

DIGITAL ARTS 1 - THE MUNDANE (PHOTOGRAPHY)

RATIONALE

- This lesson is designed to cultivate a creative mindset through the lens of photography. Students will learn the basics of photography, the things that go on behind the lens of the camera, and how all of those settings help them create a “good” photograph. This will take the form of two sets of 5 photos, one before a critique and general introduction, one after with retouching.

OBJECTIVES

1. Students will gain an understanding of the technical aspects of photography through a self guided handout to be completed in class.
2. Students will become familiar with the vocabulary necessary to photography (Exposure, camera settings, compositional techniques, etc.)
3. Students will study the inner workings of a camera, and understand how each of the properties of exposure affects the cameras functionality.
4. Students will engage in a critique and discussion as a class about what makes a good photo.
5. Students will become familiar with, and be able to utilize, 6 forms of composition after going through a presentation and doing a compositional exercise.
6. Students will create a series of 5 photographs using the compositional techniques and technical knowledge we learned in class.
7. Students will use the RAW Editor and Adjustment Layers/Masks to do retouching of their photos before submission.
8. Students will present their series of 5 photos as a set, organised as they desire.
9. Students will become familiar with the value and usage of artwork in groups (diptych, triptych) including historical context and use.
10. Students will engage in a classwide critique of their set of photos, both defending their artistic vision and accepting constructive criticism from their peers.

EQ

- What makes a “good” photo?

- How can you use the camera settings creatively?
- What is “Mundane” and how does it apply to your experience with Photography?
- What are the rules of Composition and how do we apply them?

STANDARDS

- 9.1.12.E
 - Delineate a unifying theme through the production of a work of art that reflects skills in media processes and techniques.
- 9.2.12.C
 - Relate works in the arts to varying styles and genres and to the periods in which they were created (Darkroom vs. Digital).
- 9.2.12.F
 - Know and apply appropriate vocabulary used between social studies and the arts and humanities.
- 9.3.12.B
 - Determine and apply criteria to a person’s work and works of others in the arts
- 9.3.12.E
 - Examine and evaluate various types of critical analysis of works in the arts and humanities.
 - Contextual criticism
 - Formal criticism
 - Intuitive criticism
- 9.3.12.G
 - Analyze works in the arts by referencing the judgments advanced by arts critics as well as one’s own analysis and critique.

TOOLS/RESOURCES/FEATURED ARTISTS

- Marcel Duchamp
- Martin Parr
- Alfred Stieglitz
- Jeff Koons

- Photo Handout
- Photo Tech Presentation
- Photo Composition presentation
- Mundane photo presentation
- Nikon D3300
- Photoshop
- RAW Editor
- Adjustment Layers
- Brush Tool
- Spot Healing Brush Tool
- Layer Sampling

IMPORTANT VOCABULARY

- Exposure
- Shutter Speed
- Aperture
- ISO
- Depth of Field
- Composition
- DSLR
- Mundane
- Adjustment
- Retouching
- Camera RAW/Compression

INSTRUCTIONAL PROCEDURES

- **Day 1-2 (OBJ 1)**
 - The first day will be both a catch up for students that have not yet finished the previous project. Students in class will be given 2 days to finish a handout provided on Google classroom. It will be worth 25 points, with opportunity for

bonus points built in. Once students finish the handout, they should double check their work, and do the bonus questions.

- **Day 3 (OBJ 2, 3)**

- Introduction

- When students come into class, they will be prompted to get a camera (either individually or in groups). We will sit together with the lights on in class and discuss the different parts of the camera, where they are, and what they change. Students will have the opportunity to study the camera physically while we take a tour of the entire camera, including the specific parts that we need to know.

- Instruction

- After a guided tour of the physical parts of the camera, we will go through a presentation on Exposure, and review the material learned in the Photo handout. This discussion will cover each of the parts of exposure, what they do, and the “hidden functions” of these parts.

- Closure

- At the end of class, we will do a quick activity that involves changing each of the camera settings, and balancing the other two to compensate. Once this is complete, cameras will be put away, and students will leave class.

- **Day 4 (Prep for OBJ 4)**

- Introduction

- As students come into class, they will get a camera before they sit down. We will do a quick version of the final activity we did the day before to refresh the control of the camera in everyone’s minds. We’ll make sure everyone knows where the SD Slot and Battery slot are in the camera, and then send them on their way.

- Instruction

- Students will spend the majority of class completing the prompt “Take 5 Photos that you think are ‘good’”. They will be given no additional prompting other than “take your time”.
- Closure
 - Students will return to class and take their photos off the camera. They will get the chance to review them, and then upload them to the classroom assignment for critique the next day.
- **Day 5-6 (OBJ 4)**
 - Introduction
 - Students will come into class, and take a few minutes to make sure they’ve submitted their photos to the classroom. We will do a short exercise on critique, and have a discussion about what is and is not useful critique. For this, we will critique two of the instructor’s photos that were taken for this purpose. They’ll have elements that students should be able to easily delineate.
 - Instruction
 - After critiquing the instructor’s photos, we will move into the meat of the class critique. We’ll go by volunteer, and look at each student’s collection of 5 photos, deciding which of them are the most vs. the least *successful* in the set. We will discuss why they are or are not successful, and how we as photographers may do things differently if we were to take that photo. We will use this time in class to go through each student’s set individually.
 - Closure
 - After the critique, we will choose what we think are the MOST successful photos in the class, and put them into a slide presentation. The next day, we will discuss Composition.
- **Day 7 (OBJ 5)**
 - Introduction

- Students will come into class looking at their peers' photos that they chose yesterday as the most successful. We will review these photos, and discuss again why we think these photos are successful.
- Instruction
 - After the quick review, we will discuss as a class, 6 compositional techniques. We will discuss how these techniques can be used, and how they apply to the photos that we chose as a class. After the presentation, students will be given 20 minutes to use whatever photo taking device they choose to go take photos that correspond to each of these techniques.
- Closure
 - Students will be given a few minutes to complete this exercise, and be asked to complete any unfinished prompts next class.
- **Day 8 (PREP FOR OBJ 6)**
 - Introduction
 - As students enter class, we will have a short talk about the amount of preparation we've been doing for this project, and how they have not yet started the project. We'll talk for only a moment about how we're going to approach this project.
 - Instruction
 - The class will go through a presentation of "The Mundane" and how it applies to photography. We will talk about the shifting observation styles, and how to use compositional techniques to make Mundane things look interesting. We will take a look into some of the best practices for photography in a mundane area, and move on from there. At the end of the presentation, the requirements of the project will be laid out, and the idea of tagging will be introduced.
 - Closure

- After the presentation, we will do a short exercise about how to tag your photos, and some best practices for file organization. We'll talk briefly about the expectations for the next class.
- **Day 9-12 (OBJ 6)**
 - The class will spend these days in the halls shooting. They'll have a few days to gather 50-100 (depending on the class). They'll end up using 5 of these, so they should try to make all of the photos worth at least a little bit. They are to return 10 minutes before the end of class to make sure they have time to collect and tag the photos they took in class that day.
- **Day 13 (OBJ 7)**
 - Introduction
 - Regardless of how far students are in editing, the whole class will remain in the room. Everyone will be prompted to open one of their .NEF photos, and we will talk quickly about the RAW Editor, and how that applies to our photography. We will talk quickly about compression, and the difference between RAW and .jpg or any other file type.
 - Instruction
 - Once we exit the raw editor, we will go through our workflow for photo retouching. We will talk about what exactly the practice includes, and look at some examples of retouching in the advertising world. From there we will cover the following techniques:
 - Spot healing brush on it's own layer
 - Adjustment Layers and masks
 - Custom burn/dodge layers using Overlay
 - Compositing to remove unwanted elements
 - Sculpting light, and directing focus
 - Adjusting Color and Balance
 - Crop Tool

- Closure
 - Once students get a feel for the Editing process, we will have a discussion about possible edits for a series of photos, and talk about how to take photos with edits in mind.
- Reflections
 - *What evidence did you collect to demonstrate that your students have met or are progressing towards the learning outcome?*
 - So everyone did end up with an edited exercise. I got a chance to see everyone's layer masks, and had to sit down to guide a few students through it.
 - *What changes or adjustments had to be made during the lesson (justify those changes) to ensure students make adequate progress in meeting the learning objective?*
 - So for a few classes, I had to leave the sculpting light for the next class, as the layer masks took a little longer than anticipated. It's a complex idea, so I should have seen that coming.
 - *What changes will have to be made to the next lesson in order for students to be on pace in meeting the overall goal of the Lesson or Unit?*
 - This exercise doesn't seem to be super engaging for students. I need to retool the way I teach layer masks. This year has proven to be more of a challenge with keeping lessons engaging, but I can figure it out. I think some sort of mask challenge might be good to try out. Maybe make a template and have students complete it on their own, after I show them the technique.
- **Day 14-17**
 - Individual feedback for each student, looking at collections, additional days to take photos. Start of the final collections.
- **Day 18 (OBJ 9)**

- Introduction
 - Before students are set free to take photos, we will talk about collecting out photos as a series. We will look lightly at the Diptychs of the renaissance, and how the two pieces related to each other. Then we will look at the collections of Martin Parr, and how he uses the idea of a connectivity to create a cohesive collection of photographs.
- Instruction
 - This will consist of individual feedback for each student concerning their collection of photos, and how they work together as a set. We will discuss which photos they should reshoot, and which they should eliminate from their collections before moving forward. Once students are finished with feedback, they can go out to take more photos.
- Closure
 - Students who are comfortable with it, will volunteer to show the preliminary, unedited version of their final set. We will talk about how the photos relate to each other, and end class.
- Reflections
 - *What evidence did you collect to demonstrate that your students have met or are progressing towards the learning outcome?*
 - So I ended up having to eliminate this day for time. This project is stretching on longer than I'd like, and I want to be able to get into different things before the end of the class.
 - *What changes or adjustments had to be made during the lesson (justify those changes) to ensure students make adequate progress in meeting the learning objective?*
 - See Above
 - *What changes will have to be made to the next lesson in order for students to be on pace in meeting the overall goal of the Lesson or Unit?*

- Hopefully next time I teach this lesson, I'll have the time to really get into this, but I could not, unfortunately. I did end up talking about theme, but not in any way relating to art history.

- **Day 19-22**

- These two days will be time to reshoot any photos, and start editing them as a set together. These will be the final days to build their collection of photos, so that they can present them during the critique. Students will receive consistent feedback during this time.
- Reflections
 - *What evidence did you collect to demonstrate that your students have met or are progressing towards the learning outcome?*
 - Students are consistently working, many of them have visions that they are not sure how to accomplish, so helping them shows me that they're trying to problem solve their way to success.
 - *What changes or adjustments had to be made during the lesson (justify those changes) to ensure students make adequate progress in meeting the learning objective?*
 - No adjustments were made to this section this time.
 - *What changes will have to be made to the next lesson in order for students to be on pace in meeting the overall goal of the Lesson or Unit?*
 - I think moving forward, I need to give a guideline on the set. I don't want to stop students from creating whatever they want, but I feel like a little bit of guiding would be useful for some of the students, especially since I had to skip the triptych part of the lesson.

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- **Day 23-? (OBJ 8,10) (SEE LESSON)**

- Class critique on photography. Will take the same form as the previous critique, except with a small (1-2 sentence) introduction from the student before we look

at the set. We will also discuss how the set works as a whole, in addition to the most/least successful discussion. At the end of the critique, students will be primed for the next project, through a survey on whether we stay with Photography, or move on to graphic design.

ADJUSTMENTS

- There are a lot of variables in this lesson, so many that adjusting can be made into a relatively easy task. Students who are higher performing will be expected to generate a higher number of images for their bulk shoot, and asked to reshoot more of their 5 images once they develop their final set. Lower performing students will be asked to take less photos, but make them more meaningful, prompting them to spend more time between photos, planning and really observing their environment.
- During retouching, high performing students will be asked to edit and submit additional photos, using more in depth techniques (combining the previous technique to create a “superphoto”). Lower performing students will have their requirements lowered so that they can dedicate their time to learning the important techniques.

ACCOMMODATIONS

- The classroom is set up in a way that does not allow for accommodations to be made in the physical setup. If students have mobility issues, they may sit in the back row, and if they cannot manage that, a laptop can be set up in the front of the room. There is also one computer in the front row that can accommodate mobility issues.

ASSESSMENT

- Artistic Initiative
 - How ambitious was the student in their pursuit of a good photo? Are there interesting angles? Are there interesting edits? Did they use Photoshop in a creative way?
- Craftsmanship
 - How much care was taken to ensure the final piece is presented as intended? Are there unintended edits that were left?
- Use of Media

- How well did the student employ the media that was given? Did they correctly set up their document and export in the proper way?
 - Interpretation of the Assignment
 - How well did the student use the techniques learned in class? Did they effectively use Adjustment Layers and the Spot Healing Brush? Did they gain an understanding of how these tools function?
 - Design and Composition
 - Are the photos well composed? Are they aesthetically pleasing?
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GENERAL REFLECTION

- ***What evidence did you collect to demonstrate that your students have met or are progressing towards the learning outcome?***
 - The student work that was produced met all expectations that were set at the start of the project (with a few exceptions). As long as the project doesn't drag for too long, students have a good time with this, and end up knowing quite a lot about photography.
- ***What changes or adjustments had to be made during the lesson (justify those changes) to ensure students make adequate progress in meeting the learning objective?***
 - Since this lesson took significantly longer than usual, I had to cut some of the content that I wanted to include. This means some of the organizational stuff, some of the discussion about art history. Overall the lesson stayed the same.
- ***What changes will have to be made to the next lesson in order for students to be on pace in meeting the overall goal of the Lesson or Unit?***
 - I think this lesson could be improved with making the retouching part a whole different lesson. I'm not sure it fit with the theme, and I think having students rely solely on composition is a better plan at the end of the day.