



Open
College
of the Arts

Formative feedback

Student name	Iain Barbour	Student number	515236
Course/Unit	IAP	Assignment number	1
Type of tutorial	Written / Audio-Visual		

Overall Comments

A good start to the module in which you have shown how much you enjoyed leaving your comfort zone and pushing your own photographic boundaries. There are technical areas that can be worked on over coming course sections but for now I am encouraged by the start you have made.

Assessment potential

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 module. More and more people are taking the idea of lifelong learning seriously by submitting their work for assessment but it is entirely up to you. We are just as keen to support you whether you study for pleasure or to gain qualifications. Please consider whether you want to put your work forward for assessment and let me know your decision when you submit Assignment 2. I can then give you feedback on how well your work meets the assessment requirements.

Feedback on assignment

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

Below are the key points from our discussion yesterday:

- The confidence you have shown to get out of your comfort zone and embrace speaking with people rather than photographing them from a distance is great. Engagement with your subjects is key if you want to become a more confident photographer so this is absolutely crucial. The various smaller technical issues and lighting will all come with practice, but none of that matters if you don't make that first step which you have taken here. Well done.
- Working with a subject is all about engaging and collaborating with them to produce the image you (and they) want. It is important to understand that they too have power in that relationship, as opposed to candid street photography where you attempt to be unobserved, thus removing any power from your subject.
- It was good to see you worked to shoot more subjects than you needed for the final edit – this is a professional way of working as you never quite know how images will work when placed together in an edit and more options helps out at this later stage.
- The castle was a sensible choice of location because, as you found, people are more amenable to being photographed when in a place where they expect to see cameras and photographers – i.e. tourist locations.
- This raised another point – I was hesitant about your use of the term 'foreigners' to describe your subjects. This has become a loaded term in contemporary political debate and, as photographers, we don't operate in a vacuum. I suggested that instead you adopt the term 'tourists' as this also broadens the possible subjects, including the couple from Wigan who you didn't consider 'foreign' enough within the conceptual edit (disregarding, for a moment, the framing issue you cite in that image).
- We spoke at length about the power relationships within the photographer/subject dynamic and, implicit within this, is how you caption portraits. At the moment you have used GPS co-ordinates. I wasn't sure these add anything to this specific series, whereas the names of the subjects where they have travelled from to visit the castle would be important. As you recorded this information when shooting, I recommend making this change ahead of assessment.
- The only other change I thought would be useful was to tweak the colour in the portrait of the Korean couple. Once this is done you could play with the edit a little but, aside from that, I would put this assignment to one side until you come to printing everything up for assessment.
- We did discuss the framing of the first image as the lens was on a wider setting. As you like the portrait and feel it is critical to the cohesion of the project, I suggest adding a note to the reflection signalling that you are aware of the difference in framing, although slight, and it's impact on the series. In addition, write a brief comment about how you spotted this when making the work and then refined your strategy (as you did) to better help put subjects at ease when making the rest of the images. This demonstrates that you are aware of the shortcomings but, as this is an assignment 1, you have used it as a test rather than a fully resolved body of work.

Coursework

Demonstration of technical and Visual Skills, Demonstration of Creativity

Exercises are going well. We went through your work and didn't see any areas that need to be addressed at this time.

Research

Context, reflective thinking, critical thinking, analysis

Your post on Niall McDiarmid's portraits is an example of good practice. I have added some other interesting photographers for you to review in the suggested reading section.

Learning Log

Context, reflective thinking, critical thinking, analysis

Try and take part in some study visits. If there aren't any around you, there is always the option to propose one along with your fellow students.

The place to look for upcoming events is the WeareOCA section of the main OCA website, here: <https://www.oca.ac.uk/weareoca/category/study-events/>

Suggested reading/viewing

Context

The following photographers came up during our discussion for you to look at alternative portrait strategies:

Bruce Gilden – (aggressive street style portraiture worth examining for the ethical questions it raises) <https://www.brucegilden.com/>

Stephen Gill – Audio Portraits

<http://www.stephengill.co.uk/portfolio/portfolio/nggallery/album-1-2/audio-portraits> and

Trolley Portraits <http://www.stephengill.co.uk/portfolio/portfolio/nggallery/album-1-2/trolley>

Anastasia Taylor-Lind – Maiden – Portraits from the Black Square <https://anastasia-taylorlind.squarespace.com/maidan>

Pointers for the next assignment

The next assignment continues on from what you have done here in many respects, but asks for you to vary locations whilst working to a theme. Your choices will be determined from the work you make in the upcoming exercises so if any issues or queries arise, feel free to get in touch.

In general terms, perhaps start thinking about developing a specific workflow both in terms of the camera itself and for additional lighting.

Please inform me of how you would like your feedback for the next assignment: written or video/audio.

Tutor name	David Wyatt
Date	29/2/20
Next assignment due	2/4/20