

## ARTS205 – Photo Media Studies

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### Photograms – Absences and Evidence

#### Project Brief

A photogram is a camera-less photographic image. Rather than taking an image of an object with a camera, the photographer places two- or three-dimensional objects on photographic printing paper and then exposes them to light. Light passes most easily through translucent objects and is obstructed by denser objects. Light striking the paper will darken it. Areas protected from the light will remain white. Areas that let some light through, for example a translucent object, will become gray. The process is as old as photography (1826) and has, as is typical of simple techniques, a great deal of opportunity for exploring creative ideas.

#### Assignment

Answer these three questions: Who? Where? When? Using found objects exposed on photo paper, notice how they leave a negative silhouette or is the object transparent allowing light to pass through? How can you combine shapes/objects to juxtapose new meanings. Compose 3 final images that will create footprints for a narrative or concept. Think of it as evidence or absence of a previous life. Use a variety of objects and techniques to come up with 3 final photograms that work together. Think about symbolism, form, contrast and how the difference between double or triple exposures vs single exposures works in creating mood and story.

#### Photogram Process

1. Make sure the negative tray is closed before turning on the enlarger light. Open the enlarger lens to an aperture of f/8. Raise the enlarger head so that the light covers the glass. Set the timer for 2 seconds and turn off the light.
2. Place a piece of unexposed photographic paper test strip on the baseboard (emulsion side up) under the sheet of glass.
3. Arrange the objects/images on the unexposed paper. In addition to these materials, which will be contact printed, you can also project objects from the negative carrier. For example, placing a woven or mesh fabric, or transparent material, such as a leaf, in the carrier will project a pattern into the image.
4. Hold a book or an opaque board a few inches over the objects/paper/glass so that all but two inches of the paper will be shielded from the light.
5. Expose for 2 seconds.
6. Move the book/board another two inches (now 4 inches are uncovered) and expose for 2 more seconds (the original 2 inches has now been exposed for 4 seconds total). Repeat this procedure all the way until you make the last exposure with the photo paper completely uncovered.

7. Process the paper. (See photo processing document)
8. Evaluate the test strip to determine the area with the best exposure and density.
9. Reset the timer to the chosen exposure. Place a sheet of unexposed paper on the baseboard under glass and objects.
10. Expose for the full exposure time, or split it up and move the objects around. Process.

## **SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS**

-Three photograms that work together uploaded as one single file showing how the triptych is organized.

- Artist statement explaining your concept, techniques used, and how the individual works become a narrative whole when presented together. (300 words)

-Photos and Artist Statement uploaded as a single pdf labeled as "LastName\_Photograms.pdf"

## **Materials**

- **Photographic paper**
- **Exposure Unit**
- **Found objects**
- **Chemicals for developing.**

**Each student will be supplied with a set number of materials which should suffice for the project**

If students require additional resources, they will need to purchase those items. Or contact instructor for alternative options.

## **Artist Statement 300 words**

1. Discuss your work in terms of the components of an artwork.

**Who** – Who did these objects belong to? Who left them? What is their story?

**What** – What are these object(s)? Can we tell the texture, or transparency?

**Where** – Are they new, or worn down? Are they associated with a time or place?

2. How does the work engage with mediums and processes of Photo? Make sure to mention specific elements and principles.

3. How does the viewer read these objects? Are they culturally connected? Viewers background knowledge needed? Provide a new perspective?

4. How was your project successful?

5. How could your project be improved?