

## Formative feedback

Student name	Debra Flynn	Student number	517222
Course/Unit	Photography 1: Expressing Your Vision	2	
Type of tutorial	Written		

### Overall Comments

An effective idea.

### Assessment potential

*I understand your aim is to go for the Photography/Creative Arts\* Degree and that you plan to submit your work for assessment at the end of this course. From the work you have shown in this assignment, providing you commit yourself to the course, I believe you have the potential to pass at assessment. In order to meet all the assessment criteria, there are certain areas you will need to focus on, which I will outline in my feedback.*

### Feedback on assignment

The overall concept was very good; in museums collections are put in glass cabinets or framed. Here you're collecting people and putting them in frames and behind glass. Although rather than connecting it's more about voyeurism as the subjects are unaware.

**Image 1** is an embodiment of the concept, frames within frames and everything squared away, geometrically correct and shot at a decisive moment.

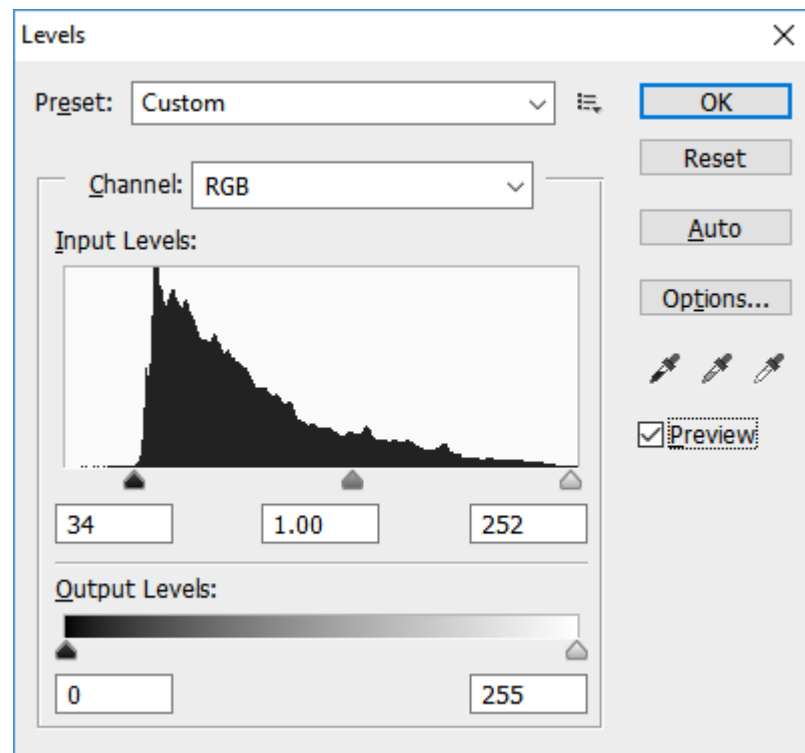
**Image 2** isn't nearly as satisfying. It feels more like an auto focus error. All the visual detail interest is denied us. This image could usefully be replaced with an alternative.

**Image 3** has the potential but missed the decisive moment. If we could have seen his face it would have been a strong companion to the first image. Perhaps you've got some where we can see his face.

**Image 4** is back on song but a little muddy to be properly satisfying.

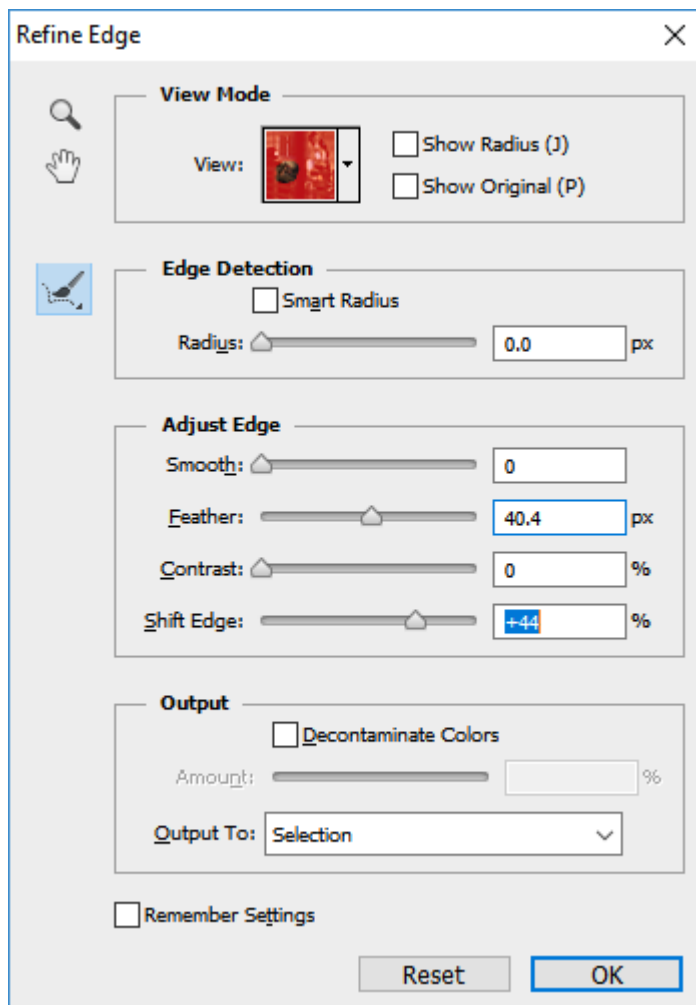


Basically there are no blacks and we should nearly always try to use the full tonal range that an image can be presented with. So here I've adjusted the black point on the histogram to bring some contrast back...



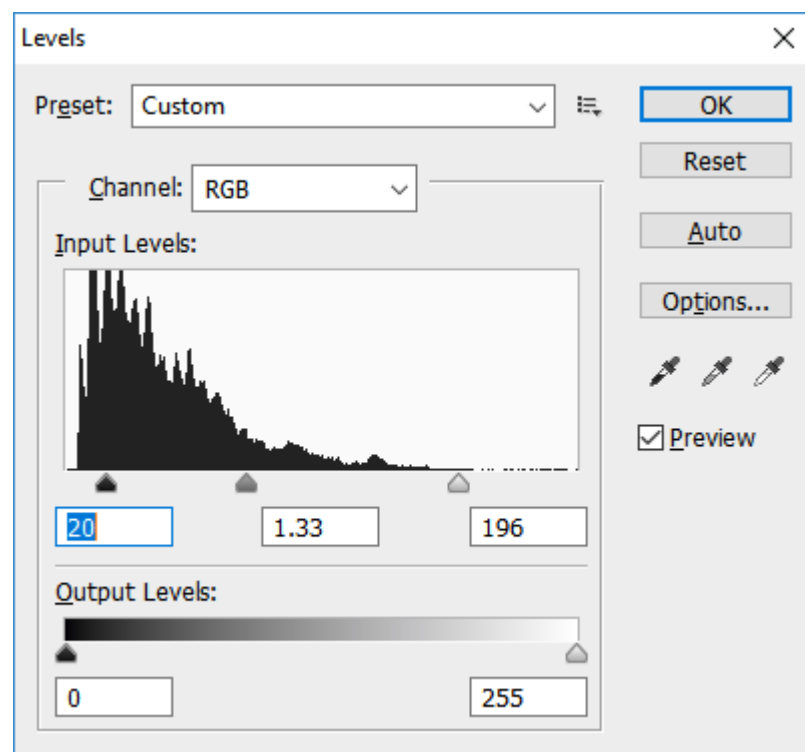


Now the face would benefit from a little emphasis as it's the central subject of the image. I've made a rough selection with the freehand lasso tool in Photoshop and then used the refine button to considerably soften the selection...





Then I've adjusted the black, white and grey points to pick out the face a little more...





Finally I've run the Auto Tone filter on it and sharpened it slightly...





**Image 5** has a similar problem to 2 but not as acute. The eye is led across the bread as you say but again is denied the interest of what it's been lead to. Being sharp from back to front and shot at a more propitious moment for the two figures it would have been a good companion to 1 and 4.

**Image 6** works in the series, again it could benefit from a little post production attention to fine tune the contrast in the figure.

**Image 7** is an interesting composition but it's very back focussed and it's only at considerable enlargement that one notices the photograph of the little girl looking out at us.

This would have worked much better on a wide angle lens so that it was all sharp and shot at a moment where we see more of the blonde woman in the foreground's face. That would have set up a narrative possibility between her and the girl.

**Image 8** works because we can see the face, unlike the previous one and fits with 1 and 4.

**Image 9** like 4 needs a little post production work to optimise it.

I notice some of them aren't as sharp as they might be and there are some unusual choices of ISO. For example on this one, if the properties are to be believe it was shot at 90 ISO and consequently at 1/8 sec and f1.8 which must be wide open for the 85mm lens.

When shooting hand held the controlling factor is the shutter speed. Without image stabilisation a general rule of thumb is that the slowest shutter speed that the typical person can hold the camera sharp at is the reciprocal of the focal length, so with an 85mm lens that would be 1/85th of a second, with stabilisation that might be improved by 2 stops, say 1/20<sup>th</sup> second.

The way to make sure for any one person, because some are better at holding steady than others, is to run a series of tests for each focal length that you commonly use and then shooting a series at different shutter speeds and comparing them at 100% magnification to see what shutter speed you can consistently hold the camera sharp at.

So say with the 85mm lens you might shoot 5 frames at 1/250<sup>th</sup> then 5 at 1/125 then 5 at 1/60<sup>th</sup>. Then repeat with image stabilisation on, if available, but this time start the series at 1/60<sup>th</sup> and go down to 1/15<sup>th</sup>.

In each case look to see which series of exposures is all sharp at what shutter speed. This will then tell you what's the slowest shutter speed you can hand hold an 85mm lens at; with and without image stabilisation.

Do the same for a range of focal lengths from the longest you have to the shortest.

Having set your shutter speed to one that you can always hold sharp, because if it's not sharp all the rest doesn't matter because it's wasted, the next thing to consider is required depth of field, more often than not you need as much as you can get.

Differential focus draws attention to the fact that one is looking at a photograph and makes it difficult to inhabit everything in the image with equal conviction, it limits the gaze. Because we have auto focus eyes wherever we look is in focus so having everything sharp in a photographs inherently makes it more immersive and 'real'.

One also has to take into account that lenses perform best in the middle of their f stop range so resolution is always poor at the widest aperture, say f1.8 and other aberrations are introduced at f22 so ideally we'd like to be able to work around say f8.

This is one of the advantages of working with wide angle lenses for any given f number you get more depth of field. Also as you will discover from the above tests you can hand hold sharp at slower shutter speeds.

In order to obtain the fastest shutter speed to hold the image sharp at and the f stop you require for the conditions it may be necessary to adjust the ISO. The higher the ISO the more noise there will be in the image; equivalent to film grain.

Most times one wants the least noise as possible, 100 ISO being the ideal but if necessary one increases the ISO until one has the necessary depth of field at the appropriate shutter speed for the focal length being used.

Yes this increases the noise but a noiseless image that's not sharp isn't usable any way so it's no good shooting at 100 ISO if you've got camera shake or not enough depth of field. So working hand held manually set the correct shutter speed for the focal length then adjust the ISO until you get an acceptable f stop.

## **Coursework**

The coursework is coming along fine, no problems.

Always work out your composition in the camera and pay as much attention to the edges of the frame as what's going on in the middle then take a step back to allow for a refining crop in post production.

## **Research**

The writing that you've done strikes the right tone in terms of discussion and personal reaction you need to do plenty of this and be expansive in your searches and influences.

The 'Reading List' item in your top ribbon menu would be better called Research and Reflection or Blog.

Here you could not only include researches specific to a particular assignment but also tangential research and experiences plus regular self reflection in the nature of 'Dear diary' entries about your developing engagement with photography and how your conception of your work is changing and growing. This is something we're majorly encouraging and will be looked for in assessment.

A particular problem with 'Reading List' is that it's typically what students have done who actually haven't done much reading who simply do a list of books they could have read. Those are pretty much ignored in assessment, we look for tangible evidence of reading and informed discussion of it, such as you've written about Ruff; which is a model of how to tackle it, both in style and length, including your 'Aside'. It demonstrates you are broadening and following trails.

## **Learning Log**

### **Suggested reading/viewing**

There's still plenty to go at in the 'reading list' in the appendix, do some substantive reviews of that reading as you go along.

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

A significant number of students have a problem with Assignment 3 and as tutors we can't really work out why. People either assume it's an assignment about Cartier-Bresson or they think the concept of the Decisive Moment is more complicated than it is. It really is a simple idea; it's not something H. C-B. Invented, he just came up with a dramatic name for it.

It's about choosing the right moment to press the shutter button according to how the composition is changing in the frame at any particular moment; some arrangements feeling more pleasing or significant than others.

So for example I shot this in Sicily just as the old man was centred in the door and the shadow of the tree was pointing to him like a sun dial, a fraction before or after and those three elements, the tree, the man and the door centre pillar wouldn't have aligned making for a less interestingly structured image.



Students who are new to street photography and the idea of the decisive moment often think that some photographers have a special talent for capturing those moments as they saunter down the street when nothing could be further from the truth. It's about seeing potential and waiting and preparing.

In this case I'd noticed on the two previous days that at the same time every day this old gentleman would come, immaculately dressed and stand outside the church for while before leaving. So on the third day I was waiting there and shot a series of images with him in different poses as he moved from one foot to the other and I shot this just as he moved off having decided, as soon as he started to move that would be the optimum position for him in the composition to create the most potential interest.

It can be as simple as that. There simply needs to be a reason, which is visually evidenced, for pressing the shutter at that particular moment, rather than before it or after it.

## Summary

Strengths	Areas for development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• An effective approach to the work of the course</li><li>• Good analytical skills with text</li><li>• Self awareness .</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Expand research base</li><li>• Do handheld shutter speed tests</li><li>• Work on post production skills and cementing the relationship between shutter speed, f stop and ISO and apply it effectively in manual mode</li></ul>

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

Tutor name	Clive White
Date	12/1/2018
Next assignment due	12/3/2018