

Before meeting with Jose, I was struggling to like the work I had produced. I felt like I was pushed down a path that I wasn't exactly sure if I wanted to go down myself and felt like I was making work that was becoming incomprehensible to the average person. On top of that, I felt increasingly isolated from the rest of the programme and everyone else's work, which didn't make me feel confident in my work.

I chose to speak to Jose about my work because his work seemed to have a humour and levity to it. He seemed to enjoy poking fun at institutions that held lots of power with something simple that illustrated the humorous but dark ironies that can be found in analyses of major institutions.

After speaking with Jose, I realised I was not alone in terms of work — but I was looking in the wrong places for examples. Jose recommended that I watch “They Live” which I did and thoroughly enjoyed (lol) and that I check out Joan Fontcuberta's photography as it also dealt a lot with the art of perception. Jose also suggested I start by sitting down and literally writing questions to myself to organise my thoughts and goals more efficiently, which I think will be a big help going forward. — and choosing something hyper specific rather than something big and bold. He encouraged me to find a topic that exemplifies how truth is an experience or an emotion rather than a fact.

Just speaking with someone who understood what I was exploring and what I was trying to communicate made such a difference for my development of the project. After our conversation, I immediately started writing down ideas that were coming to mind; AI newspapers, the uncomfortable-ness of my own androgyny (to others), newspapers that change based off of donations/media narratives changing (akin to 1984), a documentation of sorts of the truth of Appalachia — the beauty of the mountains and nature with the horror of drug abuse, poverty, and lack of economic opportunity. All of these I felt like fit into the same answer to the same question; Is there a universal truth? No, but there are interesting grey areas, and you can decide for yourself if you think it's real.

After speaking with Jose, I went back home for a few weeks and did some thinking about what it is that I would ask the next practitioner/designer/artist. I identified a few people I wanted to speak to. I reached out to Trevor Paglen in July, he is an artist who examines American surveillance through photography primarily, and takes photos of military bases etc, from afar. I thought his work offered a really unique perspective because it didn't say much — literally — but offered an experience to the viewer to decipher the meaning and come up with their own interpretation of it. He didn't get back to me, but I also couldn't find anywhere else to contact him other than an old email I found on his website which hadn't been updated in a few years.

I emailed Mieke Gerritzen, a dutch artist who used humorous juxtapositions in her work *Heroes* and founded the image society which is a group that analyses the meaning of images and imagery. I thought that her visual style was interesting and could be effective in what I'm exploring and that she would be a good resource to ask questions about the aesthetic of trust and truth. She responded, and said that I could ask three questions, (In the

emails I sent, I specified that they could choose any format they wanted that would fit in with their schedule.)

I sent her the questions and she didn't respond (at which point I had a 9-5 summer internship); to make a long story short I followed up again with her and she said that she did not have enough time to answer the questions.

I then sent an Instagram DM to Elliot Earls, I couldn't find any other contact information aside from that. He said he was interested in speaking with me; I followed this up by asking how he would like everything to be formatted (I gave options) and he left me on read.

So! Here we are