

In this series, I wanted to show what academic pressure actually feels like from the inside. It's more than just being "busy" or having a lot of homework; it's a weight that starts to change how you see yourself and the world. Since I am the person in these photos, this project is my own way of dealing with the stress that most people expect us to just "handle" quietly.

I wanted the aisles to look like a maze or a tight cage, showing how trapped you can feel when you're buried in research and deadlines. I also included old technology, like the microfilm reader and the "Dimes Only" coin slot, to show how mechanical and outdated the system can feel—like we are just parts of a machine rather than actual people.

The lighting in these photos is everything. I used harsh, red, and high-contrast light to represent that "always-on" feeling of anxiety—the panic of failing and the constant reminders of grades (the "F" stamps) that follow you even when you close your eyes. Then, I used motion blur and shadows to show the moments where I feel like I'm disappearing or losing control, physically overwhelmed by the mess on my desk and the thoughts in my head.

We talk a lot about "success" and "getting the grade," but we don't talk enough about the cost. I made these images to show the late nights, the pills, the crumpled paper, and the mental toll that stays hidden. I want people to see that we aren't just students who perform; we are humans who are tired of being invisible behind our GPA.

Success shouldn't have to hurt this much. Gerald Davis



In this image, I wanted to visualize the intrusive thoughts that come with burnout. The "F" stamps over my eyes represent how, after hours of studying, you start to see yourself only through your grades. I included the "Am I going to fail?" popup window with the "YES" button highlighted to show that moment of pure pessimism. The mix of medication and the red "warning" light creates a sense of emergency-like my brain is hitting a breaking point.



I shot this aisle in the library to show how a place of learning can start to feel claustrophobic. By framing the shot deep between the tall, dark shelves, I wanted to create a "tunnel vision" effect. It feels like a tight space where there is no way out but forward, through more and more books, showing how endless the work feels.



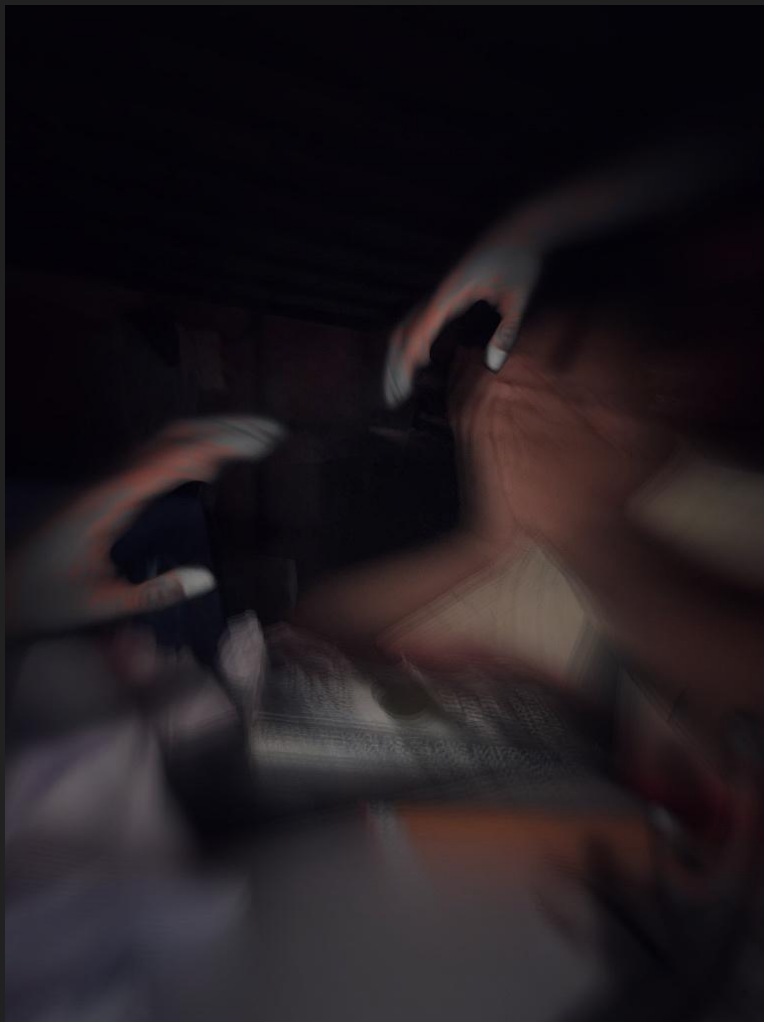
This photo of the old Minolta microfilm reader represents the feeling of being "stuck in the past" or part of an old, mechanical system. The machine looks like a giant, staring eye. I feel the char was placed right in front of it to show how students are forced to sit and stare into these screens for hours, becoming almost like an extension of the machine themselves.



This is a more literal look at the exhaustion. I'm dressed in a shirt and tie to show the "professional" expectation of a student, but my eyes are closed and I'm slumped over. The red light from the side represents the that unnatural, high-stress energy you have to find when you're working while the rest of the world is asleep.



I focused on the coin slot to highlight the "coldness" of the institution. Everything is labeled, locked, and requires "payment"-whether that's actual money or just your time and energy. It's a reminder that in the academic world, you're often treated like a number in a filing cabinet or a customer at a machine.



This is the most emotional photo for me. I used motion blur to capture a literal "mental breakdown." My hands are over my face, and the image is distorted to show how anxiety can make you feel like you're physically vibrating or losing your grip on reality. The desk and the books are still there, but everything is spinning out of control. It's the moment where the pressure finally becomes too much to hold. the hands represent an intrusion—the feeling that there is nowhere to hide from the judgment or needs of the outside world.