prairie Southeast of Chicago – Early May 2018

Noel Myles

Noel Myles is a photographic practitioner who specialises in compound photography. I initially came across his work when it was featured in *Into the Woods: Trees in Photography*.

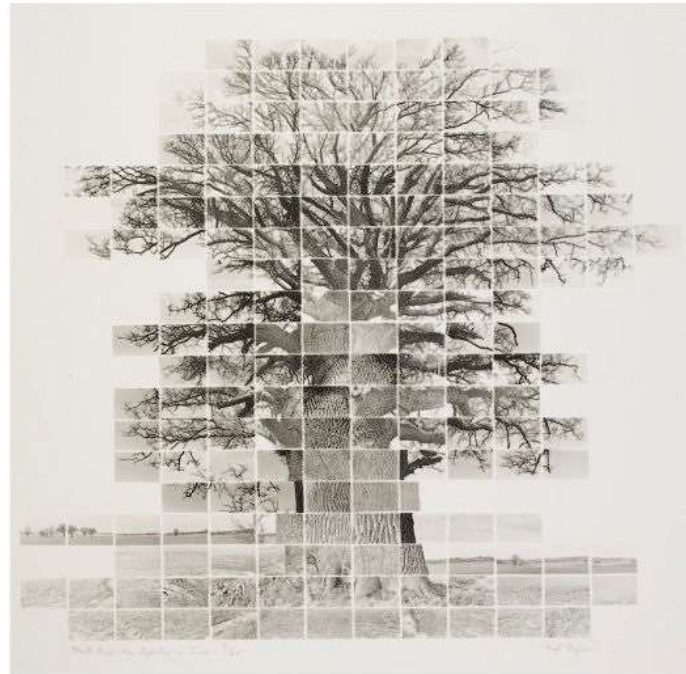


Figure 21: Noel Myles, *Fourth Short Film Depicting a Tree* from the series *Still Films*, Winter 2000

This image above (Figure 21) was composed in the photographer's studio using 187 separate 35mm negatives, taken over a four-week period. By making a whole image from a series of many rather than a single exposure, it goes beyond one viewpoint, showing multiple moments of time.

Myles has also made his compound images using both Black & White and colour (Figures 22 and 23).



Figure 22: Noel Myles, *Third Film of the three trees No 1*, 2010 2011



Figure 23: Noel Myles, *Still Film of an Oak at Wormingford No ,7* 2011

As with the images I've annotated so far, there also is the use of blank space. Myles also uses this aspect within the Looking series. Each image features different subjective shots of a tree.

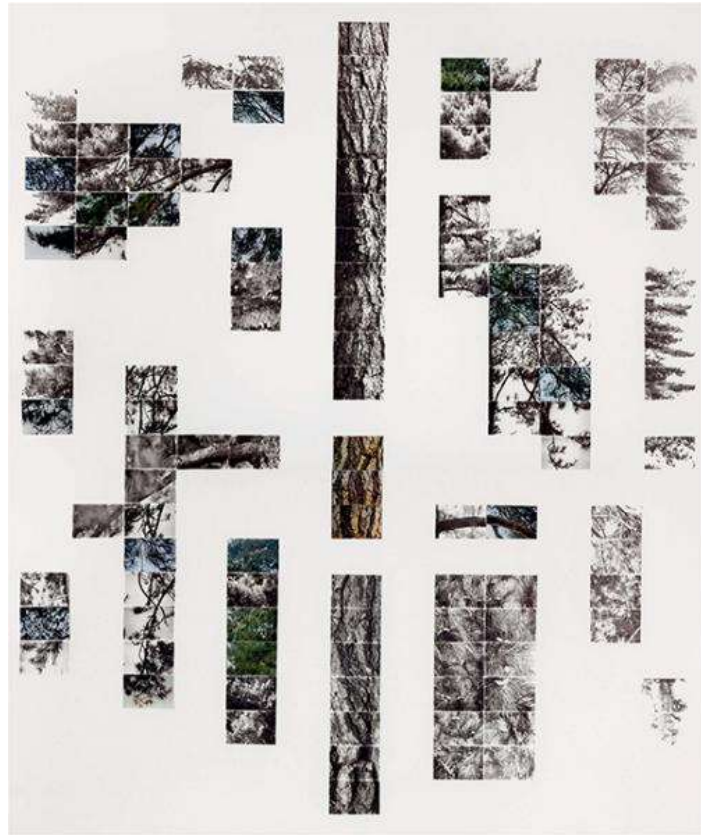


Figure 24: Noel Myles, *Looking*, 2011

This inspired me to try something similar, as shown in the Stage 2 proposal.

These are just a small selection of Myles' extensive work. I started researching his methodology and concepts behind the pieces during Stage 1 and will delve further during Stage 2.

My main discovery during Stage 1 is that there were two major influences behind Myles work: Paul Cezanne and David Hockney.

Paul Cezanne

In the video of Noel Myles' exhibition at the Minorities Gallery in 2013, the artist explains:

“I was also very much aware of one my strongest influences and strongest likes and loves was Cezanne’s watercolour paintings where there are just small, discreet areas of colour and pencil and large areas of white, and the white of the paper is the white of the Provencal light. They’re wonderful evocations of this intense light and it’s almost as if what he was just painting, the little bits of colour you would see, are what was going on in the shadows. These (images) refer to that.”



Figure 25: Paul Cézanne (1839-1906) *La Montagne Sainte-Victoire vue des Lauves* watercolour and pencil on paper 16 7/8 x 21 1/4 in. (42.8 x 53.9 cm.) Painted in 1902-1906

David Hockney

The other inspiration of Noel Myles was David Hockney's series of polaroid collages.



Figure 26: David Hockney, *Place Furstenberg, Paris, August 7, 8, 9, 1985*

By combing images taken from multiple perspectives and on different days, Hockney has encapsulated these elements in one final piece.

I will be examining Hockney's work and influences further during Stage 2.

James Balog & A New Vision of the American Forest

James Balog is an environmental photographer who also specialises in compound images. Balog's focus is on humanity's modification of nature.

As with Terry Evans and Noel Myles, Balog uses multiple images to depict a single tree as a portrait. Balog's initial method of photographing trees was like Myoung Ho Lee's in that he hung artificial backgrounds behind the trees. However, due to the cost and lack of available funding, this method became unviable. Balog also noticed how variables such as light, subject movement and weather always seemed in flux. As such, Balog decided that combining a wide range of visual treatments would better reflect a changing reality. This included shooting in both Black & White and colour plus utilising different image ratios. Balog also used a range of digital technology to capture the individual images, from the highest spec cameras to basic point-and-shoots.



Figure 27: James Balog, Eastern White Pine, Lenox, Massachusetts, October 2002



Figure 28: James Balog, Coast Redwood, "Stratosphere Giant", Humboldt Redwood State Park, California, 2004

Minor White

‘The secret, the catch, and power lie in being able to use the forms and shapes of objects in front of the camera for their expressive-evocative qualities. Or to say this in another way, in practice Equivalency is the ability to use the visual world as the plastic material for the photographer’s expressive purposes.’

(White, M. 1963 pp. 17-21)

Minor White (1908-1976) was an American photographer and was known for his meticulous black-and-white prints of landscapes, architecture, and men. White’s approach was also influenced by spiritualism and zen. When first introduced to White’s work during my initial photographic studies, I was entranced by his subjective, abstract, and close-up observations of trees and other natural phenomena.



Figure 29: Minor White, Copper Creek, Oregon (Wallowa Mountains), 1941

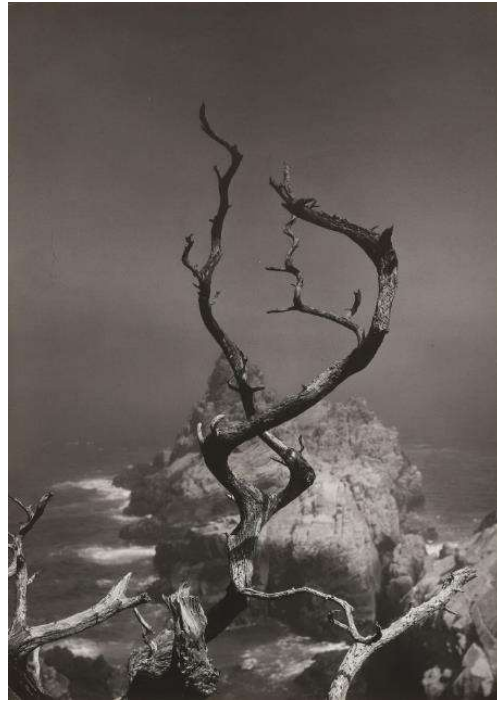


Figure 30: Minor White, *Twisted Tree, Point Lobos, CA*, 1950

White's use of dramatic monochrome with its dramatic contrast used within his images have influenced and will continue to influence my conversions from colour to Black & White.

A further element of White's work I took into consideration was his sequencing of images. This was brought to my attention in the book *Minor White: Manifestations of the Spirit* by Paul Martineau. This tome was issued in connection with the exhibition of the same name held at the J. Paul Getty Museum from 8 July to 19 October 2014.

According to Martineau, 'White described his sequences as being like a "cinema of stills" and called on the viewer to be an active participant in experiencing the varied moods and associations that came to the fore while moving from one photograph to the next'. (Martineau, P. 2014 pp. 10). Again, this ethic is reflected within the compound images within this visual portfolio.

Bernd & Hilla Becher & Water Towers

When considering my photographic viewpoint during Stage 1, I contemplated whether it would be either objective or subjective (as with the work of Minor White). An objective viewpoint is exemplified by the work of Bernd and Hilla Becher.



Figure 31: Bernd Becher and Hilla Becher, Water Towers, 1972-2009

This collection of the Becher's work is held by the Tate and was purchased with funds provided by Tate International Council, the Photography Acquisitions Committee, Tate Members and Tate Patrons in 2015. The nine gelatin silver print photographs were taken by Bernd and Hilla Becher over a period of more than thirty years and printed in 2013.

According to the Tate website, these prints are arranged in three rows of three. The photographs are typical of the Bechers' work and show different examples of a specific type of industrial architecture. The Becher's work epitomises the concept of photographic typology, which can be defined as:

'A single photograph or more commonly a body of photographic work, that shares a high level of consistency. This consistency is usually found within the subjects, environment, photographic process, and presentation or direction of the subject. The creation of a typology is likely to be employed for one of two intentions. To enable objective comparison of subjects that share similar visual characteristics, or to create a relationship between subjects that share no obvious visual relationship.'

(Lewis. P. Can the photographic typology be defined? 2020)

The Bechers had a particularly meticulous approach to their photography. Their production method followed the same set up to produce photographs in which their subject takes up the whole frame of the picture.

When comparing my methodology with that of the Bechers during Stage 1, I could see a similarity. I was beginning to use a predetermined set of parameters when photographing each hawthorn (both landscape and portrait orientation). This included composition, the point of view and weather conditions. I also started to edit my images so that they looked similar in tone and 'mood'. In retrospect, I was creating a photographic typology of a particular tree in a set environment.



Figure 32: Jennie Meadows, Three Tree Test, 16 November 2020

Riitta Päiväläinen



Figure 33: Riitta Päiväläinen, Vestige Nest 2011

Riitta Päiväläinen is a Finnish photographer who constructs temporary, site-specific installations in nature, consisting of second-hand clothing and flea market fabrics.

When I looked at Päiväläinen's images, I was quite struck by their haunting nature. There is a very eerie aspect to her work involving trees and clothing props. I get a similar reaction when I look at my images of hawthorns.

Two things came to mind in relation to my tree photography. Firstly, my particular methodology doesn't involve physically adding to or changing my subject matter. For me, the tree itself is enough. Secondly, the mood of the images plus the reactions and emotions they evoke are an exceptionally important element.

Simon Roberts & The Weeds and The Wilderness

The Weeds and The Wilderness is a series of photographs by British artist-photographer, Simon Roberts, whose work deals with our relationship to landscape and notions of identity and belonging.



Figure 34: Simon Roberts, *Weeds & The Wilderness* 17 2019

When I first looked at Robert's work, I could not see a connection between my work and his. When I revisited the images in relation to this project, the connections became quite clear.

My research involving hawthorn trees has made me realise how much they are part of humanity's culture and ecology. The following paragraph brought this realisation home:

'Many Britons no longer have any daily connection with its woods. Mostly we go about our lives sealed from the wild. At the same time, these landscapes touch upon themes such as conservation, ownership, history, magic and myth, climate change, childhood fears, and our current obsession with what is 'native' or 'alien'. They also say something about Britishness and belonging.'

(*The Weeds and the Wilderness* – Simon Roberts, 2020)

The realisation came from my 'discovery' of hawthorns – I had been visiting Bushy Park since 2007 and it was only this year (2020) that I discovered the part these trees play within this environment. Before this, the hawthorns were 'invisible' and only an afterthought compared to the other trees in the park. Although Roberts' images are different in style and composition, the ethos behind the work is similar. It is making the hidden visible, provoking awareness of our natural environment.

Images of Hawthorns

While researching the subject of hawthorns, I initially found reference to these trees in books that covered the subject in general. There were brief mentions in a selection of tomes that gave a taste of the background of this tree, but they were quite general.

I then discovered an enlightening book by Bill Vaughn titled: *Hawthorn – The Tree That Has Nourished, Healed and Inspired Through the Ages*. Published in 2015, it is a combination of political, religious, and natural histories and Vaughn's own relationship with the hawthorn. The author lives on a large plot of land in North America called Dark Acres that is dominated by the tree.

Throughout the book, Vaughn intertwines his experiences on this land, his family history and how the tree has impacted humanity. The aspect which is most useful is that Vaughn does not just focus on the hawthorn in relation to Great Britain or the United States. The author looks at the influence of the tree on a global basis and how it interconnects places in the world through invisible and visible means.

One of my critical and important observations of this book is that there are no photographs, apart from the one on the cover.

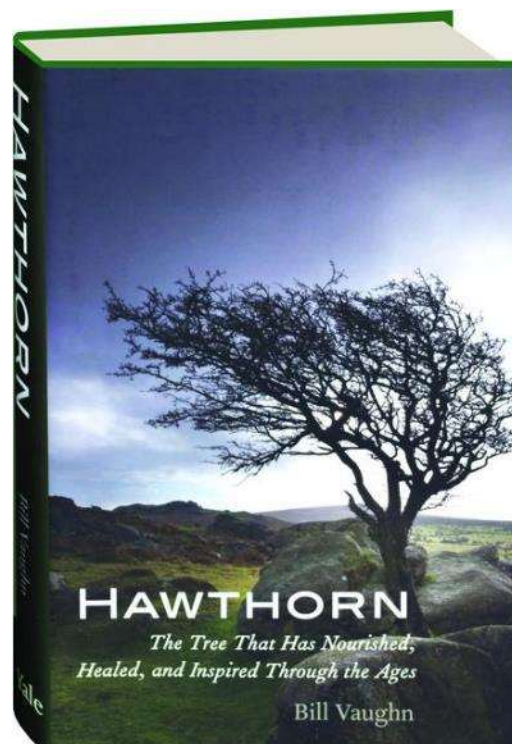


Figure 35: Book Cover - Bill Vaughn, *Hawthorn – The Tree That Has Nourished, Healed and Inspired Through the Ages*, 2015

There is a selection of illustrations by the author, two 19th Century engravings, two maps and photograph of an owl. This is not a criticism, but a pertinent observation. It echoes the words of David Company in his contemplation of the use of images to identify plants and trees.

‘Being a medium of specifics means photography is not well suited to generalities. A photograph can record the uniqueness of an object, but it cannot designate the general category to which it might belong. What makes it useful in compiling an inventory makes it quite useless in defining the group.’

(Company, D. 2020 pp. 116)

Company continues with his stance in putting forward the example of images found in books to be used for identifying plants. Company purports that although photography can record a specimen, but not the species, as each individual specimen is a variation of that species. Company states that botanical identification is better served by drawing than by photography as:

‘The skill of a botanical illustrator is to look at several specimens and then produce an average. The average does not exist, but it is useful to have it.’

(Company, D, 2020 pp. 116)

This stance is highlighted by Vaughn’s own illustration of a hawthorn branch that covers the four seasonal appearances of blossom, leaves and berries.



Figure 36: Bill Vaughn, Hawthorn Illustration, 2015

This relates to my work for both Stage 1 and 2, in that I am recording individual hawthorns to highlight their variations, not providing a generalisation of a species.

Joanna Jackson & A Year in the Life of Bushy Park

Through photography, Joanna Jackson has chronicled Bushy Park over the changing conditions of the year. The book is divided into chapters categorised by the four seasons.

When looking at these images, I noticed Jackson's use of different aspect ratios, depth of field and combinations of images within the book. This was an influence for the different methods of shooting images for Stage 1. This book also will be a resource for Stage 2 and the AGM92 Photographic Book & Publications module.



Figures 39 & 40: Joanna Jackson, Bushy Park Glimmer Diptych 1 & 2, 2015



Figures 41 & 42: Joanna Jackson, Mega Mist, 2015

Beth Moon & Ancient Trees: Portraits of Time

Beth Moon has spent many years photographing ancient trees in the UK, USA, Europe, Asia, and Africa. Initially, Moon used a medium format film camera to produce Black & White images. This work is documented in her book, *Ancient Trees: Portraits of Time*.



Figure 43: Beth Moon, *Avenue of Oaks*, 2006



Figure 44: Beth Moon, *Avenue of The Baobabs*, 2006

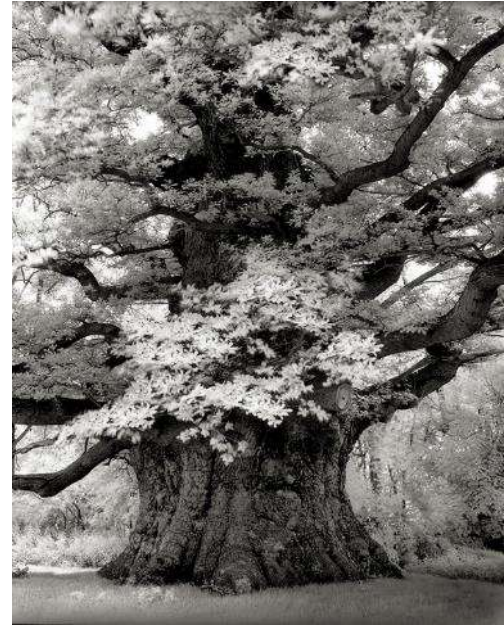


Figure 45: Beth Moon, *Bristle Cone Pine Relic*, 2005



Figure 46: Beth Moon, *Majesty (Back)*, 2005

My work was initially inspired by Moon's work when I noticed she has paired 'front' and 'back' views of the same tree together.



Figures 47 (Left) & 48 (Right): Beth Moon, *Majesty (Front)* and Beth Moon, *Majesty (Back)*, 2005

I saw this after I had paired these 'front' and 'back' images of the same tree.



Figures 49 & 50: Jennie Meadows Bushy Park Hawthorns 6 December (Left) & 12 December (Right), 2020

Beth Moon & Diamond Nights

When looking at Moon's website, I came across this collection of long-exposure images that capture the stars. This also marked Moon's transition from film to digital cameras. Moon found that the long exposure time required to photograph at night was not possible with film. By using a digital camera with features such as lower noise options and higher ISO settings, Moon has produced a different image of the same tree.

Moon's technique was to use a wide-angle lens and an ISO of 3200 to 6400. Moon found that exposures up to 30 seconds allowed enough light to enter the lens without noticeable star movement. Moon also discovered that each location required considerable experimentation and different lighting techniques to achieve these results.



Figure 51: Beth Moon, Aquila-Long, 2015



Figure 52: Beth Moon, Atlas, 2015



Figure 53: Beth Moon, Delphinus, 2015

Jean-Luc Brouard & Nocturnal Arboreal

This Brighton-based photographer has created a series of night-time tree portraits called Nocturnal Arboreal, which remind me of Beth Moon's Diamond Night series. According to Brouard's website, the photographer relaxes by trekking across the countryside and shooting trees at night for this on-going series.



Figures 54 –59: Jean-Luc Brouard, Nocturnal Arboreal, Various Dates

These well-observed and beautiful images showcase the photographer's control of light and the use of long exposure shows an exceptional level of photographic skill. This technique is one I would like to explore in Stage 2. Unfortunately, due to the restrictions of not being able to use a tripod or stay in one place for longer than a few seconds, I won't be able to carry out my own experiments in Bushy Park until these restrictions have been lifted.

Paul Cupido & IBASHO Gallery Exhibition

‘I see my work as little visual haikus, echoing the emotion that is behind, triggering feelings in the same way music can. I find real meditation within photography, to walking to get into a rhythm and from there begin to play and learn. I like to share the process, turning the invisible into a momentary snapshot and then go on.’

(Cupido, P. 2020)

When I discovered Paul Cupido’s work, I was intrigued by his images and the ethos behind them. Cupido’s words above echo my own way of experiencing photography. Walking with my camera in Bushy Park is a form of meditation for me and one that has kept me going during these interesting times. The piece that led me to research Cupido further was this image:



Figure 60: Paul Cupido, 'Kumo (Cloud) II', 2019

Cupido’s work revolves around the principle of mu: a philosophical concept that could be translated as ‘does not have’ – a void, albeit one that holds potential. This recalls the concept of the empty spaces as part of the images in many of the visual resources I have collated for this portfolio and experimented with.

One further reason why I have included Cupido's work within this annotated portfolio is down to his exhibition held at the IBASHO Gallery in Antwerp, Belgium from 29 October 2020 to 17 January 2021.

Cupido's work had a strong bearing on my Invisible Trees images. The way in which they were printed and framed contributed in my choice of framing, mounting and paper (Hahnemühle German Etching 310 fine art paper).

The other significance of this exhibition highlighted how important producing work is. Seeing and experiencing printed and framed pieces in a gallery environment is so superior to just seeing it on a back-lit screen.



IBASHO Gallery Paul Cupido Video Stills_001



IBASHO Gallery Paul Cupido Video Stills_002



IBASHO Gallery Paul Cupido Video Stills_003



IBASHO Gallery Paul Cupido Video Stills_004



IBASHO Gallery Paul Cupido Video Stills_005



IBASHO Gallery Paul Cupido Video Stills_006



IBASHO Gallery Paul Cupido Video Stills_007



IBASHO Gallery Paul Cupido Video Stills_008



IBASHO Gallery Paul Cupido Video Stills_009



IBASHO Gallery Paul Cupido Video Stills_010



IBASHO Gallery Paul Cupido Video Stills_011



IBASHO Gallery Paul Cupido Video Stills_012

Figures 61 - 72: Paul Cupido Mukayu Exhibition (Video Stills), IBASHO Gallery, 29 October to 17 January 2021



IBASHO Gallery Paul Cupido Video Stills_013



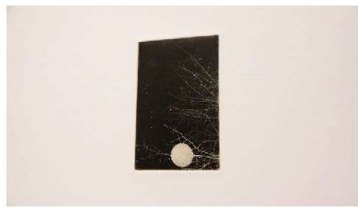
IBASHO Gallery Paul Cupido Video Stills_014



IBASHO Gallery Paul Cupido Video Stills_015



IBASHO Gallery Paul Cupido Video Stills_016



IBASHO Gallery Paul Cupido Video Stills_017



IBASHO Gallery Paul Cupido Video Stills_018



IBASHO Gallery Paul Cupido Video Stills_019



IBASHO Gallery Paul Cupido Video Stills_020



IBASHO Gallery Paul Cupido Video Stills_021



IBASHO Gallery Paul Cupido Video Stills_022



IBASHO Gallery Paul Cupido Video Stills_023



IBASHO Gallery Paul Cupido Video Stills_024

Figures 73 - 84: Paul Cupido Mukayu Exhibition (Video Stills), IBASHO Gallery, 29 October to 17 January 2021

Keep Your Distance

With the recent strengthening of importance of social distancing, I came across the image below. It certainly resonated with the images of the two trees. It seems there is no escaping the cultural influence of Covid-19.



Figure 85: City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council, Keep Your Distance Visual, 2020

-END-



Project Proposal

Photography Research Project Stage 2

‘It is easy to neglect the humble hawthorn, to pass it by unnoticed, until it explodes with creamy blossom in May. Historically, it is one of our most important species: for shelter and defence, for wayside sustenance and as a marker for boundaries and travellers.’

(Adams, M. 2018 pp. 176)

“Exercise with your household (or support bubble) or one other person, this should be limited to once per day, and you should not travel outside your local area.”

(National lockdown: Stay at Home, 2021)

Introduction

My intention for the Stage 2 Photography Research Project is to continue investigating the relationship between digital photography and the depiction of trees through my own practice.

There are several options in which I can take this project forward. Currently, due to the Covid-19 restrictions, not all are possible. As such, I have taken into consideration various scenarios that will enable me to carry out and complete this module within the parameters I have set myself.

Option 1

In an ideal world, with no restrictions, this project would involve taking further photographs of Hawthorns within Bushy Park. During the timeframe of Stage 2, I will be able to capture these trees in different states from Winter to the start of Summer. I am interested in portraying how these trees change in appearance and how the environment plays its part. My initial shots were taken during the Autumn and have specific characteristics that played their part in producing the final Body of Work. I would also extend the experimental use of my equipment while on location (tripod, long-exposure shots in the dark, flash lighting, time-lapse, etc.). I would then compare these images to those taken during Stage 1 and continue with my experimentations of artistically representing these trees using digital technology. (Figures 1-4).

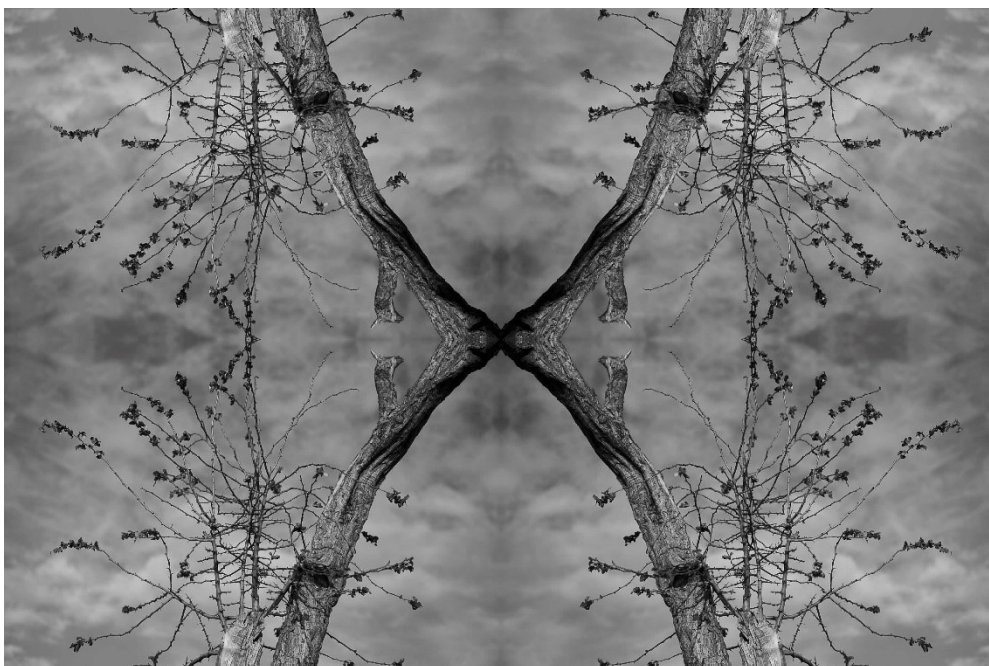


Figure 1: Jennie Meadows, Test 1, December 2020

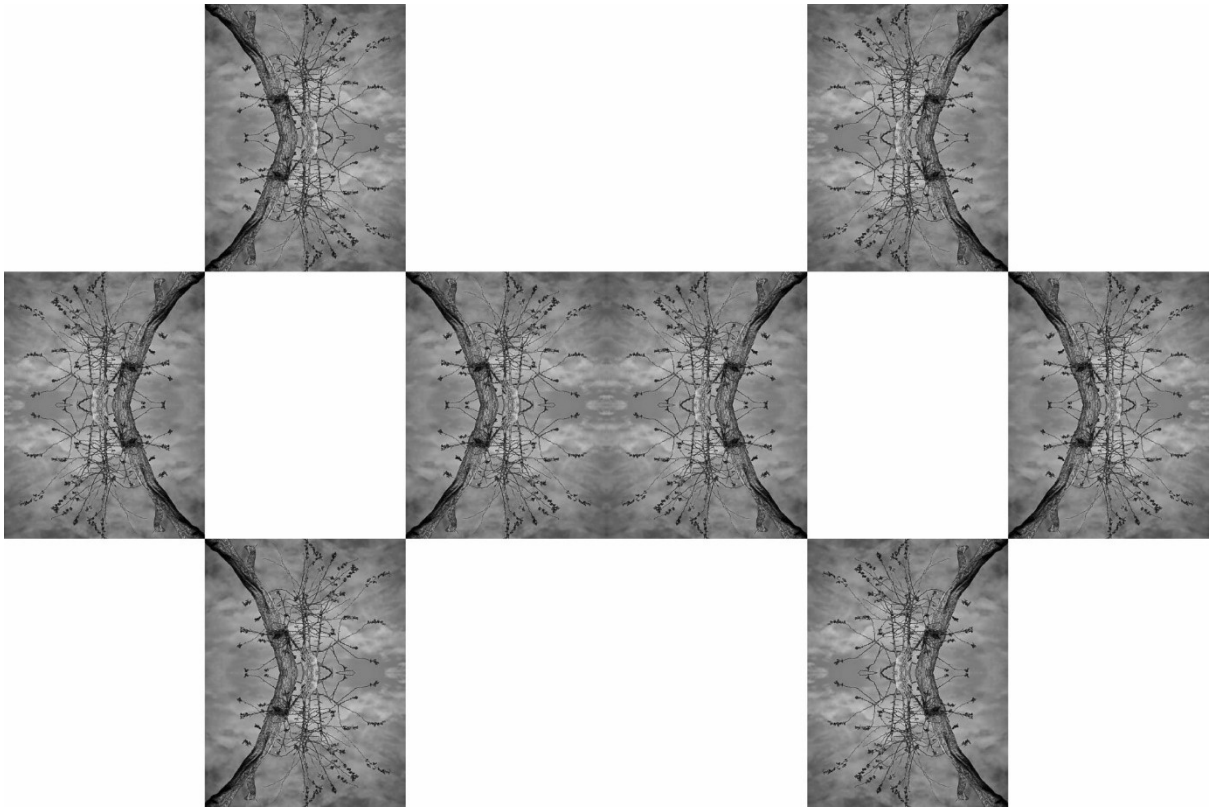


Figure 2: Jennie Meadows, Test 2, December 2020



Figure 3: Jennie Meadows, Test 3, November 2020



Figure 4: Jennie Meadows, Test 4, January 2020

The tests shown in Figures 2, 3 and 4 explore my concept of portraying ‘the space between’ and what ‘is there, but not there’ within an image. This experimentation was inspired by the work of Noel Myles, James Balog, Terry Evans, Aubrey Beardsley, and Japanese print aesthetics.

All three options will involve experimenting with compound images as this is clearly an area strongly directed by both my photographic interests and research.

One feature that I am very keen to capture is the Hawthorn blossom during mid to late May. I have always wanted to visit Japan to see and capture the cherry blossom. What I now realise is that I can capture the UK equivalent of this on my doorstep. I had photographed these flowers in 2016 (Figure 5), but that back then I didn't realise they were Hawthorns. I would now be able to photograph the blossom with a specific purpose, not just because they 'look pretty'.



Figure 5: Jennie Meadows, Bushy Park Hawthorn Blossom, 25 May 2016

Option 2

This scenario is the same as Option 1 but takes into consideration the current restrictions as stated by law. It has been advised by University of Brighton that all off-site working cannot be undertaken or authorised by the university until these restrictions are lifted. However, it has been permitted for students to use small, hand-held camera technologies including smartphone cameras to photograph/film briefly as part of outdoor daily exercise. Within this allowance, photography/filming activity must be very brief, i.e. for a matter of seconds, before moving on.

Until these restrictions have been lifted, I will be able to use both my smartphone and small, mirrorless camera to photograph trees while walking in the park. As such, it will restrict my activity and my shoot planning will take this into account.

Option 3

In the unlikely event that I am not able to leave the house (through having to self-isolate or advised to stay inside) and take further photographs outside, I can utilise the large bank of images taken during Stage 1 and AGM60 Research & Experimentation. For example, I took 165 individual images of one tree (examples in Figures 6 and 7). In theory, I could use these to make a composite image of this tree. I have already experimented with this concept (Figure 8).

BP Hawthorns 20-12-11 Tree 1 Compound Experiment

1



bp_hawthorns_20-12-11_001



bp_hawthorns_20-12-11_002



bp_hawthorns_20-12-11_003



bp_hawthorns_20-12-11_004



bp_hawthorns_20-12-11_005



bp_hawthorns_20-12-11_006



bp_hawthorns_20-12-11_007



bp_hawthorns_20-12-11_008



bp_hawthorns_20-12-11_009



bp_hawthorns_20-12-11_010



bp_hawthorns_20-12-11_011



bp_hawthorns_20-12-11_012



bp_hawthorns_20-12-11_013



bp_hawthorns_20-12-11_014



bp_hawthorns_20-12-11_015



bp_hawthorns_20-12-11_016

Figure 6: Jennie Meadows, Bushy Park Hawthorn Tree 1 360 Shots, 11 December 2020

BP Hawthorns 20-12-11 Tree 1 Compound Experiment

2



bp_hawthorns_20-12-11_017



bp_hawthorns_20-12-11_018



bp_hawthorns_20-12-11_019



bp_hawthorns_20-12-11_020



bp_hawthorns_20-12-11_021



bp_hawthorns_20-12-11_022



bp_hawthorns_20-12-11_023



bp_hawthorns_20-12-11_024



bp_hawthorns_20-12-11_025



bp_hawthorns_20-12-11_026



bp_hawthorns_20-12-11_027



bp_hawthorns_20-12-11_028



bp_hawthorns_20-12-11_031



bp_hawthorns_20-12-11_032



bp_hawthorns_20-12-11_033



bp_hawthorns_20-12-11_034

Figure 7: Jennie Meadows, Bushy Park Hawthorn Tree 1 360 Shots, 11 December 2020



Figure 8: Jennie Meadows, Composite Tree Experiment, 14 December 2020

Realisation Directions

During Stage 2 I will continue with researching and experimenting with the realisation and physicalising the resulting images. This is based on my findings during Stage 1 and previous project results. This aspect is essential to the nature of this work and my research enquiry. I will also take into consideration aspects of exhibiting of the work (both online and in reality).

Research Methods

Research areas for Stage 2 would include:

- Use of montage and symmetry within photography and art
- Continued experimentation of this within my own practice
- Connection of reflection/mirrors with photography and cameras
- Philosophical implication of using mirrorless camera instead of SLR/DSLR in relation to mirrored images (ironic juxtaposition)
- Further research of tree photography in relation to my practice

Timetable

The following is an outline timetable for the various stages of the Stage 2 project. At the time of writing, the PG show is scheduled for July 2021. The final date of the show may change to September 2021 due to the impact of current and potential Covid-19 restrictions. Both the date of the show and whether to have it online or as a physical exhibition will be confirmed by mid-February 2021. Once the date and format have been decided and the full Semester 2 and Summer timetables have been confirmed, I will amend the below.

February 21	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review all images taken during Stage 1• Experiment further with montage and symmetry images• Carry out further research on montage and symmetry images• Take 'Winter' images of Hawthorns
March 21	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continue with above
April 21	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continue with above
May 21	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mid-month – take photographs of Hawthorn blossom• Process images considering previous experimentation and research
June 21	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review images and experimentation
July 21	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• PG show?
September 21	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• PG show?

SWOT Analysis & SMART Targets

This will be based on the SWOT analysis and SMART targets formulated for AGM62 Photography Research Project Stage 1 and updated when the details of the PG show have been confirmed.

-END-



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