Foundations in Photography
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Welcome to *Foundations in Photography*. This course aims to equip you with fundamental visual and technical skills in photography as well as informing you about ways of thinking about and understanding photographs. Alongside the practical projects and experimental exercises, you'll be directed to the work of other photographers which you can look up in libraries, book shops, galleries and on the internet to help you gain a perspective on different genres and creative possibilities. It's important to apply this learning to your own productive output by emulating what you see and trying things out; that way you'll absorb new knowledge and develop your expertise.

On completion of the five parts your tutor will help you judge whether you've gained sufficient skills and enough confidence to go on to further study with the Open College of the Arts.

You'll find more information about studying with OCA in your Student Handbook so keep this to hand as you work through the course.

### Your tutor

Even though you'll be studying from home you won't be working in isolation. You'll have the support of your tutor, who is your main point of contact with OCA.

Your tutor's contact details are in the course pack. Once you've had a chance to look through the beginning of the course, email your tutor and explain your experience in photography and ask any questions you may have about the course or distance learning. Throughout the course you can contact your tutor by email if you're stuck or need something clarified. Your tutor's main job is to give you feedback on your assignments, which you should usually send to your tutor via email with a link to your learning log. In some cases you may choose to send prints through the post.

Your tutor will comment on your work and try to help with any questions that may have arisen, and will offer constructive criticism as well as advice to help you progress. Your tutor will also help you to put the course projects and your own work into an appropriate context by making suggestions on texts to read, images to look at, places to visit and photographers and artists to study.

You can also draw on the support of your fellow students. There are lots of other OCA students studying photography. Use the OCA website forums as a place to meet them, share experiences and learn from one another. You can access these via the student website here, [https://discuss.oca-student.com/](https://discuss.oca-student.com/). You may want to start by logging onto the forums and introducing yourself, perhaps find out who else is on the course and say hello. You will have automatically been included in the FIP group email and will receive regular email updates from fellow students.


**Course Support**

Course support are able to assist with things that you may find unclear in the exercises, projects and assignments and technical issues such as locating course resources etc. They can act as a point of contact in between tutor communications. Please email coursesupport@oca.ac.uk

**Course structure**

The course is split into five parts, each representing a particular aspect and genre of photography, which you’ll tackle through a series of exercises. At the end of each part of the course you’ll carry out an assignment task based on that part of the course which you’ll send to your tutor for review. Your tutor will get back to you as soon as possible but this may take a couple of weeks or more. Continue with the course while you’re waiting.

Take note of the suggested date (on your tutor reports) for your next assignment but don’t feel pressurised. These course materials are intended to be used flexibly. Work at a pace that fits in with your life. If you feel you can complete a particular part of the course quickly, then by all means do so. If you feel you need a little longer, that’s fine. However, if there’s going to be a considerable delay (e.g. several months) between assignments, contact your tutor and let them know what’s happening.

To help you with each part of the course you will find a concept map that shows how the exercises and research connect and feed into making the assignments.

**Making a start**

Start by skimming through the course guide to get a feel for the way you’ll work. Don’t feel you need to read every detail at this stage; this is just a chance to get your bearings. Once you’ve done this, contact your tutor (see above) and think about what equipment you’ll need.

Work through the course in the order it’s written. Read the first part of the course thoroughly and ensure you have everything in place before starting. It’s a good idea to read each section several times before you start work so you know exactly what you’re supposed to be doing.

**Learning Log**

All OCA Photography and Moving Image courses require you to have an online learning log. You may still want to work with a notebook that is handwritten, but for the purpose of documenting your work and for your tutor to see your progression, an online learning log, sometimes referred to interchangeably as a blog, is the best vehicle. Handwritten notes and sketches can be scanned or photographed and uploaded to the blog. To protect your security the blog can be password protected, although the likely hood of someone
happening upon your blog randomly is quite unlikely.

Each time you complete an assignment, you will upload it to your learning log. You do not have to include every exercise in the learning log, although some students do. It is up to you. As a minimum guide each assignment and associated project tasks should be uploaded to the learning log.

Don’t worry about setting up your blog this will be covered in the introductory exercises of the course.

If you’d like more information about learning logs and blogging please see the ‘Resources’ section on the OCA student site.

**Reading and research**

It’s vital that you look at the work of other photographers and understand the different genres of photography. Juliet Hacking’s *Photography: The Whole Story*, (London: Thames & Hudson, 2012) is an anthology of photographers, genres and different approaches with accessible texts that should help you to think about photography more critically.

Throughout this course, you’ll be encouraged to look at the work of photographers and artists. Review their work critically, from the perspective of the criteria you’re learning through the course: composition, framing, subject, genre, light, etc. Research means raising questions and looking for answers. Apply what you learn to both your own practice and the way you review other photographer’s images.

Always use quotation marks if you copy comments or reviews from other writers. If you progress to degree level study with OCA you’ll have to apply academic conventions to all the writing you do, using the Harvard referencing system. It’s not mandatory for this introductory course, but if you intend to study further you’d be well advised to start getting to grips with this now by looking at the study guide to Harvard referencing on the student website. But your research shouldn’t simply consist of quotes or cut and pasted sections of writing. You must digest intellectually what you’re learning and show that in your writing.

**Print quality**

Make sure you look at the course as a PDF online as well as the printed copy. You’ll find the image quality may vary considerably. You can find the PDF of the course on the OCA student site. This will illustrate the difference between medias of presentation.
Tip
If you gain inspiration from photography magazines, try to offset an amateur perspective with a more advanced one. So if you've read amateur photography magazines, also look at *The British Journal of Photography* or an online site like *lensculture.com*.

Photographic magazines have quite a strong focus on the latest equipment. Beware of the false assumption that you can’t take good photos because you don’t have the best equipment. Even a mobile phone could be appropriate for making candid photos. What’s important is the end result. Don’t limit or ‘close down’ your understanding about what photography is or can be. All photography relies on the choices made by the photographer, so it can become whatever you make of it.

Image-editing software
As a student you’re eligible for student pricing, which gives you significant discounts on software and hardware. For this course you’re recommended to use Adobe Photoshop. You can download a free 30 day trial of Photoshop to get you started.

You can subscribe to different Adobe Creative Cloud options here:  
[www.adobe.com/uk/creativecloud/buy/students.html](http://www.adobe.com/uk/creativecloud/buy/students.html)

Photoshop is an extensive image-editing program which allows you to create layers and special effects. With the Adobe Creative Cloud Photography subscription, you also get Lightroom for organising your photographs and Camera RAW for editing in highest resolution RAW format.

Don’t be daunted by having to learn a new program; you can usually get up and running in a few hours. Buy a book on Photoshop that’s written specifically for photographers, like Adobe Photoshop for Photographers by Martin Evening and Jeff Schewe (Burlington, MA: Focal Press, 2011) rather than a general book that will teach you things you’ll probably never use.

Adobe have a suite of online tutorials available, most of which can be accessed for free, to support your skills as they develop. More information here, [https://helpx.adobe.com/uk/photoshop/tutorials.html](https://helpx.adobe.com/uk/photoshop/tutorials.html)
Introduction

Study advice for new students and making a blog
Good study begins with a decision to improve old skills, knowledge and thought processes and gain new ones. You’ll need to re-affirm this decision periodically as you progress through the course, particularly at times of difficulty. Expecting, and learning to tolerate, difficulty is a part of learning.

**Goals:** Set yourself study goals throughout the course. If you lack skills in a specific area, put particular effort into that area. In *Foundations in Photography* (FiP) one of your primary goals is to understand the five genres of photography. Structure your goals in a way you can manage and take one step at a time.

**Discipline:** Study requires discipline, particularly in your structuring of time. Carefully schedule your time to encompass both practical projects and research. Keep reminding yourself of your goals and learn to prioritise tasks when there are other demands on your time.

**Criticism:** A vital part of learning is receiving and digesting your tutor’s feedback. You won’t get unbridled praise – if that’s what you want, you’re probably not ready to study. A tutor’s job is to give you an educated appraisal of your photographs based on the aims of the course and to give you advice on how to improve. Be open to both positive and negative criticism and take on board your tutor’s comments. Your tutor’s feedback will relate to the technical, aesthetic and intellectual aspects of photography – not their own taste. It’s crucial that you learn to perceive your own work in this objective way. If you strongly disagree with your tutor’s comments, email them and explain why. This is a key part of the learning process.

**Practice:** A skill is a *practised* ability, a facility in doing something. You can read an instruction manual on playing football, but only physical repetition of a skill like accurate kicking will improve your ability. So go out and search for images. Practise technical skills like fill-flash or study a particular subject or a photographer – whether there’s an ‘idea’ or driving inspiration or not.

**New knowledge:** You’re setting out on a journey where you’ll sometimes feel like a foreigner who doesn’t speak the local language. The best way to absorb new knowledge is through repetition and practice. It helps if you connect your photographic practice to different areas of your life to enlarge its ‘sphere of interestedness’.

If you find it hard to master something, frustration can make you feel hostile to knowledge. Don’t mistake disagreement for frustration. Be open, take as much as you can, then move on.

**Production:** The foundation of artistic education is the production of artworks. Produce work no matter how ‘dry’ it feels. Take a genre like portraiture and put it to work. What can you do photographically with a face? Some light, maybe a candle, a strange hat, a change in location? What can you come up with?
Don’t stop because you’re not ‘in the mood’. Even times of despair and grief have been immortalised in artworks, from Edvard Munch’s early expressionist paintings to Picasso’s ‘Blue Period’. A bad day could be when you produce your very best work.

**Technical skills:** Read about the technical aspects of your medium and put this knowledge into practice. Learn about the shutter, focus, aperture, depth of field or different kinds of light, then practise until they become part of your ‘toolkit’, your decision-making process when making photographs. You’ll find technical tutorials on photographic techniques in this course and on the web. Evaluate your technical skills periodically and build on them if you sense you’re lacking in crucial areas.

**Technique:** Technique is a particular use of technical skills. For example, Rembrandt used layers of paint and varnish to achieve luminosity in his oil paintings. Don’t get too hung up on technique; most photographers don’t know all the techniques and don’t need to. They only need those they’ll use and these are often few. Technique is something you’ll pick up from other artists and refine throughout your studies and your career.

**Intellectual skills:** Developing your thought processes is vital to all study. The standard critical thinking techniques of analysing and questioning form the foundation of this approach. These should be based on the new skills and ideas you’re learning as well as on your own inward convictions. Acquiring knowledge of all kinds will deepen and inform your creativity. Life experiences are also a vital source from which to draw.

Do research in libraries and on the internet. See what other photographers have done with the same subject. Study the history of photography. Another key area of study as you move through the degree pathway is photographic theory. Images have long been written and talked about. Visual art has often had intellectual foundations like Surrealism, ‘New Objectivity’ or ‘Subjective Photography’. These ideologies help artists direct their creative output. All this may seem difficult at first, but it’s likely that you’ve been engaging with some of this theory at a subconscious level and you’ll be rewarded with a deeper clarity about what you make.

**Experimentation:** All materials and technologies have specific characteristics – for example, the frozen stillness caused by the shutter in photographs or, conversely, the blur when using longer shutter speeds. These inherent photographic characteristics can be the inspiration for experimentation, which is vital for renewal in the arts. Any facet of photography can become the genesis of new ideas. The mobility or smallness of a phone camera could be something that sparks an experiment in that kind of image-making.

**Aesthetic skills:** Aesthetic evaluation is much more than a personal taste reaction – ‘I like this’ or ‘I don’t like that’. Aesthetics deals with the coming together of objective picture elements – materials, surfaces, textures, light and shadow, lines, shapes, forms, colours – and the subject’s place within all these visual qualities. This leads to our interpretation of the image.
Your initial questions when viewing a photograph should be, ‘What is the subject?’ ‘What are the objects the image depicts?’ ‘How does the artist depict these objects?’ There isn’t a single element of a picture that doesn’t play some part in the overall visual effect. The better you understand these elements, the greater your ability to use them,

**Personal talent:** Notions of personal talent are rife in the arts and it can end up being a limitation if you think you don’t have any talent. Talent is basically *ability*. It’s not necessarily a ‘special ability’ or a ‘natural ability,’ though it may be. Talent is about what you are and the things you’ve learned and you can nurture it by practice, research and wider engagement. Whether you develop a *special* ability will be something you’ll discover further down the line. For now, try to be realistic about what you do and get on with making pictures.

**Inspiration:** Inspiration is the most valuable commodity in the arts: that new idea, that bold energy, that fascination. Ideas seem to ‘come out of the blue’ but you can play your part by evaluating, pursuing, nurturing and *realising* them – not leave them in a sketchbook. Then you’ll experience the joy of a flow of ideas. Indeed, by realising your ideas you’re realising your self.
Exercise 0.1 Set up a blog

We’ve created a Wordpress blog template for Photography and Moving Image students to use for their studies here at the OCA. To access the template and guidance on how to set up a blog with Wordpress, see this guide on the OCA student site:

www.oca-student.com/resource-type/study-guide/oca-wordpress-blog-template

This guide will help you to set up your blog, covering areas such as downloading the appropriate template, importing the template into Wordpress, creating the menu structure and categorising posts.

The guide also allows you to request additional assistance from OCA should you have any concerns about the set up of your blog. You can also email help@oca.ac.uk for support from OCA’s IT Team.

Remember, you’ll need to do some administration in the background of your blog. Your structure will need to consist of these main categories, each with sub-categories:

Home
- Pressing ‘Home’ will just lead you back to the front page of the blog, like the homepage of a website, where you can access all the sections.

About
- Here you can write anything you like about yourself and your studies.

Assignments
- Assignment 1
- Assignment 2
- Assignment 3
- Assignment 4
- Assignment 5

Coursework
- Part One Workflow
- Part Two Image
- Part Three Communication
- Part Four Experimentation
- Part Five Exhibition

These blog posts should be accompanied by a short written summary about your progress, what you’ve learned and your response to the process and the photographic results.
Research & reflection

- Research
- Photographic analysis
- Reading
- Reviews
- Reflection
- OCA student blogs
Part one
Workflow: Landscape and environment

Stephen King, Brownfield
Every exercise, project, and every piece of research in Foundations in Photography is a building block to improve your photographic practice and understanding. Exercises and projects equip you with the technical, visual and creative skills and research provides you with the knowledge to make successful assignments at the end of each part. This concept map illustrates the chunks of knowledge and skill you will obtain.

### Key

- **Technical and visual skills**
- **Creativity and communication**
- **Contextual Knowledge**

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#### Assignment One Square Mile

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<th>Topic</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<td>Printing</td>
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<td>Making a contact sheet</td>
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<td>Avoiding classic mistakes</td>
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<td>Long and fast exposure</td>
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<td>Photographing in diffused light</td>
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<td>Controlling exposure: bracketing</td>
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<td>Picture Analysis: Shibata</td>
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<td>Understanding Form and Content</td>
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<td>Evaluating your photos</td>
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<td>Light and Shadow</td>
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<td>Light meter</td>
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<td>Image editing: cleaning and selecting adjustment</td>
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<td>Basic image editing: contrast, colour and crop</td>
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<tr>
<td>File types</td>
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<tr>
<td>Uploading and organising</td>
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<td>100 photos</td>
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<tr>
<td>Framing and composition skills</td>
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<td>Camera skills</td>
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Part One aims to get you up and running with an efficient workflow so you can concentrate on making photos. Working within the genre of landscape and the environment, you’ll learn how to upload and organise your photos on your computer and make basic image adjustments. You’ll develop some fundamental visual and technical skills that you can put into practice in all your photography. A single course can’t hope to teach every student how to use their particular camera, so it’s vital that you study your camera’s user manual to become familiar with how your camera works before you start work on the course.

In Part One you’ll learn how to:

- apply basic compositional skills
- organise files and folders in Adobe Bridge (Bridge is free, but you don’t have to use Bridge if you prefer to use Lightroom or another means of organizing your photographs)
- control and emphasise light and shadow for visual effect
- make creative use of fast and slow shutter speeds
- avoid the classic mistakes of amateur photographers.

You’ll also start to develop your understanding of landscape photography.

Before you start the first project, you’ll need to set up your camera and give some thought to framing and the basics of composition.

**Setting up your camera**

1. Set your camera to Manual Mode. It’s vital to shoot in Manual (M) rather than Program or Auto modes so you can learn how to control the camera.

2. Set file type to RAW. Most cameras allow you to shoot images of different sizes (pixel dimensions) and file types (JPEG or RAW). Choose RAW to get the highest possible quality. When you upload your images to a computer, you’ll see they have a proprietary file name suffix that indicates they are RAW files. If your camera doesn’t have RAW, choose the best quality setting you have.

3. Set ISO. Always aim to shoot at the lowest ISO setting (80 or 100 depending on your camera) because this will increase the resolution of your images. In low light you can choose a higher setting, but you will notice (particularly with compact cameras) that your images lose resolution and become ‘grainy’.

4. Set ‘White Balance’ to Auto. Light has different colours – or tints. Morning light is more blue than midday light; household light bulbs can give images an orange cast. If you’re noticing odd colour results using the Auto white balance, you’ll have to use Manual and choose the right manual balance (e.g. flash) for the situation. If you shoot in an environment lit by fluorescent lights, you’ll probably notice a green or a brown
colour cast. You can correct these later, but it’s best to do so in-camera by choosing the Fluorescent white balance setting.

5. Light meter types. Your camera ought to have a choice of three types of light meter:
   - Evaluative
   - Centre-weighted
   - Spot

Evaluative or centre-weighted should work fine for most situations, but when available light is varied and of high contrast you may find the light meter gets the exposure wrong. This is when you should use the spot meter, which measures the light of a small area you select – someone’s face, for example. If you don’t have a spot meter function, you should be able to point the camera towards a mid-toned subject, press the shutter half way to ‘hold’ the exposure, re-compose your picture and shoot.

6. Exposure control. When light enters your lens, a sensor measures it. Too little light results in an under-exposed picture (it’ll come out too dark); too much light results in over-exposed (the picture comes out too bright). You adjust the exposure with three controls:
   - The f-stop (indicated by a number like f2.8 or f5.6) which controls how much light is landing on your camera’s sensor via a diaphragm in the lens.
   - The shutter speed (indicated by a fraction of time: 1/250th of a second – or 1sec, for example).
   - The ISO 80 is low and requires more light; 1600 is high and means you can shoot in low light situations, but with the disadvantage of increased grain.
Framing

All photographs are framed selections. The frame can be a ‘window’ or a ‘canvas’ – you can see *through* it or construct *within* it. Look at the two framing orientations below: portrait/vertical and landscape/horizontal. Which you use depends on the subject you’re photographing. For example, the long, thin, vertical shape of a tall building may suggest a vertical framing. The wide, horizontal impression of a landscape suggests a horizontal framing.

The four edges and four corners of the rectangle ‘cut off’ the scene you choose to frame: they outline your view.

You may also have seen examples of oval framing in nineteenth-century portraiture. You can experiment with any kind of framing if you like – circles, triangles, hexagons – but for general purposes portrait and landscape are the most widely used.

Google the work of Saul Leiter. He cleverly uses the frame as well as foreground objects like car window frames to create a tight, subject perception.
Composition – the basics
A composition is an arrangement of shapes within the frame. Composition is largely about visual balance.

- The first thing to consider is your subject. What is it you are photographing and where are you placing it in the frame? E.g. the building in the centre of the frame below is the main subject.
- If you have more than one subject, e.g. two people, consider the balance of these two ‘points’in the frame.
- Consider the background, i.e. the area directly behind the subject: the hills and sky below.
- Think about the surrounding environment of the main subject(s) and whether that distracts attention from the subject. The lake below is very smooth and bright making the central building stand out.

Central composition
The photograph above shows the most ‘obvious’ composition that reflects the way our eyes work, focusing our attention on things centrally. The eyes go straight to the structure in the lake, which is framed on the line of the horizon between the lake and the sky. It is neatly ‘embraced’ by the surrounding hills, which adds to the central emphasis.

With central compositions it’s vital to check that there’s nothing poking out behind the main subject, or otherwise distracting from the clear outline and shape of the object.
Shapes, planes and lines
The best way to compose the different objects in the frame is to think of them as shapes, planes and lines. In the photo you’ve just looked at, the structure in the lake is a cylinder sitting on a flat plane. The mountains form an irregular dark band running across the middle of the frame. The irregular cloudy forms in the sky cover the top of the frame with gradually changing tones. But even there you can see a distinct oval-shaped cloud above the building. Only the central structure is evidently ‘man-made’. All the other shapes and forms are natural and so the building stands out as a manufactured form against natural forms.

In the image below, the bold triangular shape of the hill forms a background for the pattern of geese.

Tones within the frame
Tone and colour is also a vital part of composition. The cylindrical building in the centre of the frame (on page 20) is emphasised visually because it’s darker than the tones around it. This emphasis created by tonal contrast – a dark subject against a light background or a light subject against a dark background – is a strategy that’s often used in composition. See how the darker geese stand out against the middle-grey hill?
Dividing the frame
The frame can also be divided into sections so that different areas act as ‘frames within the frame’ in the way that a doll’s house illustrates different domestic scenes. The pool’s edge in the photograph above creates a blue frame that divides the view between inside and out. Note how your eyes go to the red shapes in the pool, then to the steps, then along the line of the pool.

Here the unfinished building forms a pattern that reflects the angular frame. Notice also how the frame is divided into the man-made linear shapes of the building and the more natural forms of the shrubs, grasses and ground.
**Complexity**

Even when the contents in the frame seem overwhelmingly complex, dominant shapes appear in the field of vision.

In the photograph above a complex environment is resolved into a balanced composition with the three figures and the boxes on the trolley forming a row against the urban backdrop.

Using formulaic compositions and subjects, like close central images of flowers or rows of similar objects, reduces photography to graphics and won’t teach you to deal with the complexity of everyday life. You’ll learn much more by trying to compose complex situations than by looking for ‘ready-made’ compositions.
Layers
The photograph below has three distinct layers that lead the eyes back and forth: the foreground rocks, the smooth plane of the river and the vertical cliff face.

Viewpoint
The high viewpoint used below, looking down on the subject, allows the frame to be filled with the landscape in the background. Note how the figure’s head stands out against the bright lake on the right. Always try to seek out interesting viewpoints.
Points
Try to balance significant points of interest in the frame, as OCA student Chris Woolgar did here, balancing the palm trees with the pyramid in the background.

© Chris Woolgar, OCA student

You can read more about Chris’s image at: www.weareoca.com/photography/two-points/

You’re now ready to start working through the projects. As you do so, collect exhibition catalogues, cut-outs or articles from newspapers and magazines, etc., and store these along with any handwritten work you do.
Project 1 100 Photos

For this project your task is to make 100 photographs in 30 minutes. You can choose to shoot in any environment you like, inside or outside. You can shoot in your own home or in a public space. But do it now! Working quickly and productively can help turn off the ‘inner critic’.

Vary the subject and shoot a variety of close and wide shots. Make conscious use of the frame to create compositions that balance shapes and tones. Use wide-angle and telephoto focal lengths, and move around the subjects. Think in terms of visual effect and take as many different framings, angles (high, low, birdseye, ant’s perspective, etc.) and viewpoints as you can.

Time yourself: you have 30 minutes to make 100 photos! Don’t think too much. This isn’t about quality, it’s about quantity. Stop after 30 minutes.

Exercise 1.1 Uploading, organising and reviewing your photographs

1. Upload your photographs to a computer.

2. If you’re using Adobe Bridge, the Photo Downloader should automatically open when you connect your camera to your computer and turn the camera on. If not open Bridge.

3. Check the box that says ‘Convert to DNG’. That’s the Digital Negative file type. It’s a RAW file type and you should always keep this original image file as an archive image. If your camera came with its own software and you prefer to use that, you should always retain a copy of the original RAW file, CR2 for example.
• You can work on the RAW image in Camera RAW, but for more extensive image editing, you’ll need to open the image in Photoshop and save it as a PSD (Photoshop file) or a TIFF file.

• When you come to upload your photos to a blog or in an email attachment to send your tutor, you should always send a lower resolution COPY of the photo.

4. Click ‘Get Media’. Your image files will be uploaded and saved in an automatically created folder probably named after the date you took them. Re-name the folder Project 1_100 Photos.
5. Review all the images in Bridge.
   - Do any stand out? You can mark these with stars: select the image, choose Label > make your choice of 1 to 5 stars or other labels.
   - Do any interest you in terms of their visual effect or composition? View these larger (usually by clicking the spacebar) and re-name the best photos with more meaningful titles to help you identify them.

6. Select the hard drive and folder (for example My Pictures) on which you’ll save all your photographs for *Foundations in Photography*.
   - Create five folders and name them after each part of the course: **FiP 1 Workflow**, **FiP 2 Image**, etc. You may also want to make sub-folders for different projects and exercises as you go along.
   - Place ALL the photos you make and any documents you write into these folders. You’ll need them later in the course.

7. Now move your **Project 1_100 Photos** folder into the **FiP 1 Workflow** folder.

8. Upload your final selection to your learning log as small thumbnails.

**Important note:** Always make back-ups or copies of your photographs on an external disk drive to guard against problems like disk failure and viruses.
File types
Mostly you’ll use Save As... to save the file as a different file type. Use these file types:
• TIFF files for high-quality general work.
• PSD (Photoshop) files for high-quality composite images with layers.
• JPEG or PNG files for the internet. You only Save As...these file types when you’ve finished editing your photo as one of the higher resolution types (tiff etc.).

When you save as a JPEG, you’ll be presented with JPEG Options. Choose Maximum and the optimum image quality. JPEG uses file compression that results in a loss in quality.

Image size
Image files are usually large and it’s best to keep them large to retain the maximum resolution for printing and archival purposes. But when you want to send them over the internet to your tutor, you’ll need to make them a lot smaller:
• Open your Image Size dialog and reduce the longest edge to 1500 pixels.
Or
• Reduce Resolution to 72ppi to make very small files.

The Image Size dialog should tell you the resultant size of your image in megabytes. The image file below has gone down from 10.6 Mb to 84.4Kb – a small size suitable for sending in email attachments.

Be aware that reducing the resolution will cause images to look less sharp and more pixelated. If you’re unhappy with the look of your photographs when they’re reduced, undo the previous action and increase the Resolution to 150 or 200 ppi. Aim for an image size of under 1Mb for internet use.
**Exercise 1.2 Basic image editing**

1. Select a good photo from your 100 Photos series and open it in Photoshop.
   - If the photo is a RAW file it will open in Camera RAW where you can edit the RAW file non-destructively. Which is what we’ve used here. Click Open Image to open it in Photoshop.
   - If the photo is of another file type it should open in Photoshop.

2. Click the Histogram tab if it isn’t open. It gives you information about the tonal range of your photo. The left side represents the shadows, the middle area is midtones and the right is highlights. Any spikes on the right indicate over-exposure.

   ![Histogram Diagram]

3. Choose Image > Adjustments > Levels. Levels has a histogram of its own. Move the slider in the middle to the left to lighten the midtones and to the right to darken the midtones.

   ![Level Adjustments Diagram]

   - This may feel counter intuitive, but what you’re doing is setting the mid-point and therefore widening or narrowing the tonal range on either side.
4. **Black Point:** The most common adjustment that photographers make is to the shadows and the highlights. By moving the left (shadow) slider to the point where the histogram meets the baseline, you can ensure that your darks will be deep black. This sets the black point.

5. **White Point:** The histogram below represents an image that is quite dark. Move the right (highlight) slider to the left of the histogram. Take care because this can over-expose the highlights.

6. **How does the photo look?** Adjust it to your liking.

7. **Now choose File > Save,** and give your photo a name, a file type (choose Photoshop), click Save and close the image.
Exercise 1.3 Adjusting colour

Sometimes the colours in a photograph need tweaking because the lighting conditions they were made in have left a ‘colour cast’. Or you may think the ‘feel’ of the light is too cool and needs to be warmed up. Select an image that you’re not happy with and experiment with adjusting the colour.

1. Open a RAW image file in Camera RAW where you have the simple Temperature slider that allows you to shift colour temperature to the left to ‘cool’ an image and to the right to ‘warm’ an image.

2. Using the White Balance Tool, click on part of the image that should be white; this will automatically correct white balance.

3. Click Done to close the file or Open Image to move the image into Photoshop.

4. Open another photo, this time in Photoshop. Choose one that is too blue.

5. In Photoshop choose Window > Layers to open the Layers palette, then Window > Adjustments to open the Adjustment Layer palette. Click on the scales icon in the Adjustments palette. This opens a Colour Balance Adjustment Layer just above your image (which will be called Background).
6. The image below has a blue cast that is subduing the golden yellows of the field and making them green. If your image is too blue, subtract blue by moving that slider towards the yellow.

![Image with blue cast](image1.jpg)

7. In the image below, increasing Red (reducing Cyan) and increasing Yellow (reducing Blue) brought out the colours of the field.

![Corrected image](image2.jpg)

**Tip**
All visual artists must master the visual and technical aspects of their medium but don’t fall into the trap of thinking that good photography is all about technique. Good photography is invariably about good subjects.
Making selective image adjustments

There are various ways to adjust the contrast in a photograph. You can work with Levels and Curves to correct, increase and decrease contrast. The photo of building foundations below has a few basic problems:

1. There are specks of dust in the sky.
2. The photo has a blue cast.
3. The sky is too bright, taking attention away from the concrete forms which are the main subject of the composition.

How could you resolve these problems?

1. Removing dust

Create a new layer above the image layer (Background) and use the Healing Brush to remove the dust. This is done by sampling a clean section of the image (alt/option click with the Healing Brush) and painting it over the dust.

This process of cleaning is called ‘spotting out’. You can do it directly on the image, but it’s often preferable to create a layer above the image like this in case you’re not happy with the work you’ve done. But be sure to select Sample: Current & Below in the tool bar. Note that different programmes should have this facility so just Google “How to spot out photos in...[my programme]".
2. Correcting the colours
Insert a Hue & Saturation adjustment layer above the image layer (Background) and reduce the saturation of the Blues to -20 to take some of the blue out of the picture.

3. Reducing the brightness of the sky
Insert a Levels adjustment layer above the image layer (Background) and reduce the Output slider on the right (the highlights of an RGB photo) from 255 to 230. This reduces the brightness of the sky, but also the whole image.

Reducing the Output to 230 is drastic; you wouldn’t normally go beyond 250 so that the whites were just off paper white. But here the adjustment layer’s mask is used to block out the Levels adjustment on all but the sky. You do this by selecting the Adjustment Layer’s mask (to its right) and then paint black onto the image (actually the mask) with the brush tool. The black paint masks the Levels adjustment from affecting the image.

This adjustment layer and all layers can be reduced in Opacity, thereby lessening the effect. Reduce the opacity to 0% and then gradually lift it until you notice the change. Usually you’ll need much less of an adjustment than you initially thought.
There are more exact ways of making selections - particularly of bright areas like skies.

1. Go to the Channels tab, next to the Layers tab. If the Channels tab is not visible, go Window> Channels.

2. In the Channels tab you will have four channels, an RGB combined channel and three separate channels for Red, Green and Blue.
   - Click on each of the three colour channels making each one the only visible channel.
   - Notice how the image goes black and white and emphasizes different colour values in that channel.
   - With landscapes like the one shown, the Blue channel is often the most useful because it brightens the sky.

3. Drag the Blue channel onto the New Channel icon to create a copy of the Blue channel.

4. Now press Control L (Windows) or Command L (Mac) to open Levels.
   - Moving the mid-tones slider to the right will darken midtones, making them more intensely black.
   - Moving the highlight slider to the left will brighten any pale greys, making them white.
   - Do you notice how the channel now looks like a Layer Mask? That’s exactly how you’re going to use it.

5. To select the channel, Control Click (Windows) or Command Click on it. This loads it as a selection.

6. Click on the Layers tab to go back to the Layers palette and create a Curves adjustment layer. You will see that the new adjustment layer appears with a Layer Mask that corresponds exactly to the selection you made in the Channels palette.

7. Reduce the highlights in the Curves palette and you will see all the bright areas of your image reduce in brightness. Don’t over-do it. Aim for a natural look.

This technique is extremely useful because you can create another Curves adjustment layer, click on the Layer Mask while pressing Alt (Windows) or Option (Mac) and copy the Layer Mask to the new Curves layer. You then press Control I or Command I to invert the mask so you can increase the contrast of only the land element of your picture without affecting the sky.
**Contrast adjustments**

The next stage is to increase the contrast of the concrete blocks. Using a Curves adjustment layer, ‘pin down’ the shadows and the highlights by clicking on the curves line (red circles).

Now increase the contrast of the midtones only by using the arrow slider (with the little hand – blue circle). Place it on the image itself and lift up for an increase of brightness down for a reduction in brightness. This puts another point on the curve’s adjustment line at the exact point (blue circle on the line) that corresponds to the tonal values of the image.
**Exercise 1.4 Cropping your images**

Experiment with the techniques you’ve just been reading about to make selective adjustments to some of your images. You might also want to think about cropping.

Use the Crop tool to remove part of an image and re-frame it, as in the example below.

You could also change the orientation from landscape to portrait framing, but it’s best to use cropping to refine what you framed when you shot the photograph or as a dramatic ‘effect’ in itself.

When you’ve been experimenting with different contrast, colour and crops, it’s good practice to Save As... and give your image a new file name, for example: *Meadow_Crop*.

Choose File > Save As...

This way you keep your original file. When you return to the image with fresh eyes, you may find that you went too far with your editing.
Exercise 1.5 Experimenting with your light meter

To prepare for Project 2 (Shadows), you’ll need to understand your light meter. A camera light meter measures the reflected light from the subject.

The result is represented by a meter in your viewfinder (right). You need to line up the red line or needle of the light meter reading with the middle mark that represents a midtone and a correct exposure. You do this by changing the f-stop (aperture) or by changing the shutter speed. You can also change the ISO.

Most cameras have at least a simple centre-weighted or ‘averaging’ light meter that measures most of the light around the centre of the frame and provides an average exposure.

Some cameras have a sophisticated evaluative light meter that bases the measurement on typical photographic scenarios, like a bright sky in the upper half of the frame, and provides an exposure calculated from this.

A spot meter provides the photographer with the most control for telling the camera where the light reading should be taken from. A spot meter works by taking a light measurement from only the small ‘spot’ in the centre of the frame. You should be able to ‘hold’ this reading while you re-frame by half-pressing the shutter.

1. Aim the spot meter area at a bright patch of sunlight or artificial light.
2. Adjust shutter speed to level out your exposure.
3. Take a photo.

Do you notice how your photograph reduces the brightest highlights to an average midtone and makes the shadows very dark? Try this with your other light meter types; you’ll find the resulting image will be different because they’ll attempt to find an ‘average’.

Your light meter can’t know what you’re photographing, so you need to understand when to over-ride automatic readings and choose the midtone reference for your image. For example, if you photograph a snowy scene, it will probably come out under-exposed (too dark) because the light meter will try to average all that bright white light. You’ll need to deliberately over-expose (or compensate) by a few f-stops to make the white snow truly white instead of grey. The same thing happens the other way around with dark subjects, which can come out over-exposed.
Project 2 Shadows

This project involves hunting for strong shadows and highlights in either an outdoor environment lit by strong sunlight. On a clear day, the hours after sunrise and before sunset when the sun is low on the horizon are useful for this kind of light. If it's been raining recently, you'll also find more reflections and highlights. Try to make pictures with feeling.

Exercise 1.6 Light and shadow
Before you start this exercise, have a look at the work of Trent Parke:
www.magnumphotos.com
www.in-public.com/TrentParke/

Make some notes about how Parke uses high contrast light and shadow to create telling, dramatic compositions.
Make a series of photographic studies of light and shadow. Use your spot meter to expose the highlights correctly, but make the shadows dark.

Use the edges and corners of your frame to create dramatic compositions.

You’ll need to shoot many exposures for this project, perhaps more than you’re accustomed to taking. Be observant and go out specifically with taking pictures in mind. Notice:

- shadows cast by trees and people
- patches of light
- angular shadows cast across city streets by buildings.
Exercise 1.7 Evaluating your photographs

Before you upload your photos from the Shadows project, review them first on your camera.

Are any photos just downright dreadful? These might be photos that are out of focus, extremely under-exposed or over-exposed, or in which the subject is obscured. (Remember these keywords.) Delete them! There’s no point filling your hard drive with poor photos. Upload the rest of your photos to your computer, then make a visual evaluation.

Evaluating your own photographs is a key skill to develop during this course. It’s your conscious awareness of visual problems that will help you to avoid them and to make better photos as a result.

Here’s a list of questions to help you assess your photographs.

• What is the subject?
• Is the subject clearly visible or is it obscured?
• What’s behind the subject? Is it distracting?
• Does the composition have any other major distractions?
• Is the subject in or out of focus?
• Is the image well exposed?
• What is the contrast like?
• Is the colour balance the way you remember it?

Upload your final selection to your learning log.
Tip: Form vs content

Properties like light and shadow, colour and contrast, framing and composition are the **formal** aspects of photography.

**Content** is what your photos represent – a person, a place or an event.

As you progress through the course, try to discern the difference between form and content in your photos. If you progress to degree level study, you’ll find that content and meaning become increasingly central. For example look closely at Dave Wyatt’s photo below.

![Dave Wyatt, Thames Town V](image)

You may find some clues that contradict what appears to be a pretty English townscape. In fact, Thames Town is in China, built purposely to emulate an English town for the Chinese middle class. Dave’s photo sharply illustrates a paradox between form and content.
Picture analysis *Red Bridge, Okawa*

1. Take a close look at the photograph above. What do you see? Write a visual description using short phrases and keywords. Describe the objects you see, their shapes, colours and tones, the direction of lines. There’s a picture to analyse in each part of this course. Always start your analysis by objectively describing what you see.

2. What took your attention first? And where did your eyes move to after that?

3. A picture can have many subjects, but what’s the main subject? Apart from the objects depicted, does the photo have a metaphorical subject? Perhaps it has something to do with man’s intervention in nature.
4. Describe the quality of the *light and shadow*. Note the atmosphere or mood of the picture.

5. Look carefully at the composition, the way the different shapes, lines and tones are arranged within the frame. Make a small sketch with notes explaining the composition. Do the lines or shapes have a particular direction? Note these down on your sketch.

6. What does the title tell you?

7. Name every object, that is every ‘thing’ that’s in the picture.

8. Is what you’re seeing and what you’re *describing* the same thing? Or is there something you think you understand intuitively? Make a distinction between what you can see and what you’re guessing, feeling or intuiting.

9. What is your felt or *personal response* to the photograph? This is your *experience* of it.
Exercise 1.8 Bracketing exposures
Bracketing exposures means making three to five shots of the same subject at different exposures. This gives you more choice to work with later, resulting in more controlled shadows and highlights.

1. Put your camera on a tripod or a stable surface.
2. Set to Manual mode. Make a photo of anything you like at the optimum exposure according to the light meter reading.
3. Now deliberately under-expose by one f-stop or by reducing the shutter speed (e.g. 1/30th sec to 1/60th sec).
4. Take another shot, under-exposing by a further f-stop.
5. Now take a shot over-exposing from the initial optimum exposure by one f-stop or increasing the shutter speed.
6. Take another shot over-exposing one stop further.
7. Upload these photos to your computer to view them better.

You may notice that the under-exposed images have more tonal ‘information’ in the highlights and the over-exposed images have more shadow information. It’s usually easier to work with a slightly under-exposed photograph when conditions are difficult than an over-exposed one because digital cameras record shadow detail better than highlights.
Research point - Diffused light

To prepare for the next exercise, look online at the cityscapes of Gabriele Basilico. Notice the smooth quality of light, the sense of space and the way architecture seems more like sculpture, with its shape and form emphasised. And look at the broad tonal range in Mike Walsh’s landscape below, which comes from the naturally occurring light and dark tones in the landscape.

© Mike Walsh, OCA student
Exercise 1.9 Soft light landscape

Search your local area for a landscape, cityscape or other external environment where you’re able to get a wide view of a large expanse of space. Try a high vantage point, hills, car parks and department stores work well. The subject of this exercise will ideally be lit with diffused light, so you’ll either need to wait for an overcast day, or photograph before the sun comes up or just after the sun has set.

1. Photograph the landscape using a tripod to keep your camera steady, with an aperture of f22 (the narrowest aperture) because this will give you most depth of field (focus). Shoot a variety of viewpoints and compositions with the horizon low in the frame (more sky) and then high (more earth).

2. Bracket your exposures using the shutter speed dial. You may have to make long exposures of over one minute depending on the available light so it would be useful to use a cable shutter release to prevent you jogging the camera. When you make long exposures you’ll notice how light ‘gathers’ in your photograph and moving objects will blur.

   Don’t worry about inherent bright spots like street lights or car headlights.

3. Upload your images to a computer.

4. Assess your photographs carefully. Choose one or two that are the most successful.

5. Look for the place within the image that has the darkest shadow in it and use Levels to make it black or dark grey. This is likely to be a shadowy edge or a silhouette. Do the same with the lightest point following the instructions in Exercise 1.2.

6. Use the middle slider to increase the mid-tone brightness as high as you can before it becomes unnatural or blocky. Your goal is to increase the perceived luminosity of the photograph.

7. Now re-assess your photograph. Does it look real or unreal? Have you gone too far with the processing? Does it represent the view you saw with your eyes or is this an ‘image’ only a camera can create?

8. Save As…version_2 and respond to your own re-assessment. You may decide the photo looks better less ‘luminous’ or more ‘contrasty’, for example, or perhaps you prefer it in black and white.
Project 3 Stillness and movement

This project is an opportunity to produce a series of landscape or environment photographs that fuse the stillness inherent to photography with the movement inherent to life. First, though, you’ll investigate the visual effects that occur at different shutter speeds.

Exercise 1.10 Shutter speed
Make a series of experiments bracketing only the shutter speed, for example by using 1/250th sec, then 1/60th sec, 1/15th sec, etc. You’ll go from freezing movement to blurring movement.

Think about interesting moving subjects and note down some ideas: people, nature, machines, etc. Note the most effective ways you could photograph them: by panning the camera with a moving object or by holding the camera still.

Try not to fall for visual clichés; if you’ve recognised that something is a cliché, move away and search for something new. All visual art is refreshed by new ideas.
Exercise 1.11 Capturing stillness and movement

To prepare for this exercise, research more of the work of Toshio Shibata whose images of dams and waterway reinforcements in Japan contrast the fluidity of water with the solidity of rock and concrete. They also document the way human beings interact forcefully with the natural environment.

Notice how rigorously composed Shibata’s photographs are. They are almost abstract in their use of geometric lines, angles, shapes and forms.

Shibata, like many other photographers, works in series. This means they photograph different instances of the same essential subject many times, often using similar compositions and image tonality to help the photographs sit together as a series. Working in series is a strategy that helps the photographer hone his or her skills when directed towards one particular subject. Series can help to emphasise subtleties of form or content.

• Choose a subject that includes both stillness and movement. Create a series from a variety of different instances of this subject.

When you’re assessing your photographs, try not to think in terms of what is ‘photogenic’ in the usual sense of the word. Go beyond that. Ask yourself if your photographs communicate what you intended: stillness and movement peacefulness and energy.

Do your photographs communicate any other ideas? In other words, are they symbolic or metaphorical? This capacity to take something unintentional and make something out of it is a sign that you’re developing as a photographer.
Some classic mistakes
Amateur photographers all tend to make similar mistakes. Some visual problems can be resolved in image editing software, but you have to be aware of them before you can fix them. Look carefully at the photographs below. Can you spot the classic visual mistakes? Make some notes before you read any further.

In the image above:
- The horizon isn’t straight.
- There is a lens flare on the right edge of the frame.
- It’s out of focus.
- There is an edge distraction on the bottom edge of the frame.
This second image shows:

- under-exposure caused by pointing the camera into the sun
- a brightspot (the sun) in the image as well as lens flare
- blur caused by low shutter speed and camera shake.
In the portrait above:

- The woman is the main subject but is out of focus.
- The background is in focus.
- A silver birch is sticking out from behind the subject’s head. This is an example of a background distraction coinciding with the subject.
- The red sign and green grass draw the eye away from the subject.
- The subject is too low in the frame.
Other classic mistakes include:

- a cluttered composition
- no decisive subject
- distractions on the edges of the frame
- dust on the sensor
- verticals that aren’t straight
- people captured blinking
- red eye
- grain or pixelation caused by cropping into an image too much.

It’s better to be aware of these issues when you’re photographing so you don’t have to fix them later. Often they can’t be fixed – or not without compromising the image.

Mistakes needn’t be a disaster. As with all visual art, photographers make creative use of their ‘mistakes’. All visual properties have an effect that can be re-purposed, for example:

- the slanted horizon
- colour cast
- over-exposure
- blur
- out-of-focus.

As you do your research for this course, look for examples of this re-purposing.

Look through the photographs you’ve made so far on this course and see whether you can identify any of these ‘classic mistakes’. Use your image editing software to try to fix them.
**Exercise 1.12 Smash!**

This exercise asks you to choose some suitable small objects that you can break! An old toy, some rotten fruit, a shirt or a balloon filled with water would all work well. The point here is to freeze a fast-moving object in an otherwise still location. You must get the object in sharp focus to reveal the detail of its disintegration and movement.

Choose a suitable location where you won't make too much mess. Aim to frame the object quite close, with the environment around it. You'll need to frame the object in front of a background that helps to emphasise it visually: that could mean a complementary colour (e.g. red against green) or an opposite tone (light object against dark background or vice versa).

Before you start, research the freeze-frame photographs of Denis Darzacq at [www.denis-darzacq.com/](http://www.denis-darzacq.com/)

Do an online search for Harold Edgerton’s experiments.

These photographers give you images that would be impossible without the mechanism of the shutter, and in Edgerton's case, a flash.

1. Set up your camera on a tripod a few metres from the ‘impact zone’ (ground, wall or other) and set the shutter speed to the fastest possible for the available light. Focus your lens manually on the ‘impact zone’. Take a few shots to make sure the exposure is spot on. If you have a flash, use it.
2. Now ask an assistant (standing out of shot) to drop or throw your object onto the impact zone where you’ve nailed focus. (They may need to wear protective glasses depending on your choice of object.) Take your shot.
3. Review your photo. How was your timing? Is the shutter speed fast enough? Should you increase your ISO?
4. Try again...and again... it’s a trial and error process.
5. Review your images.

You should have a variety of images that show the frozen movement. However, this project doesn’t just illustrate the effect of a fast shutter speed, but also the significance of chance in photography. Even if you photographed the same kind of object ten times, the resultant images would all show subtly different results. This is one of the reasons why photographers invariably shoot a lot of exposures.

This exercise also shows how a ‘planted’ object can alter the interpretation of the environment. All juxtapositions have this effect, but usually in subtler degrees.
Exercise 1.13 Make a contact sheet

A contact sheet is a document with a collection of small ‘thumbnail’ images on it. This can be a printed document or a digital document like a pdf or even a Microsoft Word file. Contact sheets are useful for viewing images quickly. Also, viewing each image so small renders it more of a graphic, emphasising its main shapes and lines.

Your goal in this exercise is to make a contact sheet so Google ‘How to make a contact sheet in (your software).’ Or learn here for Photoshop: [https://helpx.adobe.com/photoshop/how-to/create-contact-sheets.html](https://helpx.adobe.com/photoshop/how-to/create-contact-sheets.html)

And here for Bridge: [https://helpx.adobe.com/bridge/using/create-web-galleries-pdfs-adobe.html#create_a_pdf_contact_sheet](https://helpx.adobe.com/bridge/using/create-web-galleries-pdfs-adobe.html#create_a_pdf_contact_sheet)

- Ardeche and Cliff.tif
- Autumn Yellows.psd
- Azellias.psd
- Beacon_29_bw.psd
- Bicycles in Eindhoven.jpg
- Book_Love_2.psd
- Budapest Central Square.jpg
- Buttercups.tif
- Concrete Blocks (Bulgaria).tif
- crowd_2_B+W.psd
- Dandelion Field.tif
- Dandylion.tif
- Diver.jpg
- Dodds Lane in the Rain.tif
- Dog at hospital_4_more red.jpg
- Empty street at night.tif
- Geese on Hill 2004_3.jpg
- Horizon with Cottage.tif
- Light on the Beacon.psd
- Man in rain.tif
- Recce 9_mid contrast.psd
- Screen and stage.JPG
- Sheffield Station.psd
- Unfinished Soviet Building...
Printing

The images captured by your camera and stored on your computer will be RGB (Red, Green, Blue) images, which is the ‘colour space’ that digital equipment and computer monitors use. Although inkjet printers use CMYK (Cyan, Magenta, Yellow & black) there’s no need to convert your images to CMYK to print them on an inkjet printer because most inkjet printers automatically convert to proprietary CMYK. (Converting photographs to CMYK will become necessary if you want to make a book of your work via an online publisher like blurb.com for example. They provide a CMYK profile and instructions for this.)

Printing your photographs out and putting them up on a wall is an important practice because repeated viewing will help you to learn from your own photos. You don’t need to print them large or print every photo, but do print out the images you’re working on for assignments.

• Use cheap Photo paper for general printing and archival quality paper, like the Brilliant Museum range, for your final prints.

If you’re getting banding or lines in your prints then you probably need to run the cleaning facility of your printer. If the colours look unnatural, it could be that you need to replace an ink cartridge. If the print quality is disappointing, use photo-quality paper to print on and use the best quality settings and resolution for your printer.

• Print images no less than 200 ppi. 300 ppi is optimum.

When you’re working on the colour and tone in a print, print small sections (test strips) of the image rather than the whole picture, to save paper and ink.

Print out your best photos from Exercises 1.11 and 1.12 and stick them on a wall.
If you have serious discrepancies with colour and tone between what you see on your monitor and what you print, even though you have a good photo-quality printer, you may need to calibrate your monitor and printer. Check out X-Rite's ColorMonki at www.xritephoto.com.

Uploading images to your blog
Now you've made some images, you can upload them to your student blog. But you’ll want to process a batch of images rather than one at a time. Here’s a link to an Adobe tutorial: https://helpx.adobe.com/photoshop/using/processing-batch-files.html

Exercise 1.14 Re-sizing a batch of your images for your blog
1. Open up Bridge and select all the images in one folder.
2. Choose Tools on the top menu bar and select Photoshop > Image Processor. At this point Photoshop will open and the Image Processor window opens.
3. Choose the same settings as right, putting your name in the Copyright info box. The Quality of 5 should give you an image of under 1Mb – try 3 or 4 later if they’re still too big.
4. Click Run.

Photoshop will automatically re-size all the selected images, convert them to JPEGs and place them in a folder marked JPEG in the same location as the images. You can now use the re-sized images for your blog.
**Exercise 1.15 Uploading photos to your blog**

1. Log in to your Wordpress blog.

2. Click on Dashboard, then on the left, Posts > Add New. (A ‘Post’ is like a new page or entry on your blog.)

3. Give the post a title – Project 2 Shadows, for example.

4. Click in the area for text and write some text if you like; press Enter to create a space between the text and the image you’ll upload.

5. Then click on the ‘Add media’ button.
   - A window opens and you need to navigate to the image file on your computer, then click ‘Upload’.
   - Align your image as you would text. Central alignment is probably best.
   - If you want to add more than one image, put a space (press Enter) after the photo you just uploaded, then click ‘Add media’ and re-do the process for all your images.

6. Now assign them to the correct category (categories are like chapters or sections in a folder) by ticking the correct Category box on the right – you may need to scroll down a little. For example, Part One Workflow, Project 2 Shadows.

7. Press the ‘Publish’ button to publish your work to the WorldWideWeb.

Upload all your project work so far as well as your four assignments, placing everything in the correct category.

You can post your writing in the Research & reflection category.
Exercise 1.16 Inviting and posting comments
Inviting comments from your fellow students and posting your own comments on their blogs is a vital part of learning – the equivalent of an on-line seminar – which will add friction, refreshing perspectives and communication to your learning experience. You’ll be amazed at how much you’ll learn from the responses of other people.

Please be respectful when posting comments. Calling someone’s photos ‘rubbish’ or ‘boring’ may seem honest, but it’s actually a superficial knee-jerk reaction – and just plain rude.

• First add your name to the list of OCA student blogs here:
  www.oca-student.com/course-mates/directory

• Spend some time looking at the work of other OCA students and post comments on their blogs. You must put web links to these posts on your blog as your tutor will look for them. You can post them on your blog in the Research & Reflection category, under OCA student blogs.

Tips
The texts you write needn’t be long – particularly in the Coursework section of your blog. Try to express yourself concisely.

You can put longer and more in-depth research or analysis in the Research & reflection section of your blog.

Keep your blog tidy and easy to navigate. Above all, try to be, clear and unpretentious.
Assignment one Traces

People leave traces of their activity on the landscape whether urban or natural. They dig into it, leave stuff behind, make their mark and stake their claim. Paths, graffiti, rubbish, cigarette burns, worn out stones and oil stains in the road are all examples of human traces. These marks imply that someone was there, doing something, leaving some signature of their existence and activity.

In this assignment you’ll make a series of photographs that focus on and emphasize the traces that humankind leaves behind. If you’re lucky, and observant, your images may portray a palpable sense of their absence.

You can interpret this brief freely. Often photographers start in one place, run with an ideas and end up with a different or surprising result. That’s OK, just let your ideas and curiosity guide you.

You can choose a location that is well-known to you as a starting point – your street, your neighbourhood or the area you grew up in. Or somewhere you feel drawn to because of its visual potential.

Perhaps rather than man-made marks, you may find nature making marks on civilization.

Traces and marks can often be small, so try to contextualize small objects in wide shots that include the whole environment and give information about the character of space they’re in. If your photos are too close, there may be no sense of place.

Unifying Visual Strategy

Try to think about using a unifying visual strategy to help the pictures gel together as a series. By ‘unified visual strategy’, we mean a way of visualizing your subject that is similar through all the images. For example, if you took a series of photos of dumped objects, with your main subject (say a mattress) placed in the foreground of the frame with your viewpoint not looking down at the mattress (because that would exclude too much of the environment) but from a level viewpoint with the horizon, so the mattress sits in the lower portion of the frame. Then perhaps if you find a burnt-out car, you could photograph it from exactly the same kind of viewpoint and the two images would probably sit together well because the visual approach is similar. But this is just one example of a visual strategy. You could use a wide-angle lens for all your shots or photograph at a similar time of day.
Images and Statements
Do you think the images above make a statement of some kind? Do they ‘say’ something – visually? To a degree, we are giving you a brief which adds content to your photographs. But you need to choose which traces you photograph. And you need to find out for yourself where it leads.

The image above says something about the way man uses the environment as a place of action.

Research
Do some online research on the work of the following photographers to help inspire your approach to this assignment:

- Richard Misrach – *Writing on the Wall*
- Gina Lundy – *Academy*
- Lensculture’s feature on ‘forensic traces of war’
- Chloe Juno – *Someone’s Rubbish*

- Select between 8 and 12 photographs to send to your tutor.
- Resize the images to 1500 pixels along the longest edge.
- Send them to your tutor as an email attachment with some brief notes about your intention.

FINALLY...
It’s important you try to complete this assignment as soon as possible. Your tutor will use your assignment to get a sense of your current level of technical, visual, analytical and creative skills. While you should commit to the assignment and pursue an idea that interests you, it primarily has a diagnostic purpose so don’t labour it.