



FINE ART PHOTOGRAPHY | LEVEL I

Institution: Indus Valley School of Art and Architecture

Department: Fine Art | 4th Semester

Course Duration: Three Weeks

Focus: Basic Black & White Photography

*The use of the term art medium is, to say the least, misleading,
for it is the artist that creates a work of art not the medium.
It is the artist in photography that gives form to content by a distillation of
ideas, thought, experience, insight and understanding.*

~ Edward Steichen ~

Course Objectives & Outline

You will be taught the basics of 35mm camera operation and black and white film processing and printing. The purpose is to familiarize students with the use of the camera and darkroom as their means to a creative, visually communicative language. The course covers the study of the camera, film, lens and exposure; light, composition, developing and printing; and the history and aesthetics of photography.

Course Requirements

- Six black & white prints demonstrating the transformative powers of framing and play of light.
- One photogram displaying significant shapes and tonal interest



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Assignments

1. The Frame

- Design and Pattern in Natural and Urban Environments (2 of each = 4 images to submit)
- Design and Pattern Using the Human Form (2 images to submit)

The assignment requires an investigation of natural or man-made designs and patterns in our surroundings with emphasis on the play of light and shadow. This will help develop an understanding of how different ways of framing affect both the emphasis and meaning of the subject matter. The final images should demonstrate how the frame could be used to create compositions of shape, line, and pattern.

You are to create three sets of images. Two of the sets deal with inanimate subjects, one will deal with people. Each set will contain two images of the same subject: One should be an overall view clearly communicating what the subject is; the other should be a close-up that is recognisably different from the previous image.

Suggestions on framing the image:

As you frame with your camera, try to move around and compose the image in different ways. Experiment with how you want to fill the space. Remember to crop out anything that is irrelevant to the image you are creating. Try putting the main subject off to one side, or one corner of the frame—can you balance an asymmetrical composition? Try having nothing at the centre of a picture and directing the viewer's interest in other directions. Photograph your subject in its totality, then move in very close and photograph—ask yourself: how will you cut into an object? What will you leave out? Keep trying to move in closer, as close as possible with the camera lens you are using (close-up filters may be used in this assignment whenever possible).



Photograph your subject in its totality, then move in very close and photograph—ask yourself: how will you cut into an object? What will you leave out? Keep trying to move in closer, as close as possible with the camera lens you are using (close-up filters may be used in this assignment whenever possible).

Bracketing:

To make a series of images of the same scene that are underexposed, correctly exposed and overexposed. Try to incorporate this into your first assignment. One of the main purposes of this technique is to ascertain the accuracy of the camera's light meter through manual manipulation of the exposure process.

Procedure:

Load your roll of T-Max 135-36 film into your camera, making sure beforehand that you are familiar with the loading procedures of your camera. Set your ISO on the scale. The meter requires that information in order to suggest a "correct" exposure reading to you based on the film speed (light sensitivity). Find and decide on your subject matter (make sure the subject is neither too light nor too dark). Shoot an image at the recommended camera meter reading and then make further combinations by varying the exposure settings: Keep either the f-stop or shutter speed constant and vary the shutter speed or f-stop settings (the opposite of what you kept constant). You will get an underexposed, correctly exposed and overexposed image (in one-stop or more than one-stop intervals) of the same scene. Write down your exposure settings as you go along.

Some cameras have an auto-bracketing mode where the camera fires off several frames of varying exposure in succession. You are not allowed to use this just yet, perhaps in later classes.

Once you have finished photographing your subject (without moving the camera to a different vantage point or changing the composition, and using the three different exposure combinations you've calculated), the first exposure should have the minimum silver density (underexposed); the second exposure should have the proper exposure density, while the last shot should have the most silver

density (overexposed). Now finish exposing what's left of the film in the same manner. Try an assortment of different compositions with the same subject or photograph something else.

This assignment is intended to help the student become attentive of how the camera and film function together. Quite often a wrong decision is made as to what is a "normal exposure". This could be due to any one of several factors: subject matter (too white or too black), ambient light (backlit, subject in shade) or even the effect or mood you want to achieve (sombre or bright & cheery).

By bracketing your exposures you will see the results of "over-" (image too light) or "under" (image too dark) exposure of your film as it relates to proper or "normal" exposure. What might be considered standard exposure may not be the proper exposure for your particular subject, or it may not communicate the atmosphere you wanted.

3. Photogram (in the darkroom)

This assignment is to help you learn how to make an image on photographic paper without the aid of a camera. The purpose of the assignment is also to familiarize students with the darkroom facilities and equipment.

A photogram is a contact print made by placing something opaque or translucent on light-sensitive material. This blocks some of the light, resulting in a pattern or image on the photographic paper (light-sensitive material) when it is exposed to light and processed.

Material Required:

Sheets of photographic paper may be used as the light-sensitive material. You are to select objects with varying levels of translucency, carefully chosen for their shape, texture, and size, to block out the light. Things that have interesting shapes can be arranged in interesting patterns. The possibilities are endless, and the following are some suggested materials:

- Dried flowers and leaves
- Toothpicks, pins, other small objects
- Seeds, marbles, beads
- Household objects and tools
- Glassware, lenses
- Plastic (objects, crumpled sheets)
- Sand, salt, sugar etc.
- String, hair, thread, wire
- Crumpled tissue paper
- Paper cut-outs, lace
- Collaged negatives
- Overhead transparencies
- Drawings on plastic, glass or tracing paper
- Use your hands to form interesting shapes
- Arrange thinly sliced fruit
- Flashlight pen size (with a cone of black chart paper to control the shape and size of the beam)
- Small animals or insects

Submission Requirements:

Total: **Seven prints** (the six best photographs from the first two assignments and one photogram) presented in a portfolio box. Canvas size: 5 × 7.5 in. (retain the 2:3 image ratio of the 35mm format and maintain a white border). Use 10 in. square, white/off-white window mounts and visually centralise the image; paste typed labels on the reverse.

The Darkroom and the Rules to Follow:

Producing prints calls for wide-ranging handling of light sensitive photographic paper, and processing in developing trays, a darkroom is therefore essential. The three most basic central features it requires are: light-leak proof, plumbing and electricity supplies and adequate ventilation. The best way to check how effectively your room is blacked out is to stand in the room on a bright day, allowing five to ten minutes for your eyes to adjust to the dark. Slight beams of light will then be very evident and can be sealed over with black paper or tape.

Try to organize your work area into clearly separated DRY (paper, enlarger, negatives, and power-supply) and WET (dishes, chemicals, hot and cold water) zones. This is essential to avoid wet finger marks and chemical stains on prints, negatives and equipment. Equally you must adopt the discipline of rinsing and drying your hands each time you change from a wet operation to a dry one.

- Each student will leave each workstation in clean condition and neat order.
- The last person to leave a work session is responsible for cleaning the lab, turning off all lights, turning off water, and locking the door.
- Cleaning the darkroom means:
 - Returning all chemicals to their containers or disposing of them if they are exhausted.
 - Rinsing all trays, tanks, reels and beakers used.
 - Rinsing down the entire sink.
 - Sponging off all counters.
 - Mopping the floor.
- Never leave the darkroom alone with water running.
- Washing and drying film and prints are the responsibility of each student.
- Never turn on the white light in the darkroom without every current user's permission.
- Respect other people's work in the darkroom.
- Dry prints may be taken off dry screens or drying-line and placed in your personal print box.
- Care must be taken to not damage school's valuable and limited equipment and MATERIALS.

Learning Resources:

Curriculum information, image gallery and web links can be accessed in the “Virtual Matter” section of the website: <http://www.farahmahbub.com>

For further inspiration and ideas, visit

<http://www.farahmahbub.com/ApprenticeAnthology/index.htm>

Also checkout suggested web links within

http://www.farahmahbub.com/ApprenticeAnthology/FA_4thSemester.htm

The School Library and the Department Studio have a wide-ranging collection of material available for student research.

Instructors Contact Information:

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