

Formative feedback

Student name	Simon Chirgwin	Student number	512973
Course/Unit	Context & Narrative: Assignment 1 Square Mile.	Assignment number	PH4CN-1.
Type of tutorial	Written / Audio-Visual		

Overall Comments

A well progressed creative and experimental (read 'diagnostic') submission from some earlier 'procrastinations' as you call them. Some difficulties in finally submitting the work (to be expected sometimes) but overall the work is very strong and after initial video call (when the technology had problems) the idea and theme for the work is already working. Good to see that the broad 'discourses' surrounding narrative strategies in photography are being researched and engaged with (of course more to do).

You are working to resolve some of the initial 'gaps' in the learning log and on-line blog which was hampered by 'sparsity' of references. Some honest self-reflection and engagement with more difficult concepts (Typologies and 'the everyday') with reference to Walker Evans etc means the work is already in dialogue with critical photography. Can only bode well for future progress.

Good communication and engagement with the course.

Assessment potential

Assignment 1

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

Feedback on assignment

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

Really loved your introduction and the evocative memories of Kodak Instamatic:

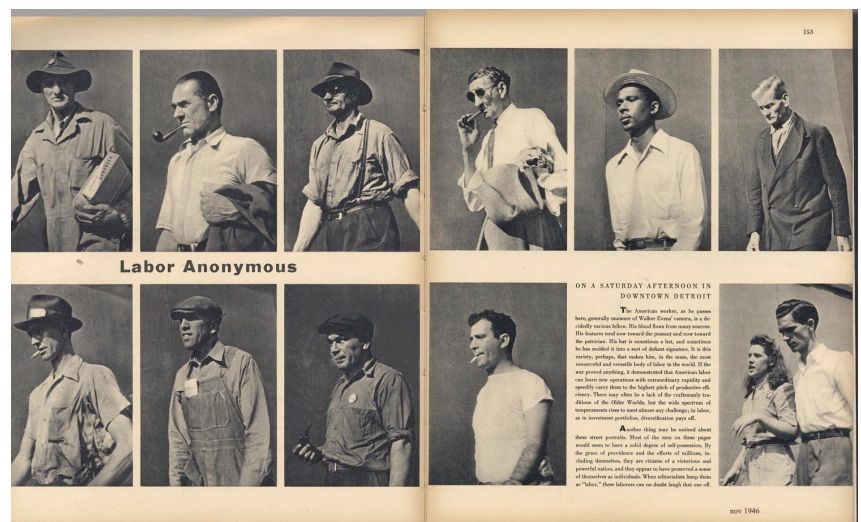
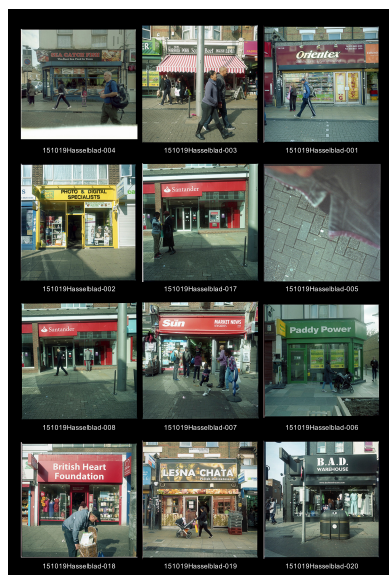
“It had a slider for different weather conditions and a little square hole to look through. The shutter release was a flat, stainless-steel plate.”

A tangential note I know but this descriptive quality in your writing is something you might consider using and perhaps making a piece of work later in the course which draws from this, as well as writings from Roland Barthes (who you mention) and memory aspect of the photograph (references to David Bate’s writings could be useful).

I think you can use the English and Film & Television Studies experience to link or provide inspiration (I am particularly thinking of ideas of narrative and narration) as your ‘trajectory’ seems to be similar to mine.

- Good to see that you have read and got something from David Hurn’s book as you do emphasise the ‘subject’ in your work - then the question is *how* do you approach or make work *about* that subject? You have chosen to approach your subject (on the changing face of shops and populace in the area) in a ‘different’ way from mere illustration indicative of many beginning photo students. For this you should be commended and encouraged.
- [29 August 2015 introductory Gmail video:](#)
- **Summary:** David Hurn’s book very useful for defining subjects - now look at more critical ones I recommend (see - *Research* below).
 - David Bate - Key Concepts
 - Graham Clarke The Photograph - genre classification
 - Terry Barrett - context article as well as *Criticising Photographs*

Yours seems a much more creative interpretation of what can be largely simple technique pictures reminds me of Peter Marlow and Peter Fraser and of course, as mentioned on video, Walker Evans, *Labour Anonymous* (Fortune Magazine 1946):



- Good to see contact prints but do show the *annotation* and working out which is the most appropriate. Several askew photographs (showing that you may be rushed to not be noticed). Your selections indicate the more considered ones. So make this a feature of your research (progress this with annotation and chinagraph marks on the actual sheets).
- This eventually may be a presentation format - use of grid structure to emphasis typology or even showing your working methods to get away from the 'preciousness' of the frame and single photograph (see Jim Goldberg).
- Square format works really well as it forces the viewer to consider *content* primarily (I will send you my interview with Amateur Photography Magazine and of course the late Peter Marlow's comments upon the choice of framing as being significant).
- Use of *typology* and the notion of accident and the everyday using a combination of visual strategies derived from consideration and research on gaze and glance as well as direct address (PH4CN-A1-East-03 - Oana & Andrei Market),
- Caption the photographs (perhaps just place or number on street rather than the file names). This will encourage and *interpretation* by the viewer. You can experiment with text to define place and change - see *encourage* and *relay* in - *Research*.

Coursework

Demonstration of technical and Visual Skills, Demonstration of Creativity

Your reflections on the blog are critical and appropriate. I do think for this 'diagnostic' assignment it is fine to feel that there are 'mistakes' as such (the skewed framing (corrected in prints), time of day issues, the front facing/or directional choice you might have preferred. But it IS a successful resolution of a tradition in photography and looks at the subject and broad theme of displacement/immigration etc in a novel way.

It is 'proper' contemporary documentary photography.

- Choice of going back to film as you really did need the square (and all that implies) to focus the viewer. Of course you could have cropped from a digital 24 x 36 but its not the same!

Research

Context, reflective thinking, critical thinking, analysis

There are two levels of research here: visual/process and contextual/historical.

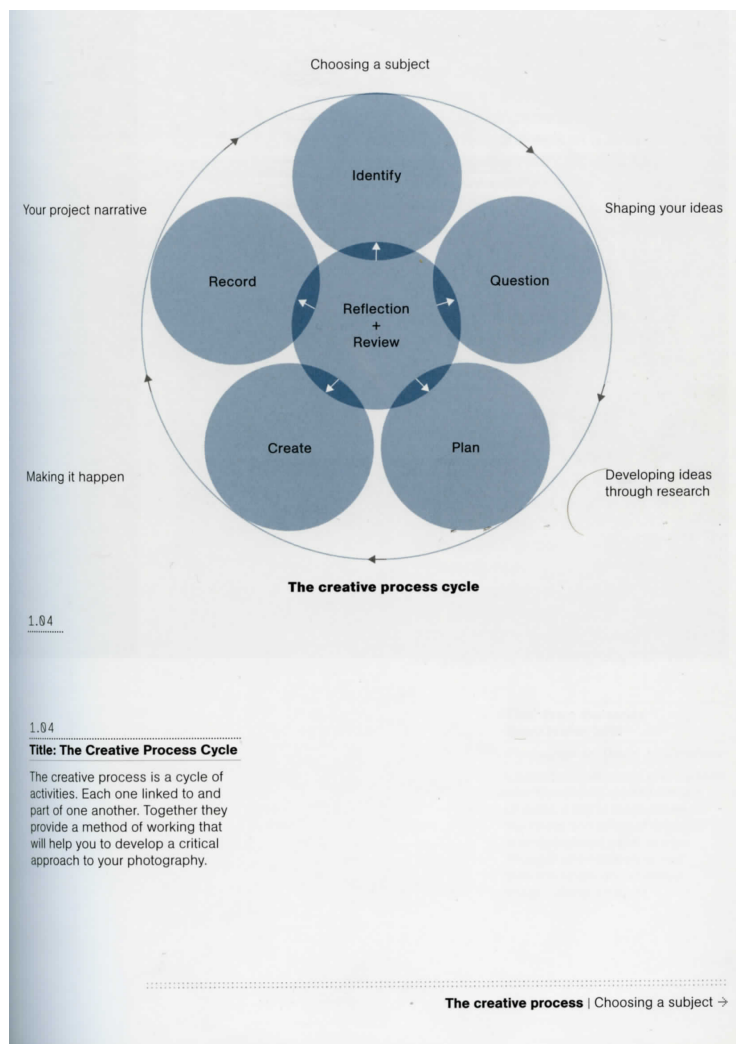
They are both working well and well documented in your learning log.

Photographic research: The 'proposal' is well formed relating the changes in the socio-economic structure of the area visualised through references to the 'news' agendas on

immigration etc. A very worthwhile - and contemporary relevant project which could be published. Process wise there are some positive explorations (use of contact prints - deadpan style seen as part of a visual 'tradition' informed by your readings). This aspect of *The Banal* as a visual discourse could be explored further - see Shinkle in Readings.

Contextually: as you sayL "works, but more as a pointer towards what it could be than as the thing itself" but this is actually a really useful strategy to get away from the finished 'precious' nature of most photography (especially the 'big picture' of Gursky et al to a looser more college approach (which still however addresses the rigorous consideration of space and comparison).

Your consideration *visually* of the following strategies or 'discourses' in contemporary art and photography should now be researched and linked with this work and the work of other practitioners in a kind of research triangle - as per Mike Simmon's Creative Process Cycle.



TPOLOGY

- There seems to be the beginnings of working with 'typologies' in this project with the 'Bechers' approach to seriality (although they used architecture) Typologies. Comparisons, Archives. August Sander and Bernd and Hilla Becher, Thomas Struth, Thomas Ruff, Thomas Demand and Gillian Wearing at red bubble: <http://blog.redbubble.com/2012/04/photographic-typologies-the-study-of-types/>
- American Suburb X (ASX) is a great research web site including essays and interviews with key practitioners where they outline their strategies and influences. See the Bechers here: <http://www.americansuburbx.com/artists/bernd-hilla-becher>

'Visual Stance'

'Strait' v Snapshot or 'Reportage' Gaze

Although way beyond this assignment, for the future reference. In order to get the 'dichotomy' between a 'reportage way of working' and a more 'considered' view: Tod Papageorge: Frank and Evans, An Essay on Influence.

On 'American Suburb X' web site: <http://www.americansuburbx.com/2010/07/theory-walker-evans-and-robert-frank.html>

PDF of the Essay: http://ericetheridge.com/Papageorge_on_Evans_and_Frank.pdf

Stephen Shore is a great photographer to consider this contrast between snapshot / considered way of working. His photographs in his second book (where he placed a tripod on a street corner and was bemused by the fact that no one noticed he was there).

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FRM2X1GnNSQ>

'Visual Stance' - Gaze and Glance and 'Direct Address'

The subject looking straight into the lens is a form of confrontation with the viewer. making us aware that we are looking at a photographer taking a picture. insider of a privileged 'window on the world': http://www.dshed.net/digitised/reveal/resources/the_gaze_begs_part1.html

Jim Goldberg on Documentary Practice mixing a variety of formal elements: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BzDbugn4XDw>

Philip Lorca Di Coccia Using 'types' and 'staging' to question the assumptions of documentary. Particularly his 'street photography' which has little or no engagement with the subject whatsoever. See: <http://www.hepworthwakefield.org/whatson/dicoccia/>

- Walker Evans' 'Labour Anonymous' from Fortune magazine November 1946. Stayed in one place and let the typology of workers pass into the frame. <https://www.fulltable.com/vts/f/fortune/aa/08.jpg>
- David Company's book on Walker Evans' magazine work: <http://davidcompany.com/walker-evans-the-magazine-work/>
- Donovan Wylie's street Photography influenced by Walker Evans (about 1:48): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=naoxP-iLvqU>

- My own 'take' on the typology during the 7/7 bombings: Mourner's Anonymous: <http://www.garryclarkson.com/mourners#0>
- Jim Goldberg: less 'precious' finished images presented alongside more considered images: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-O0BVWP27iU>

David Hockney: Painting and Photography
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4_lcb28fCz8

David Hockney draws on his lifelong interests to present his latest—and ever-evolving—theories about perspective and the relationships between painting and photography.

- Stephen Gil (invisible): <http://www.nobodybooks.com/invisible/11-0>

Learning Log

Context, reflective thinking, critical thinking, analysis

- On a creativity demonstration it is as concerned with how we look as much as how people and places are viewed. The geometry of the frame and the exchange of glances (or not as people pass by seemingly oblivious to you the photographer). So some research an links with this as well as 'philosophy' of how we look (David Hockney's TV programmes are useful for this- see - *Research* below).
- There are echoes of Stephen Gil (invisible); Walker Evans of course; Peter Marlow and his use of geometry which you could add to your research - see below.
- 'Tighten up' the log so that there is some way to link the visual with the contextual (rather than simple links its better to show your reflection). You have strong beginnings of this here so build on it.

Suggested reading/viewing

Context

Photographs in Sequence

More than One: Photographs in Sequence Edited by Joel Smith; With essays by Peter Barberie, Kelly Baum, Anne McCauley, Kevin Moore, and Joel Smith, Yale, 2009. <http://yalepress.yale.edu/yupbooks/book.asp?isbn=9780300149302>

The Everyday/Banal:

Boredom and 'the Banal' as a photographic 'discourse'

- If you wish to further contextualise these 'discourses' through genres and the representation of objects (might be something to consider in other levels later on?): Eugenie Shinkle, *Boredom, Repetition, Inertia: Contemporary Photography and the Aesthetics of the Banal*. http://www.academia.edu/3111338/Boredom_Repetition_Inertia_Contemporary_Photography_and_the_Aesthetics_of_the_Banal

The Everyday (Whitechapel: Documents of Contemporary Art): <https://mitpress.mit.edu/books/everyday>

Pointers for the next assignment / assessment

- Continue Learning log that records your 'artistic journey' thanks for inclusion of feedback - this is a way to select and then show how you have addressed the process.
- More Critical analysis of images.
- Planning and making 'recce' images and notes before the 'final' shoot (if it is of this 'Topographical Nature').
- Google drive, PDF captioned images as outlined in our e-mail conversations.

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

Tutor name	Garry Clarkson
Date	28 February 2016
Next assignment due	25 April 2016