

## *Our black mirrors .... Square-eyed gaze*

### *Part 1, Part 2, Part 3*

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The significance of lighting is extremely underrated. Without light humans struggle to live. Through the exploration of lighting I came to the realisation of how dependable we are on it, as well as, all the different things that provide light, for example, the sun, the moon, stars, light bulbs, fire, the television, mobile phones, reflections. It goes without saying that light is only emphasised by darkness. With this creates shadows, without light shadows couldn't exist. I wanted to explore this and the variations of light whether it was artificial or natural.

Through photographing with natural and artificial lighting, I found interesting results that captured mood and the atmospheric conditions. My initial experiments of natural lighting resulted in a strong, white light, creating an energetic tone to the overall composition. My contrasting work with artificial lighting created a darker, more eerie atmosphere. This interested and intrigued me. Natural light cannot be manipulated only by moving things around the natural light can change the composition, however artificial light is easy to manipulate, move and direct. This led to further experimentation with how to manipulate artificial lighting.

Through artist research Lilly Hibberd became of interest. Her work presents a strong influence of light. She centres her pieces around light by displaying the figure reacting to the light. This added greater value and narrative to the work, as well as emphasising the importance of light.

Experimenting to use light in this way where the figure reacts to the light, allowed for my concept of artificial light to be expanded. The ability to manipulate artificial lighting makes it easy to direct where the light is coming from. This affects the composition and atmosphere of the photograph. I began using iPhone lighting as the main source of artificial lighting. I wanted to explore the relationship between the figure and the phone – the entrapment of the light.

My work progressed to explore creating light through different mediums. Oil paints were my main focus as it was easiest to manipulate and move the paint across the surface, due to its oil texture. Though oil paints were a new medium to me I began to familiarise myself with how the colours worked together and how to mix colours to create the illusion of lights. Artists such as Louise Fennely and her abstracted studies of elegant folded fabric overwhelmed me and made me reflect that structure was needed to guide me when learning the tradition of oil

painting. With help from a local artist, Sheree Wright, I was able to work through tonal studies and colour mixing that provided the foundation I needed.

Later in my experiments artificial light was the primary focus, specifically iPhone light. Photographs were taken that examined artificial light of the phone where the figure is looking into it, engulfed by its glow. My first series of photographs, the light created a blue eerie mood, which is something that I felt it, was successful, because the coldness of the blue emphasised the added dimension of the phone. From these images, experiments were taken further by using oils to paint with the selected ones that presented the concept I was exploring. A photograph was chosen and painted onto a canvas. There was difficulty when painting the face as the underlying tones and mixture colours were difficult to find.

Later another series of photographs was taken that continued the link of artificial iPhone lighting. The series of photographs focussed on exploring the mechanics of the manual digital SLR camera. Through this I was able to experiment with the subject moving the light as well as the figure itself, which was, captured in a singular shot to present a dysfunctional figure with an engulfing hand shadow behind- watching over. I composed more carefully the subject matter to explore my concept around the obsessive dependence of this form of technology. A further exploration of my technique of oil painting occurred by choosing a larger canvas size and painting the selected image that best reflected my message of technology. Through this painting I was able to expand on my painting techniques as well as further developing my understanding of colours and their place on the photograph. Due to the larger size of the canvas I found it difficult to understand the proportion of the image to the canvas, and where things were positioned. The face of the figures image is distorted to which I initially thought would be difficult to copy and paint onto the canvas. Though by interpreting the face as not a face, rather a shape, it became easier to paint. The shadow of the image and painting best reflected my message, as I wanted the shadow to represent the overpowering and lingering sensation of technology.

The rise of technology has been increasingly significant in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Society is seemingly becoming more reliant on all kinds of technology and that although advances in technology can be good, others can also negatively impact lives. By using an iPhone as the source of lighting, the likely most common source of technology addiction, it emphasised my point further. Although, the iPhone isn't clearly focused in either painting, the blue eerie atmosphere and the large engulfing shadow symbolise the negativity I wanted to express.