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MA Art and Science Unit 2 Independent Project Proposal
(Word Count: 1098)

Strings & signals.

The investigation will branch into numerous areas of technical and cultural study. The primary goal is to express the relationships between rigid, abstract definitions of connection and communication in fields of science such as physics, computing, and engineering, and utilize these models to form symbolic metaphors that can explain phenomena and experiences in areas of culture, sociology, and philosophy.

I will use photography and artwork to encourage thought surrounding the nature of connection in our lives and how communication blurs the boundaries of what we would consider very rigid definitions of people, society, space, and reality.

Research methods and context:

The initial step forward will be to collect a series of photographs - potentially from multiple locations and even outside of the UK - that document communications infrastructure such as pylons and underground cabling. I also wish to document powerline infrastructure such as wind turbines, solar farms, and nuclear power stations. These photographs aim to present reality, the abstracted existence of connection in a very literal sense.

A string, in mathematical terms, is a chord between two connecting points - an abstract understanding. Communication could be considered the transmission across a connection (Gleick, 2011). What we understand to be a connection stretches well beyond the physical and continues to exist in the very depths of our personal experience and emotional understanding. Is a sense of connection as real as the connections that keep our lights on?

Once I have documented examples of connections in industrial society, I will begin to find similarities between physical connections and those found in our cultures online and in more traditional social settings. Once a foundation of understanding has been found, I would like to continue this practice to see if such a connection can express the connection we find in ourselves and to reality in a metaphysical sense. This exploration will be done through a meditative piece of artwork that consists of a complex arrangement of string nailed to a large wooden board. The string will show an array of lines that align and intersect, expressing what we understand to be a network of connections. Following the creation of this work, I will write a short essay to put what I have understood in more concrete terms.

We are in an age of information. I would like to elaborate and suggest that we are in an age of communication. Information has always been available, but now we can transport data from almost anywhere in the world to anywhere else. Not only can we transport information, but we can also be the authors of truth or fiction. The result of free information transportation is delocalization, which has furthered the existence of universal culture and knowledge.

This age of communication constitutes only a negligible fraction of the existence of human consciousness. Therefore, it is fair to assume that the resulting influence of this level of communication power is yet to be realized. Because of this, I believe that any research into the understanding of communication is not only necessary but vital to how we should conduct development in this rapidly changing world.
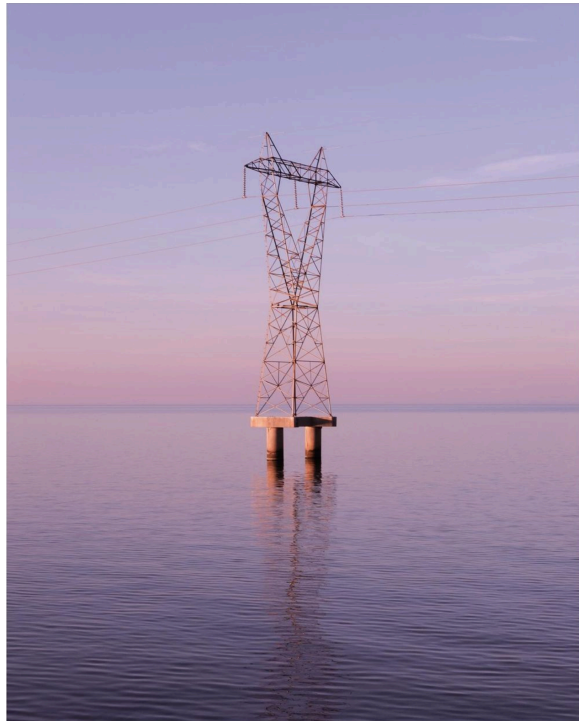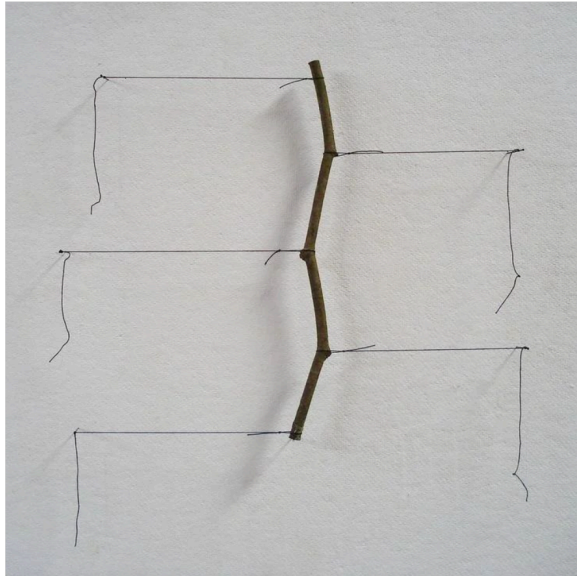
Inspirations and wider reading:

The primary inspiration for this work is The Information by James Gleick. This book presents a history of information that outlines the vital nature of communication not only to technology but also to the very essence of human culture.

Alfred Jules Ayer's Language, Truth, And Logic instilled in me an understanding of the power of linguistic communication among people and the influence logic has had on both culture and modern life (Alfred Jules Ayer, 2018).

Gaston Bachelard's The Poetics Of Space is a vibrant yet confusing poetic exploration of the meaning of space. Space, in a philosophical sense, has an important role in this project as communication is about the negation of space itself. It is the overcoming of distance where distance is the primary separation between the signal source and recipient (Bachelard, 1958).

Paul Hirst's Space and Power is almost the polar opposite in context as The Poetics Of Space, since it is a chilling exploration into the influence of space in the realms of politics and warfare. As I aim to cross the boundary between reality and the metaphysical, coming to terms with the influence of space on the practical realities of modern society is a must, and this book is exactly that (Hirst, 2005).

Paolo Zellini's The Mathematics Of The Gods And The Algorithms Of Men is a book I have yet to complete. It is a rigorous depiction of the philosophy of mathematics as a historical account. Similar to linguistics, I see mathematics as a tool for communication that allows humans to connect with the inanimate (Paolo Zellini, Carnell, and Segre, 2021).

Top Left (Brinkman, 1962), Top Right (kai [Alias], 2022), Bottom Two (Dino Kužnik, 2021)

The true nature of this project is yet to be realised as I aim to approach this through the lens of journalistic curiosity.

Environmental impact:

The environmental impact of the three parts of this project is significant and needs to be taken into consideration, as there are elements that may be wasteful or even harmful to the environment.
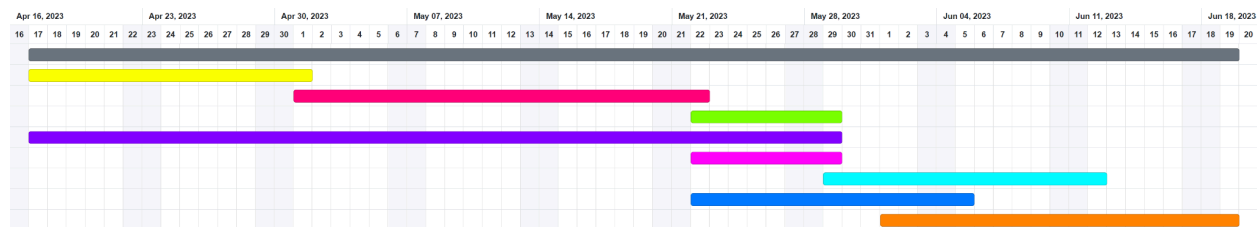
Photographing communications, transport, and power infrastructure could result in environmental impacts due to the need for travel. To minimize emissions, I intend to align any travel I do with work or leisure travel. The breadth of the subjects I wish to photograph will allow for some flexibility in terms of where and how I obtain these photographs, which will reduce the need to travel for the sole purpose of capturing these subjects.

Creating artwork using wood, nails, string, and spray paint presents a number of important environmental considerations. The first step will be to obtain all the necessary resources from waste or recycled suppliers, which I will do by utilising the CSM and Archway swap shop. Another crucial point to consider is the harmful impact of spray paint on the environment. Spray paint can contribute to air pollution, particularly if it contains volatile organic compounds (VOCs). Some spray paints are also made with chemicals that can be harmful to human health and the environment. To avoid this, I will explicitly search for VOC-free spray paint.

If the string I select is made of nylon, it may contribute to microplastic pollution. Thus, I will avoid using synthetic materials wherever possible.

Timetable and expected completion dates:

Name	Start Date	End Date	Duration
▼ Unassigned Task	Apr 17, 2023	Jun 19, 2023	46 days
RESEARCHING COMMUNICATION INFRA…	Apr 17, 2023	May 01, 2023	11 days
ONSITE PHOTOGRAPHY	May 01, 2023	May 22, 2023	16 days
EDITING	May 22, 2023	May 29, 2023	6 days
COLLECTING SUPPLIES	Apr 17, 2023	May 29, 2023	31 days
DESIGNING ARTWORK	May 22, 2023	May 29, 2023	6 days
CREATING ARTWORK	May 29, 2023	Jun 12, 2023	11 days
RESEARCHING ESSAY	May 22, 2023	Jun 05, 2023	11 days
WRITING ESSAY	Jun 01, 2023	Jun 19, 2023	13 days

Apr 16, 2023							Apr 23, 2023							Apr 30, 2023							May 07, 2023							May 14, 2023							May 21, 2023							May 28, 2023							Jun 04, 2023							Jun 11, 2023							Jun 18, 2023
16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20

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kai [Alias] (2022). *Untitled*. [Digital Photograph].

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