



Open  
College  
of the Arts

## Formative feedback

Student name	<b>Claire Borlase</b>	Student number	<b>511768</b>
Course/Unit	<b>Context &amp; Narrative</b>	Assignment number	<b>5</b>
Type of tutorial	(written)		

### Overall Comments

Many thanks Claire for sending in your last assignment for this module. You have done well; your work throughout the shoot - initial conception, research, location, scene planning and execution shows maturity, competence and professionalism.

You have harnessed the learning and personal development from the preceding assignments effectively. Looking back to your early work you can see how far you have come and that you are now well placed to explore and express yourself with this learning as you move on to level 2.

I think that the image works well by itself combining with the text to give viewers enough information to indicate subject matter without anchoring the scene too much, thereby allowing them space to bring their own experiences and thought to bear. It is unnecessary to include your researched archive material.

I feel - and this is only a personal view and by no means meant to be prescriptive, that some of the symbolism is a little heavy handed and the could be more subtlety. You have alluded to this possibility. I suggest you think carefully about this especially as it is explicitly mentioned in the course brief.

Also minor details of how the light falls on the scene could be improved. While I like the scene and think it works well, it does come across as a little too contrived, perhaps unnatural. But this is being hyper critical and I mention it only because I think this is good work that can be made better. I'll go into detail about this below.

### Feedback on assignment and supporting work

#### Technical and Visual Skills

You have done well in choosing your spot - I think that while using the local hall might have had advantages of space, it would have changed the whole feel of the piece - the intimacy of the confession at home with all the connotations that this brings would be altered. Confession in a neutral place changes the dynamic of the mother and daughter relationship.

I like the pared down feel you have engendered - reminiscent of Walker Evans' work with the interiors of the Burroughs' home.

Similarly your experimentation with the orientation of the table in the room has paid dividends and allowed you to position the protagonists so they present a 3/4 view of their faces to the camera and minimise the space in the frame taken up by the table.

Placement of key objects - This is where I feel you could use more subtlety - the heart in the window I think is too obvious and distracts attention away from the figures. While I like the symbolism of the apron and ironing, the way the chair is turned to 'display' these is too obvious. The spare chair - again turned to the camera - prescient of a third person who has just left or may enter the scene at any time? This is an intimate and private moment which this to some extent cuts across. I'm sure you tried various alternatives: possibly both these chairs turned normally to the table with the apron over the back of the end chair and the ironing on the seat of the other?

The pictures on the wall have been carefully chosen - did you try them the other way round - the baby photo above your daughter - maybe creating a different signifier of mood/feeling and baby grown up. Also I'd consider centering - top to bottom - the picture above the fireplace.

#### The lighting

I think you have used the dutch lighting from the window well and also the fill light from the OCF. But I feel you could look carefully at where the light is coming from and tweak the results accordingly. Also your fill light uses a small diffuser. Ideally a bigger one would be better. The main light from the window spreads across the mother and so should fall off from one side to the other - I would darken her left side and also her left hand (furthest away from window). Similarly the end of the table nearest the camera and the side of the apron facing the camera (and way from the window) Also the side of the table facing away from the window this ought to be quite dark but it seems quite light - presumably from your fill light and unnatural. The beams are I feel unnaturally light. I know these are a key feature but think that this can still be kept while making them lit a little more naturally. This detailing is what takes up so much time to get right for Crewdson and di Corcia.

These are all subtle tweaks that can be done in lightroom or photoshop.

Do you need to show all the apron? I've quickly tried tweaking the lighting and a suggested crop for you to ponder on. I think this adds some subtlety while keeping the symbolism - reject or keep some or all of the suggestions as you see fit. See file attached.

#### Quality of Outcome

As you will have gathered I think that the outcome shows very good quality - I stress again that my suggestions are just opinions to be accepted or discarded as you wish. They are intended to make good work even better.

Your log, preparation and planning have all paid dividends and been instrumental in achieving the good outcome.

It's good to see your thinking about the presentation of the work. What I'm unclear about is whether what you have sent in is a mock up of the final work or not. I suggest that it is fine as a mock up as it lacks a professionalism that the final product should have to support the level of your photography. Think about the size of the text - I suggest the copy of the Haiku as presented in the mock up is too small for easy reading. Some design advice may well pay dividends.

#### Demonstration of Creativity

Your work is strongly creative building on your learning from previous assignments and applying it well to interpret and build on a personal situation. You show that you can experiment well and take risks as part of the ongoing development of your 'voice'.

#### Learning Logs or Blogs/Critical essays

This is comprehensive and well presented as with previous assignments. This makes for easy navigation and appreciation of the work you have put in to the module.

#### Suggested reading/viewing

I mentioned Jo Spence - and her work currently being shown at Tate Britain as this while quite a different style shows how she uses photography and particularly symbolism as a personal exploration and expression.

#### Pointers for the next assignment

You've come to the end of the module and I wish you well in your move on to the second level.

- 
- 
- 

Tutor name	Simon Barber
Date	31 Oct 2015
Next assignment due	