

PHOTOGRAPHY PEDAGOGY AND SALVAGING THE ENCROACHED WETLANDS IN UGANDA A CASE STUDY MASAKA AND RAKAI DISTRICTS

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Abstract

*Photography pedagogy and salvaging the encroached wetland is a critical media literacy framework that constructs knowledge and creates a representation of the world that when combined with a Practice Based Research, an original investigation for new knowledge, practice and demonstration, results into a creative outcome. Photography is a tool that has been used in aiding teaching, combined with pedagogical theories and practice of education that could salvage the encroached wetlands. The dependent variable (Uganda wetlands) twined between the two disciplines photography and education combined with a multiple research design could create an innovative theory that could eventually lead to an exhibited model. The analysis of an advanced innovative photography pedagogy **theory, where significance and context of the claims were described in words and a full understanding was obtained with direct reference to the outcomes which was visually communicated using the photography pedagogy essay exhibition at the end of the research findings. That would ultimately reshape the public opinions on government policies that were often the direct cause of encroachment onto the wetlands. A contextual knowledge occurred through the photography pedagogy text image theory as evidenced in the unit of analysis at Nakayiba wetlands where community members discussed openly on some of the effects that accrued from encroaching onto the wetlands. This was based on the photography pedagogy essay that was passed around the communities by the researcher. And participants learned and processed new information in such a way that it made sense to them in their own frames of reference within their inner worlds of memory, experience and response.***

Key words: Photography pedagogy, Salvage, Encroached Wetland, Practice Based Research,

Introduction

Photography pedagogy has not been used as an alternative option to save the encroached wetlands in Uganda, which was faced with the catastrophe of

environmental degradation that was evidenced through the encroached wetlands by settlements, agriculture and industrial developments. However the government instituted bodies like the National Environment Management Authority, (NEMA) Uganda Wildlife Authority, (UWA) and NAADS have not done much progress through conservation and maintenance of those wetlands. Among such wetlands was the case of the Namanve and forest reserves in both Wakiso and Mukono districts which were encroached upon by 20,000 families and the government gave a notice to have them vacate the land in the next three weeks or face the full force of the law. (New Vision, 2016) Therefore photography pedagogy was the ultimate answer to be focused upon to the dilemma of settlement, and educate the communities in salvaging the encroached wetlands?

Photography pedagogy and salvaging the encroached wetlands in Uganda using an innovative photography pedagogy theory and practice - based photographic exhibition model are in place.

Methodology

The research design is a multi dimension of a participatory action, constructive with an explorative and practice - based photography design combined with a qualitative and quantitative approaches research method. Photography pedagogic experimentation was done through software programs (Adobe Photoshop or Illustrator) and piloting with some of the photographs that became a photography pedagogy exhibition model.

The study proved that the research was a success since the contextual knowledge occurred through the photography pedagogy text image theory as evidenced in the unit of analysis at Nakayiba wetlands where community members discussed openly on some of the effects that accrued from encroaching onto the wetlands. This was based on the photography pedagogy essay that was passed around the communities by the researcher. And participants learned and processed new information in such a way that it made sense to them in their own frames of reference within their inner worlds of memory, experience and response.

The study aims at using photography pedagogy within communities that had encroached onto the wetlands. And the beneficially are the general public, since the environment does not need us but we do need it absolutely.

This section considered what the overall intentions were in achieving the purposes of the study which is an innovative photography pedagogy theory and practice – based photographic exhibition model. The contribution to knowledge demanded the researcher to show evidence with substantive possible solutions, strategies, frameworks and theories for the knowledge gap identified through analysis and interpretation of the research findings.

Overall, 30 respondents were interviewed, of which 15 were conveniently sampled from Lwera, Nakayiba, (Masaka District) and Kalisizo (Rakai District), another 8 from purposive interview from the captive group of undergraduate students and 2 lecturers from the School of Commercial Industrial Art and Design of Nkumba University, and Lastly, the 5 Nkumba community members that were interviewed as an after event for comparison purposes with that of Nakayiba (Unit of Analysis) since the research is meant to benefit the public.

Observation unit

- i. Setting: The location of the encroached wetlands in the field had a great impact on the final copies of the photographs, which contained physical and psychological properties that were observed and recorded.
- ii. Behavior of independent variable: the researcher noted the behavior of the manipulated photography pedagogy areas of Lwera, Nakayiba, and Kalisizo, in a manner that he engaged the relevant process that influenced increased visual authenticity within the three areas.
- iii. Behavior of the dependent variable: the researcher took note of the development of the text image elements from the manipulated encroached wetland areas that were subjected to experimental treatment.

Secondary data was got from a variety of sources, and some of these were;

National Environment Management Authority, State of the Environment Report for Uganda, New Vision and Monitor Publications.

Structured observation was an appropriate instrument for the research because it focused on the designated aspects of behavior of encroached wetlands from the original setting using the computer laboratory of a relatively specific formulation that developed the photography pedagogy essay. The study demanded to experiment with the encroached wetland

areas for a behavior to be observed in order to get suitable text that would blend properly with the selected encroached sites. In the computer studio setting, the major chosen encroached wetland sites that were used as test units were arranged into categories, and subjected to experimental treatment principles and elements of design so as to suit the research purpose and minimize the danger that would have developed from the moderated variables. Within these categorical experiments the mechanical problems in observation and the failures in reliability were met by excluding some inappropriate encroached wetland categories and treated others more clearly so as to define them well enough to provide reliable data demanded of the research questions.

Narrative records: detailed notes that interpreted the findings of the study in relation to the elements and principles of art and design were backed up by variations of demonstrations of relevant categories and processes of experimentation. The researcher recorded the visual aspects of the different units, choice of text that blended with units, and the events that occurred in the making of the image composition.

Checklist: This tool was used to record the characteristics of encroached wetlands and text to acquire appropriate image compositions. The visual appeal, included visible varieties of colored text, sizes and formation, combined with their different positioning that varied according to the image composition setup.

Preliminary analysis: Involved gathering data from the behavior of test units of selected encroached wetlands when subjected to experimental treatment, and inform respondents to the standardized questions whose content aimed at discovering standards of action.

Definitive analysis: This involved establishing answers to the research questions and evaluating the suitability of encroached wetlands to the text image composition.

The relationship within the study and its data were interpreted through established and evaluated reports what was typical in the test units of the selected encroached wetlands. And secondly, the results of the study were interpreted basing on the theories, elements and principles of art and design

so as to bring out the relevance of text image essay composition as far as the study was concerned.

The different encroached wetland photographs were named according to the areas they were located from namely, Lwera, Nakayiba, and Kalisizo. Each of these areas had been dealt upon separately in the manipulation process, in as regard to the theories of image and text, basics of composition using typography, meaning, and color terminologies.

The relations between text and pictorial representation were, at first, presented on the basis of the most dominant. Secondly, the outer and inner visual expressions of picture and text were distinguished. And their different functions in the picture-text relations were pointed out. Determined crucial notions regarding the examined phenomena, to ascertain initial classifications for the analysis of picture-text relations, to point out that there are no simple texts based on just one means of expression, and to find the main functions of the message and its parts revealed in the mutual impact of text and picture.

It demanded the designer to seek information from a great range of references, and had successfully communicated with people of all ages, professionals and lifestyle, and properly contextualized his design work.

Linear reasoning implied a strategic thought process using step by step logic, and followed a specific trend. The kind of reasoning frequently involved a predetermined idea or concept that was then worked towards in stages. It involved splitting the idea in manageable components, and considered color, type, composition and scale, and worked on each through to finalize the form to fit the concept. Lateral thinking involved indirect exploration, generating ideas less readily available by linear reasoning. The emphasis was on indirect, creative forms of research.

Composition referred to the visual structure and organization of elements within the design. The images and text, each had its own shapes, sizes, color and textures, from two to three dimensions. It was the most effective tool in guiding the viewer through the complexity of visuals to the intended message.

In creating meaningful composition, it was important to understand the role of visual perception that is the way our eyes and brains made sense of what we saw. The figure and ground, (the form was always experienced in relation to the space it occupied and to other forms that were present in the format) the law of closure,(was a phenomena drawn from Gestalt psychology, which argued that there was a tendency to close or complete lines or objects that are not in fact closed) and the rule of thirds(demanded that most compositions became more dynamic when divided into thirds vertically, and horizontally, with important elements placed within those thirds).

The typographic message apart from its beauty had to convey meaning, a meaning and its expression was at the core of the typographic activity, a level of both individual words and entire passage of text. That was called linguistic meaning, since it resided in language.

Understanding how to deal with space in typography was essential. Proper spacing affected legibility, and space was also an integral and powerful part of any composition, whether symmetrical or asymmetrical. Developed an eye for detail, and considered the role of space in both legibility and meaning as you progress at every stage of the design development.

Typographic emphasis and hierarchy was a critical skill. It involved considering the relationship between multiple elements- the size and weight of type, the position on the page and the dynamics between elements- as well as developing an understanding of how these decisions called forth some contents while suppressing others.

Colour had a unique complex language, and the ability to change its meaning when partnered with other colours. The choice made of the colours to incorporate into the design, required to consider issues of contrast and harmony, and how these would affect legibility in typography. The researcher further set the mood of the photographic essay by using the psychology of colour, through selection of colours that conveyed the correct message at an unconscious level, and that they were suitable for the audience his project was intended to reach. In this case the researcher had to

use dark combinations to evoke mystery and fear as a way of triggering communities to be sensitive of their wetland encroachment.

Photoshop was the industrial standard software package that manipulated the selected wetland encroached photos, that suited the study. Text was incorporated into the design and gave a clear integration of text and image within a single digital environment.

There was one way to import images into Photoshop for modification and incorporation into a design, and that was to scan them. Scanning required some essential skill, as it allowed the capture of actual objects as the depth of field was not too great.

Photoshop layered different images and elements so that each could be worked on separately without altering the rest of the image.

Print production was the last stage in the design process. Familiarity with the print production techniques and issues was vital to ensure the final printed job looked and felt the way it was intended.

The ancient Greek Philosopher Aristotle believed that all knowledge was accumulated memories, collected through a long series of observations and connected by the mind into single experiences, like many pictures forming a single movie. Each picture leads into the next, following the progression, we make sense of in our minds, until we reach a logical conclusion. Having seen certain actions lead to certain consequences before, an experienced man can see a particular picture and conclude what will happen next. A man who can explain why one thing precedes the next thing and can event an appropriate conclusion on the other hand is wise according to Aristotle (Culatta, 2018).

Kohler and Koffka, Max Wertheimer was one of the principal proponents of Gestalt theory which emphasized higher-order cognitive processes in the midst of behaviorism. The focus of Gestalt theory was the idea of grouping, for example; characteristics of stimuli cause us to structure or interpret a visual field or problem in a certain way. The primary factors that determine grouping were: (1) proximity – elements tend to be grouped together according to their nearness, (2) similarity – items similar in some respect tend to be grouped together, (3) closure – items are grouped together if they tend to complete some entity, and (4) simplicity – items will be organized

into simple figures according to symmetry, regularity, and smoothness. These factors were called the laws of organization and were explained in the context of perception and problem-solving. (Husain, 2018)

The fundamental elements and principles of graphic design photography pedagogy as have been understood by the Masaka and Rakai contexts. The exhibition model is meaningful, memorable, and communicative to the audiences.

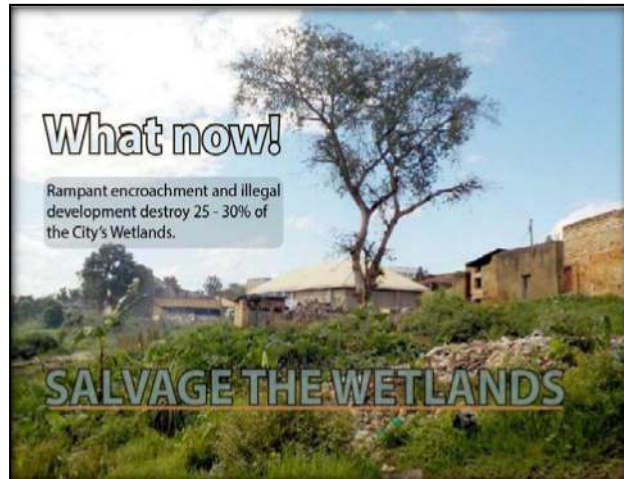
The Photography Pedagogy Practice Based – Exhibition Model Plates

PLATE 1



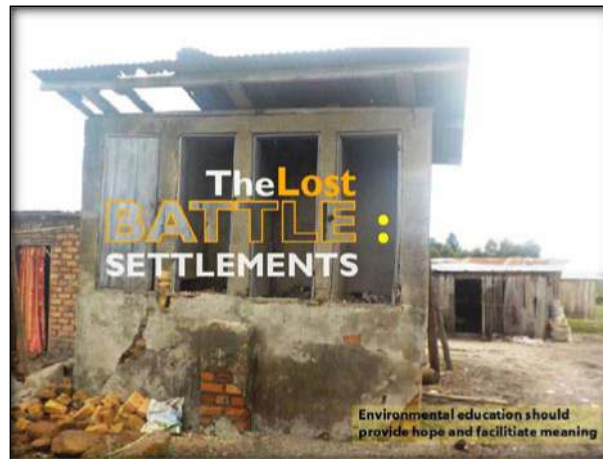
Title: Encroached wetland for mudfish
Context: Kamuwunga village, Lwera, (Masaka District)
Medium: Photography
Size: 16.8cm by13.7cm

PLATE 2



Title: Small scale industrial encroachment
Context: Nakayiba Wetland, (Masaka District)
Medium: Photography
Size: 15.5cm by 11.9cm

PLATE 3



Title: The trauma of the Cholera epidemic
Context: Kamuwunga village, Lwera (Masaka District)
Medium: photography
Size: 15.5cm by 13cm

PLATE 4



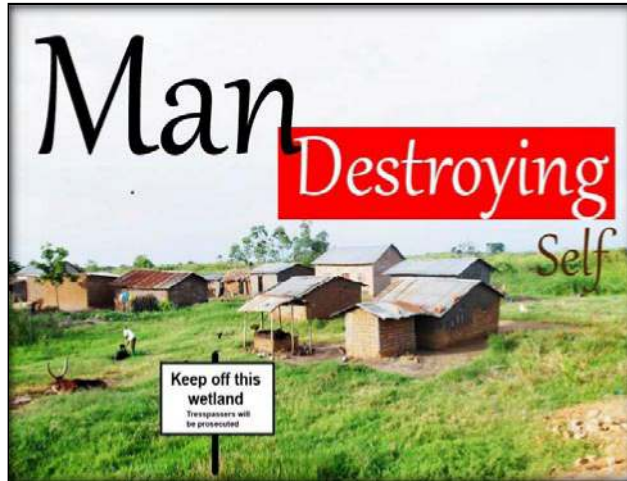
Title: Wetland Fish pond farming
Context: Kalisizo Town Council, (Rakai District)
Medium: Photography
Size: 15.5cm by 11.3cm

PLATE 5



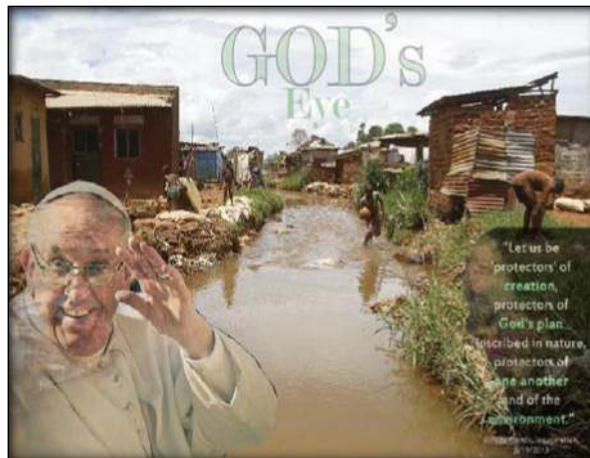
Title: Protect not Pest the Wetland
Context: Ninzi village, Kalisizo (Rakai District)
Medium: Photography
Size: 15.5cm by 11.8cm

PLATE 6



Title: Eminent Disaster
Context: Kamuwunga Village (Masaka District)
Medium: Photography
Size: 15.5cm by 11.8cm

PLATE 7



Title: Desperate of God's intervention
Context: Nakayiba wetlands (Masaka District)
Medium: Photography
Size: 15.5cm by 11.8cm,

PLATE 8



Title: Need for Ecological Restoration
Context: Nakayiba (Masaka District)
Medium: Photography
Size: 15.5 cm by 11.9 cm

PLATE 9



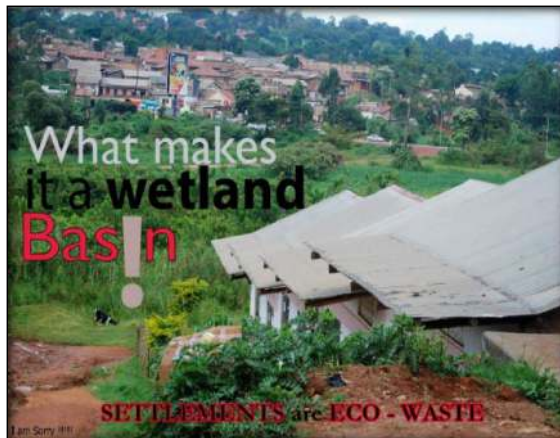
Title: The Catastrophe of Wetlands
Context: Nakayiba Wetland (Masaka District)
Medium: Photography
Size: 15.5cm by 11.3cm

PLATE 10



Title: Join The Fight
Context: Ninzi Kalisizo Village (Rakai District)
Medium: Photography
Size: 15.5cm By 11.5cm

Plate 11



Title: Cheating yourself not the Environment
Context: Nakayiba Wetlands, (Masaka District)
Medium: Photography
Size: 15.5cm by 11.9cm

PLATE 12



Title: It all comes back to us.
Context: Kamuwunga village, (Masaka District)
Medium: Photography
Size: 15.5cm by 12.7cm

PLATE 13



Title: Respect your Environment
Context: Nakayiba Nnyendo Wetlands, (Masaka District)
Medium: Photography
Size: 16.2cm by 13.8cm

PLATE 14



Title: Ignorance is no Defence
Context: Kamuwunga village, Lwera, (Masaka District)
Medium: Photography
Size: 15.5 by 12.3cm

PLATE 15



Title: Wetlands are not Wastelands
Context: Kalisizo Butemba Village, (Rakai District)
Medium: Photography
Size: 15.5cm by 13.8cm

PLATE 16



Title: The Dream
Context: Nakayiba Wetlands,(Masaka District)
Medium: Photography
Size: 12. 1cm by 10.4cm

Many of the respondents have been sensitized through the basis of comparison from the photography pedagogy practice – based essay of the encroached wetlands by brain storming, and reflecting about the effects of the outcome of their actions. The nature of text image elements involving template matching against copies stored in memory from past experiences on the other hand however, has reinforced the fact that the relationship between the syntactic (form) elements that tell the story, form a language and composition to establish the first understanding to which a viewer will come, identify the nature of a form, noting how it behaves in space, and comparing the behaviors of individual forms to others, is the foundation of communicating at even the most basic abstract or non pictorial level.

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