A black and white architectural rendering of a long, narrow corridor. The corridor is formed by a series of dark, rectangular blocks that create a sense of depth and perspective. A bright light source at the far end of the corridor creates a strong lens flare effect, illuminating the central path. A small airplane is visible in the distance, flying towards the viewer. The overall atmosphere is dramatic and futuristic.

Project View (5-02)

Tristan Lock (Leader)
Tan Myn Jae
Tang Chongkai
Zhu Yunsong

Class 2i2

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Introduction

Our Project

Project View is a photography project that aims to show the relationships between nature and urbanisation. We want to show that while man and nature can coexist peacefully, there are also times when man forces great destruction onto nature. Since Singapore is known as a “Garden City”, we decided to play on this phrase and chose “Urban Jungle” as the theme for our project.



Rationale

We want to spread awareness about how rapid industrialization in our modern-day society is destroying nature through photography. Our photographs depict the negative impacts caused by the rapidly - changing world.

However, we also want to show that if we work together to conserve nature, nature is resilient and can bounce back from these difficulties. Thus, we also want to show scenes of man and nature coexisting and interacting positively with one another.

Objectives

Our objective is to come up with a website in the style of a portfolio, containing our photographs with captions, explaining our project’s rationale. We aim to reach help people understand that rapid industrialization adversely affects our environment, in hopes of them taking a small step, to help slow down the destruction of nature.

Equipment

In order to show that good cameras are not necessary to take good pictures, we decided to use our own phone cameras, which were - Galaxy S20+, S10+, A31 and iPhone XR. We also used tripods for stabilisation. Colour correction was done during post-production in Adobe Photoshop. We decided to consolidate our photographs through Google Drive.

Artist Inspirations



Thinking Like a Mountain

Her work juxtaposes nature before and after man destroys it, seen from the charred, destroyed grasslands on the left of the valley, while the part that is unaffected remains green. This image portrays the idea of destruction, and highlights how not all nature-man interactions are beneficial.

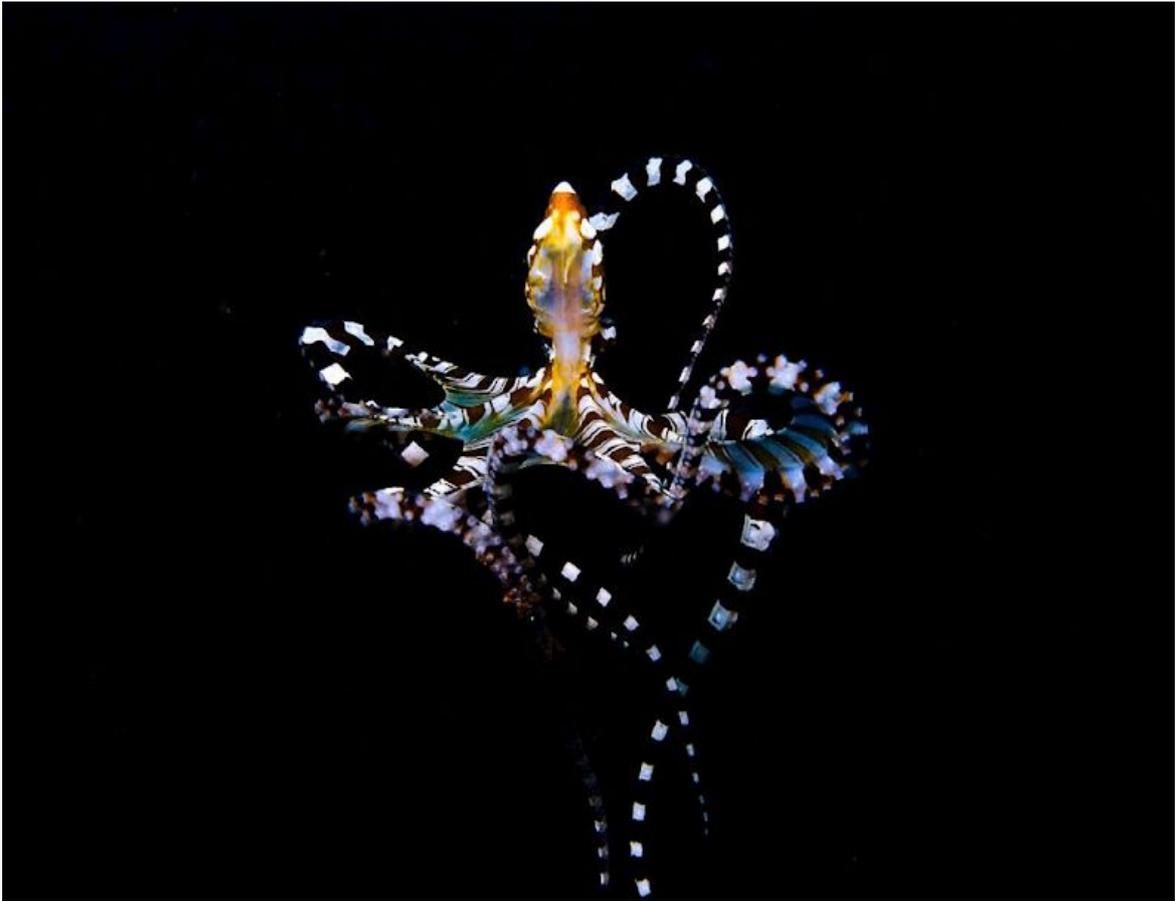
(Helene Schmitz, 2017)



Adiantum Pedatum

Karl Blossfeldt was a master at close-up photographs of plants and living things. Here, he has done a macro portrayal of a fern.

(Karl Blossfeldt, 1900- 1928)



Wonderpus-36

Michael Aw is a renowned marine photographer who is well-known for his saturated colour imagery. As seen here, the bright and saturated colours of the octopus contrasts greatly with the black background, creating a sense of emphasis on the subject matter.

(Michael Aw, Date Unknown)



MAN vs NATURE | 1

So similar, yet so different- They're both clumped up in a mess, and have similar orange tones. This picture shows that man can imitate nature's designs.

(Martin Klimek, 2013)



Man vs Nature

The weeds grow through the cracks in the asphalt floor, bathed in natural sunshine. As they grow, the cracks will widen, symbolising how nature will always be stronger than man.

(Nancy Duranteau, 2018)

Artist Inspirations

These works were made by prominent photographers who have had years of experience in photography. As the saying goes, “Learn from the greats, and expose yourself to better works”. Their refined skills and techniques appealed to us, and by analysing their design choices and ideas portrayed, it gave us a sense of how different photographers had their unique styles and content, which eventually led to our group finding our own style, portrayed in our photographs.

We also picked different works that portrayed various subject matter, which allowed us to explore various ways of depicting our subject matter, using camera positioning and editing. We also learnt how photographers use the elements of art and design to their advantage, in order to create a visually appealing work that also fuels the mind to think. For example, Helene Schmitz used contrast and colour in *Thinking Like a Mountain* to create a work that has various interpretations.

Photo-taking Process

Documentation



We took these pictures during our photo expeditions in order to document our photo taking process. Some pictures also showcased artistic techniques that we used. Moreover, we also referenced these pictures for other photo expeditions.

Preparation

 32 °C | °F
Precipitation: 19%
Humidity: 67%
Wind: 18 km/h

Singapore
Friday 12:00 pm
Mostly cloudy

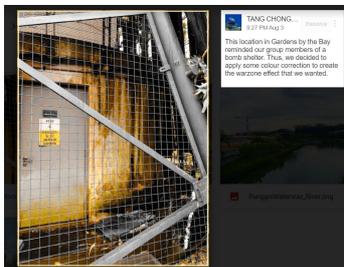
Firstly, we scouted for locations online, and selected those that seemed more interesting and suitable for our theme. Subsequently, we did basic preparations such as checking weather forecasts, planning our routes and our timeframe. This was a challenge for our group as we each had our own weekly plans. We also had to ensure we were not flouting SMMs as well. To solve this problem, we made it a point to take pictures by ourselves.



Our Expeditions

After the preparation was completed, we would meet up at a MRT station near to the location we wanted to visit as they were convenient for everyone to head to, and walk to the location. We would spend about 3-4 hours taking photographs at the location, before finding a cafe to sit down and rest, while consolidating our photographs in the Google Drive.

Post-Processing



A captioned image in the Drive

After taking our photographs, we would begin the process of post-processing. We would use Adobe Photoshop to colour correct and crop our photographs, before uploading the edited photographs to the Google Drive. We would caption the photographs using the “Comment” function in Google Drive. Yunsong, our website designer, would transfer the photographs and captions into the website.

Ideas Discussed

While we were brainstorming for our proposal, we suggested and rejected many themes. At first, we had wanted to use urban renewal as a theme, and juxtapose the old and new Singapore. However, this theme had been used before and we wanted to focus on something unique. After much discussion, we settled on our current theme - Urban Jungle.

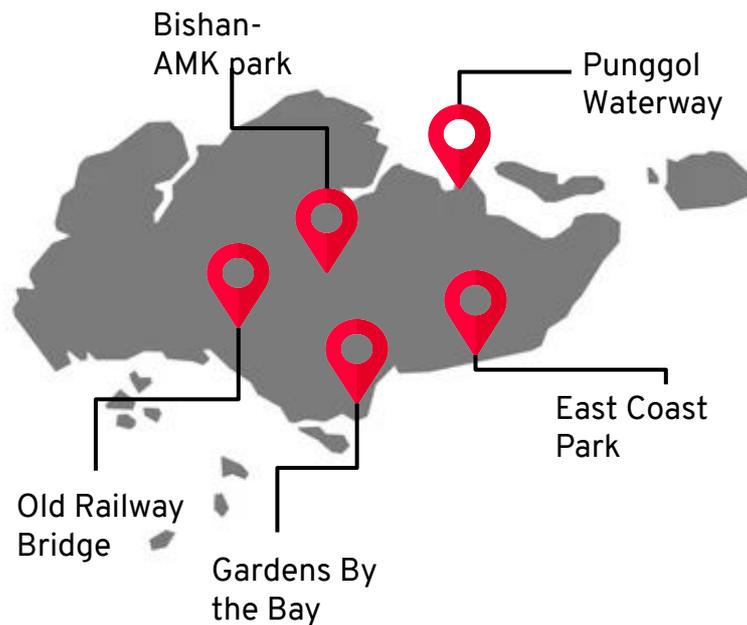
We also had to choose a medium for presenting our photographs. Originally, we wanted to create physical installation to showcase our photographs. However, due to COVID, we chose an online medium that would be easier for the whole group to work on together regardless of the COVID-19 restrictions. In the end, we decided to create a website as a gallery for our photographs. This made sense as it makes our photographs more accessible, and allows us to show our objectives, rationale and inspirations in the website.

At first, we wanted to use Adobe Spark to create our website. However, after experimenting with the features of Adobe Spark, we found it quite unsuitable, mainly because it had a scroll down only layout, where the viewer has to keep scrolling down to view the content. This could be quite cumbersome for them. Thus, we decided to switch to Wix. Wix allowed us to give viewers a refreshed interface to view our photographs, and also had more functions such as a navigation bar for the viewers to use. Wix also allowed us to upload our photographs in higher resolution.

Decisions Made

We chose to visit places that were considered to have lots of nature, such as various parks. We also decided against deliberately “scripting” the photos by framing it deliberately (e.g. use of props or special lighting). We wanted to capture the scenes in a natural light. This was also the reason we opted to use the default settings on our phones to take the photos. Any necessary colour-correction would be done in post-production.

Locations Visited



We chose to visit scenic locations throughout Singapore, such as the Old Railway Bridge near Hillview, Gardens By the Bay and East Coast Park. Our group also felt that these locations contained scenes that could fit our theme well, as these were areas where humans constantly interacted with nature.

We also took pictures individually during the various COVID-19 lockdown phases, at places such as Punggol Waterway and Bishan-AMK Highway.

Challenges Faced

During our photo-taking process, we faced some technical difficulties, such as low battery on our phones and wrong image saving format. Thankfully with our preparation and some help from the Internet, we managed to resolve these issues.

We also faced some difficulties with cooperation within the team, such as problems dividing the workload, but we managed to solve these problems and assign work to each member properly.

Photo Showcase and Analysis



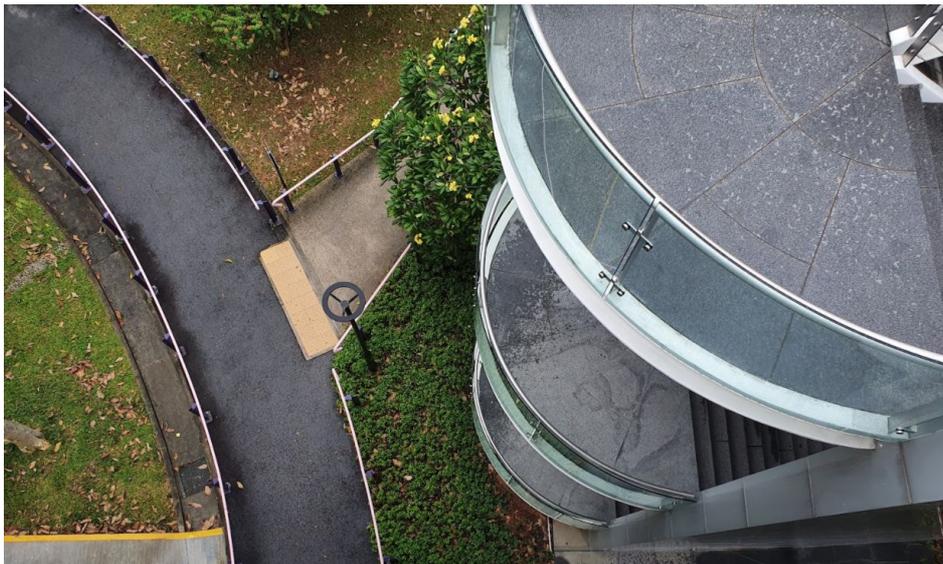
Through this photograph, we showed man and nature coexisting, evident from the blooming flowers even when surrounded by man-made structures, including the ominous metal fence.



Our photograph shows the contrast between man destroying nature and man grooming nature, seen on the left and right sides respectively. The ripples in the water, and the clouds frozen in motion create a sense of movement.



The idea we want to convey through this photograph is that with care and love such as Jewel Changi Airport, from humans, nature can thrive alongside us, even in man-made spaces.



We wanted to portray the alarming rate at which humans destroy nature. What used to be a grass patch has been cut up into small plots of grass after man built our own structures on it.



At first glance, the piles of logs look like boulders lining the side of the road. In this photograph, we wanted to capture the loss of life after humans cut trees down, emphasised by the greying of the logs. Another goal here was to highlight that nature has a life as well- look at how the brown trunks of living trees contrast against the grey logs.



This photograph signifies how man disrupts the natural flow of nature- first with the building of the canal, then by stopping water from flowing from the canal to the ocean with sandbags.



Although we often associate visually appealing photographs with colour, the grey tones in this shows how man has destroyed colourful nature. To build Changi Airport, many trees and grass was cleared, replaced with lampposts and buildings.

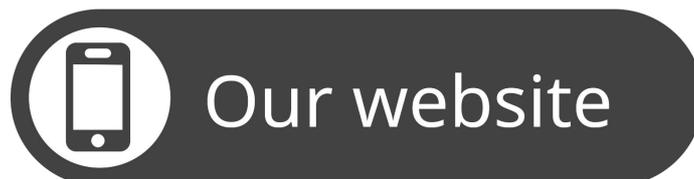
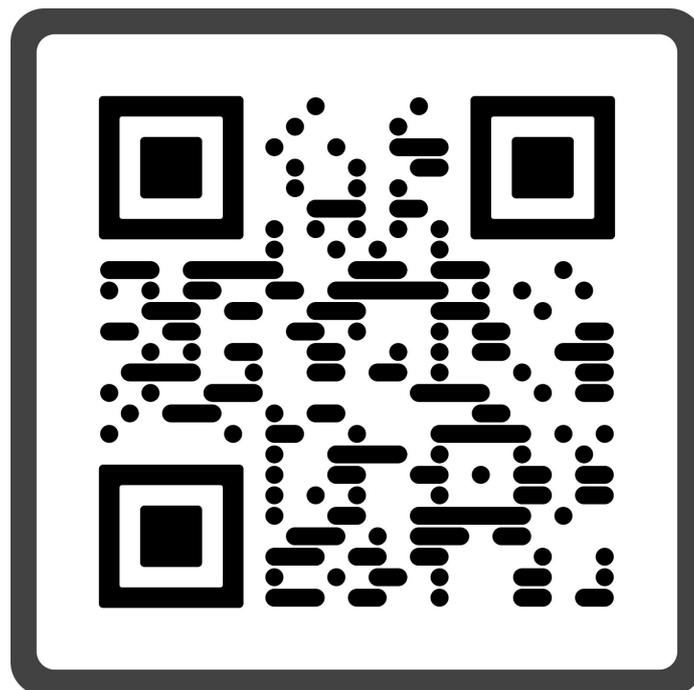
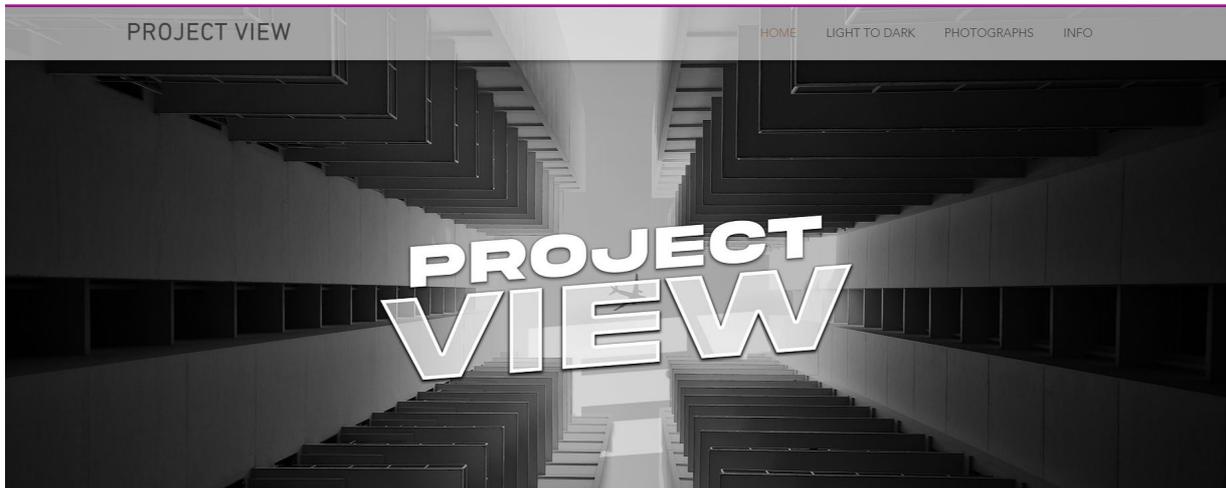


The harmony between the natural trees and man- made Supertrees shows how man and nature can exist together in a shared space.

Final Product

Our gallery website was built using the website maker Wix. We originally experimented with different platforms, including Adobe Spark, but settled on Wix because it was easy to use, accessible to many people, and logistically suitable for the current COVID situation (as compared to a physical installation).

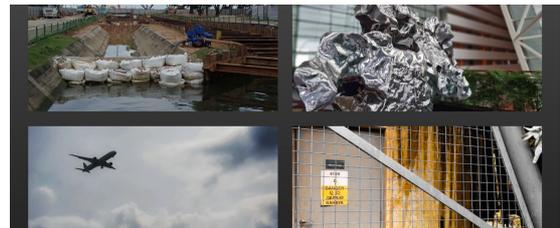
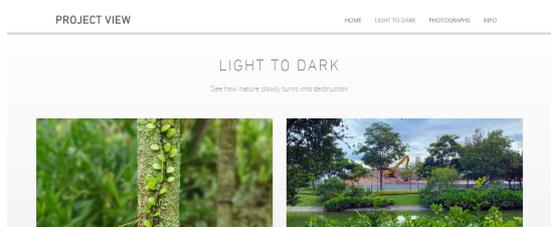
You can access the gallery by scanning the QR code below or with this link:
<https://202548e.wixsite.com/projectview>



Website Design

In our full gallery, our group decided to use a “light to dark” theme to sort our photographs. Those at the top of the gallery showed nature harmonising with man and its creations, but as the viewer scrolls downwards, the background colours turn dark, and so do the colour palettes of the photographs. The idea of unity portrayed at first also slowly disappears as the viewer scrolls down, with the harmony between man and nature turning into destruction of nature by man. Through this “light to dark” theme, we wanted place emphasis on the fact that although man continues to destroy nature, with some work put in, we are able to coexist with nature.

We originally experimented with different platforms, including Adobe Spark, but settled on Wix because it was easy to use, accessible to many people, and logistically suitable for the current COVID situation (as compared to a physical installation).



From light, as seen above, to a darker theme. Similarly, the ideas portrayed in the photographs are less about unity and harmony and more about destruction as the viewer scrolls downward.

Reflections

Tristan Lock (Leader)

As the saying goes, “Look back so that the view forward is even clearer”. After 6 months of project work with my group, I managed to learn a lot, not just about photography and art but also about the importance of team dynamics. This project allowed me to better understand and make use of the elements of art and design when taking photos. I also had a better grasp of the photography techniques and technical knowledge such as ISO, shutter speed and focal length, and am looking forward to making use of these in my AEP Individual project. I do hope that after completing this project during such tough times with many constraints, not just I but also my group mates have gained much insight and knowledge.

Tan Myn Jae

Entering this project, I did not have much photography or editing experience. COVID-19 restrictions made it more difficult for us to take photographs together. Thus, I had to take pictures during my free time to add to the group’s collection of pictures. Another thing that I learnt from this project was to always keep the theme in mind. Our group would often be distracted by aesthetic pictures that did not encapsulate our theme of “Urban Jungle”, which was very time-consuming.

Most importantly, this project allowed me to view photography from an artistic perspective. Before this project, I had thought that photography was just about taking nice pictures. However, I am now able to see the artistic elements in a photo, such as repetition, contrast and perspective. To me, this project was indeed “Project View”.

Tang Chongkai

My biggest takeaway is that the amount of work put into a single photo is huge. Prior to joining this project, I had thought that it would be a breeze, but these past 8 months proved me wrong. Every photo had to tell a story related to our theme, while still having flawless technical execution. Looking through various artist references helped me understand what types of photos to take, to better accentuate our projects' themes and objectives. Throughout this project, there were definitely challenges, such as physical constraints (e.g. SMM) or disagreements within the team. However, I'm confident that we managed to brave all of these challenges and work together to take some truly stunning photographs.

Zhu Yunsong

Our group decided on a photography project as we were interested in photography and photo editing. Even though I already had some experience with photo editing, I still managed to learn a lot from working with my group mates. The main skills I learnt was how to take alluring photos even with a mobile phone, edit photos with software, and making our final product as a form of a website.

Working with my group mates taught me how to cooperate with them, like planning dates for our outing, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. As spreading awareness about how industrialization destroys nature was our theme, learning to empathize with nature was important too.

I enjoyed being part of this project and it was surely a wonderful experience.

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