

FINAL

PROJECT

PROPOSAL



Utah 2020, Stevi McNeill

STEVI MCNEILL

COMMON

GROUND

Introduction

For my Final Major Project, I wish to continue my exploration and investigation of the land, focusing more on the marks and traces we leave on it. The aim is to look at both public areas such as popular hiking and camping spots in national parks and private lands, such as gardens which will demonstrate how we have used and continue to use these areas for our leisure and relaxation.

Overview

This project started as a very general look into life in the American west and the communities living in different areas high of the desert. I explored regions of California, an urban laboratory designed by architect Paolo Soleri during the late 1960s in Arizona to a small old mining mountain town in Colorado. Each was fascinating, valuable and allowed me to explore and develop my interest in the history, people and land in North America.

(Figure 1 Stevi McNeill, High Desert 2018)



(Figure 2 Stevi McNeill, High Desert 2018)



(Figure 3 Stevi McNeill, High Desert 2018)



As I enter my Final Major Project, I am excited to continue to delve into what that means to me. While considering my final research project, I encountered several challenges. From Feb - May 2020, I was stranded in the UK due to the global pandemic and UK/US lockdown. I needed to reconsider my plans and work with the limited space and change of landscape. It made me step out of my usual broad approach and start to focus on what it looks like to shape and produce landscapes that fit our needs. It became apparent to me that the traces and marks made people rather than the people themselves are what interests me; they have their own story to tell, and I want to explore what they have to say.



(Figure 4 Stevi McNeill, West Sussex 2020)



(Figure 5 Stevi McNeill, West Sussex 2020)

Throughout my research, I realised that I am continuously drawn to the tools and artefacts used to build our landscapes, so I began experimenting with still life photography. I was using everyday horticultural tools in a makeshift studio, which was my parent's Greenhouse. I have never really pursued still life before but found that it fitted the aesthetic I was aiming for to showcase the tools, and is another aspect I wish to move forward with.



(Figure 6 Stevi McNeill, West Sussex 2020)



(Figure 7 Stevi McNeill, West Sussex 2020)

Influences and inspirations

Research has led me to the classic representation of the American way of life, represented by classic American photographers such as Walker Evans, Ansel Adams, Helen Levitt, and Alec Soth. All of which have expressed and documented a point of view of the American experience that has become a guide to the rest of us.



(Figure, 8 Helen Levitt New York 1971)



(Figure, 9 Alec Soth Patrick, Palm Sunday, Baton Rouge, LA, 2002)

However, as much as I appreciate those photographers, I want to take a different approach. Over the past few modules, I have been evaluating my methods and methodology and considering how I want to refine the aesthetic so that it conveys a more intimate observation, much like Jungjin Lee (figure 10). Lee has a very systematic and thoughtful approach to the environment she is portraying. Her process starts with observing her surroundings in a very intentional manner, that then leads to her producing beautifully hand-printed images resembling charcoal drawings that are somewhat surreal, delicate and carefully thought out, which is the perfect conclusion to her whole process. Her approach has had a significant influence over me as I wish to step away from the typical scene of the American landscape to portray a more intimate view.



(Figure, 10 Lee, Unnamed Roads, 2010 - 2013)

Split Rock by Afton love is a fascinating project to me. She produces drawings of places where she has walked and wandered, reflecting on our connections with the natural world and how it is continually changing and shifting as often as we are. Much like Love, I will be producing work from trials and lands that I wander in. I find her work very informative, and it has led me to start my investigation in psychogeography in the rural environment, which is the study of specific effects of the geographical environment, consciously organised or not, on the emotions and behaviour of individuals.

Tate. 2020. Psychogeography – Art Term | Tate. [online] Available at: <<https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/p/psychogeography>> [Accessed 20 June 2020].



(Figure 11 Afton Love, Split Rock g, 2018)

As this project progresses I realise the work would be best presented as an installation to allow an immersive experience focussed on scale. I am drawn to the work of Elena Damiani who creates large scale chiffon prints with a small wood-frame are elegant and unintrusive, but makes an impact on the viewer. "The viewer struggles to grasp at once to the totality of the image, which keeps fusing with the space in the background. As a result, the works function as constant reminders that it is only through the eyes of the present that we can catch a glimpse of the past, and that both realms -virtual and physical- merge constantly in the act of remembrance."

Her play on the past and present is another aspect that I want to include in my work and want my audience to consider. I want to reflect on how we have been using the land for our advantage, and what we can do to make less of an impact on it. Having my work presented in a large and unintrusive manner will allow the audience to interact with the work closely, and creating an atmosphere that will enable them not only to consider how land and space is used but how it has an impact on our lives.



(Figure 12 Elena Damiani, Fading Field N.7. Digital print on silk chiffon. 2013)

Personal objectives

“If as individuals we can improve the geography only slightly, if at all, perhaps the more appropriately scaled subject for reshaping is ourselves.”

(Adams, 1994 Why People Photograph)

One aspect of this project that has become clear over this past year is that I realised it has become a way for me to reconnect and understand my life back in America. As the project develops my exploration will keep moving forward, and I aim to will inspire others to reflect on their connection to the community, land and spaces in their lives and how it has shaped them. In addition, to the installation, I plan to create a Zine or a small collection of boxed prints and notes reflecting on the project and its outcomes. This will further the connection with my audience and widen the potential reach of the project.

Audience

I see my work being of interest to anyone who is in the outdoors, conservation of public lands, landscape photography, social, and environmental issues and history of North America.

Potential outputs

Installation: I have been considering creating a small installation on private or public land where the work can be viewed by general public/ people passing by the area.

Also, by creating an installation outside of the gallery space, especially in a public setting will allow more accesses to a broader audience base.

Publication: A collection of boxed prints or a zine along with the installation, allows the work to engage a wider audience, as well as contribute to the physical retention of the work.

Website / Social Media: Having my work presented on my site will allow the audience to have a more in-depth background of the project if they wish to dig deeper.

Provisional timeline:**June/July:**

Research.

Project Development.

Critical Research Journal: Sharing research and project exploration.

Trip to Utah will explore desert BLM (Bureau of Land Management <https://www.blm.gov/programs/recreation/camping>) campgrounds and trails.

Trip to Washington will explore trails and private land use on a small farm which includes;

Trails/paths.

Gardens.

Buildings.

August:

Research.

Project Development.

Critical Research Journal: Sharing research and project exploration.

Start considering and experimenting with final presentation ideas.

Review and reflect on approach and experiments so far.

Explore trails and land near me.

St Vrain.

Brainard lake.

Rocky Mountain National Park.

September:

Research.

Project Development.

Critical Research Journal: Sharing research and project exploration.

Start to narrow down the final presentation and & print box design.

Trip to northern Michigan trails and private land use on old summer camp.

November:

Project Development.

Critical Research Journal: Sharing research and project exploration.

Draft Critical Review of practice.

December:

Project Development.

Critical Research Journal: Sharing research and project exploration.

Complete and submit Critical Review of Practice.

Appendices

Figure1 Stevi McNeill, High Desert 2018

Figure2 Stevi McNeill, High Desert 2018

Figure3 Stevi McNeill, High Desert 2019

Figure 4 Stevi McNeill, West Sussex 2020

Figure 6 Stevi McNeill, West Sussex 2020

Figure 7 Stevi McNeill, West Sussex 2020

Figure, 8 Helen Levitt New York 1971

Figure, 9 Alec Soth Patrick, Palm Sunday, Baton Rouge, LA, 2002

Figure, 10 Lee, Unnamed Roads, 2010 - 2013

Figure 11 Afton Love, Split Rock g, 2018

Figure 12 Elena Damiani, Fading Field N.7. Digital print on silk chiffon. 2013

References

Damiani, E., 2020. Elena Damiani. [online] Elenadamiani.com. Available at: <<https://www.elenadamiani.com/fadingfields.html>> [Accessed 17 June 2020].

Adams, R., 1994. Why People Photograph. New York: Aperture.

Photography Risk Assessment form

Please read the Risk Assessment Guidelines before completing this form which contains further resources, available from [The Photography Centre](#).

- Please save a copy of this form to your computer
- You will need to attach a risk assessment form to your Research Project Proposal and your Final Major Project Proposal.

Photographer's Name:	Stevi McNeill	Date(s) of Shoot:	June-November 2020
Assistants' Names:			
Module Leader:	Dr Wendy McMurdo		
Location:	Various		
Description of work:	A series of landscape and still life images produce for my Final Major Project.		

Persons at Risk Identify all those at risk

Technical Staff:		Academic Staff:		Students:		Admin Staff:		Canteen Staff:	
Contractors:		General Public:		Visitors:		Estates Staff:		Library Staff:	
Cleaning Staff:		Emergency Personnel:							

Other:		Especially at risk:	Self
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Check list				
Equipment	Flash/tungsten	Stands/tripods	Hot lights	Smoke machine/fire
Flammable materials	Risk of Fire	Welfare of Assistant	Welfare of model	Working at Heights
Location	Transport to location	Parking	Vehicles/traffic	Weather conditions
Public	Confined spaces	Derelict Buildings	Animals	Children
Tides	Compressed Gasses	Water	Noise	Chemicals

HAZARD	Weather- In the summer months, there will be high heats and thunderstorms. in the fall/winter moths the wearer will be quite cold and high possibility of ice and snow.	RISK OF	Heat stroke/ sunburn / getting caught in thunderstorms / snow storms.
CONTR OL MEASU RE	Check weather and pack appropriate clothing, or reschedule for a better day.		

HAZARD	Wild life.	RISK OF	Bears, mountain lions, Moose
CONTROL MEASURE	Be aware of my surroundings. Check local park info activity. carry bear spray.		
HAZARD	Terrain.	RISK OF	Cliffs / bodies of water
CONTROL MEASURE	Research my trail to know the land contains before I go. Be aware of rockslides, or any severe damage to location. Be aware of contentions of any body of water near location.		

On site risk assessment: these are control measures that arose on your shoot

Emergency Information and Procedures	
Phone	Charged mobile phone with full signal / Nearest Payphone / Landline
Medical Expertise	Are you or a member of your team First Aid qualified? Do you know where the nearest one is?
Emergency Procedure	In the event of an emergency dial 999 or 112 ensure that you or someone with you can accurately describe where you are (ideally nearest postcode)
Medical Treatment	Minor Injuries Unit, Falmouth Hospital Open weekdays 8am to 8pm A&E Treliske Hospital, Truro, Open 24 hours
Evacuation procedures	Ambulance can evacuate from main road.
Incident/accident reporting	All incidents or accidents should be reported to tutor at Falmouth University

Assessment carried out by

- I have ensured that I have reviewed the hazards and risks associated with this project and taken necessary steps to remove hazards where possible or reduced the risks associated with the remaining hazards to a minimum.
- I have recorded the main hazards, risks and control measures in this document.

• I have ensured that those working with me have been briefed on the nature of the tasks they are to perform, and are aware of the hazards associated with the task and the measures in place to reduce the risks associated with those hazards. (if applicable)

• I will continually assess hazards and risks 'live' on site to ensure that nothing has been overlooked or has changed since initial assessment.

Signed:



Date: 8th June 2020

Assessment reviewed by