

Photography A-Level Summer Work



'The Lost Summer' by Alys Tomlinson

A Portrait Project

Portraits tell us many things about the subject. They communicate and inform us about the person; the age and culture they exist in. They also tell us about the person who conceived and constructed the image. When we look at a portrait, we read not only the subject and their expression but the things around them, their clothes, hair, and surroundings; often containing important symbolic objects. Traditionally portraits were used to declare status and identity, but they can also reveal more personal details about the character and individuality of the sitter.

One of the principal uses of photography from its inception has been the documenting of home life. All of us have photos, most of which have been in the form of a *snapshots of our lives*. Rarely are these composed or considered in any way other than to get all the significant people in the photograph looking towards the camera and smiling.

There are, however, many photographers who have chosen to document their home lives through portraiture, as a considered photographic project which is exhibited or published as a photography book. Some notable photographers who have produced such projects are:

1. Jamie Hawksworth is a fashion and documentary photographer. His first photography project was made in Preston bus station. <https://www.anothermag.com/art-photography/7879/preston-bus-station-by-jamie-hawkesworth>
<https://www.shashasha.co/en/book/preston-bus-station>
2. Carrie Mae Weems staged and photographed a fictional drama in which she plays the lead, as a way of exploring her identity <https://www.nga.gov/artworks/209288-kitchen-table-series>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pPDInpNoO50>
3. Craig Easton is a Scottish photographer who, through his works, explores identity and the sense of place. He led a photography collaboration called 'Sixteen' which explores what it means to be sixteen in the UK today. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ah8O9EdahEE>
4. Sian Davey projects provide a thoughtful alternative vision of childhood and adolescence. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VIgANeDSKls>
5. Alys Tomlinson photographed local teenagers dressed in outfits they would have worn to prom in summer 2020. <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2020/nov/09/prom-portraits-from-the-lost-summer-of-2020-a-photo-essay>
6. Richard Billingham The photographer made his name as young person with a series of photographs showing his colourful homelife. <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2016/mar/13/richard-billingham-tower-block-white-dee-rays-a-laugh-liz>

TASK ONE:

Look at the work of all the photographers above and choose the photographer whose work you are most interested in. Select two of their images relating to family that immediately appeals to you. Print the photographs out on an A4 sheet and use the following questions to analyse them:

- **Include the title and date of the photograph**
- Write a short description of what you see in the photograph.
- What is the first thing that you look at in the photograph?
- What is the relationship of the photographer to the subject/s in the photograph?
- Does the photograph contain any objects that give more clues about the person/people in the photograph and what do they suggest?
- How does the photograph differ from an average photograph?
- Why have you selected this image from the other photographs by this photographer?

TASK TWO:

During the summer break, photograph as many significant people from your 'life' as you can, you could choose to take portraits of family or friends. Use either, the camera on your phone or another type of digital camera.

Your photographs should be based on the research you have completed in task one and form a series. They should have something in common, such as always photographing the subjects standing in a doorway or all holding their favourite mug. Find an element that will connect your images so that you can easily repeat this in each photograph.

You should take a minimum of ten photographs and aim to photograph as many significant people as possible.

You will be expected to submit your written analysis of your chosen photograph printed on an A4 sheet and bring in the images you take on a memory stick or other storage device at the start of the course.

GOOD LUCK!!! We look forward to seeing you in your Photography classes in September.