



Open
College
of the Arts

Student name	Michael Nott	Student number	510717
Course/Unit	Photography 1: Digital Photography Practice	Assignment number	5
Type of tutorial	written		

Formative feedback

Overall Comments

Congratulations on completing the module, have you decided on your final level 1 modules yet?

You must remember to send not only my tutor reports but also any of your documents that I have annotated (the annotated documents of course!) so that the assessors can see the comments that you are responding to. You should also include the assignments as you have sent them to me plus any amendments, changes, additions or subtractions you have made both in response to my comments or simply because you have thought better of something. The assessors want to see that you haven't simply done the assignments and moved on but you have thought about them and perhaps changed your mind after getting them back and/or after having done later exercises and projects or simply seeing the work of someone else. The process of making work is an extended one and often circular, having the idea (in response to a brief perhaps) researching, making work, reviewing that work, re-working, thinking again etc. etc. etc.

Take another final look at the assessment criteria to make sure that you are covering all the bases. I know that you make your self-assessments on the basis of these but looking at the submission as a whole is sometimes revealing!

If you have any comments or questions on this report or on the submission for assessment don't hesitate to e-mail me.

Feedback on assignment and supporting work

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

Most of what i want to say is in the comments I have appended to the copy of your supporting notes but just a few points here.

First of all let me urge you not to mount the prints for assessment. You have printed them with sufficient borders to make any mounting superfluous for assessment purposes. And the overall weight increase is really not worth the bother. Submitting your work in the usual clamshell presentation box (like these from Silverprint, expensive but will serve you well throughout your BA and beyond) is just what the assessors like as it is very straightforward to look at and so gives them the maximum time to assess the images. Added to which it is the 'professional' solution.

You could do a lot worse than to discuss in your blog the status of digital monochrome work based largely on the work of practitioners working with film. Is it desirable or even feasible to work this way or should monochrome work be done using film? There may well be no 'right' answers to these things but there does need to be discussion about them and a personal position taken and the reasons for this position explained. Take a look at the difference between Gregory Crewdson's colour work with its high production values, movie style sets and crew and made on large format film and his black and white work with no lighting or crew and made using medium format (?) digital cameras. (see links below) In the colour work I suggest he is creating a fantastical world using the real world locations and in the second he is making a real world out of the fantastical world of the disused film studio...contradiction upon contradiction and the choice of medium is central to this.

The size and quality of the printing is right for the purpose (I am not damning with faint praise here!), even the slight green cast does not detract from the images for my taste.

Am I right in assuming that these are commercially made prints? In my experience, unless one has access to very expensive professional printing machines, digital black and white printing is fraught with dangers, unpredictable colour and a tendency to a restricted tonal range being only some of the frustrations. So going down the commercial route is almost the only way.

Assuming this is the case then my objection to having the text on the image may not be possible for you to do much about in the time left (not to mention the cost!), but you should talk about it at least in your blog. It would be so much better if you had left the text off and put a label on the back of the print with the name, number, photographer's name etc. I think there should be nothing on the face of the image that doesn't have to be there.

There are some very high standard images here so what I am going to say from here on in is intended as a discussion of how to make 'good' into 'very good'; if you see what I mean.

It could be said that you have got very close to restaging existing images in at least some of these; your Lettuce 1 and Weston's Cabbage leaf for example. It is difficult to see how one could photograph vegetables without this being a possible criticism but you need to be prepared for it.

One could argue that the tonal range is a little variable. Take your Cabbage and Cauliflower images for example. The Cabbage has a higher contrast look about it, making it feel sharper, more vibrant; whereas the Cauliflower feels softer and quieter. The result of this may be what you were after or it might seem to upset the unity of feel in the set of images (all these things you can make reference to in a blog post in response to this report.)

One of the results of this variability is the impression that some images are sharper and more detailed than others. One might even think that the focus isn't as pin sharp in, say, the Sliced Avocado as the Cabbage. Again be prepared for this to be questioned...do you think the focus is spot on? If not why include the image? And similar questions.

Depth of field comes in here as well. Particularly in close-ups we are always fighting this problem. One needs to use a small aperture; however, particularly with digital SRLs, small apertures lead to the loss of sharpness due to diffraction effects. (Take a look at [this¹](#) article). One of my tutors at college (we spent much of the first year fighting with 5x4 cameras in the studio) was insistent that is you couldn't get the whole subject in focus (in close ups that is) you should make sure that the closest point was just in focus and let the most distant parts take care of themselves. Also it is worth remembering that depth of field is distance dependent so that only one third of it is between the point of focus and the camera and the other two thirds on the other side of it. So you should start off by focusing one third of the way into the main subject. Things were made easier for us with depth of field scales on the lenses but hey! Things are made better by using more expensive lenses and those who specialize in close up and macro work very expensive, slightly long focus lenses to maximize depth of field and sharpness.

I wonder if Lettuce 2 wouldn't be better the other way up in this set. It looks more uncomfortable than the rest.

I am not entirely happy with the composition of the Bananas. Going out of the frame like that makes them so different from the other images.

Ok, so what am I saying overall? This is a good set of images, generally good technical quality and a good homage to the photographers, Weston in particular, you have researched. They could be said to be somewhat derivative but on the other hand it has to be remembered that you are only in the middle of the equivalent of your first year so this might not be unexpected. There is room for improvement of course but that is to be expected (I suspect that all images can be improved)...this is a learning process after all and you have made a strong statement here.

¹ <https://luminous-landscape.com/understanding-lens-diffraction/>

Learning Logs or Blogs/Critical essays

Context

Re-read the advice I have given you in previous reports and make sure that your blog has everything in it that you want, and that it is easy to navigate.

If you have kept a hard copy scrapbook, sketchbook(s) or similar you should send these in as well.

Suggested reading/viewing

Context

Gregory Crewdson:

http://whitecube.com/artists/gregory_crewdson/

Assessment criteria:

<http://www.oca-student.com/resource-type/assessment-criteria-visual-arts>

Assessment Guidelines Photography:

<http://www.oca-student.com/resource-type/assessment-guidelines-photography>

Pointers for the next assignment

N/A

<i>Tutor name</i>	<i>Peter Haveland</i>
<i>Date</i>	<i>10/09/2015</i>
<i>Next assignment due</i>	<i>N/A</i>