

PHOTOGRAPHY DEPARTMENT SUMMER PROJECT

Title: "Observation Unveiled: Exploring New Narratives Through Everyday Moments"



Lee Friedlander: America By Car 2010

PROJECT DURATION: 1 WEEK

Project Overview:

Welcome to the world of photography and the power of observation! In this summer project, you'll delve into the art of actively observing the world around you, finding beauty and intriguing narratives in the everyday and mundane. By sharpening your observational skills, you'll discover new perspectives, textures, patterns, and stories that often go unnoticed. Throughout the week, you'll capture and curate a series of images, reflecting your journey of observation and presenting your findings in a visual sequence.

Project Tasks and Activities:

Day 1: Introduction to Observation

Task 1: Reflecting on the Importance of Observation in Photography

Begin by considering the fundamental role observation plays in photography.

Reflect on how observation allows photographers to see beyond the surface and capture unique narratives and perspectives.

Consider how observation enhances the storytelling aspect of photography, enabling photographers to transform ordinary moments into extraordinary visual experiences.

Write a short journal entry or create a mind map highlighting your thoughts on the significance of observation in photography.

Task 2: Exploring Renowned Observational Photographers

Research and discover renowned photographers celebrated for their exceptional observational work.

Look for artists who have the ability to uncover hidden narratives and bring attention to the beauty of everyday life.

Select three photographers from the list provided below and delve deeper into their work, exploring their distinctive styles and approaches to observation:

- **Saul Leiter:** Known for his intimate street photography, Leiter had an extraordinary ability to capture fleeting moments and create poetic narratives through his unique use of colour and composition.
- **Vivian Maier:** Maier's work was discovered posthumously, revealing her remarkable talent for capturing candid moments of everyday life. Her street photography offers a glimpse into the human experience with an incredible eye for detail.
- **William Eggleston:** Eggleston is considered a pioneer of colour photography, documenting ordinary subjects in a way that transforms them into extraordinary compositions, focusing on elements of colour, form, and light.
- **Helen Levitt:** Levitt's street photography beautifully depicted the essence of New York City, capturing moments of everyday life with a sense of grace and humour.

- Daido Moriyama: Moriyama is known for his gritty black-and-white street photography, capturing the energy and chaos of urban environments while highlighting the beauty in the mundane.
- Lee Friedlander: Friedlander's photographs often focus on the American landscape and urban life. He has a unique way of framing and composing his images, highlighting unexpected juxtapositions and details that offer a fresh perspective on the ordinary.

Evidence with example images from the artist and a series of bullet points which reflects on the artists use of "observation".

Day 2: Observational Journey - Part 1

Go for a walk along a chosen route, taking your camera with you.

Capture 10-20 images during your journey, focusing on everyday scenes, objects, people, or moments that catch your attention.

Take note of any initial observations or thoughts that arise during your walk.

Day 3: Image Selection and Sequence

Review the images captured on your walk and select the best 5 that stand out to you.

Arrange the chosen images in a sequence that tells a visual story, either in a physical sketchbook or digitally in a document or presentation.

Write a few notes describing your journey, explaining why you chose the specific images and how they contribute to the overall narrative.

Day 4: Observational Journey - Part 2

Return to the same route as before, this time with a heightened sense of observation.

Pay close attention to textures, lines, patterns, colours, and any other elements that catch your eye.

Look for the unusual, the out-of-context, and ways to make the mundane interesting through a fresh perspective.

Day 5: Collating Observational Notes and Images

Compile your observational notes and reflections from your second journey.

Select new images that best represent the discoveries and narratives you found during your heightened observation.

Create a visual sequence that combines the new images with the corresponding observational notes.

Day 6: Final Image Selection

Review all the images captured throughout the project and select a series of 6 photographs that best describe your observational journey.

Consider the visual impact, storytelling, and unique narratives behind each image.

Day 7: Presentation and Reflection

Present your work either in an A4 sketchbook or digitally in a document or presentation.

Arrange your final selection of 6 images in a visually appealing manner, accompanied by any relevant observational notes.

Reflect on the skills of active observation versus passive seeing, providing 5 top tips for honing observational skills.

Remember to enjoy the process of observation and exploration, embracing the beauty and stories hidden within the everyday moments. Happy observing!

Note: Depending on your preference, you can adjust the timeline for each task to fit within the span of one week.

LOOKING AND SEEING – THE IMPORTANCE OF OBSERVATION IN PHOTOGRAPHY

Observation plays a fundamental role in photography. As a photographer, observation is the act of carefully observing your surroundings, paying attention to details, and being aware of the elements that make up a scene or subject. Here are several ways observation influences photography:

- **Composition:** Observation allows you to identify and arrange the visual elements within a frame. By observing the scene, you can find interesting perspectives, lines, shapes, textures, colours, and patterns, and use them to create a compelling composition.
- **Light and Shadows:** Observation helps you understand how light interacts with your subject. By observing the quality, direction, and intensity of light, you can make informed decisions about exposure, contrast, and highlighting the important aspects of your subject.
- **Subject Interaction:** Observation allows you to anticipate and capture decisive moments. By closely observing your subject, you can anticipate their actions, expressions, and gestures, enabling you to capture authentic and impactful photographs.
- **Storytelling:** Observation plays a crucial role in storytelling through photography. By observing your surroundings and the interactions within a scene, you can capture moments that tell a story, evoke emotions, and communicate a narrative.
- **Details and Nuances:** Observation helps you capture the small details and nuances that might be easily overlooked. By paying attention to the subtle elements, you can add depth, interest, and uniqueness to your photographs.
- **Self-Reflection and Improvement:** Observation allows you to review and analyze your own work critically. By observing your photographs and the work of other photographers, you can identify areas for improvement, learn from different techniques and styles, and refine your own photographic vision.
- **Overall,** observation in photography is about being present, attentive, and aware of your surroundings. It helps you see beyond the obvious and capture images that reflect your unique perspective and vision as a photographer.