



Fig. 1 : Tusa 2022. *Figments of Memories*. Cetatea Village

Figments of Memories

People and Places of
Dobrogea – an Exploration of
the Common Self

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"Will it ultimately reach the clear surface of my consciousness, this memory, this old, dead moment which the magnetism of an identical moment has traveled so far to importune, to disturb, to raise up out of the very depths of my being? I cannot tell. And suddenly the memory returns. The taste was that of the little crumb of madeleine." (Proust, 2015:621)

Growing up in Romania's region of Dobrogea, I've been left with strong impressions of the quotidian life of the local people – their gestures, the lights, the earthy smells, like Proust's Madeleine¹.

My photographic project traces the subjective contours of these childhood memories and seeks to impart to my audience the deeply-held emotions that surface whenever I journey back to my roots.



Fig. 2: Tusa 2022. *Figments of Memories*



Fig. 3: Tusa 2022. *Figments of Memories*

¹Proust's Madeleine, an expression used to describe smells, tastes, sounds, or any sensations reminding you of your childhood or simply bringing back emotional memories from a long time ago.



Fig. 4: Tusa 2022. *Figments of Memories*

About the Project

Dobrogea is a melting pot of a multi-ethnic and multi-religious composition. Lying between the Danube River and the Black Sea, Dobrogea has a troubled history. Successive waves of Turks, Tatars, Greeks, Armenians, Bulgarians, Romanians, Jews and Russians intermingle in its history.

I grew up accompanying my grandfather to get together with his friends for Saturday morning's coffee. He came to Romania – Dobrogea in 1919 from Constantinople.

Like my own family, my grandfather's friends were also brought to Dobrogea by the historical events that took place in the Balkans and Anatolia at the beginning of the 20th century (Djuvara, 2014:288-291).

My childhood memories became more immaterial after the death of my grandparents' generation, when almost nothing of that past still subsisted. Still, regardless of the passing of time and the fading of concrete memories, the emotion remained. Even though I did not experience what these people did firsthand, their collective unconscious remained within me, informing my artistic approach.

When I immortalize quotidian scenes with Polaroids, it's as if my childhood memories are manifesting themselves before my eyes – a snapshot of the present, but with a faded, nostalgic quality. The details of time and place are not in the pictures but supplied from elsewhere – from a store of childhood memories that might be anybody's (Kuhn, 1991:395). The Polaroid film's imperfect and unpredictable qualities are best suited to unveiling them.

To me, the Polaroids can showcase the sense of "known" I feel when I go to Dobrogea. They evoke the same emotions that I felt when listening to my grandfather talk to his friends – they make me recall the fervor in their voices and demeanors. These feelings represent the "collective unconscious"², the "unknown known" buried so deep, not just in my mind but also "passed on in our DNA from generation to generation" (Jung, 2003:13).



Fig. 5: Tusa 2022. *Figments of Memories*

² According to Carl Jung, the part of the unconscious that is common to all humankind and contains the inherited accumulation of primitive human experiences in the form of ideas and images called archetypes and manifested in myths as well as other cultural phenomena (e.g., religion) and in dreams. It is the deepest and least accessible part of the unconscious mind.



Fig. 6 : Tarkovsky 1979 - 1983. *Instant Light*

Images can express our feelings either by poetical or descriptive means (Tarkovsky, 1983). I am influenced in my work by the stillness and poetic approach used by Tarkovsky in his films, such as *Stalker* and his Polaroid series.

My objective is to create a body of work that captures the impressions of my childhood memories that surface when I travel to Dobrogea.

I want to awaken the nostalgic sentiment that lies within all of us, even if the shape of the memory is not the same.

What underpins this project is the idea of the collective unconscious, generating themes of endurance, troubling history, and perseverant inner child.

Paraphrasing Susan Sontag – the photographs allow me to be a part of a world's vulnerability, mortality, and mutability and testify to time's relentless melt (Sontag, 2001:10).



Fig. 7: Tusa 2022. *Figments of Memories. Fantana Village*

In achieving my project's objective, I will produce three genres of photography: landscape, portraits, and self-portraits. My landscape photos will combine geography, autobiography, and metaphor to emphasize the complex stories associated with the project (Adams 1996:14). The portraits show subjects in their natural environment – depending on the context, they will either be candid or formal. The self-portraits are used as a means to connect my memories³ with the geographic and cultural space.



Fig. 8: Tusa 2022. *Figments of Memories*



Fig. 9: Tusa 2022. *Figments of Memories*

³"The early childhood memories are projective techniques that contribute to strengthening my self-identity." (Adler 2010:117)

There are a few recurring themes across my body of work.

There are *memories*, ever-present and informing our everyday choices, and yet tantalizingly out of reach, warped by time spent away from them –

There is *childhood*, and the attachment we all feel towards our formative years and the nostalgia associated with its loss –

And then there is the *collective unconscious*, the culmination of two.

The unsettling feelings we have when something is familiar yet far away, the sense of known unknown – it takes a different shape for everyone. For me, it is represented by Dobrogea.



Fig. 10: Tusa 2022. *Figments of Memories*



Fig. 11: Tusa 2022. *Figments of Memories*

"Memories may be screens behind which the forgotten elements of the experience are hidden; thus, they cannot be considered childhood memories but memories about childhood." (Freud, 2014:425)



Fig. 12: Tusa 2022. *Figments of Memories*. Lespezi Village

There are two main concerns associated with this project – audience and ethical.

- As regards the audience, there is always an awareness that the theme can be challenging. As such, it raises concerns that it may not be compelling enough to be spoken of or related to. Furthermore, it's of the essence that the project does not give off the impression that it constitutes discourse relating to poverty, nor should it amount to historical documentation. Therefore, the main question is – how do I convey the complex emotions associated with my subjective experience in a way that the work will speak for itself and invoke the same feelings in my audience?
- The ethical issues are also a factor. Children may be the subjects of my portraits, and in the context of the local culture, it may be challenging to obtain from their parents as legal representatives a freely given, specific, informed and unambiguous consent (Art.7 GDPR, 2016).



Fig. 13: Tusa 2022. *Fragments of Memories*. Dobromir Village

Looking ahead – Collaboration and Professional Development

My aim is to progress in the professional practice by strengthening my knowledge about, and the collaboration with, different stakeholders relevant for my work.

In this regard, I will connect closer to the communities I have collaborated with so far. I will travel to a selection of Dobrogea's villages, where the people have previously allowed me to take their photos and some of them even invited me to live alongside in their homes⁴.

I am particularly careful in bringing in the views and perspectives of the individuals who freely contribute their images to my project, especially children (Warrington & Crombie, 2017). I plan to share the taken pictures and ask my contributors for their input in altering some of the photos with drawings or collages.



Fig. 14: Depoorter 2012. *Ou Menya*

⁴Similar to *Ou Menya*, 2012, Bieke Depoorter, published by Lannoo Publishers

I will establish connections with different ethnic and cultural organizations that have the potential to facilitate my connection to audiences and markets. Among them are the Yunus Emre Institute, Ovidius University of Constanta, Tatars Associations in Romania, Dobrogea Cultural Association as well as mayors and local councils. Some initial conversations are very promising – for example, the Yunus Emre Institute has expressed interest to organize an exhibition of my works.

How to best connect with my audiences will be at the center of my collaboration with these stakeholders. This is of particular importance since the concept of my photographic work is not about documenting historical or ethnic aspects of the communities or capturing concrete things, people or situations. It is about reflecting my state of mind modeled by the emotions from my childhood memories.



Fig. 15: Tusa 2022. Faurei Village

Looking ahead – Informing Context

Deepening my visual culture and developing an informed contemporary practice will allow me to better reflect on the nature of my images and their contextualization. Regarding the techniques I plan to continue developing my skillset with different Polaroid techniques (cyanotypes, colour injection or experimental painting – to name a few).

To this end I will use a three-leg approach, namely to practice, understand and evaluate visual material. I will then have the necessary tools to critically revisit my work and underpin it in a more formal theoretical background.

Firstly, I will continue to photoshoot in the villages of Dobrogea, working with portraits and landscapes that evoke impressions which are thematically linked to my project.



Fig. 16: Tusa 2022. *Figments of Memories*



Fig. 17: Benhelima 2005. *Black Out*



Fig. 18: Tusa 2022. *Experimental*

In addition, I've begun experimenting with self-portraits to capture myself in the midst of this experience and evoke my childhood self, as well as the memories that drive this project. I plan to integrate people's stories and art into my work and strive to represent a collective memory of the space. In this sense I am inspired by Carolyn Drake, *Wild Pigeon* (2013) and Rehab Eldalil, *The Longing of The Stranger Whose Path Has Been Broken* (2018).

Secondly, to deepen my knowledge and understanding of the philosophical and psychological elements associated with the project, I plan to study several books and relevant artists⁵, for example, Charif Benhelima or Michael Iwanowski.

Thirdly, as my portfolio grows, I will request feedback from my peers and collaborators.

⁵Appendix 1 – Further Reading References

Looking ahead – Sustainable Strategies

I will explore different interdisciplinary methods and mixture of materials in making my body of work. In this sense, I plan to join photo embroidery workshops to learn how to merge different techniques, mediums, and materials to empower my images and to honour Dobrogea's cultural roots⁶.

Furthermore, the project has the potential to positively impact the local economy through the stimulation of tourism and the promotion of artisanal works.



Fig. 19: Eldalil 2018. *The Longing Of The Stranger Whose Path Has Been Broken*

⁶ "It's about using traditional methods but within a modern context." Inge Jacobsen.

Timeline



Fig. 20: Tusa 2022. *Figments of Memories*



Fig. 21: Tusa 2022. *Figments of Memories*



Fig. 22: Tusa 2022. *Figments of Memories*

- ❖ Travel and photograph the villages from Dobrogea – ongoing.
- ❖ Connecting with the community – advanced.
- ❖ Experiment with new polaroid techniques – upcoming.
- ❖ Photo editing – ongoing.
- ❖ Studying the materials in Appendix 1, Further Reading References – ongoing.
- ❖ Critical study of other photographic works and inferring inspiration from practitioners – ongoing.
- ❖ Establish connections with different ethnic and cultural organizations – ongoing.
- ❖ Connecting with audiences and practitioners through social media marketing – ongoing.

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Introduction

Climate change and ecological emergencies are arguably on top of the most important issues faced by the world today. They also threaten our fundamental values and raise serious concerns of fairness and responsibility both at collective and individual level.

Taking responsibility for my personal choices and developing a set of “green virtues” are two of my fundamental beliefs and values. Some argue that changing personal preferences and consumption choices at individual level have little or no impact to address the climate change (Sinnott-Armstrong, 2005). It seems unlikely that individual, taken in isolation, will cause harm, since one person’s emissions seem very small in comparison with the global total. However, recently, some studies show that, on average, and over the course of a lifetime, the emissions of a single typical American are significant enough to contribute to the severe suffering and/or deaths of two future people (Nolt, 2011).

This Impact assessment plan identifies three critical areas with potential carbon footprint impact and my plans to mitigate it: Resources, Equipment & Materials, Transport & Accommodation.

Resources

Energy: To carry out my project I need to use energy for travel, work from home, and equipment.

To travel to the project sites (see map on page 26), I will use my personal car, a Honda hybrid model. This hybrid car delivers significantly higher fuel efficiency whilst keeping CO₂ emissions down compared to traditional cars. By combining electric, hybrid and engine drive modes in an efficient manner, the car’s overall consumption of fuel is quite reduced. Honda announced recently its worldwide sustainable energy goals to achieve 100-percent neutrality throughout all its global product and corporate activities by 2050.

Other travel alternatives considered are to rent an electric car, to go by public transportation and train. The network of charges for electric cars in Romania is underdeveloped, and less so in Dobrogea. That is why a fully electric car is not a feasible option. The project sites are in quite remote areas of Dobrogea and public transportation (for instance, trains) is not reliable or not feasible at all.

To further save resources and reduce the carbon print I organize my travels into two categories: five long trips of one week, and nine short trips of one day. Given the average distance to the project sites of about 235 km from Bucharest (my home), the total km is thus reduced to one third, from 21,032 km to 7,134 km. Consequently, the energy consumption is reduced from 1,388 liter to 471 liter of gasoline and the carbon print is reduced from 3.32 metric tons of CO₂ to 1.13 metric tons of CO₂.

An important part of the activities for this project will be done from home. The energy source for heating and cooling my home is energy efficient and ensured by a heat pump.

I use electrical energy for computer, printer and phone usage and for charging different rechargeable batteries.

My overall CO₂ print at home is of 4 tons/year using the carbon footprint calculator .

Financial Resources: The costs associated with this project, and with the MA program are entirely covered from my savings and income. I will however seek donor funding to cover at least partially the costs for organizing the exhibition with my work.

Equipment and Materials

The equipment used in the project include cameras, lenses, batteries and computer.

Photo Cameras:

The cameras that I use are Fujifilm XT3 and Polaroid Now Plus i-Type Instant Camera.

To address climate change Fujifilm corporation has revised its Sustainable Value Plan 2030 by increasing some target values to contribute to the environment concerns. Among them it plans to reduce CO₂ emissions across the entire product life cycle by 50% (compared to FY 2019 levels) by FY 2020. Not very much information is however provided by Polaroid Co. regarding their climate change commitments.

Polaroid company has an ongoing objective to protect the environment and encourage customers to recycle their used consumer electronic items and batteries in compliance with all regulations.

Desktop and Laptop

I use a Lenovo Yoga laptop. Lenovo company has shown interest in the CO₂ emissions reductions; thus, they have an CO₂ offset service. The average cost of carbon emissions associated with my device, from manufacture to shipment and its entire lifecycle, enables me to contribute to achieving various UN Climate Action plan objectives. These include improving renewable energy, reducing air pollution, and enhancing safe-waste disposal.

My desktop is an iMac (27-inch, Late 2013) . Apple has a strong policy to reduce the impact on climate change by using renewable energy sources and driving energy efficiency in all its products, facilities and supply chain. Apple also takes a holistic view of materials management and waste minimization. Apple's mission has never wavered.

iMac is designed with the following features to reduce its environmental impact: Arsenic-free display glass, BFR-free, PVC-free⁴, Mercury-free LED-backlit display, Highly recyclable aluminum and glass enclosures, Meets ENERGY STAR, Version 5.2 requirements, Rated EPEAT Gold⁵

Output /artefacts

Currently I plan to publish my body of work in photo book form. Corporate, social responsibility and environmental protection will be critical consideration selecting the suppliers and partners throughout my entire project.

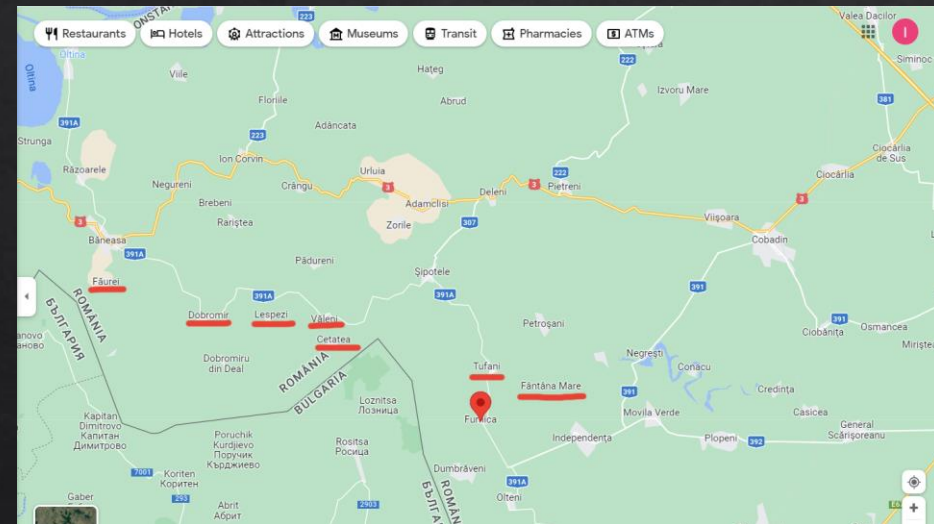
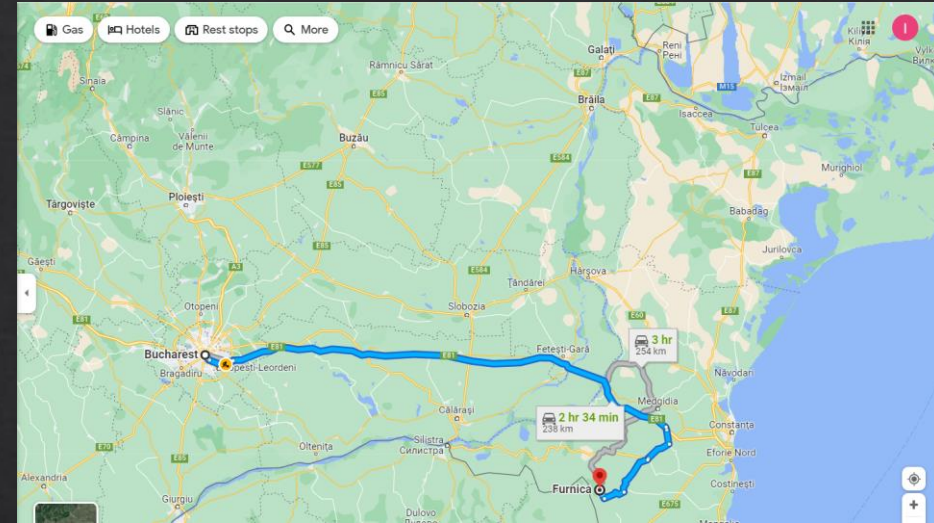
Transport and Accommodation

The photo shooting sites are in several villages located in Dobrogea region: Dobromir, Faurei, Lespezi, Valeni, Cetatea, Tufani, Fantana Mare. For energy saving/carbon print reduction considerations discussed in the resources/energy section above, I plan to have five long trips of one week and nine short trips of one day.

The long trips will be of one week each and will require accommodation for 6 days in a location in the proximity of these villages. For an average total distance of 568 km, the carbon print generated is of 0.09 tons CO₂ per trip.

The short trips will involve round trips of one day, in average of about 478 km, the carbon print is of 0.08 tons CO₂ /trip.

The total carbon emission for travel is of 1.13 tons CO₂, one third of an alternative option that involved only daily trips.



Carbon Calculation – My Research Project

The estimated carbon emissions related to the project are as follows:

Travel by Car (hybrid): 1.13 metric tons CO₂

Computer: 0.02 metric tons CO₂

Rechargeable camera battery power : 0.01 metric tons CO₂

Phone: 0.015 metric tons CO₂

Finance, personal estimate of Standard Life ethical savings activity: 0.5
metric tons CO₂

Materials: 20 polaroid film packages: 0.1 metric tons CO₂

Social media FB/Instagram: 0.3 metric tons CO₂

Total: 2.075 tons CO₂

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Appendix 3: Indicative Budget

Travel and Accommodation*	Equipment and Materials*	Communication
<p>5 trips of one week: $5 * 568 \text{ km} * 6.6 \text{ l/100km} * 9 \text{ RON/l} = 15,931 \text{ RON}$ or £271</p> <p>9 trips of one day: $9 * 478 \text{ km} * 6.6 \text{ l/100km} * 9 \text{ RON/l} = 2,413 \text{ RON}$ or £410</p> <p>Accommodation during long trips: 5 trips*6 days*100RON/night = 3000 RON or £ 510</p> <p>Food during trips: 44 travel days*50RON/day =2200RON or £374</p>	<p>Estimated cost for materials: £450</p> <p>Books and workshops: £500</p>	<p>Website design: 0</p> <p>Exhibition space: £ 200</p> <p>Prints: £200</p> <p>Photobook: £500</p>
<p>*Car Depreciation costs are not included</p>	<p>*Depreciation costs for Camera, Computers are not included</p>	
Total Travel: £1565	Total Material: £950	Total Communication: £900
Overall Project Costs: £3415		

PROJECT RISK ASSESSMENT FORM

Student:	Iris Maria Tusa
Programme	MA Photography
Activity/Equipment being assessed:	“Figments of Memories” photographic project that includes three genres: landscapes, portraits, and self-portraits. Fujifilm digital camera and i-Type Instant Camera.
Location:	Romania, Dobrogea region’s villages.

What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed and how?	Inherent risk score (before control measures) Likelihood*Severity=Risk	Control Measures What are you already doing?	Residual risk score (after control measures)
1. Transportation to/from shooting sites				
Vehicle slips and falls especially in winter times when ice/slush coat roads	I could be harmed as driver/ injuries in case of accident Other participants to traffic can be injured	High (4*4=16)	Implement safety checks each time before driving (seat/mirror adjustment, use of seat belt) Abide to traffic laws and drive defensively Stay informed about whether conditions and adapt speed to whether and road conditions Keep vehicle in top technical condition Vehicle and life Insurance Ensure First aid kit and fire extinguisher in validity period.	Medium (3*3=9)

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Distracted driving due to long hours of driving/shooting	I could be harmed as driver Other participants to traffic	Medium (3*3=9)	Drive only when in sound physical and mental condition.	Low (2*2=4)
2. Shooting site physical/climate environment				
Uneven and/or slippery surfaces	I can be harmed /physical injuries Equipment may be damaged: tripod falling over, camera broken	Medium (3*2=6)	Wear proper terrain boots equipment Weight down the tripod, and use additional weights Camera bag is tightly closed and attached to my body with at least two anchor points. Fasten camera straps around the neck Firmly attach the lens to the camera body or stow them in a zippered compartment.	Low (2*2=4)
Heat exposure during summertime	I can be harmed due to solar burns or increased fatigue	Low 2*2=4	Wear hats and loose, lightweight clothing and UV sunglasses. Use UVA/ UVB sunscreen and after sun creams and lotions. Drink plenty of water to stay hydrated.	Low (2*1=2)
Heavy rain conditions	Equipment could be damaged	Low 2*2=4	Ensure that the equipment is water sealed and use, when necessary, additional protection. Postpone shooting if weather conditions worsen.	Low 2*1=2

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3. Health /Biological/Chemical				
Stung or beaten by animals (flying insects, dogs, etc)	I can be harmed (from mild discomfort to severe allergic reaction/physical injuries)	Medium (3*2=6)	<p>Avoid colognes or strongly scented shampoos or deodorants.</p> <p>Wear clothing to cover the body as much as possible.</p> <p>Use repellent sprays for insects (mosquitos).</p> <p>Clean wounds and irrigate with water/soap.</p> <p>Seek immediate medical assistance in case of bites wounds with a high risk of infection.</p>	Low (2*2=4)
Covid 19 Infection/spread Other Fungal or bacterial infection	I could be infected, or I could infect people that I interact with, especially children and vulnerable	Medium (3*4=12)	<p>COVID-19 Testing before going to sites Vaccination against COVID-19, Rabia, Use protective equipment (facial masks).</p> <p>Increased hygiene measures (washing hands before eating, using hand sanitizers).</p> <p>Maintain physical distance as much as possible.</p>	Medium (3*3=9)
Polaroid films' hazards	My health could be affected (skin rush or skin chemical burns, blindness).	Medium (3*3=9)	Wash hands with soap and water immediately to remove chemicals, until there is no "slippery" feeling on the skin.	Low (2*2=4)

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	<p>Infants that put polaroid films in their mouth.</p> <p>Animals in the wild in contact with polaroid.</p>		<p>Strictly follow the Polaroid Material Safety Sheets (MSD) instructions for protection and disposal.</p>	
5. Legal /social interactions				
<p>Negative reactions of landowners to allowing me to make photographs of their private land and/or when trespassing their land</p>	<p>I could be affected as I will not be able to implement the project or legally challenged</p>	<p>Medium (3*3=9)</p>	<p>Behave lawful, courteous, and respectful always.</p> <p>Ask permission from landowners to shoot their private land or trespassing their land.</p>	<p>Low (2*2=4)</p>
<p>Negative reactions when making portraits</p>	<p>I could be affected as I will not be able to implement the project or legally challenged.</p>	<p>Medium (3*3=9)</p>	<p>Behave lawful, courteous, and respectful always.</p> <p>Use consent forms.</p>	<p>Low (2*2=4)</p>
<p>Camera theft</p>	<p>Equipment and work can be lost</p>	<p>Low (3*2=6)</p>	<p>Keep the photo equipment reasonably safe, store the camera in a backpack hung on me.</p> <p>Downplay the camera's value when asked by strangers.</p> <p>Insure the equipment.</p>	<p>Low (2*2=4)</p>

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Assessment carried out by:	Iris Maria Tusa	Assessment shared with:	
Position:	MA Student		
Date written:	August 8, 2022	Date of last review:	

Likelihood of occurrence	Likelihood Level	Severity of harm	Severity Level
Very Unlikely	1	Very minor injury	1
Unlikely	2	Minor injury - less than 3-day injury	2
Possible	3	Major injury – over 3-day injury	3
Likely	4	Severe injury – RIDDOR Reportable	4
Very Likely	5	Fatality	5

Risk = Severity x Likelihood

Likelihood	Severity				
	Very minor injury	Minor injury - less than 3-day injury	Major injury – over 3-day injury	Severe injury – RIDDOR Reportable	Fatality
Very Unlikely	1	2	3	4	5
Unlikely	2	4	6	8	10
Possible	3	6	9	12	15
Likely	4	8	12	16	20
Very Likely	5	10	15	20	25

Score	Risk Level
1-5	Low Risk
6-12	Medium Risk
15 – 25	High Risk