

# The Art of Photography

## *Assignment 1*

### **Objective – Contrasts.**

#### *Brief:*

To produce 17 images to include 8 pairs of images that show specific contrasts.

See Images for the names of the contrasts, the pictures submitted are labeled as required in the instructions.

#### *Aims:*

During assignment 1, I have made every effort and comprehensive use of the techniques I have learnt from completing the initial 15 projects (a way of seeing' and 'the frame'), to evidence my learning.

My personal aims are to ensure that I produce more aesthetically pleasing results that are no longer based upon specific rule sets dictated to me by amateur publications and the ideologies they portray. I have been guilty of sticking to their guides like mandatory rule sets, for example the 'rule of thirds', here I have become stagnant with its use. Almost insistent that if the guide was not used in certain circumstances then result would look poor. How wrong I have been and how this course, even in its infancy for me, has taught me so much. Those around me have remarked at how much better my results look since beginning the course.

#### *Outcomes:*

Project 1 to 15 mentioned above have been a very positive start to the course for me and a terrific success.

After overcoming my initial thoughts and fears that I was going to have to start my basic knowledge of photography all over again, I realized that there was so much more to this.

Whilst photography has never been a full time career, I have had images published and I have used photography in my full time employment.

I thought that my standards were high and technically sound. However, now I would suggest, that having done the first 15 projects, I would say my previous photography has had some good sound technical foundation but, has never pushed the boundaries of experimentation with angles, equipment and styles. The course has given me massive encouragement.

The Contrasts I have chosen were:

Rough	v	Smooth
Soft	v	Hard
Pointed	v	Blunt
Curved	v	Straight
Diagonal	v	Rounded
Few	v	Many
Moving	v	Still
Strong	v	Weak
Light & Dark		

### Rough

This image is of a small snail like sea shell that I placed on top of another shell for a backdrop. Both of the surfaces were rough and in the backdrop shell, grid like. Using the Golden point I placed the tip of the foreground shell in that place. I tried to use the spiral of the shell to draw the eye into the frame, finally pulling the eye to the backdrop. I used natural light for the photograph and placed a piece of black card to the right to reduce reflected light and emphasize the texture. I think this image has worked well and whilst there is a lot of symmetry I still think it depicts rough surface and texture.



## Smooth

Another sea shell this time with a highly polished and rounded surface made for a good subject to depict smooth. As it was another sea shell in contrast to the image of 'rough', I thought it was a good choice to photograph. Using natural light and a piece of white card to sit the subject on, as well as using some white card as a reflector to the right, has helped to illuminate all of the subject and eliminate harsh shadows. If hard shadows had been apparent and not diffused I think the image would have had edges that stood out to strongly. I like this result and hope that as a contrast to rough it succeeds in fulfilling the brief.



## Soft

For this image I used some research into Johannes Itten's contrasts.

To that end I discovered the theory of simultaneous contrasts and contrasts of hue, extension, colour, light and dark.

I found that the website [www.worqx.com](http://www.worqx.com) has a good way of explaining and showing the meanings and reasoning behind the work that Itten did. To that end I chose the idea of using complements and simultaneous contrast for this and the contrasting image of 'hard'.

For this image I used the complementary contrast within the image as the backdrop.

Firstly I photographed the 'Sweat Pea' in natural light. Taking this image onto the computer I then using a colour picker selected a strong area of colour on the petal of the Sweat Pea.

With this I created a backdrop but altered the hues slightly.

I then reintroduced the Sweat Pea in front of the backdrop and photographed the flower.

For me the experiment worked and the result is a very soft image of the Sweet Pea.

Using other colours, like for example strong colours on the opposite side of the colour wheel would not have worked as it would have drawn out a more vivid outline of the petals ruining the soft look. The image that follows 'Hard' shows this.



## Hard

To create the opposite of the soft image I decided to experiment with the concept of simultaneous contrast. Here I have learnt that to place opposite colours from the colour wheel next to each other or in front of each other, it causes a vibrant clash; the edges of the objects become striking, bold, obvious and hard. Hence I used it for this image.

To contrast against the soft image, for the backdrop I decided to make green bold squares instead of the blended colour's that interact seamlessly behind the Sweet Pea in soft.

I decided I would then overlay, or put in front, a red plant or rounded berries.

I found a multi coloured orange, red and yellow plant with berries on one stem. The berries were obviously rounded in contrast to the square backdrop, but the image didn't work.

I then tried the red beech spade which has rounded edges and this stood out far more in the way I expected, with hard striking edges and bold vibrant colour. For me it totally contrasts the image created of soft colours. Placing the objects close together in fact on

top of each other also meant that the depth of field kept the outlines of all the shapes sharp.  
From this exercise I have learnt that the use of colour in contrasts can assist in the composition of these images, it is not just the subject that photographed in its own right that forms the contrast.



### Pointed v Blunt

This picture is the blue pointed section at the top of a fence edge to a car park. I was walking around the location with the camera to my eye far more than I have ever done before, as per the lesson notes. Originally I found a shot of barbed wire, that I thought was perfect as a pointed subject, but then I felt that the angle of the image was more in line with diagonal or continuous, especially in light of the short depth of field I used. If I had managed to zoom in more on the actual barb then maybe it would have fulfilled the brief.



Instead I chose the submitted image because the subject is more defined and again because of the colour.

As a direct comparison to the Blunt image, the colours are complimentary; blue to a hue of yellow.

Using wide apertures the subjects both stand out in similar style with similar backdrops, but I liked the link in the backdrop of blue in the blunt image and the green in both, all out of focus drawing attention to the boldness of the objects and their textures. I also varied the angle of the shots and experimented to get a composition to lead the eye in and around the frame.

Submitted images:



### Curved v Straight

For this image I visited my local railway station several times to see what potential images there were. I have also been walking and looking for opportunities in a forest which is the other side of the local station. I had seen a wood pile of recently cut trees and intended to capture these for the diagonal and rounded contrast. Yet when passing the station I could see there was an opportunity of the curved track as it passes through the station, to capture. Moving around the station from one platform to the other and using the foot crossing and footbridge I set about planning the image. I looked at a number of vantage points and was strongly drawn to the downside platform at passenger level. Looking through the camera as per the lesson guides I found that a higher vantage point

would allow me to emphasize the curve of the track so I dismissed my initial thoughts.



I had learnt from my work on the project of photographing people in the street that waiting and observing a location can greatly assist capture a theme. To that end I waited and observed this location and watching trains to pass through. Initially I was concerned as the trains normally only pass through the station on the right hand platform, however, I was in luck as I waited as another train stopped in the left hand platform to allow an 'up' train to pass. As you can see outside the platform the line is a single track section. I then experimented with the lens in the portrait axis and landscape. I then captured a series of images as the train on the left hand platform moved out along the most curved section of track. I felt its presence emphasized the curve and decided, on looking at the images, the one I have submitted fulfils the brief.

The image of straight was taken in quick succession. But whilst the subjects themselves depict more of the contrast than colour or textures, it was the techniques of the first few projects that allowed me to capture these images that otherwise I would have missed.



## Diagonal v Rounded

The subjects I have chosen for these contrasts I hope are by now considered good or at least reasonable comparisons with each other on a similar theme. Colour, texture and forms.

If I have understood the lessons so far, then these images were taken to bring the composition together.

I tried to contrast and emphasize diagonal with a picture of the fencing where the main part was horizontal and vertical but the top wire shows a stark horizontal line against the flow of the picture. It crosses the golden section and I believe with the depth of field used stands out well to tell the story.

With the rounded image of the fencing, I chose to crop the picture, using my cropping tools, to the square format. This worked so well it concentrates the eye on symmetry of nine intersections of the wire but, leads the eye to the centre intersection where the wire goes around itself. Pre-course I really would have missed this and I have discovered a world of opportunities through the initial projects.



## Few v Many

For these images I chose the same subject but wanted to use the camera techniques to contrast the two. The first, 'Few' is taken with a very wide aperture so that only a few heads of the Barley crop are in focus. In the composition I tried to balance the five heads to the left bunched against the upright Barley head to the right. The head to the right rises well above the centre line of the image and takes up the area of the golden section. Not a precise fit to the rule, but I have learnt from the projects that this is a guide not a hard and fast rule.

The 'Many' image contrasts the wide aperture and was taken with a small aperture to maximize depth of field and show as many heads

of Barley as possible. It shows the abundance of the subject matter being photographed and has an endless quality. Whilst there is no central focal point there is just a seemingly endless amount of quantity that I hope emphasizes 'many'.



### Moving v Still

The moving and still images were captured at a similar time to the Curved and Straight images. The technique was much the same, using the camera and moving around the location considering the options. For the moving image I too had to move fast, but if anything at all it is evidence again of my learning from the first the first projects, in this case the exercise on speed and motion using fixed points and panning.

I knew as I heard the train coming that there was a need to slow the shutter down immediately, so that I could emphasize the speed whilst using the camera in a fixed position on a tripod.

I think the image worked really well and whilst I took a series of the moving train through the platform I also widened the field of view to create a strong composition of as much movement as possible. I was stunned when I viewed the results and pleased that you can see the reflections in the paintwork of the train.

For the still image I took this of the two trains poised side by side, I tried to give balance left and right in the composition. Both trains were motionless and still, but ready to go. I thought that by continuing the train theme into the comparison contrast aided fulfillment of the brief.



## Strong and Weak

With these images I saw this rose bush with both vibrant coloured healthy heads and also weaker coloured and frail looking heads that had 'gone over'.

There were also some Rose hips where the petals were completely missing.

Upon framing the Strong picture I could see the colour contrast between the Rose and the backdrop. I liked the appearance and varied the aperture to render the backdrop out of focus forcing the eye to concentrate of the strength of the healthy Rose head.

As I saw the dying Rose bud on the same bush I thought this rendered a powerful natural contrast and the colours and frailty worked well.



## *Light and Dark*

I took a great many images as I experimented throughout the initial projects, this image was one that I took during project 13.

Again trying to balance the light of the sun in the major box to the deep shadow in the minor box was what I was trying to do. The nose of the plane was meant to be on the intersection or Golden Point, interestingly though 'old habits die hard' and the composition is possible closer to the rule of thirds.

I think the contrajour nature of the image works well and fulfils the brief of light and dark in one image.



### *Conclusion*

This has been an extremely valuable assignment for me and one that has added even more value to the opening projects of the course. I have found the image recording very thought provoking and it has given me many more insights into my approach to taking a subject. I have been astonished and very pleased about how it has drawn on my creative ability. I am very pleased with my findings and I will now look to continue using my camera and equipment in more ways with differing views from landscape format to portrait and use focal lengths to achieve far more than just depth of field.

Colour, texture, tone and form will definitely feature as I progress and I hope to deliver more in this respect with future images.

I liked the way the projects lead into one and other and I like the content. I found the history of photography book fascinating and thought provoking even towards my own work.

I hope that this submission is of sufficient quality to move on through the course and I look forward to the receiving my first report.