

PROPOSAL

STORY AND EVOLUTION OF THE THEME

The theme of my board came about from being brought up in the ocean. From as young as I can remember, I was always playing in the ocean, catching waves or training down at my local surf life saving club. Being in the ocean is a way of life for me as it is a way to destress and unwind while still being physically and mentally changed by the waves and conditions. The ocean teaches many lessons such as respecting something greater than yourself not only by the ocean but also to look after the beautiful resources we have on our back door in New Zealand.

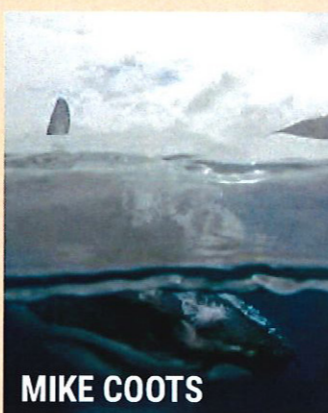
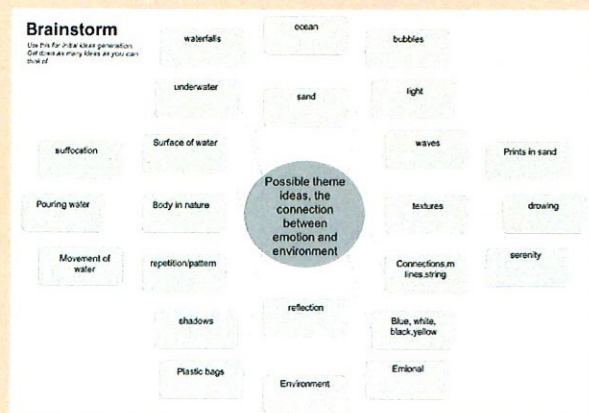
Being a lifeguard for 5 years, I have encountered situations that are challenging but remaining calm in the madness of the incident is very important for the best outcome of the patient and your teammates involved in the incident. By seeing what can happen first hand to people when they overestimate their abilities, puts into perspective how lucky I am to have grown up in a family with the means to instill 'respect of the ocean' to my older brother and myself. This is why I chose the ocean as my theme to showcase the beauty, serenity and movement of the ocean, but also the the fear and danger is can cause to the people involved. Being the beauty in something that can rip lives away if not respected is very humbling at the same time scary.

INSPIRATION AND WAY OF FINDING A PURPOSE AND INTENT

The approach to doing in water photo shoots was definitely a learning curve with the setup of my equipment but also safety gear for in the water. There were many more aspects to take into consideration when doing a in water shoot especially in big surf such as wind directions, rips and not being able to see what I was shooting because of the glare from the sun on the screen of the water housing equipment.

I learnt many skills, techniques and took inspiration from Ben Thouard who is a french ocean photographer based out of Tahiti and Mike Coots who is shark attack survivor fighting for shark conservation who found his love of photography especially in the ocean after the incident. By looking at their images and how they work in the water, it opened my eyes up to the endless possibilities of ways the shoot in the ocean. I follow both photographers on social media and see their work regularly which helps creates new ideas and ways to approach a new shoots or different surf conditions. It also shows be what type of setup they use of their equipment and what safety equipment they have on during their shoots to keep themselves safe while creating content. Because it is both their full time job there camera gear is more expensive but it helped me understand what type of equipment is important to have and spend a bit more money on the get great shots and what type of equipment I would love to have in the future.

These two artist have had a very heavy influence on my work I have done this year because they way of life they live is very much connected to the ocean and how they feel is very much tied to the ocean which I can related to alot. If they weather is great with nice big waves I feel content and humble while catching waves and taking images doesn't feel like school work I have to get done, rather than I feel excited to come home and process images and see what images I can get next time.



INFLUENCES

CATHY CARTER

Cathy Carter is a photographic and multimedia conceptual artist, based in Grey Lynn, Auckland. Her art is inspired by concerns about climate change and our evolving relationship with bodies of water as we enter the anthropocene. Her art explores bodies of water as a physical, cultural and investigates our complex psychological relationship to water through different perspectives and geographical locations across New Zealand.



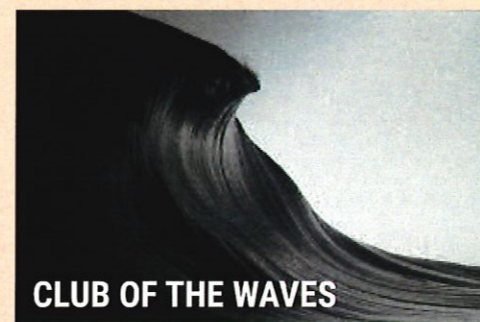
When looking at her work I could really resonate with the physical and emotional connection people have towards the ocean because I have grown up always swimming and surfing in the ocean alongside being a lifeguard.

Being around the ocean gives a sense of release and rejuvenation within the atmosphere it creates with the mind, body and soul. Being in the ocean and big waves it can cause people to panic but if you are calm it is more of a mental game rather than physical with controlling your breathing, relaxing your mind and muscle and going with the flow of the currents and waves. Her work inspires the 'flow state'- 'in positive psychology, a flow state is also known colloquially as being in the zone, is the mental state in which a person performing some activity is fully immersed in feeling of energized focus, full involvement, and enjoyment in the process of the activity.'

Being in the flow state when taking images is very important I found because if I was focusing on going to where I thought images would look good it would be expecting more from the ocean, I needed to take a step back and take in the moments of the wave movements and wave currents that were around me rather than away from me.

TRENT MITCHELL

Trent Mitchell is an Australian photographer who has a unique eye for capturing moments. His moment-in-time style connects people and place through a bold and humorous style in a singular and exciting way. Throughout Mitchell's personal and commercial work, he has an ability to not only compose his subject, but to distill the sensibility of the location which identifies his work. His stories told through images encapsulate and resonate globally.



The style of Trent Mitchell's work is very simple and it draws the viewers closer to see the small details such as ripples on the water caused by rips, waves, rocks, wind and tidal pulls. These small details give the image a sense of emotions and depth that also are creating different tones of black and white through reflections.

By having his images in black and white this further simplifies the images to having white sky and black as the water. I have taken inspiration from his images by having my images monochromatic and having some images 'unreliable' and 'frozen in the unknown' or 'unseen'. This means that he has captured moments that people don't normally see when in the ocean because we are under water or have our eyes closed. It shows the ocean as we have never seen it before which I have tried to capture with my images.

By using an underwater camera and a fast shutter speed I was able to capture moments in time underwater that we would otherwise not see when out in the water. This can be from seeing inside barrels of a wave, movement of a wave from underneath or behind it. It creates effortless lines and patterns from air movement underneath pulling towards the surface and escaping through eruptions of bubbles and air holes that move in the direction of the wind and water. It shows that movement as a whole can be so fast that us as humans aren't taking the time to look deeply into the smaller movements that are creating bigger things: waves.

THE OCEAN

GEAR THAT I USED FOR SHOOTS

My top 11 essentials for a in water/on land shoot

1. Pink and black Rip Curl spring suit (2mm), used for warmer water but still easy to move around in a keeps the sun and wind off
2. Blue and white Rip Curl spring suit (1mm) used to keep the sun off for hot days but for slightly bigger surf than a wetsuit top
3. Black Rip Curl wetsuit top (0.5-1mm) used to keep sun off for smaller surf
4. Billabong full steamer/full suit (3-2mm) used in bigger surf to keep warm and protected if there are lots of board riders from fin chops on the skin
5. Gul Airborne 2 carbon helmet to protect my head from surfers
6. Canon EOS 800D with a 18-55mm lens
7. Iphone for in water case (all images shot in the water were from the iphone)
8. Dafins- fins for swimming out through surf and getting around quicker
9. Canon 90-300mm lens, used for shots up on hills/cliffs for overviews of the ocean and sky, also used for close up shots of the water from land and was mainly used to shoot board 1 and parts of 2 and 3
10. Fin bet, we use these when on patrol lifeguarding, you can clip the fins on each side of the belt. This was especially helpful when i needed my fins but not for certain shots because of the depth of water or currents. It allows easy access for fins but also allowed be to not have to keep a hold of them in my hands.
11. 195 ft water housing for the iphone with an attached yellow wrist floater

SHOOT PREPARATION AND SET UP

When doing photo shoots in the ocean, there are many more factors to consider such as:

- Checking the surf forecast days and the night before the shoot to make sure what beach has the best type of waves and conditions for the style of shoot im going for
- The gear im using is water tight, in good condition and working and set up before putting it into the water housing to prevent coming in and setting up again
- What to wear, such as the thickness of wetsuit for the right conditions, fins+fin belt and possibility of a helmet if there are many boardriders to protect your head
- The right type of sunscreen so it doesn't rub off from your hands on the camera equipment and damage it
- Making sure you know where the rips, this means watching the ocean from a minimum of 15 minutes from up on a cliff or sand dunes to see what the water is doing and where the water is pulling back out after a big set of waves. By doing this I can know and understand the seconds between waves and how many waves come in a set so I can keep myself safe in the ocean and know what is happening by reading the ocean before hand.

THE OCEANS PURPOSE

With the ocean producing over half of the worlds oxygen and absorbs 50 times more carbon dioxide than our atmosphere we need to be taking care of what we have and the sea life which call the ocean home.

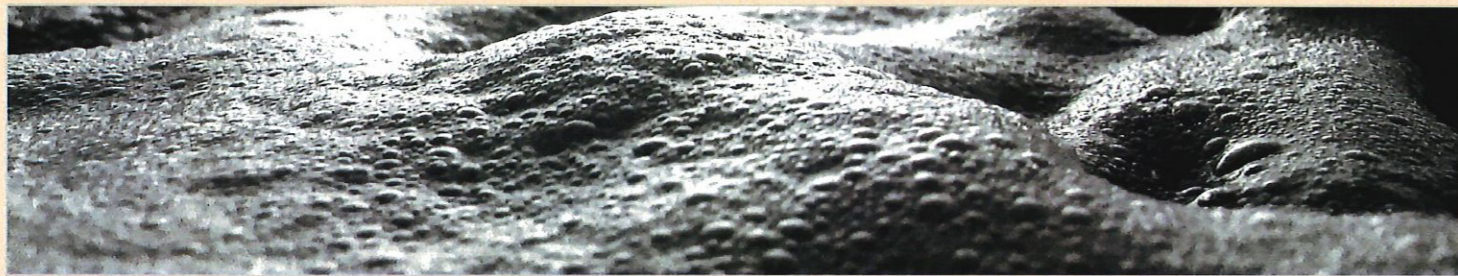
By taking images of the ocean in a way that we normally don't see it in, it is shedding light into how valuable it really is for not only humans but animals too. Showing the oceans beauty alongside the darkness it can show what is can make us feel if we lose the ocean to over pollution and killing of the wildlife from overfishing, littering and dumping. It showing that mother nature is beautiful but when disrespected can be deadly.



THE SUBLIME

The overall surface level theme for my board is the sublime. The sublime is a western aesthetic concept of the 'exalted' or 'beauty that is grand and dangerous'. The sublime refers to the wild, unbonded grandeur of nature. The concept of the sublime art was put forward in 1757 by Edmund Burke in a philosophical enquiry into the origin of our ideas of the sublime and beautiful published in 1757. Burke's definition of the sublime focus on such terms as darkness, obscurity, privation, vastness, magnificence, loudness and suddenness and that our reaction is defined by a kind of pleasurable terror.

In my images there is a strong sense of openness and vastness but there is also the same feeling of lost and suddenness almost the movements of the waves and currents. The abstract images are making you look closer into what else you can see and also makes you not heard anything apart from washing noise and silence because you are underwater, but the images above water of moving foam and froth also gives you a sense of tiny bubbles getting popped and water moving into formation to create beautiful waves as they come crashing down.



While processing my images and having friends and family see the images I was taking, I asked them 'what do you feel when you look at the images I have taken?' most of the responses were a sense of being overwhelmed, overcome but peaceful at the same time which most of them didn't understand why they had two of the most opposite feeling at the same time from one image or from a series.

While doing more research and reading into the sublime, I learnt that Burke, who finds the ocean naturally sublime, argues that the feeling of 'terror' or 'fear' inspired by the sublime involves some speculation about the possibility of one's own death. This is theorized because we find the ocean sublime partly because its vastness exceeds the powers of our understanding, but more so because that vastness prompts us to imagine our own death by drowning in it because it is so large and beyond comprehensible. The openness of the ocean and shoot locations with only the ocean, horizon and sky, where the images that turned out the represent the vastness because the simplicity allowed for the eye the wonder around the image and amongst get lost within the vastness and beauty.

In order to achieve the sublime within my images and have the vastness show through in my images I needed to be experimenting with different shoot locations with different conditions in the water. This made it hard some weekends and after school driving far away out west or up North, but I learnt heaps in the process not only about photography but also about other life skills which are just as important. It was really easy to check the Surf Cams around the northern region before heading out because it would give me an idea on what a beach may look like before I get there. This would help with what type of camera gear I would bring and what type of wetsuits to put in the car before school.



By having the sublime as a subtheme of my board, I really wanted to 'show of' the beautiful of our ocean, but also how powerful mother nature can really be. The vastness shows how the water can engulf you because the ocean is so much more powerful than humans. While doing some research into one of my biggest inspirations: surf and ocean photographer Ben Thouard, he said that '*moving with the wave and going with the flow, you feel very humbled in front of all that power.*' I really resonated and understood what he meant not only when taking pictures but also when paddling out to catch waves or when going into the water for a rescue. By watching lots of videos on how he has become the amazing photographer he is, I learn that when taking images in the ocean is not always going to turn out the way you think or envisioned and that is ok.

Working with the condition rather than again is going to give you the best chance at getting the shot you desire and also allows you get surrounded by the atmosphere and enjoy the movement of the waves and currents. In the middle of the year while doing shoots and coming in and out of lockdown, getting in the water and just shooting away was the best thing to do for me. Many shoots didn't work out well due to conditions but I still learnt from those shots. 'There is so much variation in the ocean so it takes a lot of time to finally witness the perfect moment.' by following Ben Thouard on Instagram and watching many videos about him, It made me understand why people do ocean photography: because of how interesting the images can be and the state of mind/flow you get into while shooting is indescribable.

TECHNIQUES

LIGHTING

My only source of lighting was the sun while doing all my shoots. This meant that the only way to adjust my images was in the post production phase using lightroom and photoshop. I couldn't control how high the sun was, the angle of it, the colour it was giving out weather it was yellows and pinks or greys and yellows or the brightness of the sun. this was a challenge at times because if I left after school to do a shoot on the west coast, the sun would be setting near the end of the shoot and be giving of bright pinks and yellows which can be difficult to work with at times to grab the 'right information' from the images. I found that the best times to do a shot were either right before a storm in winter because the clouds would be heavy and have a darker feel to them. Another good time to shot was when it was over cast because there is less UV light reflections which means less white put spots and less chance to have waterstops being promadment on the lens of the waterproof housing on the camera.



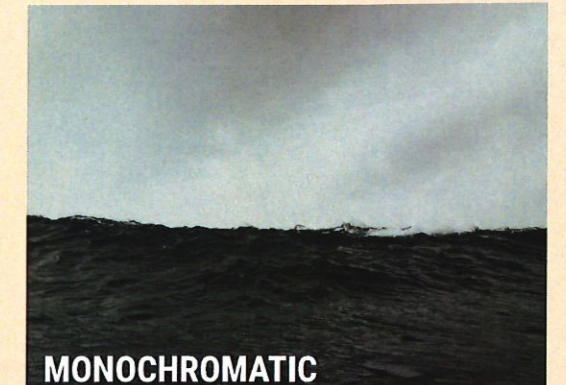
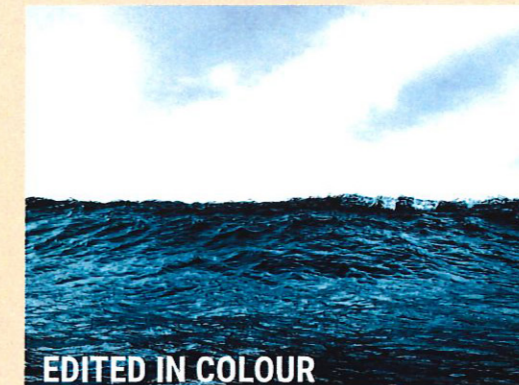
SHUTTER SPEED

One of the techniques I used on my board was having a fast shutter speed on my camera set up for the images taken on land but also on the Iphone for all the water shots I took. Because I was taking shots of the ocean for my whole board, i needed to have a fast shutter speed on both cameras because of the amount of light the ocean reflexes from the sun. the fast shutter speed also allowed me to capture minute details that a slow shutter speed for miss or blur were the details and interesting and only seen with a fast shutter speed. I found that it was important to capture the smaller details of the ocean because of how vast and unknown the ocean is still to humans with only 5% of the ocean discovered by humans. The fast shutter speed was also allowed be to capture crisper and shaper images which is important while shooting a constantly moving object: the ocean.



BLACK AND WHITE POST PRODUCTION

I decided to edit my images in black and white after doing the first 4 shoots and realising that if I made a preset for editing a shot on week, the next week shoot could be completely different because of how exposed the images can get when using the ocean as a shoot location. There was too much variation between colours even though it could be the same beach, the ocean changes so much that there would have been too many inconsistencies to work with. Black and white images removes any distractions of colour and helps the viewer focus on the others aspects of them photo, in my case it was texture, lines, patterns from waves, bubbles and rips that would would not see in a image that had colour in it. By having my images in black and white is made them seem more dramatic and sublime which I really like the look of.

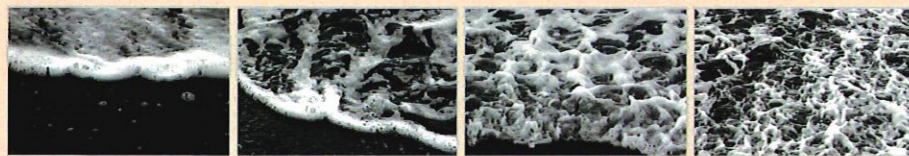


STRUCTURE OF PORTFOLIO

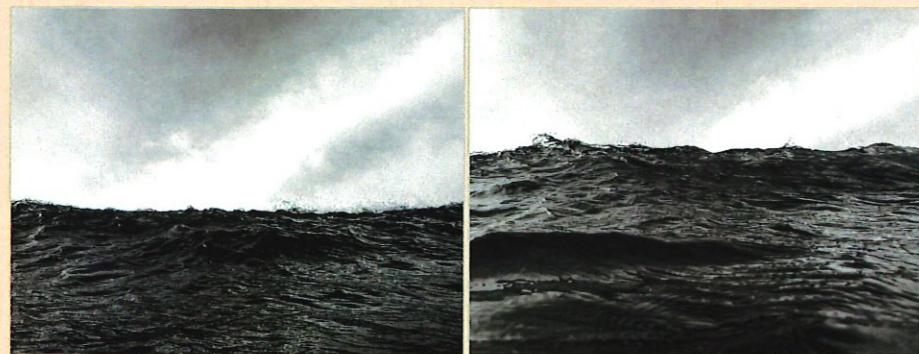
BOARD 1



For the first series of my board (seen above) I wanted to explore the openness of the horizon and vastness of the ocean. The images are from left to right shot at Sunset beach, Rothesay Bay, Ohama and Long bay. To take these images I had to wait for a calm day with little wind to avoid choppy waves and too many white caps in the ocean.



The middle to the top part of board 1 focus on texture, line and movement. This 4 image series was taken at Kennedy Park and focus on the line of the wave counting through until the water is filling up the whole space on the final image. It is giving the sense of overwhelming and 'drowning' and the water keeps moving and engulfing the space in the end.

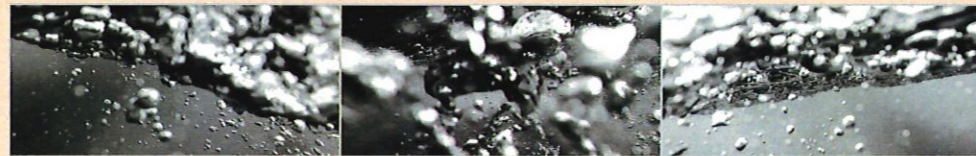


For the last images on board one, I wanted to make the person looking at the images feel as if they are going under water the the wave and have a sense that they 'can't touch the bottom of the ocean anymore' and the wave is taking them under. This leads into board 2 which prodomtally underwater.

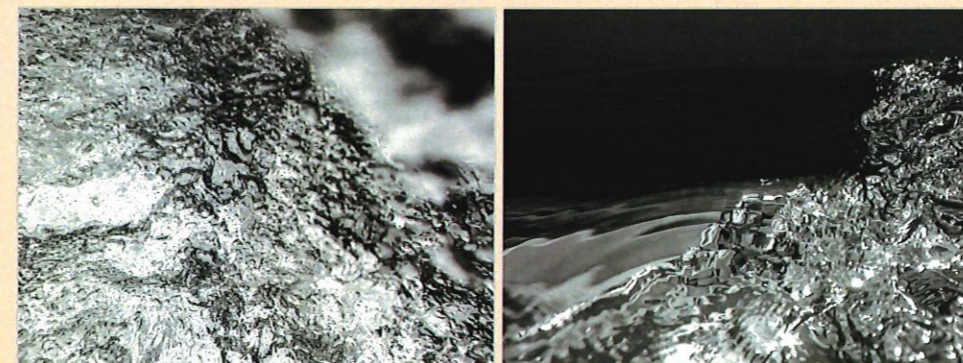
BOARD 2



For the first part of board 2, the images are focusing on engulfing and submersion. This is because it will help transition to the abstract images future on in board 2. The image in the left is at Rothesay Bay and the rest of the images are shot at Omaha Beach. The textures and reflections from the light help make the image more real and give a sense of sublimity.



The series in the middle of board 2 focus focus on the actual submersion and the movement of the water when waves and currents are affecting the water. These images were taken at Omaha Beach a few seconds after the wave had broke on the seaward side to achieve the 'messy bubbles' and movement of water. By having the images edited in Black and white it removes and distraction of colour and helps the viewer focus on any other aspects of the photo. In this case it is the textures of the water, shapes and patterns of the bubble and surface tension.



For the last two images on board 2, I wanted to have images that are abstract but also have the juxtaposition between calm and rough water. By having them in black and white it really shows of all the little details and lines within the water from the reflections left by the sun. it creates patterns we would never see because of how fast the water is moving and because it is underwater.

BOARD 3

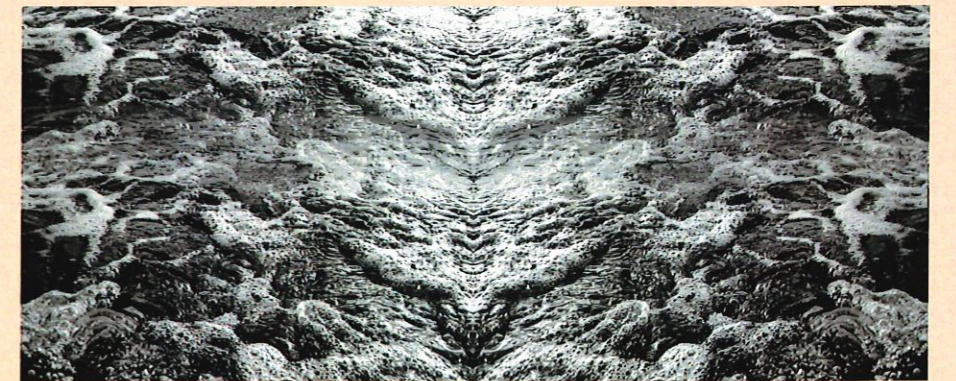


The first image on board is starting a transition and introduction in the 'modified ocean'. These images were of the same wave but seconds apart. By using a fast shutter speed I was able to capture the small details of the wave as it was breaking such as the reflection from the sun of the face of the wave disappearing into the broken wave and the water pulling up into the face, smashing down into a broken wave.



The middle image for board three is about how the water can be 'never ending'. Sometimes when paddling out, a big set of waves can come and it can be difficult mentally and physically to get out the back and out of the break zone. This image represents the continuous cycle of waves and the never ending sets of waves that can keep pushing you under and away from the surface of the ocean.

- 'A set' is a group of waves, generally around 3-10 waves
- 'A lull' is a break in waves and there are no waves
- 'Out the back' is beyond the area of were the waves are breaking, you normally sit out here to catch waves (or take pictures)
- 'Break zone' is the zone in which the waves break. The wave is generally around 5 to 10 meters deep and this causes the wave to become unstable and break. It can be quite dangerous but making sure you check the sure and know how many waves are in a set and the general time a lull is can help you be safe know what the ocean is doing. I took most of my images in the break zone to capture the moving water and reflections underwater.



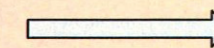
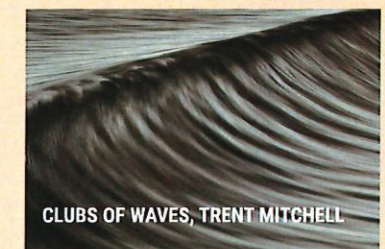
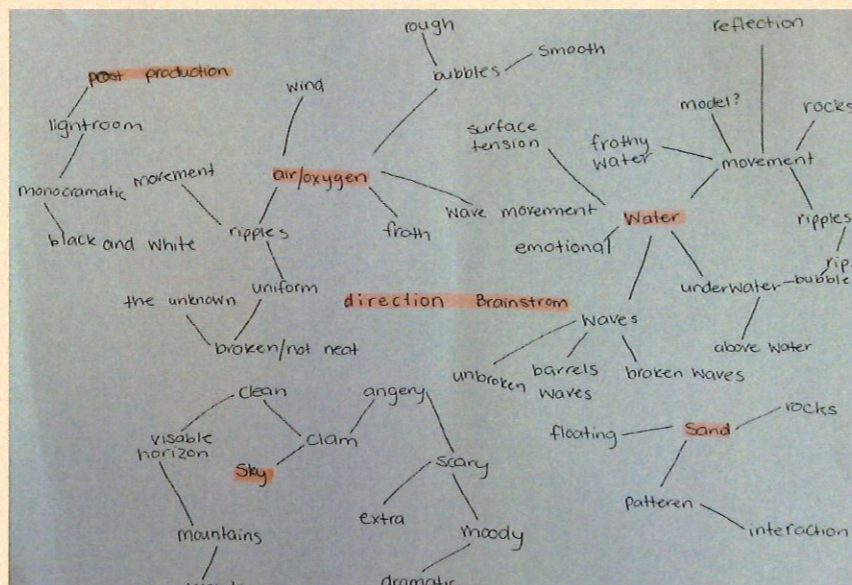
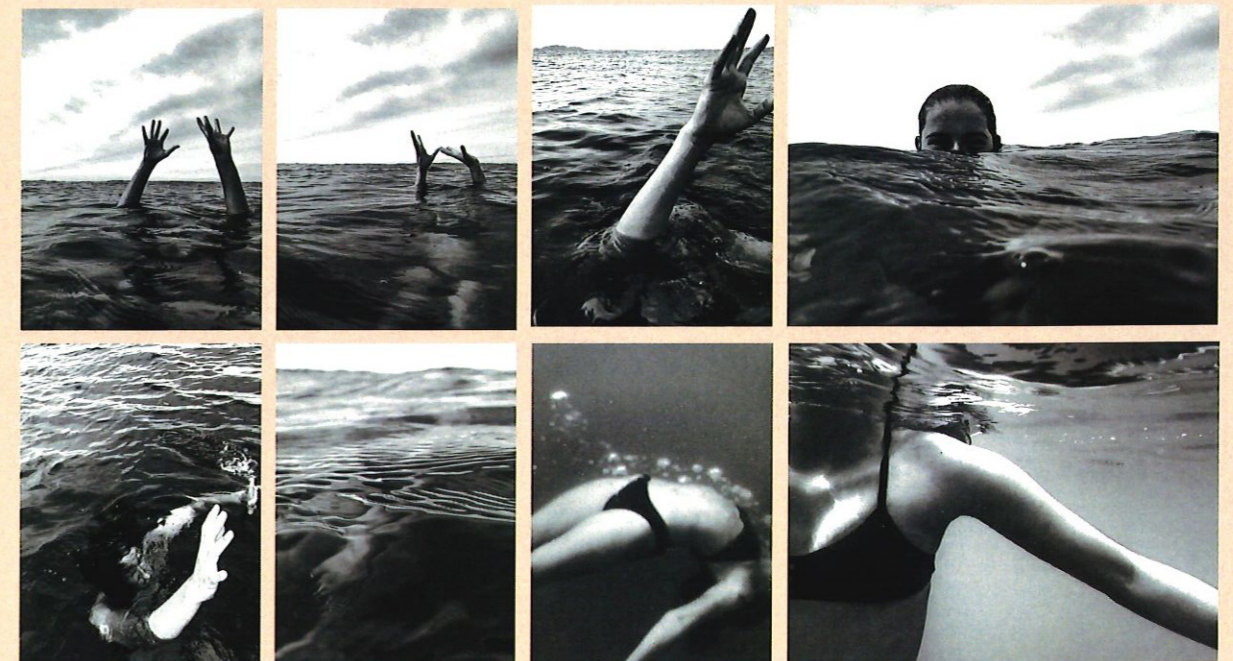
The last image on board 3 was inspired by Cathy Carter. She has done a piece of work called 'living water' and it give you the sense of never ending water and not knowing were it stops and starts. I believe that this piece of work ties all the images together because it has a sense of sublimity and sense of never ending. I makes you feel humble and tiny compared to the vastness of the water with all the texture, lines and reflections amongst it.

— WORK NOT INCLUDED ON BOARDS —



These images were done from a two part shoot up at Omaha on on land (part 1 to the left on land, part 2 in water below) before the first lockdown came around. The artist models from this shoot was Arno Rafael Minkkinen and Florian Gruet. They way these two artist use the human body to tell a story was able to fit into my board at the beginning by telling a story of a girl going to the beach and finding it hard to stay afloat amongst the waves and big body of water. The direction of my board was very different at the beginning because it was more of an emotional connection between this girl and the ocean and how powerful and dangerous it can really be. As a lifeguard we see and hear of so many drowning that are preventable and seeing the families of the loved one that has been taken by the ocean is a very sad and raw experience for lifeguards. Because of COVID-19 and lockdown, doing shoots with a model was no longer an option and going into the ocean during level 4 was also no longer an option. During Level 4 lockdown I did lots of brainstorming, research of artist models and ocean photographers and thinking about what direction my board was going to go in while still keeping to the lockdown rules.

By changing my theme, I had to think about the other ways in which I could still have the same emotions on my board but without a model and some shoots being out of the water if were in level 4 lockdown. By doing a brianstorm and research into different artists I decided to have the 'Sublime' as a subtheme of my board. It made it real easy to do shoot outside of the water on land during level four because the beach was a 2 minute walk about so I was able to keep within my bubble and not have the drive anywhere. The more images I shot and edited with the Sublime as a subtheme I really started to see a direction again with my board and a clear vision for what other type of images I could take once the beaches opened back up again for swimming. This change in direction in hindsight was very good because doing a shoot with a model can be difficult because it can get very cold and the conditions are not always what you need and can work with. Because most shoots happen during the winter, it was a safe idea to not shoot with a model for the rest of the year.



BEYOND THE BOARD

REFLECTION+FUTURE IMPROVEMENTS

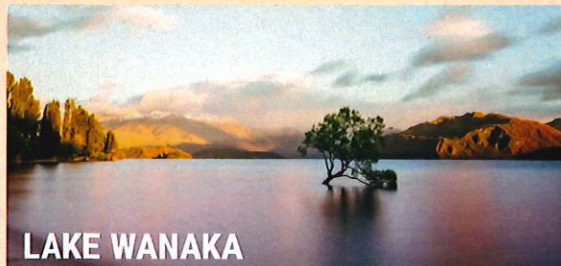
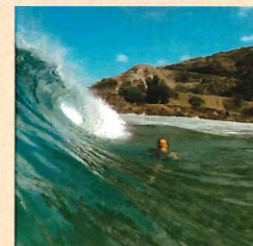
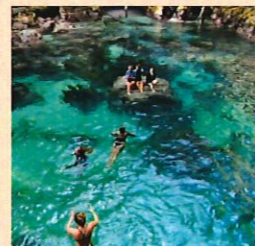
- This year has been a real learning curve with doing underwater shoots and shooting with and object (the ocean) that I have no control over how it looks or acts. It has taught me to be very flexible and organized with my time because if they waves look good before I leave home for school I will need to load up the car with my gear so I can head to the beach after school to make sure I can get the best shots. Being able to head out to the beach after school ment that I would be getting home very late at times if I went out west or up north to do a shoot. I have really enjoyed shooting the ocean as the ocean is a place that I really enjoy. Doing shoots never felt like a task or school work because I was having so much fun learning about how to improve my images with setting on the camera or phone, post production using lightroom and photoshop or seeing new shoot locations. It was really cool to see beaches of different days but having completely different conditions due to storms, high winds or big waves. It was also really cool to go on surf day trips with my family and friends to take pictures and catch waves at some really cool locations.
- If I was to have a 4th board, I would have like the included more variation of bodies of water with sublime backgrounds this could include Lake Wanaka, Lake Ohau and the Bowen River. This can create different aspects and interest points within the images and movements of water will be different because it wouldn't be the ocean so the interactions between water, wind and rocks will create different patterns in the water.



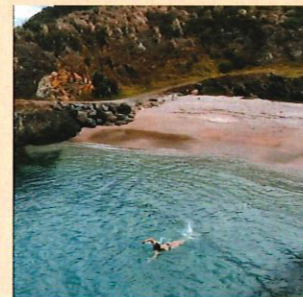
BOWEN RIVER



LAKE OHAU



LAKE WANAKA



TACTILE AND SENSORY ART EXHIBITION

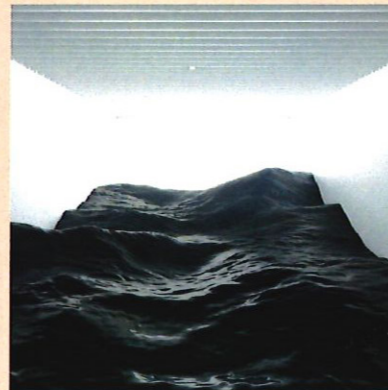
Because being a lifeguard, working with kids for by part time job, being dyslexia and dyscalculia and having my family raise guide dog puppies I have been exposed and have experienced first hand how art can bring people together but it can also create a divide in our community and society between different people with different challenges in their life weather it is struggle to read and write, not being able to have full vision or hearing. Because art isn't a written language, it can be a form of communication between generations to tell stories, inspire reflection and form connections. On the other hand art can be hard to connect with and see if there are impairments. Because of this, If I were to take the concept of my portfolio and apply it to the outside world with the understanding I have I would create a tactile and sensory art exhibition. By having tactile pieces of art that include wind, salt spray, noise, water, sand that use fans, braille projectors, lights and mirrors it can be pieces of art that everyone can enjoy no matter what their background is. **When thinking about visual art, many people are not able to experience it due to vision loss or blindness. Globally the number of people of all ages visually imparied is estimated to be 285 million of whom 39 million are blind. With visual art being limited to people with vision or ability to view art, I have decided to use my work and as my 'beyond the board' create a sensory art installation involving all the senses such as touch, sight, smell and hearing to create a all inclusive viewing of art.**



This piece of work is done by Cathy Carter is called 'seven sisters' which is 7 acrylic panels, inkjet photographic print and dichroic film. The installation references the minimalist painted plywood panel works of John McCracken but still having the properties of clarity, conciseness and effectiveness. By using industrially-processed materials such as acrylic panels there is a association with minimalism and the shininess of the acrylic panels gives the look of the ocean's surface. This technique of displaying artwork looks very effective because the light can shine through with the use of LED lights above and shows the water from a different view.



This type of artwork is called anamorphic illusion. This means that it is a series of closely lined up LED lights strangely placed which creates the illusion of a moving piece of water. The piece of work on the left is a giant 3D wave that was in Seoul's Gangnam district. This would be a cool piece to include within the tactile and sensory art exhibition because it gives you a sense of being inside the ocean with huge waves without being in the water. Because it would be LED lights it has the option to change the piece of work/water that is getting displayed.



This piece of work is an installation in Japan Minic the tumultuous nature of the oceans waves. Because it is in black and white is really emphasizes the lines and pulls in the water that reflect the light from above. This would be a great addition to the art exhibition because it shows the image up close and how the water interacts with other movements of water and the ripples on the surface with are creating more lines and details within the water.

It could also work as a 'statue/playground' where kids and adults can 'walk on the surface of the ocean' and experience something that could never happen otherwise. The ripples on the surface of the sculpture would allow it to be a tactile sensory piece of art were everyone can enjoying the feeling of the ocean that is frozen in time.