



# Open College of the Arts

## Formative feedback

Student name	Jose Souto Martinez	Student number	██████
Course/Unit	C&N	Assignment	5
Type of tutorial (eg video/audio/written)	Written		

### Overall Comments

From your extensive texts you have identified an idea about suspicion and the stranger. You've thought around this project and tried to distil your thinking into an image. The idea I found most promising was that of visiting a location found in someone else's photographs and thereby appropriating - almost stealing - something close to them, like a personal memory. That idea would have thrown up a more contingent and unplanned result than your usually heavily designed images. It would possibly have taken you down an interesting new avenue of creative development. Removing the design stage in your work, looking at using processes with unknowable outcomes, could be an important option.

You've tried again to make a narrative photograph. You tend towards being illustrative in your photographs and trying too hard to make a "movie shot" in a literal sense. I wonder whether your ambition is to be a photographer like Gregory Crewdson? Perhaps you should look deeply at what makes his work (and others Tom Hunter, Jeff Wall, Hannah Starkey etc) function. It's a lot to do with mood and allegory. By this, I mean that there are layers of meaning that are sort of implied by the scenes and objects in the photographs but you have to dig with your thinking to get to it. It can be the way a teenage girl wears an Arsenal shirt (we ask questions) or why a dishevelled man is chosen to portray The Thinker?

### Feedback on assignment

Your constructed photo is taken from the perspective of a car where a man (you I guess) is sitting nonchalantly and innocently waiting for a breakdown recovery (so the story goes). In the distance we can see a woman looking out of a lit window at the man in the car. Your intention (as far as the text goes) was to explore a moment of anguish or tension when social conventions break down (your words). Something to do with the uncanny, held moment of encountering a mysterious stranger.

But what exactly has broken down here? Where is the tension? It is one-sided because the man appears not to have noticed the woman and her response is not clearly visible because

she is so far away.

The implication actually seems to point to a relationship. But this looks like the aftermath of an argument between a man and his wife. Although it is difficult to tell the gender of someone so far away.

Why, if you are trying to make an image about the mystery of a stranger, have you placed the camera with him in close up and the viewing woman so distant she can hardly be seen! He looks blandly impassive. There is nothing frightening or mysterious about him. It feels like a fundamental flaw in your visual design.

This image is based on a situational idea but it doesn't become anything. What you are aiming at is a deeper theme about fear, suspicion, isolation. But you are not conjuring much emotion. It's all too set-up and artificial. Your approach is to create a TV style story and photograph a 'scene' as a snapshot of the narrative.

Photographs are still, they do not tell stories in the way film does in time. You can indicate a kind of "narrative" through the clever use of visual clues in a single image, which the viewer can gather as they peruse the picture. You should research visual allegory to understand this further.

One thing that strikes me when I see your work is it's visual tidiness. You are very good at including only the information that you feel is expressive. Although I don't think you've made a leap in your creation of narrative images here, these skills should help you when you do.

## Research

You haven't sent any research but I guess this has been more about reading and writing your own short stories. That could be a way of fleshing out an idea rather than through a theoretical approach. Think about that and see what works best for you.

Certainly painting is full of allegory - especially Renaissance paintings you can see readily in museums like the National Gallery in Trafalgar Square.

## Learning Log

*Summarize how you have applied what you've learned from the course to your assignment photographs. Also note down what you've learned from other photographers in executing the assignment.*

Your reflection is very much a history of your process. That's ok, but you also need to question your own images. How is this image expressing your intentions? What are the elements in it which are 'signs' of this visual communication? What is the overall effect? At some point you should ask your tutor for phone tutorials because you need to get into a discussion about your work.

## Summary

Strengths	Areas for development
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Visually tidy.</li><li>• Technical competence.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Developing thematically.</li><li>• Possibly developing allegory.</li></ul>
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<b>Tutor name</b>	[REDACTED]
<b>Date</b>	16th July 2018