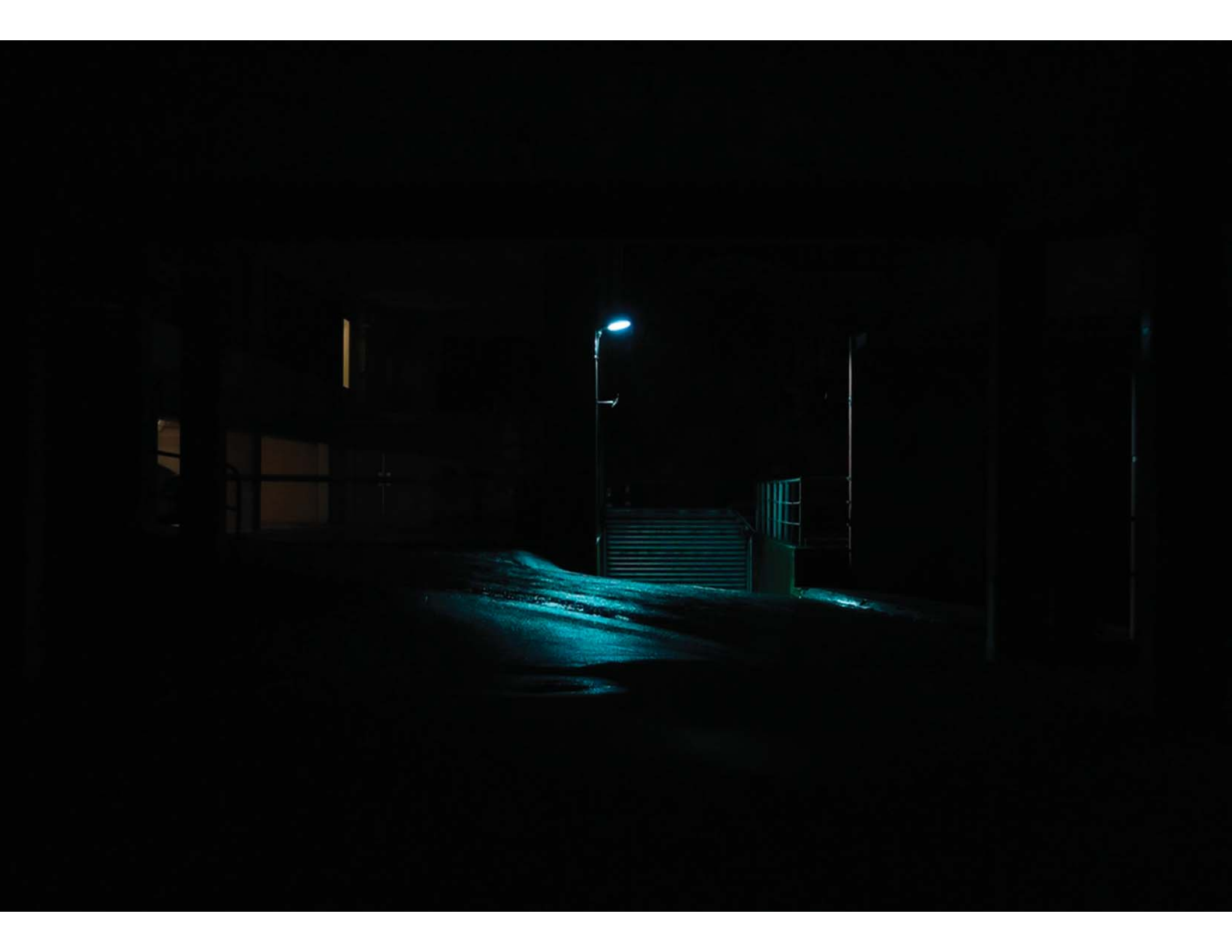


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William Hadwen is a Wellington-based New Zealand artist currently completing an MFA at Massey University. His major focus is time-based photographic work in immersive environments. Exploring intersections between documentary and fiction, his work is predominantly nightscapes in non-specific urban sites. These are experiential installations, playing on anticipation and strange states, with undertones of science fiction and cinema.

A special thank you for your help, guidance and support

*Supervisors*

Cassandra Barnett & Raul Ortega Ayala

*Lecturers and European Tour leaders*

Eugene Hansen & Jenny Gillam

*Informal advisor*

Derek Wallace

*AV technician*

Michael Bridgeman

*Musicians*

James McGregor-Macdonald

Mitchell Kirk

*Massey counsellor*

Sharman Robinson

*Graphic designer*

Kurt Shanly

*3D model and prop designer*

Richard Lett

*Parents*

Elizabeth Thomson & Warwick Hadwen

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I'M GOING WHERE THE COLD WIND BLOWS

An exegesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the  
degree of Master of Fine Arts at Massey University Wellington, New Zealand

W.W.A.Hadwen

2017



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## INTRODUCTION

What is time without conscious perception?

Quotidian spaces within seemingly lifeless environments we wouldn't typically think to consider, are brought to light, not for their potentially sinister value, but for an appreciation of the fleeting traces of life. What small events take place that define time passing? How do we affect what we don't consider? I am drawn to the calm of night-time, when what is left behind, the traces, become the inhabitants of these urban settings. It is what we leave behind that lingers.

An idea which I have been further developing during my MFA is the notion of time-based photography, which has become the main drive of the physical processing of my art practice. This concept in particular has acted as an applicable medium which can be crafted to work with sound or silence, projection, both photographic and time-based installation and is experiential for the audience. Over the past three years I have been conducting photographic studies of these sites within urban and industrial settings, searching for mundane, generally non-specific, anonymous sites that present interestingly lit structural, textural and overall compositional properties.

The work I make comes from a basis of documentative nightscape photography, while formally considering light, site, trace and time. With introduced aspects of fiction and subtle augmentations of the imagery, I simultaneously capture and create my experiences to be presented

in an isolated, dramatised, distinctive viewing space. A large part of my work, I have found, is more instinctive and spontaneous - looking for happy coincidences. My research is centred around artworks and installations, film, music, writing and experiences which I have been inspired by, the things which I feel my work and interests resonate with and that I can often see similarities to.

In July of this year I was part of a group that embarked on a European Fine Arts Study Tour while three international art events were coinciding – this only happens once a decade. 2017 was a special year too, as one of the events, Documenta 14 was split between Athens and Kassel, Germany. The tour began in Athens, then on to the Venice Biennale, followed by a short visit to Berlin. The bulk of Documenta 14 was in Kassel and we finished at Skulptur Projekte in Münster.

The tour lasted twenty-one days and involved viewing a large and diverse range of artworks most days. As a result of this, I was able to see a lot of work that I connected with, recording and researching as we went. This gave me a huge range of compelling works to choose from to suit my exegesis, and has heavily impacted on my practice as an artist, both conceptually and in the physical making and installation processes. Now, more than half of my artist research and the final imagery that I intend to work with was found and made on that amazing tour. I feel that my artistic ability and self awareness has gone through a sort of metamorphosis.



# 1 BASIS AND INFLUENCES

## 1.1 INTERSECTIONS OF FICTION AND DOCUMENTARY

An element which motivated me to explore and research throughout the Masters programme has been the idea of ‘fiction meets documentary’ – when the captured subject becomes less authentic and more altered. The intention of this first section is to progress through a series of examples that demonstrate different dynamics between fiction and documentary, while still presenting an air of both. The progression will move from works such as Werner Herzog’s *Lessons of Darkness*, which are more documentary than fiction, to works such as *The Truman Show*, which are more fiction than documentary. I am aware that fiction and documentary are not polar opposites, although they are often distinguished as true (documentary) and untrue (fiction).

In my work, this happens when the functionality of the space is altered, stepping away from documentary. This intervention brings with it an aspect of fiction, and as the functionality is displaced, we step away from documentary as the space is altered to suit the image. These alterations could sometimes be quite extensive. The work knows what it is and perhaps acknowledges this by not entirely hiding the means of becoming dramatised. An example of this can be found in Quentin Tarantino’s *The Hateful Eight* – a technique which I have observed in several of his films is a single spotlit area in the centre of the dining table. Considering this movie is set predominantly at night (this scene in particular is at night) and that the isolated cabin in which the film is based would have no means of electricity, this single spotlight defies the reality of the scene. It is an exaggeration, subtly impossible for it to exist but adds its own intensity and provides a point of reference. Despite the historical accuracy of the set and its characters, this little nod of acknowledgement, this admitting of fictionality, contributes to an entire visual language.

Attempting a similar strain of removal from documentary, my second semester final last year (2016) was a presentation consisting of three large darkroom prints in a small, square, vault-like space. Fixed into the ceiling were three spotlights, each finely framed to illuminate the sources of light within the images. The lights were attached to an automatic dimmer, fading the already dim lights in unison into darkness, which lasted for maybe five seconds, and then gradually turned on again, holding their brightness for a similar amount of time. The full cycle took about thirty seconds. While the lights synthesised a sort of day/night dynamic, as the lights faded another element became apparent – the illuminated windows of the images had been replaced with very precisely cut blue glow-in-the-dark vinyl, which completely shifted the audience’s interaction with the space as the lighting cycled. It was an intervention of these documentary photographs, drawing attention to a very specific element (the lights in the windows), focusing the work around this particular, accentuated feature.

For me, this was an interesting experiment investigating the intersection between fiction and documentary. I believe it was a success in this sense.

My final take on the work was that it felt too easy and pleasant. While I do want to create a memorable experience for the audience, this eventually started to feel like a magician’s trick, and despite the work sharing very similar properties with past artwork, it simply didn’t bear that same raw grittiness. I did feel like I was treading a fine line using this material, however, the work was activated in a different way to a projection, and opened up new possibilities for these darkroom prints. They gained another dimension.

---

W.W.A.Hadwen  
*Untitled 2*, 2016  
Ilford satin darkroom print,  
glow-in-the-dark vinyl  
20 x 24"

## 1.1a Science Fiction

“A planet in our solar system. White mountain ranges, clouds, the land shrouded in mist. The first creature we encountered tried to communicate something to us.” (Werner Herzog film collection: Lessons of Darkness – Trailer, n.d.)

The misleading expectation is that documentary is non-fiction, especially seeing as photography and image capture are such literal mediums, although it may seem a non-biased recording, there is a large amount of consideration and selectiveness in the process. There is a huge history of art history and theory critiquing this supposed ‘literalness’ or ‘veracity’ of the photographic image. Perhaps that is the defining difference between seeing work as a documentary photographer’s recording or an artist’s impression and interpretation. As director Errol Morris states in an interview about the film *The Act of Killing*, “Whatever documentary is, it’s not adult education. Presumably, it’s an art form where we are trying to communicate something about the real world. There’s a journalistic component, but it’s properly considered, to me, journalism plus something more than journalism” (Morris, 2013). Documentary does in fact have a large fictional quality to it. This can be found in its selectiveness and, strangely enough, in its facts. Werner Herzog says “I believe that

documentary filmmaking, and I am one of the great advocates, has to move away from the pure, fact-based movies, because facts, per se, do not constitute truth. That’s a big, big, big mistake” (Herzog, 2013). In his 1992 film, *Lessons of Darkness*, Herzog assumes the identity of a spectator from another planet, making bemused comments about the catastrophe with no attempt to inform the viewer of the factual circumstances behind it. The documentary is an exploration of the ravaged oil fields of post-Gulf War Kuwait, decontextualised and characterised in such a way as to emphasise the terrain’s cataclysmic strangeness. Straddling the line between documentary and science fiction, this near unbelievable event seems otherworldly.

Science fiction is often based on real world events and developments, this is just a lot closer to the real world than what we are used to.

The relevance of science fiction in my final work this year is actually encapsulated in the time-based photography and the installation itself. While the work is intended to hold a similar atmosphere of strangeness and unknown potential (similar to ‘The Zone’ in Tarkovsky’s 1979 film, *Stalker*). The installation is intended as a sort of portal to another place, as though the audience can step into it – the screen is non-existent. I want it to

appear close and attainable, avoiding showing long stretching straight lines and vanishing points in the center of the image. This isn’t a never ending road, this is a transitory space. A subway carriage joiner outside of physicality. Where does it take you? The artist’s memory of a place? One’s own memory? A parallel dimension? A post-apocalyptic future? Or simply to somewhere else? Or anywhere else?



---

(Images on page 10)

Werner Herzog  
*Lessons of Darkness*, 1992  
Film still

Andrei Tarkovsky  
*Stalker*, 1979  
Film still

(Image on page 11)

W.W.A.Hadwen  
*I'm going where the cold  
wind blows*, 2017  
Digital model still



This is a digital model for the initial planning of the final work. The idea behind my installation is to create a closed off experience where I can have total creative reign to change the space with flexibility and cater every aspect of the site to the work.

Stepping back into science fiction, my intention is to create a portal – to where? I'm not entirely sure – but that's the point. The interior of the container will be painted completely matte black and the plan is to make a screen which will take up an entire end of the space. Only one entrance and exit. Behind the screen will house the technology: projector, media player, sound desk, speakers and sound dampening. In contrast to my previous spreading out of the visual and audio, this time everything needs to be coming from the screen so that it can act as a window or doorway to this strange other place, as though one can easily step through it.

---

*Power Plant*, 2014  
Kinetic light and sound  
sculptures  
Wellington Botanic Garden

### 1.1b Altered Reality

During my Honours year of Fine Arts, I wrote a series of reviews as part of the 'Art in Context' paper. I have included some sections from them because they are still relevant and inform my practice.

Now, this next example of the confluence between fiction and documentary is the only influencing work in this section which actually had a physical nature to its audience engagement, so much so that one was able to wander through the works and become surrounded by them. The idealised landscape of the Wellington Botanic Garden, which it could be said, is really an intersection between fiction and documentary in itself, provided the landscape for these kinetic light and sound-based installations to take form.

#### *Power Plant* event review, 2015

A sectioned walkway wound through the gardens for visitors to become immersed in this Alice In Wonderland-esque experience, progressively making their way down from the top cable car station to the duck pond, through the central entrance gardens and back up to the cable car. A huge range of installations ensued as we progressed along this pathway guided by illuminated alien plants, insects and gramophones, catching glimpses of what was to come as strange lights wove through the dark unknown of the gardens. The installations appeared to



be meticulously considered whilst giving an illusion of spontaneity and playful response, seeming almost to be naturally interacting with their surroundings. These works employed sound as liberally as they did light, outlining and highlighting select areas of the gardens in a fantastic resonating array of constantly shifting sounds and light forms in different moods, claiming their domains in inventive and unique ways.

Many of the works were cleverly understated and unpredictable, with elements of surprise, fantastic but not 'theme park'. The artists' site-specific response is to the natural environment of this public space – they worked in situ

with what was already there, using the dark of night to their advantage. Changing and emphasising the brief encounters of a familiar, extraordinary mindset – a willingness to believe anything in the depths of night-time.

Mysterious, understated, clever, light and playful. Yet a certain dark undertone.

The charm of the show was the illusion and ambiguity which allowed for an imagined sense of drama and atmosphere of mysterious happenings as if waking up inside a dream. Haunting, it gets under your skin, you take away a fictitious unravelling within your subconscious.

### 1.1c Site Intervention and Narrative

Gregory Crewdson is known for his ability to construct complex narratives within single, meticulous, cinematic stills. In his series *Beneath The Roses* his intervention of pre-existing settings enhances the narratives with their inherent nature that he thoughtfully builds on and exaggerates. His initial reaction coming from a documentary perspective quickly becomes fiction.

#### Gregory Crewdson *Brief Encounters* film & *Beneath The Roses* exhibition review, 2015

Ben Shapiro's documentary *Brief Encounters*, released October 2012, follows Gregory Crewdson's photographic process during the making of his 8 year long series *Beneath The Roses*. Predominantly set in small-town American suburbia of western Massachusetts, he observes and presents a very unique cinematic photographic style, with scenes of romanticised, fictitious, almost fantastical moments of contemplation and urban decay.

The film is very affecting, narrated primarily by interviews with the artist and also various writers and people who Crewdson works with to create sublime imagery. A psychological tension festers in worlds that are seemingly real, searching for a moment – a perfect moment, with real characters who he has generally found locally. The viewing experience is enhanced by a very simple and mesmerising piano soundtrack.

Crewdson talks a lot about his own life within his work, drawing from past experience and observation. His father was a psychoanalyst with his practice in a room under the family home – young Gregory was not allowed in and it was always a place of ambiguity, curiosity and mystery. A fascination for what lies beneath really does come through in his work.

Each image is narrative based but without plot or character development, simply providing a tableau with real characters and an atmosphere accentuated with

smoke machines and an excess of carefully considered lighting – it is up to the viewer to figure out the details for themselves and become immersed in the image. A very personal narrative to anyone who takes the time to work it out.

The images in this series project a sense of social dilapidation, people and places perpetually aging, consumed with neglect and incompleteness. Depressingly fluorescent in their desperate dependence on the flawed American Dream.



Gregory Crewdson  
*Untitled (Birth)*, 2005  
*Beneath The Roses* series

With regard to his influences, Crewdson seems rather taken by scenarios that are initially inviting but with emerging unsettling and sinister possibilities, as in Alfred Hitchcock's *Psycho*, David Lynch's *Blue Velvet* and photographic works by Dianne Arbus. He is also known for directly referencing old movies such as *Psycho* – the hotel room used in one of Crewdson's images, *Untitled (Birth)*, looks very similar to that used in the film – there are these layers, depths of understanding to his works that can reveal themselves over time. The *Psycho* reference really gives the image a disturbing atmosphere that I only suspected as a worst case scenario.

There is a real sense of ambiguity within his imagery, a blurring of reality and fiction.

#### Gregory Crewdson *Sanctuary* exhibition review, 2015

In his series *Sanctuary*, Gregory Crewdson approaches old film sets very similarly to his last series, *Beneath The Roses*. The key difference this time is that the fictions that he builds are constructed on top of a place which is already a pre-existing fiction.

I first saw Gregory Crewdson's photographic series *Sanctuary* when it was exhibited at the Wellington City Gallery in 2013. It consisted of a group of 41 black and white photographs, shot digitally and produced with minimal reworking. The City Gallery exhibition featured three separate series within his practice – *Fireflies*, *Beneath The Roses* and *Sanctuary*. In comparison to the higher budget and better known *Beneath The Roses*, in which Crewdson's perfectionist cinematic style of photography reached its apex, in its study of rural American towns and the dilapidation of the flawed American Dream, this series seemed to be a kind of release of these meticulously elaborate refinements that he was confined to for so long. Being his first series to be produced outside of the United States, on the abandoned 1940's movie sets of Cinecittà Studios in Rome, his discovery of this place was timed perfectly

with the generation of work he was ready to move into. To Crewdson, it appears that Cinecittà Studios acted as a kind of physical manifestation of a compilation of others' imaginations that have been laid out for him, dilapidated and forgotten, fictional faces of buildings made of hardboard and plaster, propped up by scaffolding with no interior or substance. It offered an insight into the human condition that he could for once view from a third person perspective, adding his own touch in the choice of framing, processing and subtle changes made to the composition (with smoke, lighting, time of day, etc.). This new imagery has a real sense of spontaneity, no longer needing to have a total change of location between images



---

Gregory Crewdson  
*Sanctuary*  
book cover, 2010

or to fabricate a scene; the fabrication was already there. This surrealistic place has been used for high-powered film productions over the last 70 years. The diversity of location between sets was so sudden that he could record the contrast within single images. Another adaptation to the previous series is that these images are virtually devoid of human presence. These abandoned outdoor film sets have been made the subject, allowing for character to be found in inanimate objects and studies of light, infused with the atmosphere of movies made over many years by directors such as Federico Fellini and Joseph Goebbels. The reason I referred to this as a study of the human condition earlier is that this removal of human subject also removes a certain level of subconscious response and assumption when viewing a human subject. The viewer has now taken up the role of the lost characters in *Beneath The Roses*, falling into a strange artifice between the ordinary and the extraordinary.

In considering this aspect of documentary-based-fiction in Crewdson's series, we find two layers. The first being that the subject matter of the imagery is in fact a fiction of its own, romanticised and reconstructed by a film industry. The second being the guise and perception of the artist, aspects being exaggerated and dialed through a very particular lens and sensibility. It is fictional documentary of fictional documentary.

### 1.1d Constructed/ Fabricated Settings – fiction disguised as documentary

Now we are at the point in this section's progression where fiction has overtaken documentary. This is where photography-based artists such as Jeff Wall and Thomas Wrede, who prefer to construct their scenes (building their sites, hiring actors, creating their own scenes) rather than build on scenes they have come across, as Gregory Crewdson and Werner Herzog have done.

“Wrede uses commonplace objects for the staging of the images: toy cars, classic houses and pine trees taken from a model train kit are placed on North Sea beaches, in coal dumps, on garbage heaps and piles of rubble. As a consequence, the compositions simultaneously depict a sense of the monumental and the idyllic, reduced to an existence dependent upon the lens of the camera. The sheer expanse of the environment is thrown into large-scale perspective through sparsely spread signs of civilisation.”  
(Magazine – Idealised Construction, n.d.)



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Thomas Wrede  
*Fred & Red's Cafe*, 2015  
95 x 120"

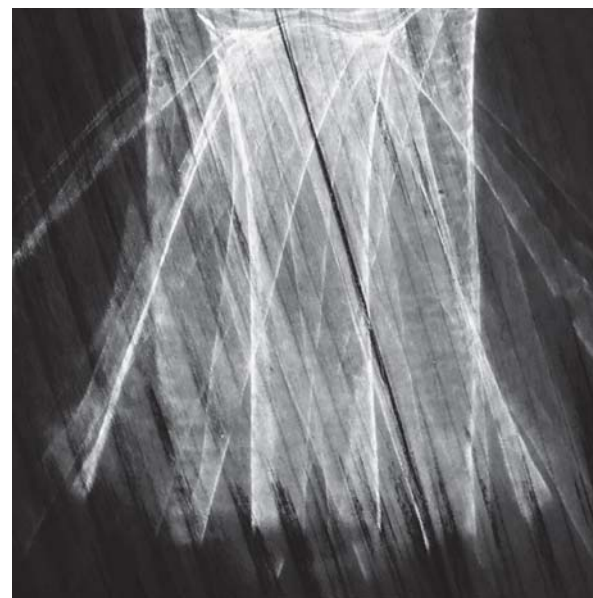
## 1.1e Perception

### Sharman's reading

During the first half of this year, I decided to see a Massey University counsellor as part of my research. I was interested in talking about my art practice with her. It involved answering questions to gain a psychologist's reading in relation to my work, and the emotional and psychological effects it may have on an audience. We talked about my motivations, the making process and how I had reached this point. She offered insights into conscious, unconscious and subliminal aspects of my thought processes. Consciously perceptive, she was able to help me become more aware of the angles we might not necessarily consider.

We talked about the ways people look at different spaces, and how these works offer an altered perception of these settings. Little truths, alternate facts, added value. Letting people in on a secret that is right under their noses. When somebody sees the work, hopefully it subtly changes the way they look at things.

This was of great help to me – strengthening, focusing and directing my practice – especially installation processes.



---

W.W.A.Hadwen  
*Light study, 2017*  
Digital photographic  
drawing

### Perception divergence

Consider science fiction concepts that explore how science and technology might alter the very core of human experience. What would happen if we could enhance that one deeply unique human feature that is consciousness?

An interesting thought struck me last year, while watching a science-fiction short film titled *Adam*, which was being used to demonstrate the Unity engine (a 3D animation engine). I have found that often these short animated sci-fi films explore some very intriguing concepts. This one in particular looks to be based around artificial intelligence, if not artificial replication of human minds and consciousness uploading. It follows the awakening (or perhaps conception) of a humanoid robot who immediately struggles to breathe, hinting to their probable human past. As the story progresses, this character discovers that they are one of many seemingly exact replicas of one another. Whether or not this was the case, I became fascinated by the thought of a single mind being

replicated and applied to multiple individual perspectives – this single, unique mind at one point branched out to become many, each becoming their own from the moment of their awakening.

The makeup of all those different experiences, directions and choices are circumstantial to the replicated individual. Slightly different circumstances makes the exact same person react completely differently.

In relation to my current practice, I considered perhaps the reverse of this

concept – to bring multiple individual perspectives into one, sharing the same experience from the same perspective, regardless of personal histories. A short period in time in which these consciousnesses temporarily align.

There was also very little dialogue, in fact there were only about three relatively mundane words spoken throughout the entire video. This was a great example of a very definitive and strong story being told without necessarily being worded, instead told through visual language and circumstance.



The Unity Demo Team  
*Adam*, 2016  
Film still

### Perception convergence

It is a sense that we all know; as illustrated by *The Truman Show* – the feeling of being singular, alone – that perhaps your perspective is in fact the only perspective and that the rest of the world is either playing along, a simulation or simply don't see or notice the things you do. The idea of being a unique individual in a sea of unique individuals. Before we allow ourselves to be grounded, our minds can take us to very strange places.

This is a reality show of an entirely constructed fiction – except for the central focus, Truman. The basis of the entire programme is to observe his authentic, human reactions to his full immersion into this fabricated environment. A Hollywood replica of idealised American society. A representational reality that everybody is in on except for one individual, whose entire reality is constructed around him and is catered to both his response and their influence over his life, their plan for him.

Thinking of these works as studies in perception, perhaps this aspect of immersiveness has value in one becoming more able to perceive the space as a reality. The more senses it appeals to as a believable, coherent, consistent experience, the more it can be accepted and embodied.

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Peter Weir  
*The Truman Show*, 1998  
Film still



## 2. MAKING PROCESS

### 2.1 TIME-BASED PHOTOGRAPHY

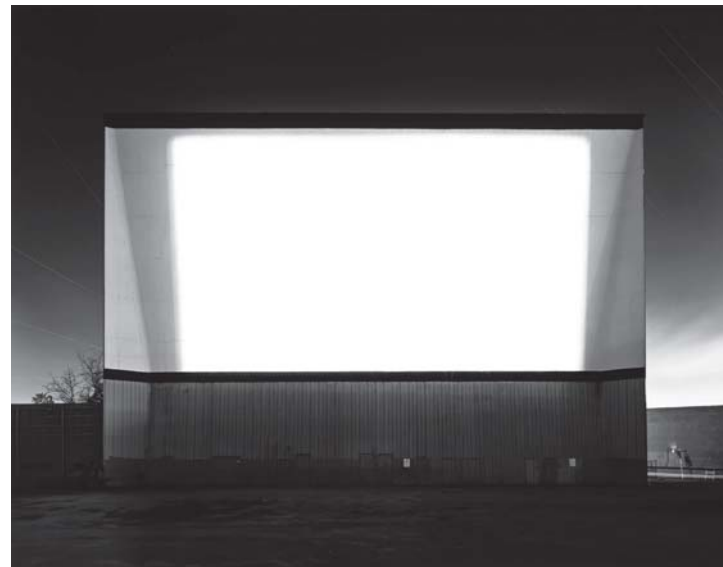


These scenes that I capture in my time-based photographic works have a documentative aspect to them – but they are also displaced by a lack of information with regard to location, potential intervention and elements of functionality and selectiveness. Somewhere between observation and storytelling. These time-based photographic series have certainly had this element about them as formal documentations of time, finding separate situations and creating a functional progression, linking them together to form a cohesive narrative – more to be situated as an overarching experience with moments of tension and release, rather than a linear progression.

Light is a reflection of not only the subject, but the process by which it is captured, developed and presented. In considering the imagery itself, it has a very simple, defined and purposeful compositional placement – aiding in the composition and the overall feel of the work. These single points of light are able to accentuate textured surfaces, silhouettes,

definition and form, while also providing balance within the image and a sense of safety and sanctuary from the enveloping darkness.

Another photographic practice which could be classified as ‘time-based photography’ is Hiroshi Sugimoto’s *Theatres* series, which involves long, film-length exposures of screens in cinemas and outdoor theatres. The entire scene is illuminated by a single large central light source (the screen), which is also the subject and balance of the composition. Capturing an entire movie within a single exposure, it bears a measure of timelessness and contemplation – a reverence, of history and displacement of the site.



---

W.W.A.Hadwen  
*Untitled*, 2016  
Timed-based  
photographic still

---

Hiroshi Sugimoto  
*Los Altos Drive-In, Lakewood*,  
1993  
*Theatres* series

---

W.W.A.Hadwen  
*Höhle der vergessenen  
Träume (Cave of Forgotten  
Dreams)*, 2017  
Digital photographic  
drawing

“In these photographs, which seem to condense not just all the light, but all the emotion contained in an entire film, theaters appear as divine and awe-inspiring as cathedrals” (Dunne, C. 2016).

### 2.1a Terrain Vague and strange states

“With the coining of the term ‘Terrain Vague’, Ignasi de Solà-Morales is interested in the form of absence in the contemporary metropolis. This interest focuses on abandoned areas, on obsolete and unproductive spaces and buildings, often undefined and without specific limits, places to which he applies the French term *terrain vague*. Regarding the generalised tendency to “reincorporate” these places to the productive logic of the city by transforming them into reconstructed spaces, Solà-Morales insists on the value of their state of ruin and lack of productivity. Only in this way can these strange urban spaces manifest themselves as spaces of freedom that are an alternative to the lucrative reality prevailing in the late capitalist city. They represent an anonymous reality.” (Terrain Vague, n.d.)

---

David Lynch  
*A window and a real estate  
opportunity in Lodz*, 2014  
*Factory Photographs*  
publication

### Uncertainty

Starting with this idea of ‘the missing step’ – when you are climbing a staircase in the dark and it ends earlier than you expect, there is a moment of doubt, as one suddenly enters a panicked void in which nothing makes sense and everything we know goes out the window for a brief instant. It is strange how this sudden mental adaptation comes with a certain willingness to be swept away from this physical norm which we are used to. Is this real? Where did my understanding of the physical world go wrong?

I found a similar moment of doubt and lostness when we went for a swim in the Otaki River on the first day of Wiki Hui Tua Tahī (grad camp) – without fully comprehending the depth of the river, I dived in at what I thought was a fairly gradual downward angle, letting my momentum carry me into the unknown depths. At first my mission had been to find the bottom but it soon became



apparent that this wouldn’t happen (not during this breath anyway) and so I angled my body upright and started toward the surface, only to find that where I thought the surface would be, merely proved to be more water, this happened maybe three times as I prepared for my face to breach the surface but nothing happened – there was no panic, or discomfort, I simply found myself in a strange state in which I felt I’d left the world I knew behind.



“I just like going into strange worlds. A lot more happens when you open yourself up to the work and let yourself act and react to it. Every work ‘talks’ to you, and if you listen to it, it will take you places you never dreamed of” (Giloy-Hirtz, 2014, p.13). David Lynch’s book, *Factory Photographs*, provides an intersection between film and photography.

His construction of the image, while less painstakingly considered than cinematic shots, presents similar values of subject, symmetry, drama in lighting and tone, and symbolism.

This cinematic, almost theatrical and staged style of photography, similar to Gregory Crewdson and Weegee (who I will talk more about on page 24), seems to instinctively take on its own fiction, simply by being. It is a relief to see that this can still be achieved, if not better, as a spontaneous shot.

Following a similar approach of finding other worlds in the mundane, by means of spontaneity, I managed to snap this image in passing during our time in Berlin – at first, it was simply a security light reacting with a concrete texture in an abstract way. But, once it was a recording on my phone screen, the reading changed completely – it became a tunnel, or a cave, it leads to the surface, but what are we viewing from? Is it an old, ruined structure, buried by time?

Instantly, it made me think of Werner Herzog's *Cave of Forgotten Dreams* – a documentary about human's most ancient art in Chauvet Cave, France – dating back 32,000 years. Open-ended possibilities.

### Darkness

There is a certain intangibility in the dead of night. We've all felt it – suddenly the impossible becomes completely reasonable and dark shapes can take the form of exactly what you don't want to see. There is a vulnerability to night-time, as though the darkness is thick and can swallow you whole. These ordinary, banal, workaday spaces that I seem drawn toward, take on a certain extent of storytelling for anybody who manages to notice what would typically be a rather boring sight during the day. Traces exist within these seemingly lifeless environments, ones we wouldn't typically think to consider – and they are brought to light, not for their potentially sinister value,



but for an appreciation of the fleeting traces of life. Spaces for and of contemplation, they are ambiguous and allow one's mind to drift, to make associations, narratives, commentary – and then let go. These strange situations can be hard to rationalise, as one has to relinquish any expectations. Filmmaker/ director David Lynch says "On the first viewing, one feels them being dark and almost threatening. But that's only one side. These places of stillness and dignity, they have a poetic and even romantic aura, a beauty..." (Giloy-Hirtz, 2014, p.14).

### Colour

I have found that low saturation rather than straight grayscale in my time-based photographic images enhances the sense of depth and accessibility, and also helps to navigate away from a Film Noir genre and connotations with crime and an underlying violence. There is still a sense of mystery and presence, but it isn't necessarily threatening or ominous. Black and white has a distance and detachment, whereas colour has a closer association to our own experiences, softening and perhaps more painterly. American photographer Stephen Shore, who is known for his images of banal scenes and objects and his use of colour in art photography, says "Colour expands a photograph's palette and adds a new level of descriptive information

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W.W.A.Hadwen  
*Un estat de somni*  
(*A state of dream*), 2017  
Digital photographic study,  
desaturated palette



and transparency to the image. It is more transparent because one is stopped by the surface – colour is more like how we see. It has added description because it shows the colour of light and the colours of a culture or an age” (Shore, 2010, p.18). Conversely, David Lynch says, “I wouldn’t know what to do with [colour]. Colour to me is too real. It’s limiting. It doesn’t allow too much of a dream. The more you throw black into a colour, the more dreamy it gets.... Black has depth. It’s like a little egress; you can go into it, and because it keeps on continuing to be dark, the mind kicks in, and a lot of things that are going on in there become manifest. And you start seeing what you are afraid of. You start seeing what you love, and it becomes like a dream.” (Giloy-Hirtz, 2014, p.29). Black and white is a view of reality almost exclusive to the photographic world, both still and time-based. There are few other situations that alter our visual perception so strangely – it has a long history with very ingrained connotations. Colour is reality, and has a different effect on the viewer, perhaps because grayscale has another level of removal from the captured situation, making it seem more ambiguous and detached from what we know.

### The act of photography

Introduced aspects of fiction and intervention have always held a somewhat undercover, subtle yet mood changing place in my image making. The position of the camera and its settings play a large part, but in the past I have also moved, introduced and taken away objects and played with lighting and motion sensors. These all contribute to a perhaps more imagined, idealised vision of the space as opposed to its literal nature. Of course, the fictional nature of this imagery comes from non-fictional physicality, but then to consider what Richard Kelvar, another American photographer, asks “once captured, is it still reality?” (Howarth & McLaren, 2011, p.179). Does the selective processing of a single image augment the authenticity of a photographed situation? With regard to these small events taking place, the preference is for random events to occur rather than be planned; however, in particular circumstances, subtle intervention has felt appropriate. There is a play between something happening and the anticipation for something to happen, and a defined event of movement or change, such as a light turning on or an automatic roller door opening, isn’t always needed.

### 2.1b Intuitive Making

#### Encounter

In a preview for the upcoming documentary *The Seed Beneath The Snow*, Dr. Stephen Harding discusses an idea of encounter. “Well, encountering means really meeting something, in a way that goes beyond one’s intellectual process. So, normally in the West, particularly as a scientist, as I am, one’s taught to encounter, say a tree, through one’s ideas. So, how did the shape of that tree come about through the process of natural selection? What might the forces have been that made, say the sycamore leaf, the shape it is? And, you know, it becomes a sort of instinct when you’re a scientist and an ecologist, to look at Nature in that sort of way. That’s not encounter. Encounter is when that conceptual structure vanishes. And you actually meet the being, as the being, coming forth from itself, as itself, revealing itself to you in a way that is beyond your intellect. In a way that’s much more deeply intuitive, and much harder to express. Infact, scientific language is inappropriate for this kind of encounter. It’s poetry that does it. It’s a poetic encounter” (*Encountering Another Being*, 2017). He had moments of this kind of

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(Image page 22)

**W.W.A.Hadwen**  
*Untitled, 2016*  
Time-based  
photographic still,  
enhanced palette,  
cool and warm

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Weegee (Arthur Fellig)  
*Two Offenders in the  
Paddy Wagon, circa 1942*

encounter during his field studies, researching the muntjac deer during his doctorate. Venturing into the wood in order to observe them, he would have to wait. “And then, if I was lucky, a muntjac would appear, and just stand, even for just a few seconds. And if I was lucky, would look in my direction. Then time stood still. Time stopped. And there was this infinite moment of meeting between myself and the muntjac... I could have an intuitive perception in that instant” (Encountering Another Being, 2017). Similar to my experiences with these urban environments, these moments of synchronicity provide the framework for my practice. If we can step outside of ourselves, observing and absorbing the setting we inhabit from a non-biased perspective, this state can sometimes be activated.

### Weegee

One documentary-style photographer who was among the first to consciously explore a literal reading of the little known grizzly side of the American Dream was New York freelance crime scene newspaper photographer Arthur Fellig, otherwise known as ‘Weegee’ (in reference to Ouija boards), for his eerily intuitive knack of beating the police to a crime scene. Weegee’s nightscape

photography from 1950’s New York is something that I have been interested in for a long time now. The book *Weegee* features an essay by Allene Talmey, which includes a brief biography and a hard-hitting description of a very direct photographer. His crime and New York nightlife imagery takes on a sinister, yet intriguing quality – a rawness, providing an observation from a person who looks at such scenes on a regular basis and makes a living from encapsulating crime and pain. “Only people nourished him” (Talmey, 1978). Weegee’s work was always of literal human activity, unstaged and exposed, photographing unaware and often intoxicated strangers. His sense of lighting was always impromptu and convincingly dramatic, “sometimes I even used Rembrandt side lighting, not letting too much blood show. And I made the stiff look real cozy, as if he were taking a short nap” (Talmey, 1978).

This ‘Rembrandt lighting’ was Weegee’s artistic intervention, the one term he adapted from art. By this he referred to the use of a dark background with the subject in bright light; he accomplished tonal selection automatically by the use of flash. This lighting was the key to the striking effect of his photographs – with it, he claimed, he could render a gruesome scene less



distasteful, while still providing enough high-contrast detail to help the publisher to sell newspapers, even when reproduced in the dots of newspaper halftones.

I have always found Weegee’s stark black and white street photography to have a certain timelessness to it, its raw honesty offers an accessibility outside of fashion and current affairs, presenting an openness that can be understood from any era – it is in this special quality that I feel I can relate and apply to my own work.



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W.W.A.Hadwen  
*I want to wake up  
in a paper cup, 2017*  
Photographic study  
in black and white

### Rembrandt Lighting

During our time in Kassel, Germany this year, we took a day to visit the Old Masters Picture Gallery (Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister) in Wilhelmshöhe Palace. As each floor progressed through the generations of classical painting, it gradually built up to the top floor, which was almost entirely Rembrandt. As soon as I saw his paintings, I felt as though I had woken up – it made the mountain of other works rather redundant, really. His attention to form and light was amazing to see – two small paintings in particular caught my attention, tucked away in the back of the exhibition. Both portraits – one was of the painter himself, and the other was of an old man. Both were quite dark, with very specific, bright shafts of light dramatically defining their faces. That technique of high contrast for three-dimensional modelling is chiaroscuro, which is what Weegee used for dramatic effect. Neither bore as much honed, overcooked detail as the majority of the show – they were very understated, with a quiet dignity. As though they had a personal value to the

painter, perhaps made in the early days of his artistic career or made to be kept or given, rather than sold.

These works resonated with me – the simple and surprisingly dramatic lighting informed the work I made for the remainder of the trip. Although the imagery that I am intending to use in my final was shot before this, there are certainly similarities in the treatments of light in relation to form and its interaction with the composition of the image.

There are several dramatised aspects to the presentation of my works, one of the more obvious being their monochromatic or desaturated appearances. These traditional, formal qualities speak to time and temporality. This is the headspace I look for when I'm making my work, to enter a space of intuition, instinctive reaction and spontaneity, as if in a dream-state. To become lost in these complex levels in a strange dimension of understanding.

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(Left)  
Rembrandt van Rijn  
*Self portrait at an early age*,  
1628  
Oil on oak panel  
23.4x17.2cm

(Right)  
Rembrandt van Rijn  
*Old Man with Beard*, 1630  
Oil on panel  
18x17.5 cm





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W.W.A.Hadwen  
*Liminal photographic  
drawing, 2017*  
Digital photographic study

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W.W.A.Hadwen  
*untitled*, 2017  
Time-based  
photographic still

### 2.1c Process Fluidity

I consider the chosen process of a series of work to be as much a part of the conceptual framework as the themes I am exploring. Each contributes to the conveying of the overall narrative I am attempting to construct.

Process fluidity, with an exploratory photographic basis has become a large part of my practice, I want to use whatever is required as a means to an end, rather than specifically producing a photograph or video installation etc. An example of this process fluidity has been in my attempts to achieve similar experiences through both digital and analogue means. Both employ techniques of abstract documentary, with similar timing but entirely different media and process. Each work presented a scenario to the viewer which at first glance appeared to be simply a photographic image. Both works measured time similarly by use of an artificial fade which had been added later in the process as part of the presentation. The digital, time-based photographic works appear at first to be still nightscape images, but to the viewer's surprise, something moves and they will realise that it is a video. Similarly with my last analogue work, as the lights faded, the audience was met with the surprise of the glow-in-the-dark (see image page 8).



With this work in particular, the installation involved projecting the time-based photographic work onto a black FilmPro (paint specifically designed for projections) painted canvas. Once the image was projected, I painted in the spotlights with white FilmPro, giving the work a very high contrast between light and dark. The effect was intense, and although the work was received as “overcooked”, it had quite an impression on

its viewers. The test was an exciting discovery and this process fluidity allows my work to step outside the bounds of conventional photography as a medium, just as it does with painting, video, drawing and event-based installation. Instead it is a combination of the disciplines, making it hard to pinpoint any preconceptions of these works without having personally seen them.

## 2.1d Temporality

In early August, we arrived back from our European art-related adventures. The next evening, I was invited to attend a screening of artist Andy Goldsworthy's latest biographical film. At this point, I don't believe I had heard of him before. Due to my increasingly difficult jetlag, I was only able to stay conscious for about a third of the film in total, being nudged awake for parts which my Dad thought I would appreciate, only to stay awake for about a minute, after which time I would pass out again. Funny thing though, although it would

have been great to have seen the film in its entirety, those key snippets have stayed in my mind, as though each is separated from the rest and can be individually appreciated. His work is methodical, and involves exploration and adventure as a key part of the making process, as in my work. Also his site interventions resonated with me, playing with dynamics between both human and natural interventions and temporality. He works with what is available, within the site of the work.

Now, in relation to temporality, Andy Goldsworthy's performative works do have a lifespan. From what I saw, the majority of his work was set outdoors, and once he had completed it, he was happy to leave it to the mercy of nature. This gives his work a freshness and a spontaneity, a natural energy that cannot be contained and has its own time to exist and then dissipate.



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Andy Goldsworthy  
*Leaning Into the Wind*, 2017  
Film still



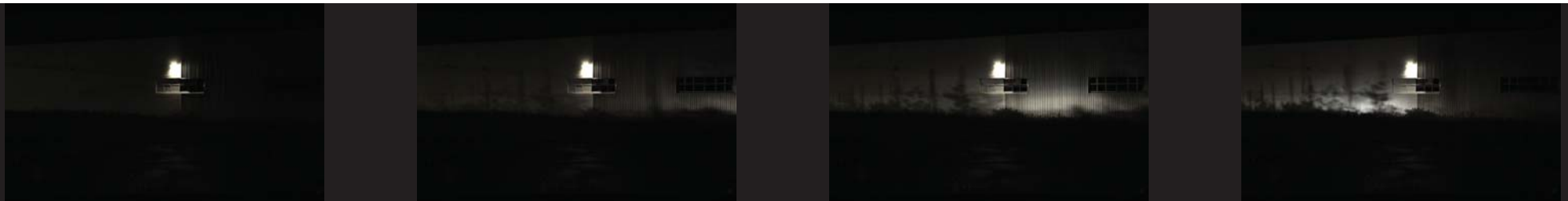
**Editing: pacing, transitions, sequence**

As this section about my photographic process and making comes to a close and we begin to talk about time as we segue into audio process and making, this seems like an opportune time to talk about the pacing, transitions and sequencing within these time-based works.

Firstly, this integration of an aspect of time into my photographic work has been a revelation for my practice and I'd say this brings us to about three years of development in the ways of time-based photography. Considering the naming of the concept, it did actually take until the

masters programme for me to decide to try making it more time-based than photographic. This was the point where, rather than having very rigid timings around image durations and transitions, I started playing around with them and working collaboratively with musicians in order to produce soundtracks to pair with the visuals, but more on that later (see page 32).

In considering visual pacing, transitions and sequencing in particular, I really am starting to realise that it has actually been a long development. For starters, sequencing has become virtually non-existent and I prefer to work with single images on relatively seamless loops now, whereas





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W.W.A.Hadwen  
*untitled*, 2017  
Time-based photographic  
sequence stills

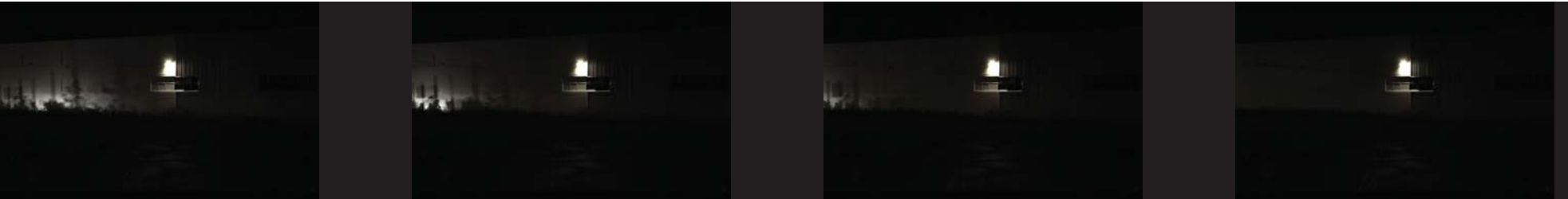
I previously made sequences of at least four different situations, transitioning with a drawn out black fade. This did provide a sense of progression and narrative to the work but now that I have put it to the test several times, the single image by itself is so much easier to engage with – no need to feel rushed in case it will transition soon, no treating the work like a screening and leaving as soon as you see it loop. The original intention of people coming in, staying as long as they please, and then leaving has finally reached a point where I don't have to worry. The audience can look after themselves now, engaging with the kind of timelessness one would normally give to a static work.

#### A workbook entry from April 2017

A narrative in this work is played out through the medium itself. As the sequence progresses, the levels of light increase and the sound is almost stretched thin, as though the work is simultaneously growing and straining. At a point, the light shuts off and the sound falls to silence – it is as though it has collapsed in on itself, reverting to its photographic nature. All momentum of time is lost and it is forced to start again.

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W.W.A.Hadwen  
*untitled*, 2017  
Time-based photographic  
seamless loop stills  
(first test)



## 2.2 SOUND

This consideration of time, development and a linear progression of a narrative of sorts eventually led me to integrate an audio aspect into my time-based photographic installations. At first it started as a collaborative/commission process where I would work with musicians and other artists individually in order to produce a 'soundtrack' that felt up to standard, as I hadn't had much experience in audio editing and didn't feel technically competent enough. I wanted to have a better handle on these skills before putting them into practice. This process of collaboration and commission was a fresh and exciting way of working but eventually I discovered that I am really the only one who can make appropriate sound compositions to seamlessly integrate them into the installation. I needed to make the entire process my own before working with others again. I have gradually built up a library of various sounds to pair with the movements, reactions and scenes of these urban sites. For several works, I managed to produce audio pairings that, rather than be made in a musical sense, were more intended as ambient and experiential, drawing from – I was happy with what I had made. But, as we get closer to the final work of the year, I realise that what I have been producing still hasn't reached the level that I am happy with. While

I feel completely capable of making sound that I am satisfied with, as yet I'm not there technically. I do want to be producing my own audio but that may have to come later. As a result of this, I have again been working with my cousin, James McGregor-Macdonald. While I still want to make the audio my own, my struggle is in the generating of these audio textures. So the plan is to have him produce these base textures and it will be my job to manipulate them to suit the time-based imagery and add in any extra sounds it may need.

This aspect of introduced audio has been the most obvious dramatisation and the biggest step away from specifically documentative imagery. Through experimenting with different musicians and studying specific film soundtracks and music, this process has gradually formed and re-formed to become a key part of my time-based photographic series. I have needed to be very careful in avoiding it dictating the mood of the experience, consciously considering and avoiding obvious contextual relationships with both structured music and film soundtracks.

This has helped to direct attention away from viewing these spaces as scary or potentially dangerous – showing the work as more of an

appreciation than a warning or daring venture. Audio has its own physicality as well as the video and can accentuate points of tension, anticipation, progression, development and cycle.

### Time

Time is an element that is used in the production of both digital and analogue photographs and video (in the sense that they are captured by means of extended exposures). A very specific period of time is recorded and, in the case of analogue processing, it is solidified into a single event, and in the case of digital time-based, it is literally documented in real time to be repeated over and over again to an audience. Past periods of time can be witnessed by a third party, to experience the perspective of the original observer. In a zone that is past, present and future all at one time, timelessness.

The purpose of this next progression is to show where I place my practice between diegetic sound and non-diegetic sound.

## 2.2a Diegetic sound and silence

Diegetic sound is a term used in filmmaking to distinguish the sound which appears natural on screen, sounds made as a direct reaction of something on-screen that would cause it.

Susan Philipsz' immersive audio work was made up entirely of silence and diegetic sound, it was exactly what one would expect to hear after reading the title. Rather than using the standard big black box speakers, the artist consciously selected a sound system which was reminiscent of the musical instruments that had been recorded (brass and woodwind). It was a very spare and open installation, allowing its audience to wander through and experience the soundscape, which was different wherever they stood. The sounds of the old, war torn instruments playing single notes as they built up a crescendo from nothingness and then faded away again, Susan Philipsz was also taking advantage of silence and void – there is a drama in silence, an anticipation.

The effect was haunting and contemplative, sometimes discordant but harmonious and soothing nonetheless. There was a sadness.



Susan Philipsz  
*War Damaged Musical  
Instruments, 2015*  
Audio installation

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Ben Russell  
*Black and White Trypps*  
*Number Three*, 2007  
Time-based immersive  
installation



### 2.2b Diegetic sound becomes non-diegetic sound & dynamics between camouflage and noticeable

Okay so this was a pretty unexpected, surprisingly satisfying work – within a small/ medium size room, a video/ audio/ immersive work was playing very loudly. The imagery was of a mosh pit, close up studies of cramped, exhausted, sweaty, intoxicated, ecstatic young people at a high energy rock concert. The audio started as the gig itself, very loud and thrashy music. As the gig progressed, so did the audio as the actual music gradually became muffled and pitched down as an atmospheric drone rose up and over the beat. Without us noticing, the audio had very gradually moved from diegetic sound to non-diegetic sound. As this happened, the visuals started to go in and out

of focus as its subjects drifted in and out of delirium.

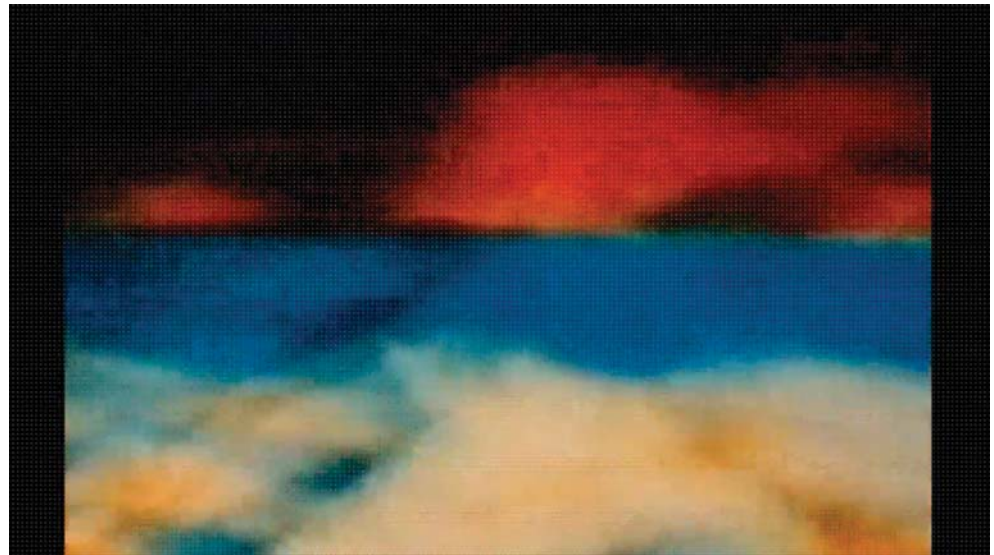
There can be an interplay between the camouflage and the noticeable. The audio change was surprisingly hard to notice as it fitted the energy of the work so well. Audio plays on atmosphere that comes naturally with the work.

It is what is most balanced, relevant and suited that disappears and becomes less noticeable – points of tension, displacement and imbalance give a work its pertinence and its character.

### 2.2c Non-Diegetic sound

Non-diegetic sound is a term used to distinguish the sound which is not caused by anything on, or hinted to off the screen – sounds such as narration or soundtrack that do not naturally belong.

Barbara Hammer's *Sanctus* was through and through an abstract time-based work with non-diegetic sound as its audio. Featuring brightly coloured x-ray images moving in unison to a high energy soundtrack. It reminded me of Len Lye's scratched film works, slightly mad but very enjoyable and aesthetically pleasing.



## 2.2d Where I locate my practice in this progression

*Un Hombre que camina* was a very powerful artwork, not only its audio but the setting that it embodied and the role of the artist as the central character as well. His procession across the salt flats captured beautifully with documentary-style imagery. There were subtle shifts between reality and augmented reality with the occasional obvious edits to aid the narrative. The work took its time with its suitable progression, in sequence without being jarring.

In considering the spectrum of works presented in this audio section, I believe this work falls into a similar placement as my current works. The soundtrack was largely diegetic, all of the natural sounds captured.

The point being that the music/audio in these films is intended to be subliminal, to simply be an aid to the film as a sort of emotional ground music while simultaneously being somewhat emotionless. This is an interesting thought because it makes one consider what audio should be noticeable and memorable, and what audio should camouflage into the visual?



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Enrique Ramirez  
*Un Hombre que camina*,  
2014  
Time-based installation

## 3. DELIVERY AND RESPONSE

### 3.1 SITE/ SETTING/ IMMERSIVE/ INSTALLATION/ RESPONSE

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(Image page 37)

W.W.A.Hadwen  
*untitled, 2016*  
*Time-based photographic*  
*still*

This year in particular, I have been spending a lot of time on installation, experimenting with alternative presentation sites and ways of presenting: various types of projectors, film pro paint, audio layouts and overall optimising of the experience to make it as immersive as possible.

The intention of this section is to firstly define the relevance of the sites and settings in which my time-based photography is produced, and also the sites, settings and environments in which these works are installed. Similar to the previous section, it is a progression – only this time, it begins within the imagery of the work and shifts to the installation site and the dynamics they have between them. Site is a concept in reference to both the capturing and the presentation. It is the initial reaction to the physical setting itself which sparks the beginning of these visuals, and the selection and altering of the spaces in which they are presented that contain and isolate the experience.

These alternative ways of presenting, and the effect that different presentations have, offer dramatic and dynamic ways to transport and shift one's mindset. I have always found my work to be more evocative in the dark, suggested themes of reality versus fiction. These are active works which often require a lack of interference or distraction, to embody an isolated room, removing any other frames of reference. It plays with one's perception – elusively exaggerating what we expect to see, perhaps appearing as though the image continues beyond the outside of the frame, as if there is a window in the wall. Projections of things that we remember or try to recall, filling in the details with imagination and other experiences - a shift in personal experience and memory.

#### **Trace in the urban setting**

Trace is in fact my original pull to this urbanised setting in which these works are generated, it also drives the documentative side of my practice – referring to the traces of human presence, anything which has been built, altered, broken, taken or left behind by humans – and to document these traces. Evidence of this urban isolation taking its own form, perhaps as its own presence and character. David Lynch speaks of being similarly drawn to these sites “No people whatsoever, anywhere. Nobody lives here. And yet these photographs are about people. Their absence has a tragic quality to it, and marks they have left reveal their way of life and experiences. Everything seems pregnant with meaning; the place itself, whether romantically enchanted or ominous, holds creative potential. It is, as Lynch would define it, ‘a setting for the narrative” (Giloy-Hirtz, 2014, p.26).

During my time in the MFA programme, my work has toned back on industrial grandeur. In the past, industrial imagery has dominated my practice, and while I'm certainly drawn to it, I feel the pull of urban imagery as more of a point of relatability and influence for the audience's experience. While the industrial provides interesting structures, forms and dilapidations, the urban is populated and constantly changing in unpredictable ways, it doesn't have a meticulous schedule or barbed wire fences, it is alive and it wants to be comfortable. It takes more of an effort and is less obvious, harder to identify within the urban detritus.





**Install / making:**

In considering the install as part of the making process, it really opens up the possibilities of creating an engaging space, rather than treating it as an unavoidable necessity. Artists often don't seem to realise that it is an intrinsic part of the experience of the work. It is an expected intervention of the site where simple things such as lighting or modes of hanging are capable of completely changing the work.

Something which I have been pondering for my final work this year has been appealing to multiple senses. Sight and sound are expected now, but what about touch? Especially considering the title of the project, would it be ridiculous to install an air conditioning unit behind the screen as well? The regulated temperature of the room could have a powerful effect on the immersion of the unsuspecting audience.

**3.1a Site / Setting within the work**

A photographic drawing I made earlier this year. It ties back to temporality and intervention of the site, displacing the function of the light box and the setting it occupies. The limited perspective of location allows for a representation of an urban / industrial anonymous reality. Originally it was

intended as a time-based photographic work, showing progression via lights passing by in the seam of the roller door and the floor. It

helped to show that it was in real time, rather than sped up or slowed down, which gave it an authenticity.



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(Image page 38)

**W.W.A.Hadwen**  
*Untitled, 2017*  
Time-based photographic  
still

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**W.W.A.Hadwen**  
*Constructed scene, 2017*  
Digital photographic  
drawing

### 3.1b Dynamics between the site in the work and the site of the work & trace

The viewing space of this installation was amazing. Colossal. A concrete cavern with a huge screen, easily a 15 metre high ceiling with an opening in the back above the screen, letting in a small amount of daylight, giving it an atmospheric, ominous glow. There was a synchronising dynamic between the recorded sites on screen and the site in which the work was shown. A prevalent theme of repurposing and tracing history was present in both sites, bringing to mind my research around trace and displacement of function. This was one of the leading factors to influence the installation of my final work this year – constructing the install site to act as an extension or relevant addition to the work itself.

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Julian Rosefeldt  
*In the Land of Drought*, 2017  
Time-based installation  
König Galerie, Berlin



### 3.1c Displacement of Function and Anonymity

These quotidian spaces are everywhere, devoid of culture – they serve a function. An aspect which I have been considering during the making of these works has been ‘displacement of function’. These spaces are built to serve a specific purpose, the idea is to shift that purpose, or make it non-apparent, and allow it to become something new. Another integral part has been in the collecting of props and constructing my own scenes – giving the space an almost assigned function, physically displacing the original function and introducing a fiction, a set. This gives it potential for a certain strangeness.

Displacement of function doesn’t come without its own set of issues. The first critique in which I really presented and pushed this idea, the audience seemed to take opposing standpoints. Some saw it as a nod to science fiction, while others saw imagery that was potentially reminiscent of death camps and places of great suffering. At the time, I wasn’t sure how to respond to these virtually polar opposite readings of the installation. Personally, my leaning was more toward the science fiction camp.

These works are intended to be accessible, the fact that people bring wildly different interpretations is a good thing. I feel that I now have an appropriate way to respond to these readings: Yes, this content may be triggering, but that also gives the work a degree of success. The success is in my wanting to push an aspect of anonymity – as more reference and recognition is taken away from these works, the more they become open to interpretation, and I don’t believe that this triggering can necessarily be blamed on the work. This act of reduction causes the audience to place their own individual perception and experience into its reading. With the work acting as a mirror of sorts, these readings can often say more about the viewer than about the work

or the artist. It could be a portal – like the scene in *Being John Malkovich*, in which John Malkovich travels through the tunnel into his own mind.

Perhaps this will be the function of the container in my final work? Perhaps this is even where the idea stemmed from? I've only seen the film once, about five or six years ago, but that specific scene has evidently stayed with me.

“In Mika Rottenberg’s video installations, the spaces and places of production condense to form surreal worlds in which the laws of nature governing gravity, time and matter are suspended. In the process she inquires into the relationship between work and the body, the logic of global production processes and the economy of profit maximization frequently based above all on the exploitation of cheap labour. The videos themselves merge fictional elements with documentary ones, which then - in the surrounding installation – continue out into physical space.” (MIKA ROTTENBERG, n.d.)

Mika Rottenberg’s *Cosmic Generator* very convincingly embraced a certain displacement of function and anonymity. Had we not known what to look for, we could have easily walked past it, dismissing it as a sad little shop.



We were greeted by a woman sitting behind the shop counter as we entered and as we looked around, noticed there was access to the back of the shop. We ventured down the hall and found a small cinema which had been built into one of the back rooms. The video

and shop installations worked in situ with each other with purpose and cohesion. It was impressive to see how the artist had managed to tie together the different aspects of the work with such synchronicity.

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Mika Rottenberg  
*Cosmic Generator*, 2017  
Immersive installation with  
time-based media  
Skulptur Projekte Münster

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Giorgio Andreotta Calò  
*Senza Titolo (La fine del mondo) - Untitled*  
*(The end of the world)*, 2017  
Immersive installation  
Venice Biennale



This was a very ambiguous installation in an anonymous space. As we entered the room, beneath the work, we felt confused and lost – trying to figure out what is going on. As we walked up the stairs to see this view, it took a very long time to figure out just what was going on. It was beyond comprehension for an embarrassingly long period.

Following a similar strain to displacement of function, anonymity turns these sites into non-sites, further opening up interpretation without distraction or reference to such things as street signs of places which can be recognised. The audience don't need to know where they are, and this was in fact a major hindrance in my work when the imagery was predominantly filmed in Wellington. The first thing many would do, rather than engage with the atmosphere, was be distracted by trying to solve the work's location.

Thinking about my final work, it is good that the time-based photography I am planning to use was captured outside of New Zealand. There is far less to recognise, reducing one's need to solve the mystery of their specific whereabouts, which gets in the way. However, in considering recognition – these are familiar, quotidian spaces, and so a non-specific or universal recognition of elements such as a skip or street light does in fact aid the experience.

I would like to really push the anonymity aspect in the coming series and see how unrecognisable and locationless it can get while still keeping the imagery and atmosphere engaging and immersive.

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Douglas Gordon  
*I Had Nowhere to Go:  
A Portrait of a Displaced  
Person*, 2016  
Time-based installation



### 3.1d Where I locate my practice in this progression

#### A workbook entry from the European art tour

We're in Athens, second day of the tour and just saw my favourite work so far. Possibly one of my favourite works ever. Douglas Gordon's *I Had Nowhere to Go: A Portrait of a Displaced Person*. It was a ninety minute film, shown in a small outdoor cinema in urban Athens. The space was actually pretty amazing, the presentation too. The cinema appeared disused, rather dirty and very overgrown. The projection was interrupted and obscured by several tree branches that had been consciously left ungroomed. The sides were lined with high quality speakers and the guests sat on old broken fold-out white chairs with the occasional small circular white table. An aspect of the site which I especially liked was the fact that it was lined with apartments, filled with people going about their lives. Only the occasional window was lit but the activity behind them actually played into the film rather seamlessly. The film itself consisted of a narrated track of a Jewish German writer who had fled the country during World War II, accompanied by

ominous sounds of foreboding, tension and war. It was a memorable experience. The imagery was very minimal, often just a blank white screen, otherwise there was footage of a gorilla in captivity, playing with its hands. At one point the screen was a luminescent red which flooded the entire space as it reflected off the screen.

Although the subject of the work and tone of its atmosphere starkly contrasted that of my own experience and practice, I couldn't help but feel a strong affinity with this work and the setting in which it was installed. The dark, hidden corner of urban Athens, the dilapidation of the cinema and reclamation of nature is evidence of its disuse – it felt post-human, and aside from the audience, the area felt as though it was inhabited by memories and traces of people, rather than them actually existing within the walls of this strange amphitheatre. All of the events and reactions which took place in the various windows felt as though they could have been automated as part of the work, seamlessly choreographed to aid in the experience. The space was embraced, rather than made to suit – its dilapidation and character kept intact.



## CONCLUSION:

The mundane as the significant. To my mind, this makes for an interesting tension.

How do we affect what we don't consider? Photographing these sites comes with a freedom to develop and construct my own visual language, presenting these small events of human trace. Less information given leaves more chance for engagement and enquiry with an open endedness.

It is important that these spaces remain anonymous – often dark, blank recesses with limited light, or nondescript locations without preconception or infamy. There is both a familiarity and an otherness

present in these non-locations, an understated drama. Unquantifiable spaces alluding more to openness than containment.

The MFA programme has been a great opportunity to experiment between mediums while keeping a cohesive direction with my conceptual developments. The resolve that I have reached after two years of intensive working is a culmination of this time and has further opened up possibilities for the future. I'm looking forward to working as an artist and progressing my studies – this entire process has been very consolidating.



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W.W.A.Hadwen *untitled*, 2017  
Time-based photographic still

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W.W.A.Hadwen *untitled*, 2017  
Time-based photographic still

PAGE 6

W.W.A.Hadwen *Untitled 3*, 2016  
Ilford satin darkroom print, glow-in-the-dark vinyl  
20x24"

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W.W.A.Hadwen *Untitled 2*, 2016  
Ilford satin darkroom print, glow-in-the-dark vinyl  
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Werner Herzog *Lessons of Darkness*, 1992  
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W.W.A.Hadwen *I'm going where the cold wind blows*, 2017  
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Peter Weir *The Truman Show*, 1998

Screenshot by William Hadwen  
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W.W.A.Hadwen *untitled*, 2016  
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Hiroshi Sugimoto *Los Altos Drive-In, Lakewood* (1993)

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W.W.A.Hadwen *Un estat de somni (A state of dream)*, 2017

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Still from time-based photographic study, enhanced palette, cool and warm

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W.W.A.Hadwen *untitled*, 2017

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W.W.A.Hadwen *Untitled*, 2016  
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W.W.A.Hadwen *Untitled*, 2017  
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Giorgio Andreotta Calò *Senza Titolo (La fine del mondo) - Untitled (The end of the world)*, Venice Biennale 2017

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