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|  | <p>Open College of the<br/>Arts</p> |
|   | <p><b>Tutor report</b></p>          |

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|---------------|-----------------------|-------------------|---------------|
| Student name  | <b>Saffron Cuccio</b> | Student number    | <b>511394</b> |
| Course/Module | <b>AoP</b>            | Assignment number | <b>1</b>      |

### Overall Comments

Overall this was a good start to the course. You have shown a good variety of creative decisions in making each of the photographs and whilst I would agree some are more successful than others, at this stage this is less important than showing a thorough engagement with the learning material. There were a few technical problems that we will have to iron out but these will be fairly simple to fix. The hardest part is coming up with the ideas for photographs and you have done well here. What you might like to consider for future assignments is how to link your photographs together thematically to create a narrative or conceptually linked series of photographs.

### Assessment potential

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**

- Before I get to individual photographs there were a couple of things I should mention. It looks like two of the photos were ones you had made previously and repurposed for the course –the one that I assume is Vietnam or Cambodia and the San Francisco photo. The latter has an embedded date of last March. It is an expectation of the course that you produce new work –

even if you think you have a better example from older photos. The goal of the exercises and assignments is to get you thinking about the different factors that go into making a successful photograph *whilst* you are out making pictures. This assignment is not graded during the final assessment (but still reviewed) so I would not reshoot these photos but be aware that in the future assignments you will need to be producing new work.

### **Pointed/Blunt:**

- I don't normally focus too much on the conceptual success of the photographs for this assignment but I did notice that both of these photographs are visually more suited to the blunt concept. The apple on the end of the knife effectively 'blunts' the sharp visual point of the knife, making this quite an effective photograph for 'blunt' but not especially effective for 'pointed'.
- I noticed the reflection of the apple in 'blunt' is out of focus, despite being your point of focus. If I had to hazard a guess I suspect you used autofocus and this has focused on the mirror's surface, not the object in the mirror (as autofocus relies on infrared light bouncing back from the subject, it assumes the mirror surface is the subject not the object reflected in the mirror). To focus on the apple you would need to have focused a few inches further away, increasing the focus distance by the same distance as between the mirror and the apple. This is easier to show than explain but if you stand in front of a mirror with your camera, set your aperture on the largest opening (smallest number) and focus manually on the surface of the mirror. Release the shutter. You will see you are out of focus in the resulting picture. Now adjust the focus so that you are sharp and you will see that you had to set the point of focus further away by the same amount as you distance from the mirror. This is a great example of a case where you really need to be aware of what is going on within the frame so that you can override the camera to make a successful photograph. Personally I always turn everything automatic off on my cameras because it should be me making the creative decisions, not the CPU in the camera.

### **Straight/Curved**

- I liked how both of these photos were of walls –this allowed you to use a neutral subject matter to describe the contrast well. I must question why both are cropped though and not to the same aspect ratio as each other or to the same aspect ratio as the rest of the submission. This isn't necessarily a problem but if you are mixing your aspect ratios then you really should be mentioning your reasoning within the learning log. The problem is many aspect ratios are associated with certain film formats and their associated working methods so if referencing this you need to explain why in the log. If cropping purely for aesthetic reasons you are better off working harder to get the photo right in camera. Cropping excessively in post-production leaves

yourself and editors less choices when producing layouts and can lead to dramatically reduced image quality in your photos.

- Whilst the subject in the 'straight' image is clearly the wall, having the cigarette butt out of focus and yet in the foreground is somewhat distracting. You could have achieved the same 'straight' effect either by omitting the butt altogether or having sufficient depth of field to ensure it was in focus.

## **Black & White**

- I thought this was an interesting idea. You may however have made a more successful photograph if you had framed the image slightly differently. Perhaps omitting the left hand side patch of colour and stepped back a bit to capture more of the graffiti on the wall you would have been rewarded with a stronger photograph.

## **Learning Logs or Blogs/Critical essays** Context

The log shows good documentation of the work you have made of the exercises but you need to start adding posts about your wider research into photography. To get you started I have included a longer list of blogs in the suggested reading that can form the basis for your discovery of material to mention. You should approach this by spending time browsing the blogs and picking out work you feel some emotional engagement towards –so work that you either like or dislike, and then think briefly about what it is that you like/dislike and record this on your log. If you spend as little as 30 minutes a day on this then you will end up with a much more thorough log which will feed into your own practice by exposing you to more of the possibilities of the photographic medium.

## **Suggested reading/viewing** Context

### **Contemporary Photography Blogs**

Conscientious <http://www.jmcolberg.com/weblog/>

Flak Photo <http://flakphoto.com/>

Wayne Ford <http://wayneford.tumblr.com/>

Mrs Deane <http://www.beikey.net/mrs-deane/>

No Caption Needed <http://www.nocaptionneeded.com/>

Prison Photography <http://prisonphotography.org/>

DLK Collection <http://dlkcollection.blogspot.nl/>

David Campbell <http://www.david-campbell.org/>

A Curator <http://www.acurator.com/blog/>

40 by 50 <http://40by50.com/blogs/4b5-blog>

Of the Afternoon <http://www.oftheafternoon.com/>

Unless you Will <http://blog.unlessyouwill.com/>

Visual Culture <http://visualcultureblog.com/>

Duck Rabbit <http://duckrabbit.info/blog/>

### **Pointers for the next assignment**

I would like to see more work on the learning log side in the next submission as well as more reflection on *why* you make certain creative decisions. This does not to be terribly in depth at this stage but you should begin to show some degree of critical thinking behind the creative decisions made. You may also find it useful to produce the next assignment focused on one theme, architectural details for instance (just an example), as this will allow you to spend the assignment working on producing a coherent body of work on one topic.

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| Tutor name:         | Dave Wyatt |
| Date                | 13/12/13   |
| Next assignment due | 30/01/13   |