

## Photography 3

# Body of Work



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## Level HE6 – 40 CATS

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# Introduction

*Body of Work* will provide a framework for you to develop a photographic project over a sustained period of time. The aim of this course is to equip you with the skills you need to progress your ideas and technique into a coherent and eloquent visual outcome whilst being aware of where your personal practice is situated within the wider photographic industry.

Thomas Edison famously said that any great achievement consists of 1% inspiration, 99% perspiration. You face the daunting task of producing what may be your first major body of photographic work and there's a danger you could become paralysed by the misconception that you have to have a great idea before you start. You may feel that your ideas have 'all been done', or aren't good enough to start a major project, but you know you have to start somewhere. At the other extreme are those photographers who have hundreds of good ideas which never come to much because they lack the discipline and perseverance to make the 'great ideas' into great artworks. Whichever category you fall into, we advise you to start by taking some photographs!

It's said that if you want to be a writer you need to turn up and write. So if you want to be a photographer you need to turn up and take photographs. Part One will help you make the first jump into taking some pictures and thinking them through afterwards in a critically reflective manner for feedback from your tutor. View these tutor feedbacks as interim critiques or tutorials rather than end points. The course should flow as a whole; the assignments are simply there to give you points at which to pause, reflect and look forward as well as back.

Visual people often think by seeing. Your first photographs for this course don't have to be the best and most profound images you've ever created. Think of them as a launch pad for you to develop your eye and your conceptualisation of this work and help it move forward.

## What about thinking?

By this stage in your degree you will already be in the habit of deconstructing, contextualising and conceptualising your photography and we're certainly not advocating that you stop all this thought and important development. But photographers are generally visual processors and it can be easy to become creatively blocked by thinking too much. As you look at other photographers who make amazing work you may become discouraged, or find that the concept has become detached from the work and your image doesn't communicate what you'd hoped it would. It is a very different thing to think *about* photography than to think *with* photography. As a photographer it can be very debilitating to be able to think about interesting issues relating to photography and not be able to produce anything that does them justice.

The best way forward is to view it like a tandem bicycle. The two riders are theory and practice. At first it is difficult to combine the strengths of both and make the vehicle move at any speed without crashing, but with a bit of practice the two will get in sync and provide you with more speed and enjoyment than one without the other. That's why we strongly recommend that you work on *Contextual Studies* alongside this course. One will inform the other. Sometimes thinking will lead and sometime taking pictures will be the most important thing to do, but ultimately it will be the connection of both these disciplines that will bring about the most engaging and thought-provoking work.

The amount of time you take to produce your body of work will be longer than anything you've done at Level 2. It may be a new experience for you to develop one project over a sustained period and it may feel strange, difficult or impossible. But as you develop your initial ideas, you'll go to places you won't have thought of when you were focusing your efforts on a single assignment. This richness will hopefully be an enjoyable and deepening experience for you as well as having a positive impact on the end result. So try not to hold exact views on what you want to do, how you'll do it and what it will look like at Assignment Five. That is to miss the point of the artistic process. Note your ideas down, certainly, and hold lightly to them. And you may of course return to them if they fit well with how the project is developing. But don't regard anything as set in stone.

Your photographs, your research, your ideas, your instinct, and your tutor, will all be your guides. It should be an unfolding, at best exciting, at worst exasperating experience. There will be times of questioning, uncertainty and doubt but these will give way to moments of clarity, conviction, renewed passion and direction. Allow yourself to go with the process.

## Course aims and outcomes

The aims of this course are to:

- support you to produce convincing and sophisticated visual products independently
- point you to research techniques and resources so that you can situate your own work within a wider photographic context
- further develop your skills in transforming abstract concepts into narratives and integrating them into your work
- extend your critical, evaluative and reflective skills
- build your confidence in using negotiation, management and communication skills.

On successful completion of the course you'll be able to:

- produce convincing visual products that communicate your intentions, using accomplished techniques in complex and unfamiliar environments, with minimal supervision from your tutor
- demonstrate comprehensive knowledge of your area of specialisation and situate your own work within a larger context of practice in your field
- transform abstract concepts and ideas into rich narratives and integrate them in your images
- critically review your own work and evaluate it against desired outcomes
- demonstrate management, leadership and communication skills and deploy them during the negotiation and production of the final body of work with your tutor and third parties.

## Assessment criteria

The assessment criteria for *Body of Work* are listed below. If you're going to have your work assessed to gain formal credits, make sure you take note of these criteria and consider how each of the assignments you complete demonstrates evidence of them. On completion of each assignment, and before you send your assignment to your tutor, test yourself against the criteria; in other words, do a self-assessment, and see how you think you would do. Note down your findings for each assignment you've completed in your learning log, noting all your perceived strengths and weaknesses, taking into account the criteria every step of the way. This will be helpful for your tutor to see, as well as helping you prepare for assessment.

- **Demonstration of technical and visual skills** – Materials, techniques, observational skills, visual awareness, design and compositional skills (30%).
- **Quality of outcome** – Content, application of knowledge, presentation of work in a coherent manner, discernment, conceptualisation of thoughts, communication of ideas (20%).
- **Demonstration of creativity** – Imagination, experimentation, invention, development of a personal voice (30%).
- **Context** – Reflection, research, critical thinking (20%).

## The course at a glance

### Part one: Genre

The first part of *Body of Work* reviews some different genres in contemporary photography, and their practitioners, to help you start thinking about how you would like your own practice to be situated. Assignment One asks you to get out and about and start shooting for your major project. For your second assignment you'll develop this work in the light of your tutor's feedback. Assignment One is diagnostic and will not contribute to your result at formal assessment.

### Part two: Chance

This part of the course develops the theme of genre with an examination of the role of chance and 'accident' in contemporary photography, for example in street photography. For your third assignment, you'll continue to develop your major project.

### Part three: Showing not telling

Part Three looks at how you can use the components of the image to create meaning beyond what the eye sees as it looks at the photograph. You'll consider the importance of editing, sequencing and the use of text in creating meaning. Your fourth assignment will ask you to produce an edited and sequenced series of images accompanied by appropriate text.

### Part four: Presentation and outcome

In Part Four, you'll complete and present a final portfolio of carefully selected images together with an introduction and an evaluation; this portfolio will form the basis of your 'publication' in *Sustaining Your Practice*.