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Curriculum  
Council

# CREATIVE PHOTOGRAPHY

(Year 11 and Year 12 Art and Art & Design)

Art Studio Support Document

# CREATIVE PHOTOGRAPHY

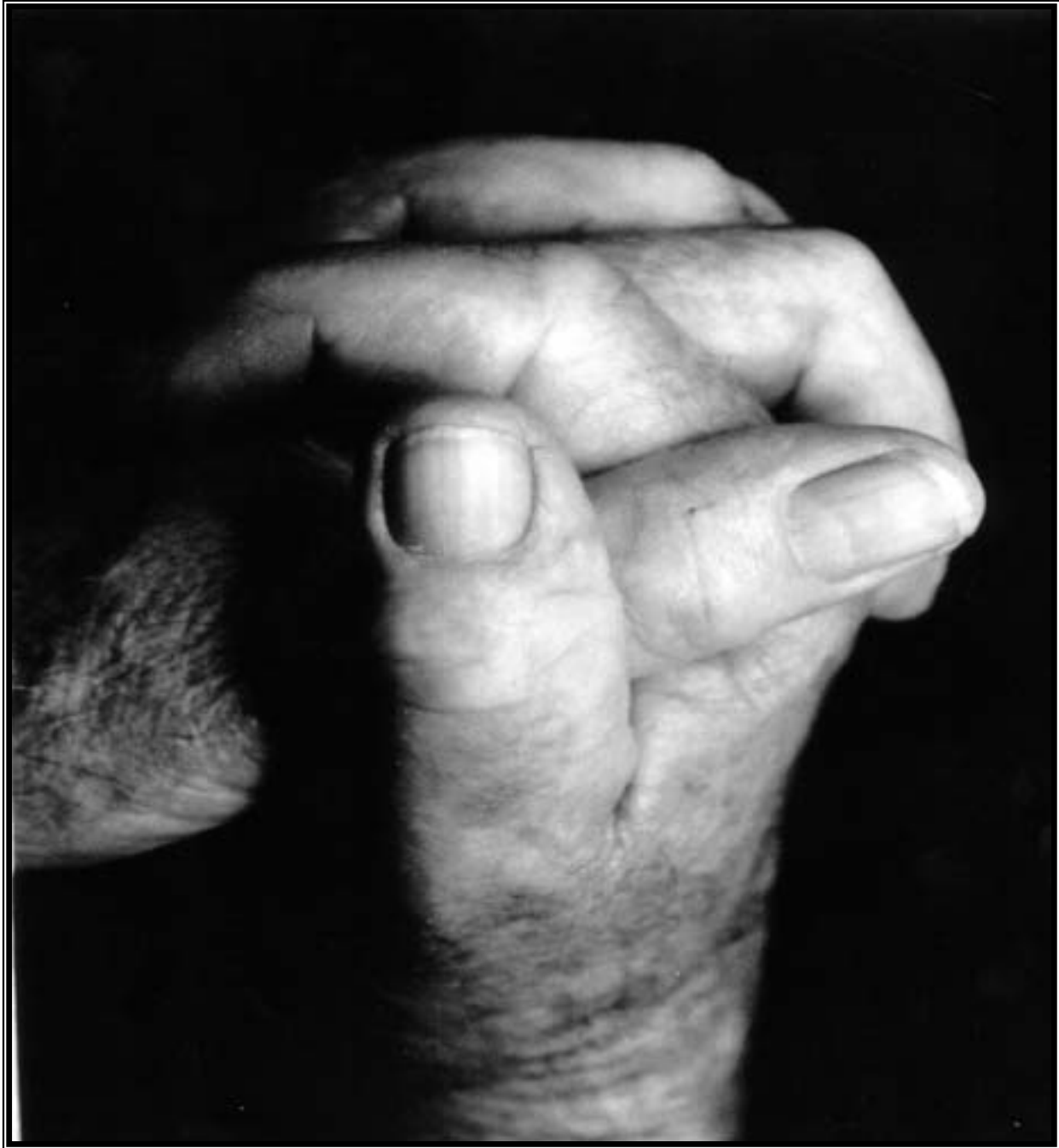


Photo: Peter Venn, Scotch College Year 11 1997

# *Creative Photography*

This document is part of a series of documents developed to assist teachers with the delivery of a range of studio areas.

The Curriculum Council would like to acknowledge the following:

Original Writer:

Lorraine Warner

Photography

Students from Scotch College

Lorraine Warner

for their input into developing this document for use in the post-compulsory Art and Art & Design subjects.

It is hoped that teachers will find the information on the particular studio area and associated briefs of use in the delivery of both Art and Art & Design.

# ***CREATIVE PHOTOGRAPHY***

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# ***WHAT IS CREATIVE PHOTOGRAPHY?***

Throughout history artists have been inspired, motivated and influenced to create artworks that reflect personal views, attitudes and responses to their world. Artists are constantly introducing new ideas and approaches to creating art - this century PHOTOGRAPHY has been added to the numerous tools which the artist has available to communicate visually. The word Photography means drawing with light, it is simply an added medium to record what the artist sees or wishes to say.

It is very important that senior school students be made aware that there is an enormous difference between TAKING a photograph and MAKING a photograph.

In MAKING a photograph the student employs many of the same design elements used in creating a visual image with any other medium.

Students should demonstrate that they can interpret a range of subjects from man-made, the human form and the environment.

To successfully MAKE a photograph students must be equipped with the technical knowledge necessary to: operate their camera, control light - natural or studio, and to process works in the darkroom. This is fundamental and basic knowledge just as knowledge of painting mediums, surfaces and techniques are to the painting student and printmaking techniques are to the printmaking student.

Added to this fundamental knowledge is further knowledge associated with techniques available to the photographer when using the camera, the darkroom and the computer which enable the student to manipulate and control the image to produce work which is of an original and individual style. Thus adding to the MAKING of the photograph.

Creative Photography can present itself in a variety of forms. It may be in the form of a related set of photographs which form a visual essay, it may be one photograph which has employed creative darkroom processes or it may be computer aided. One of the studio pieces could employ a photomontage technique which may be a unique piece or it may be computer aided. Students should be encouraged to present their work in a variety of forms both 2D and 3D.

The student should demonstrate through the use of the Visual Diary an understanding of the technical aspects of their projects and that they have researched other photographers and have employed a design development process in creating the studio piece.

***COMPOSITION – PERSPECTIVE***



# **COMPOSITION**

This is the first stage of making a photograph...

- How to hold a camera - vertical or horizontal format
- Rule of thirds
- Bird's eye view
- Worm's eye view
- Leading lines
- Central composition
- Use of strong angles to enhance photo - e.g. to gain perspective
- Use of horizon line to create space
- Subject up close
- Subject in distance
- Intimate and panoramic views
- Three different views before the shutter button is pushed.

**SUGGESTED EXERCISE** - this is a teacher based example; a student brief is included in the SUGGESTED BRIEFS SECTION.

**SUBJECT - ARCHITECTURE** - this is a good subject to begin with as it does not move or change dramatically. The University of WA is a great location as may be your school environment, home or a trip to Fremantle or Perth city.

The student is to produce a visual essay on the location which conveys information about the site and communicates an intimate study.

Set the student a set of tasks which require a variety of compositions to be recorded. You may place emphasis on PERSPECTIVE as the key component of the task.

All of the above compositions or some of the above are to be incorporated in this task to produce a visual essay on the set location.

**RESEARCH** - students should make a collection of photographs from publications which explore the set compositions and subject of architecture, to analyse and write about the photographer's approach to the shoot.

Max Dupain was commissioned to photograph the Sydney Opera House and various other architectural sites - make reference to his work. Video on Australian Photographers available from the State Library.

## ***VISUAL INQUIRY***

Set the students the task of exploring the location and recording in thumbnail sketches (using pencil) a variety of camera views that explore the set task and required compositions.

As art students they should also do a set number of drawings on the subject to demonstrate their drawing skills and media control.

Encourage the students to look at the location and decide on the overall atmosphere of the location...is it the height of the buildings as in the city, or the corridors and alley ways of UWA, the repetition of form - what is their focus? This could come across in their drawings.

Do this before allowing the students to use the camera.

*Refer to the generic design development sheet.*

Now allow the students to take the photographs - it should be evident that they have followed their plan.

As an integral part of this exercise students must record camera data:

- type of camera used
- type of film
- conditions of shoot - time of day, brightness of day, subject in shade etc.
- shutter speed
- aperture reading

*Refer to the provided data sheet.*

## ***PRINTING AND PROCESSING***

This will depend at what stage this assignment is set. I would view it as a first Year 11 assignment. In this case it may be appropriate to have the film and prints processed at a commercial outlet.

If combining this assignment with learning the darkroom techniques this would mean that the student processes the film and prints the required prints in the school environment.

Analysis should be demonstrated at this stage with the students writing about their results and selecting which of the negatives are appropriate to include in the final work.

Use of language here is important as the student has the opportunity to discuss the results using design elements of composition, direction, shape, surface etc.

***DESIGN*** - At this stage the student would make further design decisions indicating final layout or varieties of presentation as set out in the STUDENT BRIEF.

***STUDIO*** - this may take many forms and can be solely directed by the teacher or student initiated with teacher direction. Here are some suggestions:

- scan these images into the computer and produce a layout suitable for a publication
- combine the printed images in an interesting collage composition and include lettering
- combine the prints with drawings of the location
- combine with transparencies and other mediums
- present as a series

## ***ASSESSMENT***

The student's diary should contain:

- Information as to the type of camera used and its functions.
- Research - cut and paste from publications with analysis
- Historical reference to Max Dupain (or others)
- Design development section - drawings of buildings from different viewpoints and compositions. Thumbnail sheet.
- Film speed data and shoot data sheet.
- Contact print or prints from commercial printing house plus analysis
- Layout and design for final studio
- Experiments in media - computer, transparencies etc.
- STUDIO - this should be presented in an appropriately sophisticated form. Well mounted work ready for exhibition.

## **SUGGESTED BRIEF - YEAR 11 CREATIVE PHOTOGRAPHY**

Produce a set of photographs on the theme of PERSPECTIVE IN ARCHITECTURE which demonstrates your ability to use your camera as a compositional tool.

### **APPRECIATION**

Research the work of Australian photographer Max Dupain and his work on the Sydney Opera House and other projects by viewing the video on Australian Photographers.

Source magazines and publications for examples of how other photographers have composed photographs - analyse and use alongside your work.

Where possible relate this research to your work.

### **VISUAL INQUIRY**

Choose a location handy to you which has interesting architecture - UWA, the city, your home, the school.

1. Complete a set of drawings which have strong emphasis on the following compositions to enhance perspective:

- Bird's eye view
- Worm's eye view
- Leading lines
- Horizontal format
- Vertical format - using strong angles

Experiment with media in these drawings

2. Complete a set of thumbnail sketches which show the planned photographs making notes as to composition.
3. Shoot a film which uses all of the compositions set out in the drawing stage and based on the thumbnail sketches.

Demonstrate an understanding of the camera by recording all relevant camera data - type of camera used, type of film, conditions of shoot, shutter speed and aperture readings. This can be done on a data sheet.

4. Process and develop the prints - either through a commercial outlet or using the school photography facilities.
5. Design development - critically analyse the prints and select those most appropriate to form a visual essay of your location.

### **STUDIO**

Experiment with different ways of presenting your work and different layouts for final presentation. Use photocopies of the prints at this stage.

The work should be presented either as:

- a collage combining the prints and incorporating lettering suitable for a poster
- a combination of photographs and drawings - refer to the work of American artist, Robert Rauschenberg.

OR

- a series of high quality prints - scan into the computer and present a layout suitable for a publication.



## ***SHUTTER SPEED***

- Use of fast shutter speed
- Use of slow shutter speed
- Use of T setting and B setting
- Panning of object
- Use zoom lens to record object moving toward photographer
- Shutter speed and its relationship to aperture and film speed (ISO)

### ***SUGGESTED EXERCISE*** - teacher based example

Students may set themselves a problem to deal with moving objects such as:

- cars
- trains
- rolling ball
- flowing water
- a crowded street
- drinking coffee.
- “The Swimmer” - this is a particularly interesting topic and allows for layers of interpretation by the student and for the student to explore a range of camera types.

***SUBJECT - MOVEMENT*** - It is best that the student chooses a subject here that he has control over, thus employing the MAKING of a photograph. Students may work in groups as models or as photographer’s assistant if the student has decided to do a subject such as pouring water into a glass.

***BRIEF*** - the student is to demonstrate his control of the camera by producing a set of photographs, which portray different types of movement.

Set the student the task of producing shots which demonstrate frozen movement, panned movement, subject blurred/background sharp.

### ***RESEARCH***

- relate the study of movement to artists such as those of the Futurist movement in Europe who tried to capture the essence of movement.
- Australian artist, Noel Counihan attempted to capture movement at the football in his .....
- Some very famous photojournalists such as Henri Cartier-Bresson have had to use fast shutter speeds to capture ‘the moment’.
- Students should make a collection of photographs from publications that demonstrate the different use of shutter speeds to capture movement.

### ***VISUAL INQUIRY***

As art students a number of exploratory drawings should be done on movement either as research before the photographs are taken or as interpretations and exaggeration of movement in the photographs. Employ a variety of mediums here such as charcoal, washes, brush and ink work.

Photocopy and cut photograph using only part of the photograph in combination with drawing to reinterpret the photograph - refer to the self-portrait by Brett Whitely.

Encourage the students to instill in their work a message to communicate, it may be the effects of movement on the environment, people moving to the workplace versus leisure.

Follow a design development, Studio and assessment plan as for COMPOSITION.

## ***APERTURE***

- What is aperture?
- Relationship to the shutter speed
- Relationship to ISO
- f-stops
- Depth of field scale
- Minimum depth of field.
- Maximum depth of field.

### ***SUBJECT - LANDSCAPE and NATURE***

To demonstrate maximum depth of field, use the subject matter of landscape and look at the work of Ansel Adams and the f32 group as inspiration.

To demonstrate minimum depth of field direct the students to study plants up close and to look at photographers who have used individual plants as subject for their photographs.

or

Demonstrate how depth of field can be used to enhance a photograph by using the same subject with varying aperture readings. Critically analyse the results.

or

Create a work entitled “In a Row” and photograph with varying depth of field readings.

# ***THE DARKROOM - PROCESS AND PROCEDURES***

The use of photography as a tool requires that the student be in possession of processing and darkroom skills just as it would for students of printmaking to be knowledgeable in the printmaking techniques.

KNOWLEDGE IN THESE AREAS CAN BE GAINED BY THE STUDENT THROUGH A SET ASSIGNMENT ON PROCESSING AND PRINTING OR CAN BE INCORPORATED IN A BRIEF ON COMPOSITION OR ANY OTHER BRIEF.

A well composed and shot film can be lost if the processing and printing are not well executed.

***FILM PROCESSING*** - information in relation to these processes are found in numerous textbooks.

- Black and white film
- ISO reading
- Chemicals and safety issues
- Push processing

## ***PRINTING***

- contact print
- size variation
- cropping
- dodging and burning in
- vignetting
- test strips
- use of filters
- Chemicals and safety

## ***CREATIVE DARKROOM PROCESSES - BLACK AND WHITE OR COLOUR***

The student has the opportunity to use any of the following methods to manipulate and use photography as a visual tool.

- The photogram - compare the work of Man Ray
- Positive/negative imaging
- Distortion
- Using a black and white negative on colour paper
- Texture Screens
- Varying methods of use of developer - brush or spray
- Solarizations
- Combination of negatives
- Combining transparency and negative in printing
- Negative plus photogram
- Use of graphics art film to create tone dropout and base relief work.
- Using the darkroom to create a silk-screen image using light sensitive material and students own negatives.
- Printing onto water-colour papers, which have been coated with a light sensitive material - combining with hand watercolouring.

## ***CREATIVE IDEAS OUTSIDE THE DARKROOM***

When creating the prints the student would have followed a design development plan as to the presentation of the work.

The presentation is very much a part of the creative process.

Students may choose to:

- Emulsion transfer process using Polaroid cameras and film
- Hand colour, tone or sepia the prints.
- Photomontage
- Weave together two photographs
- Mounting final print with contact print
- Presenting in a three dimensional format - in a box, on a chair
- combining photographs with paint or inks
- Spray painting part of photographs
- Using the computer to demonstrate product based use of photographs e.g. for a brochure or CD cover.

### ***COMPUTER AIDED PHOTOGRAPHY***

'A Photograph never tells a lie' - well the computer can!!!!

The computer and Adobe Photoshop (of course there are other products such as Rev Pro 24) is a wonderful tool, which can be used in a highly creative manner.

Students should be encouraged to use their own photographs when using the computer and not to appropriate from other sources.

An excellent book to guide students in this area is PHOTOMONTAGE - A step-by-step Guide to Building Pictures by Stephen Golding

Incorporate the use of the computer with a study of SURREALISM.

### ***CREATIVE COMPOSITION - THE STUDIO***

Photographs can be MADE in the studio - this can be indoors or outdoors and is a way of controlling light.

- Use of lighting to create mood
- Strong lighting and soft lighting
- Reflection
- Mirrors
- Projected images or shadows on subject
- Use of flash

### ***COPY STAND***

Just about every school has a copy stand in the library. They have become a thing of the past as the scanner is now used to copy images so grab the copy stand and use it in the studio to create interesting still-life compositions.

# ***WHAT TO TAKE A PHOTOGRAPH OF:***

Visual images can be very broadly covered by the themes of man-made, natural and human form. Themes used in all Art investigation areas are applicable to Photography, but just to give you some ideas.

## ***Personal themes:***

At home  
Family  
Friends  
Pets  
Belongings  
The Self  
School  
Sport

## ***Portraits***

Personality  
Fashion  
Expressions  
Role playing - costumes  
Large crowds  
Small groups  
Person at work or in set activity. e.g. 'The Swimmer'

## ***Environment***

Landscape  
Close-up photography - plants  
Animals  
Flowers  
Pollution

## ***Man - made***

Still-life studies  
Belongings  
Architecture  
Machines - cars, boats, washing machines, dishwasher's etc.  
The Markets  
Furniture

## ***Social Comment***

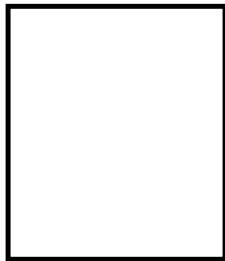
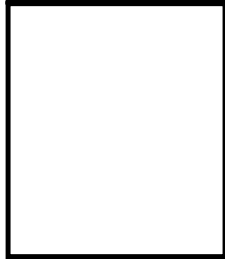
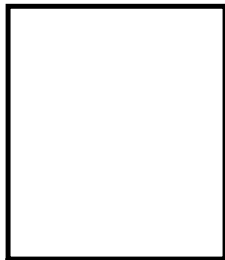
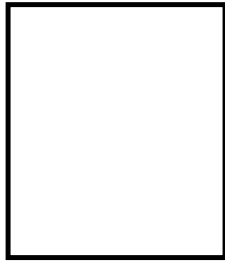
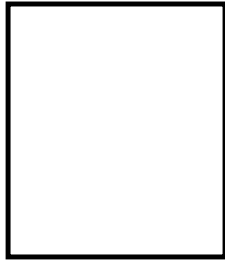
Community Issues  
Personal Issues

## ***THEMES***

Elements of design - shape, pattern, texture and direction  
Perspective  
Movement  
Contrasts - Old versus New, Black versus White.  
Size  
Space  
Human relationships  
Photograph a process  
PROJECT:  
BRIEF:

# ***COMPOSITION THUMBNAILS***

Notes: procedures, techniques, necessary equipment, lighting etc.



## **SUGGESTED BRIEF - YEAR 11 CREATIVE PHOTOGRAPHY**

Produce a set of three photographs on the theme of Movement which demonstrate your ability to use your shutter speed to capture movement in different forms.

### **APPRECIATION**

Research the work of the Italian Futurist artists and their attempts to capture movement. Relate their theories and methods to your work.

Make a collection of photographs from journals where movement has been the theme - analyse both aesthetically and technically.

### **VISUAL INQUIRY**

Brainstorm the idea of movement looking at different themes - cars, trains, rolling ball, spilt milk, "The Swimmer".

Decide on a subject which is available to you or which you are able to create. It is important that you have some control with this project.

Complete a set of 6, 30 second observational drawings of your subject moving.

Complete a design development sheet, which includes

- a fast shutter speed
- slow shutter speed and
- panning.

Shoot film recording camera data

Process and print contact sheet.

Analyse and evaluate contact sheet.

Make prints from selected negatives

Complete a set of drawings from the prints, which further interpret the theme of MOVEMENT. Photocopy prints, cut and paste, include a variety of mediums.

Design development - Present a series of ideas on layout and presentation for final studio work.

Demonstrate experimentation with media.

### **STUDIO**

Present the three prints as one visual image incorporating them together so that they successfully work as one. This may mean photomontaging the work or using other materials in the work.

## **CREATIVE PHOTOGRAPHY - YEAR 12**

A Year 12 student choosing Photography as their area of studio practice should have a clear understanding of the basic knowledge associated with the use of the camera, the darkroom processes and procedures; and the techniques available for image manipulation in and out of the darkroom. It is advisable that the student be in possession of this knowledge before embarking on the Year 12 course. This knowledge may have been gained through work covered in Year 11 Art or through some other source.

The following suggested briefs for Year 12 presume that the student is in possession of the basic techniques and skills just as in any other area of studio practice.

The suggested briefs are theme based rather than the technical slant of the Year 11 Briefs.

There are three briefs covering the three themes of -

- the human form
- the environment
- man-made forms

## CREATIVE PHOTOGRAPHY YEAR 12 SUGGESTED BRIEF

### PROJECT DESCRIPTION - PORTRAITURE

Portraiture, whether it be of another person/s or a self portrait has been a subject for artists throughout the centuries and is the most popular use for photography today.

It can be used simply to record an image, however, as artists we strive to communicate visually something more about the subject than merely the image.

For this brief you are to choose available people such as friends or family as your topic.

Through your research aim to communicate the personality of your subject.

### VISUAL INQUIRY

1. Do a series of drawings of your subject in a variety of poses using a variety of materials.

Quick gestural drawings - use pen and ink, crayon, washes, getting to know your subject and to demonstrate your skill at figure drawing.

2. Contour or linear drawings of the subject/s in their immediate environment.

3. Tonal drawings using charcoal or conte crayon to emphasise the tonal patterns caused by strong lighting. Use a variety of light directions. Relate the work of relevant artists who used strong chiaroscuro such as Rembrandt.

4. Extended drawing study of subject in relevant environment- emphasis on tone and character.

5. Mixed Media - create a brainstorm page, which investigates the interests and personality of the subject.

### Design development

Evolve from the drawings a set of thumbnails for possible photographs demonstrating a variety of lighting options and compositions.

Thumbnails should have working documentation, which demonstrates an understanding of lighting and photography techniques. (film type, speed,)

6. Do a shoot of your subjects relating to the thumbnail concepts. Document all data.

7. Develop and produce contact print - analyse and select appropriate negatives and studio concept.

### APPRECIATION - INTERRELATIONSHIPS

Research portraiture throughout Art History choosing a theme, which relates to your ideas. It may be to do with the portrayal of male and female forms, of Mother and child, of Heroes.

Investigate modern photographers such as the American photographer Annie Liebovitz who explored the theme of personality portraits.

Investigate the William Dobell incident in relationship to the Archibald prize of 1932.

**Relate your research to your own work by subject matter, technique or form.**

### STUDIO

Develop a studio piece which has evolved from your Visual Inquiry dealing with the theme of portraiture.

Include all documentation for studio development.

The studio may be a set of prints or a combination of prints in a relevant format.

## **CREATIVE PHOTOGRAPHY - YEAR 12 SUGGESTED BRIEF**

### **PROJECT DESCRIPTION - THE ENVIRONMENT**

#### *From the intimate to the panoramic*

Explore your local environment choosing to concentrate on either natural forms alone or on the concept of man's invasion of nature.

Complete a studio piece which explores the environment from the intimate to the panoramic.

For Photography students this enables you to demonstrate your ability to use appropriate aperture and selective focus.

### **VISUAL INQUIRY**

1. Chose a local environment convenient to you - the beach, a parkland, the river.  
Do a series of investigative drawings looking at objects in macro and the landscape as a whole.  
Use a variety of materials and surfaces.
2. Do a set of three drawings which use strong compositional tools based on framing, rule of thirds and leading lines. Suggested materials -
  - Use pen and ink, wash with green ink, bleach back areas.
  - Collage in part of the drawing using newspaper, wash over with monochromes of black.
  - Fine line one drawing - colour with inks in a surreal manner.
3. Begin your design development by producing a set of thumbnails for photo shoot which explore from the intimate to the panoramic. Record necessary equipment and documentation. (time of day, film speed and type etc.)
4. Shoot the required number of films, process and develop.
4. Produce at least six prints - three of which should use alternative darkroom techniques such as solarisation, negative printing, distortion.

Use the other three prints to demonstrate your skills to manipulate the image by toning or colouring outside the darkroom.

### **APPRECIATION - INTERRELATIONSHIPS**

Research the work of American photographer Ansel Adams and the f32 group and the work of the National Geographic photographers. Relate their work by content and technique to your work.

Refer to the collage work of Australian artist, Brett Whitely, and relate this to options for studio presentation and the requirements of point 5.

### **STUDIO**

The studio piece may take the form of a series of related images communicating a visual essay on your chosen area.

It may be a computer aided image whereby your photographs have been scanned and manipulated in the computer. This may result in a poster.

## **CREATIVE PHOTOGRAPHY - YEAR 12 SUGGESTED BRIEF**

### **PROJECT DESCRIPTION - MAN MADE FORMS**

#### *Still there is Life*

Use the photography studio or set up a studio with artificial lighting to create a series of still life photographs which explore the theme - Still there is Life.

### **VISUAL INQUIRY**

1. Explore through a series of drawings forms which have contrast - either in meaning, size, pattern, or texture. Example - outside of a capsicum vs. inside, surface of a surfboard vs. seaweed.
2. Do at least two well developed drawings of still life arrangements which explore the concept of human presence. Example - the dining table with the used plates remaining.
3. Use montage techniques to create a surreal composition juxtaposing contrasting concepts. Example - old and new, horror and laughter, shining and dull.
4. Develop from these ideas a still life which you can construct/ fabricate which deals with the theme Still there is Life. Example - a fabricated city scene with oversized plants, or human accessories.

Do drawings and diagrams which explain the construction and your ideas.

5. Do a set of thumbnail designs exploring different angles and lighting. Document all relevant photography information.
6. Shoot the required number of films, process and print proof sheet. Analyse proof sheet and select negatives suitable for printing.

### **APPRECIATION - INTERRELATIONSHIPS**

Research the work of Man Ray and the work of the German photomontage artists as well as the Surrealist artists. Relate your research to your own work by content and technique.

Refer to the work of Richard Hamilton "What makes our homes so beautiful". Discuss the content and technique of this work.

### **STUDIO**

Produce at least one image which demonstrates your skill in studio photography. Your presentation of the image/s should be relevant to the theme of Still there is Life.