

Photography A Level

Preparation work: Pre-course Reading, Research and Tasks

New practical work, reading and research will help you to become more familiar with how and what you are going to study on your A Level Photography course.

If you complete these tasks it will also help you to become more confident when you start your course. Remember it is also a good idea to consider how your GCSE knowledge is the basis for your new Photography course; Photography, Art, Graphics, Media or Film Studies GCSE work is all very relevant.

Specification :

These are links to the Art and Design AQA exam board information and the section specific to Photography.

<https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/art-and-design/as-and-a-level/art-and-design/introduction>

<https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/art-and-design/as-and-a-level/art-and-design/subject-content/photography>

The Tasks:

These tasks will help you develop the creative, research and practical skills required for A Level work, in addition to being an outlet for you to express yourselves. You should create your own handmade or digital sketchbook/notebook and use this to record the following tasks and develop your ideas.

The size and format is up to you, if creating a digital sketchbook programs like Microsoft Powerpoint are good or if you have a Youtube channel or similar you could make a video sketchbook.

If you would like to make a paper sketchbook, these videos demonstrate how to construct a book:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EQQmZAQQnyk>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3aW6oAbKeol>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=21qi9ZcQVto>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CffQyRdTDUc>

Task 1:

What kinds of images do I like? What kinds of debates do I care about?

Collect images that you find **inspiring** from the following sources:

- Printed matter (mags, book covers, newspapers, leaflets?)
- The environment (shop displays, posters, outdoors adverts)
- Exhibitions (if we are no longer in lockdown, internet alternative otherwise)

You should aim to collect a minimum of 20 images from as wide a range of types of source as you can.

Keep a written log that identifies images that you collate. You should use the bullet points below to help you.

- Who took the photograph (made the image if not a photo)? (if you really cannot find out, add details about where you found it).
- What is the picture of? What do you think is it about?
- When and where did they take the photograph and how might that effect the picture?
- How did they take the picture? What did they have to do? How are the pictures different from other ones?
- Why did they take the photograph? Did someone else want it? Why?
- What do you like about it? Why did you choose it?

Notes: If you cannot get to a photography exhibition, images from some other kind of exhibition perhaps a museum could be used. Try to take your own photographs. If in “lockdown” find appropriate online equivalents (see case studies, websites, videos etc below).

Task 2:

Take photographs in response to the things that you have observed.

- Have a series of groups of pictures that you thought of as a result of different ideas you discovered through the process of Task 1. Have at least 4 groups amounting to 40 pictures.
- Write explaining how your ideas for each group of pictures engaged with the ideas that you had identified from aspects of Task 1.

Task 3:

Portraits are a popular genre of photography and we see them most days. Gather information and record your thoughts about the following questions:

- What do you think a portrait is?
- What needs to be included for a photograph to be considered to be a portrait?
- Does a photograph need to include a person’s face to be considered a portrait?
- Does a photograph need to include a person to be considered a portrait?
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3ULb3qPSbAI>

Case Studies for Task 3:

Tim Walker <https://www.timwalkerphotography.com/portraits#1>

Bill Brandt <https://www.michaelhoppengallery.com/artists/45-bill-brandt/overview/#/artworks/10236>

Awol Eritku <https://aperture.org/blog/vision-justice-awol-erizku>

Irving Penn <https://www.hamiltonsgallery.com/artists/irving-penn/series/cigarettes>



Task 4:

Conventional and Unconventional Portraits

Art throughout all ages of history has influenced photography. Until the invention of the camera a portrait of a person was as close to reality as possible. This centuries old tradition of portraiture does still have influence today in art and photography.

- Produce a set of photographs of somebody in conventional styles (typical and familiar kinds of image).
- Produce a set of photographs of somebody that are unconventional portraits.
 - Think of how the person you are photographing portrays themselves.
 - Think of the body as sculptural.
 - Think about obscuring through textures that change the portrait.
- Produce a set of portraits that do not include a person.
- Pick your favourite three of these photographs that you like for different reasons. Explain and contrast their interesting qualities.

Things to get you inspired:



There are many ways for you to engage with Photography, one that you are already probably using is Instagram, so why not check out some of these:

magnumphotos

magnumfoundation

lensculture

BJP1854 (British Journal of Photography)

Martinparrfdn

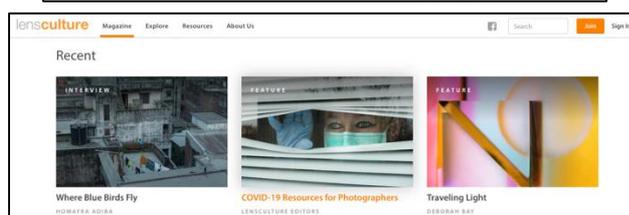
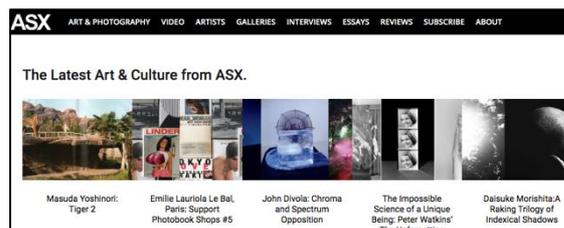
Hoxtonminipress

Royalphotographicsociety

Americansuburbx

Nowness

Websites to visit:



- nowness.com
- asx.com
- bjp-online.com
- lensculture.com



Websites for further research and reading:

100+ ideas for experimental photography work:

<https://www.studentartguide.com/articles/creative-photography-ideas>

Interesting site particularly about street photography

<https://erickimphotography.com>

List with links, 100 most Influential Photographers

<https://fstoppers.com/news/professional-photographer-magazines-100-most-influential-photographers-all-time-5238>

Books to Read:

(You will find that we have a large provision of photography books of many types in the Godalming College library, check out other libraries?)

- **Photography The Key Concepts** by David Bate
- **Read This If You Want to Take Great Photographs** by Henry Carroll (a series of similar titles available from this author)
- **The Photograph: A Visual and Cultural History** by Graham Clarke
- **The Photograph as Contemporary Art** by Charlotte Cotton

Videos to Watch:

- **Influential fashion photographers:**
<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLImpFp2q9qm1aBN4FDRWJUkXi3d8PxgzJ>
- **Jaques Henri Lartique** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=idR3ny4p9rA>
- **Making a Camera Obscura** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gzpu0Q9RTU>

Progression Opportunities

Why choose Photography A Level:

A Level Photography can, of course, lead to photography higher education courses that are practical and/or theoretical. It can lead to employment in a range of photographic activity:

Advertising and Editorial Photographer, Social Photographer (high street or online), Press Photographer or Photojournalist, Fashion Photographer, Product Photographer, Food Photographer, Corporate or Industrial Photographer... and so on.

But it is applicable to any kind of career situation where images, their design, creation or distribution or the analysis of any of these aspects is significant.

Note: Getting Equipment

When you start the course you will need a DSLR camera or equivalent. You need to be able to set the shutter speed and aperture manually, being able to change lenses is also highly recommended. The camera doesn't need to be prohibitively expensive, entry level models are fine. If sourcing a camera is an issue there are a number of cameras and lenses in the department available to borrow. An SD card and SD card reader is also needed.



Good places to look for affordable cameras second hand are:

- London Camera Exchange (excellent knowledge and warranty)
- MPB.com (reliable online source with good prices and accurate reliable descriptions)
- CEX (be aware that they are not camera specialists)

We hope you enjoy completing these tasks and look forward to you joining the course.

