



Open
College
of the Arts

Formative feedback

Student name	Simon Chirgwin	Student number	512973
Course/Unit	PH5LPE	Assignment number	5
Type of tutorial	Written / Audio-Visual		A/V

Overall Comments

The images work as individuals having a great sense of design and composition. There was something quite minimalist about a few – quite 'New Topographics'. When they are combined as diptychs and triptychs, they take on another level of narrative that produces a sense of construction and purpose. I liked the ideas for display and possibly exhibition; using analogue construction to enhance 2 dimensional representations of real constructions.

Feedback on assignment

Tutor's additional notes and suggestions in red

Online - 29th May 2022 12.00 pm (45 minutes). Derek Trillo & Simon Chirgwin

DT opened our discussion of the assignment by saying that I had not depicted a particularly inviting space and wondered if there was anywhere in Walthamstow where someone could play ball games. One of my working titles for the assignment had been 'No Fun!' - it was nice to see that this had come passed through to the viewer, He had started looking at the assignment work as a series of single photographs before looking at the main page where they were grouped.

They work much better as diptychs and triptychs rather than as individual unconnected images.

Only ones that didn't quite match in was the garage in the middle of the fourth group of pictures. I said, it was included because the huge number of squares contained with the square frame matched the geometry and complexity of the images that flanked it; I also confessed it was there because it was the one that I liked too much to drop it... (This is a common state of affairs, and not just my problem.)

It also is obviously strongly composed, and fits with the many other pictures in the set that depict perimeters, either of places where you are allowed to enter providing you follow the rules, or places where you are denied entry. DT singled out the warped, wrought-iron fence in the first picture of the second set as working particularly well; I like the three barred gates in the second last row.

You look at the pictures - another working title was 'Made you look! - and go to places you wouldn't go to otherwise.

We talked around the idea of different levels of authorisation behind some of the written content of my pictures, which moves from local authority signage (and builders' hoardings and enticements to buy) through individual painted 'No Parking' notices towards official graffiti - the enormous creature on the St James St gable end where it is juxtaposed with some - unsanctioned - tadpole like drips on an Openreach cabinet in *a5.10 - St James Street – 8th April 2022*. I thought the creature (it's a badger) looked like the work of a Belgian graffiti artist, ROA and looked it up after the tutorial. I was right: <https://inspiringcity.com/2019/04/01/the-street-art-of-st-james-street-in-walthamstow/>

There is a need to 'read' things we perceive as signs and to try and discover meaning - we reading signs as we make journeys or as we go around our day-to-day lives; we need to look and to try to make sense of the environment, even when we can't, because we lack the information to make sense of it all... this makes signs punctums that cannot be ignored

Even blank spaces without writing, or where writing has been present - non-signs? - can lead you to try to see something. During the tutorial DT provided a link to OCA student, Vincent Sluiter's work depicting blank signs in W. London) - <https://spaces.oca.ac.uk/vincent526484/category/uncategorised/assignment-5-photography-is-simple-reworked/> - and also pointed me towards Stephen Gill's series *Billboards* (2002-2004) with an advertising slogan (eg 'Come to Marlboro Country') used as the title for a photograph of the rear of an advertising site.

We discussed how some of the things that didn't quite fit/didn't make it into the final set (Sluiter's work included stretches of a very municipal-hoarding shade of blue with overpainting in a different shade; there's lots of it in some of my shortlisted photographs of Walthamstow as well; ghost ads would be another example) could be seen as beginning to be about collection and cataloguing rather than the more focused set that had emerged from the edit.

I had been left with a tight grouping of pictures whose abstraction and design that then goes together to make a set, or body, of photographs cohere around the way we view things and the absurdity you can find when you look.

We talked about the physical display of images as something you could walk through, displayed like a maze rather than arranged, flat on a gallery wall; I gave the example of Salgado's pictures displayed in the darkened space of The Science Museum in London. I showed some dummy freestanding concertinas of my assignment pictures. too! I was thinking about putting the GPS location maps for the pictures (linked on the posts for the individual photographs) on the reverse of the concertina, but we also talked about the way this would allow a greater idea

This led to a wider discussion of the way display can expand on an image's context (again like Salgado at the Science Museum) - if you just look at the images - and maybe a short, factual title - you don't get any idea of what physically links them in the real world. For example, a more imaginative placement of the images in space would allow the connection between the first two images whose subjects (a 'come-in' hoarding and a 'keep out' notice) face one another, across a narrow passageway.

DT suggested I look at work by a 3rd-year OCA student on ley lines and also an Australian photographer doing something similar with architectural photographs.

Names and Links please, Derek! [See below](#)

We ended the tutorial with a brief look forward to Assignment 6: I will send DT a draft Reflective Presentation, my first go at fitting my work to the five course learning objectives and detail of how I intend to rework the assignments before submitting them for the November/Winter assessment event.

Suggested reading/viewing

This is Vincent Sluiter's assignment five

<https://spaces.oca.ac.uk/vincent526484/category/uncategorised/assignment-5-photography-is-simple-reworked/>

The photographer who manipulated images by folding paper before exposing it in the darkroom was Nigel Henderson. Specifically, I was thinking of the image '*Stressed photograph showing a boy on a bike 'doodling' (circa 1950)*'

The constructions on panels of architectural images was by Isidro Blasco

https://isidroblasco.com/section/384548_PLANETS.html

also see Deconstructed Laneways

<https://isidroblasco.com/section/299405-DECONSTRUCTED-LANEWAYS.html>

The ley lines project of the 3rd level student (just finished) is by Ian Shaw

<https://thehippyhippo.blog/>

Tutor name	Derek Trillo
Date	30/05/2022
Next assignment due	12/06/2022 (provisional)