

A Level Photography

Identity

In this transition project, your tasks include taking photographs of, and about, a person (yourself, or someone you live with), and through these images **convey the significance of a person, an individual, and an identity.**

Use a camera or your phone to take the photographs. Present all work in a Powerpoint presentation. If you need any help with this work, or clarification of the tasks, please email edutton@oswba.co.uk

Photography, the democratic art

The camera is one of the most ubiquitous modern tools. Cameras are often both computers and phones. Nearly everyone takes photographs, and has had their own image taken. As we walk down a street, or drive a car, we are being photographed by cameras that are not even being operated by human beings.

Photographers take photographs to remember a holiday, to record the growth of children, to express themselves creatively, to record their view of the world. Photographs can function as repositories for personal memories, as surveillance tools, as historic documents, as works of art. We think of photographs as fact, but they can also be fiction, metaphor or poetry.

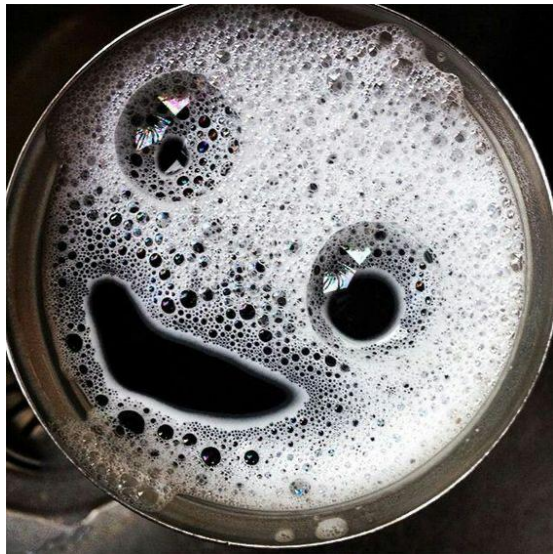
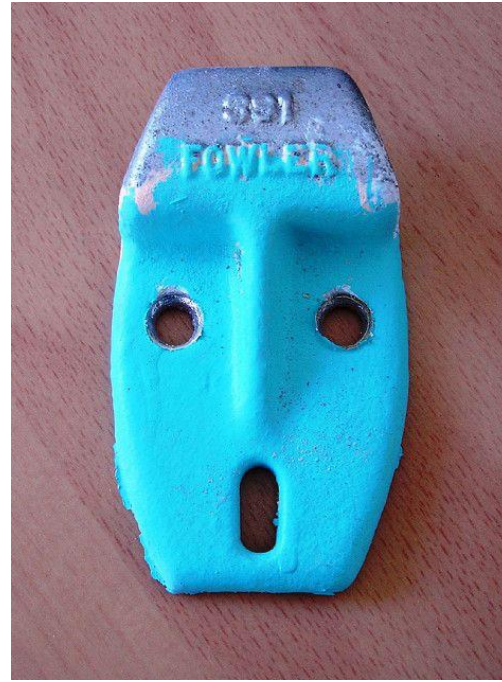
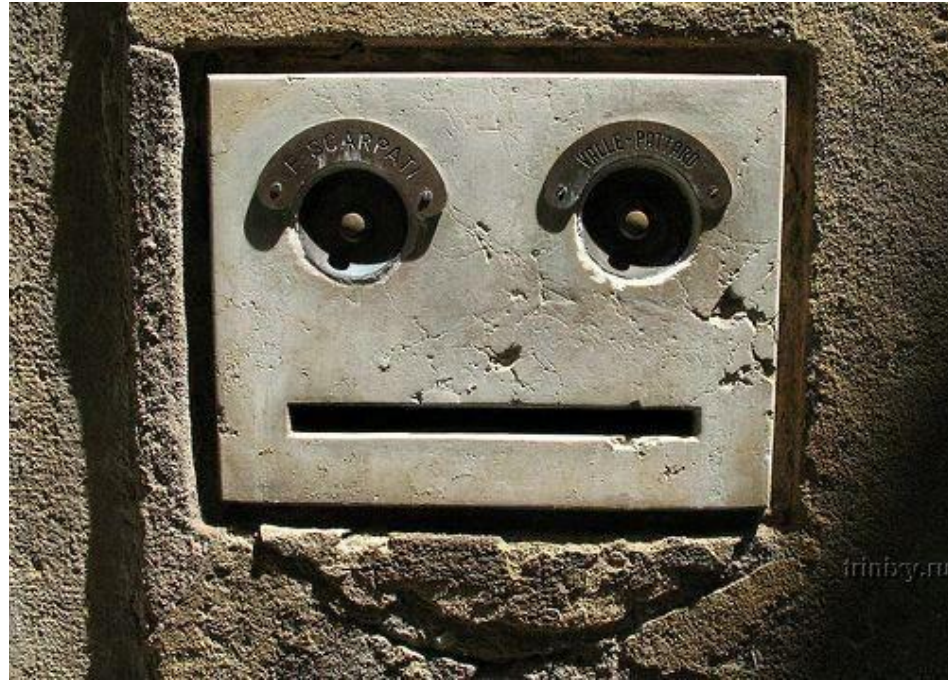
Task 1: If anyone can take a photograph of just about anything, **why are some photographs considered more significant or worthy than others?** Answer this question in no more than 200 words

Portrait photography: capturing an identity for eternity

A portrait photograph immediately grabs the viewer's attention and can trigger profound personal responses. A portrait photograph can play fast and loose with identity, depending on the agenda of both the photographer and the model. Portraits can be candid and unexpected, they can be posed and contrived, they can be warm and sentimental. Susan Sontag stated that "photographs turn the present into past", and even the most random and carefree of portrait photographs can be seen to have significance when we look back on it at a later date.

Task 2: Look through a family photo album, or scroll through your phone, and select a portrait photograph that you think is worthy of further investigation. It might capture a personality, it might freeze a special moment in time, it might have a great composition... **Describe the photograph in detail, and state how it captures an identity.** Use no more than 400 words

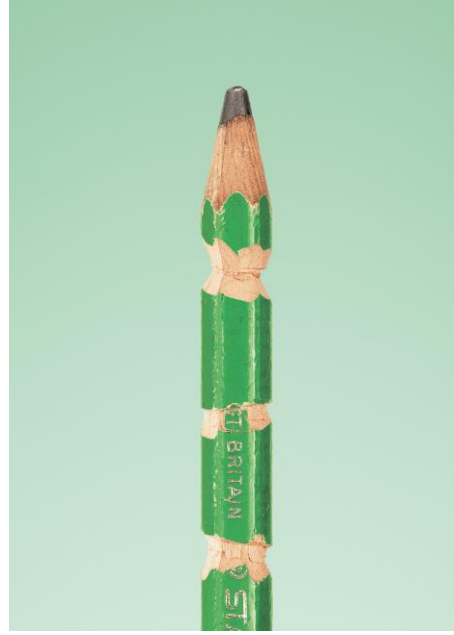
Task 3: faces in things



Have you ever tried to look for shapes in clouds, or seen a face burned into your toast? Pareidolia is a psychological phenomenon that causes people to see patterns in a random stimulus. This often leads to people assigning human characteristics to objects. ***Faces in Things*** Twitter account has some great examples of this @FacesPics

Look around your home and garden for 'faces'.
Take 20 photographs.

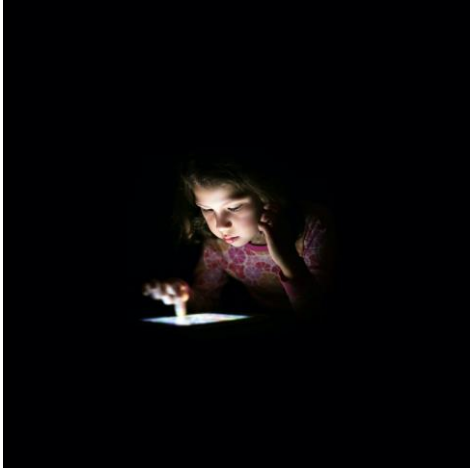
Task 4: Take **20** symbolic portraits of yourself, or someone you live with, showing the clear influence of photographers **Mike Tinney** and **Alex Hammond**.



In their photographic series ***'The Secret Life of a Pencil'*** Tinney and Hammond sought to convey an abstract portrait of today's creatives, as seen through their pencils. Their concept was that even with such advances in digital technology and software, the pencil remains central to formulating ideas and creative responses. ***"The pencil and its ability to bridge the gap between hand and paper so effectively makes it exceptionally powerful, and as we've found, still much loved amongst the creative heroes of our generation,"*** shares Hammond. Each pencil portrait offers a subtle communication as to the identity of its owner.

Select objects that represent a significance to the person whose 'portrait' you are taking. Take photographs of the objects close-up, and if possible, against colour backgrounds.

Task 5: illumination



Portrait, illuminated by an iPad



Tom Hunter (portrait illuminated by natural sunlight)



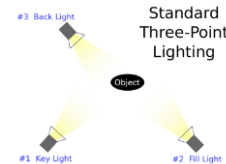
Philip Lorca DiCorcia (portrait illuminated by a street light)



Andrew Curtis (portrait illuminated by a phone)



Jasper Wilkins (portrait using key lighting)



'Photo' is defined as *using or produced by light*. Light is therefore integral to the photographic process. Purposeful lighting illuminates and accents detail within a portrait photograph, and obscures other areas of the frame, casting them into darkness.

Consider what you have available to you that you could use as a lighting source, eg windows, a torch, Christmas lights, your phone, a lamp... and make use of these to **take 20 portraits** that make specific use of lighting. Please don't purchase any new lighting equipment for this task!

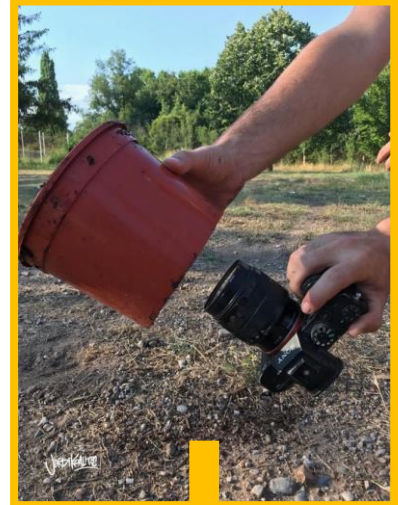
It is recommended that you research different lighting techniques online before you start this task. You could try this YouTube tutorial to get started:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qm-w236nJmQ>

Task 6: Use possessions and objects to frame an image of a person, showing the clear influence of the photographer **Jordi Koalitic**



Spanish photographer **Jordi Koalitic** shows us how ordinary things we have in our homes and gardens can be used to create evocative framing for portraits. He typically uses overlooked and functional objects, and utilises their reflective or textural qualities for dramatic effect. He plays with focal lengths, often shifting the focus away from the person. The scale of the person is frequently reduced, yet these vibrant portraits don't suggest a diminished importance or identity.



Jordi Koalitic shares his images on several social media platforms, including YouTube, Instagram and TikTok. Please look at these sources to get an idea of his process and techniques before you start your own photographs.

This video is a good place to start:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5IpmafMQ6AU>

TAKE 20 photographs for this task



Task 7: Select your own photographer reference and take 20 'identity' photographs in their style

Step 1: Research, and select the work of a photographer. You could look at <https://www.art2day.co.uk/portrait.html> (password: imagine). You could look at the website of the National Portrait Gallery <https://www.npg.org.uk> . You could choose one of these suggested photographers:



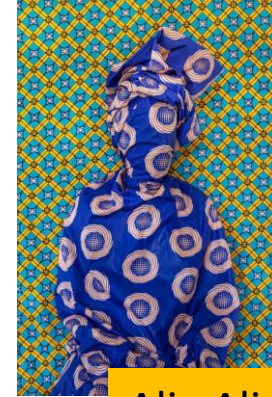
Cindy Sherman



David Ryle



Bill Armstrong



Alia Ali



John Coplans



Step 2: Read about their motivation, and concepts for their photographs. Aim to make reference to this understanding in your own photographic responses. **Take 20 photographs.**

Task 8: Look through ALL the photographs you have taken for this project, and select ONE that you consider is most successful. Analyse this photograph. Use annotation, and respond to the questions noted below:

- When and where was the work made?
- How has the work been made? What type of camera has been used? What kind of skills were involved?
- What is the dominant visual element in this photograph? Reflect on the basic visual qualities of the photograph and state how these have helped to establish and express meaning.
- Which photographer/s influenced this work? Which areas of your photograph demonstrate this?
- Is the photograph representational or abstract / symbolic? Why did you make this choice?
- Whose identity is being depicted in the photograph?
- What is it about this person's identity that you were trying to express? (Personality, their interests, cultural heritage, age, gender, their values or beliefs?)
- Has the photograph been edited in any way? If so, is the artifice evident, or disguised?
- Is the image successful in expressing an identity?

You might find it useful to use a Semiotic approach when analysing your photograph. Start with denotations (use arrows to point out what's actually in the photograph), and then reflect on the connotations of each denoted feature.

Aim Higher: The following research task is optional. It will help you to continue to get ready for your A Level Photography course, where independent research and learning is essential.

Read about the ideas, processes and techniques of a range of photographers, from 1839 to the present day. Make a list of photographers whose work you think is particularly interesting, and then select SIX of these, and present the information you've found into Powerpoint, together with visual examples of their work, as shown in this example

These sources of information are recommended:

The **V&A Museum** in London began acquiring photographs in 1852, and they now have a collection of over 300,000 images from 1839 to the present day. They produce excellent educational resources, including a series of short videos about photographers, the significance of their images and the processes they used to achieve these. There are 44 videos for you to look at:

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLe2ihXndm5judalBOP9_4Fr_FqS-UwucD

LensCulture is a photography network and online magazine about contemporary photography in art, media, politics, commerce and popular cultures worldwide. Take a look on their website for a wealth of resources and articles about contemporary photographic practice: <https://www.lensculture.com>

The British Journal of Photography is a magazine about photography, publishing in-depth articles, profiles of photographers, analyses, and technological reviews. Their website provides access to several excellent articles about the work of contemporary photographers: <https://www.bjp-online.com>

<https://www.art2day.co.uk> has collated a range of photographic references on their website. Go to the 'photography' section of the website and you will see that photographers work has been categorised as follows: digital, film, Photoshop, darkroom, photo-montage, experimental, moving image. The password for this website is 'imagine'

