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People and Place
Study Log

Contents

Portrait – Scale and Setting

I chose to use a bridal setting for this first exercise, and after some deliberation opted to use images from a standing pose. This makes it easier to not only see the whole view of the model, but also stops the dress from bunching up and creating an unpleasant balloon effect.

There is a slight issue with the shadows under the eyes, giving almost a panda like look to the portraits, however for the purposes of the exercise, and due to time and availability constraints I decided not to reshoot them.

Of the four images I find the head only shot to be the least pleasing. This is mainly due to the fact that it shows little of the bridal concept, and is maybe a little too tight on the head. While it does have the effect of concentrating the viewers attention of the face and eyes, it also has the side effect of removing much of the context from the image and leaves it as little more than a head shot when viewed alone. Obviously this would change were the image part of a series within a full wedding shoot.

The head and shoulders image is a little better, it conveys more of the feeling I was looking for and has the added interest of the dress detail. The little bit of background detail adds some locational context to the image and again it would seem to fit better as part of a series, and not so much as a stand alone image. I think with this image a viewer would be drawn to the models face and eyes, making it possibly the most pleasing of the four images for use as a facial portrait.

The torso/half length image is much stronger as a stand alone portrait. It is easy to see it is a bridal image, and show not only the bride but also much more of the dress. The fact that more of the building is visible also aids the image by giving it more of a feel of location and occasion. My only concern is that that as a viewer your eyes are naturally drawn down the length of the dress, and as it ends the image suffers slightly from the feeling of being cut off.

Of the four images I much prefer the full length portrait. Maybe this is because as a viewer we expect to see full length bridal portraits, showing the whole of the dress, or maybe it is because in this set of images it is the one that works best. The fact that the dress can be seen fully, and that there is an obvious location visible in the background, all add more to wedding feeling of the image.

Technically there were several issues with photographing this set of images. The first being although it was fairly late in the afternoon the sun was quite bright, causing harsh shadows, and even using two flashguns at quite a close distance it wasn't enough to overcome the power of the sun. On reflection it would have been better to use portable studio lights which are much more powerful and could have been used with a bigger diffuser to soften the light. Secondly it is always difficult to keep both the details of a bright white dress, and darker areas in balance, and again I think here I would have benefited from using a larger more powerful light source.

Thinking About Location

For this exercise I was somewhat spoiled for choice. Sweden has an abundance of beautiful outdoor locations including lakes, mountains, forests and old buildings located for from anywhere. However after looking at several of these, certain issues began to arise. The time to travel to some of them was excessive. The forest, waterfall and gorge locations required several hours of driving combined with a couple of hours walking through rough terrain, and the old building whilst offering an amazing location was equally awkward to get to, and had since been locked up for the winter. Whilst this may not be an issue when working with several people to help carry things, and prepare the model when you finally arrive, working alone with a model it can be very difficult to get everything into place at the right time.

I decided to use an old municipal building in a village about an hour away, it has a series of arches built into an external wall leading to a doorway. Upon arrival I was greeted with piles of scaffolding and numerous other indicators of ongoing renovation, which would mean shooting the image slightly offset to one side. The test image is a little cropped to remove the paint cans and steel poles, and gave me enough of an idea as to what I wanted to do. Upon returning with a model some days later, I was a little annoyed to find that most of the renovation had moved to the other side of the arch corridor, which forced a slight rethink on where I wanted to place the model to avoid having numerous things in shot which would be distracting.

The idea was to have the model in white, holding white flowers in the archways, the archways and the white motif were supposed to suggest waiting for or going to, some kind of grand occasion.

Whilst I like the final image I can't help but feel I didn't achieve the goal I wanted, and it looks more like a bride waiting for her groom to arrive. The actual pose of the model could be improved I think, by lowering the flowers to either waist level or letting them hang down by her side. Revisiting this at a later date with the model and her partner resulted in two relatively pleasing staged wedding images, using the location in a different way to achieve a slightly blown out dreamier background.

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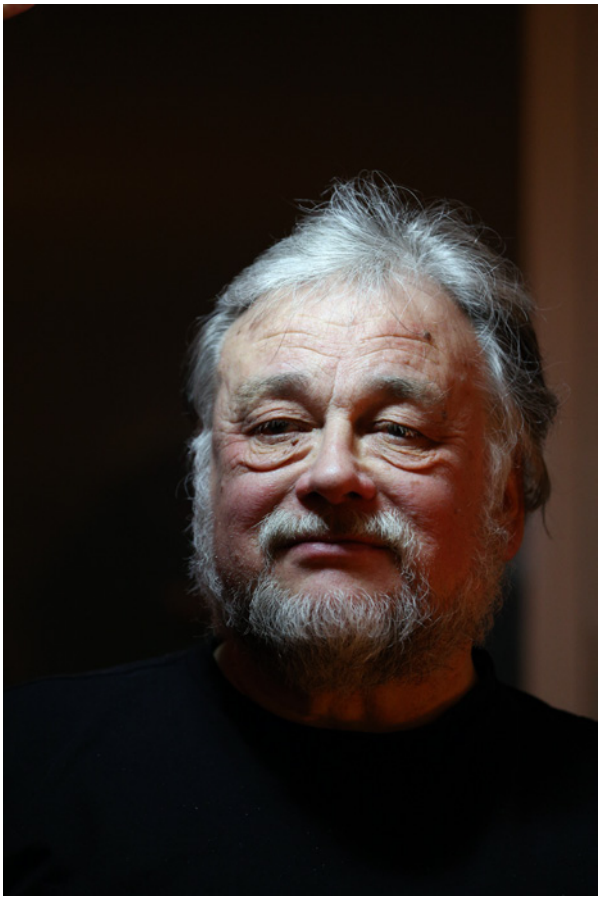
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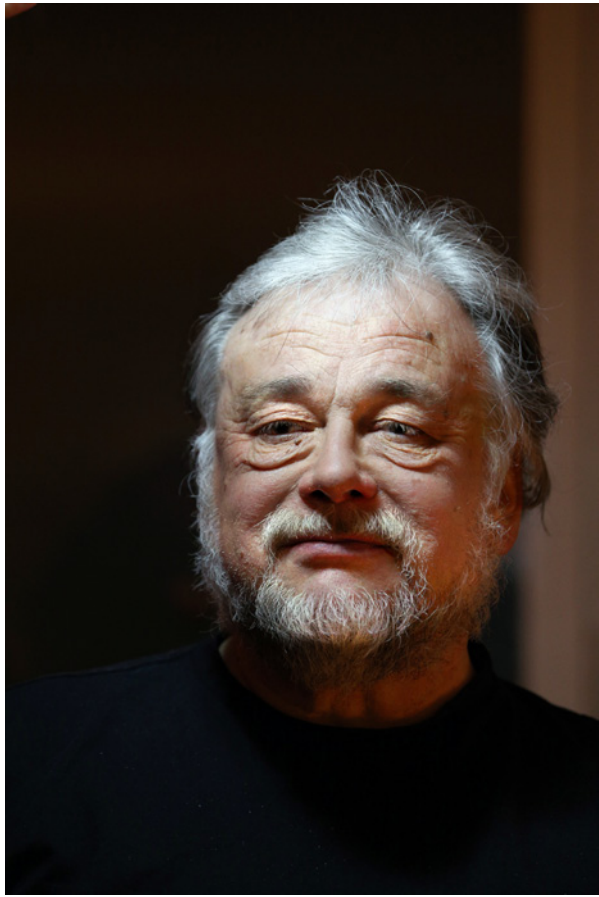
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Experimenting with Light

The fact that this exercise was supposed to be using the same person for all images caused some slight issues, peoples time and commitments meant that I had to resort to using four people instead of one. It was an enjoyable exercise in that trying to get away from the usual use of flash and studio lighting made it a little more challenging.

Image 1 uses the lighting from a computer screen as the main source. The obvious blue tint does make the image a little cold, but also tells the viewer exactly what is happening.

Image number 2 is using the light generated by a candle inside a large red paper balloon. This in turn lights the face of the person holding it. The light is quite weak, and could have been improved using a flash with a coloured gel, to match the light coming from the balloon. There are issues here with the fact that the lack of light required both a wide aperture, and a longer shutter speed, even though using a very high ISO. None of these facts are ideal in portraiture. The wide aperture meaning we lose depth of focus, the long shutter speed introduces blur due to even the slightest of movement, and the high ISO introduc-

es both noise and a loss of some fine detail. Again this could be overcome by using an artificial light source to match the colour of the light from the balloon.

Image 3 was taken when doing the set on focal lengths. The lighting comes from a powerful LED torch, inside a rogue flashbender. This is a medium size, flexible diffuser intended for speedlights. In this case the diffuser is shaped to follow the curve of the face, and held approximately 12 inches above the forehead at around 45 degrees. This gives a slightly harsh light due to the relatively small size of the dif-fuser, but it does allow the light to both wrap around the face, and pick out the details. In hindsight it would have been worth placing a reflector lower down at 45 degrees, to soften the shadows, and add a little light to the lower areas of the face.

Image 4 is from the same set of images, and uses the same basic LED torch with diffuser lighting. This time it is directed into a large large gold reflector. This has the effect of not only making the image warmer, but also softening the harsh light a little. This also has the effect of slightly reducing the prominence of any wrinkles and blemishes on the skin.

Image number 5 was taken during the exercise eye contact and expression. What I wanted to try here was have 2 colours of light on either side of the face. The lighting used is 2 studio flashes, one set to flash and one using only the lower powered modelling light. The main flash is in a large softbox, the other is using a hard silver reflector. Whilst the image is a little low key, the result is as I had hoped. The yellow light on the subjects left side adds a little depth to the image, by adding a slight rim light to the left shoulder.

Image number six is a simple outdoor portrait in natural light. The day was quite bright but with a lot of light grey cloud. This has the effect of making a very soft light, with none of the harsh shadows associ-ated with bright sunshine. The image is maybe a little cold, there was no real colour to the light and it may have been beneficial to try to do this later in the day, when there is a more golden colour to the light which would have had the effect of making it a little warmer. However, as an illustration off soft daylight lighting it works well.

An Active Portrait

I chose to photograph a potter at work for this exercise, and it quickly became obvious there was going to be an issue.

Due to the nature of his work the chance of getting a full view of his face and expression would be extremely difficult, always either looking down at the pot or obscured as he crouched down behind it.

What the image does show I think is the concentration and attention he is putting into the work he is doing. Not being distracted by my being there and not even noticing what I was doing, he just has time for the clay in his hands. The cluttered fore and background make you think that he is busy with what he does, and the clay splashes in places suggest that all that matters is the final product.

The end result is maybe a little simple and basic. It shows a potter at work and nothing more and maybe it would have been nicer to get something more exciting within the image, crouching down and peering over the finished article, or the moment as he throws the clay onto the wheel. I do however think that the image shows a man that is doing something because he enjoys it and it is what he wants to do. There is nothing false or staged about the image and maybe that has pushed it more into the field of reportage than purely portrait, but as a depiction of the potter at work I think the image is successful.

Out of Frame

Thought

Direct

Eye Contact and Expression

For this exercise I decided to go with a series of simple head and shoulder images in black and white. The idea being to concentrate more on the view of the eyes and the expressions without being distracted by body positions or background details.

Expressions and eye position within portraits can be used to convey numerous feelings and intentions. Normal practice is to have the eyes directed towards the camera lens, creating a sense of contact with the viewer. However, having the eyes directed in a slightly different direction can be used to give an impression of some kind of connection with either what is happening outside the frame of the image, or with what the subject is thinking or doing.

An example of this is in the image "out of frame", whilst there is no direct eye contact, the direction of the subjects eyes, and the light falling mainly on one side of his face could suggest that his attention is being drawn to something happening outside of the frame, possibly on the otherside of a window.

The image "thought" again has no direct eye contact, but the facial expression and hand playing with the moustache, combined with the fact his eyes are pointing slightly away and up, could suggest that he is deep in thought or day dreaming about something other than being sat in front of a camera.

The image "direct" is a more standard portrait.

Whilst the face is pointing slightly towards the right of the image, the eyes are directed towards the camera, creating a direct link to the viewer. The neutral expression conveys little in the way of emotion or feeling and as such tells us little about the subject.

As can be seen in the other images expression, head position and eye position can all be used to create an impression of emotion. A raised head and a smile obviously idicate happiness, while a lowered head and a slightly down turned mouth can point towards the opposite. A wrinkled brow and a gaze directed away might suggest confusion or interest in something else, and a lowered head with a wry smile might be considered by some to be flirting with the camera.

For myself I find that there are no rights or wrongs within the context of eye contact and expression in portraits. Whilst in many sistuations direct eye contact is preferable, it all comes down to what you are trying to convey within the image, and how you want the final image to look. Some things work better than others, and sometimes a what seems like a good idea, can be completely wrong for the specific image you are trying to create. Even a portrait with the face covered, be it by hands, or by a mask, clothing or even dirt, can say something about the subject, and hold some interest for the viewer.

1 acceptable
2 acceptable
3 acceptable
4 not good
5 not good
6 not good
7 good

8 not good
9 not good
10 acceptable
11 not good
12 acceptable
13 acceptable
14 acceptable

15 good
16 acceptable
17 good
18 acceptable
19 good
20 good

Review a Portrait Sequence

Completing this exercise has proved to be more troublesome than I could ever have expected, two attempts failed due to technical problems and two attempts cancelled due to model issues. It felt like a major achievement just to finally complete the exercise.

Having worked previously with experienced and professional models, it was fairly obvious that my subject wasn't at her most comfortable posing in a public place, and I found this to have an effect on both how I felt and how I worked during the exercise. I decided to stick to fairly basic poses and expressions, nothing outlandish or uncomfortable, in order to try and help the subject feel a little less obvious and exposed.

The idea was to slowly move through some poses whilst changing the facial expressions. These expressions wouldn't be overly demanding. Ranging from an relaxed face, through smiles and half smiles, to something approaching boredom or discontent.

The advantage I have found when working with experienced or professional models is that they need less in the way of direction, and already have a good understanding of what is required from a photographers point of view, how to angle themselves to the light etc. It is much harder to direct someone without that experience, you need to be far more specific and detailed in what you want from a pose or expression, small things that would be second nature to a professional need to be pointed out and explained. It can be a little more time consuming, and require more patience on behalf of both the photographer and model. Whilst these things are drawbacks, they also mean I needed to think more about what I was doing, about how I phrased my instructions in order to get the result I wanted. This can only be considered a matter of good practice, as anything that improves the communication between a model and a photographer is helpful.

Working through the series of images it was interesting to to see how I went more from a planned approach of, this pose to this pose to this pose, and moved into a more improvised method of making small adjustments rather than change the pose dramatically. It is easier to say turn your head slightly left, and look into camera or raise your left hand than it is to go from standing to crouching or jumping. It also helped to be able to physically show a position and then let the subject interpret that in her own way.

In some of the earlier images I felt she was looking a little tense in the face, the expressions seeming slightly forced. It was also necessary to remind her to keep her eyes towards the camera as much as possible, even when facing slightly away. I noticed as we progressed some poses bringing a more natural smile and others bringing an unhappy or bored look, most obviously in image number 7, where it looks like she is waiting for something. I remember thinking at the time that this image would either work well, or look truly terrible, thankfully in my opinion it worked.

I also recall being a little disappointed that in image 14 her eyes were closed, but this leads nicely to the slightly closer image 15, which is amongst my favourites of the sequence. I also found myself feeling that the later images in the sequence had a more natural look to them, as she was becoming more relaxed the poses and expressions looked less tense. I decided to stop shooting more down to the weather conditions than anything else. The ground was very wet and soft, sinking into it and getting wet feet wasn't ideal, and it was also very cold, a couple of hours was enough for the model in the icy breeze.

Whilst working I did notice that I preferred the images where the expression was less obvious, a half smile or a relaxed look. I felt they looked more natural and less like someone being made to pose.

On reviewing the images at home, I found that I had a number that I wasn't exactly happy with for various reasons, expressions, composition, eye contact etc. The majority of images were acceptable, but nothing interesting or special, capturing a pose or expression but no real feeling of anything else. There are 5 images from the 20 that I would rate as good, these all have seem to feel more natural and relaxed, and not just like sterile fixed poses. I am torn for a favourite image between number 15 and number 20. Both have a little more character in them, and have something more in the expressions and poses that makes them appealing. I think if pushed I would chose number 20, it is a more natural looking image and the expression is just a little less directed to the camera.
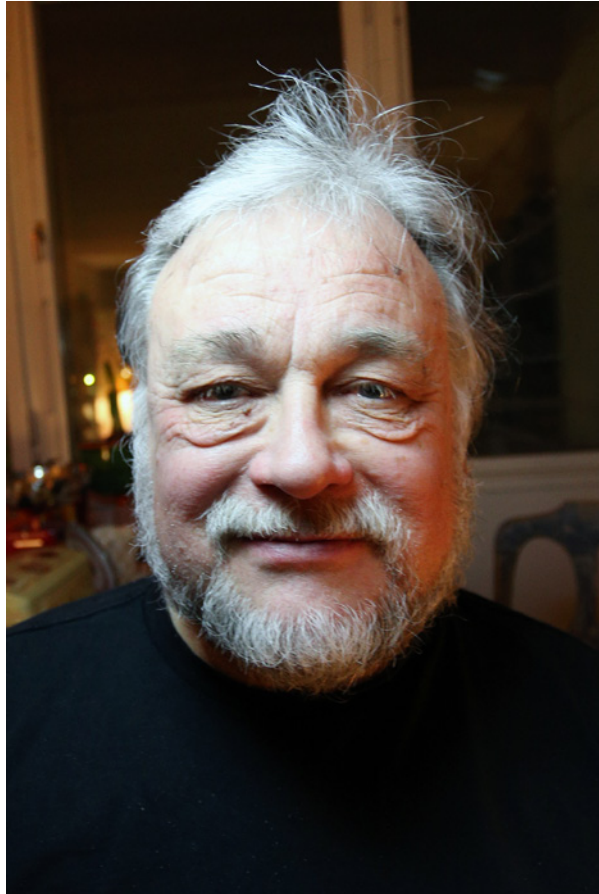
1 – 17mm
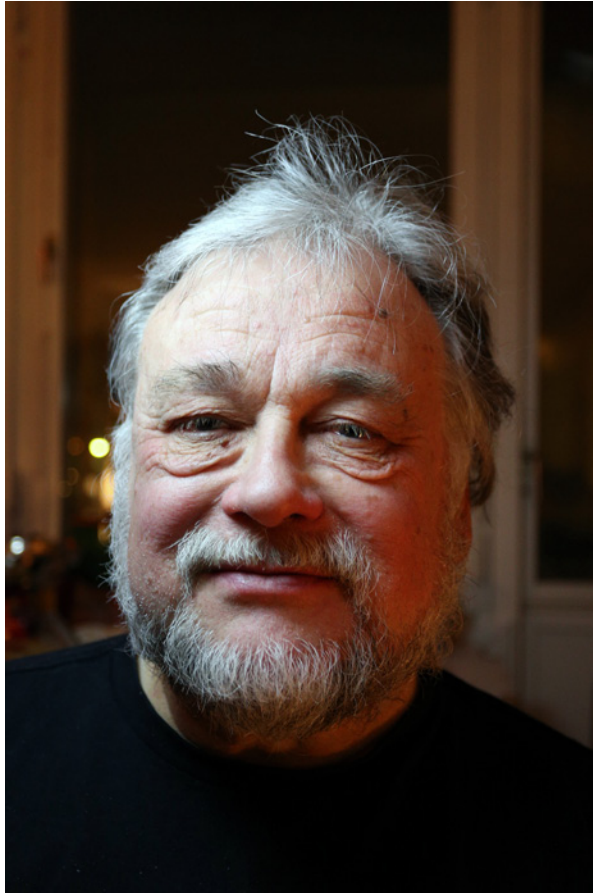
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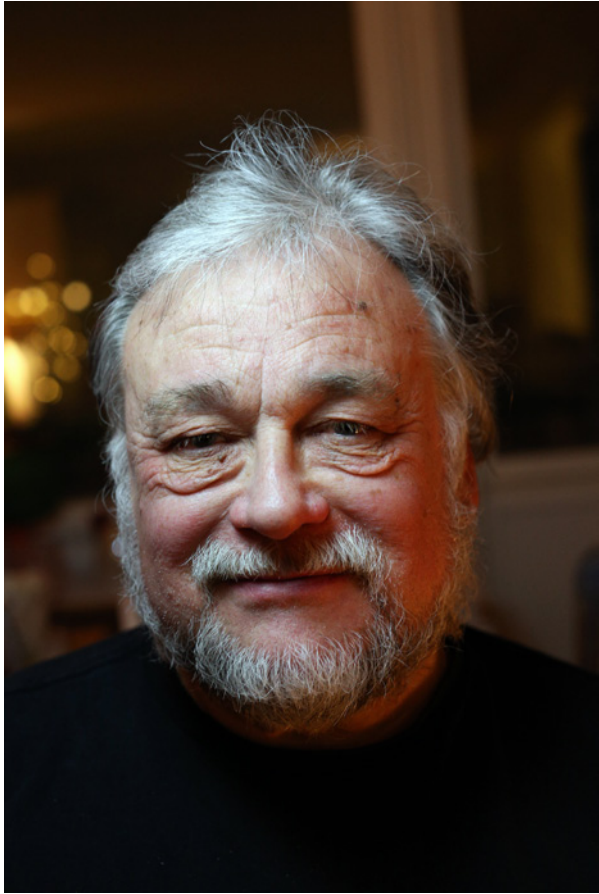
3 – 50mm
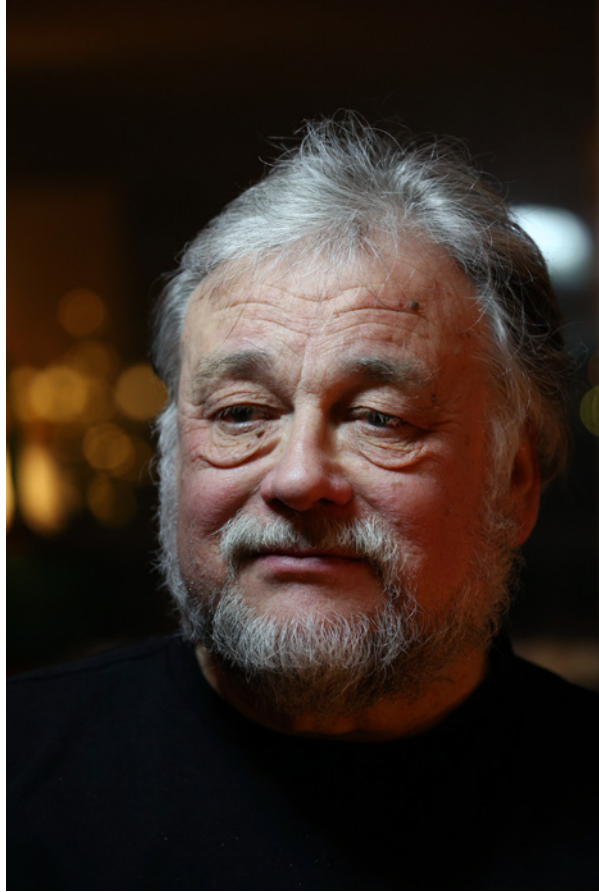
4 – 85mm

5 – 135mm
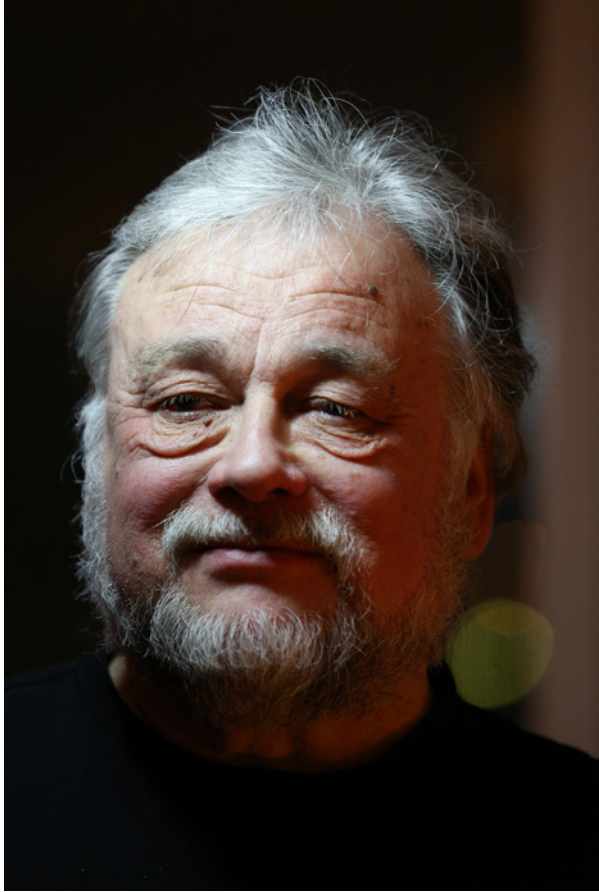
6 – 200mm

Focal Length

Creating a series of portraits using differing focal lengths is an interesting experiment in both how we see someone, and how the lens can change change what we see. I decided to use a fairly wide aperture of f/4, in order to exaggerate the depth of field changes at different of focal lengths.

At 17mm, the face is elongated and narrowed, it is also given more depth, for example noses appear longer. You also have to be very close for a face only portrait, which can lead to focus issues as you are within the minimum focus distance. It also has the effect of allowing much more background to be in shot and in focus, leading to messy and cluttered backgrounds in some cases. The image produced is neither pleasing, nor flattering to the subject and whilst it may be suitable for active portraits in a busy environment, in this case it does not work.

At 35mm the image has improved slightly, the face looks more natural, but is still slightly elongated and unflattering, the background whilst less obvious than at 17mm is still more obvious than would be wished for.

At 50mm the face is much more natural looking, with the background becoming more out of focus it is also less distracting. You also feel more comfortable from the camera side of this image, as the working distance has increased enough that you are no longer right up against the subjects face.

At 85mm I find the focal length starts to flatter the subject more. The slight telephoto effect compresses the face slightly, making it slightly less angular than it may otherwise be. The background is also improved by being much more out of focus, lights and features become less distracting and in some cases begin improve the image.

At 135mm I think we are at the point where the distance between the photographer and the subject begins to increase noticeably. This can be a good thing if you have enough room as the face is given a more flattering look, much less angular and softer. The background is now blurred enough to lose any distracting features. This is also around the focal length where shutter speed begins to become an issue if not using a tripod. Whilst the idea of 1x focal length = minimum shutter speed isn't a hard and fast rule, it is a good rough guideline on how low you can take it before you start to notice lens movement in the image. It is also worth noting that higher shutter speeds also cut out the blurring associated with small movements made by the subject. When using flash and/or stabilised lenses of course these values can change as both can have benefits when shooting at lower shutter speeds. The stabilised lens cancelling out small movements, and the flash duration being so short and bright that it in effect freezes movement even at slightly slower shutter speeds.

At 200mm I think the compression effect is starting to become obvious, the face whilst still more pleasing that at wide angles, is becoming flatter and rounder, the working distance required is now much bigger, which makes it difficult in smaller spaces. It does of course mean you can work much further away, taking images and not attracting the attention of the subject can be advantageous in many areas.
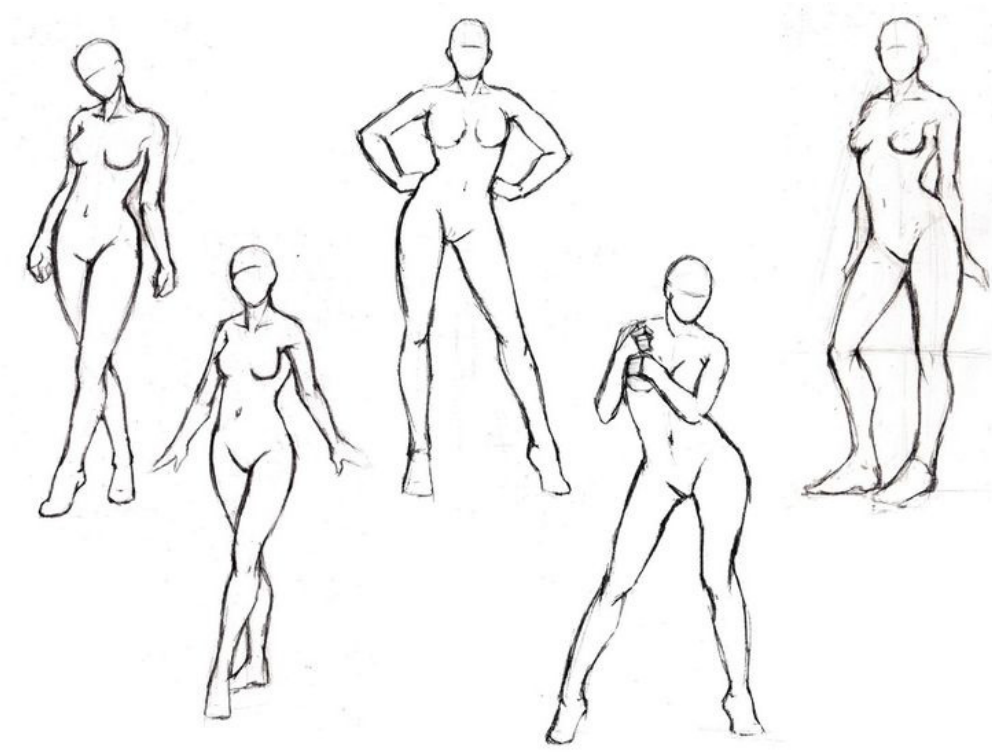
I think in my opinion the preferable focal lengths for portrait work would be in this order:
1. 85mm
2. 135mm
3. 50mm
4. 200mm
5. 35mm
6. 17mm

That is of course assuming there is no special need for either wide angle work or extreme telephoto length.
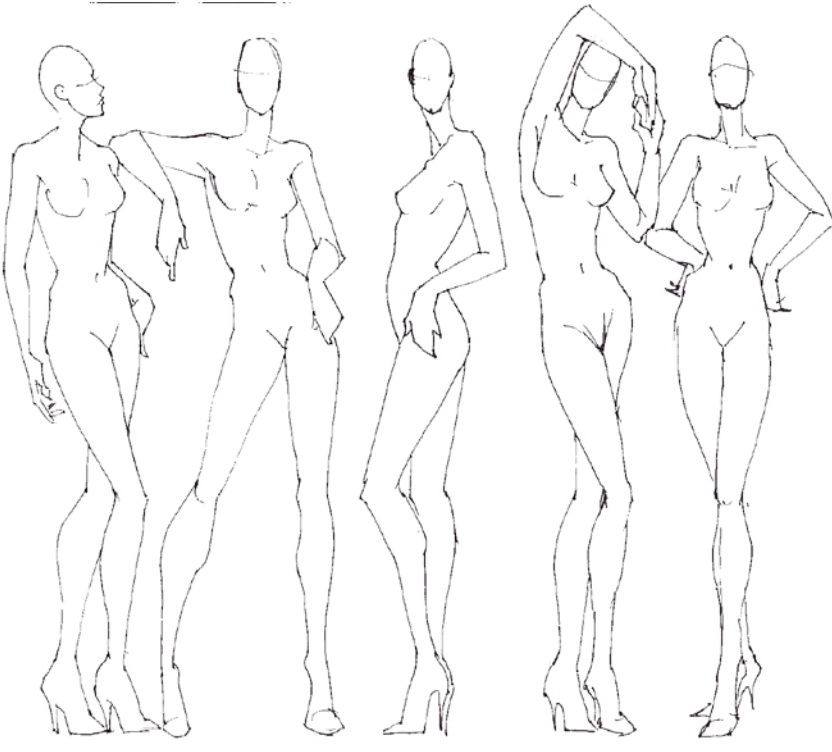
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Varying the Pose

Due to various issues around finding people to pose and being let down by people at the last minute, I have decided to go with a more research based write up for this exercise.

On viewing various magazines, websites and blogs the first thing to become apparent is the vast number of poses there are, and how many of them are very specific to the genre in which they are used. There are also numerous phone apps and websites dedicated to model posing guides, which may or may not be helpful.

Traditional portraits seem to use a style that is more related to classical art and sculpture, poses where the subject is standing, sitting or reclining seem to concentrate on showing form and natural body shapes. These poses are all very easy on the eye, maybe because we are so used to seeing them, and as such all appear to be comfortable and natural. Whether a subject has crossed legs while sitting or folded arms while standing, none appear to be out of the ordinary. Obviously some poses work better than others, for example a person standing with both arms hanging limp by their sides will appear to be just standing there, where as someone with their arms raised above their head in a ballerina type pose, or their hand on their hips with their feet apart will both suggest some kind of context to the image. Using the hands to interact with the face can add interest, whether they are used to support it as you sit leaning on a desk, or if it is being used as if to push away a strand of hair from the face. The most successful traditional portraits are ones where the subject looks relaxed and where the poses appear natural and unforced.

Other types of photography use much more extreme posing techniques. High fashion for example has a trend towards poses that look unnatural and forced, the "broken doll" look where limbs are held out at acute angles, or where backs and necks are arched in such away as to appear uncomfortable. Overall there is a much harsher and more angular look, intended without doubt to accentuate the fashion on display. Whilst these poses work with tall thin models in the confines of the fashion world, applied to normal people in the normal world they can look somewhat odd and out of place. Though it must be said, it would make an interesting project to apply these poses to normal people going about their daily business even if just to see the results.

The main problem I find with posing is that no single pose fits all. What works for one person may be completely wrong for another person, and what works in one situation may look clumsy or forced in another. Being able to direct the subject through numerous poses quickly and efficiently is a great advantage and is something that may take time to master. Working with an experienced model is something that can only be considered as extremely helpful, as they usually have not only the confidence to work without feeling uncomfortable or embarrassed, but also the experience to know what is required of them and what poses may or may not work.

It must also be mentioned that a great pose by itself is not enough, the background of the image, the context of the image and maybe most importantly the way the lighting works within the image are all as important, if not more so, than the pose itself.

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Assignment 1: A Portrait

For this assignment I decided to create a series of non posed images with my girlfriend Anna. I decided on non posed to take away any hint of being uncomfortable in forced poses, and to show real moments and expressions.

Image 1
f/2.8 1/40 50mm

This image was taken during a news story about a shooting in a local town, and in my view shows her reaction to what she is hearing and seeing. I chose to use black and white as the background of the image is a little overpowering in colour, due to light passing through coloured curtains. I think maybe the depth of field is a little shallow, with her far eye being out of focus, and could benefit from a little more area in focus, and maybe I could crop in a little tighter on her face but as a whole I think the image works the way I had intended.

Image 2
f/1.8 1/250 50mm

Another close portrait showing her face as she works on her computer, writing an assignment for university. I tried to show her concentrating here, using only the available light coming from her laptop screen to illuminate her face. Again a little more depth of focus could be beneficial, but I like the effect it gives the image. I converted to black and white due to a very strong colour caste coming from her screen, that was impossible to correct. I am less happy about the strange effect on her right shoulder,it appears to be a lighter area that extends across to the edge of the image almost as if something has moved across. I can only guess that it is the result of the lighting in the room, or a reflection from the TV which was nearby. I think if I was to re shoot this image it would be better to have no other lighting in the room apart form the laptop screen.

Image 3
f/1.6 1/50 50mm

An image taken outside at night in the winter. I am not altogether happy with this image, the positioning and background are not pleasing to the eye, and I find the strands of hair being blown around somewhat distracting. The light from a nearby street lamp is very harsh and the high ISO required has lost some sharpness in the detail of the image. It would have been much better in retrospect, to use a wider view showing more of the environment, with the dark skies and deep snow illustrating the cold night.

Image 4
f/6.3 1/500 40mm

An image showing the simple pleasure of letting a wave roll over you while sitting in the sea. The angle here is maybe not the best, and could possibly be improved upon by moving more to the front, however due to the lack of space, and the large waves this was not really an option. Had she been facing just a little more towards the camera the moment would have been caught perfectly. I do however think it captures her happiness at just being there, as you can see enough of her expression to know she is enjoying herself.

Image 5
f/4 1/125 40mm

I find this image a little uncomfortable, whilst I like the expression she has, I find the pose a little awkward and the framing a little off due to the elbows being outside the edge. Possibly cropping in closer to the face and shoulders would help, but that would lose the background detail. I think this could be much improved upon with a wider view, showing more detail of the outdoor restaurant, and the view I has from the position on the mountain top.

Image 6
f/4 1/320 40mm

This is an image I like, my problem being is it really a portrait? The figures are quite small in the frame, and are facing away from the camera. It shows an interaction with an environment, but little in the way of expression. Would it be improved by having her closer and facing the camera? My honest answer is I don't know. It shows something very Swedish, something that we don't have in England, the right to walk wherever we wish, even over private property, as long as there is no damage caused.

Image 7
f/2.8 1/80 70mm

I will say from the outset that technically I am not happy with this image. Due to harsh but bad lighting the colours look wrong, and the high ISO has degraded the quality of the image quite badly. As an image showing an expression or feeling however I really like it. The look on her face as she interacts with the wolf is obviously one of happiness. The wolf itself could be more prominent in the image, and the background is a little cluttered with the other people. The angle could have been so much better, however moving about in the company of a pack or wolves is not the easiest thing to do, and using flash to improve the quality of the light was out of the question. I can only hope that one day I will have a chance to try this again.

Overall I think I haven't done my best with these images. The problem I see on reflection is that they are images that mean something to me, and the reasons they do cannot be transferred to the viewer. While some do show moments that are obviously interesting, the knowledge behind them and of why they carry importance or happy memories is neither obvious or relevant to the viewer.

Tutor Report

Overall Comments
You described your thought process well and analyzed the issues in your images very accurately. Overall there is space for improvement but this assignment is a good starting point for the course and I believe that with a continuous commitment you will be able to significantly improve your work In the near future.

Assessment potential (after Assignment 1)
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 unit. 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
Demonstration of technical and Visual Skills, Quality of Outcome, Demonstration of Creativity
Image 1 – The right eye is out of focus. Apart from that, the blurry background is good.
Many portrait photographers use lenses with very open apertures such as f1.4 in order to get a shallow depth of field in portraits, however the eyes should be very crisp. In that way the view is directed to the eyes and overall the image appears to be sharp. The composition and the lighting are both very good since there is a lot of light but its soft and evenly lights the models face. Her expression seems preoccupied, which matches what you wanted to achieve.
Image 2 – You did very well to just use the light from the screen. The image appears to be in focus, which suggests that you probably used a tripod.
It is possible to correct the light that is coming from the screen by adjusting the white balance accordingly or by using color filters on your lens to balance the colorcast of the artificial light.
The composition of Image no.3 is slightly awkward. You shot it wider than the first two, which is fine but you could have cropped the image so there is not so much space above the models head.
The lighting is not as good as in the previous images since her face is dark and there are only highlights of light on her nose, chin and hair. The hair seems blown out, which means it is overexposed and there is not much detail in it. Also the two lights behind her head are distracting.
The composition of the image no.4 is good. I like how the round stone dominates the image in a subtle but effective way. The exposure is also very good since the water drops are captured and are very crisp. Overall the round element of the stone and the waves of the water create a very dynamic image.
The lighting is slightly problematic though. The sun is very strong and the contrast is high.

If you shot it in the early morning or late afternoon hours the light quality would have significantly improved the image. This type of light produces less contrast, reducing the chances of losing parts of your subject in strong shadows or blown-out highlights although you have made a very good reading and there are no blown out parts of this image. The warm glow adds a pleasing feel to the scene, and the long shadows help to pick out details, adding texture and depth to the image.
The expression in image no.5 is very good. The model seems very relaxed and there is a sense of intimacy in this portrait, which makes it strong.
However there are some issues with this portrait that you have already addressed and described well although I think that a wider crop would not be the solution. Rather a closer crop or a crop in which you composed the image slightly lower so you can see her whole arms from her elbows upwards. The surrounding (over her head) is distracting and isn't necessary.
I like the idea of the image no.6 and you achieved the sense of interaction with of people with nature but it has technical problems. The image is underexposed and the ray of sunlight on top left corner that created the circle with the rainbow colors is problematic. Also the crop is a bit too wide. Look at the work of Thomas Haywood.
Image no.8 – The wolf is fascinating however the composition is unbalanced. There are a lot of distractions like the person in the background. A composition that would be more to the left and lower would have

made a better portrait of the wolf and the person in the background (right side of the image) would have been cropped out. Obviously it is difficult photographing wild animals with people since your control is limited but this image could have been much more striking. The lighting and exposure are good though.

Learning Logs or Blogs/Critical essays
You have not submitted you learning log/blog for this assignment, which is necessary in the future if you decide to send your work formal assessment.

Suggested reading/viewing
Look at the portraits of Thomas Haywood, Joel Sternfeld, Kathy Grannan and Jitka Hanslova

Pointers for the next assignment
For you next assignment, find an activity to photograph that you find interesting or an activity that you have a certain fascination with. That way it will be much easier and more enjoyable to engage with your subject. Try to apply the experience you gained from the first assignment and think of the lighting conditions that are present and what shutter speeds and f-stops you will need in order to capture the activity.

Good luck!

Tutor name	**Benjamin Beker**
Date	**09.03.2015**

Response to Tutor Report

I must say that I have no issue with any of Benjamin's comments. On reflection using images that have some kind of personal meaning is probably not the best way to go. Whilst they record instances that may be memorable or important to me, the story behind them is unknown by the viewer, and as such they have to stand on their own merits, rather than having technical difficulties overlooked because I know the back story.
I was tempted to attempt the assignment again from the start, as I think I let myself down. This is more of a failure of thought process than an inability to create the suitable images.
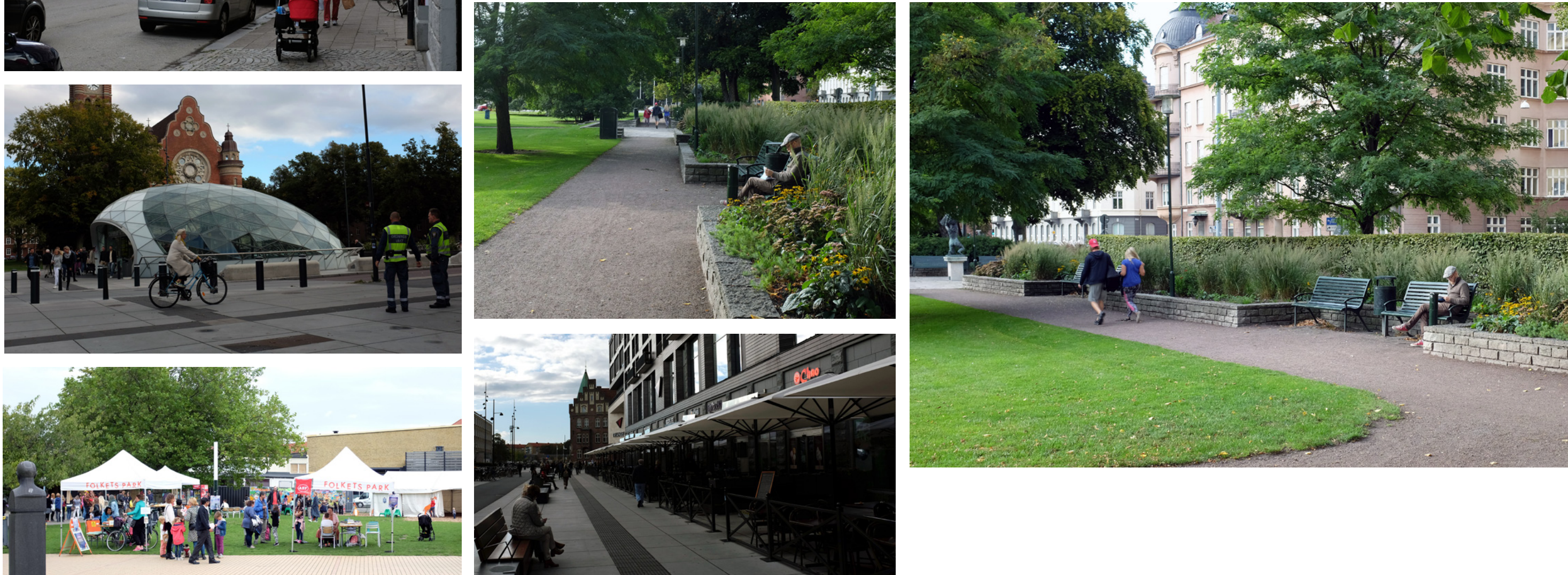
Developing your Confidence

I tried this exercise twice with different cameras to not only see how people reacted, but also to see if made any difference to the way I felt. When using my Canon 1DX I found my self feeling very obvious, and this seemed to be reflected more in people and their reactions. Some look directly at you, some ask about the camera, others make it clear that they do not wish to be photographed. The camera whilst being visibly obvious is also very loud. The shutter noise drawing attention from people nearby. Having only used a 50mm lens whilst doing this exercise, I think using anything longer would have drawn even more attention, from both subjects and people around me.

For the second attempt I used a Fuji X100s. A much smaller compact camera, with a fixed 35mm lens. Whilst being a small camera it does function very well in manual modes, and even has usable manual focus, something which is missing on many smaller cameras. I felt much more at ease when using this camera, it is small, looks old fashioned and has a completely silent leaf shutter. People didn't seem to notice me at all when using it . The only downside of having the fixed 35mm lens is the need to be close to any subject if you wish to fill the frame with it, at which point people do notice.

Overall, as a confidence building exercise it was of benefit, especially once using the smaller less obvious camera. However I don't think I am a natural street photographer, as it is not something I can say I particularly enjoy. It does remind you though, that the possibilities for getting a photograph you never expected whilst generally out and about, are increased infinitely if you carry a camera with you. The majority of people now probably have phones equipped with some kind of camera, but to me, it always feels better to actually have a small compact camera in my pocket. The main benefits being you are using a tool designed solely for that purpose, and not draining the battery of your phone.

Capturing the Moment

For this exercise I decided to chose a trip to a gallery with my partners nephew and parents. Some of the images show the happiness of a young boy as he rides the train, and others capture people interacting with the gallery itself.

With my nephew on the train the three images are taken a few seconds apart, and show him reacting to something he has seen outside the window. Of the three I think the first one captures his moment of happiness best, as he smiles and points as we pass. I like the fact that, in such a short space of time, there are three distinct expressions, and that his arm continues to move across the frame.

The image of a few people in the room with the coloured lights projected onto the wall shows the way a small child can make anywhere a fun place, running to follow the movement of the lights along the wall.

There are four images of people in the gallery itself. The first of a lady viewing a semi nude portrait, whilst captured as I wanted, is a little flat. There is little to see and although she is obviously spending time to view the image, you see nothing of her face which would have added her reaction or feelings to the image.

The second image shows a lady photographing the photographs on the wall. While I like the idea of this, again it lacks a little context. We can see images behind her, but not the one she is actually photographing.

The third image was intended to show something which is all too common in modern life. Someone concentrating on their phone rather than what is going on around them. I like the way she seems to be oblivious to what is going on around her, and only has eyes for her phone. The image itself is a little soft, the focus on the man with the glasses to the right side of the image also holding his phone.

I chose the fourth gallery image as my favourite. It is nothing overly active or exciting, merely showing a man viewing a number of images on the wall. He appears to be deep in thought, concentrating on what he is seeing, letting nothing distract him. It is these kind of quiet personal moments I find more fun to photograph. There are always plenty of active exciting moments captured, be it sports or news items, people partying or going about their daily business. The quiet personal moments are the ones that we see less and less of in our modern world, with social media being updated every minute with bright shiny things to attract more followers, or 24 hour a day news showing us events as they happen in far off places, we seem to crave the exciting and miss out on so many little things, just because we are no longer looking for them. From a technical viewpoint I like that he is only lit by the light reflecting from the images, as if he has been drawn towards them by it.
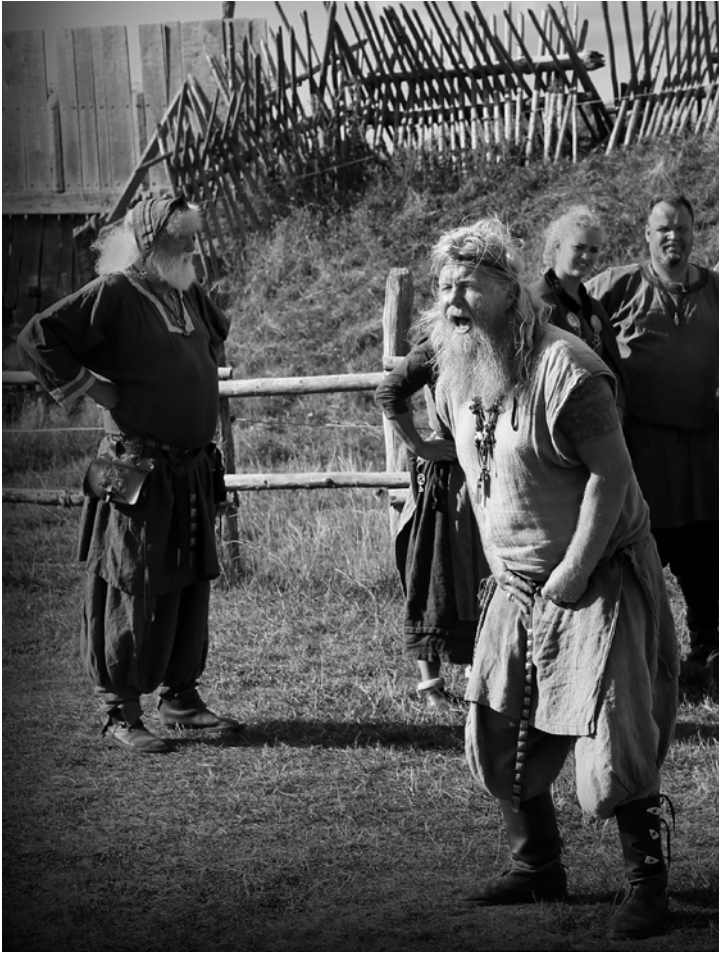
Standing Back

Working with longer lenses has both advantages and disadvantages. There are subjects that often require them, wildlife, aviation and sports photography for example, where it tends to be near impossible to get in close enough to use a short lens. Medium length telephoto lenses are often also useful for both landscape and people photography, when you either don't want to be close to the subject or there is no practical way of doing so.

Whilst using these longer lenses allow you to capture close in photographs of people at a distance they are not without their drawbacks. You tend to need to have a higher shutter speed in order to get a sharp image. With lower shutter speeds any slight movement of the lens is magnified causing a blurred image. This can be offset to some degree by using a stabilised lens, however these do not help in situations where subjects are moving, as you still require the high shutter speed to freeze the movement. There is also an issue with weight, longer lenses are heavier than their shorter counterparts, more noticeably so when they have large apertures. My 70mm-200mm f/2.8 IS

Canon lens for example weighs 1.5kg, when combined with the weight of a camera this can become tiring over the course of a whole day, and can make holding a camera steadily more difficult.

There is also the issue of the distance between camera and subject. Whilst taking photographs it is easy for things to pass between you and the subject, blocking out what you are trying to photograph. This problem is further exaggerated by the fact that when viewing your subject through a longer lens you have no view of what is happening outside of the frame. So you do not notice approaching obstacles people etc.

Then we have the depth of field. Due to the fact you are focusing generally at a higher magnification other things in the frame may be out of focus or soft. This of course is intended in many cases, to provide a more pleasing image, but longer lenses tend to have a narrower depth of field for a given aperture.

For example a 35mm camera using a f/2.8 35mm lens to focus on an object 10 metres away has a nearest in focus distance of 5.78m and a furthest one of 36.88 metres. Giving a total depth of field of 31.1m

Using the same camera, with a f/2.8 200mm lens we have a nearest in focus distance of 9.79 metres and a furthest in focus distance of 10.22 metres. Giving a total depth of field of 0.44m.

Now while this means people or objects may require a smaller aperture to get everything in focus, it also has the effect of blurring out the background, which can help isolate the person from the items behind them.

Another advantage of a longer lens is the way it has a compression effect on the background. As we move back with a longer focal length lens, the distance from the camera to the subject changes, but the distance from subject to background remains the same. With each change to a longer focal length, our distance from lens to subject becomes proportionally larger than the distance from subject to background. This causes a flattening effect, where not only does the background appear larger, but it also appears to be nearer to the subject. We can use this in creative ways to make objects appear closer to subjects in photographs, making backgrounds appear more attractive or dynamic.

Close and Involved

There are a number of problems I had with this exercise. Firstly, I am not a natural 'street photographer', it is a little difficult for me to make the transition to photographing random people in such a close manner. Secondly, in Sweden the issue of personal space is something that you don't invade unless invited, and as such being 30cm in front of a stranger taking their picture is considered to be a little rude and unacceptable. This is not due to a reluctance to be photographed, but more the proximity of the photographer.

Using a wide angle lens does introduce problems. Distortion can cause the subject to appear in a less than attractive way, and the issue of getting in close enough to fill the frame means you can often find yourself in the way of a person who is just going about their business, whilst this may not be a huge problem, in crowded places it can be uncomfortable. This issue is my main problem with using wide angle lenses in people photography, to illustrate it in the extreme, to fill the frame with a subjects head whilst using a 17mm lens on my full frame camera, I would have to be inside the minimum focus distance, something which is obviously pointless. This means we are left with less tight shots of people (without resorting to cropping), that are still needing to be taken from a distance that can be considered as uncomfortably close.

Using the lens to cover wide areas is less of a problem, and helps to give context and a sense of location to images, and in these cases the distortion can be less obvious.

A wide lens also works well for shots involving some kind of action or motion, as it can bring the viewer into the situation and also has the ability to give the effect of the subject coming out of the image.

With my images I decided not to get into any of the problems of waving a big camera in the faces of strangers and concentrated on using people that were aware I was there. Whilst this may not be entirely in the spirit of the exercise, experimenting in this way is somewhat less problematic.

There are times when a wide angle approach works far better than using a standard length or telephoto lens, it can bring intimacy to the image in a different way, and can draw the viewer into what is happening by being closer to the action, so to speak.

I find the best compromise on focal length to be around the 35mm length. There is less distortion, more working distance but still a reasonably wide angle to include backgrounds etc. if I wish, without having to extend the distance between myself and the subject.

Standard Focal Length

I tend to use a 50mm prime lens for many things, however I had never thought to try and have the non camera eye open, in order to match the scene in the viewfinder with what I was actually seeing. It does feel a little disorienting to start with and somehow not natural.

Due to the versatility of the 50mm lens, I decided to use a selection of images for this exercise, ranging from landscape to portrait.

When being used for landscape images, I find there are some issues which need to be overcome. The main thing is obviously the fact that you have a narrower angle of view than with a wide angle lens. This tends to mean having to stand further away to fit a wide scene in the image, which can lead to things appearing quite small within the frame. Another issue is the depth of field, the 50mm lens tends to need a narrower aperture than the wide angle lens, to get details sharp throughout the image. Whilst not a huge issue this can be problematic in low light situations, and can require a tripod where the wide angle lens does not.

The narrower view point of this focal length can be used to advantage when wanting to show more of a point of interest image. For example the image of the stone building, the foreground is filled with the building, showing its colours and textures, whilst the background has enough detail to give some interest and context. With a wider angle this would either have been distorted from being so close to the building, or the building itself would have been much smaller in the frame.

The image of the aircraft has just enough surrounding detail to see where it is, but again the 50mm has allowed the shape of the aircraft to be unchanged by the distorting effects of a wide angle lens. With this image I did have to stand back more than I expected to not only fill the frame with the plane, but also to match the views from both eyes.

The image of the lady laying by the sea under a tree was much easier. I was lucky enough to be in the right place when I noticed her, and again this less wide angle draws the interest to her and her bicycle, rather than the view of the beach and sea that would have been prominant with a wide angle lens. It is also better than using a medium telephoto lens suchas a 200mm, which would have isolated her from the sur-roundings.

The three protraits are all taken at different distanc-es from the subjects. Full length portraits are easy enough to take, with no need for larger distances that would be associated with longer traditional portrait lenses like 85mm and 135mm. Torso portraits and head portraits, again the working distance here is comfortable, unlike with a wider angle lens you don't have to be holding the camera within inches of their nose to fill the frame with their head.

There are many advantages to this focal length, the images have little or no distortion, and prime lenses tend to have not only a wider aperture, but also seem to give better quality with regards to sharpness, con-trast and colour. It does seem to be an ideal length for environmental portraits, where the surroundings play just as much of a part of the image as the person in it.

An Organised Event

Looking for an organized event, outdoors in late autumn in Sweden, is not something that will ever give you a lot of choice. At this time of year the weather has become cooler and darker and people are generally more interested in being inside in the warm. However there was one thing going on that sounded like it might be promising, a protest march through town. As a small social side note, the Swedish people like to march and voice their collective opinions. From subjects varying from racism and gender issues through to politics and education there will always be people somewhere ready to take to the streets. Malmö still has a series of huge marches on the Mayday bank holiday, a remnant of the socialist past.

The idea was to take part in the march itself, and record images as it went along, capturing the the people and areas they pass through.

In several of the images banners are visible, some show anti racist sentiment, some the rainbow flag of the gay rights movement and others the bright pink of the Swedish Fi party. I hope this shows that the march wasn't a small one issue thing, but a large well attended gathering.

A number of the images show a wider view of the march itself, with people streaming down streets, some with smoke bombs filling the air, and others with banners waving. One or two images show small children, marking it as an event that everyone was involved in. I tried to convey the feeling of a crowded area, of people filling streets and squares and moving in one group. Where as at the end where they attend a number of political speeches, I found it almost amusing to see one man looking as if he was alone in listening to a speech by the Left Party. The final image shows people raising their hands in solidarity over the issues they marched on.

I am not entirely sure I managed to convey the feeling of claustrophobia in the narrow streets as thousands of people marched through them, and while I think I managed to show the variety of people involved, it would have been nicer to have more images of peoples faces. The inconsistent weather also makes the images somewhat disjointed as some have a grey rainy sky and others a bright blue and sun filled sky. Maybe not an entirely successful exercise, but at the same time it was an interesting experience and something that may be more successful in future attempts with the hindsight of lessons learned.

A Public Space

This exercise turned out to be somewhat more difficult than I had imagined. The time of year doesn't lend itself well to people sitting in parks or attending the beach, and whilst there were people around doing things, they were fewer than I would have liked. I decided to use an area within the city where people tend to be just wandering around. Thankfully the weather was reasonably bright which helped, but at the same time many of the street side coffee shops and restaurants were completely empty.

I tried to show how people tend to be drawn to specific places, small groups sat by the river, people walking in the square etc. I'm not sure I would call it a successful exercise, some of the images work well, some don't.

I like the image of the girls walking down the middle of the cobbled street, with some people sitting outside a nearby coffee shop, and a completely empty area in front of another one. Also the image of the busy outside bars and restaurants with people walking past, shows an element of the way people spend their time in the city.

The completely empty area around the stage containing the musicians setting up, and the image of the people meeting in front of the building with the painted signs on the wall don't really work for me, even though they do show something they lack any real interest.

The people by the river sitting in groups of two or three is representative of a large number of Swedish towns and cities, but at the same time a few more people would have been nice.

I like the image of the girl in the square taking a photograph with her phone, the people in the background just sitting on benches watching the world go by, and other people on their way somewhere make it somewhat typical of modern cities.

I think overall this exercise has shown that there is always something going on, even in places you are familiar with and wouldn't normally take much notice of, and that it is worth spending the time to stop and look at the places you spend time without really paying a lot of attention.
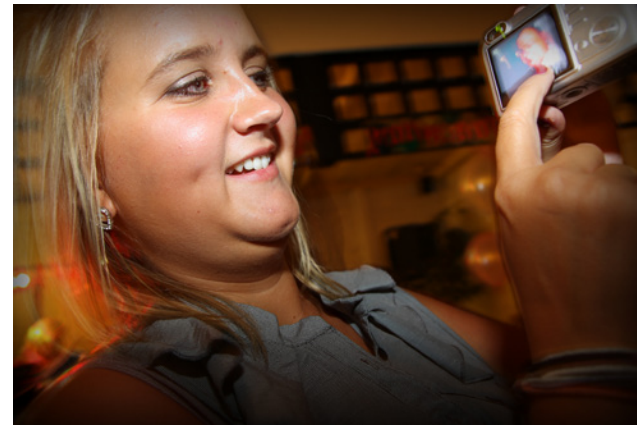
Assingment 2: People and Activity

I found this assignment slightly difficult, more due to the time of year, and trying to find and event of some kind to go to than actually taking the images. People in Sweden don't seem to start having much in the way of events until nearer the end of May. I decided in the end to use the 80th birthday party of a family friend, in a small resturant. This presented only a couple of problems, lighting and space.

Image 1 – Rachel, it was her birthday. I like the image despite the lack of any real activity, it just places her at a party, with a smile on her face..

Image 2 – A general view of people interacting. The size of the room is easy to see here, and it does show interaction between party guests. The light was a little awkward with a mix of fluorescent, tungsten and Led lights. I'm not entirely happy here as the image has a strange 3d effect, like people have been photoshoped in. More evident in the smaller size image.

Image 3 – I think this image works well. Michael is explaining a series of images of Rachel, from her 80 years of life. I wanted to be behind for this image to show people being involved in his speech, however as can be seen not everyone is listening. While I managed to correct the white balance for near the camera and his shirt, further in the different lighting has given a warmer colour caste, I kind of like this within the image, as it feels like it adds a little depth.

Image 4 – Karaoke. I think this shows people being involved in the party, joining in and having fun. The lighting is a little strong, and it was slightly harder exposing for both the detail on the black shirt, and the lighter hair and dress in the foreground. The lack of space has left this feeling a little tight, and I think a wider angle would have worked better.

Image 5 – I like this image for the moment it captures, 3 generations messing around together. The colour and lighting are a little warm, and again it has a slightly cramped feeling due to the confined space.

Image 6 – The are many issues with this image, from the ghosting at the edges from the longer shutter speed, to the warm colour caste giving it an orangey glow. I do however like it, it shows the happiness that comes from taking an image at a family event that means something to the person.

Image 7 - Singing at a party. The image is a little dark, and could do with more light on the singer. Framing it between the shoulders of two people watching gives it a feeling of when it is happening, and shows family enjoying time together. I didn't want to flood this with flash as it would have taken some of the atmosphere away from the image.

Image 8 – A dad Dancing. There is interaction in this image between Michael and the lady watching, she is obviously amused by his dancing I would have liked

the light to carry forward a bit more onto her face, but I think this might have been a little harsh and taken away from the feeling the image has. The fun would be somewhat diluted if everything was brightly lit.

Image 9 – I'm not so sure about his image. I tried to light more on one side and have the light fall off to the back and other side. Highlighting one table with people doing what they do at parties, sitting and talking. I think maybe the area of light is too small and could have been better used over a wider area.

Image 10 – A father getting a hug from his daughter. This image is a little tight, and maybe I would have liked to have seen a bit more of his face. It does however show the emotion in his eyes and for that reason I really like the image.

Image 11 – I like this image, but I am not so sure about it. The blur from dragging the shutter gives it a sense of motion and energy, but is it too much? Does it lose the feeling and just end up being a little too messy?

I think possibly again by using subjects that I have a connection to directly I may have chosen images where things are obvious to me, but will be a little lost on the viewer. Knowing the people and their personalities I can see things in some of the images that would almost be like having an in joke within a group of friends, that anyone outside would not understand.

Tutor Report

Overall Comments

The choice of event to photograph was a bit problematic due to the lighting conditions and limitations of the space the images are not as strong as they could be.

An outdoor event would have been suitable, such as a performance, concert or a sporting event but since photographers usually don't choose the assignments they get, it is very good to gain experience in environments that are difficult to shoot in.

The most important thing for each assignment is to learn from the work you produced and be able to reflect on what you have done in order to improve for the next time so I would not get discouraged if the results are not as good as you hoped that they would be.

Overall you faced a challenging environment to photograph and you have made several good images. The exposures and use of flash you seem to have under control but there are some other technical and compositional issues that I will address in more detail in the feedback.

Assessment potential

I understand your aim is to go for the Photography Degree and that you plan to submit your work for assessment at the end of this course. From the work you have shown in this assignment, providing you commit yourself to the course, I believe you have the potential to succeed at assessment. In order to meet all the assessment criteria, there are certain areas you will need to focus on, which I will outline in my feedback.

Feedback on assignment

1 – Image is good except that the lady is not looking in to the camera. Especially since the couple in the background is doing so, it would have been more consistent.

2 – The image shows the atmosphere of the place but not so much a specific activity.

3 – Very good image. It shows the activity but also the ambient of the place.

4 – Overall very good image, well composed and timed.

5 – The image depicts the atmosphere very well although it is not cropped very well. A horizontal composition from a bit closer up would have made the image more dynamic.

6 – This image is problematic since it is shot from too close and it is cut off.

7 – The singer is shot well, she is positioned well and the timing of the shot is good but the people in the foreground are distracting.

8 – This image is not so good since it is really only about the man that is turned with his back towards the camera.

9 – Similar to image 2 it depicts the ambient very well although not a specific action or activity. If the man that is standing up had engaged in a specific action or activity, it would have worked better.

10 – The image is shot from too close. It is not clear whether they are hugging or dancing. A bit wider shot would have revealed a lot more.

11 – Very good image. The image is shot very well since it depicts the couple dancing in a very dynamic way. The timing and the composition are very good.

A soft box on the flashgun or any other type of diffuser like a reflector that you can bounce the light off would have created much softer light. It is an important addition to your kit if you plan to work as a event, wedding or portrait photographer.

Regarding your choices, imagine that you where are photographer (or an editor) for a local newspaper. In that case, which images would you choose and why?

Suggested reading/viewing

Apart from the photographers that are mentioned in the course module, look at the work of: John Riddy, Thomas Struth, Lynn Cohen, Candida Hofer and also the earlier work of Andreas Gursky. Their work on architecture and Interiors will be very interesting for you to research for your next assignment.

So, I would recommend you to continue your online research as well as visit some exhibitions and check the books. OCA blog always keeps you updated on the recent shows and publications. So, please remember to use it as one of your information sources.

Here is a few websites focused on photography such as:

http://www.1000wordsmag.com/
http://www.photomonitor.co.uk/
http://www.seesawmagazine.com/
http://photocaptionist.com/

I also recommend you to start reading some theoretical books on Photography since they might help you to think about photographic concepts and ideas.

You have plenty of suggestions on your reading list although I would recommend that you start with one of these:

- Angier, Roswell. (2007)Train Your Gaze: A Practical and Theoretical Introduction to Portrait Photography, AVA Publishing SA
- Liz Wells, (2009) Photography: A Critical Introduction (2nd Edition), Routledge
- Charlotte Cotton (2009). The Photograph As Contemporary Art (2nd Revised), Thames and Hudson

Learning Logs or Blogs/Critical essays

Generally for the learning log/blog you need to keep track of your learning process and post your exercises, assignments, reading and anything else that is relevant to the course.

You need to start reading the books from the reading list and research the photographers that are relevant to you. Also include any other photographers, artists, books etc. that you find useful or inspirational and share your thoughts on your learning log or blog.

As further research, I recommend you to have a look at their one specific image and analyse it (ex: why you select this image and what makes this image special, what you can learn from it) and try to self-reflect on it, thinking how it refers to your own practice or why the image was inspirational to you.

Pointers for the next assignment

Look at how the mentioned photographers represented the objects and the spaces that they photographed. Apart from the subjects they chose, note the camera angles, distance to the subjects and lighting conditions in which they shoot in their images. Think of the compositions they make and how they avoided having falling lines in their objects. Also avoid shots with distorted perspective such as you get with fisheye lenses.

You have demonstrated that you are capable to take good images so take your time with the next assignment and slow down your editing process.

I would also like to see your digital contact sheets for your next assignment so we can have a brief chat about which images you chose and why.

Good luck!

Tutor name **Benjamin Beker**
Date **18.05.2015**

Response to Tutor Report

I think to some extent I have the same issue with this assignment that I had with the first. Using people that are known to me, and situations where I already have background knowledge of what is going on. I think Benjamin's criticisms are fair, and some of the images whilst showing the ambience of the party, do lack a little in activity.

A couple of the images were chosen based on the knowledge of the individual, and I can see how this may be lost to a viewer who is not familiar with the person.

An interesting point to make is the difference between our viewpoint as photographers, and the viewpoint of the people within the images. Where we see faults and issues, the people, or clients often see things they like. A few of the images were viewed and liked because they captured the character of certain people, where both I and Benjamin may have seen flaws. This in no way justifies any errors I may have made, but it is an interesting point to think on.

Exploring Function

I found this exercise more interesting than I expected, not only that but more involving as well. Thinking about the function of a space or room is not something we tend to do that often. In fact I think we only really notice it when something is not quite right, when something doesn't work and when we feel uneasy for some reason.

The space I chose to use is a bar/restaurant with the advantage of a view within Fotografiska. It seems to be most popular during lunchtimes, and the tables along the wall where the windows are always full first.

The purpose of the room is to provide a light and airy, fairly formal dining and drinking area. It is supposed to be relaxing and as far away form being a workplace as possible, yet relevant to the building it is within.

The tables are laid out in a conventional manner, there are several along the length of the wall with the large picture windows in, and then the other tables run at right angles to these across the room.

Entering the room itself the first thing to strike you are the huge windows, offering a panoramic view over the water towards Kastelholmen and Skansen. This is a very relaxing view and very peaceful and does indeed drag you away from any thoughts of a work environment, and encourage you to just sit and relax as you eat your lunch. The walls of the room are decorated with various photographs, and promotional items for Fotografiska, and at one end of the room is a gallery area where small exhibitions are always on display. As can be seen in the smaller photograph the room itself is fairly unremarkable, the benches lights and tables are in no way special and what really makes the room is the fact that the large windows give you a feeling of being outside.

I decided that the image I wanted would have people in it, using the seats in front of the windows enjoying both the view and their lunch. I also wanted the image to be more exposed for what was being seen outside the window than inside the room, knowing this would leave the interior a little dark and lacking in detail, as the point of the room is the view this had to be the main focus. Unfortunately the day was a quite dull and grey and there was little activity on the water outside. However I don't think this detracts too much from how I wanted to show the room, even if it does make the view a little less pleasing to the eye.

The final image is close to what I wanted, with another attempt I might wait until the middle of summer when the water is busy and there is the golden evening light which makes Stockholm and the surrounding water and islands appear much more photogenic.

Preferred

Preferred

Preferred

The User's Viewpoint

Choosing four spaces designed for a specific use from a specific location is a surprisingly difficult task given that many of our buildings and spaces are becoming multi functional and seem to have almost limitless possibilities for use.

I decided to use an old church, a very old cinema, the amphitheatre at Kurion and the dining area of a home for this exercise.

For the church I took three images, from the back of the centre aisle, sitting in the pews facing the pulpit and sitting facing one of the altars. Whilst the two sitting images perhaps show the best users viewpoint, in that this is what you see as you attend a service, I prefer the centre of the aisle image. This viewpoint is traditionally what you see as you enter the church and as such is always designed to be impressive.

The old cinema images are much the same, from the end of row seat at the back of the cinema, looking across the cinema from a seat, and the fornt row looking in at where the screen would have been. The prefered image here is form the back row. This gives you the view you would have had whilst watching a movie in the 1920's, straight down the centre to the screen. It shows the gradual slope and the uniform lines of chairs.

For Kurion I was split whether to use an image from the seating area as per a spectators viewpoint, or an image from the floor showing the performers viewpoint. I decided on the later as we quite often see images of stages bet less often the view from the stage. I think it illustrates not only the height of the seating area but also the way it curves round to almost surround the performer.

The dining area image is a little awkward. I included it as it is from the viewpoint of entering the area, as you walk down a few steps into it the view onto the table and outside is far more memorable than the the view whilst sitting at the table.

It is an interesting exercise to view an image from a users viewpoint, usually I tend not to capture images this way and find myself as more of a viewer than a user, and it is a useful tool to have when looking to photograph buidlings and places.

How Space Changes with Light

We are used to having well lit spaces, modern buildings tend to be much better lit than older ones and as such have, I think traded a bit of character away in the quest for more natural light. Admittedly, at night when lit by other sources they can take on a different appearance or feeling but overall I prefer the light in older buildings for its character.

I decided to use a pair of older buildings here for this exercise, Skokloster Castle built in 1676 and Kolossi Castle built in 1454.

I went to Skokloster in the summer, mainly as we were near enough to it that it was no longer a 9 hour drive, and in the summer the evenings are long and drawn out with the sun hardly dropping below the horizon until after 10pm. Over the course of a few hours I got the three images I wanted, late afternoon, early evening and dusk.

The early evening image has a slightly warm golden tint to the light, typical of that time of day, where the dusk image has a slightly colder blue tint to the light. Due to the fact that even later in the evening the sun is still relatively high in the sky compared to the UK, and the direction the sun is traveling as it sets, what we have aside from the colour changes are a deepening of the shadows. This changes the mood of the room, from bright and welcoming, through a warmer cosey feeling and into a colder more intimidating place. Using the light in this way can be useful when wanting to set the mood in an image, the normal daylight white is not as pleasing as the softer golden colour. A colour of light which is traditionally used to create warmth in an image. The colder blue can be

used to suggest something a little creepy or frightening or even some kind of mystical quality.

The second building was a bit different. The small windows limit the amount of light entering, and this in turn means the light inside can change very quickly with even just some cloud cover. The first image shows standard daylight, the wall colours make the light slightly cold but it is pleasant enough. The second image is a little darker, the sun being covered by thick cloud made a huge difference in the light available inside, making it feel much more oppressive and foreboding. Images 3 and 4 are a little warmer, the lower sun is letting a warm golden light through the windows and this in turn makes the rooms feel a little more hospitable, almost cosey.

Using a different angle on the light and dark seemed to give interesting results, looking into the dark from a light area , through into another lit area gives the impression of something being between you and the window, a dark shadowed area you need to rush through to get to the light.

The second image offers the opposite feeling. A route to escape from the darkness, the soft slightly golden light is guiding you out of the unlit area.

I think we have all experienced the way light can change the way something feels, long shadows and areas you can't see into are somehow slightly spooky, and to be treated with suspicion. Bright areas with warm lighting are considered safe and inviting and this is used in many modern buildings to make us feel comfortable, shopping malls for example.

Assignment 3: Buildings in Use

I must admit this was not my favourite assignment, architectural photography is not something I am usually interested in, and trying to show how a building works was something I found quite difficult without resorting to obvious images of flows of people. I chose a few places based purely on my familiarity with them and their different styles.

Set 1 Emporia Mall Malmö
This is one of the largest malls in Sweden, and was designed by the architect Gert Wingårdh. It has an unusual design , the outside being covered in sheets of coloured plastic. Externally it is very organic, straight lines replaced with curves. Inside the hallways are also all curved, the light is tinted in various areas by the sunlight coming in through the coloured outer shell, and this seems to make the whole place feel a little more relaxing. There are areas dedicated to non shopping as well, a large food area, a roof top garden with seating and grass covered hills , and even an area for music. The internal signs are in the form of coloured transparent sheets, directing you with pictographs to the area you want, the colour of the sign tells you in which correspondingly coloured area of the building something is located.
I tried with my images to give a quick impression, the curved sheets of the outside shot showing the organic from. A simple shop window advertisement, tinted in red from the coloured light, one of the pictographic signs, directing people to where they want to be, and a man bathed in blue light, enjoying a coffee in one of the many cafés. Photography in malls is not a pleasant experience, large numbers of people make getting any other image than one of large numbers of people quite hard, and the plethora of shops can lead to a collection of images of nothing but shops. I tried to pick small details of the mall to represent it , and to some extent have succeeded.

Set 2 Kykkos Monastery Cyprus
Kykkos monastery was founded around the end of the 11th century and is in the Troodos mountains in central Cyprus. It has been rebuilt many times due to fire and damage and now non of the original remains. It is regarded as one of the richest Monasteries in Cyprus and as such is quite lavishly decorated with paintings and mosaics. Being an active place of worship for many local Greek Cypriots, and a working monastery, taking photos within the actual church buildings and reliquary is not permitted, though many tourists try and flaunt this rule I decided to try and not offend and concentrated on the structure and decorative parts of the buildings.
With my images I wanted to show both the extensive and colourful decoration, and the rigidly formal layout of the buildings. The buildings themselves are quite plain and stark and everything has the feel of a place dedicated to worship, the only decorations, the paintings and mosaics are all depicting religious scenes. It is these images that add life and colour to an otherwise harsh building.
The bright colours contrast well with the stone and lime washed walls, and overall I think the images manage to show that a little colour can always bring life to an otherwise severe and formal building.
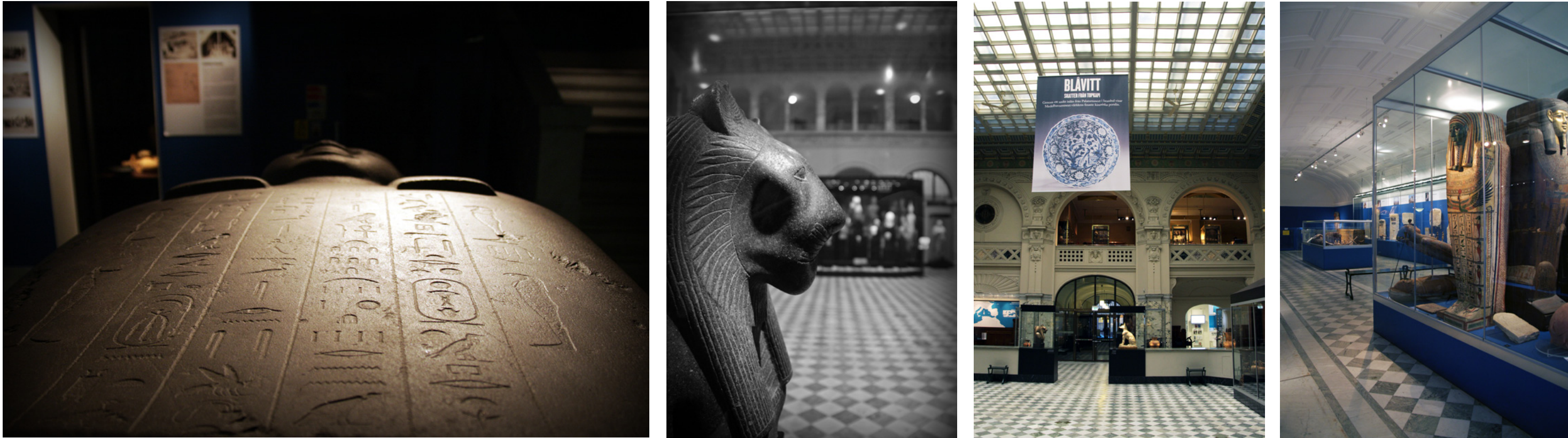
Assignment 3: Buildings in Use

Set 3 Medelhavsmuseet Stockholm

This museum concentrates mainly on the area around the Mediterranean and the Middle eastern countries nearby. In English it is called The Museum of Mediterranean and Near Eastern Antiquities, and was formed in 1954 when the Egyptian Museum and the Cyprus Collection were combined.

The exterior of the building is quite unremarkable, so I decided to concentrate on the interior. Inside is has the appearance of almost an old colonial building, tiled floors and balconies combine with light colours to make it feel fresh and bright, even when in the lower levels underground, the vaulted ceilings giving a tomb like feeling, whilst housing collections of caskets and mummies from history. With my images I wanted to show some little detail of various objects, and show the space inside the museum, which is not cluttered in anyway, but open and it leaves you free to wander aimlessly between objects without having to follow a set route.

Set 4 Skokloster Castle Håbo Sweden

Skokloster Castle is located between Stockholm and Uppsala on Lake Mälaren and was built between 1654 and 1676 by a wealthy military commander named Carl Gustaf Wrangel. Bult in a the barouque style it is very different to how we in England would envisiona castle.

I decided to concentrate on the exterior and physical features rather than the plush and lavish personal accomodation of Count Carl Gustaf. The building is built to be a fortified home, and as such has a number of features that make it appear cold and quite severe internally and externally. I chose to work in black and white to bring this feeling more into the images. The thgick pillars and plain walls, small windows and doors all lead to it feeling quite enclosed and shut off from the otuside, the courtyard in particular, surrounded by cloistered walkways feels very opressive with the high byuilding towering on all four sides. There is little or no external decoration which adds to the cold feeling of the building overall.

Assignment 3: Buildings in Use

Set 5 Slottsbiografen Uppsala Sweden
One of Sweden soldest purpose built cinemas dating from 1914, this buildign weas used for both the screening of film and and as a meeting hall or festival hall. The first move shown here was Stormfågeln by Mauritz Stiller. It is also famous for being the cinema attended by Ingmar Bergmann as a child. Seating a maximum of 300 it is not overly large by modern standards.
I wanted to show the cinema as it is, the images I chose, show a somehwat uninspiring external view, and the entrance hall, and the interior itself. The cinema itself is very spaces both the seats themselves and the space bwteen them much larger than we are used to today, The walls are quite decorative, with an almost communist style representation of workers and craftsmen.

Set 6 The Café
I wanted to try something a little different with this set. Café culture is a big part of Swedish tradition, in particular Fika. Fika is difficult to explain to a non

swede and it took me a long time to adjust from the British idea of a tea break, to the concept of fika. Fika is a break for coffee and cakes or pastries, however it goes further than that and has a whole social level to it that as a British person I find hard to understand. It is almost a required part of living in Sweden and to refuse or turn down fika with a friend, acquaintance or a work colleague is the height of bad manners.
As such Sweden is awash with cafés and coffee shops, both in towns and in the middle of nowhere you will find them, and they will all have a huge selection of cakes and pastries, in the day time these places are bright and fresh, as the sun sets they become darker and more cosy, a place where people meat and reflect in subdued lighting and comfortable seats.
The 4 images I selected show more of the atmosphere than the actual building, the bright day time image showing the inside of the café, is followed by the darker warmer images of a serving area and a selection of cakes, and an old light bulb glowing warmly, as it puts it just enough light to see your coffee with.

Tutor Report

Overall Comments
Overall your research is good and you have engaged with the spaces well. Your descriptions of the spaces and the details that you want to focus on are very good and made some very good images. Some others have some technical issues that need to be worked on.

Generally when shooting architectural structures or interiors you should try to avoid converging vertical lines that occur when the camera is not held in a horizontal position. The perspective changes and it appears as if the structures are leaning (of falling) back or to one side. Professional architecture photographers would often use a spirit level and a tripod (especially when they use wide angle lenses) in order to keep the camera level.

The white balance is also important since some of the images have a strong colour cast. The settings' on your camera (white balance) needs to be adjusted to the colour temperatures in the environments that you shot the images in. Especially when you shoot in artificial lighting conditions you will need to balance the colorcast by changing the white balance settings on your camera (colour temperature).

Overall the results are encouraging and I believe if you can take this feedback on board that you can significantly improve your images for the next assignment.

Feedback on assignment
Set 1 Emporia Mall Malmö
The strongest image in this set is the second (In the blue). This image is very good because the architectural features that you described are represented well and you have included a person in it (the coloured light becomes apparent), which helps in terms of giving the viewer a sense of scale, but also describes the functionality of the space.

The other images do not describe the space as well and the viewer does not have a sense of how the space is constructed. Wider shots that capture more of the space would have given more information on the functionality of the space.

Set 2 Kykkos Monastery Cyprus
The images are very good. They describe the place very well and you have shot from a variety of angles, which makes this an interesting set of images.

Set 3 Medelhavsmuseet Stockholm (Egyptology)
The first image is the most interesting because you have captured a detailed shot of the statue and the space in which it is placed so it is describing the space and its use very well.

Set 4 Skokloster Castle Håbo Sweden
This set is very good. Especially the two interior images are strong. You have balanced the light between in the interior and exterior well and the compositions are very good since they are balanced and the verticals are straight. The choice to shoot in black and white worked well for these images.
The exterior shot of the whole Castle is also very good. The 'Courtyard-small' image would also be very good if the perspective was corrected. Since you have

already shot it you could correct it in photoshop. Overall this set is the strongest in this assignment.

Set 5 Slottsbiografen Uppsala Sweden
The two interior images are the most interesting although the same white balance issues apply since the images have a strong yellow colour cast due to the artificial lighting.
Generally I would recommend the use of a tripod in lower lighting situations as this since you will have the camera in a stable position and can have full control over the exposure and f-stop. I would also avoid shooting handheld with any exposure times below 1/60s. You can use higher ISO as you did and sometimes it is necessary but the image quality will always be much better if you use a tripod and ISOs between 100-400.
By using a tripod you also can give yourself more time to compose the image carefully. Look at the work of interior photographers and which angles they chose to represent places such as this.

Set 6 The Café
The most revealing and most interesting image in terms of its composition is the image 'Daylight-Cafe-small'. The colours are also balanced well and the light is bright due to the daylight coming in from the window.
The other images lack detail in the darker parts. These images also require longer exposures so the use of a tripod is essential.

Suggested reading/viewing
Look at the work of:
Candida Hofer (Interiors)
Taryn Simon – An American Index of the Hidden and Unfamiliar
Fabrice Fouillet (Church Interiors)
Thomas Struth – 'Museum' series
Helen Binet
Iwan Baan

I will write several recommendations down to further your research. Have a look and choose one that seems relevant to your practice.

David Bate's Photography (Key Concepts)
http://www.amazon.co.uk/Photography-Key-Concepts-David-Bate/dp/1845206673/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1414431296&sr=1-1&keywords=david+bate

Stephen Bull Photography (Routledge Introductions to Media and Communications)
http://www.amazon.co.uk/Photography-Routledge-Introductions-Media-Communications/dp/0415428947

They both cover similar topics so there is no need to read them both straight away.

Pointers for the next assignment
Try to apply the feedback to your work and improve your work technically. Try the courses www.lynda.

com for some more detailed technical workshops. They have online workshops on every possible subject and I can really recommend them since I have used them myself a few times.

Look at how the mentioned photographers composed their images and how they used people in their work.

Carefully choose the places that you want to photograph and take your time with your next assignment. You have proved that you can make very good images and that should be the level that you should be aiming for.

Good luck!

Tutor name **Benjamin Beker**
Date **29.07.2015**

Response to Tutor Report

I think I can say whilst agreeing with Benjamin's comments overall, that The Emporia Mall selection, aside from the man in the blue light is fairly weak. On reflection, maybe it wasn't the best location to work with, I became more interested in the details than in the overall form of the building.

I must say that I was pleased with the images in Skokloster Castle, the courtyard photograph that Benjamin has flagged as having a slight perspective issue has completely defeated me. Nothing I seem to try has corrected this problem, and I think for this image at least it would be worth taking the long trip back to try and get one that is less affected.

There is of course the issue of using a wide angle lens for several of the images, and the distortion it brings with it. As discussed with Benjamin, I am aware of the use of tilt shift lenses in architectural photography, and perhaps it may be a sensible idea to rent one should the need arise in the future.

On the subject of tripod use in lower light situations. I would usually try to use a tripod in any static situation where the shutter speed drops into the slower speed ranges, or where the ISO is being pushed past 1600. Whilst I am happy with higher ISO ranges, in static subjects when using a tripod there is no harm in using a much longer exposure and keeping the ISO low for much better quality. Sometimes this is not an option, there are areas tripods are either impractical or not allowed, and on these occasions we have to balance the shutter speeds and ISO as best we can whilst hand holding the camera.

A Single Figure Small

As exercises go this one was much harder to plan for. It is relatively easy to think about planning when the images will have an obvious subject, knowing where something is, or is likely to be is half of the solution. However, with this exercise I found myself to be relying on a lot more luck to be in the right place at the right time.

The first image initially looks like a simple landscape, a reasonably nice beach and bay on a clear autumn day, looking closer there is a small figure to the right on the beach. It does lead you to wonder what he was doing there by himself, and whether or not he had purposely sought a secluded unused beach for his swimming. In fact he appeared to be gathering shellfish of some kind, so I would presume that less popular areas have more for him to harvest. I like that the image has a sense of seclusion, even though in the distance you can see buildings, the beach and bay are obviously not on the beaten path.

The second image has a much larger centrally placed figure, appearing to be waiting at a shop door with a small dog. Are they waiting for someone inside, or asking permission to bring the dog into the shop?

There is enough detail for you to know what you are seeing in this image, unlike the first one, but the figure is far enough away that you cant really see what is going on.

The third image shows someone standing at the entrance to an archaeological site. Are they a visitor or someone working there? We can see the setting quite well, but have no idea of what the person in view is actually doing. The obvious question that springs to mind is will they enter the doorway ahead of them or are they just trying to see inside? For me this image brings to mind some of the images from the early 20th century, where archaeologists pose outside tombs, or are pictured making their way into some long forgotten crypt. The distance form the figure is enough to make you feel like you are watching rather than involved, and your eyes are drawn past the figure and towards the doorway.

Image four a railway platform. Nothing new or exciting there untill you see at the far end on the right a very small figure. So far away from everything, the immediate question is what is he doing there? I'm not entirely happy with the quality of thisimage it is a lit-

tle soft due to higher ISO and a slightly too slow shutter speed. I would have liked to taken a second image, but the person decided to move back behind the linie of pillars out of sight.

The fifth image is of a fisherman on a harbour wall. By positioning him to the far right of the image I had hoped to exagerate the size of the sea, to make him appear small against the surface of the water, as if he was all alone.

Image number six is again of the fisherman. I liked the way he looked to be small surrounded by large birds, as if they are just waiting to swoop down and steal his catch.

Overall I found htis to be an enjoyable exercise, the process of finding what to record relying on a bit of luck and observation made a nice change from planning things down to the last detail. I would say however that this is not a way I would chose to work all the time. The inability to plan, and lack of certainty would cause me a little anxiety I think, in my ability to find the situations I wanted to photograph.

Busy Traffic

Busy traffic is an exercise I found to be strangely interesting. Not because of the images I can create, but more because I find myself noticing huge differences in what we would consider a busy place. Having lived in England for most of my life, and 3 years ago moving to Sweden, one of the main differences I have noticed is in how people view a place as being busy or congested. In the UK we are used to a level of traffic in public places which far outweighs what you could expect to find here in Sweden. Even rush hour here can seem to be much like a Sunday afternoon in any of the larger British cities.

For example in the images I have included are a number taken in the Triangeln station in Malmö. What appears to be a few people moving about the platforms, waiting for trains etc is probably what would be expected. That is until you realise that 16:15 on a Friday is when the rush hour has started in Malmö. Many people leave work around 16:00 on a Friday.

The image of the woman travelling on the escalator whilst not busy as such, does show the movement of people through a space. While this image does appear a little bright, I like the overall effect of obvious motion, while she is remaining still.

I have included one image which failed to work as I intended, the long exposure was just too long and as such the people are so indistinct as to appear as smoke and blurs. Not solid enough to be recognisable. Other images have slight motion blurs, with some people standing still and I feel these work a little better. The main problem with taking photographs in the railway station was the fact that tripods are not allowed, and having to use other surfaces, or clamping the camera to a pole to steady it was a little awkward.

The image of people in front of angled mirrors seems to work well. At first glance it would appear to be a large group of people however the crowd of people are mostly reflected, giving the appearance of it being busier than it really is.

The image of the covered market whilst again not overly busy does give a feeling of depth. The people in the background following the curve of the ceiling suggest a direction of travel. It would have been nice to have more people in this area, but I think that in some cases less works just as well. A suggestion of being busy can be as effective as showing crowds of people.

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Making Figures Anonymous

I found myself feeling far more comfortable with the exercise of making figures anonymous. Maybe it is due to disliking being obvious whilst taking photographs of people in public places, or maybe it is because I have a liking for these kinds of images.

The first image is a simple longer exposure of a bakery. It wasn't intended to have a person in the image, but luckily a cyclist decided to ride through it. The person whilst not interacting with the shop itself is doing something we do everyday, passing by a shop without even thinking about it. Whilst the bakery is obvious, with bright lights and a sign the person on the bicycle is ethereal and blurred, hardly recognisable as a person.

Image number two has a couple walking away from a cinema. The prominent factor of the image are the cinema lights, and the lighting in the street, we can see the couple, but not in enough detail to recognise them. The combination of red and slightly yellow lighting makes enough in the way of shadow to mostly hide their faces.

The third image is of two women having coffee in a coffee shop. The coffee shop is a traditional venue in Sweden for meeting and spending time with friends or family, for doing work or just having time out, and people can stay in them for a few hours quite easily. This one is brightly lit and we can see most of the detail within the building. The two people however, are slightly facing away from the camera, we can see enough to know that they are female, but aside form that no other clue to their identity is given.

Image number four is of the Blue Planet Aquarium in Copenhagen. The large tank is lit form above while the room has no lighting at all, to give the best view of what is in the tank. This lends itself well to creating a silhouetted image, you can see the detail within the tank, but the family in front of it are disguised by the comparative darkness outside the tank. I like that the image shows people enjoying something without needing to show them in detail. It is obvious the children are having fun, and even the adults are interested.

I included the fifth image as something of a wildcard. I will say from the outset that it is not a person, but a statue in the forest. It does have the properties though, that are required in this exercise. It is an human figure made anonymous by appearing to be covered in some kind of tight sheeting. This idea of covering the person with a vinyl or rubberised sheeting was something I had thought about trying for this exercise, however no one wanted to be the subject, and I can understand why. The concept tI had in mind was to create a blank human being. One where we know the subject is human, but it is devoid of any recognisable features other than the basic shape. Several people have viewed the image and said that because of the way it is structured, they find it a little disconcerting or creepy. As if there is someone trapped inside it, or as if it is still growing and not fully formed. It was lucky, for me, that this statue already existed and could be used to illustrate my thoughts.

Balancing Figure and Space

For this exercise I decided to use a pair of images I had taken whilst doing a previous assignment. Both are of the same wall, and both have parents with children in them.

In the first image our attention is drawn to the parent and child, as they walk away form camera. The brightly painted wall serves merely as a backdrop to the normal day to day life of the people in the image.

In the second image the people of of secondary interest. What is most obvious is the scale and colour of the graffiti covered wall. Having the people further into the distance, making them appear smaller only goes to accentuate the size and length of the wall.

Both of the images work in their own way, one being an image about people and one being an image about the place. I think I prefer the version with the focus on the wall. The smaller people walking into frame are somehow more visually appealing than the larger people walking out of frame, and there seems to be a little more feeling of someone going somewhere in the second image, maybe this is due to the obvious distance between the camera and the people, and the fact that they are approaching rather than leaving the scene. This is possibly helped by a having a longer diagonal line crossing the image in the shape of the wall. It suggests a direction of travel that may be less obvious in the first image, due to the wall ending not far past the people.

The first image may have been stronger if I could have photographed the people nearer to the point where the second image begins, having the wall stretch away from them as they walk along on it might have made for a more pleasing image.

Selective Processing and Prominence

For this exercise I decided to use an image I had taken in a photographic exhibition of an older man looking at six wall mounted prints.

In the original image there is a balance between the light on the viewers face, and the prominence of the prints on the wall. He is slightly in shadow, but enough light is reflected onto his face for us to see his expression and interest as he views the work on display.

To make the man more prominent was quite a simple task, firstly by reducing the intensity of the shadows to a point where he was slightly more visible, and then by selecting only his head and raising the exposure by a little less than 1 stop and reducing the mid range contrast slightly, making his face and hair more visible. The background was then blurred slightly using a layer mask and Gaussian blur. This brings him more into being the main focus of the image, instead of his interaction with the prints on the wall.

Reducing his prominence was also equally simple. Increasing the the intensity of the shadows, by using a levels adjustment and adding a touch more contrast, a vignette was then added to push him more into the darker shadows on the edge of the image. This has the effect of making the areas where the prints are under lights stand out more and become more prominent, there is still just enough detail in the man for us to see a little of his face and expression.

On viewing the three images, it must be said that I still prefer the original. It seems to have a nicer balance, there is enough detail in the man viewing the prints that he is still the main focus of the image, not in prominence but in his interaction with the space he is in. In the image where he is visually more prominent, I find that for it to work well, we would need to have him more face on to the camera, so we can see more of him. This would take away from the fact that it is supposed to be about him viewing the exhibition. The image where he is almost hidden and the prints are the main focus has the same problem. If we want the prints to be the main focus of interest why have a person in the image at all. Having an image of the gallery space empty aside from the exhibition itself would surely serve better to highlight the display of prints on the walls.

In any image were a person is interacting with a something, I think it is important that we see the person in enough detail to see what they are doing. If we are also seeing the subject the are interacting with then it helps if we can recognise it, and that its prominence is balanced in such a way as to fit the intent of the image. Making either the person or the exhibition, as in this case, more prominent only goes to change the original intent of the image.

Assignment 4: A Sense of Place

I initially decided to approach this assignment from a view of showing the mixture of old and new in Malmö. This soon began to be problematic as the images tended to be very similar, old buildings next to new, derelict industrial spaces with new apartments being built etc. So halfway through I decided to change direction and try to show show how Malmö is such an incredibly relaxed place for a major city.

As a city, Malmö has a strong working class past, mainly industrial businesses and trade centred around the docks, this has led to a strong socialist leaning amongst the population, and as a result Malmö is a city that is very relaxed and tolerant in ways that other cities may not be. In recent years with the decline of industry Malmö has begun to change, education and the arts are taking over from industry, and areas that were once derelict are being transformed to accommodate both small businesses and private housing in the form of apartment buildings mainly.

The images I selected as being suitable for use reflect both the relaxed attitude of people in Malmö, and show a glimpse of the industrial history and the quiet residential areas.

Selected 1

This image shows one of the town squares, a couple walking towards a relative, and people in the background just sitting and passing the time. This image is representative of Malmö in so many ways, there is no rushing or hurrying to do things, and there is always time for sitting and chatting over a coffee.

There are some things I have issue with in the image, the heavy shadow being one, but due to the size of the square and the tall buildings all around it, it is impossible to capture an image on a bright day without it being present. The pale coat on the right hand side is very bright, in the full size image the highlights are not blown out, yet with a smaller image or compressed file it may appear so.

Selected 2

A man in a window smoking. Not exciting or special in anyway, yet it shows the attitude of people in Malmö, why go downstairs to smoke outside, when you can just sit on the windowsill above a main street and watch the world go by.

My main issue with the image is the pale sky, it is flat and featureless and does detract a little from the image. I have a version that is a little closer but I think I prefer this where you see more of the building and a little background.

Selected 3

Graffiti is quite common in Malmö, interestingly it tends to be in places where it can be accepted, here along the fence of one of the larger parks in the city centre. The lady and small child walking towards the camera in my opinion show how relaxed the centre of the city is. She is not holding him by the hand, to keep him safe, he is free to walk by himself without the worries we would tend to have in a large city in the UK.

My only issue with this image is the flat lighting, I wish it had been a little brighter and more golden as it would be in the summer at this time of day, it would have given just a bit more depth to the image.

Selected 4

Some more graffiti. This does however epitomise Malmö for me, the use of the heart instead of an a, and the rainbow flag with all of its links to tolerance and acceptance , show how the people of malmö feel about their city and the people within it. It is a little dark maybe, but it does show Malmö as it is.

Selected 5

Here I try to show a little old and new. The newer silos in the background form quite a strange backdrop to the older industrial building in front. The strong yellow colours are a traditional feature

of many buildings in the county of Skåne, where other parts of Sweden tend to use reds.

It is a shame I couldn't go both wider and further away fro this to get everything in, the constraints of other buildings prevented me from moving further away, and the distortion caused by going much wider may have been difficult to fix. However, I do like this close in view, it gives a sense of the silos towering over the smaller older building, dwarfing it in the way that modern construction often tends to do to older buildings.

Selected 6

A simple residential street in the centre of Malmö. The wide modern roads contrast with the older buildings, but the surprising thing is the lack of traffic. At this time of day in the UK city streets would be packed with traffic, bumper to bumper in the rush hour journey home. It shows a little of the quiet stillness that seems fill a lot of Swedish towns, with maybe the exception of parts of Stockholm, compared to the UK.

I worry that maybe the image is a little quiet and boring, that the stillness shows nothing other than an empty street with some large imposing buildings.

Assignment 4: A Sense of Place

Unused 1

Market day on Möllevångstorget. I like this image as it shows the hustle and bustle of the market, where fresh fruit and vegetables draw huge crowds, more so than the offerings in supermarkets. The image has a few issues, the colour cast and softness of the man pointing in the centre made me decide not to use it.

Unused 2

The view between two building old and new, shows how in Malmö many building types exist alongside each other, whilst this works I found the image a little uninteresting to be chosen.

Unused 3

I was torn between using this image or the one of the couple in the square. I think this one is just a little busy, and there is no clear point of interest, other than the old phone box. It is however representative of Malmö in many ways.

Unused 4

I like this image. The weird graffiti on the wall of an old building, which is reflected in the window of the new building opposite, show how the new and old are side by side in Malmö, yet I don't think it was suitable for inclusion as it is a little 'grey' in both appearance and feeling.

Unused 5

New growing on the site of the old. This shows how close modern new spaces are to derelict industrial areas, and how the city is regenerating the areas it no longer uses. However I felt the image lacked feeling and was more of a record than showing a sense of place.

Unused 6

An interesting image form the point of view the window shows advertisement in Arabic, but aside from that I think it is a little dull and dreary for inclusion.

I think I have succeeded fairly well in showing the personality of Malmö. It might have been nice to approach this assignment in May, the month when political marches and gatherings occur, or August when there is a 3 week free festival throughout the entire city with music and other events filling the streets and parks from morning to night. The images I have chosen are to me, representative of Malmö and it's people, and show things about the city that the average tourist might not notice.

I think having approached the assignment one way in the beginning, and then having to change my approach was beneficial. I could have concentrated on many things, from the art establishments to the coffee shop culture, but to try and pick pieces of Malmö that were showing its laid back nature were more connected to how I see the city I live in. I think without the plan or the change of plan I would have ended up with a collection of images showing buildings old and new and the graffiti upon them, which whilst interesting isn't what I had in mind.

Tutor Report

Overall Comments

Overall the images are very well composed and the lighting is excellent. The description of the images is very good too. Your images are technically very good and your main focus from now on should be to develop your 'voice' as a photographer by finding subjects that are especially interesting to you and developing them in more detail.

Feedback on assignment and supporting work

The assignment was to represent a sense of place and as you stated, your work is about the quiet residential neighborhoods, the industrial history and the relaxed attitude of the people in Malmo.

You have touched upon all of these subjects but very briefly since each of the mentioned subjects is a complex subject and requires a project in itself.

Especially since 6 photographs is not enough to represent all of this.

For instance just photographing the Industrial history of Malmo could be a project that could be researched and photographed over month or even years so my suggestion is to choose your projects more specifically.

Images 2 and 5 stand out as the most interesting since they are the least conventional. The towering silo over the older building is a very strong image.

Images 1 and 6 are very good too.

The images with the graffiti are repetitious and I would only choose one (number 3) since the composition is more complex and the image is not solely about the graffiti.

I would replace it with image no.5 from the unselected folder. This image is very interesting because of the juxtaposition of the old and new, the cold and warm light and the repetition of the triangles on the roof of both objects.

Image 1 from the unselected is also very good but seems to be from a different series that would require more images of a similar style.

Learning Logs or Blogs/Critical essays

You have not submitted a blog/learning log so if you would like some feedback on it, please upload your research and exercises and send me a link.

In terns of theoretical reading:
- Steven Shore (2007) The Nature of Photographs: a Primer (2nd edition), London, Phaidon Press
- John Szarkowski (2007) The Photographers Eye, New York: The Museum of Modern Art
- Susan Sontag, (1979) On Photography, Harmondsworth, Penguin Books

These are interesting to read. Choose the ones that you find relevant to your practice.

Suggested reading/viewing

Have a look at the work of Edward Burtinsky. He shoots very large format landscapes that often deal with the decline of Industries, coal mining etc.

Rut Blees Luxemburg – very interesting in terms of nighttime photography

Thomas Struth
Axel Hutte
Gabrielle Basilico
Dan Holdsworth
John Riddy

Pointers for the next assignment
- Experiment with your ideas and choose one of them
- If you shoot in low lighting conditions you might need to experiment a bit with your approach too.
- Try to keep the subject simple
- Be persistent. Sometimes the projects need adjustments and changes to the strategy in order to work out well.

Good luck!

Tutor name **Benjamin Beker**
Date **15.10.2015**

Response to Tutor Report

It was a relief to receive Benjamin's comments, as for some reason I found this assignment somewhat hard going. Not in the sense of it being difficult but more that at times I found it hard to assess my own images. There are times when what makes the identity of a place to me as a resident, may not make sense to a viewer.

Benjamin's comments all make sense, and as such I have replaced the images as recommended. It is interesting to see that he touched on something I felt as I was doing the assignment, that maybe I had chosen to take on in 6 images a subject that really needs hundreds.

It is interesting in wandering around the city where you live, how many of the things you realise that you don't notice, whether by choice or just the fact that you never stop to spend the time.

Replaced with

Assignment 5: People and Place on Assignment

I had originally decided to work with the idea of Swedish winter evenings, and how people go about their business in the dark. However after spending a several weeks working on it, and looking at the results, it soon became apparent that although the images were pleasing enough to the eye, they were more a selection of city images at night, than any themed body. So at the last minute I decided to start again with a fresh idea.

The idea I had was to show how the old industrial area of Västra Hamnen in Malmö, is slowly being replaced with a mixture of luxury apartment buildings, modern business and educational buildings.

The fictional brief was as follows:
Employer: Kulturen, The organisation for the conservation of cultural heritage in southern Sweden.

Document the current and changing landscape of Västra Hamnen, as modern building projects are coming face to face with disused industrial landscapes.

The project is not to record the historical buildings, but to show the progression of the replacement of industrial landscapes with modern architecture. To be displayed as prints as part of the exhibition "Modernising Malmö"

After several days walking around, I decided to work in black and white. There were two reasons for this, at this time of year the weather and light are very inconsistent, so removing the colour keeps a similar visual theme through out the project. Secondly I didn't want the colour differences between the buildings to be a reference between old and new, dirty and brown versus shiny and white for example.

In many ways it seems as though the new constructions are surrounding the remaining old buildings, and slowly consuming them, and replacing them like some living organism, and I wanted to show this confrontation in some of the images.

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Assignment 5: People and Place on Assignment

Image 1
This shows the new Malmö University buildings facing across the old harbour and access channels towards disused warehousing. It almost appears as though the new buildings have pushed up tot he edge of the water and are waiting for a chance to cross and continue spreading into the part still occupied by the older construction.

Image 2
The old dry docks showing construction getting closer and closer. It would have been nice if the dry dock was completely empty of water for this image, as I'm sure the bottom is fairly well covered in all sorts of industrial rubbish which would have made a nice addition to the image. My main reservation within the image is the tower building to the left, whilst the highlights are not completely blown, it is a little on the bright side, and stands out a little harshly against the background.

Image 3
The old warehousing railway lines. Either side of these new buildings are springing up, but the lines have not been removed and are like a strip of history down the middle of the street. The fencing either side makes you feel as though it's protecting itself from the inevitable replacement by a flat new road. I ewish the sky had a little more in the way of clouds, and that some of the lamps had been removed from the track, as they do crowd the centre a little.

Image 4
An extremely expensive apartment block growing in the car park of an old factory. The car park is still in use, servicing other nearby new buildings, but the factory sits idle and empty. The approaching new construction is still shrouded in protective sheeting, while the old building is stained and damaged from years of exposure to the Swedish weather. I am a little disappointed in the way the plastic sheeting on the new building has hidden much of the detail behind it, in reality it was quite transparent, but the reflection of light has made it appear much more like frosted glass.

Image 5
I chose this image because it was darker than expected. The shadowed side of the street with sunlight falling on the higher parts of the old building reminded my of something retreating back into the shadows, as if it was trying to get away from the half finished buildings on the other side of the road. It is maybe a little darker than I would like, but at the same time it does convey the feeling I wanted, of older buildings being pushed out of the limelight as sparkling new ones arrive.

Image 6
This bicycle park outside of a cafe, faces onto an old engineering workshop. It seemed an odd place for a cafe, facing onto a derelict industrial area, but maybe that was the point. Perhaps the view of crumbling old buildings and wharfs is something worth seeing before they are gone forever, replaced by the kind of tower looming in the background. The location of the lamp post in the foreground bothers me, there was no way to avoid it as it is in the middle of quite a small area, and it does cut the image in half in a way not entirely pleasing tot he viewer. However I decided to include it as I enjoy the idea that the older buildings are being used as a backdrop for coffee and cake.

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Assignment 5: People and Place on Assignment

Image 7
A simple view of ground already cleared and waiting to be built on. Some older buildings are dwarfed by the towers in the background. Some viewers may find the fence distracting, I like the fact it is a line that isn't yet crossed. The land is empty after years of having something built on it, and in a short time something new will be there. It's almost as if it was having a short rest before going back to what it does. The fence itself does cause some distraction, the pattern overlaying parts of the image can be a little harsh or confusing, but overall I think that it needed to be in the picture. Taking it from the other side of the fence would just be an empty space in front of some buildings.

Image 8
This is a simple image, a new building and an old one. However if you look closely at the new building you can see it has numerous strange angles, the door frame is not aligned vertically with the wall, the windows appear to lean back in to the building, and the second floor seems almost distorted, with a slight curve, and then above it the building going back in towards where you would expect it to be. The front of this building does slope outwards towards the top, not a huge amount, but just enough to be noticed, enough to make you question yourself and wonder if what you are seeing is correct. Design features on modern buildings seem to have become more and more strange and quirky, as if they need something to add interest to even the most mundane of building. In contrast the older building behind is exactly what we would expect, just a building designed to be functional. I did wonder about including this image, the distorted look of the building does make you wonder whether it is an issue with how it is photographed or whether it actually

looks like that. Looking at the door frame in the bottom right of the image shows that the wall itself is at a different angle to the door, and from this we can see that it was designed to have the effect of being somehow distorted.

Image 9
I was in two minds whether to include this or not. The older buildings with the newer railway tanker standing idle. I liked the suggestion it put into my mind, the idea that both are at the end of the line. Flat concrete and shining metal, something that is often associated with modern architecture, here they are both old and new. The site is awaiting redevelopment, it sits in the city exactly as it has done for many years, yet it has a a strangely modern feel, industrial steel and concrete from 60 or so years ago is much the same as what would be built now to perform the same purpose.

Image 10
Docklands buildings, with modern construction growing into the sky behind them. Buildings that would have been seen as huge 100 years ago are dwarfed by modern construction. In this image we see a new one being built and the Turning Torso in the background, looming over the older structures and looking down on them. I like the disrupted reflections in the water, and the way the light is falling onto the front of the buildings, it does however leave one side a little darker than I would like, but I feel if I tried to lighten these areas it would leave the image looking very unreal, and overly processed.

Image 11
In opposition to image number 9, this shows only the modern side. A construction site specialising in apartment buildings. In the background we can see them

moving towards the road, built with the taller ones at the back and smaller at the front, to create a nice layered view for the people that will eventually move in. The image is a little cluttered and messy, but I feel that is part of the process, that this construction is both untidy, and ends up with somewhat compressed modern living. Little space around buildings when all that space can be used in the pursuit of building more things to sell.

Image 12
The final image shows a completed area of redevelopment. The waterways tidied, the new shiny buildings with their glass fronts looking out of the water. In the background some older buildings look on, the canals that were there to be used by them for commercial reasons, now relegated to perform the role of being a nice view. The large dark areas in this image are maybe a bit harsh, but I wanted to keep them that way to allow the buildings and their glass to stand out, and be the focus of the image.

Conclusion
I think overall I managed to stick to the fictional brief, to show progress as it is being made in the area of Västra Hamnen. I do wonder if some of the images may not be to the liking of some viewers, and whether the concept itself was maybe a little less exciting than some other projects may have been. I am pleased with what I have done, while some images have some slight issues I think overall I have shown what I intended to show whilst showing neither bias or sensationalising either side. I am also pleased with being able to stick to a particular style of processing for the series of images, I enjoy working with black and white, and like to put my own look into the processing. Hopefully other people won't find them over done on the style side of the work.

Tutor Report

Overall Comments

Your submission shows an ability to devise and respond well to a self-initiated brief, and create a cohesive set of images that achieve what you set out to do – to explore the contrasts, particularly architectural, in the redevelopment of this area.

This work could fit into a broader exploration of 'redevelopment', particularly of post-industrial spaces and buildings, which is a global phenomenon and of great relevance. At times, I was sure I had seen these 'views' before, but that's not possible, but I think it goes to show that this subject is quite ubiquitous, and I actually like the sparse references to the specific location – i.e. some of them could be potentially anywhere…

Feedback on assignment

Demonstration of technical and Visual Skills, Quality of Outcome, Demonstration of Creativity

I received a zipped folder via e-mail, and the images were of a very small size, which I wouldn't usually accept as a submission, as they don't enable me to see them properly and proved a really thorough critique. In future, images should really be saved at about a minimum of 2000 pixels (longest edge), and sent via WeTransfer or similar or shared via google drive, or similar if the submission folder is too large to e-mail. See my pointers for assessment…

Your brief stipulates that the work is most apparently of a landscape genre, and – fitting to your brief – it could work within an exhibition context – possibly more of a heritage/museum gallery than a fine art context: that's my feeling of the images. There is variety here too, particularly in terms of focal length/ subject distance, which feels like it could sit within an editorial context too.

Thinking back to the brief, I think it could have been enhanced perhaps with a little more variety: one this that is striking is the absence of people. That may be a deliberate choice – some of these developments do feel empty and can feel quite soulless. If that's your creative intention, then fair enough. But a less bleaker approach might have been to try to mix up the series with some portraits – perhaps of people who have moved in to the new developments, and/or (if you can find them) people with links to the industrial heritage of the area.* (I appreciate there may be a language barrier here though…?)

The monochrome treatment does of course allow for a visual consistency across the series. And what you said about the colour being distracting to the contrast between the forms is very interesting indeed. "…Secondly I didn't want the colour differences between the buildings to be a reference between old and new, dirty and brown versus shiny and white for example." I think it's a valid point, and fair enough. Although I have to say that I am reserved when it comes to processing images into greyscale; principally because black and white is (nowadays) inevitably a choice in stylization, which

(coming from my more documentary-leaning perspective perhaps) is a distraction from the subject matter.

On the other hand, there is an interesting tension/ conflict in the monochrome treatment, which adds an interesting dimension: on the one hand the pictures feel quite bleak, and negative towards the new architecture dominating the history and heritage. But on the other, the high contrast, dark skies and (at times) brooding skies are Romantic, celebratory – quite pleasing images. So, this tension between bleakness and celebration could stand for the realities of the necessity of balancing conservation with civic needs and progress..?

Research

Context, reflective thinking, critical thinking, analysis

Your accompanying text provides a good self-appraisal of your work, although I would have liked to see a few points of reference regarding research: are there any practitioners that you looked at in the making and development of the assignment?

Do have a look at the work suggested below…

Learning Log

Context, reflective thinking, critical thinking, analysis

I am afraid that I don't know whether you have an online Learning Log or you are keeping a hard copy. As most people tend to keep their Learning Log within a blog that also documents their course, I will assume you are doing the same – and I'll

just give you a few generic pointers with assessment in mind:

- Make sure there is a specific category on your blog for Learning Log entries. These may be around particular bits of research (reading/watching/doing), or responses to tutor reports – outlining how you will edit/amend/enhance an assignment with new work, or they may be more general (but still critical) reflections on your learning and progression through the course.
- Although the title implies it could be diaristic, remember to reference and quote properly, and include links where appropriate (these are potentially useful for your own reference in the future). This is particularly important looking forwards Level 2 study.
- Use your Learning Log to document the progress of your assignments – their development, and to explain / justify creative choices.

Suggested reading/viewing

Context

I'm afraid that I struggle to view black and white landscape work encompassing industry and history like this aside from John Davies's work. Although Davies usually shoots from high vantage points to incorporate great depth and narrative into his images. See his Belfast docks work (these may be on the Belfast Exposed archive –online)

I know also that Jem Southam photographed Bristol Docks extensively during their development in the 1970s and '80s.

Although I am not entirely sure if these are archived and available to view online. I think they might belong to the M Shed museum in Bristol.

- See Celine Clanet's Barrages series that includes portraits of workers. On this point, Chris Coekin has done some great portraits of factory workers.

Pointers for the next assignment / assessment

I don't know what, if any, discussions you may have had with Ben regarding preparation for assessment, or what you have done previously (or what feedback you have had from assessors?).

But my advice is to print out final versions of all of your assignments (A4 is big enough) and present these is a clamshell box. If you have kept a blog and an online Learning Log, then it is fine for the original versions of your assignments to be on here (or in a hard copy folder if you like), but it is not necessary to print out all of these as well.

You must also remember to upload your tutor reports into your dedicated gDrive folder, which you will receive an invitation to submit material in. (You may wish to include 'first draft' versions of your assignments in here).

Let me know if you have any other questions… and good luck if I don't hear from you.

Tutor name **Jesse Alexander**
Date **21.04.16**

Response to Tutor Report

It was unfortunate to have to change tutor for the final assignment, but having had a video chat with Benjamin regarding his views and then then receiving the written assessment from Jesse, it was interesting to note the similarities and differences between their views.

On the comment about image size, this is due to the request from a previous tutor for images to be a maximum of 12cm on the longest side. In retrospect it makes sense that this size may not be suitable for every tutor.

Interestingly Benjamin and Jesse had differing views on the lack of people within the images, and for myself the intention was to avoid people as much as possible, concentrating on the structures and locations to show the contrast. I can see how it may have been beneficial to have people within the images to show the changing population of a once industrial area that is becoming increasingly residential or commercial, however the brief I had set myself was about the buildings themselves and not the population. That Jesse felt he had seen the images before somehow, whilst knowing he hadn't, was a thought echoed by Benjamin in our video tutorial. This kind of redevelopment is so commonplace and the modern structures replacing the old commercial ones are in a way quite ge-

neric, which in turn leads you to feel that this could be any major European city. The views we once had, full of buildings with a localised style or character are being replaced by structures designed to fit a modern aesthetic, to be clean cut and precise and to give more thought to profit in sales than to construct something unique or interesting.
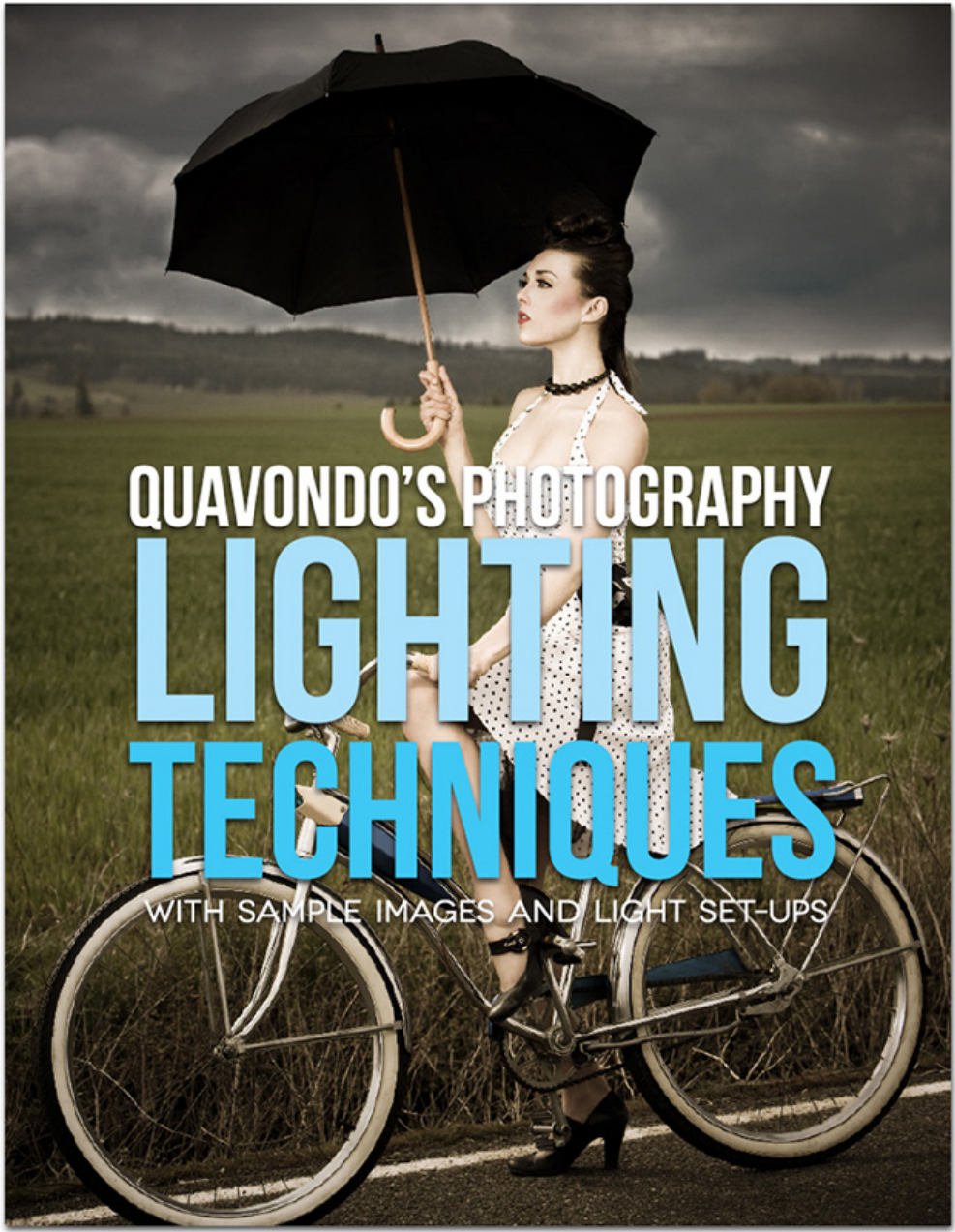
Overall I am happy with the comments from both Jesse and Benjamin on this assignment. I feel I achieved the goals I had set myself, something that Jesse commented upon when he said "it could work within an exhibition context – possibly more of a heritage/museum gallery than a fine art context". This was the brief I gave myself, to create a series of images fitting in line with the work of Kulturen The organisation for the conservation of cultural heritage in southern Sweden.

Looking back it is easy to see that this project deserves to be much larger and have more time spent on it. The scale and rate of redevelopment within cities and towns is such that we are quickly losing many links to the past, from both an architectural viewpoint and the general day to day lives of the residents. It is easy to say that progress needs to be made, and that communities have changing needs as time passes, but the history and heritage of both the structures and people is something that once lost is easily forgotten, and can never be replaced.

I find it interesting that Jesse noticed the sky as being somewhat dramatic or romantic, something I have to say that didn't occur to me. This is due to the fact that you become so used to seeing dramatic cloudy sky in the spring and winter, and bright blue skies with fluffy white clouds in the summer, with striking sunrises and sunsets all year round, that they become a usual thing, blending in with the days. You need to take time to stop and look to regain a sense of appreciation that is easily lost when something becomes a daily occurrence.

Quavondo's Photography Lighting Techniques

This is short book that I found on Kindle, it was reasonably priced and had a few good reviews so I thought I would take a chance on it. I had never heard of the writer, and it turns out he is a professional commercial photographer that has worked in both fashion and cinematography as well.

The book itself is a simple guide to lighting set-ups. Covering everything from a simple reflector to multiple studio lights, both indoors and on location, whilst not the most detailed or in depth book, it does offer some good advice on where to position lighting, how to modify the light and techniques for getting the best from your images.

The book is organised into sections based on an increasing number of lights., which makes for a logical progression as you read through.

There are numerous illustrations to accompany each section, and he goes into some detail explaining his choice of settings for each shot. He also touches on which equipment he chooses and why for each image. Helpfully, he also includes lighting set up diagrams to illustrate the positioning of his lights.

The book is well written, he uses easy to read language with enough technical detail to help you understand his choices, but without going over the top. The images included are of a consistently high standard and show his lighting choices to good effect. He also takes the time to point out that it is not all about having the biggest and best studio lighting, and that very good results can be obtained with both simple reflectors and with speedlights.

Overall an interesting little book, that gives suggestions, ideas and inspiration for a photographer to expand their knowledge, without the element of 'this way is the only right way' evident in some books.

My only real complaint is having bought this book on kindle the image resolution is a little low, zooming in soon causes pixelation and the kindle screen, whilst fine for text, isn't really big enough to display images well. Obviously this problem would not be present had I bought the book in the traditional printed format, and so I cant really fault the book for this.
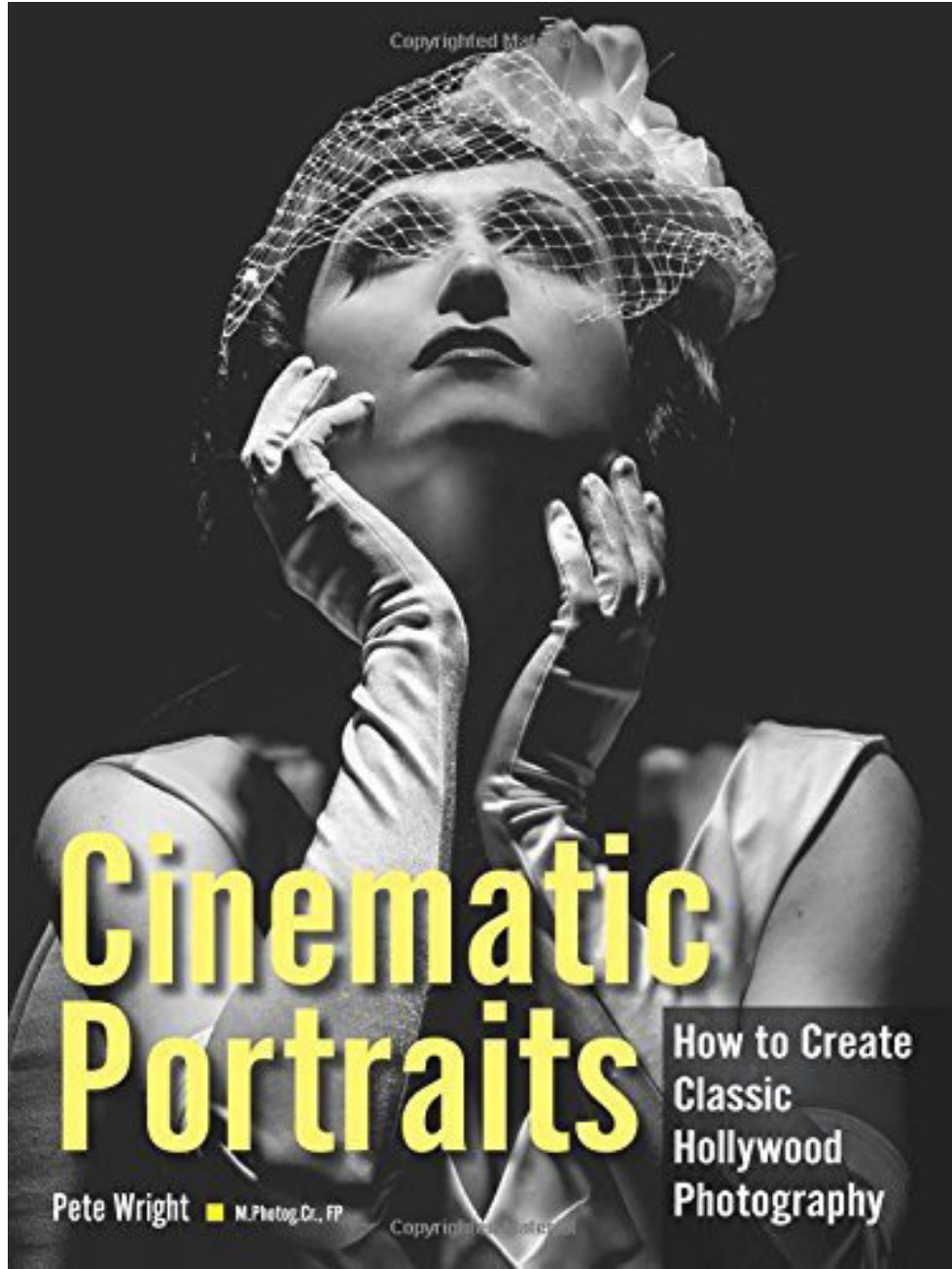
Cinematic Portraits – Paul Wright

Another one that popped up on my kindle recommended list. I must admit to having a love of vintage Hollywood portraiture, the style and content of these images always makes me think of an age of glamour and sophistication that has somehow been lost in the modern world.

I wasn't familiar with the author, and after checking found him to be an experienced photographer with a history in sports and editorial work. He later made a change to portraiture, and is a big fan of the film noir look.

The book is very detailed on both explaining the process of how to light an image, and in different styles of lighting. It has sections on different lighting types, explaining their pros and cons, and talks thoroughly about which modifiers to use for which effect. There are also sections covering the history of film noir and the Hollywood portrait.

The sections dealing with lighting set up are split into how many lights are used, a logical way to cover their advantages and disadvantages and to explain why in certain circumstances one light is better than three lights. He also discusses the use of extra lights i.e. hair lights, skim and kicker lights, and what effects they have on an image.

The sections on styles of lighting are informative and interesting, covering not only the use of a style, but the history behind it. Things like loop lighting, Rembrandt and butterfly lighting are all covered. There are also chapters tailored to specific styles of image and how to create them, film noir and Hollywood glamour being the main ones.

Not only is lighting covered, but also set dressing and wardrobe choice are explained, covering various styles from various decades to give a comprehensive guide on the actual look of a period. He goes into detail about stylists and make up and even set construction. He also touches on which equipment he uses and why. There is also a large detailed section on creating a visual dialogue within the images, a story to bring context and depth to film noir styled images.

The sections on posing are split between male and female and couples. Showing the typical poses of the period, it is interesting to see that the poses themselves are so far removed from the majority of work we see in the media today.

There is an in depth discussion on composition and depth within images, covering both in the studio and on location, and sections that cover everything from finding locations to assessing potential safety issues in historical sites. He even goes on to cover the various aspects of RAW capture and post processing, and display and sale of imagery.

Throughout the book he is reminding us to always experiment and practice, that by doing something new or unusual we can find new effects, and that honing skills not only makes the images better, it also makes it easier to produce them as a photographer.

The writing is well constructed, it contains large amounts of information, and at times does stray into some technical detail. It is however easy to follow and understand. I don't think the book is aimed at the novice, and more directed towards people with a good basic understanding of the principles of lighting. Having a personal interest in this period and style means to me the book was well worth reading, and will continues to be a useful reference tool.

Mindful Encounters — Jens Lennartsson

This book was a gift from my partner, and I had never heard of Jens Lennartsson before. A Danish photographer, who prefers to call himself a storyteller. He travels a lot recoding the places he visits and the people he meets.

I was surprised by the scale of this book, larger than A4 and a couple of inches thick it feels and looks like a proper old fashioned photo book.

There is a short forward by the photographer, explaining his motivation and we then head into pages of images.

The whole direction of the book is in looking for magnificence not in the grand, but in the everyday, in the things you see and the people you meet, and it achieves this in a wonderful way.

On first glance the images may seem no more than a number of shots from around the globe, recording people and the places they live and interact with, to some eyes this may seem a little plain or boring. However, this is entirely the point. They are interesting and rich in both character and content, showing the world and people as they are.

As a mix of portraits and landscapes this book is visually very pleasing, showing the people and places the photographer has visited. None of the images show the grand shiny side of life, covering merely the normal and usual aspects of experiencing life somewhere as a person.

The portraits are not extensively lit, or staged, there are no grand backdrops or expensive sets, just people in their normal surroundings. These are the people we see when on vacation, the people that live in the place we are visiting all year round. At most we will interact with them on a business level, buying something from a shop or restaurant. These are the people that maybe we should talk to, to see how different yet how the same their lives are, to be more social than we usually are, can only be an advantage in the modern world where we spend more and more time in front of a screen typing.

The book is about connecting with people and places, and this connection is shown in may of the images. The photographer seeks out normal people and shows them doing normal things, there is no glitz or glamour just the connection we have as people all living our lives.

It is nice to see a photo book where the principle idea is not about showing something impressive, or depressing, where the photographer has created something personal to himself, that is in fact relative to us all. Stepping away from the busy realities of life, to connect more with the people and world around us is the message he wants us to take away. That there is more to life than just obtaining the expected levels of wealth and possessions, and that there is so much out there for us to see.

I enjoyed this book, the images are pleasing and interesting, and all show a connection with or to the subject, whether it is obvious or not. It makes you think more about why we take photographs and what we as photographers want our photographs to say, about us and others.

NAOYA HATAKEYAMA

HATJE CANTZ

Naoya Hatakeyama

Naoya Hatakeyama is a photographer I became aware of through a friend. A Japanese landscape photographer who creates stunning images of urban and industrial landscapes alongside the traditional scenes of the countryside.

The book itself is mainly a photo book, there are pieces discussing the work that give insight and an explanation of the photographers intent.

I would like to concentrate on the images themselves. The first thing to hit me was the vast range of locations, from city centres to open caste mines, industrial buildings to trees on a hilltop, all of them are beautiful to look at and of obviously high quality with regards to lighting and composition. What I find most interesting is that in all of these images, there are no people. The photographer is recording purely the location, showing the beauty in the man made scenery. At times this does look slightly strange as we tend not to see to see empty cities or workplaces, we expect them to be busy and bustling as people go about their daily routines.

It is almost as if he is recording the relics of a dead civilisation, showing what has been left behind for the people that come after to see, or maybe these are living things themselves, slowly growing as time passes. Some of the images have an almost eerie feeling, due to a mixture of the urban scenery combined with mood filled lighting, and the complete lack of a human presence.

The book contains images from several countries around the world, and each section is prefaced with a short text from the photographer explaining his thoughts and ideas.

The feeling conveyed in the images is quite surprising, as if these man made scenes are some kind of natural thing, or monolithic block of stone. I find myself wondering where the people are and what their lives entail, and just how these vast areas interact with the people that undoubtedly fill them on a day to day basis.

As an inspirational piece of work this book is thoroughly worth reading, giving you ideas you might never otherwise have had. Ideas of treating the everyday objects around us in different ways, and viewing them from a different perspective. The book also works as something to just sit and look at, to enjoy the images and the writings of the photographer, you can view the images time and time again and not cease to be amazed by the sheer beauty and scale of some of the images.

Should I get the chance I would like to go and see these works in an exhibition, The larger scale of the prints would do justice to the images, and allow me to see the finer details that may be lost in prints in a book.
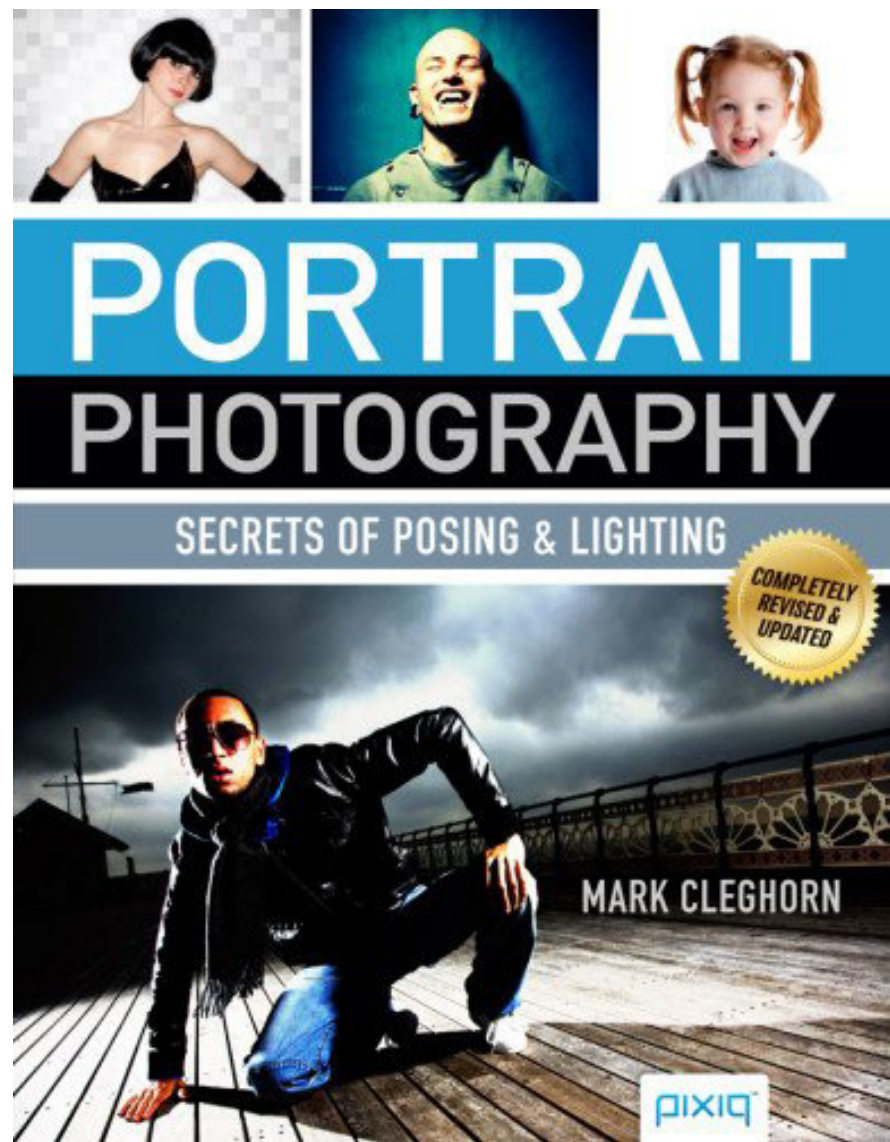
Portrait Photgraphy – Mark Cleghorn

I have read several books by Mark Cleghorn and they have all been of some interest and use.

Portrait Photography – Secrets of Lighting and Posing is full of useful information. It is written in a simple non technical manner, offering advice without sounding like it is preaching and has various illustrations to show things in the simplest way possible. Whilst it is not in anyway an all encompassing guide to portraiture what it does do is offer suggestions and guidance in the basics. Allowing the reader to understand what is required in a basic portrait, whether it be the pose, the setting or the lighting. From here you are free to experiment and make your own choices on where to go with what you have learned.

There are limited sections on poses and lighting set-ups, however this book is not really aimed at the experienced studio photographer, and more at people taking their first steps into using lighting, and as such is a nice introduction to a very complex world.

Mark Cleghorn has a pleasing style of writing, it is easy to follow and never overly technical, he illustrates his points well and offers the view of a very experienced photographer. He does point out that what works for him may not always be the best route for someone else, and that above all experimentation and practice are always needed.

Whilst I enjoyed the book I did have some issues. The version I read had several errors, in both spelling and labelling of illustrations. There were a few instances of words being missing and the odd grammatical mistake. From what I understand this is just an issue in the first print run of this book, and all of the problems have been solved in later versions.
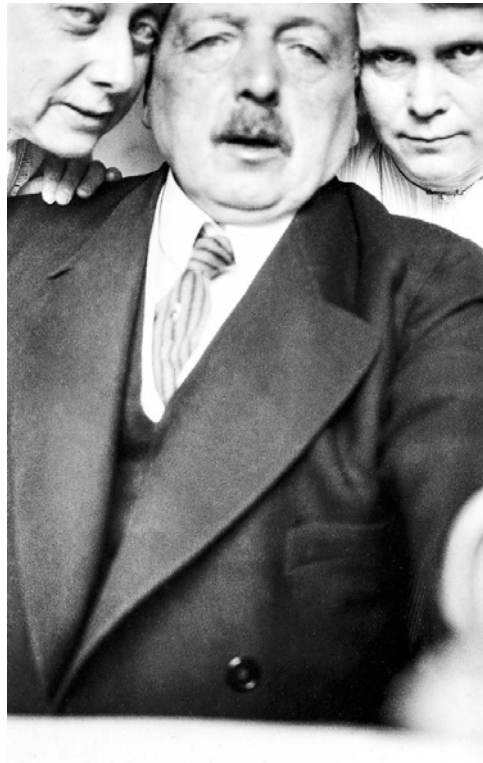
Anders Zorn

Anders Zorn is one of Sweden's most famous artists, known for his paintings, etchings and sculptures. In the late 19th and early 20th century he began to use use photography as a medium to record reference images that would later be used to create paintings and etchings.

It makes a change to see a photographic exhibition from such an early period, and I found it quite interesting to see how a traditional artist chose to record his inspiration. Many of the images are fairly normal portraits, of the kind you would expect to be transferred to a painting. What is striking about them is the formality and stiffness, we are used to portraits today being more natural and spontaneous, even formal portraits often have a lighter air about them. Obviously the camera equipment he used played a part in this, longer exposure times meaning people had to remain very still, and it is interesting to see that in the painted versions of these portraits there appears to be less of this stiffness and more life given through the application of the artists brush.

There were also a number of images from his later years, when travelling the islands of the Swedish archipelago. Many of these images are of nude young women, engaged in various poses by lakes or in forests, and these were later turned into etchings.

What I find interesting about his photographic work, is that when using it to create something in another medium there seems to be no need or desire to create something that maintains any photo realism. Many artists today strive to create hyper realistic works of art, yet with Zorn the photographic images seem to be used as a base to be improved upon. He obviously knows from the moment of capturing the image, what he wants to achieve in the final piece of work.

Aside from the artistic points of this exhibition, I always find historical photographic work interesting in the way it has recorded a way of life we no longer enjoy. The images Zorn recorded for his genre paintings include people from all walks of life, and both rural and urban scenery. A valuable and interesting glimpse into the past.

On a final note, it is also interesting to see that he also seemed to enjoy that most modern of phenomenons, the selfie, with many of his images taken at arms length and focusing on himself. Perhaps the often repeated internet saying of "everything in photography has been done before" is truer than we would like to think.

**INEZ &
VINOODH**

PRETTY MUCH EVERYTHING 2015
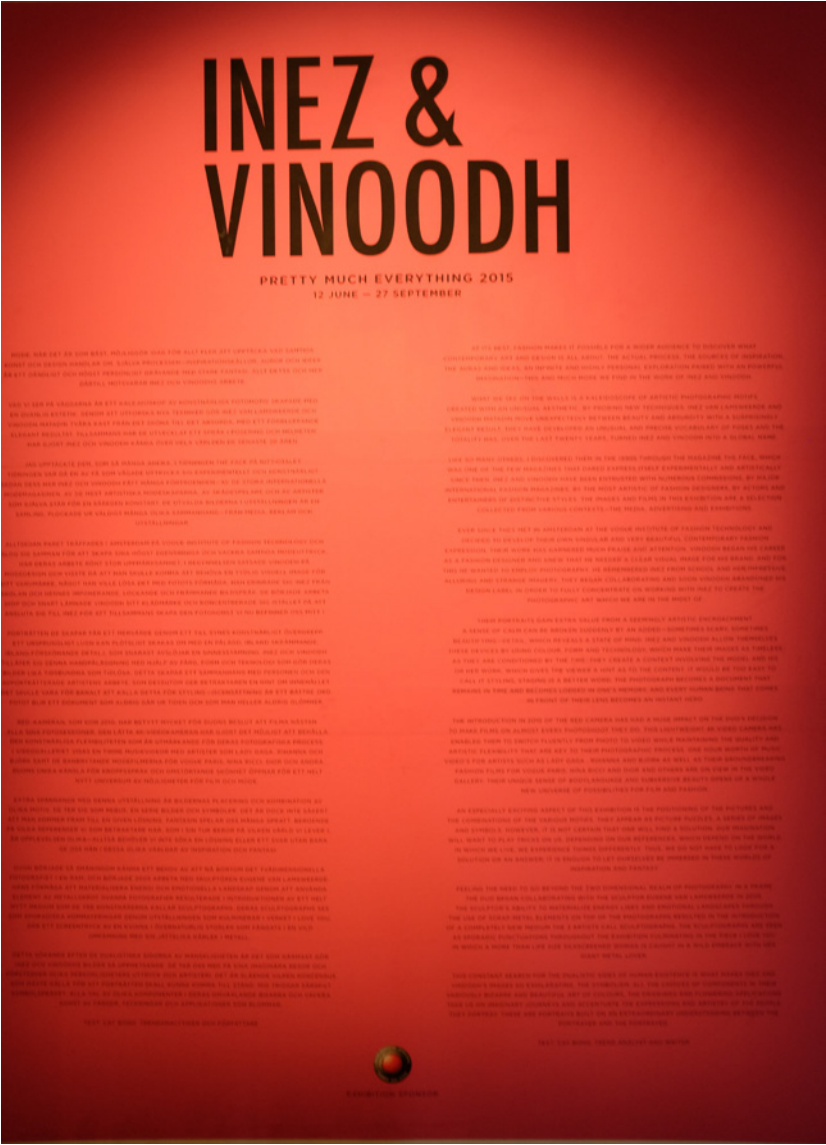
Inez and Vinoodh

Inez and Vinoodh are very well known in the fashion photography industry, they also have a long history of portrait work, and are known for using digital image editing to create thought provoking art works. Having seen their work in magazines on numerous occasions the chance to visit an exhibition was somehting I was looking forward to.

Seeing their work in the flesh, so to speak, does not disappoint. The scale of the images allows you to see a new level of detail, and standing in front of a large print does make you stop and think a little more than simply viewing it in a magazine or on a computer screen.

There were a large number of celebrity portraits, all beautifully lit and composed, however in the main they tell us little about the person themselves, and to my eyes appear mostly to be promotional material. There is no doubting the quality of this work, it just felt to me a little bit obvious. In contrast to this their own self portraits are filled with feeling and a level of imtimacy that tell us all about them, and how they feel. Sometimes maybe a little more than we would like to know. Other portraits on show range from the usual to the strange, and I find myslef more interested in this work than that of the celebrity magazine images. When the photographers exercise their creativity and whimsy the results become far more interesting and thought provoking.

Their fashion work is as you would expect, high quality and impressive in not only it's content, but style. There are some of course that are the expected type of image, but others with a style that at the time would have been unique. Full of strong colours and an intense but soft light, the images have the kind of 'pop' and seperation of subject that you expect to find in this kind of work. At the same time their is something about them that is special and unique to Inez and Vinoodh.

The advertising work is slick, clear and stylish, as I suppose is to be expected from this type of work. Whilst not being anything out of the ordinary, it does show the high level of skill required to be a success in this field.

Overall I felt this a very worthwhile exhibition. The mixture of genres and styles served not only to show the level of technical skill required when working at such a high commercial level, but also perhaps more on the individual artisitic and creative side in their other projects. I found it initeresting from both a reference and inspirational perspective.

Liu Bolin

The story behind Liu Bolin's project Hiding in the City is well known. A reaction to the destruction of the community of artists, and a means of drawing attention to the relationship of Chinese artists in general with their government.

The idea that by painting himself into his physical surroundings he is making a space for himself is an interesting one, and also one that doesn't instantly spring to mind when viewing the images. My first thought was that it was a comment on being invisible in society, where there are so many people it is easy to become unnoticed, and just blend in with the day to day life.

There are a number of images where he is painted into political slogans, apparently to make the viewer notice the slogans. I can understand the idea behind this as we become blind to things we see on a daily basis, advertising for example. The idea that even though we cease to pay attention to these slogans, we are still affected by them is one that has the ring of truth to it, especially if you use the example of mass advertising in the western world.

More than the social or economic messages within his work, what impressed me most was the dedication and time it must take to complete even one of these images. It must take an enormous amount of time paint a person so they fit in with often complex and detailed backgrounds. Not only that the camera must then be positioned perfectly in order to give the full effect.

A most interesting exhibition on many levels, the images on display were always both visually surprising and interesting, and the concept behind it thought provoking and maybe at times a little disturbing. I say disturbing, as the idea that as an individual you think you are ignoring the political slogans or advertising you see, only for them to be subconsciously present in your mind, affecting your beliefs or choices is somewhat of an uncomfortable feeling.
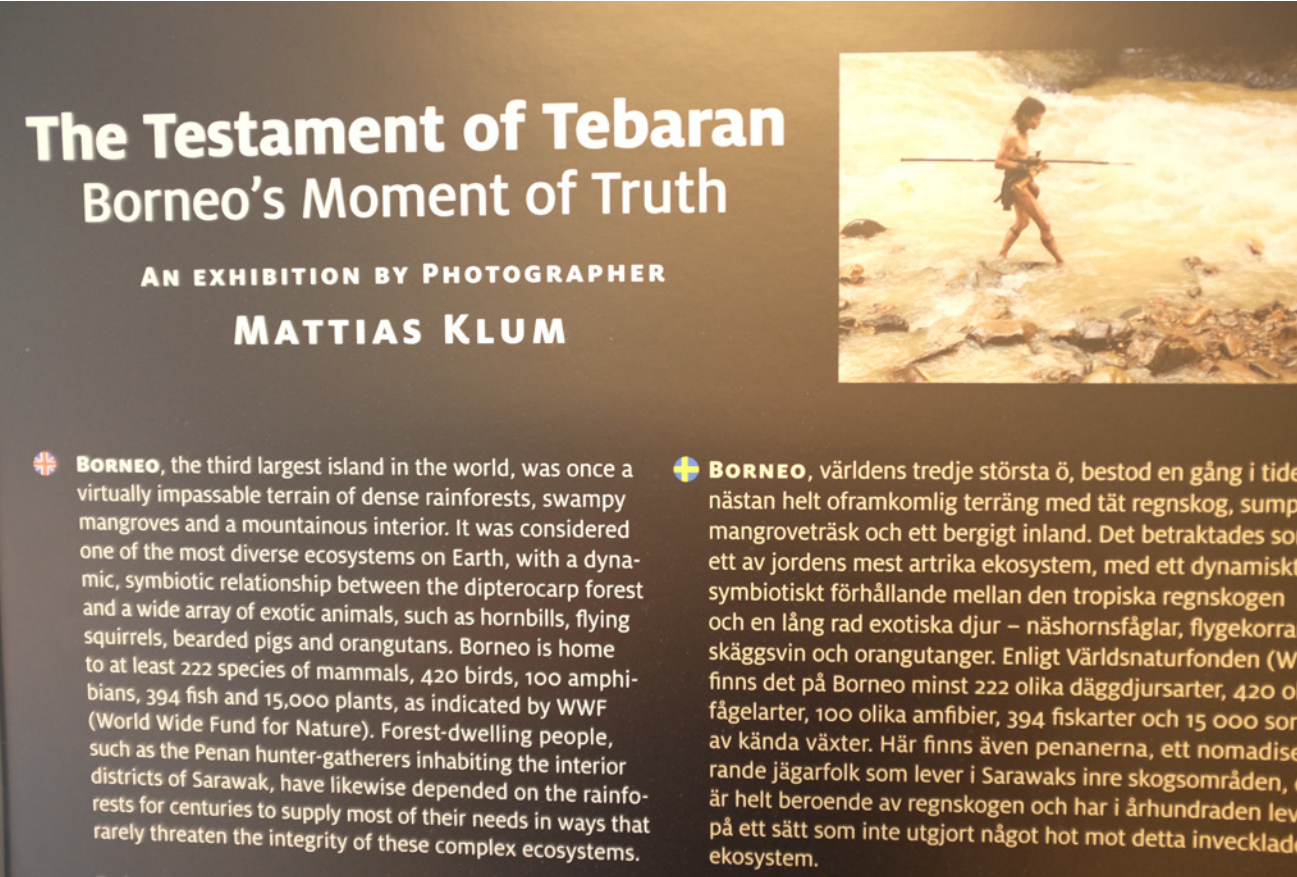
Mattias Klum

Mattias Klum, best known for his work with National Geographic, is a well known figure in Sweden, for his work in both photography and cinematography. The exhibition I visited was more of a collection of several projects relating to wildlife, the environment and Indiginous peoples.

I will start by saying I wasn't overly impressed with some of the wildlife and landscape images, not because of any lack of skill on behalf of the photographer, but because several of them appeared somewhat oversatured. The greens and blues had an almost flourescent quality to them. It is more than likely that this was down to some kinid of printing error, or that somehow there was a problem with the ink and paper.

The main part of the exhibition was from the series on Borneo, showing the changes and damage to the local environment and people as big industry has become established. Whether this is the logging, mining or other industry, they are all damaging Borneo in one way or another.

There were a number of very striking landscape images, showing the damage done to the rain forests and rivers by both logging and mining operations. Numerous images of the problems caused to the orang

utan population by the deforestation, and the scale of the palm oil plantations that have replaced large areas of rain forest. The images that were most moving were the ones showing where people that had lived in the forests for generations were losing their homes, their way of life and their traditional heritage. Being forced to live in ramshackle towns, and to move away from a hunter gatherer lifesestyle into one where employment and money are king.

The images are captured with sensitivity, they are not sensationalised or staged for maximum effect, and illustrate how documentary work and photojournalism can tell a story and inform in great detail without the need for lurid captions and overly graphic images. Despite the subject matter being somewhat depressing I enjoyed the work on display. Mattias Klum is obviously a talented photographer, and a man that knows his craft from a documentary/journalism viewpoint. I must admit to enjoying this kind of work, and in general alot of the work in the pages of National Geographic. The combination of travel photography, with social and environmental documetary is something that I find both interesting and viually appealing.

Olafur Eliason

Olafur Eliason is not a photographer. He works mainly in sculpture involving elemental materials, i.e. light and water. These are employed in such a way as to give the viewer a unique experience of space and motion.

Visiting the exhibition Reality Machines I wasn't sure what to expect, having not experienced the artist before. I had only been told about his work by relatives. I must admit to being pleasantly surprised, maybe not quite in the way he had intended, but nonetheless it was a thoroughly worthwhile experience.

I will say that the meaning and concept of the artist's work may have passed a little above my head, but his use of light and space was very interesting. The use of light, and in particular coloured lighting to affect the way we see something was quite enlightening. One room consisted entirely of large coloured gels hung from the ceiling, different colours spread out to form a transparent maze. What interested me most here was the effect of viewing the room through a series of different coloured sheets. As you look through the differing colours they combine to form a new colour, something familiar when thinking of mixing paint, but less usual when being actually viewed in person. It was as if giant colour filters were being passed over the scene as you walk, greens, reds and blues amongst others, working to change the percep-tion of colour. Sometimes stronger, sometimes weaker and at other times making things appear to change colour completely.

Another room was lit entirely by an odd yellow/grey light which again made certain colours vanish completely, whilst changing others to a shade you would never expect. In other rooms dust was floating in the air to obscure your vision, multifaceted mirrors reflected the view in a myriad of ways. Glass balls distorting reality and strobe lights freezing the motion of water, all the exhibits were obvious in their effect.

Whilst this may not be directly related to photography I thought the use of light and other visual effects were very interesting. They could easily be adapted into photographic use, either by employing coloured gels on lights to create kaleidoscopic effects, changing the natural colours we see or even just enhancing or accenting details within an image. Reflecting light from uneven surfaces or even taking the photograph through distorting lenses, or employing a series of mirrors to direct the image into the camera are all possibilities to be looked at.

Overall this exhibition was about opening up how we view things, changing perceptions and as far as photography goes that can only be beneficial.

Reference Reading List

Don McCullin: Don McCullin
The Art of Photography: An Approach to Personal Expression: Bruce Barnbaum
The Gaze of the Lens: Henry Bond
The Photographers Mind: Michael Freeman
The Photographers Eye: Michael Freeman
Robert Frank: The Americans
East End Photographs: Steven Berkoff
Context & Narrative: Maria Short
Street Photography Now: Sophie Howarth and Stephen McLaren
Ways of Seeing: John Berger
BeautyLight: Matthew Rolston
The Photograph as Contemporary Art: Charlotte Cotton
The Ongoing Moment: Geoff Dyer
Ansel Adams: The making of 40 Photographs
Vivian Maier: Street Photographer
Street Seen: The Psychological Gesture in American Photography, 1940-1959 : Lisa Hostetler
The Man in the Crowd: The Uneasy Streets of Garry Winogrand: Gary Winogrand
Evocations of Place: The Photography of Edwin Smith: Robert Elwall

Thoughts and Conclusions

What did I expect from this section of the course
I had hoped that this section would push me away from the things I find comfortable, and perhaps force me into confronting my dislike of street photography.

How did I think I fared against the learning objectives?
• *Use technical and interpersonal skills effectively to capture images which reflect your ideas*
I feel that the final 4 assignments show that my technical skills are sound. On the other hand I do still feel a little out of place when photographing strangers in the street uninvited, something that can only change with practice., I think I have demonstrated that I can create images of people with an acceptable degree of success, and create images where people are used within the image to emphasise a point or add interest to the photograph, or to illustrate a point being made.

• *Demonstrate the importance of note-taking, research, ideas and concepts to the process of developing a story*
I approached this course with the intent of planning things more thoroughly, a plan that didn't always work for the best due to outside influences and the reliance on other people for posing for some of the images. However in the main this helped me to not only chose locations and ideas, but to have time to do a little research into each step before beginning.

• *Demonstrate a good level of ability in the effective selection and editing of images to achieve objectives*
I believe that I have made sound and sensible choices in the selection of my chosen images, though on a couple of occasions I may have used something that had more personal meaning than wide viewer appeal. It is hard to be truly impartial here, even when aware of some shortcomings.

• *Show that you can reflect perceptively on your learning experience*
I think that my reactions to suggestions from my tutor, and my ability to self critique show that I can react positively to feedback, and learn lessons as I move forward. I think there are times when my choices may not have been the wisest, or when I limit my viewpoint to a personal level.

What impact has the course had on my photography?
Being pushed somewhat out of my comfort zone has had the effect of making me think more on the way people interact with their environment, and on how we as people often become somewhat blind to familiar surroundings. It has moved me more into creating groups or series of images, where before I would think more in the way of single shots to illustrate points. In terms of my personal work the course has also given me ideas for a number of projects based around the modernisation and gentrification of former industrial spaces, and the way people moving into the cities and away from the country is having an effect on the rural population.

Conclusion
Initially I did feel a little out of place with this section of the course. Whether this was due to the fact that at times I felt it difficult to motivate myself, or if that itself was due to my discomfort with the idea of street photography I am not sure. However once I got into focusing on either an exercise or assignment the feeling of discomfort went away, and in the main I found the course to be both enjoyable and thought provoking. I think it will be important for me to maintain both practice and interest in this area, to not only complete personal projects, but also to completely remove the inhibitions regarding photographing strangers. I think there has been a beneficial effect on my photography overall, and also on the way I think about, plan and view projects.

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People and Place