



# Open College of the Arts

## Formative feedback

Student name	Catherine Smith	Student number	517189
Course/Unit	EYV	Assignment	3
Type of tutorial (eg video/audio/written)	Written		

### Overall Comments

Your take on the decisive moment leans more towards the compositional side than the action side of the concept. As compositions, they are effective and you've created a coherent series of the wintry seaside. Some are more 'decisive' than others, but on the whole, this is good, studious work and shows you're developing.

The Cartier-Bresson quote is very concise, "Your eye must see a composition or an expression that life itself offers you." Put that on your wall and keep mulling it over. In time you will begin to see these *expressions of life*. Because that is the best of Cartier-Bresson's work. It isn't merely about effective compositions, it is people revealing their personalities, their cultures, their time of life, in an instant.

You've got to carry your camera at all times for this kind of candid picture. It's just not the kind of thing that's planned. And you've got to be observant. Try to always be observant of the world around you and 'frame' it in a way that helps you see pictures.

Looking back at your previous assignments, your work always has an authenticity and consistency about it. There are evident visual skills throughout. But what is most appealing and promising in your work is that it's always *about* something, never merely an image. That's a vital 'centre' for the development of your personal voice. So rather than painstakingly trying to recreate another photographer's working concept, you could well develop your own.

The prints are not bad, but they seem to have come out a bit darker than the images online. To correct this, reduce the brightness of your monitor so that it closely matches the brightness values of the prints. Then when you come to correct brightness in the images, they should be consistent with the prints. People tend to turn up the brightness of monitors because they think it looks better but it can cause eye fatigue. There are no issues with colour. Make your borders bigger. They should be at 3 to 5cm around the picture. This helps frame the picture.

Yes the box is enormous! Good for assessment but you could use an envelope to send photos to tutors.

Make sure you always send a link to your blog and name/number your prints.

### **Feedback on assignment**

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

#### Seagull

I can understand how you thought this is a decisive moment because the seagull is stepping forward. But it would be truer to the concept if there was an active link between the seagull - obviously looking for chips - and the takeaway in the background. If the seagull was pinching a chip from someone, that would be far more 'decisive' an event than just walking.

The composition works well. You've framed the seagull in a shaft of sunlight against the long rectangle of the takeaway facade. The paving stones, facade of the takeaway and the chairs and tables all create an interesting angular backdrop for the only organic shape in the frame - the seagull.

If there are plenty of cheeky seagulls around, you should seek out their antics and build a body of work based on that idea. Then when it comes to choosing, you'll have a lot more images to choose from. Never stop with one image. Refine it, rework it, go back out there and try to make a better one.

#### Dog and Owner

This is a decisive moment but it's very static. Once again, your composition works effectively to sandwich the figure and her dog between two dark shapes. You've managed to include both the event and a lot of the environment in one shot, which is good.

#### Ball Thrower

This is an interesting idea because rather than one subject, you've tried to capture a social scene on the beach with various activities. It doesn't quite come together as a unified whole, maybe because the three points of interest (ball throwing girl and her dog, woman looking off to the right, other figure in distance) are not connected by an action. Perhaps the peninsula in the distance also creates a compositional problem by pulling attention away from the activities.

But there's an idea here you could pursue: distant, objective views of social activities. I think it'll work as a 'decisive moment' when something visual brings separate events or characters together. For example, two ball throwers back to back, both throwing at the same time, oblivious of the synchronicity. These are the *expressions of life* Cartier-Bresson was talking about.

Your camera has probably underexposed this scene a bit because of the sky. You need to be careful with exposure when capturing 'big skies'.

## Lone walker through arch

This kind of frame within a frame and use of architecture to guide the eyes to the subject is very typical of Cartier-Bresson. But look where the eyes go: to the figure and then the lighthouse. Both are in a very small part of the image, leaving the rest of the scene feeling a bit redundant. Actually, you could quite easily cut and paste the lone walker to the left side of the shore, which would create a sort of 'balance' between her lonely walk and the isolated lighthouse.

## Silhouette

This is quite amusing because you've obviously noticed a diagonal line from the bird on the beach, through the figure to the boat and then the lighthouse! But the visually 'heavy' points in this shot (figure and lighthouse) weight the picture too much to the right. You could crop quite a chunk off the left side of this to balance it up. But it would've been better to frame the lighthouse in a balanced way with the figure. The lighthouse is too near the edge of the frame.

## Distant ship

The man looking at the ship on the horizon is clearly communicated, but there's a lot of visual distractions in the lower part of the frame: chain and boats. When you have a very distant and small point of interest in your frame, you need to emphasize it with your framing. This could mean getting closer to the man so he's head and shoulder's in the foreground with the ship in the background.

As an 'event' this isn't as culturally interesting as dog walkers and human activity. It's a tiny event and doesn't really say much about who this man is.

## Coursework

**Demonstration of technical and Visual Skills, Demonstration of Creativity**

Your coursework looks studious. It's good to see some experimentation in the water drops and multiple exposures of the baby. All that is very helpful for learning visual skills and expressive possibilities in photography.

## Research

**Context, reflective thinking, critical thinking, analysis**

Some good research into Cartier-Bresson. I see you've looked at Martin Parr in earlier assignments, but his incisive eye would have been extremely useful to you here. Have a look at *The Last Resort* and many of his other series of 'people at play'.

## Learning Log

**Context, reflective thinking, critical thinking, analysis**

*Summarize how you have applied what you've learned from the course to your assignment photographs. Also note down what you've learned from other photographers in executing the assignment.*

Your self-evaluation is very honest. The blog is well ordered and easy to navigate.

## Suggested reading/viewing

### Context

In text.

## Pointers for the next assignment

Have a go at using the raking light of mornings and evenings. Try to use light as a compositional tool, in the way you have with the seagull, to emphasize it.

## Summary

Strengths	Areas for development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Good work showing a developing understanding of the concept.</li><li>• Growing visual skills.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Reworking ideas, going back and getting more examples. Trial and error!</li></ul>

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

<b>Tutor name</b>	Robert Enoch
<b>Date</b>	16th March 2018
<b>Next assignment due</b>	30th May 2018