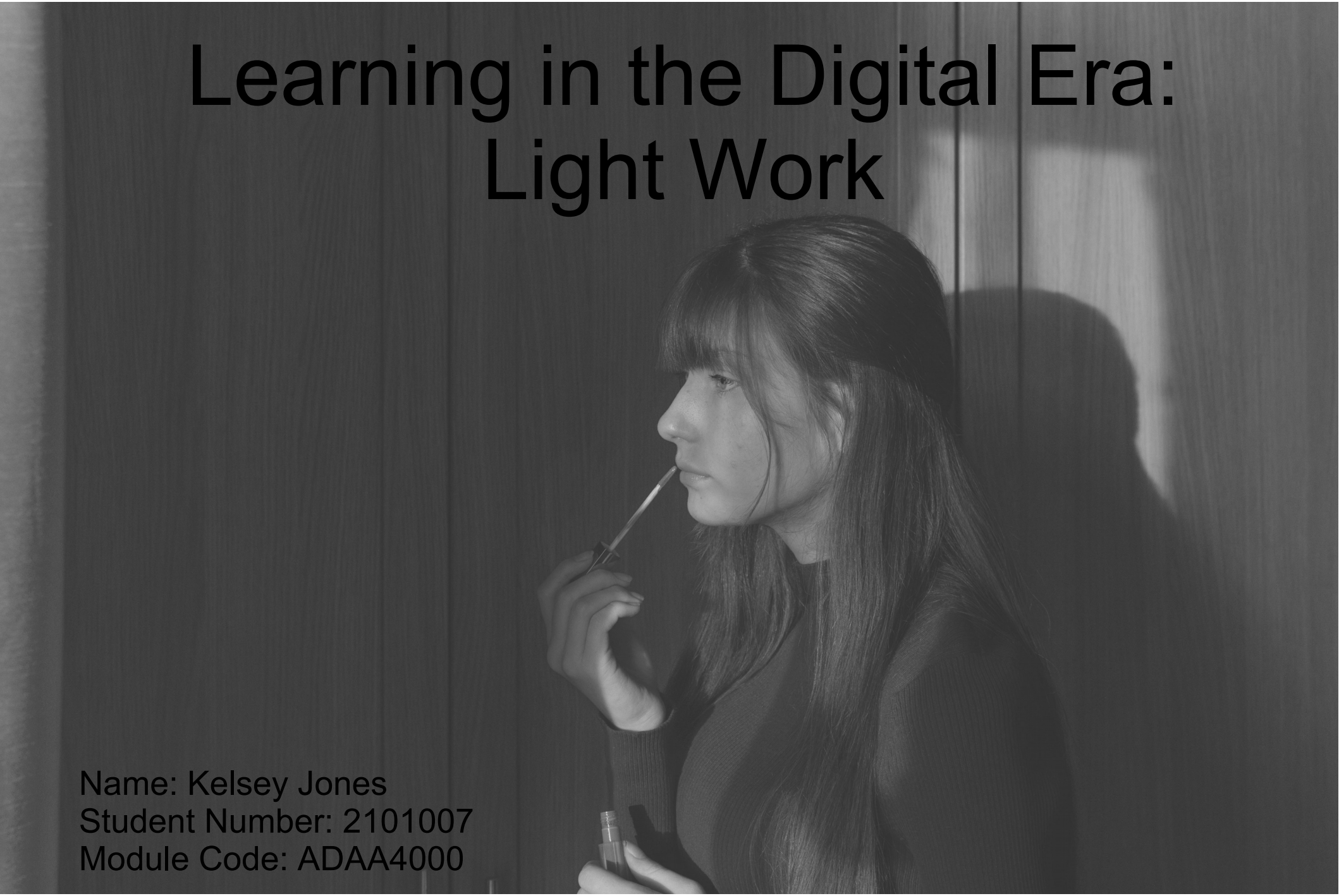
Learning in the Digital Era: Light Work



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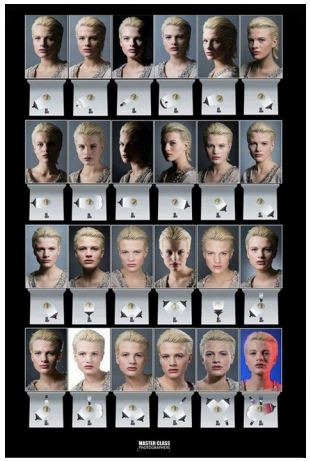
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Studio Portrait

Introduction

The brief for this project says to take a well lit portrait in the studio. For this shoot, I used the studio in university for the first time so I experimented with some lighting techniques. I decided to focus on learning to use the studio lights for this project and familiarising myself with studio set ups.

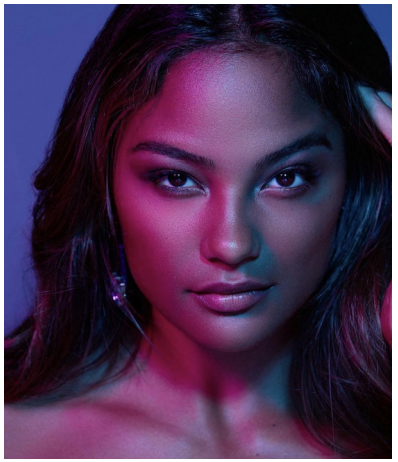
Research

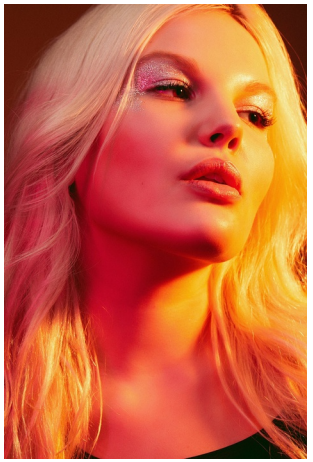


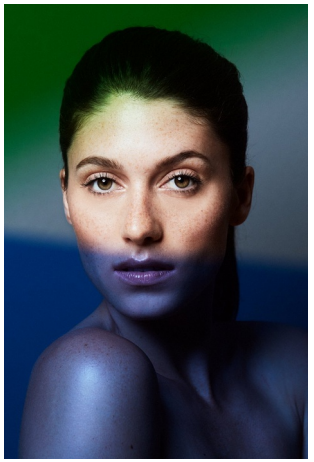


As I had never used a studio before, my first step was to research some lighting set ups. I found some lighting guides online which I found very helpful as they gave visual examples of a range of different set ups, as well as examples of what the photos would look like using that set up.









Travis Curry

Researching lighting set ups led me to discover Travis Curry's work. I like his portraits as he uses coloured lights in a creative way, and matches colours in a way that is effective. I especially like his use of two coloured gel lights on the models' faces.

My Lighting Set Up

As I had never used a studio before, I decided to experiment with lighting set ups. Firstly I tried taking portraits with a standard high key lighting set up, before moving on to a more creative lighting set up. I wanted to try two different types of lighting set ups, as a high key set up is useful as it is one of the most commonly used set ups, but I also wanted to experiment with something more artistic as well.



For the high key lighting set up, I used a light with a softbox which I placed to the right of the subject in line with the model's face to reduce any harsh shadows on the face. I decided to use a softbox because it produces clean, clear lighting and diffuses the light and spreads it evenly across the subject.

I wanted a bright white background which meant I needed to light the background as well as the subject. To do so, I initially tried placing the Godox light in the centre of the backdrop behind the subject. However, it was visible in the photos so I moved it off to the side at an angle where it lit the whole background well. After doing so, I did take a test shot to check the background was evenly lit, which it was. I also added a reflector to the left of the subject just to minimise shadows.



To take a more creative studio portrait, I decided to add gels. At first I added a pink gel to the background light, which I then changed for a blue one. After this, I placed two lights facing the background to experiment with a two toned background. I added a blue gel to the light on the left, and a pink gel to the right light which created a blend in the middle. I kept the soft box and reflector from the high key lighting set up to light the subject.

After this, I also experimented with gels to light the subject. For this, I added two lights in front of the subject, one to the left with a purple gel and one to the right with a yellow gel. I decided to keep the blue gelled background light.

High Key Portraits

This was the first photo I took as a test shot. After taking this, I decided that I needed to increase the brightness of the background light by a lot, as the background looked very dark.


DSC_0769.NEF


DSC_0770.NEF


DSC_0771.NEF

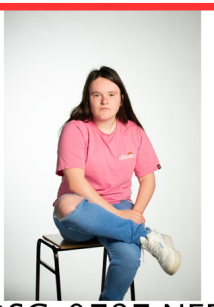

DSC_0772.NEF


DSC_0773.NEF


DSC_0774.NEF


DSC_0775.NEF


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DSC_0799.NEF


DSC_0800.NEF


DSC_0801.NEF


DSC_0802.NEF


DSC_0803.NEF


DSC_0804.NEF

Although the edges of my photos look darker, this is because of my camera and is fixed in Lightroom by enabling profile corrections.

Colour Gel Portraits

For these photos, I used the same lighting set up as I did with the high key portraits, but I decided to add a gel onto the background light to create a coloured backdrop.



Here I decided to introduce a second light. On the left I kept the original background light with the blue gel, and on the right I decided to add another background light with a pink gel to create a two tone background.

Final Piece
I chose this portrait as my final piece because I really like the way the blue gelled light and the pink gelled light blend in the background. I think it adds an interesting element to the portrait.

After experimenting with coloured backgrounds, I decided to add gels onto the key lights. I added a purple gel onto the light on the left and a yellow gel onto the right light. I chose purple and yellow as they are complementary colours. I decided to add a blue gel to the background light as I felt a white background would be too bright and distracting. I chose blue as I felt this was a neutral colour that complimented the purple and yellow well.

Image Selection













Final Piece



I chose this portrait as my final piece because I believe it demonstrates my knowledge of and ability to set up an effective studio lighting set up to take a well lit portrait. In addition, the two toned background adds a creative element to a standard studio portrait. I like the way the blue and pink gels blend together to create a gradient background.

Location Lighting Portrait

Introduction

The brief for this project said to take a location lit image with artificial light, flash or continuous, either in combination with ambient lighting or cancelling the ambient out. I decided to borrow a Godox lighting kit from university for this project.

Artist Research





Chris Chambers is an award winning wedding photographer who uses a mix of lighting techniques. Depending on venue and the effect he wants, Chambers will use on camera flash, including flashguns which are his most used form of lighting, off camera flash or video lights as well as modifiers including grids, gels and diffusers.







I really like Chamber's photography, I think his use of lighting gives his work a distinctive atmosphere and style. I particularly like his beach photography.

My Lighting Set Up

For this photoshoot, I used a Godox LED Video Light VL150 with a reflector dish, which I borrowed from university. I decided to go to Limeslade Bay in Mumble because I was inspired to take a beach portrait, as I really liked Chris Chamber's portraits on the beach.

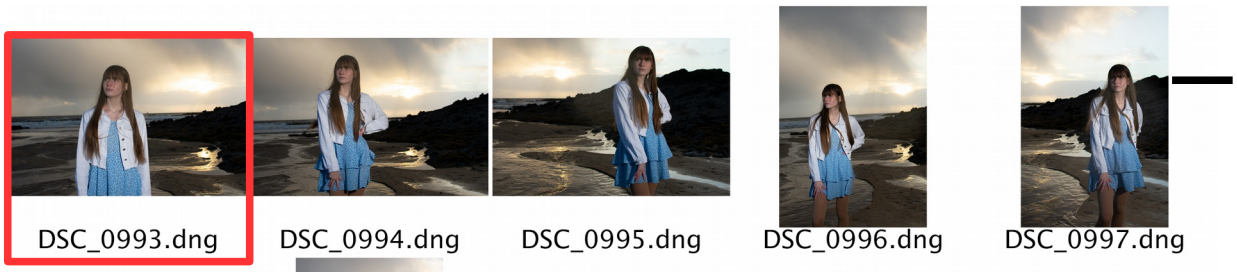
When taking photos, I used the continuous light in addition to ambient light. To do so, I used a low shutter speed, 1/80”, as this controls ambient light. I didn't want to use a lower shutter speed than this because I didn't want to capture any motion blur and wanted the subject to be sharp. Since I had the lighting kit, I used ISO100 because I was able to control the light. I used aperture F5.6 because I wanted the portraits to have a fairly shallow depth of field to draw focus to the subject without drawing attention away from the background.

As the sun set, I changed the brightness on the Godox light and adjusted it as I felt necessary. But for the majority of the shoot, I set it to 80% brightness. I also used the reflector dish, because it concentrates the light more and lights the subject better.



Contact Sheet

During this photoshoot, I would have liked more time to focus on composition. Unfortunately, the tide was coming in very quickly and the weather changed suddenly. The wind picked up and it started to rain, so I had to quickly pack up the lighting kit. As I was going back to the car, the rain stopped so I set up the light and took a few more photos where I was able to focus on composition and posing more.



I much prefer the background of these photos as I feel that the sunset lighting and the sky makes them more dramatic. However, unfortunately I was rushing to take the photos as the tide was coming in very quickly. As I was rushing, I feel that I didn't have enough time to think about effective composition.

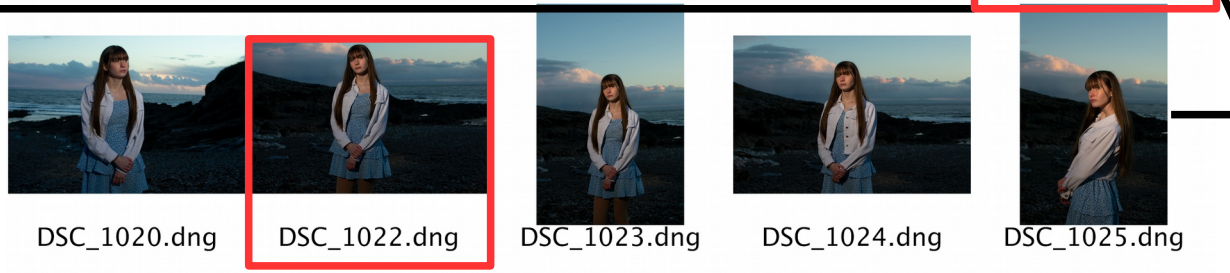




Final Piece
I chose this photo as my final piece because I liked the combination of ambient light and the studio light. I felt the light was positioned best for this photo, and the sunset enhances the portrait.



This is when I set up the lighting kit for the second time, further from the sea as the tide was coming in quickly.





As it was getting later, the natural light started to disappear as the sun set, so the background is very underexposed in these photos. However, using the lighting kit I was able to light the subject well. This means I will have to make some minor exposure adjustments to the background using Lightroom.



DSC_1032.dng



DSC_1033.dng



DSC_1034.dng



DSC_1035.dng



DSC_1036.dng



DSC_1037.dng



DSC_1043.dng



DSC_1044.dng



DSC_1045.dng

Image Selection















With this shoot, I was faced with a number of challenges which limited the time I had to do the shoot. This is because the tide was coming in very fast, there were on and off showers and it was really windy. In addition to this, the light was fading quickly as I did this shoot at sunset. With all of this combined, I was running out of time. Ideally I would have liked to stay longer and taken more photos with more poses and at different parts of the beach. After this shoot, I was hoping to go back to redo some of the photos but unfortunately the weather has been constantly raining. Despite this, I am happy with some of the photos considering it was my first time doing a location lighting shoot. I was able to use the lighting kit in addition to ambient light, whilst considering camera settings and shadows in the image. I wanted the portraits to have some shadows on the model, as I felt that eliminating these would make the images look flat.

Final Piece



I selected this portrait as my final piece because I believe it is evidence of my knowledge of and ability in regards to location lighting. Using a Godox lighting kit I was able to take a well lit portrait on location, which involved considering use of ambient light. I was able to successfully utilise the lighting kit in addition to ambient light and use appropriate camera settings.

Natural Light Portrait

Introduction

For the natural light portrait, I decided to do two photoshoots much like I did for the studio portraits. I did one photoshoot using natural light to take a well lit portrait, and one using natural light in a more creative way, thinking about the effect it will have on the photo.

Research and Shoot Planning

When thinking about what photoshoot I wanted to do for this project, I started researching some natural lighting techniques. I found a blog by portrait photographer Isabella Bubola which briefly explained some natural lighting techniques for portraiture. After reading this blog, I decided that I would do my photoshoot on a cloudy, over cast day. Although I was thinking about photoshoots in strong, sunny natural lighting this did not seem possible currently as the weather is so grey and unpredictable currently.

After deciding to do my photoshoot on a cloudy day, I started researching portraiture in these conditions more in depth. On an overcast day, the clouds act as natural diffusers and create more even lighting. This makes photos taken with this lighting appear flat and dull. I started thinking about settings for the photoshoot, and decided to take photos against a graffiti wall, because I thought the diffused, even lighting on the model would contrast the coloured background well.



This portrait, taken by Isabella Bubola, was taken with natural lighting conditions. The quality of light seems very flat, which fits with the darker background well and adds to the atmosphere of the image.

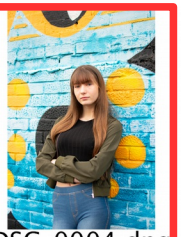
Contact Sheet

Camera Settings
I did this shoot on a cloudy overcast day, and since this shoot was using natural lighting it was vital that I used appropriate camera settings. While researching, I found that photos taken on a cloudy day can look dull, and a wider aperture can be used to fix this. I used my 55mm portraiture lens for this shoot, which allowed me to use aperture F1.8. I used a shutter speed of 1/200” to balance the exposure as I was using a wide aperture. I set my ISO to 100 as I didn't require any higher as I was able to expose the photos well already.




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DSC_0003.dng


DSC_0004.dng

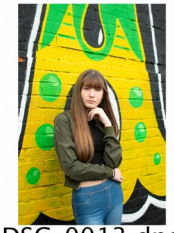

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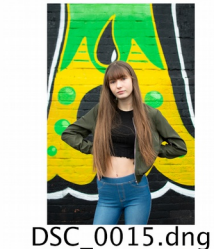

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DSC_0013.dng


DSC_0014.dng

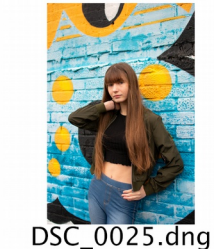

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DSC_0016.dng


DSC_0020.dng

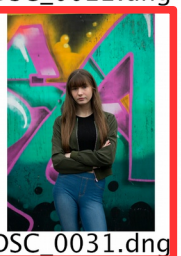

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DSC_0023.dng

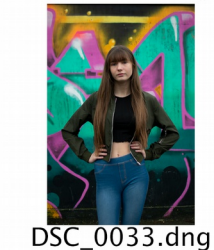

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DSC_0027.dng


DSC_0030.dng

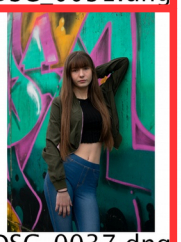

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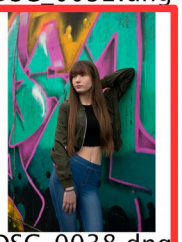

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DSC_0035.dng

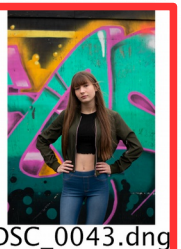

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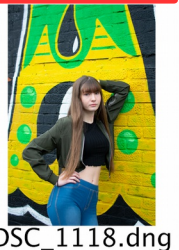

DSC_0038.dng


DSC_0040.dng


DSC_0041.dng


DSC_0043.dng


DSC_1117.dng


DSC_1118.dng

When selecting my favourite photos from this shoot, I chose photos where the background was largely filled by the colours of the graffiti because I felt the black parts of the wall were distracting in the background and didn't look as good.

Image Selection

These are my favourite photos from this shoot. As the lighting was the same across all the photos, I chose my favourite photos based on pose. I think what makes these photos so effective is the way that the diffused natural lighting compliments the coloured background so well.











Further Artist Research

After completing my natural light photoshoot, I began thinking about a creative natural lighting photoshoot. I started to research more lighting techniques and ways to utilise natural lighting to take effective portraits. Many of the articles I found discussed golden hour lighting. Unfortunately, at the time I of this project the weather has been very grey and rainy. Any golden hour lighting we had, which was not much, was unpredictable which unfortunately limited my chances of going out to do a shoot.

Jyo Bhamidipati








While researching creative natural lighting portraits I found Jyo Bhamidipati's work. Many of Bhamidipati's portraits use the idea of dappled light. This is something I found really interesting, and I think it creates an effective atmosphere in images.

Contact Sheet

Photoshoot Context and Camera Settings

As the sun was setting, I noticed the light shining through my window through the curtains. I moved the curtains to create a dappled light effect on the model's face. I asked my sister to stand in the strip of light shining through the window and start doing her makeup in the mirror. The corner of my bedroom was quite dark aside from the strip of sunlight shining in, so setting my camera settings was a challenge due to the contrast. I moved the curtains to let as much sunlight in as possible, but ultimately as a whole it was quite dark. I used ISO400, as anything higher made the light from the window overexposed. I used aperture F2.2 and a shutter speed of 1/80”. Even after this, the photos were quite dark. I quite liked this, and felt it was quite creative as I felt it drew more attention to the parts of the image highlighted by the natural light.



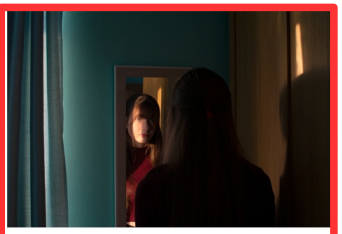
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DSC_0570.dng



DSC_0571.dng



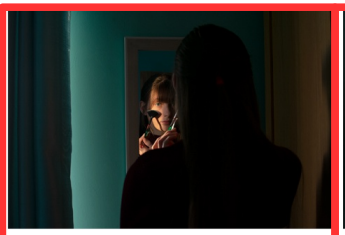
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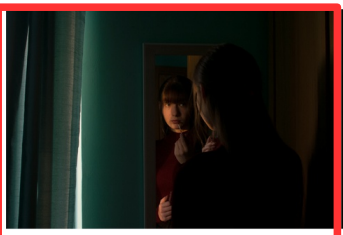
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DSC_0575.dng



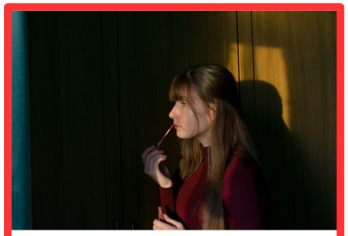
DSC_0576.dng



DSC_0577.dng



DSC_0578.dng



DSC_0579.dng

Image Selection









These were my favourite photos from this shoot, and the ones I felt were most successful. I decided to do some basic editing on these photos using Lightroom, to make some minor exposure corrections. To balance the photos, I lifted the curves slightly and brought up the shadows. Overall, I'm really pleased with the outcome for this shoot. I feel that I was able to successfully use natural lighting creatively by applying the concept of dappled light.

Final Piece



I chose this photo as my final piece for the natural lighting portrait because the brief asked for a portrait taken 'using natural light, creatively'. Although I was really pleased with my photos from the photoshoot at the graffiti wall, I feel the photos from this photoshoot meet the criteria of the brief better. I liked my use of dappled lighting in this portrait and feel that it creates a strong atmosphere in the image.