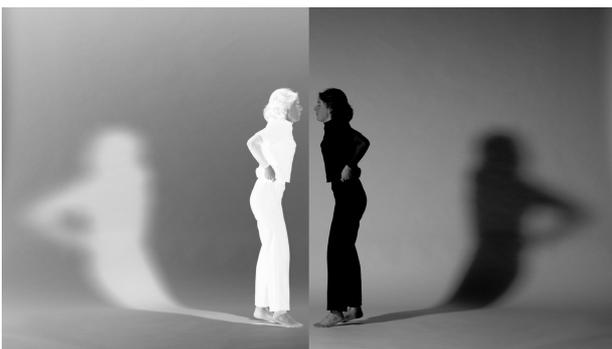


Introduction and the EYE

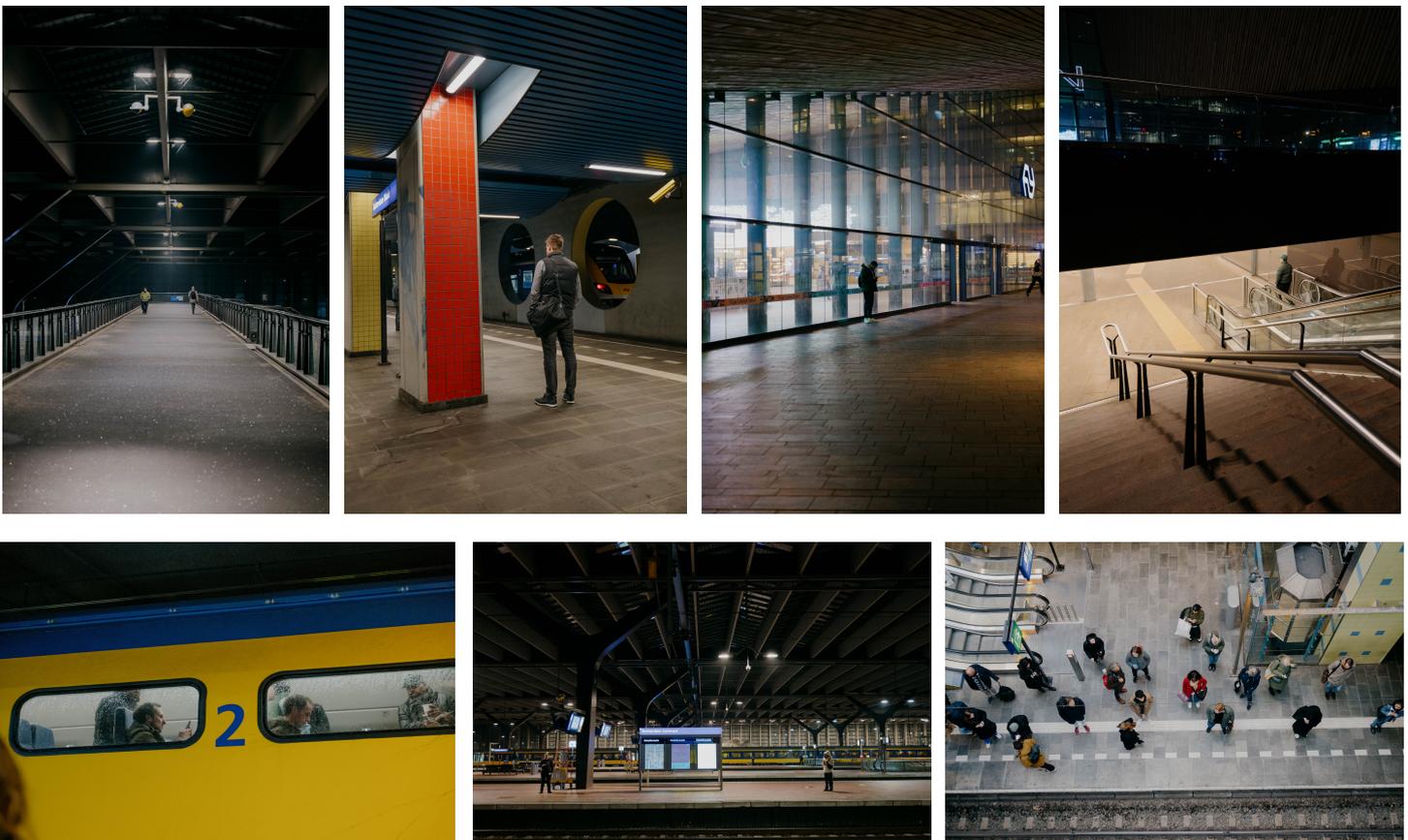
Reflecting upon my practice recently, I have been creating works which focus on dichotomies, emotional states and environmental observations. My first project for the EYE research labs was inspired by the concept of Enantiodromia, introduced to me by the book 'Man and His Symbols' by Carl Jung. Enantiodromia refers to the tendency for things to change into their opposites, as a way of the universe naturally ensuring things remain balanced. At the time of reading this work, I was also meditating often, and thought to create a filmic reproduction of my experience, observing I would often manifest a conflict of emotions within my meditations. The concept of Enantiodromia particularly spoke to me at this point, as I had recently relocated from Australia, removing myself with all the familiarities of my past life. A painful sacrifice, which would only later reveal its true benefit. Initially filming myself as the main subject and investigating this split in emotion, I decided it would be best to hone into the concept with a dancer. I believed this would allow me to more easily control the visual outcome of the work. Wanting to mirror Jung's explanation of Enantiodromia as 'the emergence of the unconscious opposite over the course of time', I decided to film a dancer within a controlled studio, directing the performance to convey the shift from one extreme of the spectrum to the next. Focusing on form and the body, the performance begins with the dancer still in lotus position, eventually moving her body as the energy shifts into rage, depicting a battle with the self. The research for this project began by investigating an aesthetic to use, choosing to shoot the film with high contrast, black and white, chiaroscuro style lighting. This helped to emphasise light as the conscious force and dark as the unconscious. Being new to choreography direction, I decided to collate a list of emotions, objects and situations into a table with two poles, assigning them either conscious (light) or unconscious (dark). Using this list, I then tied each cue with a song, which was played for the dancer to help guide the pace and energy of the performance. Within the editing process, I heavily treated the film, using overlays, changing frame rates and alpha channels, with the effect of blending footage and depicting an amalgamation of conflicting emotions. Initially being only driven by music and vision, I decided the concept may of seemed too vague, or reminiscent of a commercial music video. The final version therefore incorporated a poem as a VoiceOver, to further enforce the concept of Enantiodromia. Upon reflection, I believe I overworked the film, thinking it felt too much like an advertisement for a new fragrance. I may revisit the project and strip down the layers. However, it served as a starting point which provided me an awareness of a core theme present within a majority of my past practice and current concepts - dichotomy.



Stills from EYE research lab project 'Enantiodromia' showing the trajectory of turning into ones opposite through dance

Reading and writing methods - a new direction - link to concept 'Non-Places'

During the methods classes, the rapid prototyping sessions allowed me to quickly produce concepts of interest that could be executed immediately and potentially lead to works that could be further explored. One of the prompts I gave myself was to 'create a photo montage of different textures within my current environment'. This led me to looking outwardly at my environment and noticing things around the space in which I occupy. This thinking was later reintroduced in the 'Project That May or May Not Be Made', where I revisited the explorative space of my environment. Having recently moved to Rotterdam and being away from my usual surroundings, I proposed to create a work that acted as a way to engage and reflect on my new environment. Outside of the workshop, now more in tune with my immediate environment, I became aware I was spending a lot of time in transitional spaces; not having a car, and therefore often using public transport. Occasionally armed with a camera, I began taking photographs and videos whilst I found myself in these spaces, fascinated by the diverse characters which were forced into a universal carriage. During a peer-review with a colleague within a free-writing exercise, I was introduced to the book 'Non-Places' by Marc Augé. Augé argues in our contemporary world, we spend a significant amount of time in 'Non-Places'; such as within trains, supermarkets, airports and motorways. These places provide a sense of anonymity to the individuals who inhabit them, as people are brought together through a common cause, becoming consumers or passengers. I believe this relates to my practice as I am once again exploring a type of dichotomy, showing the duality of isolation and connection that seem to manifest within these non-places. The observational style of filming also relates to works from my practice before the masters, such as the short film I made, 'Brookside'. This film aimed to showcase how individuals act when they feel like they are being watched, or anonymous, contrasting various experiences at a bed and breakfast through surveillance cameras and linking them together rhythmically.



Photographs of non-places around Rotterdam

Potential Project 1 - Non-Places

Continuing and building upon my investigation into non-places, I would like to somehow collate my material into a video/photo series, or combination of both, thinking about how the concepts could be used in an installation. By observing and capturing the essence of my environment, its inhabitants, and those around me, I am not just exploring a new place but also delving into my own identity and how it is shaped through my surroundings. Through this exploration, I aim to uncover the interconnectedness of personal experience and environment, revealing how my observations could lead to a sense of self-understanding. I am interested in exploring this multifaceted relationship between an individual and their environment, and how it shapes ones feelings, thoughts and behaviours.

Potential Project 2 - Exploring Dichotomies

Another concept I have been developing involves further exploring my interest in dichotomies. Having recently completed a job editing a music video from found footage, I was introduced to a style of archival multi-channel editing. I decided to test this out on my own practice, searching internet archives for various footage in which I could compare contrasting activities. This experiment allowed me to test and juxtapose seemingly different yet related footage, such as a buddhist monk meditating, and a sweaty high-energy raver. I wish to develop this concept further, and perhaps film footage of my own, or look to investigate more specific themes. I hope to create this work to reveal the universality of human nature, depicting different human responses driven by a shared goal. Through showcasing these contrasts and commonalities between people and activities, I hope to reveal a greater understanding of our shared human condition.



Experiments with found footage, showing the similarities between seeming opposite activities (meditation & raving)

Potential Project 3 - Aesthetic/environmental exploration

The most recent concept I have been expanding, is a more playful exercise in noticing my environment, in an attempt to somewhat emulate the process of painting through film. Noticing many events whilst going for runs around my neighbourhood, I was often frustrated I could not capture them. This led me to take an old camcorder out for one of my runs, filming myself and my surroundings. Whilst filming, I payed attention to striking organic and non-organic forms. I later treated the video through an old analog video mixer, which allowed me to change parameters of the footage in real time. The effect was a distortion and blending of the footage, which I executed whilst listening to music to help maintain rhythm. Again, throughout this exercise I noticed I have naturally focused on dichotomies present within my surroundings, also choosing to mirror the image in certain instances.



Stills from the experiment

Broader scope - Conclusion

Looking at the broader scope of my direction, I seem to be creating as an exercise to understand myself and position at the moment. I have realised I am taking a more out-ward point of view, observing my new environment and noticing the complexities and diversity that can occur in such spaces. I was particularly inspired by the work of Zbigniew Rybczyński in his short multi-channel film 'New Book', in which follows inhabitants of a small Polish city on busses, streets and restaurant in a surveillance style. I was also intrigued by the work of Inge Bjørlo, and his installation 'Inner Space V The Goal.' Bjørlo created a structure from stainless steel that one may enter, its narrow walls and the sound of walking through the space create a claustrophobic impression and awareness of the body, and a sense of relief upon leaving. This work led me to Investigating space and its effect on peoples behaviour and mood. The work of Douglas Gordon has also been an inspiration, as his works often explore dualities and the tension between opposing forces. I feel like my current practice is a dialogue between the self and the external, the individual and the collective, as I investigate and mix various dichotomies, hoping to uncover underlying connections and truths.

References;

New Book, Zbigniew Rybczyński- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZDem_3xr_3M

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