

On the Morning after the 60's

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My childhood was displaced from time, conjuring images of Dusty Springfield songs, playing "dress ups" with vintage clothing, and watching *The Brady Bunch*, paralleling my mother's 1970s youth more than my peers'. My identity inhabits both past and present, suggesting the universality and interchangeability of historical contexts. Additionally, I have explored mixed media application of traditional craft techniques as embellishment to digital photographs throughout Years 11 and 12. My juxtaposition between historical, handcrafted techniques and contemporary, digital media also links past and present, reflecting how history defines current culture. This personally significant idea was the basis for my body of work. I used photographic and craft techniques to manipulate an authentic 1960s aesthetic within contemporary, digital photography.

Photography formed my work's basis, involving one large image surrounded by 26 small, "satellite" photographs. I investigated mid-20th Century photographers, like William Eggleston and Stephen Shore, exploring how to create attention-capturing imagery within the era's aesthetic. I was inspired by Eggleston's dye-transfer printing method, enhancing definition and widening tonal range; its aesthetic embodied the hedonism and boldness of the 1960s' "cultural revolution". Eggleston's processes were evoked through my use of an Olympus digital camera and "contrast" enhancement, similarly maximising images' tonal scales and definition. My Photoshop editing processes also mimicked the intense hues of dye-transfer printing. Converting photographs into Cyan-Magenta-Yellow-Key mode, and the "Channel Mixer" tool, allowed me to alter specific hues' saturations, whilst the "Colour Balance" feature increased discrete hues' intensities in individual tonal areas. Kate Ballis' *Infra Realism* series, featuring contemporary photographs of mid-20th Century architecture tinted with oversaturated magenta, also influenced my use of colour. Literally illustrating the "rose coloured glasses" of nostalgia, she suggests how past memories define present experiences. I almost identically tinted my images in Photoshop, conveying the same idea. My large central print's translucent textures, bright highlighting, and darker hues were edited more subtly, reflecting colour, shade, and tone in Shore's *Uncommon Places* series.

Eggleston's and Shore's approach to subject matter was additionally influential. They photographed mundane, suburban scenes; when juxtaposed with traditional compositional rules, like the rule of thirds, and unconventional, abstracting camera perspectives, their imagery suggested on the beauty within ordinary life. Their works' everydayness also authentically records their historical contexts. I spontaneously photographed "mid-century modern" architecture and "retro" shops from my everyday life and semi-candidly captured human subjects, increasing naturalism. This enhanced my images' convincingness as authentic 1960s period pieces, linking past and present when contrasted against their actual contemporaneity. I juxtaposed my subjects with unconventional camera angles and traditional compositional rules, like the use of point perspective, evoking beauty within mundanity. Within my 1960s aesthetic, it illustrates how nostalgia can enhance otherwise unremarkable memories. The central image's blurred forms and metallic highlighting suggest a futuristic sense of movement, reflecting how history can influence future progress. Whilst I photographed historically accurate subjects and utilised authentic costuming during my photoshoot, some contemporary motifs, like modern cars, were unavoidable. This subtly suggests the images' current contexts, provoking thought on the interchangeability of past and present.

I manipulated 9 of my photographic prints utilising traditional art and craft techniques: embroidery, painting, and paper collage. Embellishment motifs were influenced by three psychedelic, brightly-hued textile prints from the late 1960s. These enhanced my photographs' articulation of the era's boldness and freedom. I simplified and isolated their forms, suggesting contemporary "minimalist" aesthetics, relating their past ideas to my contemporary context. Two patterns originated from my vintage clothing collection, connecting my work's themes to my identity.

Painted embellishments were inspired by Gerhard Richter's practices. I embellished images with Abstract Expressionist-inspired techniques in Pop Art-inspired hues, loosely portraying the textile patterns' forms. The influence of mid-20th Century artistic movements strengthened my evocation of mid century aesthetics within my contemporary work. I painted embellishments onto paper to then "collage" onto one image, and added other elements, like collage and ink outlines, to paint that was directly applied onto others, increasing boldness and organicness, evoking 1960s idealism.

My embroidery was influenced by Diane Meyer and Melissa Zexter, contemporary artists who utilise textiles to embellish photographs. My juxtaposition of embroidered embellishments with a "retro" photographic aesthetic was inspired by Meyer; whilst, organic line and form, vibrant, warm hues, and experimentalism with simple stitch techniques within my embroidery owed to Zexter. The "craft" nature of embroidery connotes history, increasing my photographs' period authenticity. My handcrafted embellishing of contemporary, digital media thus links past and present, critiquing depersonalisation and conformity that societal digitisation has heralded. I avoided damaging brittle photographic paper when directly stitching into my prints by "pre-punching" needle holes, before adding the tensile force of thread.

For collage embellishments, I juxtaposed photographed elements of my patterns with my photographs, enhancing existing compositional elements and obscuring unnecessary photographic detail, increasing visual impact. Collage also suggested craft techniques popular in the 1960s, maximising aesthetic authenticity and criticising contemporary societal digitisation. All embellishments utilised vivid, warm hues and defined form and line, evoking the boldness of 1960s counterculture, provoking thought on how its ideology influences current life.

My composition conveys a photographic narrative. Clockwise from left, it depicts two characters preparing to meet, the central image illustrating their travel to do so. The figures interact inside a 1960s-style environment within their contemporary context; their appearances become more sparse as they increasingly assimilate within their vintage setting. As the characters assimilate, hues become increasingly saturated and magenta-tinted, indicating their absorption of the era's culture. The subjects' interactions within, and absorption into, a contemporary setting that has been manipulated to suggest a historical era illustrates the universal influence of past ideas on current contexts. The use of myself as a subject renders these themes personally relevant, increasing emotional investment and impact. The title quotes that of a 1970 Joan Didion essay, which discusses how 1960s nostalgia affected successant social and cultural norms; my allusion provokes further thought on the pervasive influence of the past on contemporary life.

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