

Critical Review of Practice
Final Major Project, March 2021
MA Photography, Falmouth University
Andrew Hayward
Supervisor: Wendy McMurdo

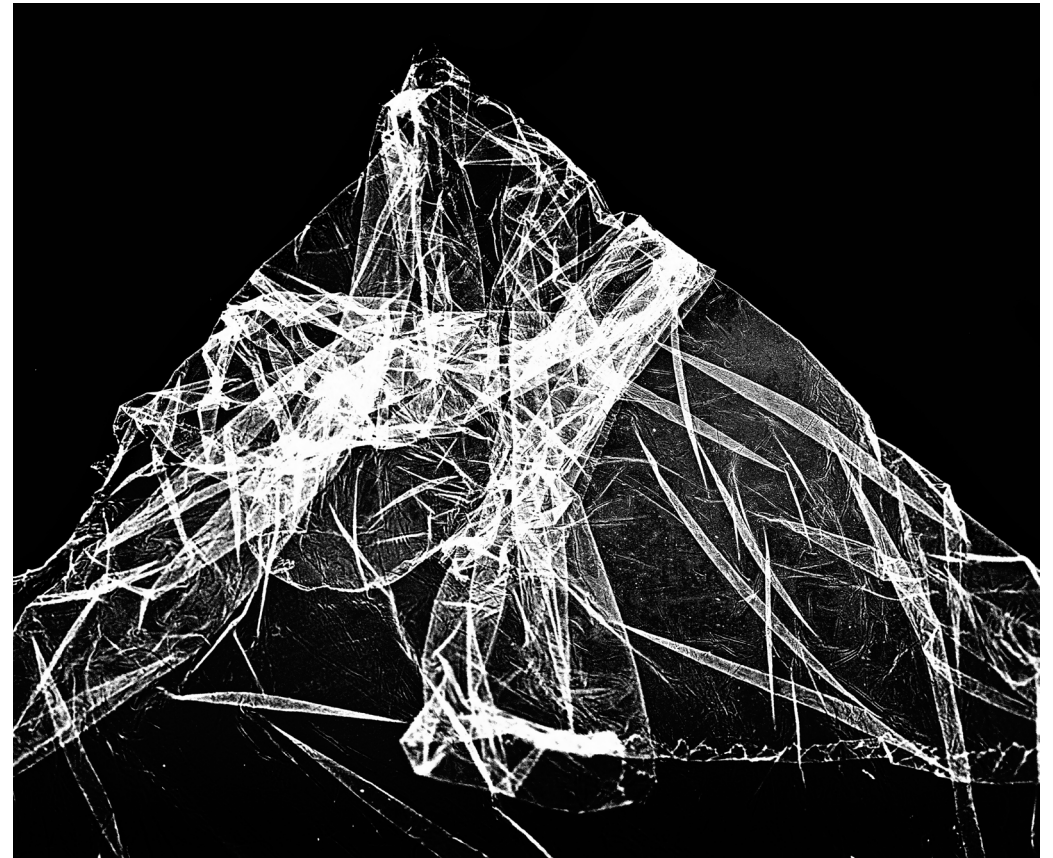


Figure 1. Andrew Hayward, 007B, 2021

Introduction

The very start of this process was very broad and very vague for me. Wanting to find some sort of semblance with the use of cameraless techniques and representations of objects to create abstract imagery.

This attempt was too broad, loaded and haphazard until a breakthrough for my practice which sought to experiment with clear plastics such as cling film to produce photograms. This became far more refined following the work of Abe Morrell using photographic film as the light sensitive substrate for my photograms as opposed to the darkroom paper I had previously been using.

Although it seems simple now, this became a revelation for me and led to large amounts of experimentation. These cling film forms rapidly started to represent horizons and mountain ranges leading to a focus on somewhat abstract landscape views without setting foot outside of a darkened room. From here the creations began to take a more deliberate form inspired by typical 'mountains' such as the Matterhorn in Switzerland or England's own Scafell Pike. These topographic forms quickly began to resemble a body of work which I have come to be quite proud of.

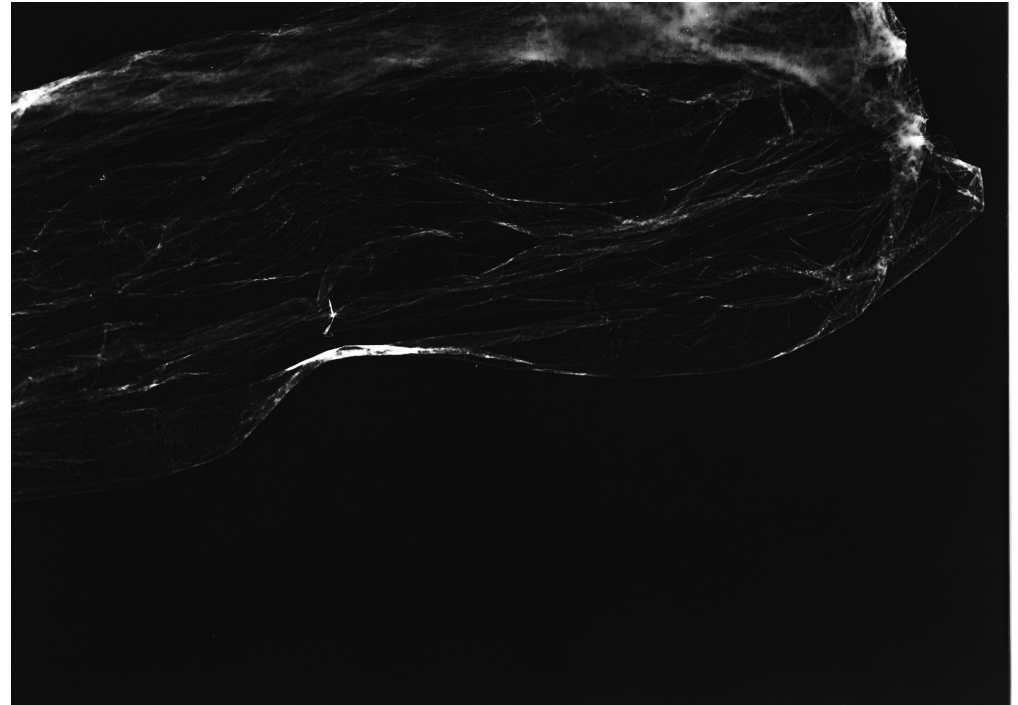


Figure 2. Andrew Hayward, Cling film photogram 1, 2021



Figure 3. Andrew Hayward, 039B, 2021

An analysis of themes:

At the start of my Masters journey I had intentions of capturing landscape photographs which, at the time, I termed as being 'post-modern landscapes'. Seeking to document scenes which were generally unconventional for a landscape photographer. This rapidly gave way to other forms of practice through 'still life' photography and now has lead back to 'landscapes'.

These 'alternative topographies' take shapes and forms which some find familiar and present them in a manner which removes them from reality. To be abstract or avoiding conventional representation has always been an ambition of mine in this process and this has lead back to a hybrid of that and the landscape.

With the concept of 'topography' in mind my thoughts led immediately to Ordnance Survey maps. These documents of navigation provide the use with a top down view of the terrain so as to plan their way through it. The way these maps fold became of interest to me and lead me to how I would construct my final dissemination.

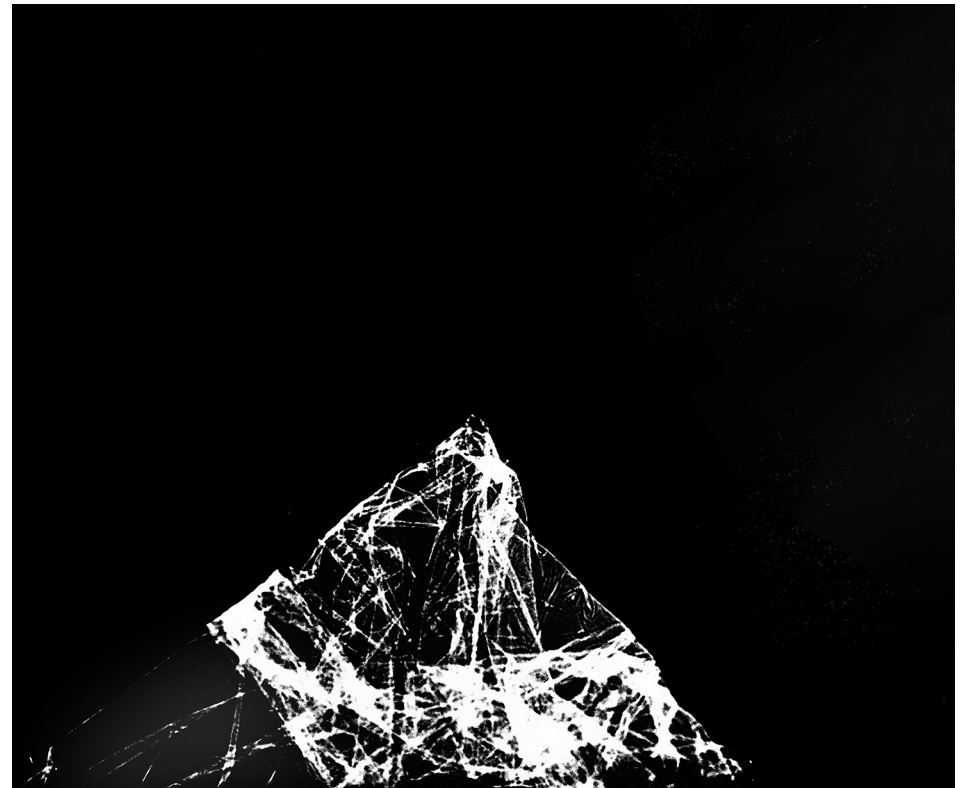


Figure 4. Andrew Hayward, 009B, 2021

Contextual Influence: Dan Holdsworth – Blackout:

Through Holdsworth's 2010 series 'Blackout' we find ourselves consumed by the inverted scarring of receding glacial landscapes of Iceland. Rappolt observed that 'the illuminated striations of each landscape in this series make it look as particular and individual as a fingerprint' (Rappolt 2015). This acknowledgment finds the uniqueness of the scene shown aided by the negative depiction of rock formations modified by millennia of the shifting ice flows around it. Those flows being under threat from the advance of climate change and, like the owner of a fingerprint, is destined to fade from this world.

My first encounter with 'Blackout' was at the time of its initial publication. My wonderment continues and its influence on this body of work is clear to be seen. The striations of the folds in the cling film forming my photogram mountains follow a similar road of changing climate and environment. The range of images which make up 'Blackout' follow a pattern of topographic formations, all similar, all different. The large presence which the images hold in gallery spaces is testimony to the land forms they represent.



Figure 5. Dan Holdsworth, 2010, 13



Figure 6. Dan Holdsworth, 2010, 07



Figure 7. Dan Holdsworth, 2010, 08



Figure 8. Dan Holdsworth, 2010, 12



Figure 9. Dan Holdsworth, Installation view 'Blackout', Nordin Gallery, Stockholm, Sweden

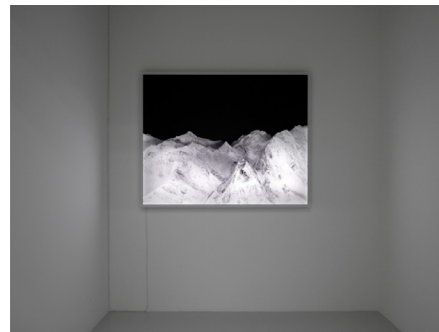


Figure 10. Dan Holdsworth, Installation view 'Blackout', Nordin Gallery, Stockholm, Sweden



Figure 11. Dan Holdsworth, Installation view 'Blackout', BALTIC, Gateshead, United Kingdom



Figure 12. Dan Holdsworth, Installation view 'Blackout', BALTIC, Gateshead, United Kingdom

Contextual Influence: Noemie Goudal: Haven Her Body Was:

'Haven Her Body Was' has led me towards a road of scaling up in a way so simple yet effective and almost missed by me. The multiple elements of each of Goudals photographic sculptures build vistas in unusual settings often in contradiction to the image they display. Frequently vibrant organic scenes within grey derelict settings, Goudals images become almost performance pieces with the photographic image presenting for the delight of the viewer.

The combining of organic and inorganic matter in Goudals scenes move some ways towards my core methodology while the unfolded and imperfect substrate on which they sit resemble an unfolded map. The imperfect creases and joining lines become part of the concept and give way to a larger outcome which can be either photographed, printed and installed to become an artefact in itself or to serve as an installation with the viewer interacting with the space in which it resides.

I have long been a fan of large outcomes and to create my own map like vista unfurled for the viewer to navigate feeds well into my methodologies of topography and landscape.



Figure 13. Noemie Goudal, Promenade, 2010



Figure 14. Noemie Goudal, Jetée 2012



Figure 15. Noemie Goudal, Creus, 2012

Development of the methodology:

At the start there were several logistical hurdles to overcome. How would I expose just one area of film and not the rest of the roll? How long would I need to expose for? How could I guide successful results while fumbling about in the darkness? Once I had found a working method for exposing film as a photogram the production of images came about quite naturally. The use of film as opposed to paper lead to much higher quality outcomes which had the greatest flexibility in post-production and further experimentation. The ability to scan in a high resolution enabled greater enlargements of images and the dissemination of these will be discussed in a later section of this review.

As previously discussed, the connection to Holdsworths 'Blackout' was quite quickly made and came about after a peer perceived that some of my images resembled horizons and landscapes. From here I deliberately built upon this aiming to create images which represented land forms.

These were eventually split into two camps, Hills and Mountains. My goal with each was to manipulate the cling film in such a way that it took the form of the land with some images coming out stronger than others. An inverted representation of each image produced formed the basis of channelling the outcomes. These positive/negative images, although simple, were quite effective. Over the coming pages I have displayed a selection of the images from both of the series so far.



Figure 16. Andrew Hayward, A set up to work with, 2021

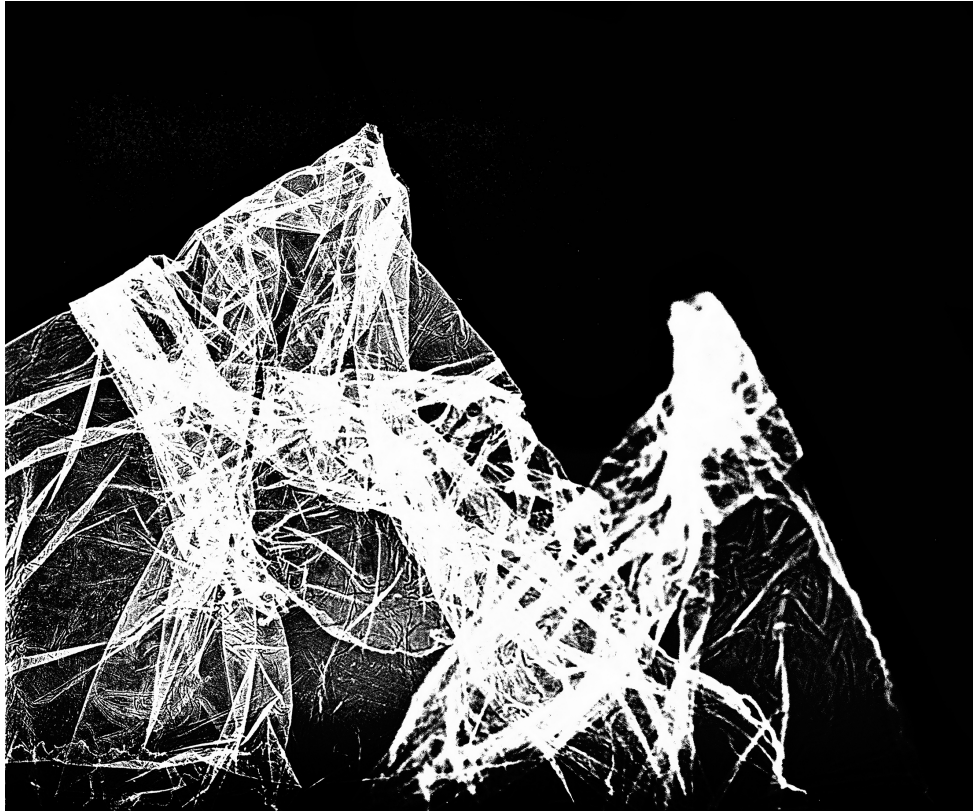


Figure 17. Andrew Hayward, 008B, 2021

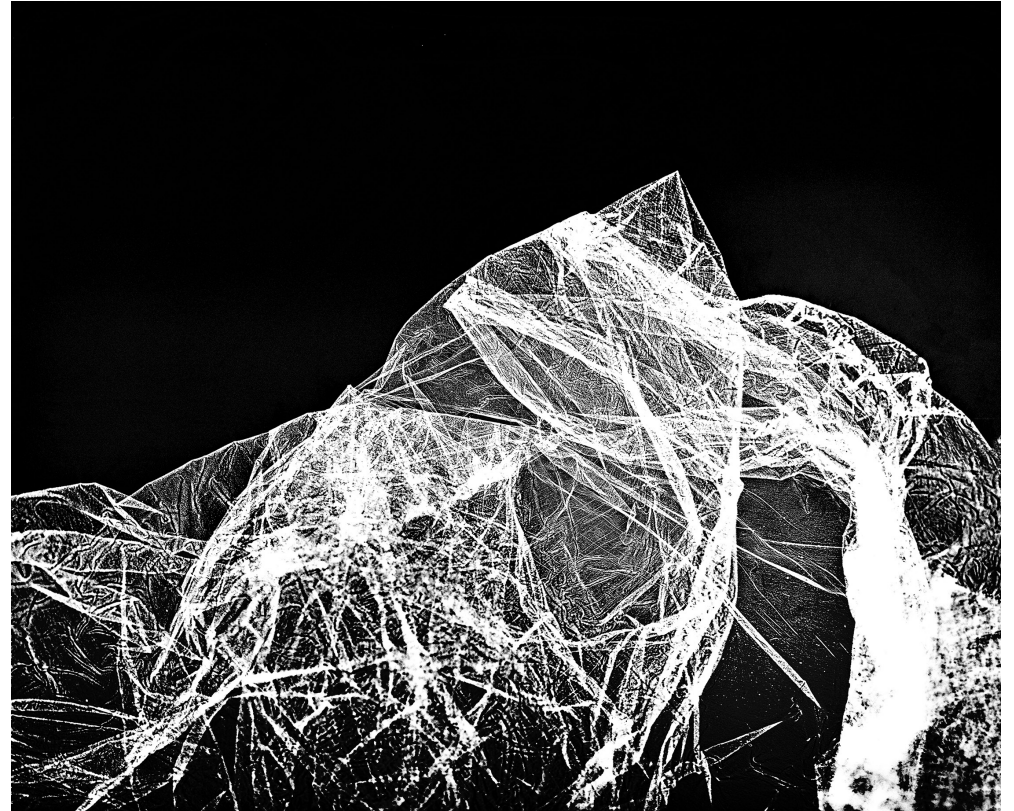


Figure 18. Andrew Hayward, 035B, 2021

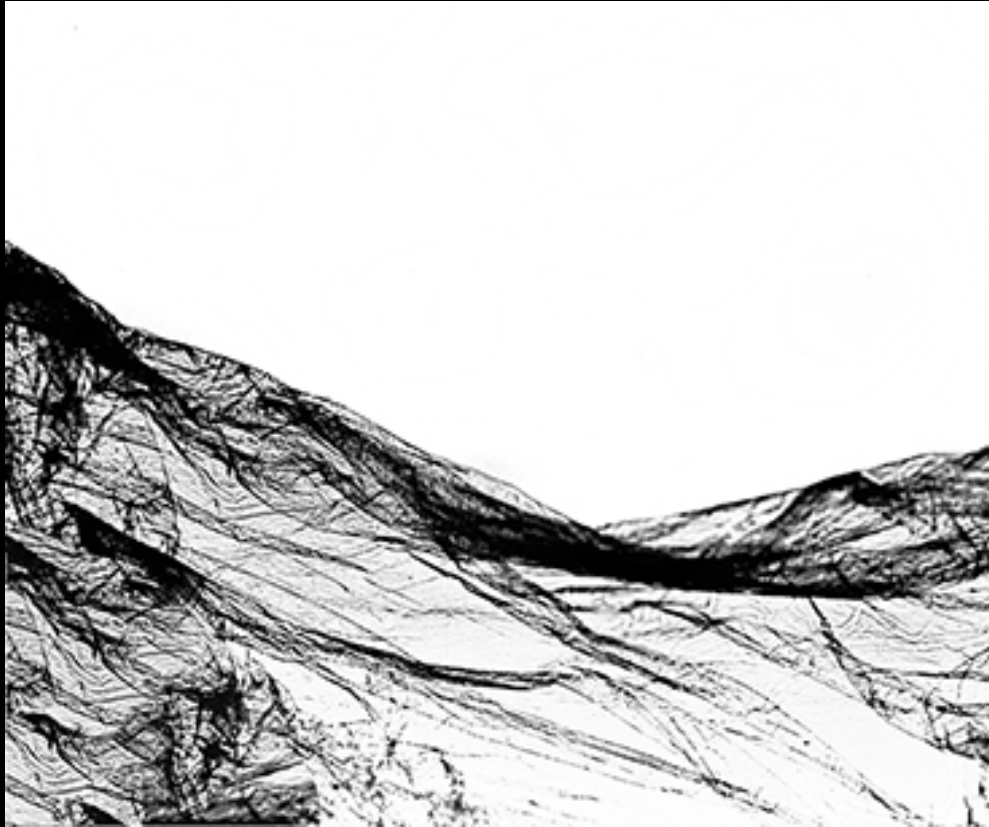


Figure 19. Andrew Hayward, 020W, 2021



Figure 20. Andrew Hayward, 039W, 2021

Public Outcomes and Dissemination:

Exhibition experimentations

All large scale work deserves to be seen. It is my full intention that this body of work gets a public viewing at the earliest convenience in the future. At the time of this review I have produced a 3D modelled view of what such an exhibition might look like and intend to simulate this at scale over the remainder of the Final Major Project.

The graphic below illustrates what this might look like. The exhibited images include four 'black' mountains, each A1 in size, shown in a row at around an average eye height of about 10 feet from the ground. To the right of this would be an extremely large rendering of one of the 'white' hills. The intention would be that this view would be much larger than the viewer and almost overwhelming in scale. The space would allow the viewer to step back and view the work both from a distance and from a range of their choosing.

At this point in time several experiments have been conducted towards a possible book outcome. If part of the final appearance of the work this would be exhibited upon a continuous shelf allowing the viewer to move close and around what it portrays.

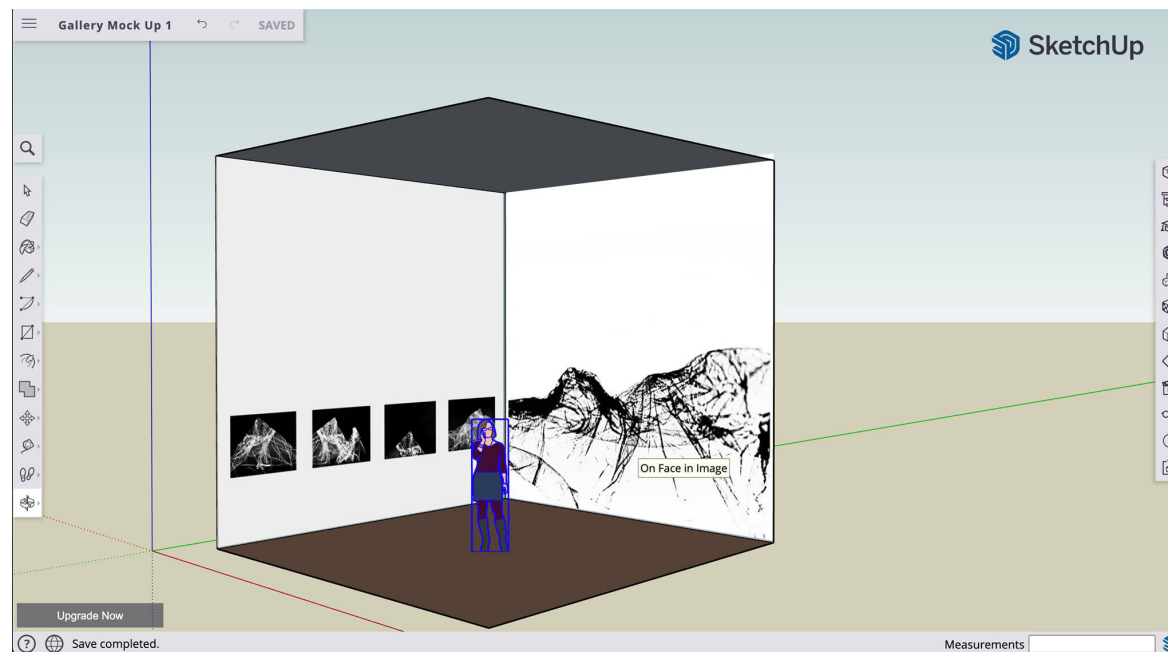


Figure 21. Andrew Hayward, Sketchup 'Gallery' view screenshot, 2021

Website:

It goes without saying the importance of web presence in the 21st Century. 'Plastic Topography' will have a dedicated section of my website where the elements of the project will be laid out. The page will build over time as the exhibiting of the work becomes more possible and as the final deadline approaches and the work moves through its final areas of development.

The main page will have a brief gallery containing the main five images previously discussed for exhibition. This will be accompanied by buttons linking to specific galleries for 'Hills', 'Mountains' and 'Books'. The books page is essential to the works dissemination and will document the artefact in the greatest possible detail. Although created as an 'artist book', the page would allow for viewers to examine the books at their own leisure.

The webpages appearance is sleek and simple without 'bells and whistles'. The stripped back black and white presentation of the page compliments the similar style of the work where images take the form of both negative and positive inversions of the representations.

The webpage becomes a facility to immortalise the works for years to come, long after they are no longer exhibited upon a wall. This is accompanied by a network of social media accounts promoting the onwards publicity of 'Plastic Topography', this would be done particularly by establishing and maintaining a highlights section on Instagram.

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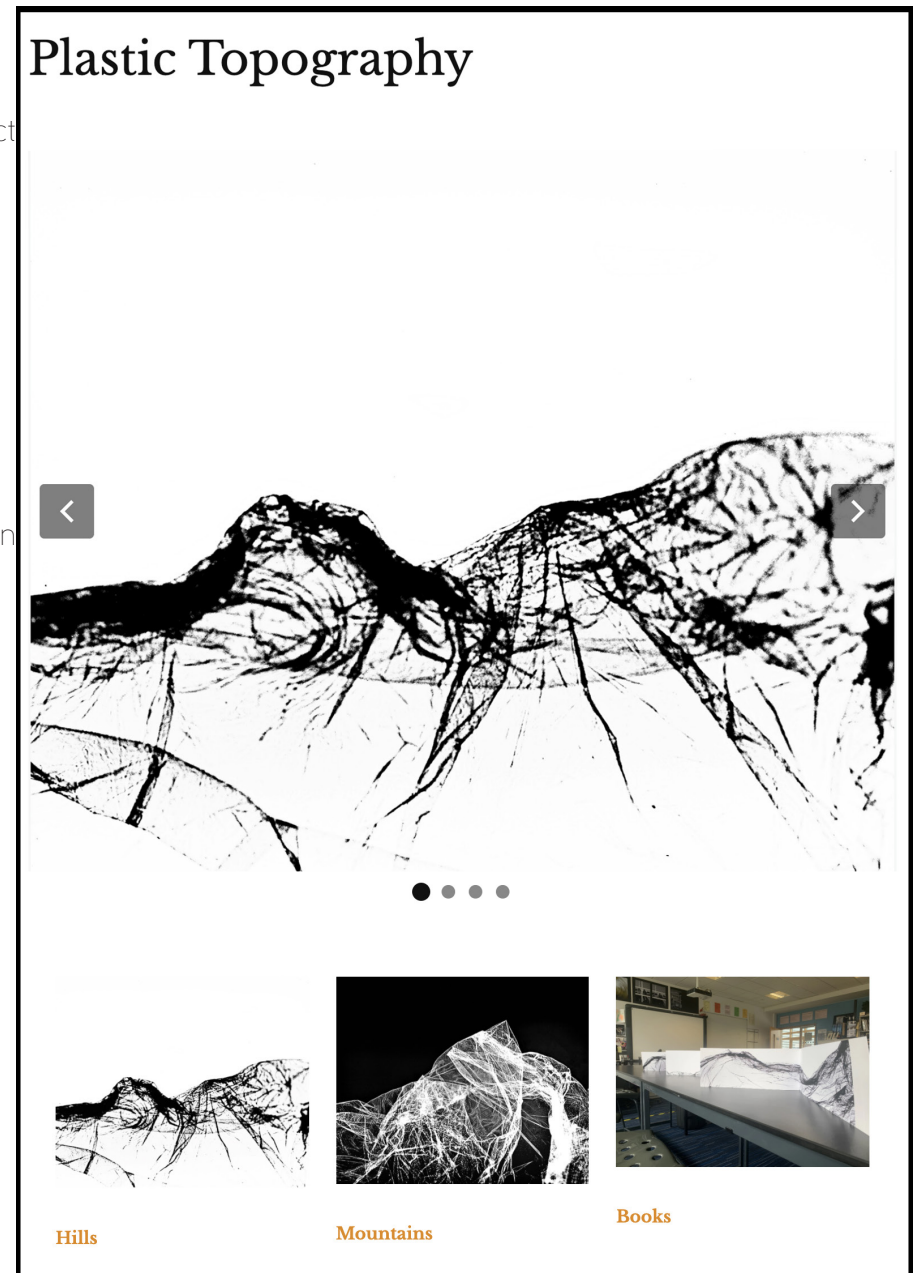


Figure 22. Andrew Hayward, website view screenshot, 2021

Book experimentations:

Throughout this journey there have been numerous book experiments with the images which make up the wider body of the work for 'Plastic Topography'. These have taken the form of handmade and handbound books using a variety of different printed materials. The general layout of these has been often basic but effective and have all been precursors to what is currently in the works and what is yet to come as part of my future plans. Stills from these initial experiments can be seen here.

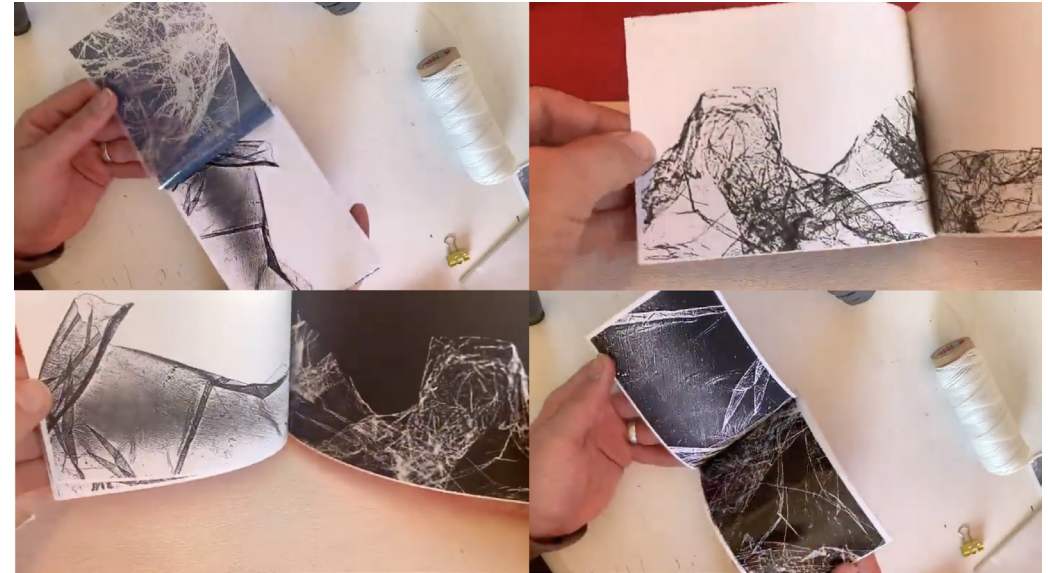


Figure 23. Andrew Hayward, stills from book experiments, 2021

The present trajectory of book development is towards accordion style formats.

This enables the viewer to move along the artefact and inspect it while also being able to take a step back to appreciate the images flow from one to the next. In this example, FIGURE NUMBER, an attempt has been made to line up the edges of the 'hills' as they move across the image space, rolling from one to the next.

This concept is easily scalable which would begin to supplement the imagery on the walls within the space. It would be my intention to 'exhibit' the book on a long plinth allowing for the viewer to move along and multiple people to view the book at once. This could be double sided with images on both sides allowing for an even greater consumption of the work.

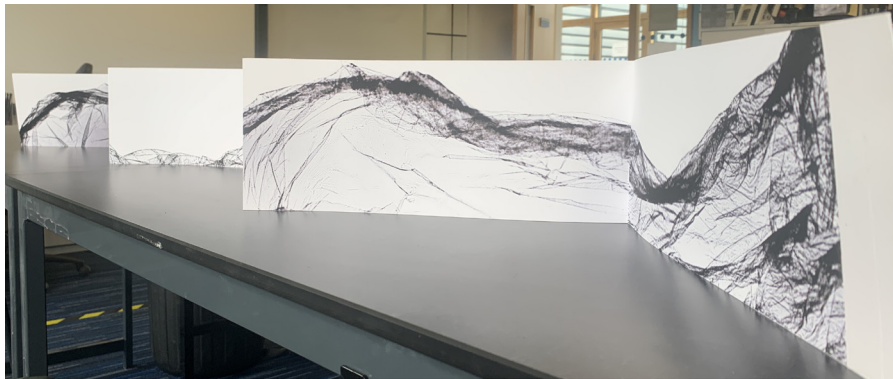


Figure 24. Andrew Hayward, accordion hills 1, 2021



Figure 25. Andrew Hayward, accordion hills 2, 2021

Future Plans:

The obvious objective for 'Plastic Topography' for the future is to exhibit the works in the way it deserves. The experience of the gallery is non-existent under Covid restrictions and would make the enjoyment of the work more difficult. I would like this to be seen in as many different places as possible but prefer the typical 'white cube' style of gallery. The minimalist nature of the space allows the viewer to consume the work as intended. Reflections upon these lines have been considered both in this review and in my CRJ when discussing the exhibiting of Dan Holdsworths 'Blackout'.

I would also like to take this a step further with slightly more 'guerrilla' methods for displaying the work such as 'pop-up' shows in public places and 'paste up' showing of the work on walls.

The book would not have a commercial intention and would remain as an artist book. Further consideration could be given to a dedicated commercial cataloguing of the work which would be available for public purchase.

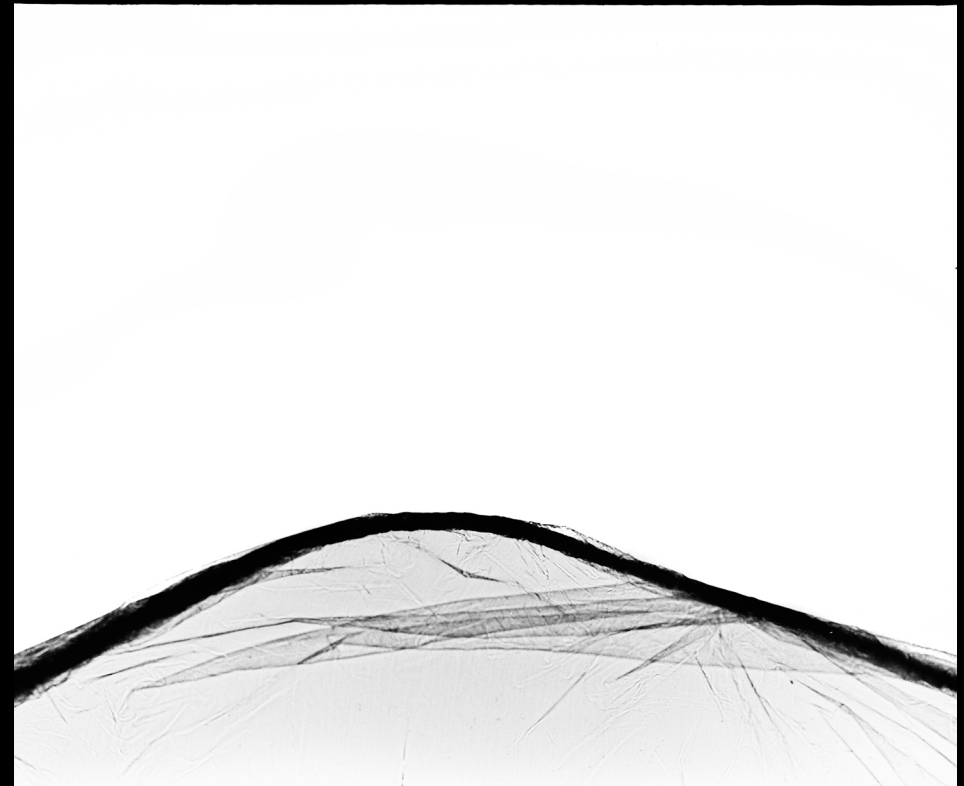


Figure 26. Andrew Hayward, 004W, 2021

Final Thoughts:

'Plastic Topography' is a body of work which could continue to grow beyond the MA program with further experimentation and exhibition. The 'guerrilla' style approach to work dissemination as outlined in the 'future plans' section could allow for a really wide display of the work to a larger community. This could grow to be something of a movement with images that beg consideration and people to stop for thought.

At the time of writing this review there are seven weeks remaining in the program. The further growth to 'Plastic Topography' in that time could be highly influential on the direction of the work. As the restrictions begin to lift it could be possible to 'get out' and try some of the considerations in the 'future plants' segment as well as developing a more finely tuned outcome in book form.

It is also my intention over coming weeks to obtain as many professional reviews of my work as possible. This 'industry feedback' could be eye opening and could feed into the projects direction and dissemination.

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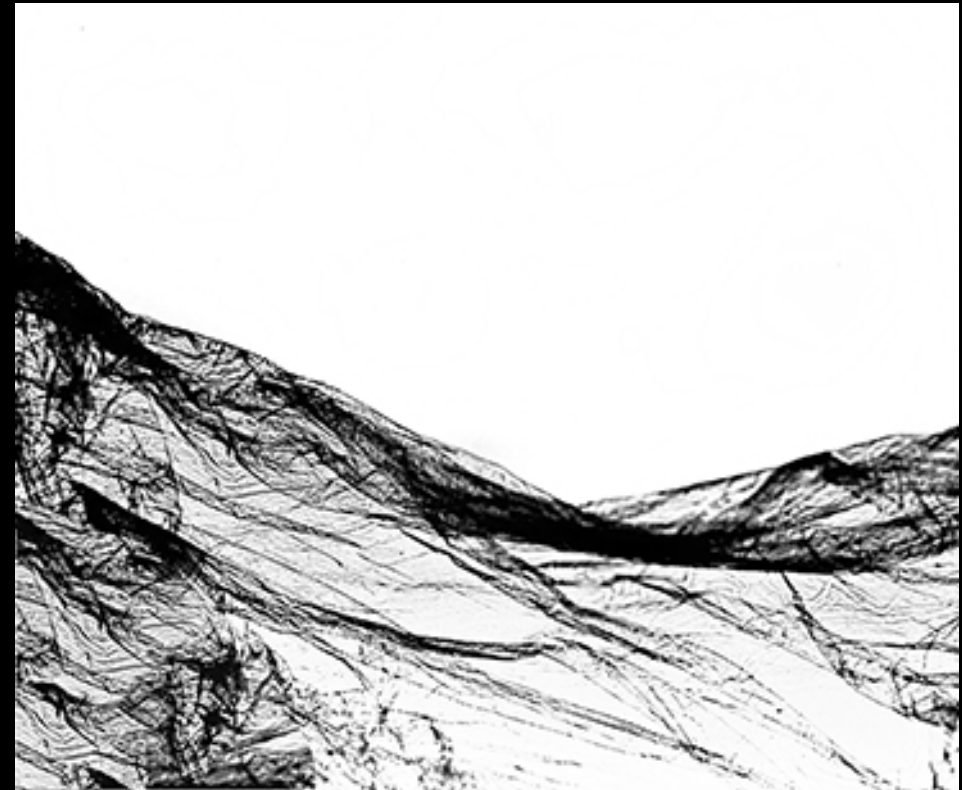


Figure 27. Andrew Hayward, 020W, 2021

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