

## Photography 3

# Sustaining your Practice



Hanging Jo Longhurst's installation at Ffotogallery

## Level HE6 – 40 CATS

This course has been written by Sharon Boothroyd and Jesse Alexander.

Copyright images courtesy of the Bridgeman Art Library

Other images from OCA tutors and students, unless stated otherwise

Every effort has been made to obtain permissions for the images used in this coursebook

Open College of the Arts  
Redbrook Business Park  
Wilthorpe Road  
Barnsley S75 1JN

Telephone: 01226 730 495  
Email: [enquiries@oca-uk.com](mailto:enquiries@oca-uk.com)  
[www.oca-uk.com](http://www.oca-uk.com)

Registered charity number: 327446  
OCA is a company limited by guarantee and  
registered in England under number 2125674

Copyright OCA 2013

Document control number: PH3SYP120913

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means – electronic, mechanical, photocopy, recording or otherwise – without prior permission of the publisher

# Contents

## Introduction

### Part one **Networking and feedback**

**Assignment one** Asking for feedback

### Part two **Publication proposal**

**Assignment two** Publication proposal

### Part three **The photography industry**

**Assignment three** Work experience

### Part four **Resolving and promoting your publication**

**Assignment four** Publication draft

**Assignment five** Publication evaluation and preparing for assessment



# Introduction

One of the most common questions photography graduates are faced with is 'How will I sustain my photography outside the structure and support of an academic environment?' Your answer to that question will determine how your future involvement with photography will pan out. Family, jobs, money, time, hobbies and social life are all vying for our attention and often what seemed like a primary passion can become secondary to more pressing concerns. This course aims to help you answer this difficult question while you're still in the slightly cushioned environment of higher education.

As a part-time distance learner, you're actually at an advantage compared to students who are graduating from full-time, campus-based courses. Simply by getting this far with your studies, you've demonstrated an ability both to manage your photography alongside other commitments and to practise your photography with a high degree of autonomy. This final course will help you think through how you want photography to fit in with your life and how you might go about making that happen.

More specifically, the objective of this course is to provide you with a framework to realise the project you began in *Body of Work* – that is, the production of an exhibition, book or other publication. For the purposes of this course, your major project, whatever form it takes, will be referred to as your 'publication'. You probably associate this term with book or journal publishing; however, its more fundamental definition is 'the public communication of something' and this might be helpful to bear in mind. Whatever term you use, the course requires you to present your work to a public audience and will help you to navigate the different stages of this process: editing and disseminating your work in different contexts, considering venues for installations, and publicising your work, including online provisions and the use of social media. The three Level 3 courses are intended to work together, each informing and progressing the others, so the research you did for *Contextual Studies* will enable you to present your work coherently to a specialist audience and describe your project rationale and influences.

Throughout the course, you'll increase your awareness of the many other roles within the photography industry and the visual arts that complement and support the work of professional photographers and artists. There will be an opportunity for a work placement, or to conduct some research into the role of someone working professionally with photography. By the end of the course you should have a better understanding of how the photography business and the art industry functions, and the skills with which to embark on a career within your chosen field.

## Course aims and outcomes

The aims of this course are to:

- support you in developing a detailed knowledge of the photography market and photographic industry
- develop your awareness of ethical considerations in relation to professional codes of conduct.
- develop the interpersonal, professional and business skills necessary to operate successfully in a commercial photographic environment within ethical boundaries
- help you publish and disseminate your body of work by developing professional relationships with markets and audiences
- further develop your critical, analytical and evaluative skills so that you can identify and develop opportunities in your professional practice.

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

- demonstrate comprehensive knowledge of the photography market and the commercial dimensions that underpin a successful photographic practice
- fully evaluate the ethical considerations of professional codes of conduct
- operate in complex commercial contexts requiring the application of specific interpersonal, professional and business skills
- disseminate your body of work by establishing relationships with audiences, clients and markets with minimum guidance
- analyse, review and evaluate information relevant to your professional practice and identify opportunities for professional development.

## Assessment criteria

The assessment criteria for *Sustaining Your Practice* 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: **Networking and feedback**

As creative people our individual vision and personal ideas are intrinsic to our output. Our work often becomes an extension of who we are, which puts us in an interesting and often very vulnerable position when we receive feedback and opinion. Nerve-racking as it may be, receiving feedback is vital for honing your people skills, communicating as best you can with your audience, building good relationships within the industry you hope to become part of, and making your work the best it can be. Although your photography is your own, it's impossible to build your career without help and insight from other experts. Often fresh eyes and some emotional distance is all you need to get back on track – and it may even take you in directions you wouldn't have chosen on your own. For these reasons, Part One looks at feedback and networking to set you in motion for 'getting your work out there'.

During this part of the course, you'll be asked to make what may be the big first step of asking for feedback from someone professionally involved in photography.

### Part two: **Publication proposal**

Whether you're resolved to work exclusively in the commercial field, or determined to devote yourself to personal projects, you'll need to develop the skills to plan your enterprises in a persuasive and business-like manner. Part Two will identify the key areas that are common to briefs and proposals across the media and visual arts. So, whether you're approaching a company to suggest a venture that might involve you in taking some photographs for their benefit, or applying for a grant to allow you to work on a photographic project, you won't be daunted by the prospect and will have a better idea about what sorts of things organisations will be hoping to see from your proposal.

The assignment for this part of the course will be to write a formal proposal outlining how you'll conclude your major project and realise your publication.

### Part three: **The photography industry**

Each person has their own idea of what a photographer is and these ideas may be very different. The photography industry is so diverse that it can be hard to see where and how you might fit in, especially now that 'everyone is a photographer' with camera phones, good DSLRs and decent photo software. Part Three will provide some job descriptions and interviews with industry experts – from straightforward commercial photographers to editors, writers and artists – to help you formulate a wider picture of how photography is used in a professional capacity today. This will potentially spark some thought as to how you'd like it all to apply to you.

You'll be asked to conduct a work placement or write an analysis of a specific job role to give you an informed viewpoint of what it's like to live and work in the photography industry today.

### Part four: **Resolving and promoting your publication**

In the final part of the course, you'll complete your final preparations for your publication, including the resolution of your work and, just as importantly, the advertisement and marketing of your publication. This aspect of the course is as much about making yourself ready to work professionally with other organisations as it is about completing your studies on this programme.

There are two assignments associated with this part of the course. For the first, you'll submit a 'draft' of your publication to your tutor for their final feedback on your major project and its resolution, together with the resources and materials that you've prepared to advertise and market your publication. In the second assignment, you'll complete a written evaluation of your publication and negotiate how you intend to supply your work for formal assessment.

Before you begin, read through the whole of this course guide to get a clear idea of what's involved and what sort of timeframe you think you'll need to complete the course. If you're not clear about what's required from you, contact your tutor.

Finally, make sure that you're familiar with the assessment criteria for the course and keep referring to these as you work through the individual assignments.