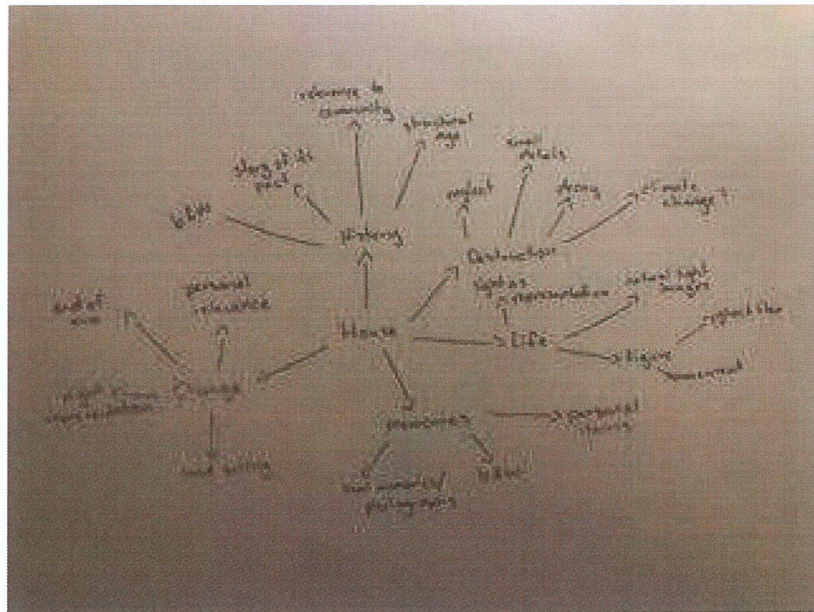


## Proposition

When choosing a theme for my photography board I knew I wanted to choose something that would have meaning to me. A photography board is a large, time-consuming project that I knew I would have no hope in finishing if what I was shooting didn't interest me. I have always been a very sentimental person, and have a lot of care for things that are often neglected or ignored by others. I have always been able to see the beauty in things that are run-down or forgotten and left to rot. It was on a drive to school one day when I passed an abandoned farm house on my road. This house has been standing, abandoned and neglected since well before I was born. I pass it almost everyday in the car and have always found myself intrigued by it, wanting to learn its history, explore its secrets. I knew then that this house had to be the focus of my 2022 photography board. The connection I felt to it due to its relevance to my home and community as well as my interest in simply exploring it, told me that this was going to be a subject I would genuinely enjoy capturing for my board.

## Brainstorm of Ideas:



This brainstorm is a map that was made and added on to as my work progressed and it became more clear to me what ideas I wanted to portray and how exactly I wanted to express them.



Coming from a farming family and having lived in the same rural area for a majority of my life, saw me lucky enough to already know the farmer who owns the land of which the house stood on. I was gratefully granted permission to explore and survey the property and photograph it at anytime I wanted. The hard part was narrowing in on what I wanted to express and show people about this house through my work. I wasn't really one for planning my shoots and preferred to turn up on the day and let inspiration strike me as I went. I particularly wanted to explore the history of the house and the features of it that connected it back to the time period in which it was built. So in my original shoots I was mostly focusing on the structure and exterior of the house. Originally, I thought that as my work developed it would leave me to focus on the idea of death. The eerie spooky vibes abandoned homes give

off has always led me to thinking they also have a strong connection to the idea of death or loss. I still see this connection, but as I got the courage to overcome my slight fears towards the home and its unknown interior, I came to find a very strong presence of life in the home. I found it was more like a beautiful time capsule of memories from the lives that were once lived there, instead of a scary, haunted feel I thought I would experience. Memories and presence of life then became a very strong focus for my work as I wanted to explore the idea of peoples lives being preserved within a building and the beauty behind that.

At this point I realised to make the most of my ideas I needed to expand my subject matter and introduce another house into my board. I knew however that using a whole new house as well as the one I had been initially shooting could be risky as it may take away from the meaning of why I chose the original home in the first place. Because of this I made sure to put careful consideration into my choice of a second house and settled on the Flemming House located near Opunake. I spent the first few influential years of my life living in



Opunake and have a strong connection to the town and the community there. The Flemming House is a staple of Opunake history and has a lot of meaning to the area, and in turn me. I knew that the Flemming House in combination with the house on my road would create a narrative I am interested in and connected to, both of which I believe are the two most important qualities when creating art of any form.

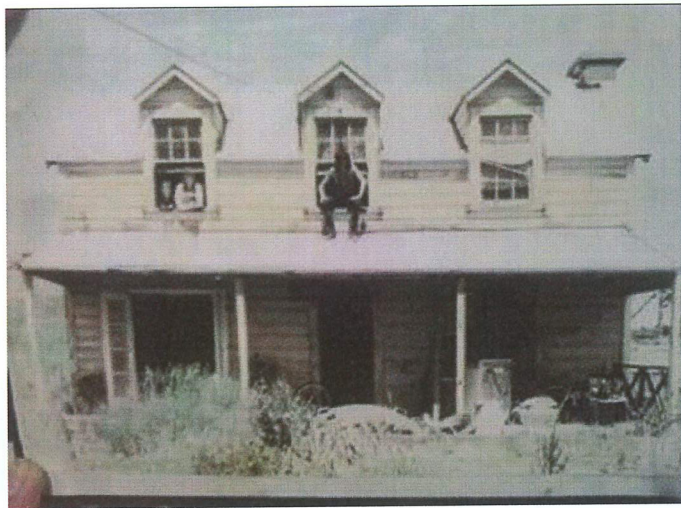
There was a lot of trial and error in my work as a lot of the time I was working in a dark environment which required a slow shutter speed. Due to this I quickly found a tripod would be necessary to achieve the shots I wanted. The purchase of a tripod would later come in to be extremely handy as I moved into night photography which required long 30 second shutters. I learnt a lot of skills on how to take certain photos and what settings to use to achieve certain looks from a large variety of artists. To name some; Kenneth Josephson, Henri Prestes, Robin Morrison, Aaron Siskind, Uta Barth, and more. There was a lot of learning along the way about aperture, ISO, shutter speed and other settings that led me to a much higher level of understanding of a camera than at the start of the year. The named artists inspired a lot of my work and led me to discovering new ways to convey my ideas that I had not previously thought about.

Work by artists  
Kenneth  
Josephson, Aaron  
Siskind and Robin  
Morrison (left to  
right).



## History

I focused on two separate houses to achieve the photography for my board. Both houses are rich in history and have a strong connection to the Taranaki region and the to the community in which they are involved. The Fleming House in particular, located in Rahotu, plays a key part in the History of the Opunake/Rahotu area and within the farming industry. The house has a very distinctive early colonial form with a plain veranda and three dormer windows for the upstairs rooms, as well as a large brick chimney up the side of the house. The Fleming House was built originally for the Jeffries 140 years ago in 1882 when they moved to the area from



Nelson. The Jeffries were some of the very first settlers in Rahotu and were the very influential start of farming in the area. In 1919 the house was sold to the Fleming family, who it has been owned by ever since. The photo on the left was taken between 30 and 40 years ago when the house was still lived in by The Flemings which I found in a community Facebook group. The



image below that one was taken 10 years ago by a blogger on the blogsite [bettysnzblog.blogspot.com](http://bettysnzblog.blogspot.com). The house and the owners have a long running, strong connection to the Taranaki farming community, giving the place a lot of historical value. The historical relevance of this house is something I find very important. Having grown up in [redacted]

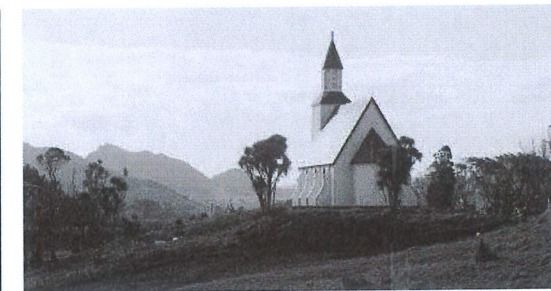
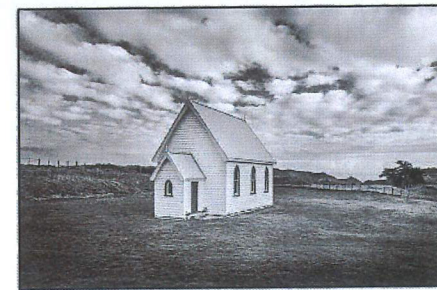


when I was younger and being directly involved in the farming community myself means the history of the home also has relevance to me personally. I wanted to explore a way to show the houses age in a way that made it seem important.

## Robin Morrison

Robin Morrison is a New Zealand photographer who focuses on historical buildings and places all around New Zealand and uses a documentary style. I have found he is extremely skilled in being able to capture the past in present photos through the use of lighting, angle, and editing. I particularly like his use of black and white in his works as it gives the images a stark sense of age and wear, almost creating the illusion that the photo was taken years ago. Majority of his shots are exterior and look at the building as a whole. I took inspiration from Morrisons work in creating that same sense of age in my own.

### Work by Robin Morrison:



In these works you can see his use of black and white to create age and his careful decision in the timing of the

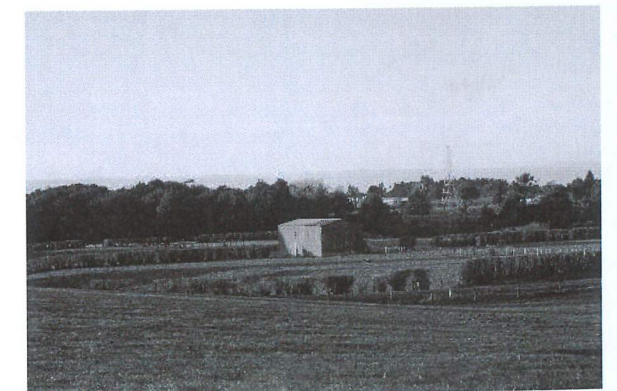


photos to achieve a moody overcast look with cloudy skies.

### My work inspired by Robin Morrison:



In my work inspired by the work of Robin Morrison I took exterior photos of the houses with careful choice in angle and positioning, and then in editing made all the images black and white to recreate the same aged and historic feel Morrison has in his images.



## Destruction

Decay and destruction were obviously very key qualities about the homes I was photographing. Due to their neglect, over time they became run-down, weather-beaten, and rotten. Destruction is something we see very often in our world, the obvious one of course being the destruction of our climate due to our neglect of the earth's needs and issues. I'm very passionate about climate change and live by the saying 'there is no planet B'. I feel we as a society are very rapidly approaching a point of no return. At some point the issues will be too far progressed to revert. I see this issue reflected in the houses I photographed. Their own issues were



ignored, and needs neglected until they got to where they are now. Rotten, unliveable, deteriorated. The buildings are nearing the point where they won't even resemble homes anymore. The destruction in these houses is irreversible and I wanted to express the extent of it in my work.

I feel like to show the full extent of an issue such as destruction, you need to take a step further than looking at the big picture. I feel like seeing the little details can have more impact and really bring light to the issue. Often an issue doesn't seem that bad when you're looking at it as a whole or from its exterior and it's not until you look closer and pay attention to the small things that you notice how deep the roots of the issue go. With these houses they both look pretty run-down as a whole, but still possibly fixable, it is not until you look closely at the rotted out walls, the holes in the floor, and the rusted out tin roof that you notice how bad the damage is. Thinking about this I took notice to how it also applies to people. When our needs are neglected and ignored, we as people start to take damage and self-destruct over time. From the outside, a person can seem like they're doing okay, but when you start to pay attention to the little details, the changes in behaviour, the bad habits do you notice their damage and find the cracks in the façade. When I considered this fact, I knew I wanted to use the damage on these buildings due to neglect as a metaphor for the damage on the mental health of a person also due to neglect.

Having struggled with mental health myself in previous years, I understand how easy it is for people to put on a face and disguise their damage. I feel my personal

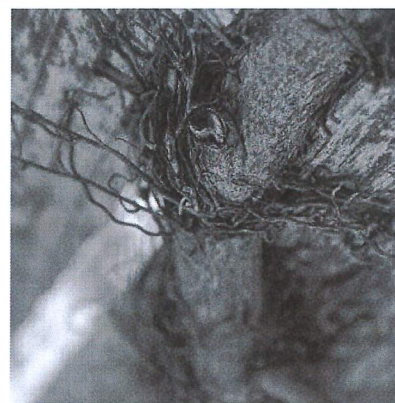
experience has allowed me to better understand a way to express this using a method that feels most correct and representative to me.

## Aaron Siskind

Aaron Siskind was an American photographer who was known for focusing on the details of things and shooting in an up-close manner that created a new image that was separate from the original object. Siskind very cleverly uses a short depth of field in a lot of his works to put the focus of the image on small details. I took inspiration from his method of photography and used it to create my own close-up shots of details I found had a strong representation of the damage in the houses.

I focused particularly on subject matter such as peeling paint, burnt and rotted wood, rubbish and debris lying around and the rusted out roof.

### Work by Aaron Siskind:



### My work inspired by Aaron Siskind:



In my works I used a low aperture ranging from 3.5-5 to focus the camera on the up-close detail and unfocus the rest of the image, similar to how Siskind does in his work which can very clearly be seen in the third image of the rocks.

## Memories

In my initial shoots I always had the eerie feeling that I was invading someone else's space. It felt like I was seeing someone's personal life without their permission, almost as if the home was never abandoned at all. I felt as though I was being watched, like at any moment I could turn a corner and run into a person asking me to get out of their home and off of their property. Of course, I knew this wouldn't happen and that I had full permission to be there, but still I could never shake that feeling. The strong presence of life still felt in this long abandoned house was something I wanted to explore and show in my work. I wanted to look at the idea of expressing memories and the concept of the lives that were lived in this house were somehow left behind and preserved within the walls of the building.

I first started with having personal items be the subject of my photos, as I felt they had the most direct relation to the memories of the people who lived in the house. I photographed items such as books, shoes, beds, chairs, ect. Because to me these items were more personal and more intimately used by the people who were once in the home. This was nice and did achieve some photos I ended up using on my board, but I wanted something more direct. I wanted a way to literally show actual memories existing in the space, and that was when I discovered Kenneth Josephson's work.

### Examples of original personal item photos:



These images lacked direct connection to the idea of memories that I was trying to express.



### Kenneth Josephson

Kenneth Josephson is recognised as a very influential American photographer who is famously known for his photographs that layer pictures within pictures. His work offers a playful commentary on photographic illusion and causes the viewer to question the truthfulness behind the representation of the image. This draws attention to the fact that photographic reality is merely an expression of an artist's ideas and choices. The subject of Josephson's photography is photography itself, and the ways in which life can be documented, manipulated, and celebrated through a photo. A photograph is always assumed to be a direct representation of the real world, particularly when objects featured are familiar and have a recognisable relationship with each other. However Josephson's work challenges this, using previously taken photos and putting them in places that would make sense if the object were real, yet also makes no sense as it is only a photograph that could have been taken any amount of time in the past.

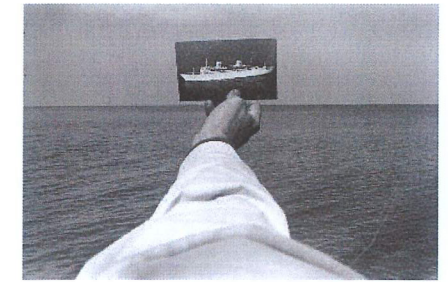
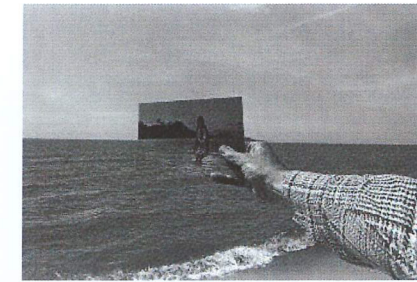
I especially like the idea that through his work, Kenneth Josephson is creating new memories through the use of old ones. This is something I myself wanted to do. I wanted to express old memories in a way that brings them into the present and connects them to the current world. I was particularly inspired by the work 'Picture Fiction'. In this image old images have been perfectly aligned with a real, present day scene. The title says it for itself that it is combining two different realities to create one fictional image. This photograph has influenced me and my work as when I look at it I see a representation of memories that exist within the captured space. I feel



'Picture Fiction' - Kenneth Josephson

connected to both the past and the present at the same time while looking at the image and this is something I wanted to recreate in my own work. The perfect alignment of the images creates the feel that the memories are not removable, like they are perfectly a part of the present structure and have been preserved over time.

### More examples of Kenneth Josephson's Work:



To create this effect in my work, I asked around in a



my work

community Facebook page I am in, and someone who previously lived in The Fleming House came forward with a photo taken of the home some 30 years ago. I cut the image in half and took it to the house where I held it up, lining it up perfectly, and took some photos. These photos to me feel as though I am showing people that the history of the house and the memories that occurred in it are still very much present, and was a way for me to express the eerie feeling of the presence of life I felt in my initial shoots.

I also took further inspiration from the 'Picture Fiction' piece and in my editing process decided to alter the "current" part of the house to appear black and white while leaving the photograph memory in colour. This draws focus to the memory making it the subject of the photo, which is what I was aiming to do. My aim was to show in the most direct and obvious way that the home is filled with memories that live within its walls.



## Presence of Life

To further expand on the strong sense of life I felt when inside each of the abandoned buildings I decided to incorporate the use of both light and figure.

### Light

I have always seen light, or more specifically natural light, as a representation or symbol of life, while darkness a symbol of death. I was inspired to use light to represent the presence of life I felt within the house purely by chance. Majority of my shooting at the start of my photography process had been done mid to late afternoon after school. But one weekend I had some free time and went in the morning. At this time the sun was in a perfect position so that it caused a large beam to come in through one of the windows and illuminate a chair sitting in one of the rooms. I felt as though the light was showing me the traces of life left in the house, and from there decided I would carry on the use of natural light in my board as a clear representation of life and the remnants of it that remained within the walls of these homes.



#### Uta Barth

Uta Barth was also a great inspiration in learning how exactly I was going to use

natural light. Uta Barth is a contemporary German photographer who often shoots ethereal subject matter such as light coming through a window and crating patterns on a wall or dispersing through a curtain. Her work often appears to be missing a subject matter or is blurred and out of focus.

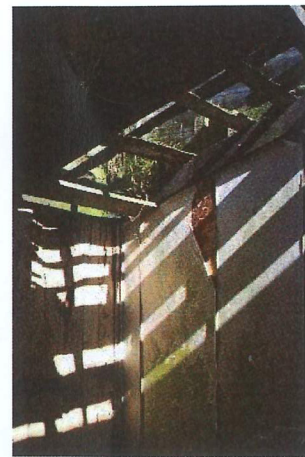
#### Work by Uta Barth:



I was particularly inspired by her works in which light was creating patterns on the walls of her homes and used this specific aspect in a lot of my own work. With my own atmosphere being extremely dark with mostly minimal lighting, the natural light I captured became a stark contrast to the rest of the image, really highlighting aspects of the room. It created the exact vibe I was looking for, that even in this abandoned, dark space, life was still very much present and seen.

#### My work inspired by Uta

##### Barth:



##### Figure

I knew to even further express the presence of life on my board I wanted to introduce a figure into my work. However, I was unsure how I wanted to do it. In my head I knew I wanted them to appear kind of ghost like or resemble a spirit looking figure but was still unsure how exactly I wanted to achieve this look. I also didn't want to accidentally fall into making the figure look too scary or demeaning, as the whole point of introducing the figure was to further express the presence of life in the house and the beauty I found in it. In fact as I thought more on it, I didn't really want the figure to be seen as a ghost at

all. I wanted it to feel like real memories were being played out all around the house and it was by accident that snippets of these were caught on camera. I needed the figure to present as unclear and hazy, in a way that made them appear like they were both there and not at the same time.

#### Nicole Coson

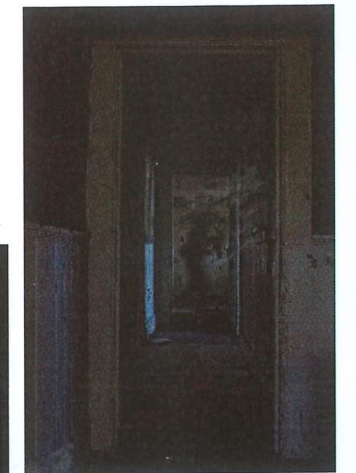
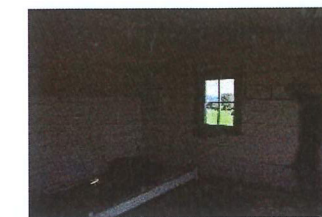
Nicole Coson is a painter who specialises in paranormal work. As artvisor.com says, "Her work attempts to connect the viewer with something simultaneously familiar and alien." I found her style of painting ghost figures in a wispy almost transparent seeming way that both resembles a figure but doesn't at the same time, as something I wanted the figures in my photos to resemble also.

I achieved this through a lot of trial and error while editing. I lowered exposure of the figure and made them slightly transparent to give them something close to a shadow effect. I then played around with different blur methods and settled on a motion blur to achieve the hazy look.

#### Work by Nicole Coson:



#### My work inspired by Nicole Coson:



## Change

When I was at the point at which I only had a few spaces left to fill my board, I was searching for some inspiration on what to finish on. Coincidentally, around that same time, the farmer who owns the property that the abandoned house near my home is on, decided to sell his



land. Large 'For Sale' signs became posted in multiple places in the area I live in. It quickly became the talk of the community. This farmer owns a large quantity of land all along my road as well as others

nearby. This land has been owned by the same family for as long as I, my parents, and my grandparents have been living here, not being sold since 1903. This event caused me to reflect on how the area I have grown up in and the people who live here has changed over the years. The ownership of this land and the abandoned house that sits on it is something that has remained a constant since before my life began. Now that the land is being sold, I feel as though a long-lasting era is coming to an end. I couldn't help but relate it to my personal life also, as I look towards the end of my twelfth year of high school and step into my year 13 boots. I'm leaving behind what I have lived for 16 years of my life and stepping into a role of leadership and influence. Simultaneously, both my home area as well as my personal life are experiencing large changes. I wanted to use this change and reflect it in my work. I wanted to express this idea of an 'end of an era' and have it be the finishing point of my board, as though the story of this house, its history, and its memories is finally coming to a close and moving on.

I toyed with how to represent this in a way that will flow on from the rest of my board, when I realised that all of my previous shoots had been done in the day, creating the perfect opportunity to use nightfall to my advantage. As nightfall is well-known for signifying the end of a day, I

found it would be a nice tool to use to represent the house being sold and its story coming to an end.

### Henri Prestes

I also became inspired by artist Henri Prestes who is most known for his cinematic, night-time photography of buildings and landscapes. Prestes said in an interview that his main goal when photographing anything is "...to enhance the emotion of the picture...". This line is something I related to as I wanted to enhance the emotions I was feeling about the farmer selling his property and the house and express that in my own photography. **Work by Henri Prestes:**



### Luc Perrot

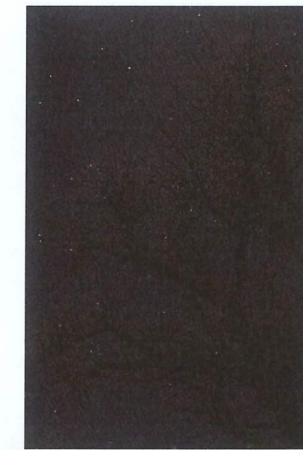
Luc Perrot is a French Astro-photographer who produces stunning works of the night sky. Though I don't have the equipment to achieve the same quality of work as him, I still used his work as inspiration to involve stars as another element in my photos.



When I began my own night photos there was a very long trial and era process. I spent lots of time studying Prestes work along with other night photographers to learn what settings were appropriate to achieve the look I wanted. My biggest challenge shooting at night was focusing the camera, as it is a lot harder to see through the lens in the dark. I also had to spend a lot of time tweaking my settings, particularly changing my shutter length to allow enough light into the camera for a

clear image. To try and capture the stars in my photos and allow more light into the image, I was often using 30-second-long shutter speeds. I would have liked to go longer and experiment with making the night images have an eerie day time feeling, however my camera isn't quite advanced enough to do that so I had to make do with what I could.

### My work inspired by Henri Prestes & Luc Perrot:



While experimenting in my last shoot for my board with night-time photography, I produced the image below. To create the image, I set my shutter speed to 20 seconds, and got my mum to walk around the house with the light on her phone on. Originally, we were using a torch, but I found this created too large of a light streak and so we moved to something smaller. The streak of light is how I have represented the memories held within the house



moving on and fading away now that the house is being sold. This relates to how I have used light to symbolise life/memories.

## Development

As a year 12 I had also produced a Level 2 board earlier in the year and my level 3 was an extension of those original ideas. I did carry a lot of work from my level 2 board into my level 3 and used it as inspiration for furthering my ideas. A lot of the photos I did reuse however, I edited and made slightly different. Getting my level 2 board printed provided the opportunity to learn what I liked and didn't about my work. It allowed me to see what aspects of photos needed to be changed, for example some of my photos needed to be lightened and some needed the exposure slightly lowered to achieve the look I was aiming for. Seeing all of the photos put together also let me



see what worked together well and what didn't as much, and led me to see further potential in my images. From my level 2 board I learned that I needed to become more conceptual in my work, and instead of just have a survey of a space, consider more what my photos meant and symbolised. I knew I needed something to activate my work, to have it represent something more. Being able to reflect on my work I think was extremely important and valuable to my line of thinking when it came to my level 3 board. The reflection also led me to a position where I decided what work wouldn't be strong enough to carry over. I was able to recognise some images could have possibly been done in a different, better way and was gratefully given the chance to experiment with that notion that most people weren't given. A big change from my level 2 to

### Example of work development:

level 3 board was the introduction of a figure. Some photos from my level 2 I actually kept and edited a figure into to give them more meaning and relevance to the themes I was discussing in my level 3 work. The works on the right are an example of how I changed the image from my level 2 to my level 3 board by introducing the shadowy



figure to focus on the idea of life I express throughout the level 3 board. A lot of work on my level 2 board was attempting to show some of the themes I have discussed in this workbook but not in a way that was strong or obvious enough. Being able to reflect on and develop this to come up with images that I really loved and felt like correctly expressed the ideas I was trying to convey was a massive help in my thought process for the level 3 board.

### Some level 2 images not included in level 3:

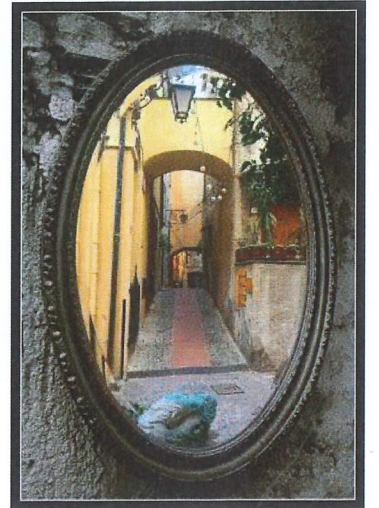


My use of the camera also became a lot more technical as doing my level 2 board first gave me more opportunity to learn about how the camera settings work. Especially since I was mostly working in a very dark environment it required me to be constantly considering my camera settings, as a lot of images came out way too dark for use. I also developed my editing skills a lot from my level 2 to 3 board. Very few images on my level 2 aside from the black and white ones had any editing done to them. In my level 3 however, majority of photos required editing such as photos with figure, black and white images and night images. This development led me to a lot of YouTube tutorials and learning my way around photoshop, which I am thankful for as it has allowed me to develop a new skillset.

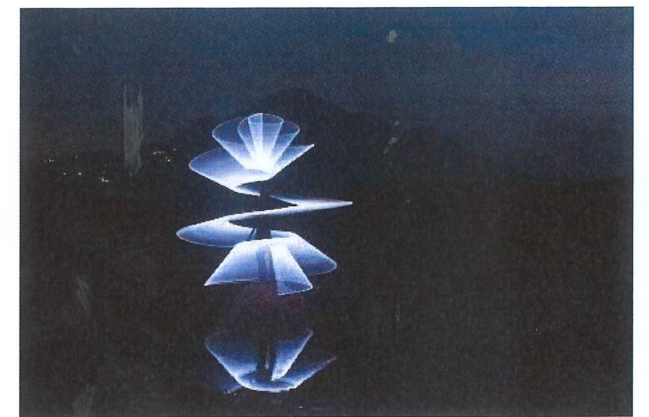
## Extension of Ideas

Even after an entire year of photographing I still have more ideas I would have liked to express in my work. Time is never on your side when it comes to art it seems. I would like to now discuss what more I would have liked to put on my board to even further develop my ideas and messages. If I were to be given more time and perhaps some resources that are currently not available to me, I would have liked to explore some routes to further express the ideas of history and memories in my work.

When expressing memories on my board I created work inspired by artist Kenneth Josephson. While I think the photos I produced were a powerful and direct way of getting my ideas across, I feel I could have developed this further and intertwined it more with the rest of my board. Pretending I could get access to more images of the homes from the times they were inhabited I would have liked to use memories in my memory expression. Particularly in the interior I think this would have been a unique way of showing memories in the house. Mirrors of course are reflective and show an exact copy of what is in front of them, but I like the idea that I could use the mirror as almost a looking glass into the past. For example, have the mirror situated inside of the house somewhere, and edit the image so that what is seen inside the mirror is a reflection of the space as it was 30 or so years ago with the use of a real image taken from back then. I've always been intrigued with the idea of mirrors acting as portals to a different world or time, and would like to be able to experiment with this in my images.



I also would have liked to experiment more with the idea of painting with light. I unfortunately only discovered this photography technique really late this year so didn't have much time available to expand on it. The last image on my board features a night exterior shot of the house with a stroke of light circling around it and fading off. This image really connected to me and the ideas I was expressing in my board. As previously mentioned, I used the night photography to signal the houses story coming to an end, and used light to represent presence of life and memories. In this image I see the stroke of light as the memories held in the house being let go into the night. The light represents that along with



the house being sold, the memories within it are going to fade away, like the life is finally leaving the building and moving on. The idea of painting with light is something I would have liked to play around with more as I believe it could have led me to some new, original, and unique ideas. Perhaps if there were a 4th panel to my board it would be centred around night photography and furthering the story of the houses by drawing with light.

Pretending I have all the resources and money it would require, I would also be interested in creating an installation. This installation would consist of a room in which large copies of the exterior images of one of the houses are covering the walls. In the room there would be multiple doors, each one that leads to a different room of the house, where again large scale images would be covering the walls floor to ceiling. This would recreate a model of the house for people to walk through and explore just like I did, but in a way that's confusing and doesn't entirely make sense as the photos would look more like a mixed up collage of the room instead of an exact copy of how it looks in real life. Another confusing aspect would be that each room would be the same size with flat, plain walls, but the photographs would create an illusion of depth and texture. I feel like this could be a really cool way to allow other people to experience the intricacies of the house but through my own work. I find it difficult to put into words the vision I have in my head for this, but in its essence it is basically a life size, warped model of one of the houses created through photographs. Being able to see how people react to my work, and see if their thought process while exploring the home is similar at all to mine would be really interesting, and a way to further develop my ideas.