My Pinhole Photography / Mi Fotografía Estenopeica:

Students Shared Stories Using Fine Art Photography

Professor José Alfonso Guevara López, Visual Arts, Universidad de Monterrey: UDEM, Monterrey, Nuevo León, México.

Instructor of Photography Joe Ziolkowski, Visual and Performing Arts,

SUNY Genesee Community College, Batavia, NY, USA.

10th Anniversary COIL Conference

COILing Across a Decade: Reflections and New Directions

CUNY Graduate Center, 365 5th Avenue, New York City, NY 11215

Location: Auditorium 5:00 - 5:30pm

April 26, 2016
What happens?
COILING a Photography Class

Who were involved?
Professor Alfonso Guevara, Visual Arts, Universidad de Monterrey: UDEM, ; & Instructor of Photography Joe Ziolkowski, Visual and Performing Arts, SUNY Genesee Community College,
Where do it happens?
Monterrey, Nuevo León, México & Batavia, New York, USA.

How many people get involved?
Around 40 students (about 20 of both sides).

What were our expectations?
1 Coiling a class.
2 Get our students engaged with pinhole technique.
3 Get our students involved in online interactions.
Module One:
• Created 4 Groups
Ice Breakers
Shared information via Google Drive.
Uploaded digital photos of daily life.
Module Two:

- Students posted making pinhole cameras and pinhole photos Google Drive. Shared success and failures.
Module Three:

• Selected best pinhole photo for exhibition and part of Genesee Community College Scholars Symposium.
Module Four:

- Reflection on the collaborative experience.

Kaci- “Better weather. They also took more picture of people than we did.”

Kayla- “They had more light than we did in the winter so their exposures are brighter, they captured people really well too.”

Nick- “I would presumably be seeing a lot of palm trees, and lush plant life.”
After they took their pictures, they upload them in a google drive shared folder.

So, they have the chance to stalk them to see each other pictures and try to figure out what happens in their classmates lives.

… But…
How do we do it?

Is there any methodology for that?

Just talking on any idea that comes to their minds?
How do we do it?

Is there any methodology for that?

Just talking on any idea that comes to their minds?

Of course not!
VISUAL LITERACY

why? because everybody need it, or at least, realize that we are always using it... at least, intuitively, but we have to make this process conscious.

Visual Rhetoric/Visual Literacy: Writing About Photography
What are the standard composition elements of a photograph?

Overview

• Where does your eye settle when first looking at the photograph? Why?
• Where does your eye move next?
• What are the planes/regions of the photograph (i.e. dividing, horizontal or vertical lines)?

Light Values

• What is light and what is dark in the photograph?
• What is significant about what is light?
• What is significant about what is dark?
• How do these light values draw attention to details in the photograph?
• How do they obscure details?
What are the standard composition elements of a photograph?

Background/Foreground (Focus)

- What is foregrounded in the photograph?
- What is backgrounded in the photograph?
- What is sharply in focus?
- What is blurry or out of focus?
- What details are emphasized or obscured by these techniques?

Detail

- What do you see (literally) in the photograph? Are there people, places, or things?
- Are people shown? Describe them (in terms of race, class, gender, occupation, etc). What are they doing? Can you get a sense of how they feel, based on their facial expressions, body poses, or interaction with others?
- What type of space does the photograph show? Is it urban or rural? Inside or outside? In a home, work, or leisure environment? Can you tell the specific location (town, state, region or country)? Is the space open or crowded? Calming or disorienting? Is it an everyday scene or something unusual?
- What other objects are in the photo? How do they interact with or augment people or places in the photo?
What are the standard composition elements of a photograph?

Gaze

• Where are people in the photograph looking?
• Do they seem aware of the camera? If so, what is their attitude towards it?
• What is significant about where they are looking or what they are looking at?
• Is there anything significant about what the person is not looking at?

Frame/Cropping

• How closely is the photograph cropped to the subject? Is there lots of background or almost no background? Does the main portion of the photograph go almost to the edges of the photograph? Does it feel crowded or spacious?
• What might lie outside the frame?
• What is not shown in the photograph, and how might that be significant?
Val- “I learned how photos were originally taken before technology brought about cameras. It’s amazing how you can capture something with a tiny little hole in a box with some photo paper…”
‘...through time, as there is progress, we have forgotten the complexity to take a photograph, with this camera (pinhole) and constant practice we have become to appreciate more deeply the importance of photography in our lives…’

- Romelia, Francisco & Sofía.
‘...con la práctica de la cámara estenopeica nos hemos dado cuenta de la dificultad que pudieron vivir nuestros antepasados para capturar un momento, en el que desde los factores de la luz, apertura, tiempo de espera y revelado son de suma importancia para poder tener un registro de algún suceso, evento o tiempo histórico…’

‘... by practicing with a pinhole camera, we have realized how difficult it was for our ancestors to capture a moment, in which from the factors of light, diaphragm, waiting time and developing process, are of utmost importance to have a record in any social or historical event.’ - Romelia, Francisco & Sofía.
‘Something we found very interesting, is how they (Genesee CC students) presented their photographs, it looks like they took their time to framing them, and show them in an exhibition, that helps to perform an analysis of the images and given feedback each other.’ - Álvaro & José Armando.
‘Hemos aprendido de los diferentes factores que influyen en la captura de una imagen, como la luz, la exposición, el ángulo, el movimiento, y hasta el cuidado del paisaje al escoger el lugar y la hora del día, que influyen en el tiempo de captura para obtener mejores resultados…’

‘We have learned the different factors that make influence on the capture of an image, such as light, exposure, angle, movement, and even taking care on the landscape we are choosing, and the place and time of day, as well, and we have to be aware of all this, to make better photographs…’ - Álvaro & José Armando.
20140209 Skype presentation by Alfonso Guevara, Batavia, NY
20160128 Pinhole photography demonstration & class portrait.  
3 minute exposure during a snowstorm. GCC, Batavia, NY. Z.
20160128 Drilling pinhole apertures using soda cans & building pinhole cameras.
GCC, Batavia, NY. Z.
20160128 Building pinhole cameras.
GCC, Batavia, NY. Z.
20160303 Shoebox pinhole cameras.
GCC, Batavia, NY. Z.
Students show pinhole cameras after pinhole photography critique.
GCC, Batavia, NY. Z.
My favorite part is the developing process.
My Pinhole Photography / Mi Fotografía Estenopeica

An exhibit by students in PHO103 (Intro. to Black & White Photography)
in collaboration with students from the Universidad de Monterrey: UDEM,
Monterrey, Nuevo León, Mexico

Joe Ziolkowski, Instructor & Professor José Alfonso Guevara López

March 22—April 14, 2016

Genesee Community College - Alfred C. O’Connell Library

Join us for the Opening Reception in the Media Room
March 24 @ 1-2pm

The classes use the latest distant learning technology to participate in
“COIL” (Collaborative Online International Learning.)
20160324 Opening Reception Pinhole Photography Show, Alfred C. O'Connell Library, GCC, Batavia, NY. Z.
20160329 UDEM Slideshow, Pinhole Photography Show, Alfred C. O’Connell Library, GCC, Batavia, NY. Z.
Certificate of Honors

SCHOLARS SYMPOSIUM 2016

Given to:
“My Pinhole Photography / Mi Fotografia Estenopeica”
for
Most Global in Perspective Award
on Tuesday, March 29, 2016 at Genesee Community College
in the Stuart Steiner Theatre, Batavia, New York, U.S.A.

Dr. James M. Sunser, President

Dr. Kathleen M. Schiefen
Provost/Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs
When I first arrived at Genesee, the campus I thought was so beautiful. I looked out the windows and saw how peaceful it really was. I like how it's in the middle of nowhere and there's nothing but fields surrounding it. I enjoy looking at the scenery and seeing the trucks on the throughway, the tops of the apartment buildings, and even the hills in the background. I think that that's why I like this school so much. When the assignment was given, I wasn’t sure of what to photograph, but once I looked outside, and thought “how beautiful it is and why not try to capture this with my pinhole camera”.

Abby Blendowski
2nd Floor of GCC, 2016
This photograph was taken with a pinhole camera I made from a 4” square box. The project required that each student make a pinhole camera from materials they found at home. Once the camera was made I then began to play with exposure time in different environments. Sitting on a window ledge looking out at trees and snow I exposed the image for merely a second, whereas this photo displayed was exposed for just over 10 minutes in the Photography classroom. I wanted there to be slight movement to show the passing of time. Seeing as I had to hold my hand over the desk for ten minutes, creating a little motion was no difficult task. That is what I’ve come to love about pinhole photography, it so perfectly captures the passing of time in a still image.
What I found most enjoyable about the pinhole assignment was after taking the pictures, bringing them to the darkroom and seeing them develop always got me excited. It is extremely cool to see how all the chemistry works. A downside to the whole process is the time. It takes about 30 minutes just to do one print, but that’s why I learned to do a lot of pictures in bulk. It saved me a ton of extra time doing multiple prints at once. Another interesting thing I liked about the assignment was how to make an enlargement. Seeing the positive image of the print looked very cool, and makes the light a fun source to play with. This assignment challenge my thinking a bit and really pushed me to get the best results I could.
This assignment was like nothing I have ever experienced. I have never taken a photography class and really till this semester I had no knowledge of photography and what it entails. I started the assignment by making my camera out of an old shoebox I had laying around the house. I then took tape to make sure no light could get through my box and used a piece of an old Pepsi can for my lens for my box. The first time I ever attempted to take a picture with my box I got an image it was pretty impressive considering I have never done anything like this before. Out of all the images this one was the best and I thought it was suiting because it's a picture of GCC.
This particular assignment was an interesting experience. I named my camera the suspicious box due to the level of attention it drew from GCC’s security while I was photographing. Also, because I created my camera out of a shoebox, my father thought it was recycling and I had to recover it before trash day! I chose this photo because of the ghostly presence it embodies. With the new building project in the works for GCC, the image I captured will no longer be available after the building is complete. So, I thought the ghostly attribution suited this particular photo, because that view will in a way be dead, or non-existent.
When I first heard Mr. Z explain this assignment, I was really amazed that pictures could be taken by just using just a box/vessel and photographic paper. I was very interested in how primitive the idea was so I made a camera out of a Nes-quick container and some black paint. As I started experimenting with it and trying different exposure times I kept coming up with images that really didn't look like anything. For this photo I was at my house on my front porch, I had tried so many different exposure times before so I guessed and exposed this photo for five minutes, and this is what came out. I was really stoked on it and it's cool to see my porch that I look at everyday in that perspective.
No matter the weather there’s always time for a good picture. This image was taken during a snowstorm on February 16, 2016, with a Pinhole Camera made out of an old VANS shoe box. To take this type of picture it requires timed exposures, this image took about 1 minute and 30 seconds to take, my fantastic teacher Mr. Joe Ziolkowski was nice enough to offer to stand in the middle of the storm while I stood on the nice warm 2nd floor taking this picture, not only is it a great picture but it was taken creatively.
For many years I would travel I-190 South along the Niagara River with my parents from North Tonawanda to our family cottage in Cattaraugus County, NY. My dad would always share stories of his youth and his adventures on the Niagara River. Years later I was his caretaker as he was diagnosed with Parkinson Disease. For several summers I would take him to Strawberry Island on my 1973 Starcraft 16 foot, 50hp outboard boat to have lunch and let the afternoon drift away in conversation. He is now present with me in spirit and as the ice thaws on the Niagara River, it brings a new season with shared memories of adventures with friends. My Dad is still with me, just with a different perspective.
Ruth Aragón

Marcelo, 2016

Cuando hice mi pinhole en realidad no estaba segura de que esperar, nunca había escuchado de este término y mucho menos había tomado fotos con una caja. Sin embargo para hacer mi primera prueba elegí un lugar donde hubiera suficiente contraste porque creí que habría más posibilidad de que algo saliera. Tomé foto de un compañero que tuvo que quedarse quieto por 40 segundos para después ir a ver si algo aparecía en la foto y así fue; la primera pinhole que había tomado salió bien.
Ruth Aragón

*Taller de maderas / wood workshop*, 2016

Durante mi práctica utilizando una cámara pinhole comencé tomando fotos en el exterior donde la luz del sol me permitía tener a los objetos bien iluminados, sin embargo pronto me pareció un reto más interesante el tratar de capturar interiores, donde la luz natural fuera casi mínima y así lograr fotografiar las máquinas, volúmenes y geometrías dentro del taller de maderas, uno de mis principales intereses. Ésta fue la primera foto que hice en un interior y tarde 7 minutos con la cámara inmóvil, a comparación de 40 segundos (aproximadamente) que tardaba en exteriores. El resultado me pareció satisfactorio y comencé a capturar más interiores.
Working with the pinhole camera was a new experience for me, the simplest box can give you a whole new perspective on how does photography works. It's not just clicking a button and instantly having a photo, it's about thinking how do you want your picture, checking the exposure, the time, the hole in your camera, the size of your camera. This picture was taken outside CRGS, the lines underneath the building was my main focus, because i wanted detail. Lucky me it was a sunny day so the people passing by didn't ruin the photo because it took me about 30sec. It may look like a simple photo but for me it has more value than a iphone photo
Ana Alejos  
*Autorretrato / Self Portrait*, 2016

That's me, Ana. Weird position. This was my first photo experimenting with two shades and a person. I was amazed about the detail because that day was kind of cloudy, but I was patient and it worked.
Fue complicado conseguir esta foto, ya que después de varios intentos, no lograba captar una de las estructuras más representativas de la UDEM, cuando por fin pude obtener esta foto, tuvo un significado especial para mí. Sin duda, ésta es una de mis fotos favoritas, sobre todo por el esfuerzo que significó.
En esta foto lo que intenté lograr es enfocar la estructura superior del edificio. Desde el suelo, logré situarme en el punto medio de esa zona y así captar exactamente el medio círculo. El estar sentado y sin estar en movimiento fue algo que también ayudó a que la fotografía saliera muy clara y no movida. El tiempo aproximado fue de 6 segundos, el día se encontraba nublado pero a la vez muy iluminado, ese fue un factor muy importante para que el resultado fuera bueno. El proceso en realidad fue algo muy fácil, desde ya antes ya tenía pensando en fotografiar las estructura, porque iba muy seguido para ese edificio y me pareció agradable.

Romina Baker

*Entropía / Entropy, 2016*
Esta fue de las primeras fotos que me salieron ligeramente más claras, este es un espacio de la UDEM en el que se hará una construcción, pero lo que más me llamó la atención fue la estructura y el contraste que hace con la persona central de la foto, el tiempo de apertura en mi cámara es de 5-10 segundos cuando el día está soleado y yo antes tenía el error de tener la exposición de 1 minuto y una vez que me di cuenta de eso, las siguientes fotos fueron cada vez más claras ya que comencé a conocer mi cámara.
Romina Baker

Parque / Park, 2016

El tomar fotos estenopeicas de escenarios cotidianos, me resultó muy interesante, ya que me gustó ver y apreciar los pequeños detalles de los que estoy rodeada y poderlos representar como algo físico sin usar la tecnología y poderlo enseñar a los demás. En este caso, la toma es de un parque frente a mi casa, mi primera intención era fotografiar unos juegos infantiles, sin embargo a la hora de revelarla, el elemento más evidente resultó ser la palma, con esto encontré que con esta técnica muchas veces dejamos elementos pasar de lado, sin embargo la cámara si te los muestra.
Contact Information

Professor Alfonso (better known as Poncho) Guevara, Art Department Adjunct, Universidad de Monterrey: UDEM, Monterrey, Nuevo León, México.

jose.guevara@udem.edu
guevara.chef@gmail.com

Instructor of Photography Joe Ziolkowski, Visual and Performing Arts, SUNY Genesee Community College, Batavia, NY, USA.

jlziolkowski@genesee.edu
joez@joe-ziolkowski.com