

Self-Evaluation

Part 1

Throughout this module, workshops and experimentation with my photoshoots helped me develop technical confidence while also refining how I use photography to communicate ideas. I used some of my existing skills such as basic camera handling, use of the exposure triangle and my photoshop skills. However, I then broadened my skills through workshops and applied them accordingly, such as composition and visual decision making. This allowed my photographs to become more intentional and conceptually focused, along with conceptually thinking and planning.

In the poetic photographs, my work explored the idea of time. To me Drummonds poem which I was working from, speaks about the things we cannot move past, the moments that stay with us no matter how far we go. Through these photographs I wanted to explore that feeling of how time, memory and endurance leave their quiet marks.

My photographs I wanted to represent different stages of time. A clock holds the weight of passing hours, a blurred figure and a ghostly figure move through the frames and hold onto the scene, showing time slipping by. Finally, a pair of hands come to rest, carrying both fatigue and resilience. The workshops that focused on observation and composition helped me slow down and become more aware of subtle visual changes. Moreover, with my existing experience with shutter speed and natural light helped me to convey the message of passing time and atmosphere within my photographs. My editing decisions were carefully considered to maintain meaning and poetic quality.

For the narrative photograph. I documented a protest, where workshops on editing were particularly important. I used contact sheets to compare similar photographs and select ones that best communicated the progression and energy of the event. In my opinion these skills helped me construct a clear visual narrative, showing both individual moments and the wider collective experience.

In the mischievous photograph section, my focus on graffiti encouraged playful experimentation and rule breaking. Workshops and lecturers promoted creative risk and helped me gain confidence to photograph outside more, this process strengthened my confidence in pushing ideas further while still maintaining technical control. Furthermore, this allowed me to explore unconventional shots, framing and bold visual contrasts. Overall, the combination of structured workshops and independent experimenting played a key role in achieving my aims across all three series.

Part 2

For my research it provided inspiration for my photoshoots. Lee Jeffries hand photographs were a key influence on my poetic photograph series, particularly in how they communicate time, hardship and lived experience through close observation of the body. In addition, Jeffries work uses tight framing, high contrast, and detailed texture to emphasis marks such as wrinkles, scars and veins, allowing the passage of time to be read directly on the skin. Moreover, his photographs often focus on hands as symbols of labour and survival, which is what I also wanted to portray. I was inspired by Jeffries approach, so I experimented with close framing and directional lighting to evident when comparing Jeffries work with my final outcome, where similar attention to texture, contrast and intimacy is used, along with post-production.

Below on the left is my own work, whilst on the right is Lee Jeffries. 2008/9. *Hands I*



Sarah Pickering's Pickpocket series was introduced to me during a lecturer to introduce the mischievous photograph series, this acted as a conceptual influence for me rather than a direct visual reference. Pickering's work explores the themes of crime by photographing staged scenarios rather than the real criminal acts. Additionally, this approach encouraged me to think of ideas of mischief could be represented safely. Instead of documenting an actual crime or placing myself in danger, I was inspired to explore graffiti as a visual symbol of illicit activity. Furthermore, graffiti exists within a space between legality and expression, making it an effective subject for representing mischief without direct participation. This influence shaped my decision-making process, while allowing me to engage with the theme conceptually while maintaining ethical and personal safety.

Below on the left is my own work, whilst the work on the right is Sarah Pickering, 2019. *Pickpocket*.



Before producing my narrative photograph series, I researched documentary and protest photography to inform a shift in my working method. After I worked with more controlled and staged approaches in my poetic photographs, I wanted to move towards a documentary style that responded directly to real events. Therefore, photographers such as Susan Meiselas and Gilles Peress influenced my thinking conceptually, their work prioritises collective experience and political context. My research encouraged me to photograph the protest as it unfolded, focusing on banners and group dynamic to suggest narrative and energy. Rather than intervening I adopted an observational approach.

Below on the left is the work of Gilles Peress, *Arrestation de Jean Paul Sartre*. 1970, then on the right is the work of Susan Meiselas. 2003. Finally, directly below both is my work.



Part 3

For the final portfolio, I made considerable decision when selecting and sequencing work from each series so it can clearly show intent and progression. I selected my photographs through a process of comparison using contact sheets, allowing me to evaluate technical, conceptual and how each photograph contributed to the overall series. I think the most important part was sequencing, as I wanted each body of work to read cohesively while showing progression in ideas and methods. This was particularly important with my narrative and poetic series.

I placed the strongest emphasis on the Poetic series outcomes, as this was where I felt the most engaged conceptually and visually. Moreover, the slower, more considered approach to staging and symbolism allowed me to explore time, memory and endurance in depth, resulting in photographs that feel more intentional. Additionally, a particular strength in this section is my use of layering, shown in my photograph that combines a ghostly figure behind myself, which helps further visually suggest the passing of time and holding onto memories in a single frame. In addition, while I found the narrative and mischievous valuable, I was more confident in the poetic work, which influenced the amount of refinement and attention given to that section. A strength of my mischievous series is its observational approach, as photographing existing graffiti allowed me to suggest themes of rebellion and rule-breaking without staging or personal risk, while using framing to create visual impact.

My main strengths I believe lie in my conceptual thinking, use of symbolism and growing ability to edit and sequence photos meaningfully. In particular, my poetic photographs demonstrate effective use of layering, controlled shutter speed and careful editing to create atmosphere and visual depth. Furthermore, I showed my ability to adapt my photography between staged, documentary and observational approaches. However, my weakness is inconsistency in some technical aspects, such as lighting in my protest photographs, where certain photographs could have benefitted from more controlled exposure or alternative viewpoints (closer viewpoints.)

If I were to revisit this module, I would spend more time planning and shooting the narrative and mischievous components to allow for a broader edit and stronger sequencing. I also think that I could've come up with better ideas for the narrative series, more story telling. I would also experiment more with different lenses and cameras to add greater visual variety, I also could have included some of my film photographs from my other modules. Overall, the module has significantly developed my ideas and methods of practice, particularly in editing, sequencing and working with different photographic approaches. Also building on my strengths (techniques in my poetic series) I would like to further develop techniques such as multiple exposure and controlled motion blur, which would support more complex visual storytelling across future projects. Further workshops in advanced documentary techniques and critical sequencing would help me refine my work.

Part 4

I have attended most of the group seminars and workshops throughout the module, with the composition workshops for me being the most beneficial and valuable. These sessions allowed me to experiment and explore ideas, try new techniques and develop my creative practice in a supportive environment, as I used to majorly photograph gigs and not much else. I feel that engaging with these workshops has helped me gain

confidence in my abilities and provided a structured space to explore different approaches to composition.

Tutor and peer-to-peer feedback has been especially important in shaping my development. I have learned to see critical feedback not as a personal criticism but as constructive guidance that highlights areas for improvement. Moreover, classmates' compliments have also helped me gain confidence in my skills and ideas. Similarly, discussing ideas with peers during and outside of seminars opened me to alternative perspectives. I have realised that collaborating and learning from my peers can make my work much stronger.

In terms of time management, I recognise that I often leave tasks until the last minute, which can create unnecessary pressure. While I have managed to meet deadlines and complete tasks, I know that starting earlier would allow more time to incorporate feedback and experiment further. Overall, the combination of active participation, feedback and reflection has significantly contributed to the development of my practice.