

# January Assessment 2015

Name: Richard Cassidy

Student Number: 23025681

Course: Fine Art BA

Year: Second Year (Level 5)

Listed below are all the materials that support my assessment;

- 1 Graphite pencil drawing on paper 83.5cm x 59.8cm
- 3 Graphite pencil drawings on paper 29.8cm x 21cm
- 1 Graphite pencil drawing on paper 41.8cm x 59cm
- 1 Graphite pencil drawing on paper 59cm x 41.8
- 5 Graphite pencil drawings containing Ultra violet ink on paper 29.8cm x 21cm
- 7 Ultra violet ink drawing on paper 29.8cm x 21cm
- 2 Ultra violet ink drawings on Acetate 30.5cm x 22.8cm
- 1 Invisible concept piece (Performance)
- 1 Sketchbook
- 1 Scrapbook (ideas book)

Listed here are the materials I will be presenting in my assessment;

- 2 Graphite pencil drawings containing Ultra violet ink on paper 29.8cm x 21cm
- 1 Ultra violet ink drawings on Acetate 30.5cm x 22.8cm
- 1 Invisible concept piece
- 1 Sketchbook
- 1 Scrapbook

## Influences

A major influence for me this semester has been my art context 2 lectures with Penny McCarthy. The overall title for these lectures is Art and the Body, but it has been split into different sections, from the history of the body to the body in performance art. These lectures have broadened my mind set and I feel furthered my knowledge in relation to my own work. Most of my work over the last two years has revolved around portraiture and people. Not only have these lectures improved my knowledge of my subject area, but they have on occasion influenced my work, one example of this would be the self portrait I made.

During the period of time that I was looking at text styles to reflect my hidden messages, I saw Anthony Burrill's work at the Made North Gallery. He chose to show punchy typographic statements to convey his powerful messages. The idea of using large bold text and doing it on such a massive scale directly impacted on the gravitas of his statements. Large texts for big statements.

Back in 2012 the Hayward Gallery showed an exhibition called, Invisible: Art about the unseen. This exhibition feature 50 pieces all of which connected too or influence my work. It was one of the most important pieces of research I found when I was originally developing my ideas. The piece that I enjoyed most was a piece by Gianni Motti from 1989 titled Magic Ink. It featured five seemingly blank canvases that had been drawn on by the artist in invisible ink. The piece unlike my own could not repair without destroying the work completely. This was a massive influence in my concept concerning the destruction of my work by showing it.

An interview by the BBC's Will Gompertz with the exhibitions curator Ralph Rugoff, mentioned the artist Robert Rauschberg. Although not part of this exhibition Rauschberg created a piece in 1953 called Erased de Kooning Drawing. The piece is, or I should say was, a drawing by William de Kooning who at the time was a very sought after artist. Rauschberg spent hours erasing the artwork and making it disappear. Ralph Rugoff also curated a similarly influential exhibition in 2005 at the CCA Watts Institute for contemporary Arts, San Francisco called A Brief History of Invisible Art. Although it seem to be the exhibitions reviews have turned out to be the most influential aspect to my work. Notably Frieze, their review of A Brief History of Invisible Art had being so intellectually written that I gained further understanding on how to explain my own concept.

## Influences

The first time I read about Lana Newstrom's work I was perplexed but gripped by her concept. Art blogs, websites, newspaper reviews all engaged with the work as it was said to be completely invisible. Newstrom is noted by the website Art Fido as saying "Just because you can't see anything, doesn't mean I didn't put hours of work into creating a particular piece". "Art is about imagination and that is what my work demands of the people interacting with it. You have to imagine a painting or sculpture is in front of you". This I thought to be revolutionary until I read in the Guardian that the entire thing was a hoax. I then found it inspirational that the idea that you can even pretend to create something that is not visible. Although the fact that art collectors are paying through the nose may have been fabricated by the media, who is to say that the original concept of the artist is not real. If Newstrom turned round and said the work was still made then the illusion will continue.

A lot of my work looks closely at children and how they are viewed by society. *Research with Children: Perspectives and Practices* by Pia Monrad Christensen and Allison James, Psychology Press, 2000, looks at the sociology and psychology of children and how they are studied. Sections in this book give me an idea about how to discuss children from a scientific perspective. I believe that by looking at the science I can more easily find ways of conveying my messages in my work as I will have a better understanding of how the child's psychology works.

I often draw from influences from my own childhood but to try and understand my own issues requires me to have a greater understanding of my own psychology. I have looked in books that show artworks by children to try and allow me to look from a child's perspective and the world. I hoped that this could then help when I am portraying a child's thoughts, mannerisms or activity from my own perspective. (*The Innocent Eye, Children's Art and the Modern Artist*, Jonathan Fineberg), (*Pictures of Innocence, The History and Crisis of Ideal Childhood*, Anna Higonnet), (*The Pictorial World of the Child*, Maureen Cox, Cambridge), (*Discovering Child Art, Essays on Childhood, Primitivism and Modernism*, Edited by Jonathan Fineberg)

The book *Jeff Koons* by Jeff Koons, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. 1992, didn't necessarily inspire any of my work more than I could see partial references from my work to his. Although I'm not sure where I stand on Koons, I have to be selective in what I take from him. The childish qualities in his work mixed with his what I believe to be massive psychological issues with sex create a tension I feel I could work with.

*The Illustrators Reference Manual, Children*, Bloomsbury was a book I briefly used to find images that helped with children form and posture. This is so when I am composing a piece I can give it some realism.

## Influences

Notable lectures for me in the Gravity and transmission series this semester have been Dawn Mellor, Thomas Yeomans and Vanessa Place. The Dawn Mellor lecture really made me think about my portraiture and the style that I show it in. She had similarly taken famous faces and put her own twist on them. Her work was generally darker than mine and depicted scenes of horror which she had selected an appropriate colour palette and medium for. Thomas Yeomans was inspirational not for the works he made, but the way that he worked. He would take sections of other peoples videos to re-create his own work. But it wasn't just that, because of his age he found a way of talking about his work that I engaged with. He simply just had a certain 'Je ne sais pas'. Someone I could say the same about was Vanessa Place. I can't put my finger on it but I really enjoyed her talk. It may of been her disregard for authority that I connected with, like when I drew graffiti on the universities property, or maybe it has to do with having such strong opinions.

An Art Journals/Paper by D. N. Perkins titled Invisible Art, discusses not a literal piece of invisible art, like a Gianni Motti. Rather how art is invisible to the masses as they can't read it. This idea I felt was similar to the idea I had about something being invisible because the viewer has an ignorance to what has been done. In the way Perkins describes it however it is apparent that all art can be invisible if you don't no how to look at it. An idea I wish to develop further. Perkins goes on to talk about the teaching of art appreciation but I feel only sections of this are relevant to what I am trying to achieve.





Richard Cassidy  
**Margaret & David, 2014**  
Graphite pencil on paper  
29.7cm x 21cm & 29.7cm x 21cm

## Margaret & David

While walking around the university I was trying to think of ways I could use my UV ink. In the mean time just started doodling and writing on anything and everything that I came across. I saw no harm in it as unless you new were to look with a blacklight you couldn't see it . This continued until I came across an image of a famous politician hanging out side of a lecture theatre, I decided that I would write what I thought of him on his frame. While amusing myself with my hidden message it occurred to me that throughout history many artists had their own political angles. I thought that I could find my political stance through drawing some famous politicians and my thoughts about them. I then decided to amalgamated this idea with an old project involving drawing adults as children. I hoped that this would then make the statements seem completely out of place, that is until you realised who the child would grow up to be. My aim was to make the viewer feel uncomfortable, as often we forget that adults were once just children.

Margaret and David are to of the first pieces I made this semester. Having said this I also feel they are now two of the strongest. When they were originally created a large portion of time was spent drawing them, I did research into the background of them as politicians, and I created my view on them as people. I wanted their clothing to be understated, I wanted the viewer to feel there childish innocence through the drawing style. Then came the UV, I wrote my hidden thoughts and opinions over the images alluding to the children's life in adulthood.

When reflecting back on my drawings of Margaret & David a couple of points originally made in a crit session resounded in my head. Although the overall aesthetic of the piece was a success, the hidden UV messages seemed overly literal. The general impression was that my opinions were so strong, it was felt that the viewer was prevented from making their own opinions. I was advised that a simple title that alluded to who the child was would be enough.

Fortunately before starting any of my drawings I had rigorously tested different papers and materials was to make sure you couldn't see the UV ink in normal light. The paper I chose to do the pieces on was one of the best performers in hiding my messages. This meant I could choose to show them without a UV blacklight and no body would be the wiser.

I took the advise on giving the pieces a simple title, and I have now also decided to only show them as a pair. I feel that there connections in their political beliefs, their controversial decisions and their prim minister or ex prim minister statuses make them stronger together than alone. I also feel that by having a boy and a girl people naturally draw comparisons which I believe beneficial in allowing the work to be more than just hidden personalities.



Richard Cassidy 2014

**The Little Boy**

30.5cm x 23.2cm

Ultra Violet Ink on Clear Acetate



## The Little Boy

This piece was at the centre of a concept I had for my exhibition in the Gage Gallery. Saying this it may sound peculiar that I placed it in the lower right corner of the room where it could barely be seen. In fact it was placed there deliberately, out of the way alluding to its apparent insignificance. The hope was that viewer would be so preoccupied with the three more prominently hung pieces, that they may become dismissive or ignorant of 'The Little Boy'. The concept was to create this moment of ignorance in the viewer. The idea derived from a time in my life when I was desperate to be listened to, but my opinions were ignored. I was dismissed because I was considered too young to be able to understand. I felt like I was in the room but no one noticed me.

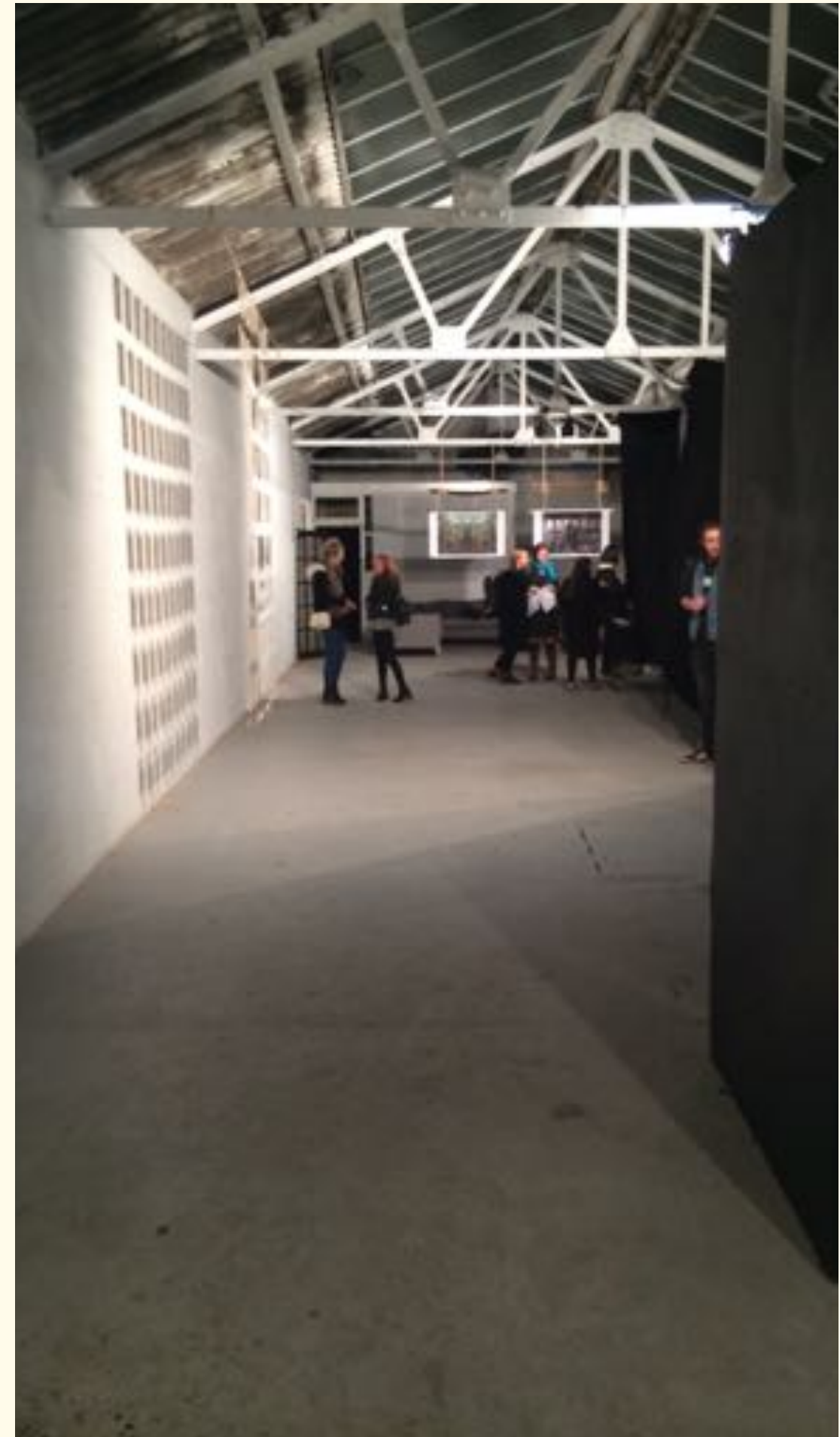
The Acetate sheet was chosen as I thought that it would help the piece blend in with the background and make it slightly less noticeable. The ultra violet ink I used allows the image only to be seen under a Ultra violet light. I placed two UV lights in the room. One a 60cm 20 Watt Light fixed to the wall, its positioning did not allow it to illuminate 'The Little Boy' as much as the other pieces. The other a hand held 4 Watt UV torch placed on a plinth. The hand held torch would allow the viewer to discover whatever they chose. This choice provides the opportunity for the viewer to become ignorant thereby creating the piece.

On reflection I would liked to have set up a camera which would have recorded the interaction and creation of my concept by the viewer. But I suppose we live and learn from our mistakes. In some ways a camera could have changed peoples natural behaviours and therefore it may have detracted from the piece. In the end I was happy with how the work finally turned out.

## Gage Exhibition

The exhibition at KIAC's Gage Gallery was the first ever exhibition I had taken part in. Although the original set up of finding, booking and paying for the gallery was done by the University, it was down to us the students, to make our exhibitions a success. I encountered various problems along the way, and even though it was rather daunting to begin with, not least the bitter cold due to the buildings lack of heating, the desired effect was achieved in the end.

We held a private view on Tuesday 25 November from 19:00 – 21:00. The event appeared to be a success, we had around 60+ people view it over the course of the evening. In the comments book we received a lot of positive feedback which will help us hopefully in the future.



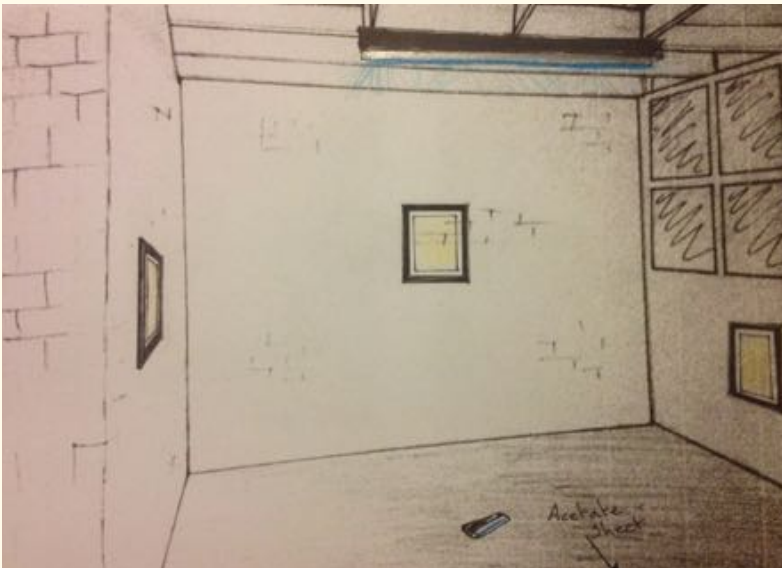
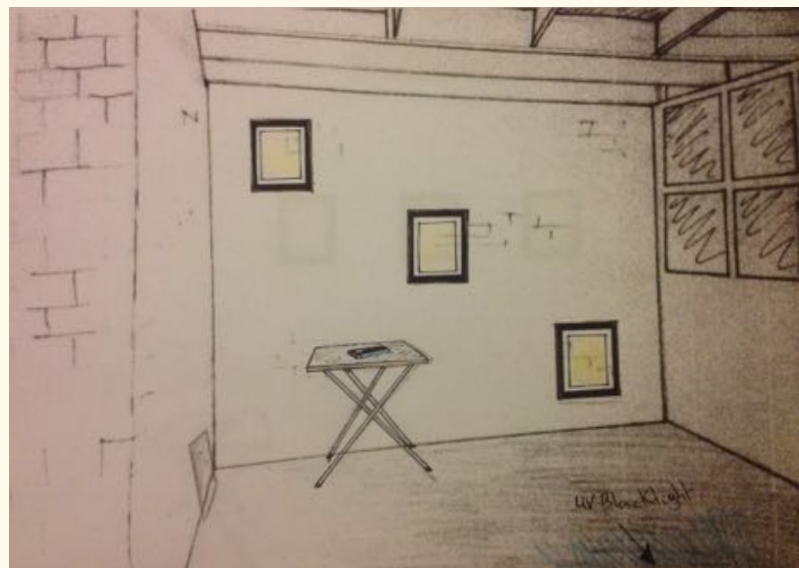
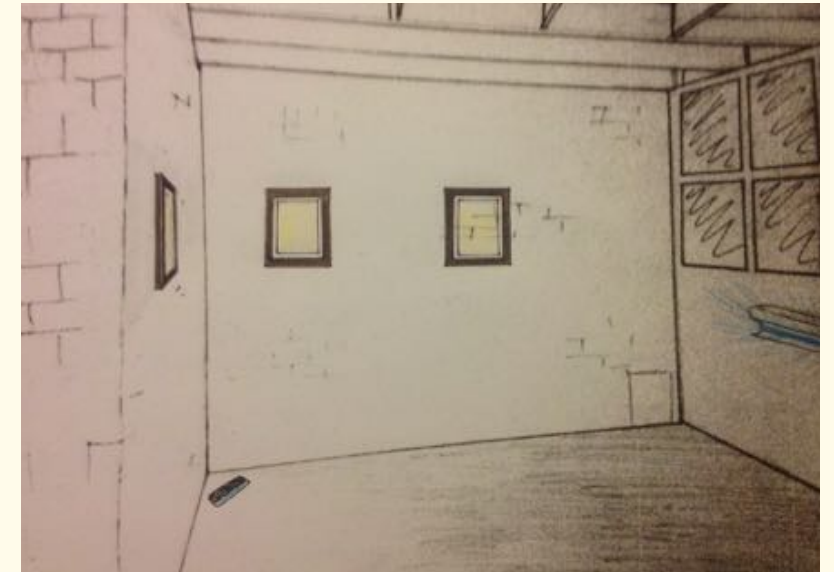
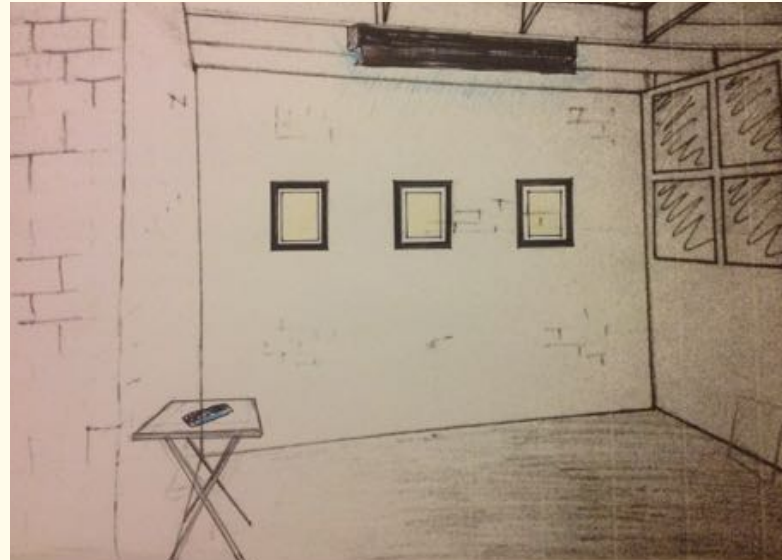
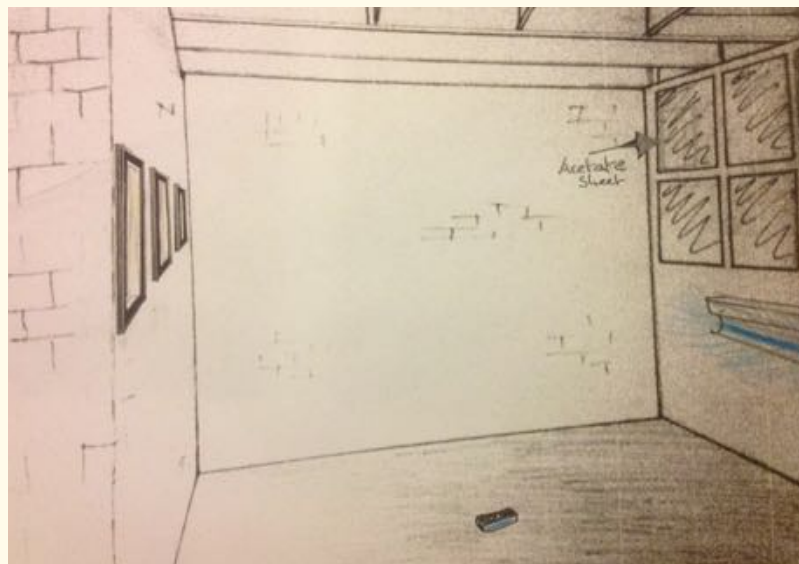
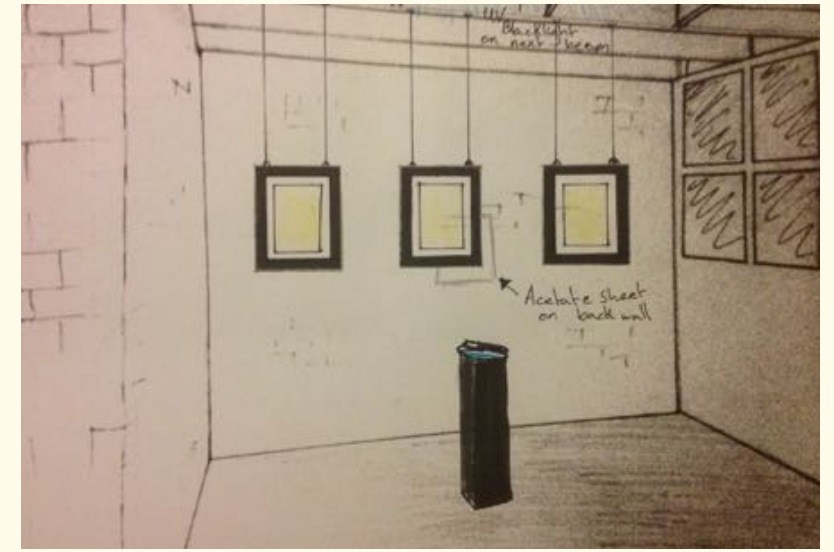
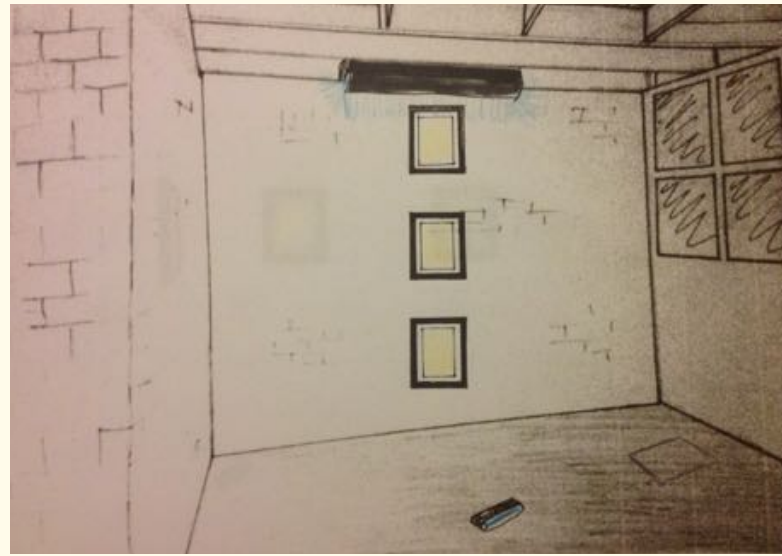
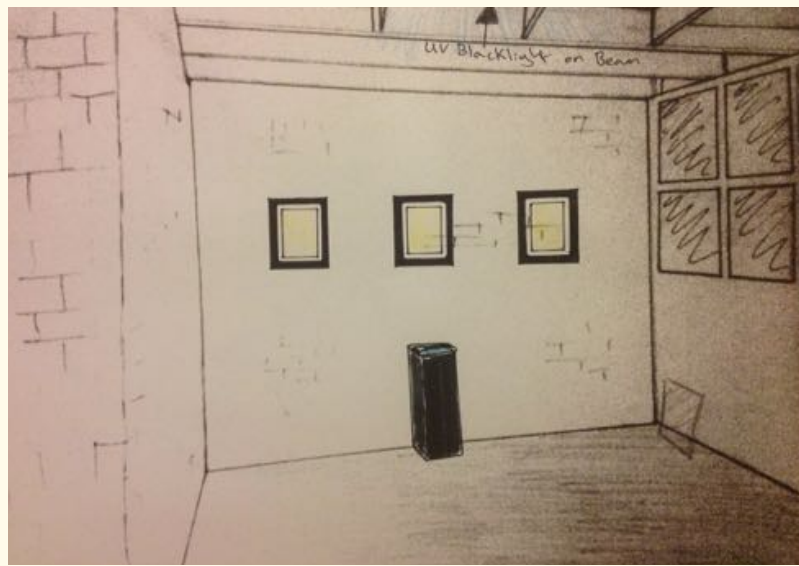


## Gage Exhibition

I based myself within a room inside the gallery space at the far left hand corner (*image below right*). The first problem I encountered was the green and brown mould on the wall next to the entrance of the room (*image below*). I found it to be uncomfortable and distracting from my work, so I scrubbed it away and painted the wall matt white. While doing this I removed all the old nails and fixings from all the walls and patched up the distracting marks with more white paint. The second issue I encountered was two of the rooms walls and ceiling had glass panelling which let in a lot of light, for my piece to work i needed the space to be much darker. So I acquired some discarded thick black fabric and cut it to hang and cover the paneling until I had the perfect light level that I required. My final more minor issue was the electricity to power my UV Light the cabling was not long enough to put the light in the place that I wanted it, so I installed an extension cable to give me the extra distance.







I had seen the walls in the Gage Gallery were just brick so I knew hanging my work would be difficult and time consuming. I thought it would be really frustrating if I finished hanging and then didn't like it. Before the day I had to install my work, I made sketches of my space so that I could plan how I was going to position my work. This meant on the day I could focus on troubleshooting and any finishing touches.





Richard Cassidy 2014 29.8cm x 21cm  
**Invisible "Selfie" 2** Ultra Violet Ink on cream paper

## Gage Exhibition

The pieces that I chose to show in the exhibition were from a project originally based on working with Ultra Violet ink, these pieces can only be seen when shown under a UV blacklight. Therefore the choice of materials, hanging and staging of my pieces in the exhibition was of critical importance. If the non-UV light level was too bright the Ultra violet light would lose its intensity in showing the Ink. The same reaction would occur if the UV light was positioned too far away from the pieces. On the other hand if the UV light was too close the Ink would be so bright it would pull out to many imperfections, in the paper and image that I would not be happy with. With all of this in mind I also wanted the pieces to be invisible in normal light, to allow the illusion that they were simply blank. To achieve all of this I needed the light level to be just right, so I hung large made to measure pieces of fabric that blacked out most of the light, only allowing for a single shaft of light to illuminate the room when someone entered the door. *(Image above right)* The rest of the time the room was darkened enough for you to see the frames clearly on the wall without the UV light on.

I wanted to allow some integration with the work, so I placed one hand held UV light on a plinth for anyone to use close up and the larger UV light on the wall was on timer set to come on at intervals. This was to make sure both types of light were shown in the exhibition.





## Conclusive Statement for Semester 1

Throughout the whole semester my main problem has been maintaining a structured thought process. I have accidentally been creating a multitude of projects all running at the same time. Their themes, concepts, styles, research and development have all become muddled and entwined. In some ways my work still connects as one project, however most of what I have done is so divergent you can group them into different, smaller projects. This has unfortunately made me feel behind, as I now don't feel any of the smaller projects stand alone as fully developed or realised. Each time I go to develop one project I seem to create another.

One reason this all may have happened is that at the beginning of the year I tried to change my normal practice. I decided to base my thinking on a material instead of searching for inspiration as I usually do. This regrettably left me for long periods using UV just for 'UV's sake' with no clear idea of what I was doing.

My resolution is to be more resolute to my chosen concept or theme, I have started a plan of action to redefine my practice. I will structure it in a way that hopefully should stop my mind going off on tangents and making my work vague.

Having said all of this I do feel there have been a lot of positives to take out of this semester. I have improved my presence in the studios, I have attended all lectures and taught sessions bar one day of illness. I have taken part in my first exhibition, which appeared to go down as a success. Finally, I have a clearer understanding of the areas in my practice that need my attention to improve my work in the future.