



## Tutor report

Student name	<b>Darren Smith</b>	Student number	<b>513465</b>
Course/Module	<b>Foundations in Photography</b>	Assignment number	<b>1</b>

### Overall Comments

Many thanks Darren for sending in your first assignment. Its a good start to your photography and gives me a good idea of where you are on the road of your development.

My overall impression is that you are competent in being able to make good images - good in terms of getting the basics right: exposure, focus and basic composition. I do think that your work is more concerned with technical experimentation and excellence than development of your own style and what you want to say with your photography. That is not a problem and quite common with people starting out on their photographic development. But, it is something to be aware of and take into account as you progress.

You need to become more aware of how you can use your photography to express your own feelings about something. So your development should concentrate both on mastering the technicalities AND how to use photography to express what ever it is you want to say as an individual.

### Assessment potential (after 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

As mentioned your work demonstrates that you have the ability to make good images - in focus, well exposed and with standard compositional competence from

a technical standpoint. You have made a good start with your photography and my comments below are not meant to discourage you but point out areas that you need to be tinkering about for future development.

In terms of visual skills you have an eye that recognises a key element but still have some way to go to develop this in tandem with an approach to what you want to say.

You mention in your accompanying text your interest and impression of the juxtaposition created by the development of an old mental asylum for housing to suit both the "well to do" and "affordable housing".

This makes for a topical and interesting topic. You have addressed this more in terms of developing your technical expertise - the use of HDR - to the exclusion of using your imagery to expand your commentary on the situation. So in terms of technicality it is good to see you experimenting with HDR; creatively, you need to be thinking about how your images reflect your thoughts about the mix of affordable and well to do housing and this contrasts with the original use of the site as a mental asylum.

#### **Technical and visual skills:**

You have done well in images 2 & 3 to contrast the old building centred around the church with the combination of old together with the new development and in so doing drawing attention to the notion of "the development" of an old site.

Your choice of Black and White - this should be thought about and reasons given for your decision. This could be because you are concentrating on the development of an old site and hence use of black and white is an acknowledgement of the past where imagery was exclusively prepared in this manner.

You are exploring the area of HDR - fine but you are relying too much on the software - look at the results. Many of your images present a dramatic sky and while this may be attractive you need to think about the balance in the overall image. I suggest that there is often an imbalance between sky and foreground with the sky often appearing unnaturally dark.

Some of your images have dark borders - it would be better to crop these out. For example, Image 6 crop out the dark bottom and right hand edge of the image.

Consider the orientation of the image - all of yours are landscape and yet image 5 of the tower I suggest would be better in a portrait orientation cropping out the distracting twigs of the branches on the left of the frame.

Concerning exposure - Image 6 has the buildings on the right appearing very dark with the shadows all blocked out. This is necessary as you have the very bright area of the sun clipping the corner of the building. How important is the distant building? What was your area of interest: the sun? if so then consider re-composing the image.

### **Quality of Outcome**

The brief refers to the notion of the square mile concept - an area that you know well and have a personal insight into. This is what the assignment is encouraging you to concentrate on your personal and unique experience of a place. As already indicated I feel you have tended to concentrate on the HDR technique at the expense of expressing what you feel about the place. You mention the mix of affordable housing with the more well to do element of the development; and the fact that the development is of an old mental asylum but your imagery pays limited attention to this interesting and topical element.

### **Creativity**

It is good to see you experimenting with both a technique - HDR and picking an interesting topic that has relevance to today. As indicated I feel that you have tended to concentrate on the technicalities of HDR and not given enough thought to using the imagery to present the contrast associated with old and new usage of the site and the notion of the mix of affordable and well to do housing and how this engenders a mixing of people with different backgrounds and circumstances. While you are not expected at this stage to be excelling in this respect it is as well to bear it in mind in your future work.

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

You have done well to start off your blog using wordpress for the first time. One area that you need to develop is to include more signposting for the exercises that form part of the assignments. At present, it is hard to quickly find your entries relating to these other than using your course work link. This however doesn't break entries down for easy linking to individual exercises.

When including commentary on your images it would be worth bearing in mind and addressing topics included in the guidance on analysis on pages 41 & 42 of the course notes.

It would be good to address the areas in the brief concerning your reaction to the work of Dan Holdsworth and Tom Hunter - I can't immediately see this and it would be logical to include this in your section on Assignment 1 in your blog.

### **Suggested reading/viewing**

Have a look at the work of Jane Bown as a photographer known for her portraiture. Her concentration of the eyes, the use of light - usually natural light and the isolation of the head against the background. A classic example is her portrait of Samuel Beckett.

Another photographer to consider is James Ravilious and his work - An English Eye that concentrates on the character in relation to his/her environment.

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

As suggested above think how these two photographers have used different approaches to portraiture and how each brings out different elements of the person's character.

What elements are you going to concentrate on to bring out aspects of the person as you or they see them.

Tutor name:	Simon Barber
Date	11 February 2015
Next assignment due	1 April 2015