Open College of the Arts

Formative feedback

Student name	Debra Flynn	Student number	517222
Course/Unit	Identity & Place	Assignment	2
Type of tutorial (eg video/audio/written)	Notes for Zoom tutorial		

Overall Comments

There's an interesting, subtle idea in here about how the eyes and eye brows become the main source of facial communication when face masks are worn. The tilt of the head also has some expressive capacity. But it's the eyes in which viewers search for cues on how the person is feeling and thinking. Really good idea considering the limitations of this time.

Assignment 2 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
Demonstration of technical and Visual Skills, Quality of Outcome, Demonstration of Creativity

I suppose I have to ask why there is only one photo without the mask? If you were setting up a 'vice versa' dialectic, creating pairs of images, one with mask, one without, would seem a logical presentation arrangement. You can tell me why you have done it like this.

Another curiosity is the mixed backgrounds. And the slightly changed lighting. You appear to be trying to influence the interpretation of the face with these devices. This aspect doesn't work. The whole thing would be more consistent if it was just about the eyes.

The changes in the man's face are read through the eyes: he goes from looking somewhat critical, to looking unsure of being photographed, to looking bored, then looking more serious and business like, in the masked portraits. However, these present the viewer with

an indeterminacy of reading the face. Even though I have tried to describe his expression, it seems to evade description and slip off in another direction.

Seeing so much more of his face provides so much more 'information' that interpretation of your amiable model becomes less ambiguous.

So, to answer your question, yes, the mask influences and degrades our perception.

The flash is a bit hard. Spot the very dark shadows under the nose and chin. A bit of fill-light from another flash or a reflector (or white sheet, card etc) would have softened those. So would diffusion.

Coursework
Demonstration of technical and Visual Skills, Demonstration of Creativity

I liked your pictures of The Head of a school. Some good candid shots. Some could have done with a bit of fill-flash.

Your 'individual spaces' project is good. You're managing to find some intimacy with shallow depth of field and the inclusion of small pieces of the environment.

You seem to have misunderstood the 'same model different background' exercise. Take the same person and photograph them in different places, with different backgrounds. The idea is about changing the mood of the shot with the background.

Research
Context, reflective thinking, critical thinking, analysis

If you look closely at Martin Schoeller's close portraits, the light is a standard two flash either side of the model. You can see the two soft boxes reflected in their eyes. There are no hard shadows. Also, his models faces are slightly distorted by being close to the lens, which could be something around a 35mm. Judging by the single light in your model's eyes, you were using one lamp.

Quotes should be in "quotation marks".

Your quote from Richard Pearce is incongruous because your photos are of someone's face! He is talking about how identity is expressed in posture, gesture, objects related to a person.

Learning Log
Context, reflective thinking, critical thinking, analysis

Your writing is good. But how do you think this work 'answers the brief'? It is not a big deal to branch off on your own, but the brief would help you understand something about contrasts.

Never ask a sitter to "show various emotions on his face"! That is the most effective way to get artificial and awkward portraits. Just let people be themselves and keep snapping away a thousand shots until you get some telling faces.

Suggested reading/viewing

You have probably read David Bate's 'Key Concepts: Photography' and Roland Barthes' 'Rhetoric of the Image'. These are key texts in photographic theory.

Pointers for the next assignment

The next assignment is about referring to yourself or others, looking in or out.

Summary

Strengths	Areas for development
• Good foundation idea. • Good technical and visual skills.	• Some clarity in the presentation would help to create a contrast. • Same background to help create consistency.

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

Tutor name	Robert Enoch
Date	8th February 2021
Next assignment due	22nd April 2021