

Thesis Outline: Experimental/Art Category

Text editing:

12 points, 1.5 spaced, include page numbers

Word count: between 6,000 - 8,000 words (excluding appendices & bibliography)

Title Page:

Is the Virtual Ruin More Real? Exploring Plausibility, Authenticity, and Presence in the Representation of Conflict through VR and Photography

A New Realism (Plausibility)? Exploring the Authenticity of Conflict Representation in 360 VR and Photography.

Abstract:

A clear and concise summary of:

Research question

Motivation behind my inquiry

Theoretical framework (authenticity, presence, plausibility)

Summary of my practical project (Peace in Ruins)

Key findings and conclusions

Acknowledgements (Optional)?

Thank for scans/resources from Ukraine, or anyone who supported my creative or research process.

Table of Contents/ List of Figures & Tables:

Reference images

Main Body (6000 -8000 words)

Part I - Theoretical Framework & Critical Inquiry (4000 - 4500 Words)

1. Introduction (300 - 500 words)

Introduce the central research question:

Can VR offer a more emotionally authentic representation of conflict than photography?

Briefly introduce the creative project as the practice-based investigation.

Outline the structure of the report.

2. Early Framework Introduction

In your **Theoretical Framework** chapter (or a dedicated **Methodology** section at the end of Part I), lay out the full **M + D + A (Sensory Impact) + J + S + A²** model.

Define each pillar, cite its origins, and explain your adaptations.

Signpost in the TOC

List “Framework & Methodology” right after your Introduction in the Contents, so readers know you’re equipping them with a lens you’ll use throughout.

3. Context: Photography, Truth, and Visual Authenticity (Focus on J and A)

Historical overview of photography’s role in documenting truth (e.g. Barthes, Sontag, Azoulay). (Compare the painting and photography)

Journalistic Rigor (J): add a mini–subsection on “Attribution & Agency” to evaluate how photo captions, scan credits, and anonymization uphold ethics.

Discuss war photography and the ethics of witnessing.

Authenticity & Plausibility (A²): add another sub–section contrasting photographic markers of “truth” (EXIF, lens fidelity) with VR markers (point-cloud accuracy, mesh artifacts).

Introduce the philosophical tension between objectivity and subjectivity in visual media.

4. Immersion, Presence, and Authenticity in XR (Focus on A Sensory Impact)

Define key immersive media concepts: presence, plausibility, embodiment, memory (e.g. Slater, Lombard & Ditton).

Explain how VR shifts the paradigm from representational truth (photography) to experiential truth.

Bring in case studies or XR artworks dealing with memory/conflict (e.g. Clouds Over Sidra, The Enemy, Aftermath VR).

5. Comparative Analysis: Photography vs VR as Modes of Representation (Cross References)

Discuss specific differences: still image vs spatial experience, viewer-as-witness vs viewer-as-participant.

Analyze how each medium shapes emotional engagement, moral proximity, and narrative framing.

Introduce the notion of the “virtual ruin”—digitally reconstructed yet emotionally “felt.”

Structure it explicitly around your remaining pillars:

Mechanics (M) – Fixed framing vs. free-look

Dynamics (D) – Static sequencing vs. real-time cross-fades

Storytelling (S) – Photo series beats vs. two-act VR arc

6. Conclusion of Part I: From Image to Immersion

Recap my argument: VR doesn't replace photography, but reframes how we engage with reality.

Suggesting it's a new evolution or alternative way of representing reality.

Set up Part II as your applied exploration of these ideas through Peace in Ruins.

Part II - Practice - Based Research: Peace in Ruins (2500 - 3500

Words)

6. Creative Intent & Conceptual Foundations

Describe the purpose and goals of Peace in Ruins.

Explain how it was conceived as a response to the Ukrainian conflict and the fragile illusion of peace.

Tie it explicitly to the ideas of mediated memory, presence, and witnessing discussed in Part I.

7. Methods, Sources, and Workflow

The use of:

Photogrammetry / LiDAR scans in London

War damage scans from Ukraine (Sketchfab, archives)

Audio sources (field recordings, news clips, interviews)

Mention ethical sourcing and your treatment of sensitive material.

Explain the iterative process: tests, design decisions, artistic choices.

8. User Experience and Spatial Design

Describe what the user sees, hears, and feels.

Discuss:

Movement and interactivity

Emotional pacing and transitions

How you guide attention (visual contrast, spatial audio)

The shift from peace to ruin as a narrative arc

9. Technical Choices and Challenges

Tools used: Unreal Engine, photogrammetry software, audio tools, etc.

Key design problems (e.g. resolution, mood control, motion comfort) and how I solved or adapted to them.

Artistic compromises or experiments that influenced the final output.

10. Critical Reflection: What Did the Practice Reveal?

Did the VR project achieve the goal of emotional or subjective authenticity?

What did the medium allow that photography could not?

Were there unexpected limitations?

Consider viewer responses (if applicable) or anticipated impact.

11. Conclusion, Limitations, and Future Work

Restate my findings from both parts.

Acknowledge the limitations: technical, ethical, conceptual.

Suggest avenues for further exploration...