Through the Lens

Photography
Alienation and Recognition

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Maaslandcollege
Through the Lens
Photography—Alienation and Recognition

We have talked about the use of the camera in the world of movies during our recent film assignments. We have thought about how the camera might be placed in a particular way in order to create an extra feeling of drama in the story that may be being told. The position in which camera was held to give a specific angle of view was also important during the group practical assignment where we remade an existing film. In this individual practical assignment you will be taking this attention to detail in the placing of the camera one step further when you make a series of photographs.

There are two assignments to choose from and they approach the making of photographs through two different directions.

Assignment 1—Introduction
Assignment 1 focuses on a feeling of alienation in the way we view the photograph. In these photographs all is not quite what it seems. We feel a sort of detachment or estrangement from recognizable forms.

An excellent example of a photographer who work in this way was the British photographer Bill Brandt (1904-1983).

One particular series of his photographs takes the feeling of alienation when looking at the human body in a particularly interesting direction. Each photograph shows part of the human body, mostly within a landscape, but photographed in such a way and from an unusual angle so that the figure and the surroundings connect in a surprising way.

Untitled, 1957
Assignment One
You must produce a series of photographs (black and white or colour) where you place a part of the human body in an unexpected and alienating environment. It doesn’t have to be outside like Brandt in his photographs, it can also be inside or in combination with other objects to form a still life. Think how you might be able to make use of less obvious parts of the body too, such as wrists, elbows, ankles or heels!
Be creative, think how the quality of the body part combines with the other things in the photograph. For example, a slightly hairy wrist is going to look different next to a kiwi than it will next to an egg.

What do you actually have to produce?
• Take a large series of photographs and in the end present the best six, two per A4 page displayed as stylishly and as large as you can to show the photographs off well (no other arrangement is acceptable)
• Use a good printer (the one in the OLC is very good).....a printer where the ink is running out is not acceptable
• The photographs may be black and white or colour (or a mixture of both)
• You may adjust the contrast, brightness or colour balance of the photographs to improve them but no other filters
• Feel free to adjust the shape of the rectangle (maybe the rectangular photograph that you have made would look better as a square
• Do not distort the photograph by pulling out of shape
• Your mark will be based on the quality of your photographic work
• Poorly presented work will lose you grades

Obviously your six photographs won’t all be the same!
Assignment two—introduction
Photography assignment two depends more on a sense of recognition in a photographic image. Somewhere we know is shown in a photograph. It is a recognisable place, a familiar environment. Except in the final pieces of work the actual location is presented twice, once as it is now, and once as it was in the past.
Other photographers have experimented with this approach in the past such as this example below:

![Example 1](image1.jpg)

We see exactly the same spot on a London bridge photographed maybe nearly 100 years apart. The two photographs have been then very carefully digitally combined. All these people stood virtually on the same spot, the only thing that separates them is a long period of time.

The image below is similar but uses a rather more ‘lo-tech’ approach:

![Example 2](image2.jpg)

A photograph from the past (note the old fashioned pram) is placed exactly in the right position to combine the backgrounds of the two photographic images.
Assignment Two

You have to produce a series of three photographs. Each one has to combine the same location but also capture a period of time between the two images.

There are essentially two ways that you can approach this:

1. Research and print old photographs of a location that you know and recognise (at least in part) in the old photograph. For example, maybe you can find a photograph of a particular street during the 1970s on the internet. If you can, print the photograph out and take the photograph to the location and try to find the exact same spot that where the photographer must have stood.

   Once you have done this you have to decide whether you are going to combine the two images digitally (like example 1 on the previous page), in which case you have to simply try to take a new photograph from exactly the same spot to combine it later on the computer. Alternatively you do the more basic (although not necessarily easier) approach of holding the image so that the old image covers part of the view and combines with it (like example 2 on the previous page).

2. For the second variation you make use of your own ‘old’ photographs. You have to dip into the collection of old family photographs. For example, maybe there is a photograph of you playing in the garden when you were five. If you still live in the same house you can take this photograph out into the garden to find the exact spot where someone stood to take the photograph.

   Once you have done this you have to decide whether you are going to combine the two images digitally (like example 1 on the previous page), in which case you have to simply try to take a new photograph from exactly the same spot to combine it later on the computer. Alternatively you do the more basic (although not necessarily easier) approach of holding the image so that the old image covers part of the view and combines with it (like example 2 on the previous page).

You don’t have to use the same approach for all three of your photographic compositions.
What do you actually have to produce?

- Three different photographs (colour or black and white or even a combination) presented neatly **one per A4 sheet**
- Use a good printer (the one in the OLC is very good).....a printer where the ink is running out is **not** acceptable
- You may adjust the contrast, brightness or colour balance of the photographs to improve them but **no** other filters
- Feel free to adjust the shape of the rectangle (maybe the rectangular photograph that you have made would look alot better as a square
- Do not distort the photograph by pulling out of shape
- Your mark will be based on the quality of your photographic work
- Poorly presented work will lose you grades

Kerkstraat, Oss—(1920s)

Peperstraat, Oss