

# Visual Arts Faculty



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# A Level Photography

Transition Learning

2023

Genres

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If you have studied GCSE Photography here at Kingsthorpe College, you will have created a coursework portfolio based on a **theme**.

Most of the photoshoots will have been **organised** and **directed** by your teacher, *telling you what to do*.

A Level Photography requires you to be far more **independent**, think of your own **ideas** and **direct** your own photoshoots and subsequently your own work.

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## TASK 1

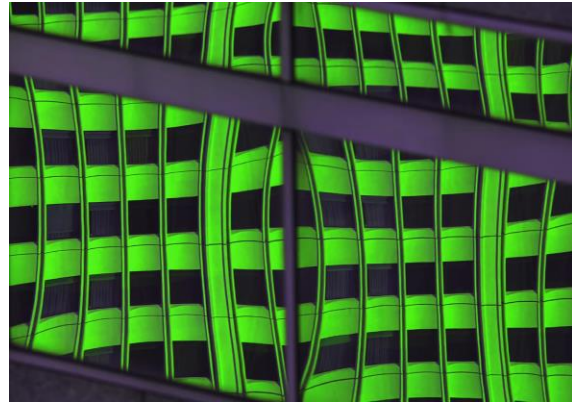
On slides 4 to 11 you will find a selection of **contemporary** photographs.

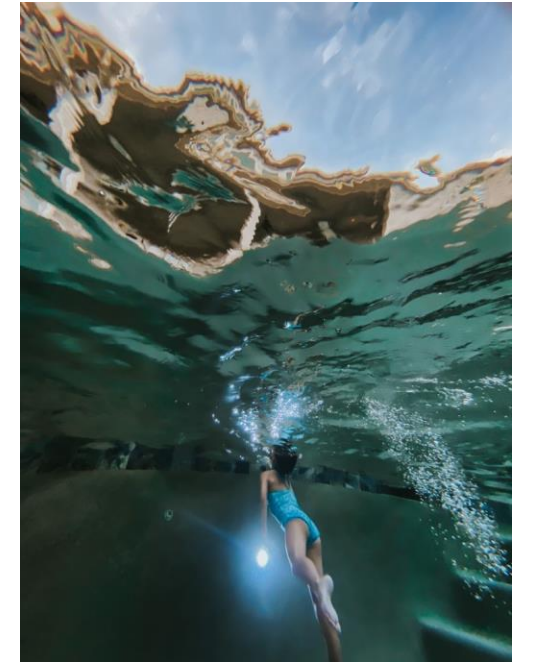
On slide 12 to 28 you will find written descriptions of the **genres** most commonly used in photography.

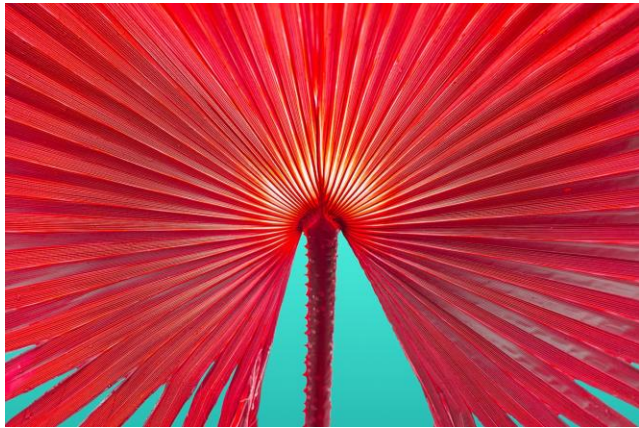
Your first task is to rearrange the images and categorise them in their respective genre.

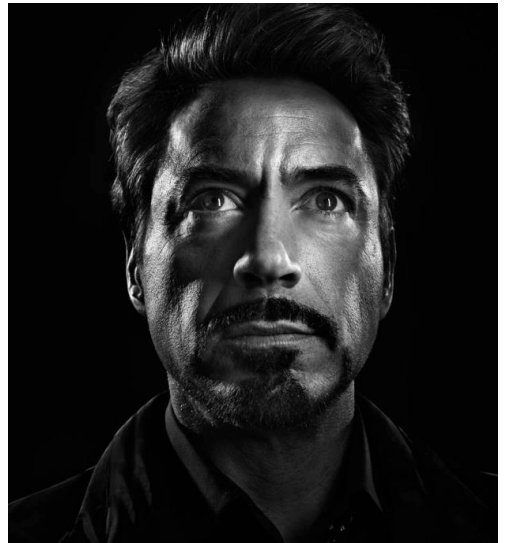
Create a visual mind map of photographic genres, add a title for the slide but remember that a photograph can be categorised into more than one genre.

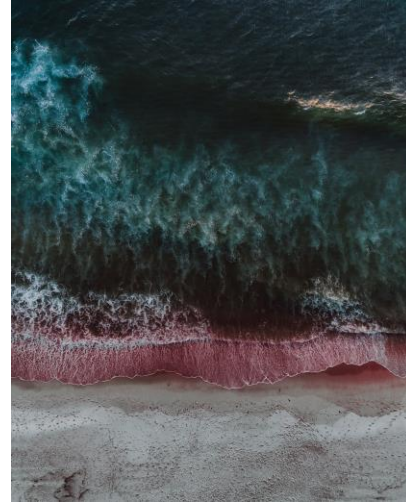
(Task 2 can be found on slide 29)



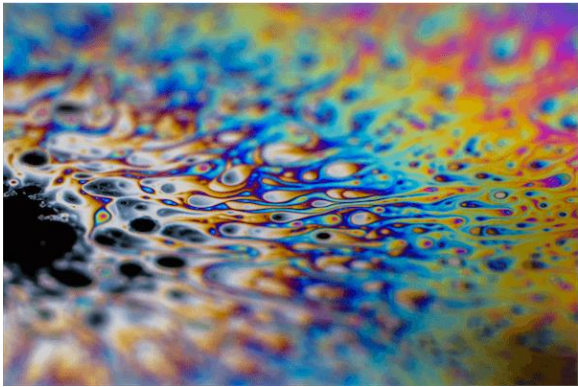


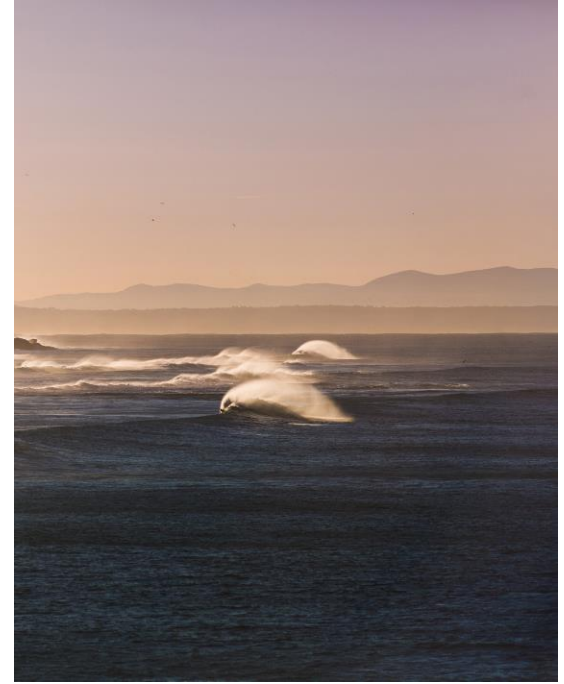


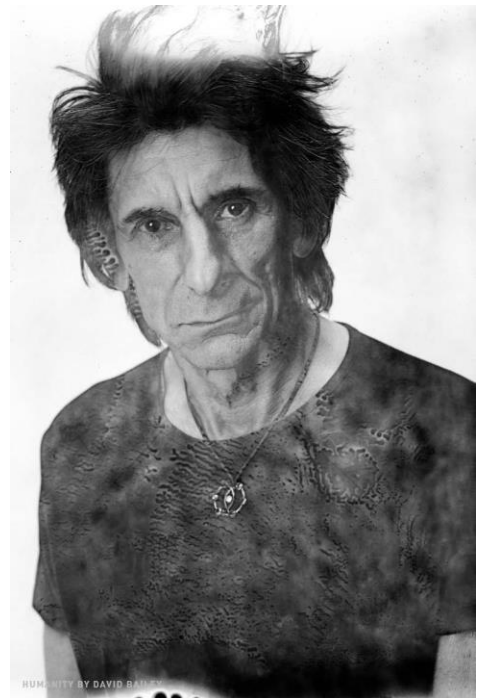
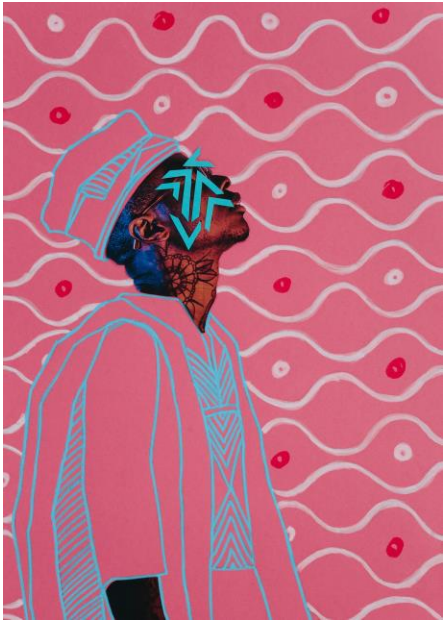












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## ABSTRACT PHOTOGRAPHY

Abstract photography, also known as conceptual, concrete, or experimental photography, is a genre that is difficult to define. Abstract photographs often use color, light, shadow, texture, shape, or form to imbue a feeling, sensation, or impression — without actually providing a representational image of the object or scene that's being photographed.

Shots that typically fit into this genre of photography are not immediately associated with a familiar object in the viewer's eye because they are created by isolating a particular object or natural scene in a way that removes contextual details from the image, either through framing the shot in a creative way or through image editing afterward.

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## MACRO PHOTOGRAPHY

Also called photomacrography or simply macrography, macro photography captures extreme close-ups of often very small subjects. Insects and plants or flowers are popular subject matter in this genre. Other macro imagery can include close-up shots of food, water droplets, everyday items such as fabrics or feathers, toys, eyes, jewelry, and other abstract patterns and textures.

Macro photography requires specialized lenses to capture a true reproduction ratio of the subject matter, with depth of field and lighting being important considerations in adjusting the shot. Extension tubes can also be used to extend lenses for that up-close and personal capture.

Photomicrography, which uses a digital microscope to capture images, is achieved when the reproduction ratio of the shot is greater than 10:1.

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## ARCHITECTURAL PHOTOGRAPHY

Another self-explanatory genre, [architectural photography](#) is when the main subject matter of the photograph is a building's exterior or interior. These shots tend to be pretty accurate representations of the construction that are taken in a way that is also aesthetically pleasing to the eye.

Exterior shots usually use daylight to capture the building along with nearby landscaping features. They can also be shot at night using ambient lighting from street lights, surrounding landscape, or moonlight.

Interior shots can be complementary to exterior shots to further depict a particular [architectural style](#) or can be used as a standalone.

Perspective control is a key aspect of this niche due to the sheer size of most buildings. The large-format view cameras of olden days, tilt/shift lenses, and post-processing can all contribute to getting a great shot of a big building.

The world's oldest surviving photograph is an architectural photograph taken in 1826 or 1827, making the genre one of the first genres of established photography. As architectural trends have shifted and buildings of different styles have been erected around the world, photographers can delve deep into this niche, focusing their efforts on a specific architectural style such as Contemporary, Tudor, [Postmodern](#), Gothic, Victorian, Classical, and beyond.

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## INDOOR/INTERIOR PHOTOGRAPHY

Images captured inside are known as indoor photography. Photographers must use special techniques or sometimes even minimal flash photography to capture a scene due to limited ambient lighting. ISO, focus, and shot composition are all important aspects of indoor photography.

Considered to be another subset of still-life photography, indoor photography produces imagery of scenes inside a home, workplace, and any other building or sheltered structure. Lighting is perhaps the most challenging aspect of this genre as windows, indoor lights, and additional lighting sources (such as a flash bulb) bring a level of complexity to how the photographer effectively captures a scene. They also provide unique conditions that change throughout the day as outside light filters through the windows of the building.

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## CANDID PHOTOGRAPHY

Most photographs of people are often posed, with the photographer directing the shot and models. Candid photography is a type of photography that removes the posed aspect of the equation, with photographers taking shots of people in motion, spontaneously, or by surprise. Photographers should aim to capture subjects in a natural state, without needing to direct or pose them to get the right image. This doesn't necessarily mean that subjects aren't aware that photos are being taken – consent is still an important part of being able to use those photos! It should mean, however, that your candid images will capture authentic scenes, reactions, and facial expressions of the people in them.

Secret photography is considered a subset of candid photography and occurs when subjects are totally unaware of their photograph being taken. Due to its unobtrusive nature, candid photography tends to use small equipment that's often discreet in order not to disturb or distract subjects when shooting. Flash photography is also not common when taking candid shots as the flash draws attention and can cause subjects to alter their behavior towards a less natural, more controlled position.



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## COMPOSITE PHOTOGRAPHY

Some types of photography are created by combining multiple images to create one composite image. Composite photography requires post-processing and editing of two or more shots to produce a layered shot that still looks cohesive.

In the 1880s, way before digital photography and editing existed, composite portraiture was being produced using a technique that allowed multiple exposures to be taken on the same photographic plate. These days though, separate images are blended by using layers, masks, and blurs. Montages of photos, where a scene is photographed in small chunks and then combined, and multiplicity, in which a person is captured multiple times in the same scene, can also create a composite photograph. Focus stacking, where a scene is captured from different angles or points of focus and then blended into one, is another technique used to create a large depth of field.

These types of photographs can create unique, artistic, and editorial images that are incredibly creative and often [very striking](#). Due to their relative complexity, they also take longer to produce.

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## CREATIVE PHOTOGRAPHY

Another hard-to-define genre, creative photography includes a vast variety of concepts and techniques. It encourages experimentation and creativity in composition, as well as in the equipment and techniques used to capture an image (composite photography can overlap with this genre).

Other examples include fisheye lens photography or crystal ball photography which manipulate the perspective of the shot. High dynamic range (HDR) photography and forced perspective photography also fall under this photographic niche. Concepts like the recently popular “cake smash” photoshoots for babies and toddlers are another form of creative photography.

Experimenting with filters, textures, and opacity, as well as shutter speed, multiple exposures, and motion blur can help create a new perspective. Using other forms of media, [such as painting on prints](#), coloring by hand, or cutting and pasting other printed images to create a collage, can also produce a creative final shot.

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## EDITORIAL PHOTOGRAPHY

Usually used in newspapers and magazines, editorial photography incorporates aspects of fashion, sports, and event photography, typically shot in a candid nature. Generally, these types of photos are meant to illustrate a story that's newsworthy, educational, and/or informative.

Since these images are meant to be shown in printed media, they tend to accompany text, giving additional visual context to a story line or project. Different from commercial and advertising images, editorial shots are used to accompany articles and therefore fall under a particular licensing model.

Editorial shots usually can't be used for commercial purposes to sell a product, unless the photographer gets appropriate model or property releases. Buyers who purchase these types of photographs from stock agencies are responsible for following the licensing conditions.

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## FASHION PHOTOGRAPHY

One of the oldest types of photography, [existing since the mid 1800s](#), fashion photography is the practice of capturing models in clothing and other fashion accessories for editorial or advertising purposes. Fashion shots can be taken in a studio, on location in an exotic or complementary landscape to the clothing, or live on the catwalk at a fashion show.

Fashion photo shoots usually require good gear and lighting. Hair and makeup stylists are often involved as well, preparing the models in ways that highlight and showcase their clothing and/or accessories. Fashion photography can range from haute couture that focuses on the latest trends and styles thought up by renowned designers to capturing models for a department store catalogue.

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## LANDSCAPE PHOTOGRAPHY

Dealing with capturing [the great outdoors](#), landscape photography focuses on trees, deserts, beaches, mountain ranges, lakes, rivers, and all other aspects of the natural world. Landforms, weather, changing seasons, and ambient light are all aspects of this photographic niche. Wildlife photography often overlaps with this genre. Sometimes shooting man-made features or changes to the landscape (such as farmlands, orchards, gardens, etc.) is practiced by landscape photographers, but many choose to focus on shots that show pure natural scenes, devoid of human influence or activity.

Playing around with camera settings such as depth of field, shutter speed, and aperture and using different lenses or filters can create various effects on landscape imagery. Tripods also come in handy when it comes to image stabilization and panoramic camera functions are also often employed.

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## SEASCAPE PHOTOGRAPHY

Also called ocean photography, seascape photography is a subcategory of landscape photography that focuses on capturing seas and oceans. Sometimes other objects or subjects are in the shot, such as people in the water or on boats. Islands, cliffs, and other geological formations may be captured as well, alongside marine wildlife.

Coastal photography is a niche in seascape photography.

Capturing the motion of waves is popular in this genre, as are reflections in the water of cityscapes. Long exposure and sunburst techniques, in which the sun's rays can be seen in the photo, are also often employed in seascape photography. Golden hour and blue hour can be ideal times to shoot seascapes to avoid harsh midday sunlight reflecting off of the water.

Tripods, filters, and other gear to keep the camera (and photographer) dry and safe should be accounted for when going on a seascape photoshoot.

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## SURREAL PHOTOGRAPHY

Surreal photography, similar to abstract photography in that the final image is not always immediately recognizable, encourages photographers to find unique perspectives to capture. Part of a wider surrealist cultural movement that began in the 1920s, surrealist photographers used darkroom tricks and optical illusions to produce dreamlike shots before digital editing tools became the norm.

Underwater portraiture and underwater landscape photography can usually be classified as surreal due to their supernatural ambience. Landscape photography captured in the right conditions are also able to incorporate aspects of surrealism.

Food photography, fashion photography, and conceptual portraits or closeups are sometimes shot with a surreal aesthetic in mind. Images are captured and often edited afterwards to add an eerie or supernatural effect. Architectural photography, as well as still life photography, provide more opportunities for surreal subject matter.

The end goal of this genre of photography is to deliver images that are inspired by passion and a unique perspective, blurring the lines between a dreamlike setting and reality.

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## STILL-LIFE PHOTOGRAPHY

Still-life photography is another overarching genre of photography in which inanimate objects are arranged in an aesthetically pleasing manner and shot for either personal, editorial, or commercial use. Images usually incorporate some artistry, with the photographer having creative leeway in how to arrange the composition of the shot. Lighting and framing also play an important part in the setup.

Popular still-life subject matter includes food, flowers, and plants, personal desk space or workspaces, household items such as dishes, vases, and plates arranged in creative or artistic ways, and the like.

Since still-life photography tends to be centered around the arrangement of the objects being shot and the lighting used, photographers of all levels and skills are able to take beautiful photos, without necessarily needing to use complicated techniques or gear.



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## UNDERWATER PHOTOGRAPHY

Taking photographs while underwater, usually while scuba diving, snorkeling, swimming, or from an underwater vehicle or automated camera lowered from the surface, is known as underwater photography. This type of photography results in images of marine life, the subaquatic environment (including shipwrecks, geological features such as cave systems and other underwater-scapes), and/or people pursuing underwater activities. More recently, underwater imagery has also been used to [document the state of bodies of water and their ecosystems when it comes to issues of climate change and pollution](#).

Equipment is an important aspect of this genre as cameras tend not to be waterproof by default. If they are, they are usually limited to a particular depth. [GoPros](#) or smartphones in plastic pouches are sometimes used as a gateway into underwater photography before investing in more advanced camera equipment and proper, often expensive, underwater housing for a particular camera.

Shooting in water also comes with adjustments to the lens as water decreases the angle of view for a lens by 25-30%. Water clarity, the presence of waves or bubbles, currents, dangerous marine life, and proximity to the seafloor will all impact shots as well. Time of day and location in relation to the sun also play a significant factor in how underwater photos get captured, as do the settings of the camera being used. This genre is, therefore, more challenging to master, simply due to the additional costs for equipment and special safety concerns of the shooting environment.

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## TRAVEL PHOTOGRAPHY

Documenting a place, particularly one that highlights the cultural, historical, touristic, or iconic aspects of the given area, is called travel photography. Dating back to the 1850s, the genre had been made incredibly popular by travel publications like [National Geographic](#) and [Conde Nast Traveler](#). Images can be used for editorial or commercial purposes, depicting the ambiance of a place, as well as the feeling one gets from the land, people, and cultures that inhabit it. Very broad in its subject matter, the genre makes use of elements of portraiture, landscape photography, architecture photography, street photography, and night photography, among others. B&W photography is also a commonly employed technique.

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## STREET PHOTOGRAPHY/URBAN EXPLORATION PHOTOGRAPHY

Somewhat related to travel photography, urban exploration photography, also called urbex photography, focuses on capturing abandoned places and spaces that have been long forgotten. Aspects of architectural photography, as well as interior and exterior photography, comprise part of this genre.

Since the subject matter is usually old, dilapidated, and structurally questionable buildings, ensuring photographer safety is key. Often, these locations require photographers to trespass on private property, bringing into question the legality of capturing these types of shots. Background research is highly recommended before embarking on an urbex photo session. A range of camera gear and techniques will be needed, depending on the location being explored and the ambient light that filters through the abandoned structure.

The art of capturing a scene in a public place, particularly on the street, is called street photography. Many of these types of photographs are also considered to be candid in nature, usually unstaged and shot spontaneously.

Depending on the country, there are certain consent laws to take into account when taking photos of people in public. Being aware of what these laws are in a given location is an important part of capturing street photography for broader use.

Another genre that's closely linked is urban photography, in which photographers capture street scenes in city settings.

Portraiture and architecture often play a part in these images as well.

Subject matter doesn't always need to include people, however. Capturing environments that don't include visible human activity can also be considered street photography. In those cases, human presence is usually implied through the composition of the image. While also having many similarities to documentary photography, street photography tends to be less deliberate in its purposeful or defined messaging.

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## PORTRAIT PHOTOGRAPHY

**Portrait photography** captures a portrait of a person or group of people. Portraiture is a challenging genre of photography because it needs to use lighting, backdrop, and posing to convey the personality of the subject in a single shot. Self-portraits and silhouettes, as well as headshots, also fall under this genre.

Lighting especially plays a big role in setting up a portrait, with high-key brightly lit shots being common. There are plenty of other [lighting options](#) to consider as well. Fast, medium telephoto lenses are preferred, used to isolate the subject by controlling the depth of field. When away from the studio, using the lens' bokeh effect to blur the background elements that are out of focus can provide an easy solution to not shooting on a clean background. Environmental portraits, those that are meant to show the subject in their environment, would not want to have much, if any, background blur, however.

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## TASK 2

On slides 30 to 36 you will find a selection of **contemporary** photographs on the genres of **Black and White, Urban, Landscape, Film Noir, Fashion, Portaiture** and **Architecture**.

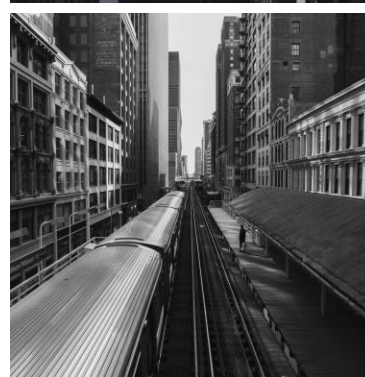
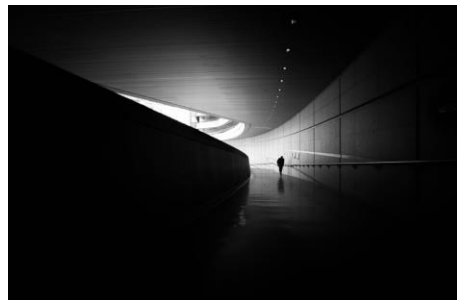
Using the examples for inspiration, take a photoshoot for each genre. Your shoot should be a minimum of 20 photographs.

The photographs should be presented as a contact sheet, (4x5) just as you have done for GCSE Photography.

Use autoshapes to identify your preferred photographs and complete the annotation.

Use the template below each genre as a guide.

# Black and White



# RECORDING OBSERVATIONS (Assessment Objective 3)

Contact Sheet 1 *Write a name for your photoshoot here*

*Create your contact sheet in Photoshop. Save as a jpeg.*

*Cut and paste your contact sheet here.*

*Contact sheet should be 4x5.*

*One contact sheet per slide.*

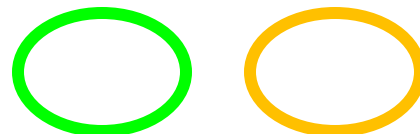
*Annotate your contact sheet here.*

*Answer the following questions using subject specific keywords from the GCSE Annotation Sheet:*

- 1. Where did you take the photo shoot?*
- 2. What was the inspiration?*
- 3. How does it fit with your research?*
- 4. What are you best photographs and why?*
- 5. What are your next steps?*

*Use a green autoshapes to identify your best photographs and write a brief description of why you think they are good.*

*Use an orange autoshapes to identify photographs that could be improved and write a brief description of why.*



# Candid (street) Urban





# RECORDING OBSERVATIONS (Assessment Objective 3)

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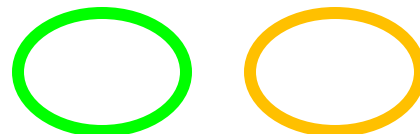
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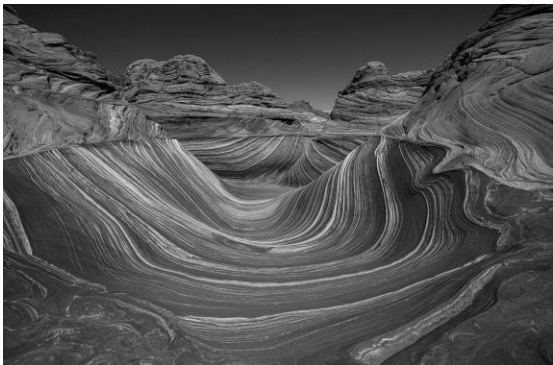
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# Landscape

# RECORDING OBSERVATIONS (Assessment Objective 3)

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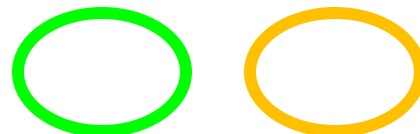
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# Film Noir



# RECORDING OBSERVATIONS (Assessment Objective 3)

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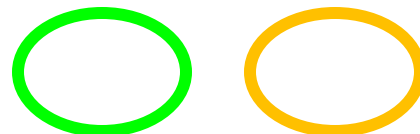
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Fashion

# RECORDING OBSERVATIONS (Assessment Objective 3)

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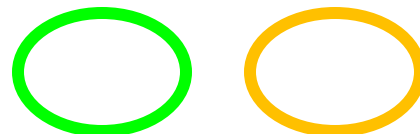
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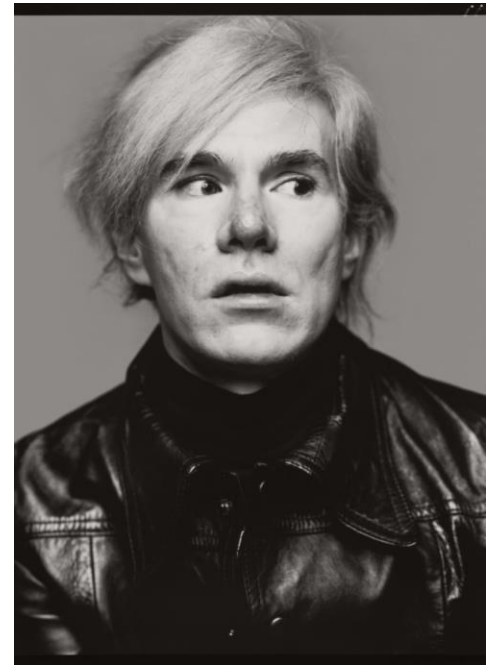
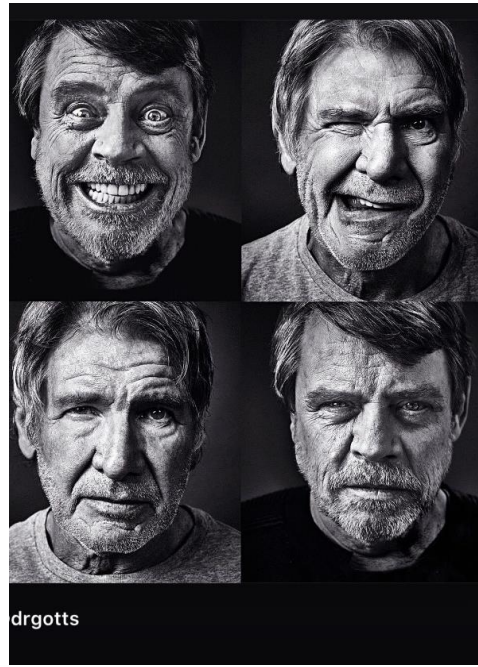
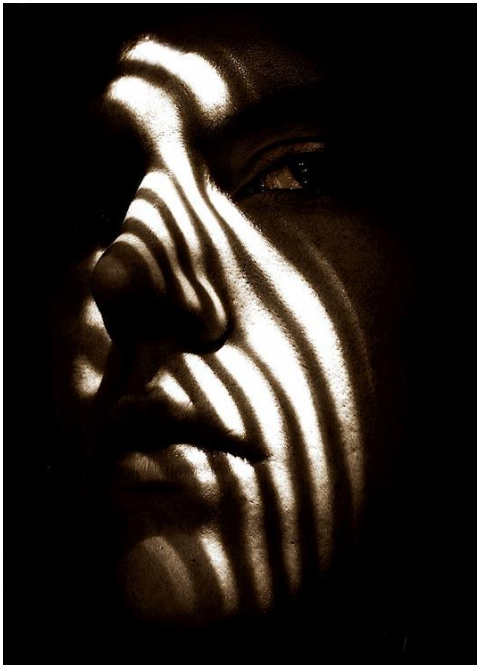
*Answer the following questions using subject specific keywords from the GCSE Annotation Sheet:*

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# Portraiture



# RECORDING OBSERVATIONS (Assessment Objective 3)

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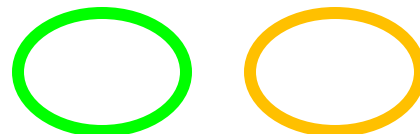
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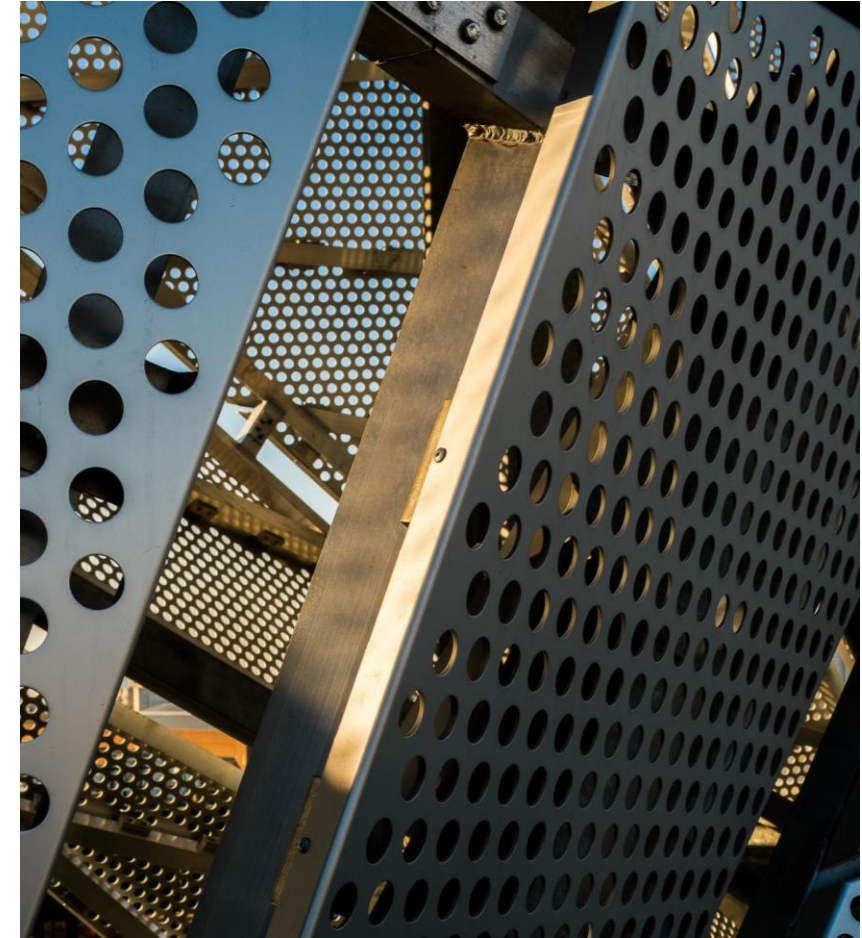
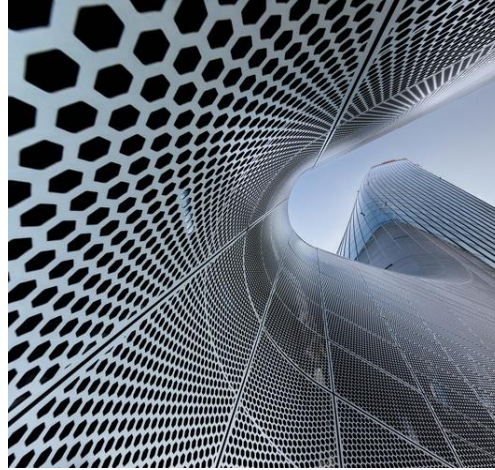
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# Architecture



# RECORDING OBSERVATIONS (Assessment Objective 3)

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