

Photography

Photo studio

Around October, I built a photo studio, to experiment with documenting my works, and photographing the body. The neutrality of fluorescent lights and an untextured white background allows for a disconnect between object and space, useful to explore specific elements[1] in isolation.

Looking at old (40s-80s) art books, specifically sculpture and architecture, led me to want to try abstracting and obfuscating the subject of the photo. In the period when a book would have a few full-colour plates, but mostly smaller black-and-white images, the nature of the photo often lent towards being its own artwork more than documentation. When colour is lost, the contrast is high, and the print is small, you'll find yourself trying to decipher both the artwork and the room it's in; your mind forced to fill in the blanks, leaving you with an entirely different understanding of the work than had you seen it in person.

The goal, then, was to document things in such a way that the photo had a life of its own, detached from the physical object it depicted.

Cameras, & processing sensor information

Over the course of this year, realising that sensors of every kind wholly rely on human intervention to produce any sort of meaningful information completely reshaped how I think about photography, audio, and any sort of medium or technique that receives and processes information from the real world.

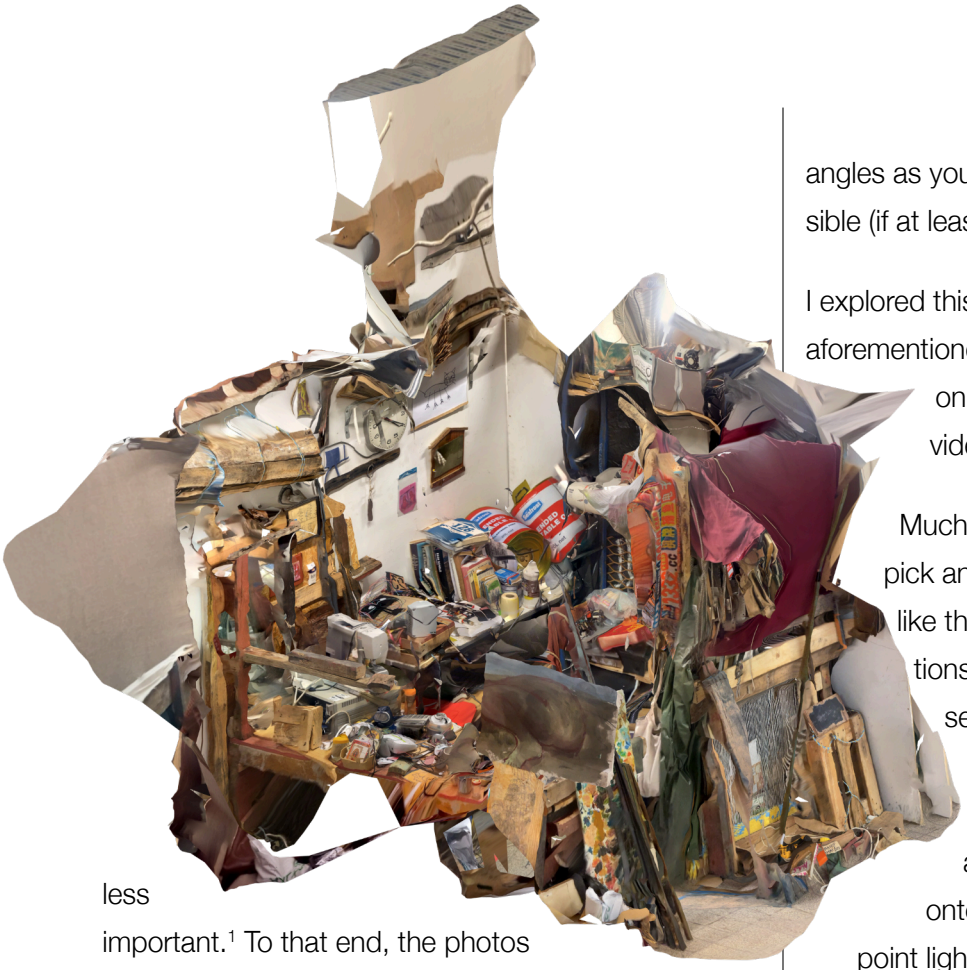


Two DSLRs from different manufacturers with the exact same lens will always produce a different result – the software is what decides how the final image will look. After the fact, if you're shooting in raw, you can poke around in an image editor and end up with a completely different image again!

Digital manipulation

Every single photo is edited in some way. Most photos were cropped, care put first and foremost into composition; readability/legibility of the subject was

[1] Texture, tone, colour, form.



less important.[1] To that end, the photos also went through quite harsh colour grading and additional post-processing, to eccentuate texture and form.

I avoided a puritan approach to image processing, as the initial photography was intended as just the starting point.

3D Digital

Photogrammetry

SPECFICALLY, STRUCTURE FROM MOTION (SFM)

Taking a regular photo produces a 2D image, flattening the 4D plane of reality into a single angle, at a single moment in time. Photogrammetry, on the other hand, lets you keep some of that third dimension – instead of one photo, you take many, often hundreds, and from that information you can create a 3D model of an object or environment.

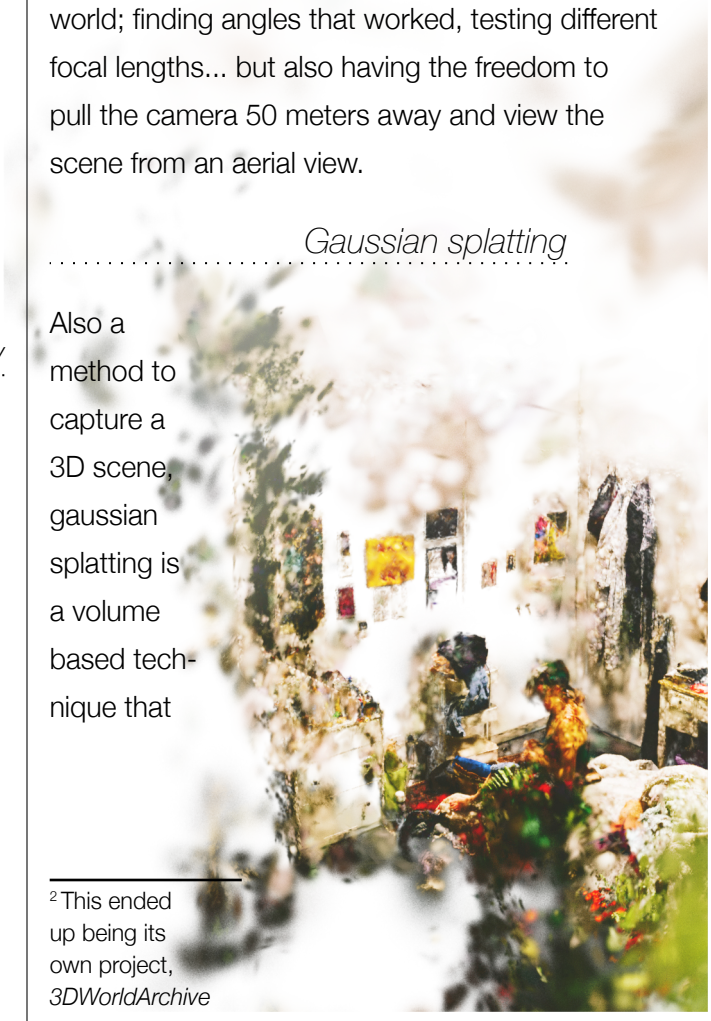
You can then explore these environments in the third dimension! And take as many photos from as many angles as you want, many of which would be impossible (if at least highly impractical) to do physically.

I explored this further, creating environments from the aforementioned 3D scans, then melding them with on-site field recordings, photography, and video.[2]

Much like regular photography, you get to pick and choose what the viewer sees. Much like the b&w plates of old art books, the limitations of the medium force a certain degree of separation between what is intended to be conveyed and what truly is. You can play with this, twofold! I modified the actual meshes, the textures wrapped onto the meshes, re-lighting scenes with point lights magically floating in air, things that must live in the digital. There were, though, also decisions I made in the computer that mirror the real world; finding angles that worked, testing different focal lengths... but also having the freedom to pull the camera 50 meters away and view the scene from an aerial view.

Gaussian splatting

Also a method to capture a 3D scene, gaussian splatting is a volume based technique that



[1] As in, readability of material, scale, and method of construction.

[2] This ended up being its own project, *3DWorldArchive*

constructs objects from thousands of coloured ellipsoids.

All said in the previous section applies to splatting, pretty much.

Pushing the camera outside the bounds of what was captured in the scan results in an augmentation of the architectural environment, blurring the lines of scale, colour, texture, form, gravity, space... A dissociation from the understood rules of reality.



Binding thoughts & ideas

How does material honesty extend to the digital realm?

AND, WHAT IS ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH THE EFFECTIVENESS OF A WORK?

There's a tendency in 3D digital art to strive towards an almost sickening hyperrealism.[1] A desire to capture every pore, surface blemish, every leaf and follicle. When I began re-exploring 3D this year, I wanted the opposite, and decided to take a similar approach that I did with my photography; be intentionally and selectively obtuse with detail, and to allow the interesting flaws and quirks of the medium to show through.

When you don't give the photogrammetry software enough imagery to work with, the guesses it makes for the structure of the object drift into abstraction, form warping into flattened and distorted façades that can only hint at the true object it's trying to depict.

It's a similar story with gaussian splatting, only instead of distorted meshes and warped textures, the once fine detail dissolves into large, bokeh like ellipsoids, hinting at space and form, unable to accurately depict more.

Digital anything has a penchant for being copied,

[1] Don't fact check this, it came to me in a dream.

shared, taken apart then put back together, archived for a rainy day, and found again a decade later.

Giving purpose to the mundane and banal

The places I documented and archived are nowhere particularly special, nor the objects photographed made from fine materials or complicated techniques. I wanted to document the banal with a care not often afforded to them. Finding beauty in the mundane gives one far more opportunity for joy!

Statement

There's a tendency in the pursuit of building an archive to start hoarding pointless rubbish, which often ends with being found 3 weeks post-mortem, decomposing underneath a box full of newspapers.

My practice in drawing this year began as an exploration of the in-betweens of digital and analogue mediums, of finding how to balance the tightrope of realism and creative liberties, especially in mediums like photography or scanning, that always create from an input from the real world. These are still definitely relevant in my work, but an overarching theme of waste, discard, and the aesthetic hierarchies of reuse and perceived value crept into every facet of my work. There's also always the architectural and design considerations that are in every single thing I make – ugly is king, when ugly is done with intent!

