

	<h1>Open College of the Arts</h1>
	<h2>Tutor report</h2>

Student name	Simon Lewis	Student number	505520
Course/Module	People and Place	Assignment number	1

Dear Simon

Many thanks for the first assignment and it is good to see you making a start on the course.

Overall Comments

The assignment was well presented in a print box and featured a series of prints, plus a sheet with thumbnail and explanation for each image.

The learning log is a blog – I have added comments on this in the learning log section further in the report.

The images show a real commitment to develop your own style and to continue to learn and improve your photography. The commentary on each image is detailed and honest. You are able to evaluate your work and suggest where improvements could be made if you were to take the shot again.

Please continue to do this for future assignments.

The prints are of high quality. For the actual images you may like to remove the information and just leave the image with or without the title. This way the images get to stand on their own merit.

You comment on exploring natural light further and I would encourage that – it will be useful for the next few assignments as there can often be mix of interior and exterior shots.

You also write about how to build a rapport with your models – each portrait photographer has their own approach. Some go for the Austin Powers style and are very loud, and in your face. However I have seen other portrait photographers who are almost silent in how they approach their models with minimal direction. Your family is clearly being obliging models but I think in order to develop your own style you will need to photograph others for you to be yourself as photographer.

Assessment potential (after Assignment 1)

“Formal Assessment: You may want to get credit for your hard work and achievements with the OCA by formally submitting your work for assessment at the end of the module. More and more people are taking the idea of lifelong learning seriously by submitting their work for assessment but it is entirely up to you. We are just as keen to support you whether you study for pleasure or to gain qualifications.

Please consider whether you want to put your work forward for assessment and let me know your decision when you submit assignment 2. I can then give you feedback on how well your work meets the assessment requirements.”

Feedback on assignment

Wrapping

This is an original image and it is clear that attention has been paid to the detail. The plain blue background helps to give a neutral backdrop as it picks up the blue in the wrapping paper. The shiny surface is hard to photograph and takes skill in deflecting the light – normally using a soft box or reflected light is the best option.

Window light can easily be diffused by covering the window with tracing paper or greaseproof.

You haven't given details of the lighting used so I cannot give much further guidance. (If you do use lighting setups in the following assignments – do give details as I can then add comments if applicable.)

What makes this image is the expression shown in Jordan's eyes – the element of surprise is well shown. I think a slightly smaller aperture – around f6.7 would help to improve depth of field and the sharpness of the image.

Homework

This is a strong image. The overall effect is powerful and this is due to both Jordan's pose and the contrast between the bright blue of this top and the darker brown wood. You have picked out the areas that I would comment on – the line of the table is unfortunate and hard to avoid. The antlers do just need that bit more space as you say.

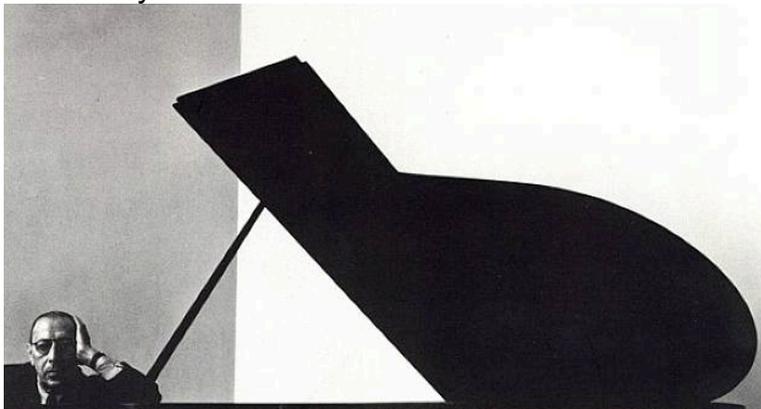
With regard to natural light – do look at Jane Bown and Bert Teunissen.

Jane is the master of available light portraiture. Bert Teunissen did a project called Domestic Landscapes, which may also appeal to you.

Do investigate natural light, as it is the most wonderful medium to work with.

It can so easily be manipulated by using shade, improvised reflectors out of card or diffused by blinds and curtains.

Also do consider making the link to this photograph by Arnold Newman of Stravinsky – the use of the elbow is similar.



Finger Frame

In this image the idea shows you have thought about the result. However this image lacks the power of the previous two. This partly due to the lighting but I also think blue top and the green wristband cause colour confusion.

You may like to try the image in black and white and see how that changes it.

Head & Shoulders

This is a well-framed portrait. The use of the space on the right works in the image. In addition the graduation in tone caused by shadow on the background adds some interest.

The highlight on the left shoulder could be subdued a little – there are many techniques in Photoshop for doing this but this one that I also seem to default to for dodging/burning in.

<http://www.thelightsrightstudio.com/videos/GetYourDodging&BurningUnderControl.mov>

This was shot with a 60mm lens, I would be wary of using a focal length any shorter than this for portrait work.

Marmite

In this image you have created a relaxed image. I agree with the comments on the use of the 44mm lens distorting the hands and plate – using a wide-angle lens can give creative effects but on the whole it should be avoided, as it will cause distortion.

The background suits the yellow shirt. The framing is also very good as the crop is tight enough around the body.

Bed

This is a very strong image and seems to capture Jordan well. The long exposure has created a still pose. The image is very sharp and the detail well captured in the pattern of the bedding. The highlights are controlled as no loss of detail has occurred in the white t-shirt.

It is this image that causes me to recommend Nan Goldin as an artist to look at.

The other photographer who springs to mind is Philip-Lorca diCorcia.

Sketchbooks

NA

Learning Logs/Critical essays

The blog is very clearly structured and you are covering each project in detail. It is clear that you are using your experience from Art of Photography.

I particularly like the use of the tear sheets at the beginning of the People Aware. This is a great way of looking for picking out key elements that make good portrait photographs work. To take this to the next stage you could annotate these pulling out the consistent elements – these can be technical and artistic. Look for depth of field, use of focal length, viewpoint, lighting, where the model is looking

You have some very obliging models and this does allow you to develop a real rapport with them. (I am envious as both girls have reached ages where they refuse to be photographed and I end up with images of hands over

faces!)

However do also consider photographing people you do not know – or widen the scope to other family and friends, as this will challenge you in different ways.

Suggested reading/viewing

Jane Bown – posed black and white photographs – always works handheld using available light

Vivien Maier – recently discovered street photographer

Harry Borden – commercial portrait photographer

Nan Goldin – this work will either appeal or it won't! She has photographed family and friends for a very long period of time. Work is normally presented as AV slideshows and some of the images in the earlier work can be distressing.

Philip-Lorca diCorcia – American art photographer

Pointers for the next assignment

People and Activity

Assignment 2

This assignment asks for a less formal approach to photographing people. You have a choice to either choose the same people doing different things, or different people at the same event/activity. The choice will very much be influenced by what/where you have access to photograph.

Photographers you may find helpful to look at include:

Gary Winogrand – American documentary photographer in particular his work around zoos.

Steve McCurry – photojournalist whose work includes a strong mix of portraits combined with people in their environment

John Gay – black and white documentary images of Britain

Henri Cartier-Bresson, Robert Doisneau, Willy Ronis, Brassai - all masters of the French black and white documentary style.

If you have any queries regarding this feedback or the course, please do get in touch.

Regards

Andrea

Tutor name:	Andrea Norrington
Date	14 th April 2012
Next assignment due	15 th June 2012