



Bodies of practice

The escapism of violence through entertainment

Statement of Process by Bethany Tompkins



Key Terms

Sfx Makeup - Special effects make up that is used usually for stage and film to create realistic alterations.

Escapism - Using distractions to ignore negativity in reality or in thoughts.

Violence - actions or words that are intended to hurt people.

News



During the summer one of the things I did was focus on the news every day, good or bad, and I became more conscious on how overwhelmed by the amount of violence and death that was being reported so frequently, and since the news section was a main section on my home screen since the beginning I couldn't just simply delete the news section off my phone. I began to notice how much violence and negativity was being in my surroundings yet there is more critique on artificial creations than the actual events, such as with video games. So from this I decided to look more into violence in other medias rather than just video games.



Molotov cocktail thrown into US Citizenship and Immigration office

A woman threw a lit Molotov cocktail into the lobby of a US ... Revealed: man force-fe...

The Guardian • 1 day ago

A 14-year-old confessed to killing all five of his family members in an Alabama home, authorities say

News



Out-of-control 'Syrian missile' EXPLODES in Cyprus nature park – sparking fears for Brit holidaymak...

A STRAY missile smashed into a park near Nicosia in Cyprus last night, exploding in a...

The Sun • 3 hours ago

Six arrests after Boutham Park 'stabbing'

Police were at the scene



Tate Modern: Child 'thrown' from balcony – teen arrested on suspicion of attempted murder

A teenager has been arrested on suspicion of attempted murder after the ... He was tr...

Daily Express • 12 hours ago



Queer teen's alleged murderer shared gruesome photos of body online

A queer Instagram star was partially decapitated in a brutal murder on Sunday

PinkNews • 1 day ago

Police: Deputy coerced mother to perform oral sex on 1-year-old

News

Protesters hold 'funeral for the future' in Lincoln

There was a sombre mood as they carried names of Li...



The Lincolnite • 1 day ago

Videogames and violence



[\[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gKKclU44Eng\]](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gKKclU44Eng)

Last of us Part 2 has yet to be released however there has been controversy around it already, especially from its graphic trailers.

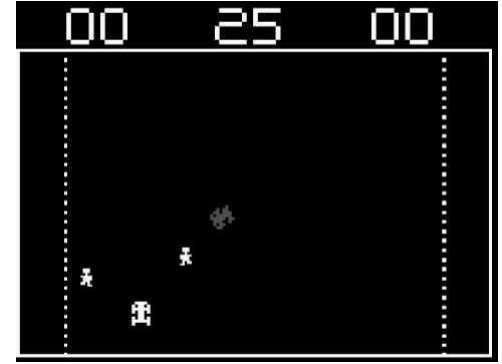
Over the years the quality and realism of games have dramatically increased, from polygons to something that looks like it could be live action. The debate around the violent nature of games have been around for decades. However, there is a clear desensitization of games and movies becoming more graphic over the years which brings into question; when will they stop and how far will be too far when people become more desensitized to the current extremities, such as Mortal combat over the years, and increased gore being allowed in horror movies.



[\[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PHboVKpGiaU&t=4s\]](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PHboVKpGiaU&t=4s)

Donald Trump publicly announces the condemn the use of violence in video games, after School shooting in Parkland Florida [8th March 2018] and the Ohio and Texas shootings [5th August 2019].

There is still a heavy debate regarding the ethics of video games and whether it is just "Glorification", disapproval through depictions, or just desensitization. Regardless the debate of depicted violence on video games is highly criticized even if a game is rated for +18, there are still a lot of parents that let their children play a game anyway without really looking at said game.



[\[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aBBtt72aJLA\]](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aBBtt72aJLA)

Death Race [1976] is the earliest Video game controversy, revolving around violence, with the game itself being removed from shelves. This was because the goblins looked like people.

So it's been over 24 years since the first controversy around violence and videogames and it is still being debated to this day.

Movies and violence



'Saw' (2004)



'Old Boy' (2003)

Movies can get very violent and graphic, but usually they are acceptable only if it is classed as “Horror” or “Thriller” and just increasing the age rating.

If someone doesn't like horror for the violence in horror there tends to be a mentality of “So don't watch it.” rather than thinking that it is a problem, like with video games and people complaining regardless if they play them games or not.



Books, usually end up being inspiration for horror movies, such as American Psycho, and the Exorcist. However, they themselves are rarely the focus of controversy for violence itself, rather for sexuality and promiscuous content.

John Paul Bichard



Blood series (2009-10)

"The subjects responded to blood very differently whilst some saw it as a play or sensual experience others were more profoundly moved or saw the experience as darker, more serious. Some fear blood, others celebrate it, but always, the sight of real or fake blood in large amounts is emotive, compelling and shocking." [Bichard J.P. 2012]

These series of works by John Paul Bichard were very interesting, as it looks extremely graphic with the use of blood, yet it is also used as entertainment from the models, as Bichard gave them each one litre of edible fake blood to play with however they choose too.

For my project I found this work in particular to be inspiring for the juxtaposition between the entertainment use and the amount of blood in the composition.



Inverse Forensics - Performance #01 (2007)

The use of fictional violence by collaborating with a contemporary dancer, which moves like a first person shooter main character. While the enemy is only visible from the blood on the walls. I liked the use of performance and almost a dance out of something like the special forces, turning something that tends to be more flowed and based on loose movement into something stiff and sturn.

"What could have been somewhat humorous was in fact tense, powerful and engaging for the audience, many of whom had never played a first-person shooter." [Bishard J.P 2010]





Video game to writing initial idea.

I decided to try and change the mediums to see if that changed the impact of the scene, on the right is a writing of a cutscene from *The Last Of Us*. I don't feel like it puts the point of the different media across very well and instead using inspiration from John Paul Bichard and his *Blood* series I will be trying out more practical effects on the body rather than writing. The the topic of violence is more visually interesting that in writing or drawing as it is a visual act.

Especially since the visual and participation are important factors for why videogames and violence are so fragile with their relationship, over other mediums.

Joel vaulted over the empty window, with Tess following close behind. They watched as Robert struggled against the alley gate, the metal creaking but not giving out before Robert drew to a stop and stepped away and scratched his face.

"Hello Robert," Tess stated, tilting her head slightly as she greeted his back.

He gave a small chuckle before turning around, "Tess, Joel." He greeted. Robert started walking towards them, opening his arms briefly, "No hard feelings. Right?"

"None at all." Tess coldly answered, bending down to pick up a metal pipe from the floor, as Joel leaned against the building.

Robert watched her as he continued to walk nearer while raising his hands slightly in defence, "Alright..." He tries to make a run for it past her, but she was anticipating this and slammed the pipe into his right shin. Robert falls to the ground and lets out a shout of pain, his face connecting with the ground, "Ah... Goddamit!" The roll of the metal pipe on the ground was heard as he turned onto his side clutching his leg, as he looks up at Tess's stern face.

"We missed you." Tess unsympathetically spoke up, Robert breathed for a few seconds as he scrunched up his eyes.

"Look. Whatever it is you heard, it ain't true. Okay? I just want to say."

"The guns." Tess interrupted. "You wanna tell us where the guns are?"

Robert sighed, "Yeah. Sure, but..." He sighed again, as he tried to find the right words, "It's complicated.

After 3 seconds he speaks up, "I can't." Tess and Joel look to each other in irritation. "Just gimme a couple of days." Joel pushed down as hard as he could, breaking Robert's arm as Robert shouts in pain, rolling onto his good side, "Fucking." He mumbled through the shout.

"Who. Has. Our guns?" Tess repeated.

Robert started to cry as he lay there panting, "It's the Fireflies." He stated truthfully, "I owed the Fireflies."

"What?" Tess dryly asked.

"Alright?" Tess looked over at Joel, as Joel pushed himself forward and walked over to Robert, "Look, alright. Just here me out on this. I gotta." Joel stood right in front of Robert and stomped on his face, breaking his nose in the process. "Fuck!" Before Robert could do anything, else Joel crouched down and pulled Robert's arm flat on the ground, putting pressure onto the shoulder as he pushed down more. "Ah. Stop. Stop! Stop!" Robert shouted.

Tess walked around the two of them and crouched down in front of Robert's face, revolver in hand, "Quit your squirming. You were saying?"

Robert panted slightly as he kept his eyes closed, "I sold em'." He eventually answered, opening his eyes to look at Tess and Joel.

Tess looked at Joel in disbelief for a second as she took in the information, she looked back down at Robert incredulously, "Excuse me?"

"I didn't have much of a choice. I owed someone." Robert explained.

"You owed us." She sharply replied, anger hidden in her voice. "I'd say you bet on the wrong horse."

"L... I just need more time." Robert pleaded. "Just gimme a week."

"You know, I might've done that if you hadn't tried to fucking kill me." The agitation in Tess's face grew as she continued to talk to Robert.

"C'mon. It wasn't like..."

"Who has our guns?" Tess raised her voice. Silence fell, the only answer was Robert's panting as he mentally seemed to be reluctant to answer.

"Look. They're basically all dead. We can just- just go in there, finish 'em off!" He resounded in desperation, trying to grasp some hope. "We get the guns! Whadaya say?" Joel and Tess didn't say anything as they stood up, only briefly glancing at each other for a brief second. "C'mon! Fuck those Fireflies! Let's go get 'em." He stated lively, pushing himself up slightly off the ground.

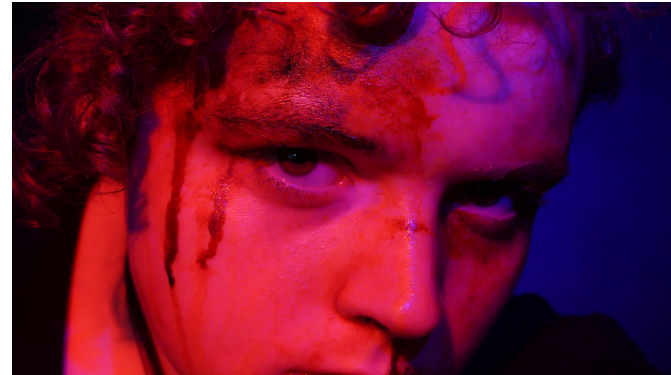
Tess stared coldly at Robert, before turning her head towards Joel, "That is a stupid idea." And without another word she shot two bullets into Robert's head as he fell to the side.

Violence in makeup





Both the realism of the blood in the previous images and the colourful in this have their own atmosphere. The previous persona almost appears to be malicious, like they were in a fight and want to continue it. However in this one, there is almost a sense of calmness from the colours used.



SFX Makeup



Theatrical horror testing



When I experimented with more theatrical, with inspiration of Movies and videogames using violent imagery for horror. The response was more underwhelming as it's almost an expectation from the conclusion that it's based off a topic that the audience has linked to more violent imagery than the SFX make up used.

While looking at reality, genuine injuries, and violence I realised that while horror tries to use gore in detail to depict violence and how brutal an event is. In reality the average person doesn't have time to document something with a high resolution camera, or focus on lighting. In livestreams and other videos uploaded

of said violence are pixelated, or are shaky from the person moving the camera. Even if a horror tries to reenact reality there is that massive problem of documentation. So even if I tried to further the gore/horror the impact of the imagery would just be compared as these images as it is obvious that it is just stage makeup and the illusion of the brutal imagery is gone.





https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lvXdT1al_xl

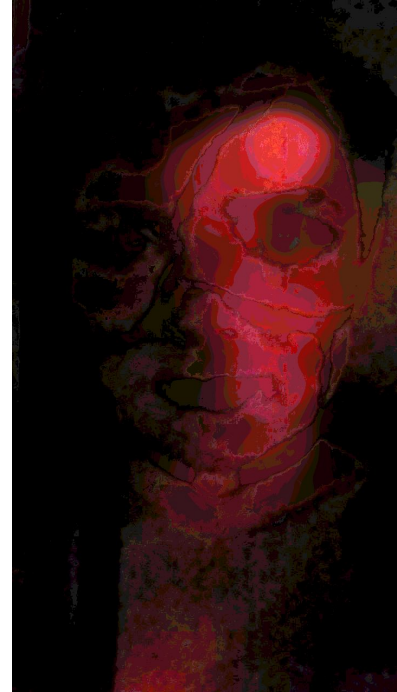
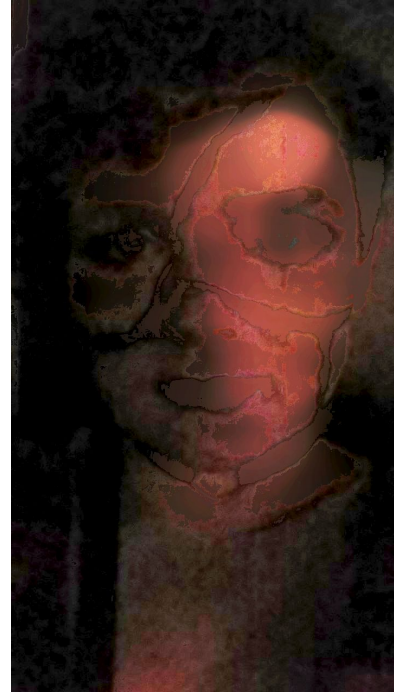
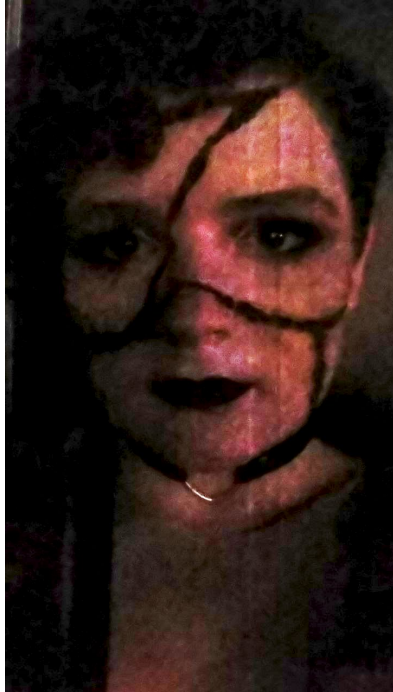


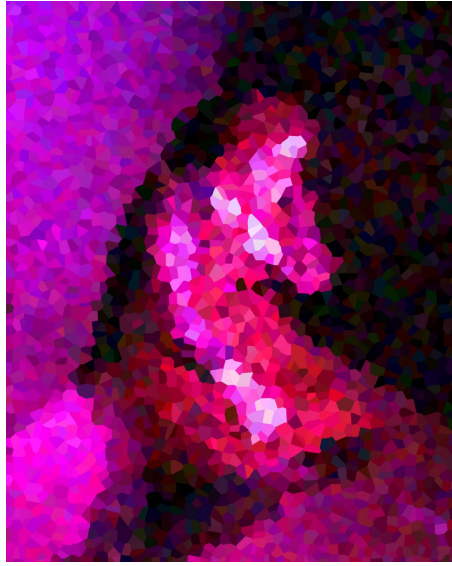
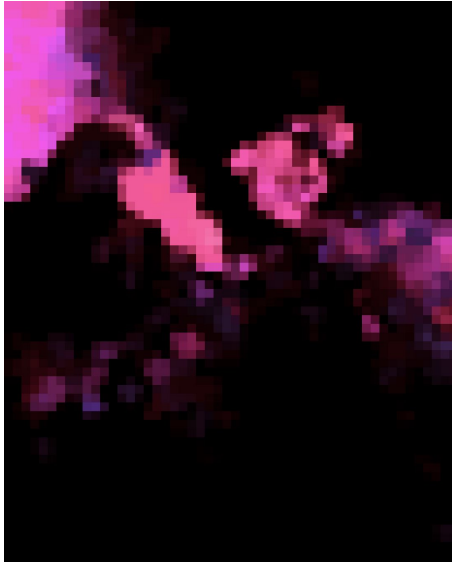
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nK5K7YkfCQ0>

I found that in person I noticed a lot more glances but they weren't picked up by the gopro as people are more likely to look while in to the side or in edges of my peripherals, which weren't picked up on the go pro.

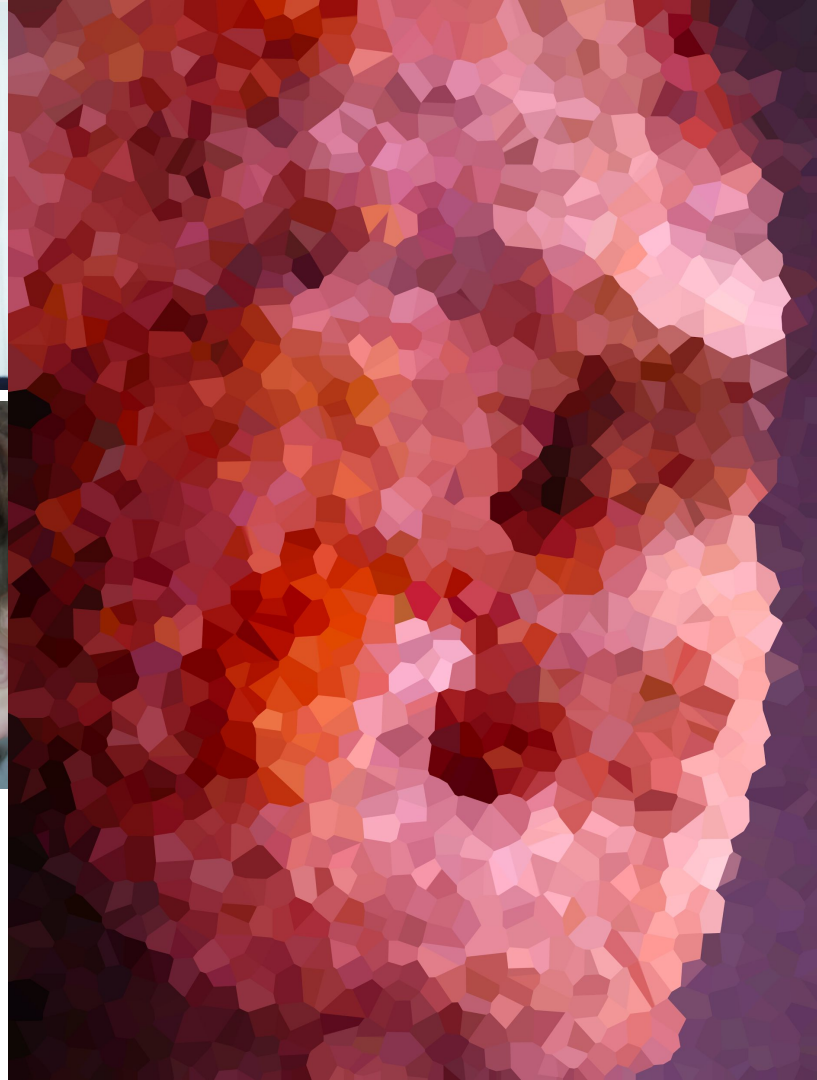
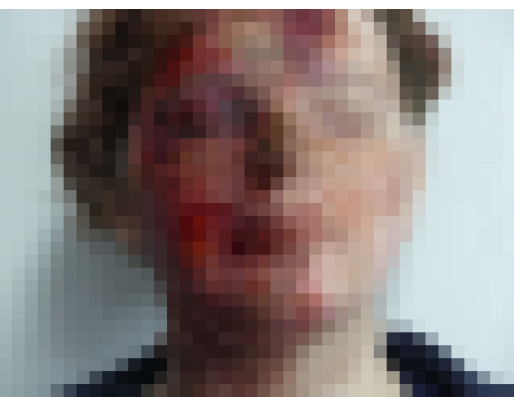
Photo distortion

Continuing on from the theatrical I decided to do some experimentation around censorship and distortion upon images, as documentation of reality tends to be lower quality than movie sets. I wanted to experiment to see if making the injuries more obscured will cause a sense of discomfort for the individual viewing it or if it is entertaining if it is brightly lit. This is inspired by the responses in comment sections to real injuries or death, that become more unnerved by the fact that it is pixelated and blurry because it is reality.





While all three of these images are vivid in colour, the image on the right is very similar to old horror movie posters and is reminiscent to pop art.



The original image is on the top left but I did like how the censored photos also made it more disturbing, especially the bottom left, as it looks like something that the news would censor.



Response and handling violence

I realised I wanted to focus less upon “Any kind of entertainment media that uses violence is bad,” as my project seemed to start to show that any violence depictions is a negative thing. Instead I began to focus on the use of violence in media and in entertainment in a new light. Instead of it being an inherently bad thing, it’s more of a response to reality.

Violence in Movies and Videogames is often inspired by reality to an extent, hearing about awful things and making a fictional world where it is even worse (such as apocalyptic and dystopian games and movies). In the same way people use dark and dry humour to negativity, to turn the negative into a sick joke and make it something positive to them. Or, just try and distract themselves with jokes or topics that are completely irrelevant to the topic, this can also be from deciding to change the channel instead of listening to negative news.



Demo 1



Demo 2



Demo 3

I tried to make my own material in the first trial before realising it would be more effective if the material used in the dark and dry humour is from jokes that people actively use online, as I believe that works better for this persona. The character is based of the humour developed by all the negative and dark news articles from across the internet daily. However I realised that most of the jokes that worked the best involved dead babies as that is the core representation of dark humour, so I focused more on one liners and dead baby jokes for the final persona.

3 videos playing at once, different responses and reality



Innocence Persona

This persona is the embodiment of the saying “ignorance is bliss.” the representation of looking at the news with rose tinted glasses, and mentally blocking out the violence and to carry on with their day.



News Persona

This persona looks objectively at the events in the world, and has to not put in any feelings or opinions into any of the reports they are saying.



Morbid Humour Persona

This persona is the embodiment dry and morbid humour. It is really easy to have access to negativity on the internet and they are using crude and violent jokes to make that darkness be more tolerable, by making it into entertainment.

Audio quality and minor changes



For the news persona, I decided to make it clear what the intention of that character is via the background, and for the dialogue I just article titles.

In addition the voices all talking over each other is a way for the audience to focus on one particular person if they wanted, however they also hear all the chaos the voices cause as the responses have their own positives and negatives for taking that response.

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