



## **ONLINE PHOTOGRAPHY EXHIBITION**

OSUN Connected Learning Contest Winner

**Tomiris Orozoeva**

**American University of Central Asia**

Instead of the photography projects that students normally do for their final exams due to the transfer to the online mode students were asked to create a photography exhibition. The syllabus was changed 1,5 months before the end of the semester. Weekly during the class students were systematically trained for their final assignment (observe examples online, discuss them, learn how to develop ideas, research, order the images and analyze them). The goal was to enable students to build meaningful projects upon their interests, learn how to do research on visual material, be able to articulate their intentions and critically evaluate their peers. Students were asked to come up with the topics, select images, write motivation and then reflect on each others' works.

### **Photography and Creativity**

This is the introductory course on photography aimed at teaching visual literacy. We will discuss the aesthetic of the image through the works of famous photographers such as Nan Goldin, Annie Leibovitz, Steve McCurry and many others. Students will learn different compositional techniques and practice them indoors. In addition, various creative assignments will be performed to develop personal skills.

### **Practical and pedagogical value**

The assignment worked well as a final project because it consisted of different tasks focused on the development of different skills (e.g. creative and analytical skills). 90% met the deadline because they depended on each other to complete the projects. Although it was an individual assignment it has created a sense of the connected learning environment because they had to visit each other's exhibitions and give feedback. There was an interesting

dynamic between two students from the Arts department. One has chosen a theme of the black and white photos and another has chosen color photography. They presented well their point of views through their exhibitions, but later on the arguments have continued in the feedback session. A debate between color and black and white photography that is very much present in the photography world took a smaller scale in my class. Their discussion was especially interesting to follow for the students from other departments who got less knowledge on the specifics of the profession.

## **The assignment**

This is an individual assignment worth of 35 points. It consists of two parts:

1. an exhibition (motivation + images)
2. a review

**Imagine that you are an art curator working at a gallery or museum. You are assigned to organize your first photography exhibition and administration gives you creative freedom to choose the topic and images on your own. To communicate with your audience you have at your disposal all works ever created in the history of photography. Where do you start?**

**Step 1:** Brainstorm. Write down as many topics for exploration as possible. You can start from something broad like people and keep narrowing it down to something specific like Albinos. If your idea is broad, you will have a lot of images to play with, but the focus of your exhibition will be blurred and the audience may not get you. If your idea will be specific, your message will be clear, but there might be less room for interpretation. However, do not worry about it at the beginning of the process; turn off the inner critic and develop ideas. Think deeply what you care about. Take a perspective that drives you, be it a social one or aesthetic. Since your interests vary greatly your list of ideas will be a mix of everything.

**Step 2:** Research. If you do not have any ideas, you can start by checking works of well-known photographers (see the list below). Search for photographs that suit your idea. Create a folder and download images that speak to you. Categorizing them by time period or location can also help to stay more focused. I assume that during research you will have up to 20-30 images selected.

**Step 3:** Select & organize images. Sequence of the images is never random. If every photo tells a certain story or makes a certain statement or transmits a certain feeling, then you have to decide what kind of narration you are creating. Two equally powerful images cannot stand next to each other. Another analogy: treat your exhibition as an essay and each photo as an argument. What will be the order of the images then? While selecting remember you cannot choose two or more images from the same photographer.

**Step 4:** Write short motivation. Explain why you are organizing this exhibition. Why is the subject matter chosen important? Who is your target audience? At the end please give credits to the photographers exhibited in order of appearance.

**Step 5:** Upload your exhibition to Google Drive.

**Step 6:** Visit exhibitions organized by your classmates.

**Step 7:** Write a review. Select one exhibition and share your impressions on it. Motivation and review should be 1-2 pages long each. Format: Times New Roman 12, line spacing 1,5.

List of photographers to explore:

Paul Strand	Andreas Gursky	Manuel Alvarez Bravo
Edward Weston	Annie Leibovitz	Tina Modotti
Ansel Adams	Steve McCurry	Donna Ferrato
Robert Frank	Artur Zdral	Charles Harbutt
Diane Arbus	Henri Cartier Bresson	Andre Kertesz
Margaret Bourke-White	Robert Mapplethorpe	Irving Penn
Cindy Sherman	Vivian Maier	Sergio Larrain
Richard Avedon	Man Ray	Alex Webb
Dorothea Lange	Elliott Erwitt	Marc Riboud
Imogen Cunningham	Ragnar Axelsson	Lisette Model
Walker Evans	Dmitri Baltermants	Abelardo Morell
Nan Goldin	Josef Koudelka	Xenie Zasetskaya
Hiroshi Sugimoto	Dmitry Markov	Sally Mann
Baurjan Bismildin	Saul Leiter	Tim Walker