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Mobile

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Mobile

by

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A THESIS

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Abstract

Mobile combines the performance of fabricating a custom motorcycle with the performative act of documentation to investigate the relationships that we form with objects, the connections that are created by objects and the phenomenon of communicating experiences through visual artifacts over social media. The cell phone camera is utilized in the process of this artwork to capture every moment of the motorcycle build, from the exciting occasions to the mundane everyday instances in order to represent the experience to a public audience in its totality. By sharing the artistic interpretation of the building experience through images over the social network Instagram, their function is transformed. The photographs no longer serve to retain memories, but they become a catalyst for communication and connection as the experience is shared globally through this form of visual currency.

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Compass Bending
JIT Powder Coaters
Tyler Morrison (Cyclebomb)

TJ Cycles
Old Motorcycle Shop
Quintaro

Dedication

.....To my beautiful wife and amazing little boy. I love you both so much.

Theodore Arthur Ostrowski

Born July, 20, 2013

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Epigraph

“...to arrive in the Rocky Mountains by plane would be to see them in one kind of context, as pretty scenery. But to arrive after days of hard travel across the prairies would be to see them in another way, as a goal, a promised land.”

Robert M. Pirsig, *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance: An Inquiry Into Values*

Chapter One: **Introduction**

The experiences that I've gained through global travel have influenced the artwork that I create and have translated into multimedia works that embody an idiosyncratic view of the human-object relationship. The foundation of my art practice is rooted in the creation of artifacts. Formerly, these artworks acted as a catalyst to initiate discussion relating to issues surrounding hyper-product consumption in our consumer based society, and questioned the sensibilities relating to practices and production methods associated with these products. My current artistic endeavor departs from these retrospective themes and focuses on the formation of experiences to unite a community over social networking.

The training that I had received prior to coming into this program was very traditional. I was a painter, and the work I created stayed true to my training. Since my arrival to the program, I have been introduced to exciting contemporary art practices which led me to put my brushes down. As of day one, I focused on experimenting with new approaches to making art. I'm always interested in pushing my boundaries and trying new ways to communicate my ideas. In my first year, the work I created concentrated on representing global issues of consumerism and genetic engineering. In the creation process of each piece, I utilized industrial processes such as vacuum forming and CNC machining as well as welding to create my art. At the end of my first year, I was introduced to a new method of art production which changed the way I thought about making art. I was very interested in the heuristic research method and wanted to employ it within my own practice. This method of art creation entails comprehensive research and the participation of co-authors. I was not going to be able to experience this method in its entirety while I was in my MFA, but I still set out to try. I was given the opportunity to work with an artist in Hawai'i as part of a residency, to learn how to shape a surfboard and to understand how this process and practice related to art. It was during this experience when everything changed for me.

When I came back to Calgary, I started to think about the experiences that I had in Hawai'i and about the connections that I made during the shaping process. I wanted to

recreate the experience in a current way using contemporary methods of communication. My work *Mobile* began to spawn. *Mobile* is a work of art that was produced in two segments. I took an experimental approach to create this piece, especially in the first part of the process. In the beginning stages of the work, I focused to capture the experience of building a motorcycle with the use of a ubiquitous device. I combined the use of my camera phone with social media to share this experience with a larger audience in order to form a sense of community. Using the photo sharing application Instagram provided a method of sharing the experience globally. Through a performative act of documenting and sharing the images over the network, I attempted to transform the object I was making into a new medium to form communication and connections. After the building experience was complete I wanted to bring this experience back to the art gallery to create a completely new viewing experience for the gallery spectator. Through the use of video, printed digital imagery and sculptural elements I created an installation that allows the viewer to fully immerse themselves within the experience of building a custom motorcycle.

Chapter Two: **The Shift in Art Practice**

2.1 The Surfing Experience: Inspiration of Experience and Object on Artistic Practice

The first experience and relationship that I created with the surfboard began during a trip specifically intended for the act of surfing on the island of Oahu, Hawai'i in 2006. The experience of surfing for the first time was quite intense to say the least. It was mostly comprised of paddling and sitting on the board waiting in the water more so than the actual act of standing and riding. This was especially true in the beginning of the trip. I had my first encounter with Hawaiian culture and surf culture during the final day of my travels. On the last day of my travels, my friend and I paddled out at Sunset beach, a popular surf spot on the famous North Shore of Oahu. I had asked about the wave size from a local surfer who had just come in from being in the water. He mentioned that the waves were around eight feet. At the time, I didn't know that Hawaiians measure waves from the back and not the face of the wave. The ratio between the backside and the face side is 1:2, meaning on average the face will be double that of the backside. Naive to this fact, we paddled out to the line-up. As I was reaching the line-up, a set of waves came. Luckily I escaped the first 12-16 foot wave as it passed to the right of me. Unfortunately I did not have the same luck with the second wave. I was lifted completely straight up as the wave sucked up the water from in front of it, and was dropped along with its fury to the ocean floor. The board had broken into two pieces and I was forced underwater struggling to get to the surface for air. A set of waves in the ocean usually come in groups, which may consist of four or five consecutive waves. Having been victim of the second wave I was left to endure the power of the last few. My body was cut up by the reef, and my heart was beating out of my chest, I found myself in a state of panic fearing an outcome of death by drowning. I decided to cross my legs in a seated position and push myself to the ocean floor to wait out the remaining waves under the water. I thought if I could relax myself, my body would use less oxygen. I waited for the opportunity to

rise to the surface and took advantage of a calmer ocean state. I made it to the beach on the remaining broken piece of the board that was still attached to my leg by the leash.

Not only did this experience change the relationship that I had with water and the ocean, it gave me an opportunity to reflect on my own life and created an awareness of the self. Retuning the board to the shop where I rented it from was another experience in itself, one which relates with surf culture and the object of the surfboard. I laid the surfboard out on the sidewalk in front of the shop in its fractured state. The employee of the shop began to ask questions and started to get temperamental with my friend and me. He phoned the owner of the shop informing him of the state of affairs. The situation began to get vocally violent as I, and my friend refused to pay for the damages. I had read the contract before renting the board which stated that only in an “act of negligence” was the user responsible to pay for the damages caused to the board. I informed the employee that surfing, being its intended purpose, was therefore not an act of negligence as it was an accident. Within minutes following his phone call with his boss, local Hawaiian youths began to show up wearing blue bandanas, and the Police also arrived shortly after. I pleaded my case to the police officer, showing him the contract and stated my defense about its use. At this time my friend had ran to a local payphone to call his credit card company to notify them of the situation, leaving me alone to deal with the situation. The police officer addressed the state of affairs and turned to me and said “leave it to the courts”. Not knowing what he meant, I asked if I should leave. He replied quietly “it’s in your best interest”. I walked out casually as if I was going to the car to get documentation or payment. I got in and drove to the payphone where my friend was located. I noticed that some of the locals that arrived to back up the store owner had also returned to their car and started following us. My friend and I drove straight to the airport even though our flight wasn’t for another ten hours in hopes of finding some form of safety since the car followed us all the way there. During the return of the rental car, we had lost our followers. I didn’t feel safe until I was on the plane home.

I sometimes wondered what would have happened if I had stayed longer. What role does the object of a surfboard play in Hawaiian culture? From this experience, it seemed as if this object formed a strong connection within the social community and tradition. In Hawai'i and throughout Polynesia the surfboard is a sacred artifact developing a sport into a “communal obsession” (Warshaw, 2010, p.23). So much so, that



Figure 2.1-1: Keychain of the shaka sign

a situation would escalate to violence over its damaged state. All these moments that occurred during my trip all linked up to become eventful experiences in the water and on land. During the ten days of our trip, I didn't capture many pictures. I had taken possibly a dozen or so images to represent the whole experience of my trip. I also didn't bring anything back as a souvenir to Canada to remind me of my experiences other than a wooden key chain in the form of a hand doing a shaka sign¹ (figure 2.1-1), and a piece of lava rock that I found on the beach. My memories were to remain within these objects, one which I hang from the rear-view mirror of my vehicle ever since the trip. This experience

was so inspirational for me that I even chose to commemorate it permanently on my body by covering my arm completely with tattoos of images that represented this experience (figure 2.1-2) Upon my return I had decided to make artwork that surrounded these experiences, and I started to incorporate imagery of surf culture and the nature I was immersed in within my paintings.

¹Shaka Symbol: the thumb and pinky finger extended, sometimes associated with the Aloha spirit, a gesture for greeting someone and also the gesture for thank you.



Figure 2.1-2: Tattoos of My First Hawaii Trip Experience

2.2 Heuristic Research Method: Immersion into the Phenomenon of Surfboard Shaping

An opportunity to return to Hawai'i and work with the art collective AGGROculture came in the form of a residency on the Big Island during In the spring of 2012. The residency was comprised of a two week course which covered the theory and practice of surfboard shaping and was an experience that was soon to influence my final thesis work. Instructed by artist, and one of the founding members of the collective, Keith Tallett, I was educated about the processes and materials in the context of contemporary art. As a Native Hawaiian and second generation surfboard shaper, Keith bears a strong connection to the practice of surfboard shaping and the culture of Hawai'i. His artwork often reflects these sensibilities as it correlates deeply with Hawaiian culture and tradition presenting themes such as tattooing, Pidgin words² and Hawaiian language as well as surfing as main investigations in his art.

During my stay, I had many discussions relating to the topics of surfboard shaping, surf culture, Hawaiian traditions and cultures as well as the artistic practice that he, and the other members of AGGROculture all are connected with. As the discussions got further into each topic, I began to search for connections that related the act of surfboard shaping with artistic practices. The reasons Keith shapes surfboards is because it is a huge part of who he is and his lifestyle in Hawai'i. His thoughts about the surfboard industry and the mass production of surfboards provided motivation to make boards more personally suited to him and his style of surfing. He believes that the process of shaping his boards is much like the process of making his art. Each step of the process links each moment into an experience. Each experience is different because the moments change, therefore making each surfboard its own entity. Keith would make boards and then relate them to his art process as a form that he could play with and experiment. He feels that the process of shaping is now more intuitive and organic in the way that it is made. Reminiscent of his art practice, when he is shaping, there is always the possibility

² Hawaiian Pidgin or Creole, is a form of speech created to permit communication between groups with no language in common.

to borrow something from an outside influence to use in his own shaping process such as other materials, designs, shapes etc. He refers to the construction of these boards much like a series in art.

This residency had given me an occasion to exercise a different kind of research method within my artistic practice. Developed by Clark Moustakas, the Heuristic Research Method attempts to formulate a more complete qualitative investigation into the human experience. Primarily used in Social Sciences and Psychology, this method urges the researcher to develop answers and a deeper meaning to a specific question through self-inquiry and dialogue which typically ends up as a creative synthesis. The process starts with *initial engagement*, where the researcher begins to create an autobiographical self-search and commitment to the phenomenon. This could come in the form of self-dialogue and a personal journal. “The life experience of the heuristic researcher and the research participants is not a text to be interpreted but a full story that is vividly portrayed and further elucidated through art and personal documentations” (Moustakas,1994, para. 6). It is in this first step that the researcher begins to form a question to further discover. The heuristic research method is a very lengthy and in-depth process that can take a few years to complete as it requires discussion with co-researchers as part of the process in the form of interviews, analyzing data etc. I was able to familiarize myself with three of the six stages of the process. In the first stage, by analyzing my personal dialogue, the question arose whether the phenomenon of surfboard shaping by the artist/shaper influenced the content of the artist’s artwork. The following stage of this research method was to immerse myself in the phenomenon I was interested in exploring. Through this process, the researcher is intended to experience growing self awareness and self-knowledge (Moustakas, 1990, p.9). Working with Keith and shaping my own surfboard in Hawaii allowed for a firsthand experience into the phenomenon.

2.3 The Surfboard Shaping Experience: Creating a Relationship with an Object through the Process of Building

There are a lot of factors to consider when choosing the design of your surfboard. In the beginning of the process of shaping I was concerned mostly with the function of the board itself and its primary relationship to its owner through its function. My first reaction was to think about how the board was going to be used and where I was going to use it. A lot of the decisions I made were based on me as an individual, my height, my weight, my arm span, my overall style of surfing, my experience level and most of all the areas that I surf. These are the basic concepts for developing a board. Knowing how it was going to be used determined the general shape of the board. If the shaper is to use the surfboard for big wave riding, it would be necessary to construct a long and narrow shape for speed. These surfboards are typically over seven feet long and are known as ‘guns’. In smaller waves, it is necessary for the board to take on a much wider and longer form to catch as much of the wave as possible for greater buoyancy. These boards range from seven to twelve feet long and are known as longboards. Longboards are also typically starter board for new surfers as they are the easiest to ride. For medium sized waves, boards are usually smaller, between five and seven feet long, and can be both narrow and wide. These ‘shortboards’ are designed for manoeuvrability and speed, and they are made so that it is easy for the rider to “duck dive” under waves when paddling out and for maximum control when riding over the water.

As mentioned, I had to take into account many personal considerations when designing my board. I first considered the height of waves in which I normally surf which are typically small to medium in size ranging from three feet to eight feet tall. I usually surf in fresh water, therefore buoyancy is quite different over salt water. I decided to choose a shape that was a hybrid of a longboard and shortboard. I normally surf in the Great Lakes here in Canada, primarily in Lake Superior and Lake Huron. I am familiar with the climate and wave types of these lakes, therefore a lot of my decision making was based on these factors. Freshwater lacks the salt of sea water, making it much more difficult to float. Also the temperature of freshwater is remarkably colder than ocean

water as the surf season in Canada is typically between August and February, with the occasional wave in the summer months. The surf is determined by weather patterns here in Canada, and waves usually arise from migrant storms. The typical wave size is around four to six feet in height, but can escalate to fifteen or even twenty feet during severe storms. I usually go out to surf in 6-10 foot waves, so the overall shape was determined by this. I went with a much wider waist and an overall length of 6'1", based on my height of 6'3", and a thickness of three inches at the waste for greater float, again due to my size and weight. The wider and thicker board compensates for a lack of buoyancy, and the shortness allows to greater manoeuvrability. I utilized the round nose of a longboard to get me into any wave due to a larger surface area and a thin tail what is known as swallow tail or fish tail for easy carving through the wave. Finally I decided to set the board up as a twin fin, as two fins also allow a greater turning radius due to less thrust between fins. Some surfers choose up to five fins for greater thrust to move them across the wave quicker.

The advantages become drastically clear between buying a generic board from a shop and having one shaped specifically for you. A board bought at a shop caters to the general public and reflects the style or trend of surfing happening at that time. Surfboard companies design boards for general applications and only make a few variations of boards, offering limited board shapes, sizes, tail shape and fin set ups. The user tends to buy a board that would possibly work best for them, having no option to change anything but the fins. Having a board made specifically for the individual surfer offers many advantages. The surfboard reflects the rider's personal taste, style, location and even attitude. A custom board, whether it is made for them or is made by them, becomes an extension of the rider themselves.

I found this to be true during the meditative process of shaping. I started to think about the board more in depth and what it represented to me, and how it was a reflection of my personality. I had a vision in mind of what it was going to look like in the end, but as I was immersed in the process, things began to change. The materials of the board started to inform my decision making. Outside influences such as the environment in which I was in started to inspire my design. Learning the techniques, the materials and

the process changed the way I thought about surfing. For one, I became aware of the environmental impact that surfboards have on the environment. The boards are made from polyurethane foam, fibreglass and resins that are damaging to the environment or even myself during the process. The dust from the polyurethane and the fumes from the resin can cause respiratory and neurological damage. I had many discussions with Keith and other artist/shapers on this topic, as sustainability and eco-consciousness are important to me. It was not only a concern of mine, but that of the other artist/shapers as well. Many of them were already thinking about alternative materials to reduce the impact on the planet. The first boards in Hawai'i were carved out of wood. This tradition changed in the early 1960's when fibreglass and resins were introduced. Being strongly rooted with the Hawaiian tradition, Keith started to practice making boards out of recycled materials, and natural materials such as wood and the agave plant. This tall plant is related to asparagus family which grows quickly, and due to its fibrous stem is very buoyant. Keith also directed me towards surfboard shapers that had created boards using unconventional materials such as cardboard and pop bottles. I have found here in North America that some surfboard builders are re-appropriating old cedar shake shingles from houses that were redoing their roofs. Techniques and materials such as this would primarily be found in the process of independent surfboard builders, as industrial practices are more concerned with mass production.

When I think about surfing, I reflect on the connection that this object allows me to create with nature. Some would also relate surfing with the hippie movement due to the concerns many surfers share over the environment. In reality, for many surfers it is completely the opposite. Many people who surf need to travel thousands of miles by planes and other vehicles which creates a large carbon footprint. Materially speaking, surfboards are completely toxic for the environment and they don't last very long as resins break down with UV rays. Polyurethane, fibreglass and resin are all materials that hugely impact the environment and have been linked to health concerns such as cancer, and yet they are still the primary materials used to build surfboards. So for myself, the materials affected me on an environmental level. I was excited to build the board, but understanding the materials and the process was a deterring factor.

The process itself was really intense in the beginning. There is a large amount of knowledge necessary to make a surfboard. On the first day of arrival and meeting Keith, I was given a book to read that discussed the process of shaping, as well as a VHS video to watch on the process. The second-hand experiences that I read and watched did not prepare me for my own experience. I felt nervous and anxious when I first came in contact with the foam blank that I was to shape my board from. I didn't know how to begin or what to do with the materials given to me. Luckily I had Keith to guide me throughout this process, and he told me just to go for it. I started by drawing shapes on the foam and listened to Keith's instructions. When it seemed as if I was in control of what I was doing, Keith left me on my own to work through the process. From this experience I learned a lot technically, including how to use a lot of different materials and tools. I also learned a lot about myself. I spent a lot of time in the little blue room by myself with nothing more than the tools, the surfboard I was making and my thoughts. Shaping my surfboard was a very isolated practice which allowed for lots of time to think about life, art, and anything and everything during the process.



Figure 2.3-1: Documentation of the process of shaping a surfboard

Many hours are spent actually forming the object using tools to carve the foam surface down to the desired shape. A lot of time is also spent contemplating the shape and

judging the perfection of the object (figure 2.3-1). The builder spends half the time observing the shape of the object, inspecting it closely for symmetry. From looking at the object intently, not only was I thinking about what it would be like to ride it, how it will function on the water, but I was thinking a lot about how this process related to my artistic practice.

This project amounted to over 100 hours spent working on the surfboard. The process took almost three weeks to complete, leaving me with only one day to try out the board. I was lucky enough to have experienced the board on the water on my last day in Hawai'i (figure 2.3-2). It was unlike any experience that I have felt before. Riding this board was completely different than riding any of my other surfboards, or the boards Keith let me borrow to ride.



Figure 2.3-2: Documentation of the first experience of riding the surfboard

I don't know if it was a feeling of accomplishment, or some sense of satisfaction, but I started to formulate a different sense of appreciation and respect for the object. The condition of the waves were not ideal as they were sporadic and quite small, and the weather was subpar, but I still felt overjoyed. Paddling into the first wave and catching it provided me with a feeling of ecstasy. Looking through all the photos and videos that I

took of that experience, there was a smile on my face the entire time. I felt a greater connection to the object, to the water and with nature.

The whole practice is completely a hands-on and very thought provoking experience. An intense amount of labour was given to the project which established an authentic connection between me and the object. To anyone else, the surfboard could hold little value and would be seen as a mere functional object. Through the experience of handling the object and manipulating it into my own vision, the artifact was transformed from a mere practical object meant to be simply ridden, to an object that represented my desires, dedication and the experience itself. This immersion into the phenomenon brought to my attention new found interests. The construction of this object brought together a community of artists and shapers. Through this inanimate object I was able to establish new relationships with other artists and shapers as well as new connections with the general public during the time spent building and in the water.

During the construction process I had artists/shapers come to visit the shaping room to see what I was building. It was during these visits that the object's materials, construction methods and its function were discussed. I had a chance to talk to these artists to find out how building a surfboard and the act of surfing have influenced their artwork or their artistic process. When relating the artwork of these artists to surfing and the shaping of surfboards, there were direct and indirect connections between the two practices. The materials, methods and themes surfaced in some of the work done by these artists, yet other works were connected to other experiences brought about by surfing. Building this board offered other occasions which presented me with an opportunity to discuss surf culture, Hawaiian culture and each person's personal life. Even while I was out surfing on this board, I had many people come to talk to me about it, the process and myself because it was something out of the ordinary that they have never seen before. The object was the basis of many discussions and it was the initiating factor for many of the relationships and conversations that I made during my visit to the island. When I arrived home, I started to think about the surfboard, the process and how it related to my art practice. Throughout the process of shaping my board, I began to think about my personal relationship that I created with this object through this experience. It initiated

new interests for me to explore such as human relationships with objects, individual interpretations of objects and the relationship between the act of making artifacts. As well I started to become interested in the attachment and experiences created by these objects as well as the nostalgia and memories objects contain.

What this experience had done for me was changed the way I looked at art making, from a practice that was very artifact based, meaning the end product was the art, to one that was more process based, tying the art to both the process and the product. During my first year in this program my intention was to make objects that reflected concerns I had, such as environmental issues and consumerism. This approach to art making was very retrospective in which I relied on outside resources to inform the work. Although the process was a big part in the concept of these artworks, they were minimally represented in the final product. Through the experience of making an object for personal use, I shifted my focus to the production aspects of art making and the experiences that are generated out of the process. I began to analyze this experience and re-examined my artistic methods in creation. This introspective approach to art making has allowed me to focus on concerns relating to the object more closely such as the relationships and experiences created by the objects.

Chapter Three: **The Power of the Object**

3.1 Interpreting the Experience: Choosing an Object to Represent an Experience

When I returned from Hawaii I reflected on the experience of shaping the surfboard as well as the community and relationships that I established through the process of building. I became interested in how objects themselves can be artifacts in which memories and experiences can be attached to, as well how connections can be formed by an object through its creation. What also fascinated me was how an experience was constructed, which I believe was comprised of a variety of moments and events leading to a total experience. It was through this experience of shaping my very own surfboard that I formed a different appreciation and understanding for objects which I hold as important in my life (surfboards, motorcycles, tattoo machines etc.). In the process of creating a surfboard, the object itself began to represent much more to me than a novelty item. It became an extension of myself as well as a means to connect with others and nature. This surfboard allowed me to establish new relationships and friendships during its creation process and through its use out on the water. Realizing this new potential for objects and understanding how an object can function to create a community, I decided to adopt these sensibilities into my artistic process.

The reasons for making a surfboard stem from the significant relationship that I have with surfing through past experiences. I wanted to translate these new found understandings of how objects function and how a community can be created through the process of building an object within my artistic practice. I thought about the material possessions in my life and questioned which meant most to me, and which I've had a long-term relationship with. Also it was important that I have had similar experiences with this object as with the surfboard prior to its build. The decision came clear to me, and I chose to use my motorcycle as the central object for my latest artwork, *Mobile*. My connection with motorcycles started when I was very young through stories my father would recite of his three rare Polish motorcycles, the Sokół 1000. Although I have never

seen these bikes personally, through stories and photographs I was able to establish a relationship to these bikes as if I had. My experience of my father's motorcycles was through second-hand information, yet I have always felt a strong connection to them. I have grown up around motorbikes, but it wasn't until I was in my mid 20's that I finally purchased a motorcycle of my own. The passion for motorcycles and its culture grew even stronger when I bought my second bike, a 1976 Kawasaki KZ750. Based on this long-term bond I've established with motorcycles, I decided to use my '76 KZ750 as the donor bike for my artwork as it was an object with which I have created a strong relationship with through many experiences.

After choosing the motorcycle as the object that I was going to build for my new artwork, I thought about how I was going to establish a community during the creation process as I had with the surfboard in Hawai'i. During my experience of shaping the surfboard, I realized the potential an object possesses in creating discussion, friendships and a community of likeminded individuals who shared similar perspectives on life, art and nature amongst other things. It became apparent that building a community was an important element of the surfboard shaping experience and something that I needed to recreate in my artwork surrounding the build of a custom motorcycle. The relationships in Hawai'i were very personal as I worked directly with artists and craftsmen, and met many individuals out on the water. I had many opportunities to learn the skills necessary to build my own surfboard directly from the people that I met. Unlike my experience of building the board which was a sociable activity, it was clear to me from the start that building a motorcycle would be a solitary endeavour based on location of the build and the lack of contact I had with the motorcycle community here in Calgary. Although this experience of building a motorcycle was going to be solitary, I wanted to extend my experience to the public in hopes of forming new connections and relationships through my artistic process. It was important for me to construct the component of community in this artwork, so I reflected on the ways in which I communicate and learn new skills. It was apparent that the internet was a key element in how I communicated daily with my friends across the country as I rely on social media to keep me updated with how my friends are doing. It is through the use of my smartphone that I am able to do so easily

and in real-time. Although it would be an indirect or less personal approach in establishing relationships compared to the experience of building the surfboard in Hawai'i, I chose to use the social media network of Instagram as a platform to communicate my artistic interpretation of the experience of building a motorcycle.

3.2 The Sokół 1000: Establishing a Relationship with a Motorcycle through Stories

If you are to express in words, the feeling of riding a motorcycle, one would include the word “freedom” as a part of their vocabulary. It was no surprise then in the 1930’s, the Polish company Centralne Warsztaty Samochodowe (*Central Car Works, CWS*) would produce a motorcycle with a name that may represent the word most adequately, Sokół translated as Falcon. The motorcycle itself did not hold true to its name as it was a heavy and bulky, but it was a powerful machine that was to be used by the Polish Army to help them bring liberty to Poland during the Second World War. The Sokół 1000 was the first motorcycle my father owned. This was to be the first motorcycle that I would come to know.

At a young age, I would find myself looking through old photo albums that my parents brought with them when they immigrated to Canada from Poland. These albums contained photographs that captured the stories and memories of their youth. Flipping through the limited number of photos, I would find myself quite taken aback by several



Figure: 3.2-1: My Father with his motorcycles in Poland

black and white photos, and only one photo in colour of my father sitting on his motorcycle with parts of other dismantled bikes strategically placed beside him (figure 3.2-1). Other images showcased his motorcycles by themselves. There

he sat with a proud look on his face as he was the owner of not just one, but three of the rarest motorcycles in Poland. I questioned the reason my father would have photos of this tangible object in a book that was a recollection of his personal history. Quite often I would sit and listen as he excitedly told me stories about his first motorcycle, the Sokół 1000.

To own and ride a motorcycle was a dream that my father and his friends shared. This dream became a reality when he bought his first bike in 1973 at the age of twenty-two. At that time in Poland, and throughout Europe there were many motorcycle clubs. The popular motorcycle in countries such as Holland, Germany, Belgium and France was the Harley Davidson V-twin. There was quite the following surrounding this American made machine. In the 1930's, the CWS, a Polish manufacturer of automobiles started producing a version of motorcycles similar to their American counterparts; Harley Davidson and Indian Motorcycles. From about 1930, up until the Second World War, close to three thousand of these motorcycles were built in Poland and sold for three to four thousand zloty which was comparable to the price of a car.

The Sokół was believed to have been modeled after the Harley Davidson *Model-D* and the Indian *Scout*. Although my father would always say that it was the American companies that copied these Polish made bikes. Regardless of which came first, my father admired the Sokół. During a conversation on the topic of Harley's between my father and a friend, my father mentioned that Poland makes an even more beautiful bike than Harley's and they go by the name of Sokół. It just so happened that his friend knew of someone that had one. Soon after, my dad had gotten the address to the location of this relic, he and another friend embarked on a 150km journey from Warsaw to Łomża.

Tucked away, hidden in a barn for over fifteen to twenty years was the rare Sokół 1000 that my father dreamed of as well as an even rarer CWS sidecar. The two of them looked it over, pumped up the tires, filled it up with gasoline and oil and with a few kickstarts to the engine, it turned over and fired up. Even after sitting for so long, the machine started without fret, which was truly a testament to their quality. My father hopped onto the seat of the bike, his friend jumped in the side car and they were on their way back to Warsaw. A dangerous turn in the weather had brought change to their plans

of riding the motorcycle back to Warsaw. They had ridden into a dense fog, one which lowered their visibility to less than three meters in front of them. Due to this inconvenience, they had decided to ship the bike back by train. At the train station, a passenger train arrived only stooping its freight cars fifteen meters too far of the platform making it too high for them to load the motorcycle. His friend ended up yelling to the railroad engineer "Hey sir, could you back this train up fifteen meters because we can't load our motorcycle". And the train backed up for them so that they could get their bike onto it. This was to be my father's first experience with his motorcycle.

After obtaining the bike from its possible grave, my father put a lot of work into getting the bike to pristine condition. One of the first things that he had done to the bike was he customized it to suit his taste by stripping the original paint and painting it blue in colour. He became a member of the Harley Davidson club in Poland where he and other motorcycle enthusiasts often gathered to trade stories and discuss their passion for their machines. It was mentioned to my father by the president of the club, that he knew of someone else that had two complete Sokół's as well as a new spare motor in their possession, but the owner would not part with them unless it was to the right person. My father phoned the gentleman about the bikes, but the man refused to sell them to my father unless he got a recommendation from the president of the Harley Davidson club in writing. After obtaining the requested recommendations, the gentleman sold the bikes to my father.

When speaking to my dad about his experiences with his motorcycles, he remembers them quite vividly even though he hasn't ridden the bikes in forty years. He always gets excited when he talks about his bikes and the memories that were created with them. When I asked him what he remembers about his experiences, the stories often start with the images that he has of the bikes. These images served to remind him of the events that were created by the objects. In a recent discussion with my father, he mentioned to me that he found an old photo album with some more photos since I asked him for a few. He also mentioned that he has a manual for his old bikes. To find a manual for a bike that is so limited in its numbers of production is rare, and my father happened to own one and kept it in the photo album. It was one of the items that he brought over

from Poland for safe keeping. Almost twenty years ago, my father sold his motorcycles to help out with family affairs. I asked him how he felt about selling them, he replied “it’s like losing a child”. It is amazing to see that people can form relationships with objects in the way that he did. He cared for his motorcycles and treated them with great respect. Every fall he would take each bike apart and store them in boxes over the winter. In the spring he would put them back together again making sure that every part was oiled and greased and the motorcycle ran perfectly. He cared so much about these objects, that he never rode them after they were in perfect order. He maintained them and marveled at them. He said they were too rare to use, and he wanted to preserve them.

The motorcycle was a way in which my father connected with other people. Often, the bikes would come up in discussion at a pub when talking to strangers with similar interest. He sometimes created new found connections based on these functional objects. For him, these motorcycles served more than just objects meant for transportation. They were objects that created dialogue with others and new friendships as well. There are very few images we have of these items. It is within these limited photographs that my father keeps his memories of the experiences he once shared with these objects.

My experiences of these motorcycles were through my dad’s stories. As I mentioned before, I have never seen these bikes in person, but I felt a strong connection with them based on the respect that my father showed for them. His motorcycles were the first bikes that I have created a bond with, and I always had a desire to try and get them back to recreate that attachment. Maybe it’s because of the nostalgic quality that I find in them, or maybe it’s because I’ve grown up and have had my own motorcycles to relate to through personal experience. Regardless, I will never get to experience these objects in life, but I will always remember them through images. I have had my own experiences with my own motorcycles, as my father had with his, and it is because of this connection that I have with the object, that I chose to create my own custom motorbike. As with the surfboard, I felt that creating something that is unique and personalized makes the relationship with the object much stronger.

Chapter Four: **Mobile**

4.1 An Introduction to the Artwork

When we hear the word ‘mobile’, many different definitions may come to mind. Primarily it is a word that is associated with movement and the physical action of moving from place to place. I chose to title my thesis artwork with this versatile word because it allows for a play on words. Its definition makes reference to three themes to which my work relates; physical motion, digital technology and transfer of images. The first association between mobile and movement correlates with the central subject of my artwork being the motorcycle. The motorcycle is a means of transportation which allows great fluidity and freedom in motion as the rider and bike act as one unit. It is an object that allows liberty in travel and formulates new experiences during its use. In this work of art, through the process of building my custom motorcycle, my intentions were to transform the perception of this functional object into a catalyst for communication, community and shared experience. Secondly, mobile represents the portability of communication devices such as cellular phones. This technology is often referred to as a ‘mobile device’ since its use is not restricted to one location due to wireless telephone networks. For this piece, I utilized my Samsung S4 smartphone devices to capture the experience of building a motorcycle through digital images using the camera on my phone. Finally, the word mobile alludes to the movement of images through society. John Urry states that; “...not only people are mobile, but so too are many ‘objects’, ‘images’, ‘informations’ and ‘wastes’. Mobility is thus to be understood in a horizontal rather than a vertical sense, and it applies to a variety of actants and not just to humans” (Urry, 2000, p.186). The internet and particularity social networks are connecting people globally which has made sharing information such as images easier than prior its existence.

Throughout the process of this piece, I was able to instantly share images of my experience of building a motorcycle in real-time through the use of my cell phone and

social media. Utilizing the social network system of Instagram as a method of sharing my images, I was able to engage with viewers from around the world to create dialogue and new connections surrounding the object I was building.

Mobile is an artwork that was produced in two parts and will be discussed as such. In the first section I will focus on explaining the process of the work including; the performative act of documenting the experience through digital images with my camera phone; sharing visual artefacts using my smartphone device towards a public audience over Instagram; and the social interactions that were generated by the experience. The second segment concentrates on the installation in the Nickle Gallery. In this section I will explain the materials and process in creating the work. As well I will further discuss the use of images in the piece and I will describe my intentions for the artwork.

Every photograph communicates information about a specific moment in time and place. Taking a snapshot is like forever capturing a memory, and in many ways the photograph acts as an invitation to what the artist sees and experiences. Throughout history, artist's explored the photograph as a medium for their art and has diversified the ways in which the camera is used. In the 1960's and 70's, artist's such as Nigel Henderson and Hans-Peter Feldmann photographed what they considered normal aspects of life without glorifying the subject, often capturing images of everyday life and objects (Walsh, 2001, p.49; Horak & MacKervoy, 2008, p.55; Tatay as cited in Johnstone, 2008). Working In much the same way as these artists, Jonas Mekas created a video diary documenting the personal moments in his life through the use of a 16mm Bolex camera. This diary was comprised of short clips of everyday moments and the things that he felt were important to record, ones that his past memory helps him choose (Jonas Mekas, interviewed by Jerome Sans, 2000, as cited in Johnstone, 2008). These artists all use the camera in very different ways in order to capture moments in time which they are sometimes able to relate to on a very personal level, and other times they are fully detached from the imagery personally. They chose not to focus directly on portraying the heightened moments in life to represent a specific event in time, but rather they captured every day actions that represented their own narrative of time.

The work that I have created for my thesis exhibition relates with the works of these artists in many aspects, but primarily in the sense that my photographs archive the mundane moments of an everyday experience, which in my case is the experience of constructing a motorcycle. Rather than using a traditional film-roll camera or DSLR, I have utilized the camera on my smartphone to capture images of my actions such as drilling, grinding, welding etc., but also, I have photographed the tools, handmade parts, assembly, and other moments that make up the experience of building a motorcycle from the ground up. I focused to capture diverse moments throughout the building experience, from banal to the exciting occurrences in the form of hundreds of digital photographs. Once a moment was captured in the form of a digital image, this particular instant of the experience was shared with others through Instagram using my smartphone device. The experience of building the motorcycle was first shared virtually and in real-time through Instagram, then in its printed form as part of my installation for my exhibition.

I would associate my work to relate most with the contemporary artistic projects of Robert Clark, Hasan Elahi and Jonathan Harris. In 2005, Clark set out with a Sony Erikson camera phone as part of a fifty day trip across North America to “capture the people, places and things that make this country unique” (Clark, as cited in Slocombe, 2005). The images he took represented aspects of everyday life, as many of the images depict animals, reflections in windows, driving etc. The ongoing work by Elahi started after his name was mistakenly listed on the FBI’s list of suspects. Hasan’s run in with the FBI, and their desire to know his every location and schedule of events had launched his continuing online work *here I am!* documenting every aspect of his daily life through the chaotic assemblage of images and text online. Harris is another artist that primarily presents his works on the internet. He creates stories using photographs, computer science and statistics to formulate artwork which is meant to be experienced over the internet. After his thirtieth birthday, Harris began his web based project titled *Today*. This photographic journey was about creating memories of the everyday and remembering stories. Harris took one images per day and posted it on his website along with a short story. He stated that he “wanted to find a way to be more in the moment, more in the

everyday, to understand time more, to understand [his] life more” (Youtube, Today, 2011). Within months he had thousands of ‘strangers’ following this experience.

Through the performative action of documentation and the use of social media to share my visual artifacts, I too extended the moments that made up my everyday experiences of the construction of a motorcycle. During this experience of building, capturing images and sharing by means of online social networking, my intentions were to initiate dialogue and connections and form a community of individuals brought together through the creation of an object and the aesthetic experience of its creation. I have chosen to use Instagram as part of my artistic process because it allows the ability to communicate my experience as it is happening to millions of people worldwide. With the occasion to take a multitude of photos during my experience and the power to distribute these images to millions of users through social media, it was possible to extend my experience by way of a performative act of photographic documentation.

4.2 Camera Phone Image: From Memory to Experience of the Everyday

Mobile devices today allow us to take higher quality digital images than ever before. Recent advancement in smartphone technology and wireless internet capabilities make it possible for us to access the internet through our cell phones, giving us faster connection speeds and better network coverage (Rogers, LTE Coverage, 2013). The combination of cell phone images, the internet, along with online social media has become a predominant component in sharing everyday experiences. Mobile devices have become a staple in the way these daily events are shared due to their offered capabilities of downloadable apps, social media networks, and most recently, a shift towards improved camera quality on these devices.

The technology in today's mobile phones have remarkably advanced since the first camera phone launched in the year 2000, showing great advancement in hardware, operating systems and overall function and performance (Okabe, 2004, p.2). One feature that has become a key component of cellular devices is the camera. Many people are debating on photography blogs over the quality of camera phones today, stating that these devices are in many ways comparable or better than digital single lens reflex (DSLR) cameras. When the Nokia Lumia 1020 was compared to a Canon D 60DSLR camera, results showed "that in terms of detail's resolving power and under special test environment, the Nokia Lumia 1020 was able to beat the Canon EOS 60D, an APS-C SLR camera" (Nokia Lumina 1020 Camera vs. DSLR Camera, 2013). Through processes called pixel oversampling, some phone cameras are now able to take up to 41 mega pixel photos (Alakarhu, Dinning, & Salmelin, 2012, p.2). Companies are also developing lens kits that include telephoto, fish eye and macro lenses which adapt to your smartphone camera lens to make it function more like a standard digital camera (Photojojo, Cell Phone Lenses, 2013). With new developments and advancements taking place with cell phone camera technology, users of these smartphones are adopting new ways to use photographs in conjunction with online social networking to develop connections and form contemporary methods of communication.

The use and context in which camera phones are being operated today are quite diverse. The camera on mobile devices offer a transition from traditional photography giving users innovative means of taking digital photos. Before the photographic digital image, photographs served to function as “a means for autobiographical remembering” (Van Dijck, 2008, p.58). Printed photographs often contained rich family history and depicted personal moments of life. Most often these photos captured cherished occasions or events usually reminiscent of domestic living (Davies, 2007, p.151). For example, “special excursion” and “noteworthy events” such as birthdays, weddings, and social gatherings were common cause for photographic opportunities using film cameras (Okabe & Ito, 2006, as cited in Gye, 2007, p.284). Photographs served as an means to recall memories of these types of events as they “were typically regarded to be a person’s most reliable aid for recall and for verifying ‘life as it was’, even if we know that imagination, projection and remembrance are inextricably bound up in the process of remembering” (Stuhlmiller, 1996, as cited in Van Dijck, 2008, p.58). A traditional roll of film made it possible to take 12, 24 or 36 exposures per roll. As this roll of film was completed in a film-roll camera, the individual would get the negatives printed. By printing the negatives to paper, the photograph retained tangibility, which may have helped to preserve the memory in physical form, and gave photographs significance and value. I recall instances when rolls of film were not filled during one event, and often ended up containing images from two or three different occasions. When taken in for processing, due to the lapse of time between the events, the printed images offered a heightened sense of nostalgia. Waiting to develop photographs remained with film-roll cameras as the innovative company Polaroid introduced the world’s first instant photo with their Polaroid Land Camera in 1947 (World’s First Instant Camera, 2006).

This inventive technology allowed the consumer to use the camera in a traditional approach, but instead of sending the film or taking the roll of film in for developing, this camera offered a one-step process that allowed images to be printed on the spot. After snapping the photo, the user would turn a knob to start the chemical reaction between the layers of the exposed negative and a positive paper. Within sixty seconds, a dry finished print was created exposing people to the first sensation and gratification of instant

photography (World's First Instant Camera, 2006). For over sixty years, Polaroid maintained a stronghold over the instant photography market by offering new advancements over their own technology. This changed for Polaroid and the photography world with the release of the first digital camera to the consumer market. Although the first digital camera prototype was created by Kodak in 1975, it wasn't until 1988 when Fuji released the first digital camera to the public. Fuji's DS-1P was the first camera to capture images in digital form. It had a "400 kilopixel CCD and saved up to ten analog images on a removable 16MB Toshiba SRAM [memory] card" (Popular Photography, 1988 as cited in Carter, 2013). The development of the digital photograph gave the world a new way to take photographs, and with it gave the public a revolutionized version of the instant photograph. The nostalgic sensation created by a time delay between exposures to development resides with film-roll cameras, and is one that cannot be recreated by digital image cameras because of the instant gratification of seeing the image on the screen right after it was taken.

At one time, keeping a photograph of family, a loved one or an object of desire in a wallet was a common practice to preserve a connection with, or memory of the subject in the photo (Kindberg & Spasojevic, 2005, pp.46-47). The images we produce now are mostly digital and are located "in a device that is not only connected to the telecommunications grid but that is usually carried with us wherever we go" (Gye, 2007, p.279). Many users of smartphones keep their devices on hand continuously due to its multifunctional purposes for audio communication as well as multitude of other uses such as internet browser, clock, day planner, music playing device etc. The way in which we are using our "camera phones are both extending existing personal imaging practices and allowing for the evolution of new kinds of imaging practices (Gye, 2007, p.279). The smartphone becomes a stand in for the wallet and replaces this practice of carrying a printed image. Instead it serves as virtual digital photo album that the user can take with them wherever they go to store hundreds of such mementos. Although images that are captured by cell phones may serve the same purpose for recollection, the immediacy and temporalness of the digital cell phone image is changing how images are being honoured. In recent years, smartphones are becoming main devices for image recording. A recent

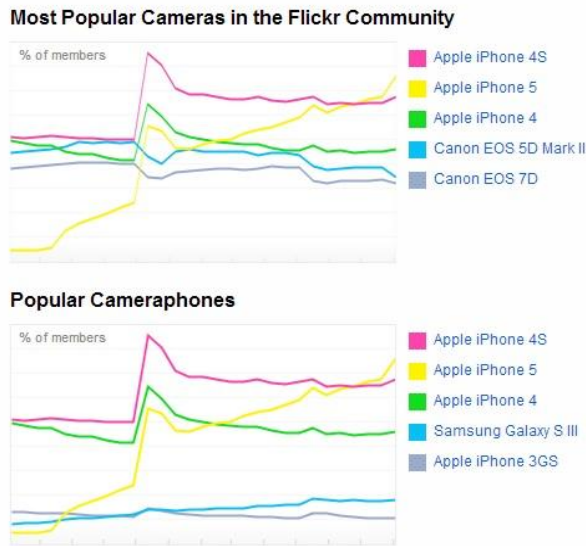


Figure 4.2 – 1: Flickr Graph

advertisement created by Apple proudly stated that; “Every day, more photos are taken with the iPhone than any other camera” (Apple, Apr., 2013). A graph provided by Flickr, one of the top photo sharing websites, confirms this claim showing that the highest percentage of members uploading images to Flickr are in fact using several versions of the iPhone (figure 4.2-1). Flickr declares that

“[t]he graphs are only accurate to the

extent that we can automatically detect the camera used to take the photo or shoot the video (about 2/3rds of the time). That is not usually possible with cameraphones, therefore they are under-represented” (Flickr, Camera Finder, 2013). One possible reason for the high quantity of images taken by cell phones may be related to the fact that users carry their phone with them constantly throughout the day, which allows for a greater likelihood to use the camera provided by the phone when ‘in the moment’ (Van House, 2007, p. 1082). Another reason may strictly be convenience. The compact size of smartphones makes it far more convenient to carry, compared to its bulky counterpart the DSLR camera. Also, these devices contain ample storage and provide the option to add memory cards for additional file storage. Unlike the traditional roll-film camera, cell phones and digital cameras make it possible to take hundreds and even thousands of images at any given moment. Possessing the ability to take an abundance of images is believed to have undermined the importance of the photograph. Susan Murray states:

Digital photography has provided the sense that photographs are no longer as precious (and expensive) as they were with traditional roll-film photography. The ability to store and erase on memory cards, as well as to see images immediately after taking them, provides a sense of disposability and immediacy to the photographic image that was never there before. (Murray, 2008, p.156)

We are seeing millions of new photos being uploaded to social media such as Flickr and Instagram everyday because digitalization has made photo taking affordable and convenient. With digital images, there is no reason to designate photo taking as an act specifically intended for special events. Nor is it necessary to wait for the ‘right moment’ to occur because images can be recorded and deleted just as fast as they are being taken. New smartphone cameras such as Samsung’s recently released S4 offer options such as “best photo” or “best face” which provide the user the ability to snap a burst of ten photos instantly to capture the right shot which can also increase the production of photos by the user (Samsung S4, 2013). As a consequence of the camera phone, we are no longer seeing photographs being taken with the same considerations as with traditional film-roll cameras.

Images are being taken in abundance and serving a different purpose. “Taking photographs seems no longer primarily an act of memory intended to safeguard a family’s pictorial heritage, but is increasingly becoming a tool for an individual’s identity formation and communication” (Van Dijck, 2008, p.57). Camera phone users are shifting their focus from solely photographing important events and memories, to capturing the aesthetics of the everyday. People are beginning to ‘see’ the world around them through their mobile devices and are capturing the immediate and momentary instances and experiences of daily life. “[P]hotography is no longer just the embalmer of time that André Bazin (1967: 14) once spoke of, but rather a more alive, immediate, and often transitory, practice/form (Davis, 2007, p.151). The ephemerality of the photograph is becoming more prevalent in images taken by cell phone cameras, especially when conflated with social media such as Instagram. Smartphones and social networking have transformed the image into a form of ‘visual currency’ (Van Dijck, 2008, p.62) for its members. Camera phone photography has become a new trend that is changing the way in which people are connecting and sharing experiences throughout the world.

4.3 Instagram: Visual Artifacts as Currency

Instagram is an application or “app” that allows the user the opportunity to upload and share photos over an online social network for public consumption. It is a social platform that offers an occasion to connect with others over the internet, and a possibility to foster social interactions through visual imagery. Instagram was first launched on October 6th of 2010 exclusively for the iPhone. By December of 2010, this app had reached one million users (Instagram Press Center, 2013). Since the app launched, Instagram has made many changes including a new layout and visual design, the addition of new filters as well as a new tagging systems. 2012 marked an important year for the application. On April 3rd of 2012, Instagram was finally launched for Android Smartphones. This move made it possible for millions of new users to start utilizing the application. Another big move for Instagram that year was pairing up with the largest social network on the internet, facebook. Within three months the app had collected over 80 million users around the world (Instagram Press Center, 2013). According to Instagram’s press release, there are now over 130 million monthly active users sharing a staggering 45 million photographs every day or 520 images every second. In less than three years, the number of photos that have been shared between users of Instagram has totaled over 16 billion images, with 1 billion people “liking” photos daily. This social network has become a huge cultural phenomenon worldwide with 50%+ users located outside of the United States (Instagram Press Center, 2013). Instagram has become one of the leading photo sharing communities allowing for millions of users to connect everyday through visual currency, which now includes video, launched earlier this year. The combination of smartphone and the Instagram application has made it possible for people to capture the world through their cell phones in the form of digital imagery and has allowed people to share these experiences with a community worldwide in real-time.

The designers of Instagram have made it easy to share experiences through digital images with an international community. The platform for this application is very simplistic and extremely user friendly, making it appealing for anyone to use. After

downloading the application from the internet using an iPhone or Android Smartphone, the user simply registers to create an account which also allows the user to connect with friends and family by syncing contacts from facebook to their Instagram profile. Once registered, the user is ready to share their images with the world. To upload an image to their profile, the user simply takes a photo in real-time using the camera provided by their phone, or with the convenient camera application provided by Instagram itself. It is also possible to upload previously taken images stored on the phone instead of using the live camera. After the image has been taken or is uploaded, there are numerous ways that the user can alter the image aesthetically.

What has made this app so popular has been the ability to apply a filter to the image to change its visual characteristics. Instagram has provided nineteen different filters for the user to choose from which mimic the filters that a photographer would use with a film or digital camera (Appendix A). As well, other filters add unique effects to the image which are primarily possible through image altering computer software such as Photoshop. These filters offer a variety of effects that can distort the image's colour, sharpness, contrast, saturation and allow the user to personalize their images. The filters have unique names such as Toaster, 1977 or Amaro which give the user little information as to how it would change or distort the image. Blindly, the user applies the filter to the image in order to see the way in which the images could be modified. After the desired filter is chosen and applied to the image, it is possible to add or remove a frame that is associated with each filter. Some are simple, offering a white or black frame to contain the image and some are more graphic giving the border a torn edge effect. If the user chooses to emphasize a specific area of an image or to distort the background by creating a faux depth of field, a blur feature is offered in either a line or circular form that can be moved anywhere on the image. The 'circular blur' effect allows a focused sharpness in the form of a dot on the image which creates a sharp center which dissipates towards the edges (figure 4.3-1). The diameter of the circular form may be increased to cover more of the images surface area. The 'line blur' works similarly to the circular form. The main difference is that a sharp band runs across the image in a line that can be turned 360



Figure 4.3-1: Circular Depth of Field



Figure 4.3-2: Horizontal Depth of Field

degrees anywhere on the image. This line too may be enlarged to cover more of the surface of the image (figure 4.3-2).

When the preferred aesthetic is chosen, the user is taken to another screen that gives them the option to share their image directly through their profile on other forms of social media such as Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr or Flickr. As well, members may annotate the image by adding a caption to the photo. The user may write anything they wish to include with the image and may also include a hashtag in their caption to increase views and circulation of the image through the network. A hashtag contains a word or conjoined words that make up a phrase with the prefix of the hash or number symbol (#). It is part of a method of tagging called descriptive metadata. “Metadata is structured information that describes, explains, locates, or otherwise makes it easier to retrieve, use, or manage an information resource. Metadata is often called data about data or information about information (Understanding Metadata, 2004, p.1). This short message of information is normally used within social media and blogging to provide others with the opportunity to find the keyword through a search. The hashtag is usually created by each individual user and can be used within a sentence or independently in a caption.

Users of Instagram usually provide a number of hashtags with each image. Adding many descriptive hashtags to the image will localize the image within certain groups of photos. Including multiple hashtags with images allows the photograph to circulate across the social network, and the possibility for more views by other members. More views of the user's images and profile by other members of Instagram may in turn lead to the possibility of new followers.

The feature that is referred to as "follow" and "following" allow members of Instagram to create greater social interaction by choosing to stay connected with other users by linking profiles. This feature permits users to establish relationships with other member's profile of interest, often times with friends, family members or even complete strangers. If a member's profile is set to public, all images are visible to anyone, thus allowing the ability to follow the profile by simply clicking the "follow" button on their profile. This instant connection provides their photos to be showcased in your feed. If a profile is set to private, it is still possible to follow the user by authorized request. "Liking" or Leaving comments on followed users images often times leads to new relationships and communication, and frequently leads other's to follow your profile. There is, however, no certainty that connections are reciprocal, but occasionally are formed through mutual respect.

Communication and relationships between members usually result from active participation in the form of "likes" and comments. Likes are the easiest way to show interest in a user's image. By simply double tapping an image automatically pops up a temporary heart shaped graphic on your screen and leaves your profile name under the image stating that you have "liked" their photo. This "like" action is also provided to the owner of the image in a separate feed stating that their images have been liked by members of the social network. In your personal "like" feed, it is also possible to see the images that were "liked" by those that you follow, possibly leading to more connections with others.

The most intimate way of communication between members is through comments left under an image in the form of text. All comments are public unless the users profile is set to private, then, only authorized followers may see the comment. Once a comment is

left, there is no way to erase it, and only the owner of the image can delete it. The owner, as well as other members may choose to respond to your comment. To respond directly to another member, a user includes a prefix of an “@” symbol along with a users screen name in conjunction with their response which is revealed in your personal feed. Once it shows up in your feed you may choose to continue dialogue with the other member. It is also common to find these screen names left as comments on your images. This is another way that users share images with their friends by directing their attention to your photo.

Images serving as visual currency circulating through Instagram have made it possible for individuals all over the world to connect with each other. The ability to modify and personalize images through the use of filters has sparked an interest for members of the application to spread their experiences of the world they see around them towards anyone and everyone. These experiences often express mundane imagery of the everyday, personal narratives and self imagery as well as climatic events through dynamic snapshots. There has been argument on both sides, for and against Instagram, stating that the app has both ruined as well as contributed to the world of photography. Nevertheless, within the last three years, more photos have been taken and shared over the application than ever before. The phenomenon of sharing experiences by way of images in real-time serves as a platform for communication and also a way for individuals throughout the world to unite.

4.4 The Ephemeral Camera Phone Image: Forming Connections through Visual Artefacts

The combination of digital image, smartphone and social media signals a new phenomenon of photography focused on capturing everyday experiences in real-time. Some have even referred to this new category of photography dedicated to capturing ordinary moments of life as 'ephemera' photography (Murray, 2008, p.155). Searching through photographs on social media such as Instagram and Flickr provides evidence of this change in subject matter, as a substantial amount of images capture mundane subject matter. These types of images are reminiscent of snapshot photography and are commonly of food, architecture, vehicles, plants, clothing and other themes that make reference to domestic living. For many members engaging in social media, these images archive life in the form of a personal narrative (Murray, 2008, p.151).

Instagram is saturated with imagery of this type, and the primary capturing device for shared photographs on Instagram is the camera phone. Recently the role of the camera phone "tends to be used more frequently as a kind of archive of a personal trajectory or viewpoint on the world, a collection of fragments of everyday life (Okabe & Ito, 2006, as cited in Gye, 2007, p.284). This personal narrative centres on the "aesthetics of banality" (Koskien, 2005, as cited in Gye, 2007, p.284) or mundane subject matter which has become an emergent trend within image dependant social media. Daisuke Okabe (2004, p.7) refers to these photos as a practice of "visually archiving an individual's everyday life", while Nancy Van House (2007, p.2718) considers this practice of photographing common objects familiar in everyday life and other banal experiences of daily life to be a form of personal-chronicling. The approach to taking these kinds of images is usually in an informal manner taken in real-time, to document a "momentary slice of a viewpoint on everyday life" to possibly refer to later on (Okabe, 2004, p.7). The subject matter in these shots are typically not staged or posed, and are taken 'in the moment'. This spontaneity for image taking often produces simple looking imagery, which would appear as if little consideration was made towards the composition of the image, framing the subject, and

overall thought towards taking the photo (Okabe, 2004, p.7). Applications such as Instagram, Twitter and Flickr have given people a place to unite in order to share aspects of everyday life in the form of images, making this phenomenon of ephemeral photography a new common practice. Susan Murray (2008, p151) states that the digital image has “significantly altered our relationship to the practice of photography (when coupled with social networking software)”. Also these new practices of photo taking “signal a definitive shift in our temporal relationship with the everyday image, and have helped alter the way that we construct narratives about ourselves and the world around us (Murray, 2008, p151). Members of Instagram frequently post a surplus of images to their profile usually letting the photo speak for itself without any written text accompanying the image. Other times members may include just hashtags with their images to describe the photo so that it may be found in a search by other members. The amount of images available for viewing over social media suggests that the photograph functions as a form of ‘visual currency’ giving individuals a new means for communication (Van House, 2007, p.2718). José Van Dijck’s ideas parallel those of Van House as she proclaims that:

[p]ictures become more like spoken language as photographs are turning into the new currency for social interaction. Pixellated images, like spoken words, circulate between individuals and groups to establish and reconfirm bonds. Sometimes pictures are accompanied by captions that form the ‘missing voice’ explaining the picture. (Van Dijck, 2008, p.62)

Smartphones offer a variety of ways in which images can operate to create social interaction. These devices have given us the ability to share images through text messages, emails, short message systems (SMS) and social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram) which has changed the way in which we communicate. In a recent study on the use of the camera phone, research suggests that “a contemporaneous connection may be made possible through the use of camera phones” (Kindberg et. al., 2004, p.46). The ability to take a photo with our mobile devices and share the visual artifact with others through our cell phones has enabled a capability to create social interaction and online relations.

Participation in online community through shared multimedia is broken down into two main ways; one-to-one relationships, and one-to-many relationships (Nov et. al.,

2009, p.558). In the case of Instagram, the participation and connections that are established reflect a commitment for a growing community. Although one-to-one relationships are possible on social networks such as Instagram, the common association between members are in the form of one-to-many relationships, where the user directs their information across the entire social network in hopes of generating interest for their profile (Nov et. al., 2009, p.558). It may be possible that information sent publicly across these social networks may lead to other ways of communicating within these types of online communities. Allowing the image to represent the individual and their experiences in a form of visual language provides an opportunity to create new dynamic connections and friendships.

Social networking applications that tailor to visual imagery such as Instagram rely on the digital image to serve as a tool for communication. Stelmaszewska et al. (2008, p.142) argue that: “photo sharing is a catalyst, which shapes social interaction and it changes depending on where sharing takes place, who it is shared with and most of all what the content of the shared photo is”. The interactivity presented by applications such as Instagram has given members a chance to fortify connections by sharing, commenting and liking images uploaded by other members as well as their own. “Photos reflect social relationships but they also help to construct and maintain them” (Van House et al., 2004, p.7). Sharing photos over public online social systems allows others to take part in an experience presented through the image. These digital representations of one’s life are the basis for communication and connections. Although countless images shared through Instagram could be categorized as ‘ephemera’ photographs and are short-lived, these photographs are inviting participation from members all over the world. The photograph has become a meeting place where people can come to interact, as well as form and maintain connections through visual imagery. With millions of photos being shared over Instagram each day, the opportunity to connect and create social interaction with others through images is imminent.

4.5 Sharing Experiences through Social Networks on a Mobile Device

With the ability to connect through online forms of social media by way of mobile devices, these smartphones are contributing in creating new forms of social communication practices. In a study on the uses of mobile media and the implications of recording and sharing images, Jacucci et al. state that “multimedia is no more seen only as a means to record and later re-live experiences but as a way to actively exercise agency and construct experiences with others” (Jacucci, et al., 2006, p.216). The camera phone images, in conjunction with online social networks, are allowing users to upload everyday experiences with a worldwide audience. As previously mentioned, the photograph mainly served to implement memory and nostalgia by capturing rich moments of family history. With the introduction of camera phones as a dominant approach to creating images, the function of photographs has changed significantly.

Throughout the world people are no longer concentrating their attention on recording their family heritage, but rather they are directing their attention to chronicling their personal lives by capturing moments of the everyday and sharing their experiences with an online community. “In recent years, we have seen profound shifts in the balance between these various social uses [of the photograph]: from family to individual use, from memory tools to communication devices and from sharing (memory) objects to sharing experiences” (Van Dijck, 2008, p.60). In the past photographs served as a means of reflection and for memory, where as today, the role of the image has shifted towards operating as medium to communicate experience and create personal identity. With the help of social networks such as Instagram, people are given the opportunity to share their personal experiences with a public audience while still in the moment or in real-time.

Users of Instagram are permitted to use the social platform to communicate and distribute photographic artifacts of their personal experiences globally and in real-time. Instagram states that it was created to “allow you to experience moments in your friends' lives through pictures as they happen. We imagine a world more connected through photos” (Instagram, FAQ, 2013). Instagram would not function the same if its members did not share photographs as readily as they do. The visual image is Instagram’s vital

component for operating, as well, it is its greatest method of creating communication and connections between its members. The filters that are provided by Instagram has given smartphone users motivation for utilizing their phone's camera to upload, modify and share more personalized images with millions of people. It may be possible that the "mobile camera phone is leading to a change in the way in which we visualize the world" (Van House et al., 2005, as cited in Gye, 2007. p.285). As stated earlier, many images found on social network sites like Instagram and Flickr can be categorized as ephemeral and contain reference to domestic, banal life experiences. With the excess amount of these types of digital images being produced daily, Van Dijck (2008, p.62) states that "the value of individual pictures decreases while the general significance of visual communication increases". Even if the value of the photograph may be reduced due to a surplus of mundane imagery, the phenomenon of photographing and sharing these types of experiences to a public audience over social networks has allowed pictures to become "a visual language" for communication (Van Dijck, 2008, pg.62).

It is through the process of creating these types of prosaic images with our camera phones that people are beginning to look at the world more aesthetically. Van House et al. argue: "Ready access to imaging encourages people to see the world "photographically"—as images, and to see beauty and interest in the everyday. And easy internet-based sharing creates an audience" (Van House et al., 2005, as cited in Gye, 2007, p.285). This audience that Van House mentions could be for some, a motivating factor for sharing photographs and experiences publically. Instagram can be regarded as an online community of people wanting to share experiences through visual artefacts with an online audience to create connections.

While Instagram stated that the application was created to "experience moments in your friends' lives through pictures", it seems to me that people on social networks are going beyond sharing with just "friends". Webster's Dictionary defines a friend as someone "being attached to another by affection or esteem". Many members of Instagram could be in fact connected with many friends, although I speculate that the relationships between users of such social networks lead more towards an acquaintance status. Through my own personal use, I have observed that some users of Instagram have

anywhere from twenty followers to twenty thousand or more followers. At the same time, these users also follow hundreds to thousands of people. It is believable that a user of Instagram is connected with friends on the basis of having a low number of followers, or following a low number of members. On the other hand, it is unbelievable or unrealistic to think that one may have twenty thousand friends. The term acquaintance may also be the wrong word to describe the association between members since most users possibly do not know or have never met most of the followers they have or those of whom they follow. Maybe the term 'fan' may be more appropriate to use to describe the bonds between members of this application. It would seem that users of social media such as Instagram are using photos to initiate social interaction with strangers even more than with friends. This phenomenon brings awareness to an involvement of everyday experiences between members through the photograph, as well as an understanding in the creation of new social connections through social media (Hochman & Schwartz, 2012, p.6).

Online social networks such as Instagram are providing environments which allow members to connect and share first-hand personal experience through images regardless of friendship status. As previously stated, the photograph can draw viewer's attention towards an individual's profile based on a mutual interest. As well, these same images can provide insight or perspective into one's existence, thereby creating a visual narrative of their life experiences. In addition, the digital image becomes a point of entry for an audience to actively take part in personal experience on the screen. Through this type of sharing and relating, boundaries and distance between people using social media are becoming narrower. Nancy Baym declares:

Digital media aren't saving us or ruining us. They aren't reinventing us. But they are changing the ways we relate to others and ourselves in countless, pervasive ways. We stay in touch with more people for longer and across greater distances...We create groups and relationships that cross boundaries that we could rarely span before. (Baym, 2010, p.153)

The internet has offered social environments which have expanded space for individuals to connect by narrowing the distance between its members. Visual imagery over social networks is helping people connect far beyond their physical geographic location. I

believe that images do not belong to a particular geographical location, only the production of the image does. This is why it has become increasingly popular to add GPS functions in the photographic tags (Geotagging) to allow viewers the possibility to identify and possibly replicate the experience of taking the same image in its physical location. By uploading an image to an online social network such as Instagram, the photograph gains a virtual location, which then becomes the language of the online community. It is a language that everyone around the world can speak which allows potential connections.

We experience everyone to whom we are connected—and conceivably everyone to whom we are potentially connected—as if they are exactly next to us. The effect is that of hundreds, or thousands, or millions of people coming together in zero space, so that there is no perceptible distance between them. (Federman, 2006, as cited in Gye, 2007, p.285)

In the case of Instagram, every member is in equivalent proximity to one another as the application creates a virtual location which removes distance between users. When I am using Instagram, someone who lives down the street from me is no closer than someone living in New Zealand, as their presence is represented through digital images on the screen of my smartphone. Contributing experiences through visual form, as well as the construction of relations in a virtual space, I believe has made communication easier by breaking down social and physical barriers. Online networking capabilities through our cell phone devices, in addition to instantaneous sharing of experiences through digital images, welcome the public into new personal experiences.

4.6 The Process: Using Social Media to Convey Artistic Intention

The idea for *Mobile* was influenced by my surfboard shaping experience in Hawai'i. While I was building my board, I had the opportunity to meet and work with other artists and shapers to create an object that was truly unique and personal. I was ambitious with my vision for my first surfboard. This ambition led me to choose a shape that was quite different than traditional commercially made boards, and one which used different materials and techniques in its production. Because of my design and my desires to include agave and koa wood within my board, it was necessary to talk to other surfers, craftsmen and shapers to get their opinion on these matters. Before long, I was interacting with many people on the Island and forming new friendships. When I arrived home, I thought about the experience and connections that I had made because of the object I was building. It occurred to me that the object I was making was the basis for initiating interaction, dialogue and relationships. Over the course of the summer, I reflected on the ways in which I communicate with others, and how I tend to learn new skills. The method became clear to me as most of my communication and skill building occurred through social networking and online information. A decision was made to focus my thesis work on recreating an experience similar to the surfboard shaping experience in Hawai'i. Only this time, instead of creating connections and community through face-to-face interactions as I did on the Big Island, I intended to establish the connections and community by creating a custom motorcycle and sharing the experience through online social media.

I chose to use Instagram as vehicle to communicate my artistic interpretation of the building experience because it was specifically created with the intentions for its members to share experiences with others by way of photographs. Through images captured on my smartphone, I engage in the process of recording the essence of the assemblage in all aspects, exciting and the mundane. I focused to create an interpretation of the experience through an artistic lens to reconstruct the images into individual artworks which collectively illustrate an experience. At the end of each moment, I am using my Instagram to make art by transforming images into artifacts through an artistic

form of documentation. Throughout the performance of building and photographing the experience, not only was I investigating the relationships that we form with objects, the relationships that are created by these objects, but also how visual representations can be used to communicate experiences. The project commenced over Instagram in real-time as each part of the bike was getting cut, bent or assembled. By doing so, I hoped that the experience would create eagerness, suspense and fascination on the part of the viewer while they were invited on this journey through the images I posted, anticipating new changes and experiences each and every day. It is not often that someone can take part or be as close to an experience such as this, so having a unique opportunity to see and participate in a first-hand experience of building a custom motorcycle from start to finish may possibly form a sense of satisfaction for some viewers.

The photographs that I took during the process of building the motorcycle do not capture just the final product or the completed build, rather they reveal a myriad of moments that may have been overlooked or missed. During the process of the build, I was interested in the performance of documenting the banal or ordinary occasions that this experience was comprised of in order to create as whole of an experience as possible for the online spectator. It is important to note that I use the words 'document' or 'documentation' in the context to describe a recording of a moment, but I do not imply that the images are documentary. The use of the terms and their relation to art will be further discussed later on. It was imperative to photograph all aspects of the experience, from ordinary events that make up an everyday experience of the fabrication processes to the climactic instants that evoke a monumental occasion. This included many of the repetitive tasks that are necessary in order to build each part on the bike. The fact that I was paired up with my smartphone continuously during the experience, and because I was taking and sharing a multitude of images throughout each day of the building experience, I began to pay attention to the aesthetic beauty in everyday events and moments which we take for granted and that are easily unnoticed or overlooked. Through the use of images, my intention for this work was to transform the motorcycle from simply a functional object meant for transportation, to a catalyst for communion, discussion and connection. Transmitting the experience of building a custom motorcycle

through visual artifacts over Instagram allowed the possibility to form an online community to engage with the experience. As well, it gave members of Instagram a chance to connect with this experience by ‘being in the moment’ with me as the images were posted in real-time over the social network.

Sharing an experience over social media by way of images in real-time, I hoped created a direct dynamic experience for the viewer, giving them the opportunity to see what is happening during the build as it was happening, and an opportunity to take part in the experience through text. I have selected to use Instagram as part of my artistic process because it allows greater access to the experience that I was creating and also allows the ability to share my experience as it is happening to millions of people worldwide. The way in which I utilized Instagram for my art differs from its traditional use. Primarily, members of Instagram use the application as a personal space to share images of their daily life to a global online community in the form of a visual narrative or life story. Often I would see images in my feed from the people I followed which depicted travel, food, vehicles and self shots also known as ‘selfies’ which represent the individual at that particular moment. I chose to operate my profile in a different manner.

The profile that I created was made specifically to communicate an artistic rendition of the experience of building a motorcycle. When visiting the profile dedicated to this experience, the spectator was informed through a short description that the content presented was part of a work of art. Each photo that was uploaded directly related to the experience, from the tasks taken to build the bike, as well as the many objects that related to the experience such as new parts or tools. My experience of building a motorbike may have been, in many aspects, similar to other people’s experiences of building custom motorcycles in their garages or shops. It may also have been possible that my building experience involved many of the same conditions of communication and social interaction which they took part in as well. In the builds that I have witnessed, in forums, TV shows and online blogs, the builder presents their experience in a few different ways; a step by step guide to building or fabricating the parts for the bike; through images of the highlighted climatic moments such as the finished or assembled motorcycle; or a verbal/text narrative of the project of their experience in the form of a blog. One of the

ways in which my process and project diverts from exemplifying the building of a motorcycle as a personal experience is through the removal of the physical self (the builder) from the images and text that I present to the viewer. What is present instead is strictly my handy work, the objects I create, the skills and tools that I utilize in the process. By divesting the experience of my personal presence, I am hoping it formulates an experience that is more accessible to people on Instagram. Also by not intruding in the photographs, I am trying to create a virtual neutral space where others can relate to the process and make it as much of a personal journey for themselves as it is mine. Although the viewers have limited interaction in the decision making process, their presence and communication forms a duality of the experience.

I also removed myself entirely from the profile, leaving only the visual artifacts to speak for the experience. Even the accompanying text served to aid in the description of the moment and not as a personal statement about myself. I had received a few comments from members that had been following the online experience stating that they had noticed and enjoyed the context in which the profile was created. Also many comments were made about the images themselves and the unique way they represented the experience. I felt that it was important not to include myself in any image because it then creates a separation between the object I was building and myself, which I anticipated would give the viewer more of a personal connection with the experience that I was delivering over Instagram. From the interaction that I was getting from each image, it seemed as if a lot of individuals were constantly in on the experience. Often members would write suggestions about how they see the bike looking in the end or offer advice as if they were building it themselves. By the end of the build experience, a large number of people were leaving 'likes' and comments for each image that I uploaded. Frequently these comments and interactions were left by returning members who were eager to see the final result.

Even though I tried to remove my physical self from the experience and images, I had begun to make friends and connections with members that followed the experience from its early stages. Some members wanted to know more about me personally, asking me things like my age and where I was located possibly to create a more fulfilling

connection. Other members had invited me to social occasions that they were organizing and to visit them because they wanted to see the bike in person. The object I was building, through the images I was posting, began to produce communication and connections between 'following' members and myself. During the build I was able to identify that many 'followers' of the experience were in fact 'in the moment' because it took only a few seconds after posting the image for responses to start. My images would be instantly 'liked', commented on or shared with others. It was interesting to see how fast people were connected with the images and ultimately the online building experience. By allowing the viewer to participate in the progression of the object which I was building, and by sensitizing the audience to unexpected or mundane images, it gives the experience and the object life, making the viewer see the inanimate as animate. When the last photo of the experience of building the motorcycle was taken, the profile had over five hundred followers in the five months that it was active. I still receive notices that new members are starting to follow the experience even after the last image was posted weeks ago.

4.7 Performative Documentation: Using a Ubiquitous Device to Establish Connections

Through its documentation, my experience of building a motorcycle differs from other bike mediated building experiences. The way in which I have chosen to represent this journey is through an artistic performative act by using the camera of my smartphone to share my building experience in real-time over social media. As quickly as the images were taken, they were personalized through Instagram's many functions and then shared to a public audience. Throughout the day, while immersing myself in the building experience, I would seize the moment through a performative approach to taking photographs. These photos take the viewer through an intimate journey as I fabricate each part, and show the complete procedure along the way. Included as part of this online experience are many representations of mundane tasks such as drilling, cutting, bending or even drawing out the part that I was making. Throughout this process I attempted to put the viewer alongside my first-hand experience as events unfolded in real-time.

Before I discuss the action of documenting the experience through performance in my art practice, it is necessary to distinguish the differences between documentation *as* art and documentation *of* art. I have raised the issue before about the use of the words documentation vs. documentary. These terms are frequently used in performative artwork as they serve two different functions. Philip Auslander proposes that there are two categories to which performance documentation falls under; documentary and theatrical. He states that:

the documentary category represents the traditional way in which the relationship between performance art and its documentation is conceived. It is assumed that the documentation of the performance event provides both a record of it through which it can be reconstructed. (Auslander, 2006, p.1)

The main purpose of documentary photography in performance art serves as evidence to verify that the performative event actually occurred. The photograph represents past performed events as a form of reality to the viewer. Documentary imagery also functions as a means to reconstruct the performance to access later on. This type of record does not

accurately recreate the event due to a lack of information between images making the documentation incomplete. What is left for a future audience are few images to serve as a reminder of the act which possess the capability of becoming iconic historical accounts in visual form. An example of an iconic documentary image is the photograph that captures Chris Burden's performance, *Shoot* (figure 4.7-1). In this photo, Burden is depicted



Figure 4.7-1: Documentation of *Shoot*, 1971

walking away from his performance after being shot in the arm by a friend. Photographs such as this one serve to retain memories, and in the case of performative work, can create new meanings and interpretations as they are read after the performance has concluded. Documentation materializes after the event occurs, and the photographs reveal the reality of the work which may transcend the act itself (Goldberg, 2004, p.107).

Theatrical documentation provides an additional purpose for the artist. Unlike traditional performance art where documentation serves to simply

supplement the performed event, this form of images is produced to do both, document the experience and function as a part of the performance as well (Auslander, 2006, p.6). An example of this type of image is represented as Vito Acconci's performative documentation *Blinks* (1969) (figure 4.7-2). The reason this images is considered theatrical is because Acconci himself took the images himself as part of his performance. The spectacle was not created with an audience in mind, rather the documented photographs were, as they are the remaining artefacts of his walk. In this performance, Acconci walked down a New York street holding a camera away from his face. When he blinked, he would then snap a photo to capture the instant that he missed.



Figure 4.7-2: Vito Acconci, *Blinks*, Nov 23, 1969; *Photo-Piece*, New York

For this artwork, what are circulated to an audience are the images that he took during the performance, and not images of himself as the performer. This form of theatrical documentation of performance work is where the artistic process for my piece *Mobile* is located. When I spoke earlier about the difference between documenting and documentary, it is the context in which the images are produced which categorizes the term. The photographs that I created as part of *Mobile* document the experience of building the motorcycle, but did not document my performance of photographing the experience. The images I created were rather the product of my performance, and art in themselves.

The artwork *Mobile* began on the internet over the social network Instagram (<http://www.instagram.com/themotorcycleexperience>) through a performative act of documentation using my smartphone. The performance of photographing the building experience as part of the process in my artwork lead itself organically. At the beginning of the project I wasn't quite sure of what I should have been documenting, or what the experience of fabricating a motorcycle was to be comprised of. I began to think about

other ‘experiences’ that I’ve had, and tried to figure out where and how each one began. When we have an experience of any type, I don’t think that we are aware of the moments and events that initiated the experience. Only after an experience concludes are we able to decipher its beginning. I knew that the experience of building the motorcycle had to start somewhere, so I randomly began snapping images of the things I would be using in the build such as tools, helmets and motorcycle parts.

As the pieces started coming together, and the jig which would hold my frame was assembled, the experience ran full tilt and I began to immerse myself fully into the events and moments that would later link themselves with the building experience. The images that I took at the start of this journey were reminiscent of snapshot photography and belonged in ephemera photography because they were taken spontaneously without judgment or preconception. I did not think too much about the images I was capturing because this type of photography was new to me, and balancing the act of using machinery at the same time as taking a photo was a difficult task. As I got further into the

build I started to be more aware of the situation I was in. For instance, the first few images of this experience captured the moments which spanned out over a couple days, featuring an arbitrary succession between the images (figure 4.7-3). The images are sporadic in content due to the circumstances I was in at the time of the build. In the first two weeks of the fabrication, I had very little to work on because I was awaiting delivery of the remaining parts for my jig. The jig itself is a key element for this build, and everything was to be

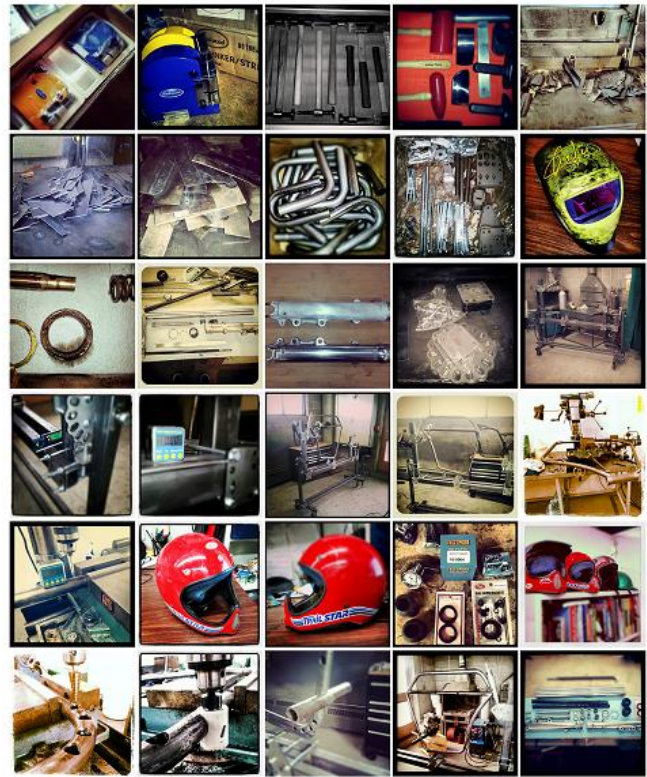


Figure 4.7-3: Selection of Images from *Mobile*

constructed on it. Since it had not arrived, I photographed the occurring moments I was experiencing such as the arrival of new tools which I ordered for this build, as well as snapshots depicting the practice of TIG welding. As I began to absorb myself within the experience of constructing the motorcycle, I started to formulate a rhythm in my image acquisition which captured the process in a narrated format in a way that revealed a progression or succession of the build and the fabrication process. I did not feel like I was making conscious decisions, or that I had a systematic approach to image capturing at this preliminary stage of the build. But having the camera with me every step of the way led to a natural and spontaneous method of capturing *the moment*.

In much the same manner, the performative act of documenting this experience mimicked my intuitive approach that I was taking with designing and building my motorcycle. It became clear to me early on in the experience that there were going to be distinct high and low moments. The mundane moments started to prevail as acts such as drilling, cutting, milling and welding became repetitive tasks. Every part of the bike carried a similar overtone in its production process. Each part is drawn out, drilled or cut and mounted for test fit. The 'donor' parts that were to be reused on the bike such as the wheels and forks would follow a routine that was quite similar, starting with dismantle and cleaning, followed by the replacement of broken or worn out components and then reassembled back together. I did not want to include only the climatic instances of this experience as I believe it was imperative to the experience to represent the whole process including the banal moments as well. After all, the exciting moments would not exist without them. Having the intention to share this experience with the online community, I was obligated to negotiate the banal with the climatic in order to present to the viewer an inclusive experience.

From the beginning of the process to the end, I became gradually more aware of every act of image taking as well as the composition of the framing of the shot. This became crucial because of the potential for capturing 'the right moment' through the lens of the camera on my cell phone. I did not wait for an opportune moment to present itself to me, rather I took the mobile camera with me everywhere I went, always in a ready state to take a snapshot. I set out to take photographs of the present moment I was in

which included the documentation of every part that I was making, every shift in the building process such as changing tools, and any other event that was related to the building experience. I carried the camera phone with me as if it were a part of my physical being, always fully charged waiting to capture the fleeting moments of time. The performative act of photography became more a part of me as I immersed myself further into the experience. It became my role, and the performance of taking images took over the experience. The process that I took to capture and share a moment was instinctive. Early in the build, I took a more casual approach to obtain images. I rarely altered the setting, atmosphere or composition of the subject being photographed. I presented the object as it were, in its original state. As I progressed deeper into the experience, my image acquiring method shifted, and I focused to create independent still lifes out of the objects I was photographing. I paid full attention to the details of the object and its surroundings while documenting it. Noticing colour, size, shape and location in the metal

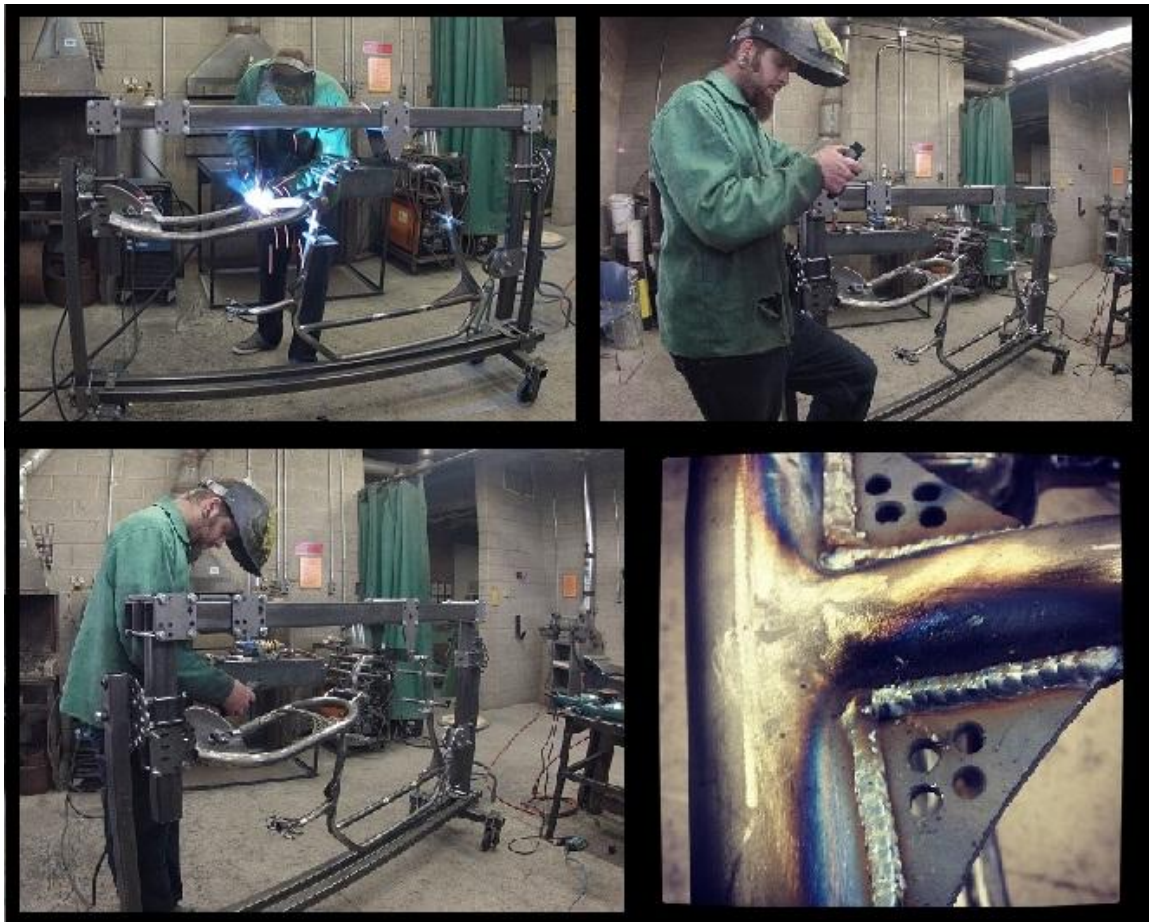


Figure 4.7-4: Documentation of the Performative Process of Image Taking

shop, I would begin to compose the perfect frame. Figure 4.7-4 illustrates the documentation of my performative practice of capturing the experiences during the build. These images show the three steps that I took to post an image, followed by the final photo which was posted on Instagram. After finishing a task or while still in a task, I would get out my phone and snap a photo before the event was over. In this particular instant (Fig.4.7-4), I was welding a gusset to my swingarm. After capturing the moment, I then personalized it with Instagram's filters. Almost as quickly as the image was captured, it was sent out over the social network. For this image I used the filter X-ProII which brought out the contrast as well as saturated the colours, bringing out the yellows and blues in the image.

I often chose the filter that would best represent the moment that I captured. Sometimes I removed the colour in an image using the filter *Inkwell*, leaving the content in black and white giving it depth through stark contrast. Figure 4.7-5 depicts the gas tank sitting on the floor of my studio. This image presents to the viewer a large amount of contrast between the metal surface and the painted floor which focuses the spectators'



Figure 4.7-5: Instagram Filter: Inkwell



Figure 4.7-6: Instagram Circular Depth of Field with the Filter Lo-Fi

attention to its detail. Other times I added a circular blur to the shot when I wanted the viewer to focus their awareness on a particular area of the image. Seen here in figure 4.7-6 is a mason jar filled with CLR cleaning solution and rusted old spokes. I wanted the

viewer to direct their eye towards the center of the image maintaining their focus on the jar itself and not the surrounding items.

When the image was altered in the way I felt offered its greatest interpretation of the particular moment of the experience, I would post it to Instagram for instant viewing gratification. This process took about a minute or so and did not detract from the build. Each image itself was very dynamic in content and offered great opportunity to create interesting compositions. Due to the repetitiveness of tasks presented by the experience, some of the images depict similar experiences. I wasn't going to hide the fact that fabricating parts may often be laborious, repetitive and prosaic. Instead I tried to portray each task in a new light, making the content of the image distinct even if it was a repeated theme. Possessing the ability to modify the images with Instagram also helped to diversify the images, giving me the possibility to change things such as saturation, contrast and depth of field which ultimately charged the images with different emotions. Analyzing the images that I took over the duration of the online experience of building my motorcycle revealed emerging patterns.

The filters that were applied to the images range in diversity, although there are a significant amount of images that use the filters Hudson, Brannan and Walden (figure 4.7-7). It was interesting to see that every 3rd or 4th image would be altered using one of these three filters. Comparing these three filters to one another discloses very similar aesthetics. Hudson gives the image a cool tone while increasing depth of shadows in the photograph. The center of the image is dodged while retaining a faint light. Brannan also preserves shadows in the picture and creates a dramatic nuance over the image. By contrast, this filter adds a sepia pigment to the image which gives it a warmer glow yet highlighted areas remain in cool hues. This filter richens deep colours and adds a metallic tint to the photograph. The washed out effect created by the filter Walden gives the photograph a look as if overexposed. Contrast is lost when using this filter and the image also retains a bluish overtone. Even though these filters were applied to the images with very little conscious effort, I can begin to understand why I would use these particular filters quite frequently.



Figure 4.7-7 Most Frequently used Filters

I believe that I may have been commonly appropriating these three filters to many of the images due to the influence of emotional innervations as well as the physical conditions in which I worked. The application of these specific filters to a myriad of images may also reflect the materials that I was working with. The motorcycle and most of its components are constructed from steel. Metal in its raw form can be perceived as an algid material although the process to get it to its final state requires the metal to get molten hot. I worked with metal every day and constantly handled it physically. To the senses, this material conveys hardness, coldness and strength. It is grey in colour with very little shine. In most of my images there is an object that is made from steel. These filters gave the machine a look of death and decay as it lacked colour well throughout the build. These filters increased this feeling of lifelessness and generated drama and emotion through the play between light and dark. It is no surprise that I seized any opportunity to amplify colour when it became available in the photographs. Near the end of the build, colours of brass, greens, blues, browns and reds became available. It seems as if I had lost the urge to apply Hudson, Brannan and Walden to the latest images as a new life had sprung into the motorcycle through the use of colour.

These three filters maintain a cool atmosphere throughout the image which is reminiscent of the season in which this building experience occurred. Having been built in the winter and early spring months, these filters keep to an ambience which evoke the

cold. Often the color blue is associated with depression (Pappas, 2010, para. 6). During the winter months, the lack of sunlight can often lead to people feeling depressed and desolate. Working in the metal shop sheltered me from minimal natural light offered by the sun during the winter/spring seasons, as well, it limited interaction with other people due to its location. I was isolated within the concrete walls of my work space much in the same way as my experience in Hawai'i while building my surfboard kept me detached from the rest of the world.

The floors and walls of the metal shop are concrete making the room feel cold. There was very little colour to stimulate my senses, as the color of the walls, floor and work tables were all in different tones of grey. I can honestly say that although I was excited and quite motivated during the experience, there was a sense of despondency that came over me while I was building this motorcycle. The pressure to get this bike finished in my personal vision as well as the commitment to spend time with the object in order to get it finished took control of my life. I worked on the motorcycle every day of the week for ten to fourteen hours a day for almost twenty four weeks. I became physically and emotionally drained near the end of this experience. Negative thoughts poured through my head which made me start to doubt my decisions and created an anxiety. This anxious feeling was also related to a worry that I would never finish this motorcycle, and that I was in over my head on this project. I believe that these images start to reflect the location and feelings that I had, and were highlighted in the photographs that I produced. As stated before, this experience led me to view my experience more aesthetically in a comprehensive way, and I gained an appreciation for the minor details in each event. Each situation presented itself with a unique opportunity in the way it would be shared over Instagram. Each photograph became a narrative of the building experience that represented time, place and emotion. No event could ever be represented the same way through these visual artifacts and the situations constantly changed.

Although many of these moments I photographed directly related to the process and the build inside the metal shop where the motorcycle was being constructed, I also took images of other aspects of the build such as visits to the metal supplier, powder coaters and motorcycle wrecking yard. Things like digging through piles of metal at the

Metal Supermarket or savaging through hundreds of wrecked motorcycles for the right part at TJ Cycle became as important to the building experience as constructing the object itself. All of these places connected me with the experience, through which, I happened to gain friendships and relationships with the people in places I visited due to this object I was building. Every photo I took of the experience, be it drilling, cutting, assembling or visiting a local business, presents to the viewer just one piece of the puzzle. Each image contains information pertinent to a specific time and place and conveys a part of the story of this experience. As photographer and sociologist Howard Becker stated:

Every part of the photographic image carries some information that contributes to its total statement; the viewer's responsibility is to see, in the most literal way, everything that is there and respond to it. To put it another way, the statement the image makes – not just what it show you, but the mood, moral evaluation and casual connections it suggest – is built up from those details. A proper 'reading' of a photograph sees and responds to them consciously. (Becker, 1974, p. 7)

The images I would take, as mundane of an event as they often were, were critical to building the object and created a significance of their own through the medium they were presented in. With the way the Instagram camera works, only allowing to take one photo at a time and uploading it individually, I did not take a multitude of photos consecutively and then choose the best one to represent the moment. I uploaded the image that seized the moment, for this moment would sometimes only last a few seconds. If I decided to wait any longer, I would not have another opportunity to capture that exact instant for its moment would have passed. Although not all of the photographs capture action sequences, I still presented the occasion as I was in it, and did not take another shot to represent that instant. Giving the opportunity for the viewer to experience every stage of constructing of each part, I felt that they would have a stronger personal or intimate connection with the object I was building.

The opportunity to connect with the building experience was left to the viewer as I laid down the pieces of the story. The 'followers' of my Instagram profile were to relate themselves within the experience through the images I was offering, and by the communicative options provided by Instagram. What I also presented to the viewer was an opportunity to connect not only with the experience itself but with the object I was

building as well. I tried to document every step of the build that showed the conceptualizing of an idea to the fabrication or finalization of the idea. The practice of documenting was quite difficult in the beginning as I mentioned before, considering I was very focused on the tasks at hand. Not being a machinist, nor having any proper training in fabrication, it was necessary for me to pay attention to what I was doing to prevent mistakes or cause bodily injury. So performing the task of documenting the experience through my camera phone was an extraordinary undertaking.

Throughout the process, I had partakers of the experience contact me through my images, inquiring to see the motorcycle in its physical form when the project was complete. Often times, individuals would correspond with me as well as with other members through my images on more than one occasion. It had seemed that the motorcycle I was building, even in its early stages of the build, was creating a connection between it and its followers. As with many personal artifacts, the affection between objects and people solidifies with an intimate or personal experience. Extending my artistic rendition of the experience of building a motorcycle to the viewer over social media allowed for contemporary forms of communication which permitted opportunity to form new connection worldwide.

4.8 Mobile: The Experience of Building a Motorcycle through Visual Artefacts

The artwork that I have presented at the Nickle Gallery entitled *Mobile* is the physical manifestation of my artistic interpretation of an experience of building a motorcycle. It is the creative synthesis that was shaped out of my artistic research process. By translating the digital telecommunications created online over social networks into material form, my intentions are to recontextualize them into visual artifacts that will create an entirely new experience for the viewers in the gallery. This project was born out of a social media experience that was contained on the internet as virtual data, but its final synthesis is an artwork to be experienced physically. This piece presented in the gallery depicts the experience of the creation of the custom motorcycle in the form of visual artefacts which includes; printed images on metal plates, a metal armature located in the center of the installation and a video projection of the motorbike being started (figure.4.8-1). The installation encompasses a large portion at the west end of the gallery which occupies a wall by the use of a digital projection, floor space in front of the projection by static placement of a large metal structure, and forms an enclosure through its three floating walls made up of hung steel plates which surround the armature within. The possible viewing experience that the participant may gain from my artistic representation of a bike build is a physical encounter of its digital counterpart that was presented online over Instagram. In all aspects, my intentions for this artwork is to create a completely different journey for the viewer. One in which takes the audience through a visual expedition of a unique first-hand experience. The first facet that sets the gallery installation apart from its virtual online component is the way in which the viewer enters the space.



Figure 4.8-1: Gallery Entrance View of the Installation

There are two ways in which a viewer is able to engage with this work; the first being online through virtual exploration using a smartphone or compatible device, and the second as a physical encounter with the gallery installation. The virtual experience of this artwork that was created using my camera phone in conjunction with Instagram relies on the viewer to enter the piece by discovering an image of the motorcycle build through a myriad of images uploaded to the social network. The participant can enter my experience of fabricating a motorcycle at any time of the day or night at their leisure due to its continuous online availability. As well, the individual can accompany my first-hand adventure through the hundreds of images posted, and yet they may not necessarily take part in the build from its conception. However, before a viewer physically enters the installation, their first perception of the piece when entering the gallery space is auditory. The listener is confronted with the repeated faint sound of knocking followed by low muffled rumble. Perhaps this first encounter with the audio of the installation may tempt the interest of the potential spectator to navigate towards the sound to get a better listen.

To the viewer/listener, this sound may not be recognizable at first as the audio is rather quiet. As well, due to the constant repetition of kicking the engine over, the projected clatter created by the kick and the engine is not typically what you would expect a vehicle to sound like. The sound which the spectator hears may come across as random noise, as they have not been able to associate the sound with a visual reference. The kickstart of the bike is staggered and unsuccessful which presents to its audience a representation of a defective motorcycle. For some, the sound may create tension due to this untrustworthiness and the repeated attempts to give it life. The engine turns over for a brief second and then returns to its exhausted state, giving little hope of ever remaining functional. If the viewer decides to take a longer listen, they are rewarded with the sound of the engine revving momentarily, presenting to the viewer a possibility of it functioning accurately, therefore giving it life. I made an effort to contain the sound within the installation by attempting to block the dispersion of sound by attaching tubes over the speakers which direct the audio towards the middle of the piece. I felt the need to control the audio that accompanied the video projection towards the center of the space for the viewer to achieve a heightened perceivable experience of the installation and motorcycle. The viewer is then connected to the sound more personally as if in conversation with the object.

As the individual navigates through the gallery towards the sound, they are confronted by walls of hung steel plates dividing the gallery space. These metal sheets of steel are cut into two foot by four foot pieces and are hanging from a structure on the ceiling with aircraft cables. Each panel is positioned with the images facing inside, thus only permitting the viewer an opportunity to witness their rusty patina from an outer viewpoint. The panels are spaced evenly at six inches apart giving the viewer a mere glimpse of what is waiting on the other side. Although there are spaces between the panels, none are big enough to walk through which restricts the access of the viewer by directing him/her through the outside corridor (figure 4.8-2 & figure 4.8-3). Following a narrow passage between the gallery wall and the hung plates, the observer ends up at a partition



Figure 4.8-2: Entering the installation from the left side



Figure 4.8--3: Entering the installation from the right side

between the projected video on the wall and the constructed room designated by the hanging panels (figure 4.8-4). Entering at this point of the space places the viewer



Figure 4.8-4: Entrance into Installation



Figure 4.8-5 View of Central Armature

directly in front of the projection possibly making them feel small due to the grand scale of the bike on the wall. It is at this point that the observer interacts with the motorcycle as their body casts a shadow over the projection. A relationship is created

between the body of the participant and the installation. This video is also the first indication to what the installation makes reference to. During the process of this work, it was my intention to initiate connections and discussions with members of Instagram

in an attempt to create a community through the

object. This installation focuses more towards creating a personal connection based on the interaction between the viewer and the physical expression of the bike build as tangible objects. This installation represents my experience of the build through hundreds of printed images, sculpture and video. It is the documentation of the seriality of the building experience opposed to the social component as offered by Instagram. Although

the video is one of the first items that connects the viewer to the motorcycle, it is one of the final moments that make up the experience of its creation. I will discuss the video element of the installation later on. When the spectator enters the installation, they are confronted by a large metal apparatus (figure 4.8-5) in the middle of hundreds of images printed on steel panels. This structure is constructed from steel and holds a skeletal frame in its grasp. When looking through the images, one might come across this object quite a



Figure 4.8-6: View of Installation Panels

few times, as it was one of the most important items of the build. This is known as a jig, and it was what held the frame of the new bike in place while everything was being constructed upon it. It helped keep everything straight and level. I included this artifact in the center of

the installation because it was the central object of the building experience and served as an operating table for the procedure. In the installation, the jig is holding the skeletal remains of a torn apart bike. I referred to this bike as the donor bike before, as it served to provide the necessary organs for my new creation. This was the original starting point for my creation process. Now, it is the only item that remains from the old bike after all the necessary parts were harvested from the functional motorcycle. Many of the parts were never used for this build. I only reused the engine, front forks, wheels and electrical components in my build. Everything else was custom made and constructed by hand.

Around the central armature, thirteen steel plates hang from a structure near the ceiling. Each panel contains fifty images organized in succession from the left side of the room which narrates the experience of the build (figure 4.8-6). I decided to use steel as a mounting surface for the images because its aesthetic qualities mend well with the

fabrication process of the motorcycle and with the metal jig structure resting on the floor. Almost everything that was constructed on the motorcycle was made from metal, so memorializing the experience of building the motorbike on a metallic surface seemed most appropriate. Using metal also allowed for the ability to create a physical space that contained the experience and maintained a solidness due to its material. During the online component of this artwork that was established over Instagram, the social network created a location for members to connect with the fabrication process of building the motorcycle. In my installation, the walls, cables and video as well as the supporting hanging structure act as the frame for the installation, giving the viewer a space to enter the work. I have recreated a space in gallery that symbolizes my work area in the metal shop. By doing so, I believe that the viewer gains access into a more complete version of the building experience. John Dewey states that the products that are presented to the viewer are not the works of art, rather the art “takes place when a human being cooperates with the product so that the outcome is an experience that is enjoyed because of its liberating and ordered properties” (Dewey, 1980, as cited in Tan, 1999). The way that I installed the work, in its room-like-form, I believe intensifies the connection between the spectator and the experience of the build and creates for the viewer a heightened perceived experience of the artwork. Through the viewer's interaction with the panels, structure and video, more information becomes present to the viewer which allows them to become a part of the story.

There is no possible way for a spectator to experience the artwork in its entirety. Rather the viewer is subjected to interpret individual portions of the initial creation of the motorcycle, image by image, in order to create a new rendition of the build for themselves. Sor-Hoon Tan's description of an aesthetic experience relates to the installation I created as he states “there is no music with only one note, no culture with only one object, no delicious dish with only one flavor” (Tan, 2008, p.110). I believe that there is no one way to view this artwork, and there is no one way to experience it either. Everyone brings their own personal life experiences to any artwork, which influences how they will interpret and perceive the piece. To get a complete sense of what it is like to build a motorcycle, it is important to include a diversity of moments to which make up

a final experience. Similar to the online portion of the work, the installation provides an overwhelming amount of visual elements to examine in one single occasion. It is necessary to interpret the installation like a song, in its individual notes, in order to appreciate the overall tune. By doing so, the work will eventually reveal itself to the observer in all its parts. Only then will the spectator be able to apprehend the complete experience that I have brought to the gallery.

It is because of this, that the viewer is led to focus their attention to small portions of the work at a time. The large amount of stimulating visual artifacts in the work may entice the spectator to spend more time to digest the work, and ultimately remain within the artwork much longer. Absorbing the available information from the images I've included in the work, a story may emerge. It is necessary for the viewer to actively take part and navigate through the installation to retain a complete encounter of the work, unlike the participants of the online segment on Instagram where the individual only needs to scan through the images on the screen of their phone. When viewing the online portion of the work on a smartphone device, scrolling through the images by pressing the touch screen was the only physical participation between the audience member and the work. Regardless which way a viewer engages with the work, online or in the gallery, each individual will relate to the work through their own past personal experiences, so their interpretation of the piece can be completely different than that of the next viewer. This work addresses the relationship between the viewer and its visual elements. Although the installation offers perceivable differences than the online portion of the work, the role of the viewer is similar. The viewer is meant to interact with the work in its available form.

The photographs themselves are printed in a scale that is reminiscent of its online presence measuring approximately four by four inches. I wanted to keep to the form in which Instagram presents images on the application. Each member's photos are arranged in rows giving the viewer the ability to visually scroll through the images as if reading text. It was important to share the images in this physical form because as I motioned in the previous chapter, the image has lost its importance due to the large number of photos being taken each day. I wanted to reverse the image from the ephemeral state back to a

perpetual form. In order to preserve the experiences that I had during the construction process of the motorcycle, and to fortify these moments in time, I believe by printing the image on a permanent surface allows it to regain its caliber and value. A printed image creates a tangible object to observe and appreciate in a physical form, whereas the images on our phones are quickly taken and stored in our digital galleries, with the possibility of never looking at them again. I spent over seven hundred hours in the metal shop working on this bike, and each and every photo is a reminder of the specific time and moment of the build. After I completed building the motorcycle, the images were left to exist on my Instagram profile until I was ready to print them. After they were printed, I regained that nostalgic feeling that I once had when I used film and my traditional camera. The printed images permit the preservation of the memories of the overall experience that I had of creating a one of custom machine.

Across from the steel hanging panels is the video projection illustrating an attempt to continuously start the motorcycle (figure 4.8-7). The video is of a short clip which is looped and features myself trying to get the bike to run. This was the first time that my



Figure 4.8 -7: Video Projection of Kickstarting the Motorcycle

physical self was included in any portion of the work. I decided that it was of great importance to include a video of the bike in action rather than including the motorcycle itself as part of the installation. The reason for this is that the physical action of starting the bike was a performance in itself, and it related with the performative aspect of the build. I felt that by placing the bike within the gallery, the translation of the building experience would have been lost. This is because the motorbike, in its complete state, does not show the time and moments that the build was comprised of. Although viewers may be able to appreciate the work that went into the motorcycle based on the aesthetic qualities of every part, I believe that the viewer would have focused just on the aesthetics and treated it as a functional object meant only for transport and not an object that can build connections, dialogue and experiences during its creation.

I wanted to get the bike to stutter and take a long time to start, but during the filming of this kickstart action, the opposite was occurring. The bike was actually too reliable and was starting on the first kick. Just as I had done with the various objects in my photographs, I had to tamper with situation, in this case the fuel, to starve the carburetors of gas to get it to perform how I wanted it to. The video is meant to connect itself to the rest of the installation by acting as the forth wall, enclosing the viewer within the experience. Although it is larger than the dimensions of the panels, when standing inside the installation, the video becomes unified with the rest of the work. This video represents the culmination of the experience of building the motorcycle. The jig and the frame located in the middle of the installation symbolize the beginning of my building experience and the revving of the engine signals new life for the bike and the possibility for new adventures on the machine. I felt that the only way that this journey could have possibly ended was by starting the engine and hearing it run. Throughout the whole process I had doubts that I wasn't going to finish this build as the project kept pushing past my anticipated deadline. I was beginning to lose hope in my abilities. I persevered through every obstacle and finally got the bike to run through dedication and a lot of hard work. It now runs better than it had before.

The experience of building a motorcycle was something I would have never believed I could have accomplished. When I look at the bike that I've created, it doesn't do the experience that I had justice. By looking through the images that I've recorded, I am able to remember the moments and events that led up to the final experience of starting the motor. Through my artistic process I was able to create a narrative of this incredible experience that I created as well as formulated new connections and friendships in the process of building the motorcycle. Through hard work and dedication, as well as help from online information sources and members of social media, I was able to overcome many obstacles and complete an experience that I thought would never be completed.

Chapter Five: **Conclusion**

Through the use of visual artifacts I was able to communicate my experience of building a motorcycle to a public audience in order to formulate dialogue and communion. Each image captured the diversity of moments and events that led up to a total experience. I was able to share this experience over Instagram in visual form in order to connect with a global community. Using my camera phone in a performative method to document the experiences I was having made it possible to remain in the moment and focus on all the aspects of this overwhelming experience, including the moments that would often go unnoticed. The images became a form of visual currency that I was able to pass along and share with anyone interested in taking part in my process. The object (the motorcycle), was in fact transformed into a catalyst for dialogue and communion. In the short amount of time that this experience lasted, I was able to gain the interest of over five hundred individuals in the form of 'followers'. In that time, I have also created new friendships and connections with members of Instagram through my artistic representation of a motorcycle build, and through the object itself.

The exhibition piece worked in parallel with the process of documenting the experience over the internet as it presented the experience in a tangible form. Printing the photos allowed the images to retain the memory of the every instant I gained, and served to tell a story, something that the image may have lost during its virtual state. Although the process of taking the images and building the motorcycle differ drastically from the installation, it was important to keep the narrative quality in both stages of the art. During the process, the story of this experience unfolded in real-time for the viewer over online social media. The audience was witnessing the live event through their devices as each image was uploaded throughout the day. In the installation, the story remains up to the viewer to decipher for themselves as the images are laid out in full right in front of them to engage with.

APPENDIX A: INSTAGRAM IMAGE FILTERS



01 Normal



02 Amero



03 Mayfair



04 Rise



05 Hudson



06 Valencia



07 Xproll



08 Sierra



09 Willow



10 Lo-fi



11 Earlybird



12 Sutro



13 toaster



14 Brannan



15 Inkwell



16 Walden



17 Hefe



18 Nashville



19 1977



20 Kelvin

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