

ALANA WILSON
notes on archiving

*exploring the relationship between art
and process in the depths of creation*



reference wall

By Odin Wilde
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studio 06

Why do you take these photographs?

I started taking them mainly as a form of documentation, particularly documenting the process. I always keep a visual diary of ideas, notes, glaze tests, and [I] document each result but found I was not so much documenting the process and, especially when you work alone, I was starting to feel it was an important thing to begin doing.

Why polaroids?

They're instant, and an object within themselves. I have hard drives full of digital files and photos, so I love the tactility and immediacy of keeping the documentations of process on hand in the studio.

Are they personal photos for yourself, or are they taken in an effort to archive your work?

Both. I don't feel any separation between my personal [life] and my work, so they lend themselves to archiving process and moments to look back on. I sometimes find [that] leading up to an exhibition, or in the process of creation, it can be quite consuming, so to be able to reflect on the process afterwards is enjoyable and also necessary.

Why do you think archiving is important?

I truly believe I will spend my life seeking and questioning the ideas and concepts I explore in my work. Nothing is ever fully resolved and works always evolve into further explorations, so to document the bigger picture gives much more insight into the growth of ideas and revelations within any practice.

What do you want to remember by taking these photos?

I want to remember the process and mindset behind the bodies of work. The finished physical works all go off to new homes in galleries or collections, so the process and ideas behind the works are what I am left with.

Do you curate the space before you take a photo, or is everything left as is?

These polaroids are very much in-the-moment. I think the studio mess of tools and materials tells as much as the works in the images.

Why is this difference important?

I feel it's important to embrace all elements of the process and try not to form a hierarchy within the studio—of physical objects or ideas. It's also the reality of the process, and that is what I am looking to document in the polaroids, not an idealised representation.

What is your favourite photograph?

I don't have a single favourite, however, I have some series that I love looking back on and reflecting upon. There are some from when I first moved into my studio and started making specific pieces, which reminds me of the many challenges I had [in] setting up the studio as a functioning business. Certain bodies of work which were made so quickly that it was hard to enjoy the process, such as the *Alien: Covenant* vessels, or some of the late nights working on the *Brutalist Meditations* sculptures.

Are you capturing the relationship between yourself and your work?

The relationship between myself and the works is primarily the thought processes and physical processes behind them, which never ends once the physical works are complete. It continues to grow in hindsight, so the polaroids are documents that always look the same but I may recollect something different from them each time I look back.

How would you describe the love between an artist and their work?

Again, I definitely feel the mental and physical process is what I consider to be my work, for myself. Over the past few years I've become more embracing of the process of creation and the cycles within that. Thinking, observing, travelling, working with others, documenting: all contribute as much to my work as the physical making of the works.

How many polaroids have you taken?

Maybe two hundred plus?

Do you only take photos of your work?

On Polaroid, yes. Purely for the studio.





alien covenant 04



cups runneth over



studio 08



studio 05



tea bowls 03



brutalist meditations chair

Do you write dates and details on them?

Not directly on the photos themselves, but I scan and document them with dates, notes, etc. in my studio journals

Do you think they offer another dimension to your work?

In a way, yes. I don't look to capture something different in the polaroids—more the opposite, in the sense of capturing the works in their purest form (to me), which is when they're in progress, in the studio, evolving.

What is the difference between these photographs and the photos you perhaps take on your phone and share on social media?

These are probably less considered and will mostly be kept for myself.

Is your artistic eye different to your photographic eye?

Not at all. My two eyes work the same for everything, in conjunction with the visual cortex. I have no hierarchy between "art" and "other", or "work" and "life".

Have any of these photographs influenced a new idea?

They allow me to reflect on the process and the works, which grants a different perspective of my work and definitely influences work in the future.

Are you impulsive in your studio? In other words, do you bounce between mediums if the opportunity arises or inspiration strikes?

I've found in the past year or two I'm much more aware of what I put out into the world. I try to sit with ideas and new materials for at least a month or two before acting on anything, to allow ideas to evolve and to also let the spontaneous ones pass by.

Do you think still life photographs can express emotion?

I think emotion is an intrinsically human trait and completely conditional to the viewer. If you are both photographer and viewer, then your emotional understanding of the works may be very close, but primarily the viewer will draw a very individual response—from anything, still life or otherwise.

Is feeling important to your work?

Absolutely. I think feeling should be an important aspect of all artworks, as it signifies a connection to a human viewer. I believe that the human connection is the most important thing in life, the reason we are all here. For this to occur through art, culture, and society is extremely important.

Why is feeling important for humankind and for the world?

The human connection and the ability for us to feel emotion, form direct thought, and possess an imagination are the most intrinsically human traits possible. In the sense of people connecting, this allows for communities to develop, to share ideas and values with one another and go on to promote positive growth and change within the world.

Are you sensitive, and why do you think this can be a strength?

I am sensitive in the sense of detecting or responding to change but am also quite stoic too. I think observing and responding to the world around me is a strength, and perhaps contemplating and reflecting upon many aspects of life more than some [people] maybe allows me to communicate my thoughts and values via my work.

What are you proud of ?

I am proud of my family and loved ones, proud of my community, and proud to be able to do what I do each day in a way that I enjoy and feel fulfilled.

What makes your heart smile?

Three days a week, when I'm not in the studio, I teach swimming. I grew up swimming and owe many of my life lessons to the water. Being in the water with the students, seeing growth and witnessing various generations learning, is ultimate joy.

Love in all its glory is...?

Everywhere and unconditional.



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artist and photographer alana wilson

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