



Tutor Report Form

Student name:	Keith Greenough
Student number:	416177
Course/Module title:	PH3: Advanced
Assignment number:	1 + Contract

Hi Keith,

I hope this finds you well and still standing strong after your training excursion. I'm afraid it's taken me a while to get round to looking at your work – very busy time of year with marking deadlines elsewhere, so I hope this hasn't been disruptive for you.

Anyway...

CONTRACT

This is a pretty comprehensive outline of how you envisage the module panning-out. Obviously this was started quite some time ago, and now some of these projects are at a more advanced stage.

Working on multiple projects simultaneously obviously isn't an issue for you (some of us find it harder to multi-task!) so by all means carry on in this way. In terms of the order of project, you may well find that some will be resolved sooner than others, so don't worry about the order in which you complete them. I think there is a lot to be said for working on multiple projects, and allowing them to inform each other.

You haven't yet given any details about your Contextual Studies text, but I presume this will relate to the many relevant portrait practitioners you mention. Portraiture is obviously the over-arching theme of your projects so it will make sense to bring together your research within this document. Typological approaches seem to be a more specific aspect of the genre which perhaps you will like to explore in some more depth.

This may seem a way off, but I'm sure you are aware that the text will need to be professionally written within academic conventions, so with this in mind, do keep track of quotes and points of information so that when you put these in your text you can quickly add the appropriate citation. The way your contextualization of the *Museum Portraits* is written is fine in this regard, but when it comes to an essay, you need to find the appropriate page numbers or links. I can send you a guide to academic referencing if you need it.

But your plan of action is great, and it's encouraging to see that you have got some strong ideas.

MUSEUM PORTRAITS

Your introduction/contextualization of this work is very clear and demonstrates both a good conceptual understanding of what you have made, and more importantly, why you have made it, as well as placing it clearly within the context of other documentary practitioners.

Like you (and Erwitt) I also like watching people and their behaviour in museums and galleries. They can be much like libraries or churches, in that they prompt a certain decorum and code of behaviour (except in school parties!) that is quite universal. I think you've really captured that nicely in some of these photos.

I think you've achieved this by capturing the intensity of the concentration on the visitors' faces. The monochrome film (*so* refreshing to see some REAL photographs!) adds a gravity and richness to the subject as well: you really focus on the people and aren't too distracted by the surroundings. I'd like you to look at a pal of mine's work:

<http://www.johnstadnicki.co.uk/Site/projects/Pages/BOXERS.html>

I think some of this will be relevant to your *Ironman* research, but some of the most interesting shots from this work are these calm moments of exhaustion of the fighters (which he printed very big), and your portraits made me think of his work.

I like the use of glass and reflections as well which give visual depth and texture, but also add a sense of the surreal as well (see Atget's photos of shop windows in Paris). Your *British Museum 6* is most distinctive in this respect.

This idea of a portrait truly capturing an emotion or personality is something that writers and practitioners have been more skeptical about in recent decades, hence the development of the Becher School's 'deadpan' approach to portraiture, which I'm sure you appreciate. But I think your pictures do genuinely capture an intensity, which is not easy, especially when you are trying to work under furtive conditions.

But you have got two things going on here which need distinguishing: there are i) the codes of behaviour - typified in *British Museum 5* – the girl photographing the exhibit on the iPhone – which is actually interesting because it is the polar opposite of the other thing, ii) capturing the gaze of the visitors as they consume the exhibits, which is illustrated most intensely (for me) in *British Museum 2* (which definitely reminds me of the di Corcia work you mention).

You mention briefly the idea of the 'gaze' in your introduction, but there is definitely further reading to here (which is relevant to this work, but actually is appropriate to consider in light of your future portrait work) around the idea of Freudian scopophilia – specifically the voyeuristic gaze.

The fact that i) all of the subjects seem unaware of the camera, ii) there is a shallow depth-of-field and lots of obscured areas of the frame and iii) your pictures are so grainy, *really* emphasizes this Freudian idea of a voyeuristic point of view. For a really vivid illustration of this see Merry Alpern's *Dirty Windows* series, and for something more amusing, see Alison Jackson's work.

If you are going to look at portraiture in real depth, this is something you need to look into. For some more general books on contemporary approaches to (self-) portraiture, see:

BRIGHT, Susan: *Autofocus*

CUMMING, Laura: *A Face to the World: On Self Portraits*

EWING, William A: *Face: The New Photographic Portrait*

Conclusions

I'd like to hope that this work isn't over: it's something you can really keep developing, wherever you go in the country, or the world for that matter. I think you should show this to gallery owners, curators and

press officers, because I think there could definitely be residential (and or commercial) possibilities with this kind of work.

I had a quick look on your site and I think the *Ironman* portraits are going to be an interesting piece of work. (I also really like the East End shots as well, very much). I do feel though that you really need to try to get some 'after' shots as the lorn men and women complete. Might be difficult to do if you are participating of course! Perhaps you could collaborate with the organisers? Yes, I like the idea of a typology of participants, particularly older ones, but I think there is a great opportunity here...

Tutor name:	Jesse Alexander
Date:	24.05.12
Next assignment due:	c. end June