



Open College of the Arts

Learning Log

Photography 2

Documentary



**This is part 4 of 5:
Part Four: Ethics and looking at the other**

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Cover photo

Portrait of Mirthe (Antoine Schneck style): 50mm, f/8, 1/160s, ISO100

1. Part Four: Ethics and looking at the other

Introduction – 13th of January 2017

This document is part four of my learning log which I keep for the course Documentary. This course is part of the BA (hons) Photography degree programme of the Open College of the Arts (see www.oca-uk.com for more information). This learning log is like a journal, a logbook, a workbook, or a notebook I created to document my learning.

- This learning log is structured according to the chapters of the course-book (OCA, 2012). Also, each entry in the log is dated and the entries are mostly in chronological order.
- All images in this learning log are my own work (© Maurice Timmermans) unless stated otherwise.
- Focal lengths are always 35mm equivalent focal lengths (efl) unless stated otherwise.

Exhibition: Landscapes in *Huis Marseille* – 18th of January 2017

In photography museum *Huis Marseille* in Amsterdam I visited the exhibitions by Chrystel Lebas *Regarding Nature* and *After Baldus: Travels in a Wounded Landscape* by Theo Baart and Cary Markerink.

I'm not much into landscape (not very interested), but because I plan to make a couple landscape photographs for assignment 5 I studied the photographs closely.

French landscape photographer Chrystel Lebas (1966) is famous for her panoramic photographs created at twilight. In 2011 the Natural History Museum in London asked Lebas to create new work based on the collection of glass negatives of the British landscape at the beginning of the 20th century by botanist and ecologist Sir Edward James Salisbury (1886-1978).

<http://www.nhm.ac.uk/discover/looking-at-past-habitats-through-a-modern-lens.html>



Chrystel Lebas: Revisited Plate n°1245 Aviemore, Rothiemurchus, August 2012 57°8.691'N 3°50.304' W

The panoramic photographs were printed on very large format (with a lot of detail because of analog panoramic camera). The museum designates the photographs as “monumental”. Because of the long

exposure times parts of the images are “soft” due to motion caused by the wind. Maybe I will use this technique (long exposure times; motion blur) in my future work.

Inspired by the 19th century photoalbum *Le Chemin de Fer du Nord* by French photographer Édouard Baldus (1813-1889) Dutch photographers Theo Baart and Cary Markerink photographed the man-made landscape of northern France. This series of fifty images was shown in a photoalbum which the visitors can view using gloves. Great experience of turning the pages and viewing the photographic prints up-close.

I like these landscape images better than the landscapes of Lebas. I studied the composition of the images and learned thing which I can put into practice for assignment 5.



Theo Baart and Cary Markerink: After Baldus



Theo Baart and Cary Markerink: After Baldus



Theo Baart and Cary Markerink: After Baldus



Theo Baart and Cary Markerink: After Baldus

Exhibition: Hiroshi Sugimoto in *Foam* – 18th of January 2017

In photography museum *Foam* in Amsterdam I visited the exhibition by Hiroshi Sugimoto (1948) *Black Box*. The exhibition is an overview of the work of this Japanese artist, a survey of his work through his major series: *Theaters* (1976-ongoing); *Lightning Fields* (2006-ongoing); *Dioramas* (1976-2012); *Portraits* (1994-1999); and *Seascapes* (1980-ongoing).



Hiroshi Sugimoto: Dioramas



Hiroshi Sugimoto: Theaters

Dioramas investigates fake and real in photography. Hiroshi: “Upon first arriving in New York in 1974, I did the tourist thing. Eventually I visited the Natural History Museum, where I made a curious discovery: the stuffed animals positioned before painted backdrops looked utterly fake, yet by taking a quick peek with one eye closed, all perspective vanished, and suddenly they looked very real. I'd found a way to see the world as a camera does. However fake the subject, once photographed, it's as good as real.” <http://www.sugimotohiroshi.com/diorama.html> I think the b&w makes the feel of the images more real than it would be in colour.

This fits in nicely with the subject I've chosen for the essay (assignment 4).

UK fashion photographer Harley Weir (1988) was on exhibition too, with *Boundaries*.

Photo project in Volkskrant – 20th of January 2017

Today in the Dutch newspaper *Volkskrant* the *Airportraits* series by photographer Mike Kelley (USA, Los Angeles) is featured. Kelly sets up camp outside of airports and photographs planes as they take off and land—shooting thousands of photos per location. He then uses Photoshop to isolate the planes and combines the images into the composite “portraits” you see below. Each image tells a story about the nature of each airport and the many unseen variables that affect the flight paths of each airport like noise regulations, plane size, and air traffic patterns.

The base image is only a slice of time whereas the planes indicate passing of time.

<http://resourcemagonline.com/2016/10/mike-kelleys-airportraits-are-the-single-most-impressive-commercial-airline-photos-weve-ever-seen/71371/>

<http://www.mpkelley.com/>

Great concept, which can be applied to all kinds of situations with unseen variables. People coming in and out a building, traffic, etc. Maybe I will use this one in my own work once.



Mike Kelley: Airportraits (Los Angeles)



Mike Kelley: Airportraits (London)



Mike Kelley: Airportraits (Frankfurt a.M.; missed approach)

Exercise: On Foucault – 24th of January 2017

The essay is about the emergence of what Foucault termed a “politics of the body” (the body as the nexus of power/knowledge relations). It draws conclusions about the use of this for a contemporary cultural politics of photography.

- Power cannot be regarded only as a negative force. It must also be recognised in its positive forms when it enables the production of knowledge.
- No body of knowledge can be formed without a system of communication, record, accumulation and displacement which in itself is a form of power.
- Discipline and Punishment published in 1975 charts the origins of the prison and the development of modern penology during the 18th and early 19th century. It is about the emergence of a ‘disciplinary society’. The result of changes in the concept of punishment from a system of retribution to a system of reform (the replacement of a tyrannical and brutal regime by a more humane and benevolent system). This was also the implementation of a more pervasive and calculated form of power at the heart of which lay the exercise of discipline.
- The mechanisms of surveillance are part of the ‘technology’ of disciplinary power. Jeremy Bentham’s ‘Panopticon’ provided the ideal model. The mechanisms of surveillance became diffused throughout society (disciplinary institutions like the prison, the hospital, the school, the factory and the asylum).
- The origins of human and social sciences are bound to the birth of these disciplinary institutions. Power and knowledge are interdependent.
- Power is not so much possessed as exercised through the myriad institutions and discursive practices that exist at all levels of social life.
- The emergence of disciplinary society corresponds to urbanisation and industrialisation.
- Politics of the body: when discipline is a power which engages and infiltrates the physical capabilities of individuals.
- Photography has been historically important in the emergence of the ‘disciplinary society’ because the photographic image would be regarded as a form of empirical truth or evidence of the real.
- Photography was employed in the fields of anthropology, medicine and criminology which drew together a whole series of discursive operations levelled at the body and organised along the axes of race, class or gender. Photography as a mechanism of surveillance in the exercise of disciplinary power.
- Foucault creates a picture of society in which the presence of power is so pervasive, so diffuse and polymorphous that it would appear to make any form of resistance implausible. But just as the forms of power are localised and specific so should be the forms of resistance. There is no overall strategy for an oppositional cultural politics of photography. It is necessary to develop alternative ways of working and different photographic forms and devices suitable to the varied contexts in which the photograph is used.

Exercise: The gaze – 25th of January 2017

The idea of the gaze applies in every way to my work, because I mostly photograph people. In my work I aim to realise two objectives:

- Prevent the tourist gaze and strive for close involvement. Prevent superficiality and strive for in-depth images.
- Prevent difference in power and strive for equality in the photographer – subject relationship.

My preferred way of working is making the photo project a joint undertaking. The photographer and the subject(s) work together in realising the project. The making of the photograph is a collaborative effort. By doing so I am realising the two objectives mentioned above.

Exercise: Don McCullin – 27th of January 2017

Links which do work:

Part 1: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EmlI5IXoSb4>

Part 2: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VLZL3mWD3Ag>

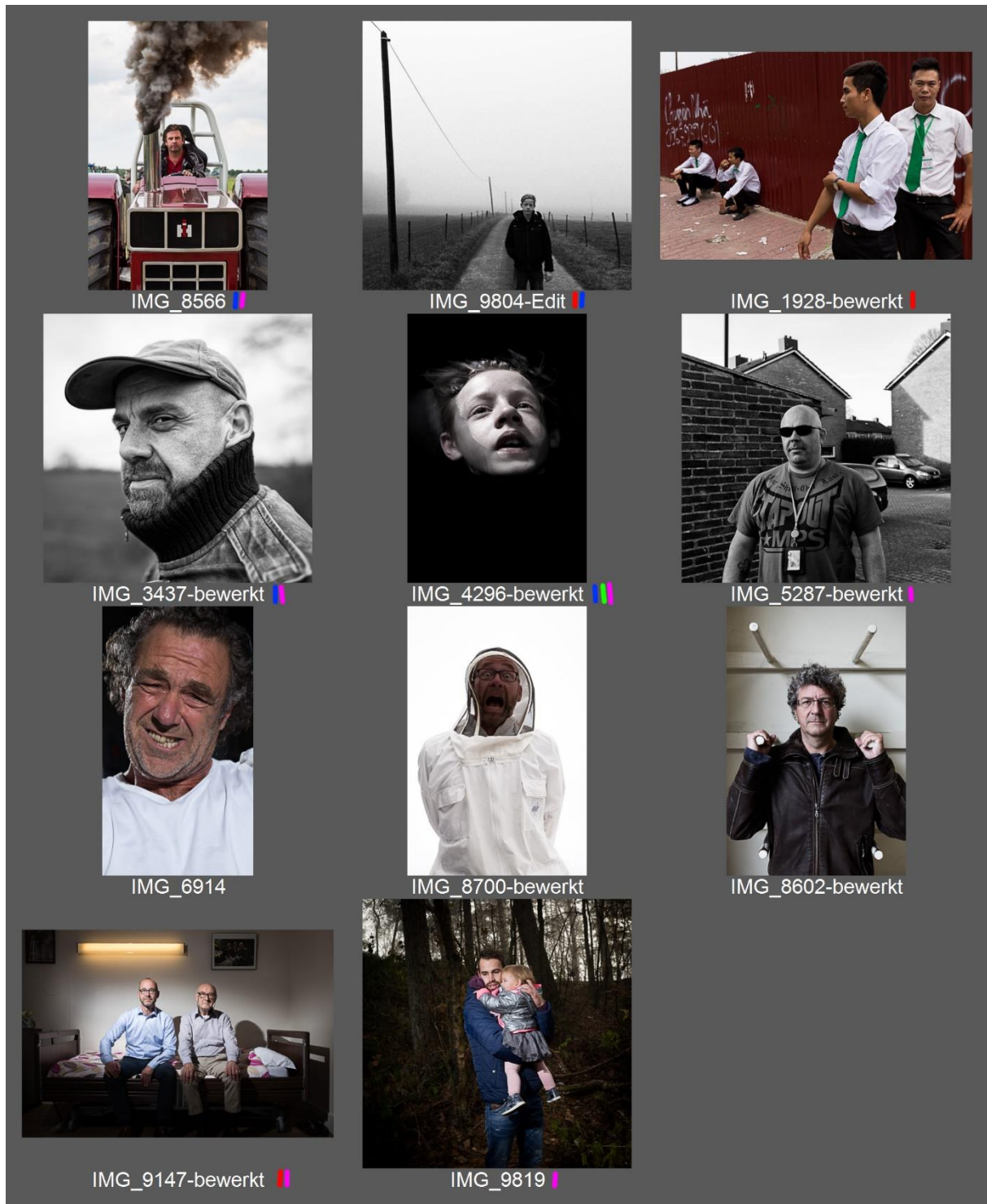
<http://debuitenlandredactie.nl/2012/07/fotograaf-don-mccullin-werd-gevormd-door-oorlog-en-schuldgevoelens/>

Exercise: Images of violence, war and suffering (Pg. 90) – 27th of January 2017

I agree the gore distracts from the story told. The publishing an image should have a justification other than the fact that it's possible. Sometimes it is better to use graphic images to get a message through other times it is better to use a more quiet approach which leaves more to the imagination of the viewer.

Entering the Lensculture Portrait Award competition – 31st of January 2017

Today I asked my peers and tutor for advice on which 5 images to select. These 5 images will be reviewed as 5 separate entries (<https://www.lensculture.com/portrait-awards-2017>). From recent work I selected the following images:



Selection of images for Lensculture Portrait Award competition (with number of 'votes')

Reinout van den Berg (curator of BredaPhoto) chose 4296 as the only photograph. Peter de Krom (teacher photography at a college of the arts in Breda) chose the photographs with a blue stripe. He advised me only to use humour if there is a strong message in the photograph. Photographer Nico Brons chose the photographs with a red stripe. The images with the purple stripes were chosen by Desiree van den Boogaard, a photography student who studies at Fotoacademie Amsterdam. I am in between tutors now, so unfortunately I did not get a response from my tutor. There are exactly 5 images with more than two stripes and I have decided to send these in.

Exercise: Imaging Famine (Pg. 91) – 8th of February 2017

Example of famine images which focus on the suffering of women and children (but the photograph was taken in a clinic, so there is hope and there is no ethical dilemma for the photographer (to photograph or to help)):

14 Buitenland nrc
DONDERDAG 2 FEBRUARI 2017

OROLOG IN JEMEN

Half miljoen kinderen dreigt te sterven

Ook onder president Trump blijven de VS militair actief in Jemen. Bijna niemand bekommert zich om het lijden van de bevolking

Door onze redacteur
Floris van Straaten

AMSTERDAM. De eerste kennismaking van het door oorlog geteisterde Jemen met de nieuwe Amerikaanse regering van president Trump verliep niet onverdeeld gunstig. Niet alleen belande Jemen vrijdag op Trumps lijst van overwegend islamitische landen waarvoor voorlopig een inreisverbod voor de VS geldt, maar ook had uitgerekend de eerste door Trump persoonlijk goedgekeurde antiterreuractie in de nacht van zaterdag op zondag plaats in Jemen.

Hoewel Trump er zelf weinig over zei, eindigde de actie in de plaats Yakla in een fiasco. Bij de operatie tegen een bolwerk van Al-Qaeda, die bedoeld was om informatie op computers te achterhalen, werd een Amerikaanse commando gedood.

„Bijna alles ging fout”, citeerde het televisiestation NBC een Amerikaanse militaire bron. Al bij de onzachte landing in Jemen raakten enkele SEAL-commando's gewond. Bij schietpartijen werden volgens Amerikaanse woordvoerders veertien Al-Qaeda-strijders gedood. Maar er kwam ook een flink aantal burgers, volgens lokale bronnen zelfs tientallen, om. Ook het Pentagon erkende woensdag dat er burgers waren gedood. Onder hen het achtjarige dochtertje van de al in 2011 gedode Amerikaanse islamitische prediker Anwar al-Awlaki. Analisten vrezen dat moslimradicalen haar dood propagandistisch zullen uitbuiten.

Met de rampzalige humanitaire

toestand in het toch al straatarme Jemen heeft de nieuwe Amerikaanse regering zich nog niet serieus beziggehouden. Daarin is ze overigens niet uniek. Ook de rest van de wereld heeft maar weinig aandacht voor het lijden van de Jemenitische burgers, minder in elk geval dan voor dat van de slachtoffers in Syrië en Irak.

Sinds maart 2015 bevechten de shi'itische Houthi's, die de hoofdstad

Sana'a in handen hebben, en de verdreven president Hadi elkaar. Hadi krijgt steun van vooral Saoedi-Arabië maar ook van de VS en het Verenigd Koninkrijk, zij het niet van harte. De Saoediërs voeren hevige luchtbombardementen uit. De tol loopt snel op. Vorige week maakten de VN bekend dat het dodental van het conflict de tienduizend is gepasseerd. Tienduizenden anderen zijn gewond.

Het Rode Kruis maakte woensdag bekend dat er elke dag twintig mensen sterven door een gebrek aan medicijnen. Zeker 160 ziekenhuizen en klinieken werden aangevallen en verwoest. Nog maar 45 procent van de ziekenhuizen is in bedrijf en vele daarvan zitten zonder stromend water, elektriciteit en medicijnen. Zo'n 2,2 miljoen kinderen zijn ernstig ondervoed en een half miljoen van hen

is zelfs in acuut levensgevaar.

Het ergst is de toestand in de noordelijke provincie Saada, in het noordoostelijke gebied bij Hodeidah en in de zuidelijke stad Taiz. Vooral in Taizis de laatste maanden zeer hard gevochten.

Vooruitzichten op een spoedig einde aan de oorlog zijn er niet. „Er is sprake van een impasse”, zegt Sarah Leah Whitson, directeur Midden-Oosten van Human Rights Watch, in een gesprek met NRC. „De Saoediërs dachten makkelijk te kunnen winnen. Maar nu zitten ze vast en het is slecht voor hun internationale reputatie. Zelf hebben ze weliswaar geen last van slachtoffers, maar ik denk dat ze graag een makkelijke uitweg zonder gezichtsverlies zouden vinden.”

Saoedi-Arabië rechtvaardigt zijn

Bij de laatste Amerikaanse antiterreuroperatie ging bijna alles fout

optreden deels door te wijzen op de steun die de Houthi's zouden ontvangen van het eveneens shi'itische Iran. Whitson zegt voor de Iraanse betrokkenheid echter maar een keer enig bewijs te hebben gezien. Dit verwijt zou volgens haar echter wel een profetie kunnen worden die uitkomt. „De Houthi's zoeken nu bondgenoten. Dat zou ik ook doen in hun plaats.”

Intussen probeert Al-Qaeda in het zuiden stilzwijgend zijn positie te versterken. Met opzet stelt het zich minder wreed op dan Islamitische Staat, dat weinig aanhang geniet in Jemen. Maar de Amerikanen blijven hen van tijd tot tijd bestoken met drones en soms ook via commando-acties. Dat was zo onder president Obama en onder zijn opvolger is dat naar dit weekend bleek - niet anders.



Een sterk ondervoed jongetje in een kliniek in Abs, in de buurt van Hodeidah.

FOTO UNICEF/AP

“Half a million children in Yemen about to die”, photograph by Unicef/AP

ZILVEREN CAMERA

Een kwetsbaar onderwerp waardig vastgelegd

De Zilveren Camera ging dit weekend naar een fotoserie over Syrische kinderarbeid in Turkije, van Cigdem Yuksel. Pijnlijk mooi en trest tegelijkertijd, vond de jury.

Door Rosan Holak

Winnaar van de Zilveren Camera 2016 Cigdem Yuksel



Hussenin Bilal (12), OODOM YUKSEL

▲ 'Veel kinderen willen juist werken'

Kinderarbeid? Zoeken kan gewoon niet, zou je denken. Maar zo eenvoudig ligt het niet. De 27-jarige fotograaf Cigdem Yuksel, die zaterdag de Canon Zilveren Camera 2016 won met haar fotoserie over Syrische vluchtelingen in de Oost-Turkse stad Gaziantep, legt uit dat veel van de kinderen die ze vorig jaar fotografeerde haar vertelden dat ze juist graag wilden werken. "Ze kunnen niet naar school, wek heeft hun de mogelijkheid was gold te verdienen voor hun familie. Veel van de fabrieksgeenaren, die ook zelf zijn gevlucht uit Syrië, begrijpen dat. Ze proberen die kinderen op hun manier te helpen. Het is de trieste realiteit, maar je kunt niet zo eenvoudig een schuldige aanwijzen. Iedereen is bezig te overleven." Het plan voor haar fotoserie ontstond eind 2015, toen Yuksel samen met Italiaanse journalisten Sakit Khader en Anne-

ke Stoffelen naar Izmit vertrok voor een verhaal over een Syrische meesmokerskelaan. Op het kantoor van de man viel haar oog op een mager jongtje van een jaar of twaalf. Zijn naam was Khalid. Hij was met zijn vier broers en zussen gevlucht uit Syrië, ging niet naar school, en werkte daar. Ik praatte met hem en ontdekte dat hij niet de enige was in zo'n situatie. "In mei 2016 reisde Yuksel met twee journalisten opnieuw naar Turkije. "We gingen om een verhaal te maken over rijke vluchtelingen bij vinder, maar ik stelde voor om daarnaast op zoek te gaan naar kinderen zoals Khalid". Khader legde contact met een aantal fabrieksgeenaren van schoen- en kledingfabrieken in het industriële gedeelte van Gaziantep. "Daarna was het een kwestie van erraotie gaan, heel veel thee drin-

ken, praten, eerlijk zijn over wat je wilt doen", zegt Yuksel. "Khader spreekt Arabisch en ik Turks, dat hielp bij het winnen van hun vertrouwen." Uiteindelijk mochten ze bij zeven fabrieken naar binnen waar ze, onder het geluid van zierende naaimachines, kinderen aantroffen die zoaltes in schoenen aanbrachten of labels in kledingstukken naaiden. Een van de kinderen die Yuksel daar fotografeerde was de twaalfjarige Hussenin. "Ik vond hem sterk. Hij was enorm gedreven en vertelde dat hij later zelf een fabriek wil openen." Ze bezocht hem thuis en heeft ze plannen om zijn verhaal, en dat van andere kinderen, te gaan uitbreiden. "Ik wil hier heel graag mee doorgaan. Dit is belangrijk".

Rosan Holak

Met een fotoserie over Syrische kinderarbeid in Turkije, zijn ze nu gepubliceerd in de Volkskrant, won fotograaf Cigdem Yuksel zaterdagavond de Canon Zilveren Camera 2016. Daarmee is de winnaar van de tweede vrouw van de Zilveren Camera prijs.

Juryvoorzitter Marc Pijst noemde de serie, "juist mooi en trest tegelijkertijd". Een duidelijk goed over ogericht, zei hij. "Cigdem heeft haar onderwerp consequent gefotografeerd, dat maakt het visueel sterk. Het zijn elf beelden die elf keer raken." Daarnaast is de keuze om juist op een overbetrouwbare nationale onderwerp voorjaar won Eddy van Westel met een fotoserie over de strijd tegen terrorisme in de regio en het naakt aan de kledingindustrie waar nog steeds misbruik wordt gemaakt van jonge arbeidskrachten.

De serie doet ons nadenken over onze verantwoordelijkheden in een globaliseerde wereld, meent Evelyn Kunst, die jar voorzitter van de categorie Nieuws Internationaal. "Het is een kwetsbaar onderwerp, dat Cigdem met waardigheid heeft gefotografeerd. Aan de belichting en de houding van de kinderen valt af te lezen dat ze ruim de tijd heeft genomen. Deze kinderen maken een enorme inspanning om hun ogen niet te sluiten voor het vluchtelingprobleem."

Van de vluchteling voorjaar al een belangrijk onderwerp, dit jaar was het aanbod gevarieerder: de slag om Mosul, de aanslag in Berlin. Maar ook, bij binnenlandse nieuws, de aardbevingen in Groningen en de Pokémon Go-hype. Toch viel het kunst op dat vooral een aantal belangrijke buitenlandse onderwerpen inhoudelijk was rijkzonden, zoals de verkiezingen in de VS en de aanslagen in Nice en Dordrecht. Ook waren niet alle fotoseries even sterk. Fotografen hebben de ringing voor een serie zoveel mogelijk beeld in te sturen. Ze zijn niet streng genoeg met hun selectie. Zo'n serie wordt dan afgevoerd. Een gemiste kans, want vaak zitten er wel sterke, enkele beelden tussen die kans kunnen maken op een prijs."

Zelfs de series die dit jaar wel werden genommeerd, waren niet allemaal even krachtig. Toch zat er een aantal opvallende winnaars tussen, zoals de serie over gewonde Nederlandse veteranen van Dennis van Lingen (Documentair Nationaal), de serie die Angelië de Jonge maakte van de tennistechniekers van Nieuw Hoog Catharijne (Nieuws Regio), de humanistische serie van NRC-fotograaf David van Dam die op gang met een per smartphone fotograferende staatssecretaris Marijn van Dam (Politiek Serie), en de serie 'Crossing Europe' van Poika Stenpa (Documentair Internationaal).

NRC-fotograaf Olivier Middelstorp ontving een eerste prijs voor zijn reeks foto's over de herterslag bij Landbouw voor een foto van koning Willem-Alexander en burgemeester Eberhard van der Laan in de Amstel-damse metro (Nieuws Nationaal). Opvallend was dat het ongezonden werk van Kerem Onurhan, die vorig jaar werd doodgeschoten in Libië, niet was genommeerd. De prijs voor de vernieuwende fotojournalistiek ging naar Ruben Terlou voor zijn project 'Lamp de overvloed van de Yangtze'.

Winende foto's zijn te zien op nrc.nl/nbeeld. De expositie is tot 12 maart in Museum Hiversum.



▲ Politiek, serie Eerste prijs

NRC-fotograaf David van Dam ging op pad met staatssecretaris Marijn van Dam (Landbouw en Economische Zaken). Hij volgde de staatssecretaris toen die op zijn dag de twaalf mooiste natuurgebieden van Nederland bezocht.

▲ Documentair Nationaal, serie Eerste prijs

Dennis van Lingen's foto's over de gewonde Nederlandse veteranen in Mosul worden hier te zien in de foto's van de serie 'Crossing Europe' van Poika Stenpa.

▲ Personen in het nieuws, enkel Eerste prijs

Mika Riech's portretserie kwam Abou Issa.



▲ Nieuws Regio, enkel Eerste prijs

NRC-fotograaf Olivier Middelstorp maakte een serie over het leven in de Amerikaanse Waterbedrijfszaken, bij Landbouw, die voor overlast zorgen en worden afgeschoten. Middelstorp werd voor deze serie genommeerd in de categorie 'Nieuws Regio, serie'.



Cigdem Yuksel: Syrian child labor (winner of Canon Silver Camera 2016; news international series)

The jury: "A vulnerable subject, photographed with dignity". Children of Syrian refugees in Turkey want to work, because they cannot go to school and want to contribute to their families.

A positive image. This child of Syrian refugees can go to school thanks to donations to Unicef.



Unicef: War in Syria (www.unicef.nl/noodhulp/syrie)



Celebrity Leontien Borsato (Cordaid-Memisa ambassador) in a clinic in Uganda



Celebrity Leontien Borsato (Cordaid-Memisa ambassador) in Burundi

Stereotyping the superiority of Western European people?

Sensationalist images are not easily found on mainstream media, but they are still there:



Foodproject Malawi against famine (<http://arbandenvoorafrika.blogse.nl/log/voedselproject-tegen-hongersnood/>)



Moussa Yaouli derives spiritual nourishment from his handcrafted leather Bible (satire) (www.theonion.com/article/poverty-stricken-africans-receive-desperately-need-1915)

Conclusion

Three types of images highlighted in the document 'Imaging Famine' still exist today. Although mainstream media do not use the gore victim images anymore. Aid-organisations seem to choose positive images. On their websites I mostly see positive images. Apparently they run a strict photographic policy where images must depict hope, dignity and a realisation that change can happen.

- Victim images, stereotyping.
- Images which tell the truth, avoid sensationalism and respect the dignity of human beings.
- Positive images.

Exercise: The ethics of aesthetics – 8th of February 2017

My comment on the blog post (www.weareoca.com/photography/the-ethics-of-aesthetics/) and the replies to it:

Almost everything there is to say about the images of Chaskielberg has been said in this blog and in the replies to it.

To me most interesting was to find out what the intentions were of Oxfam: “Alejandro’s work for us, depicted a new and very relevant way to tell the story of the people in the HORN and a starting point for discussing the future” (reply of Jo Harrison 27th of January 2012). And the intentions of the photographer: “I would like to break with the idea that a beautiful picture of a hurtful situation detracts from its message or documentary value. My intention is to highlight a hopeful vision of the present, showing people’s strength and to inspire the viewer that a change is possible.” (<https://firstperson.oxfamamerica.org/2012/01/alejandro-chaskielbergs-moonlight-photos-too-beautiful/>).

When we regard the images as advertising we must ask ourselves do these images motivate us to donate? I think they can. Aesthetics draws our attention and makes us look at the images longer. And if the images are effective (in advertising terms) long enough to get the message through. I think these images are successful in this way.

When we regard the images as documentary we must ask ourselves what story the images tell us. I don’t think (the aesthetics of) the images help to tell the story of the work of Oxfam in the HORN. Instead the images tell a whole different story, especially when we leave out the captions and text. To me these images depict some kind of ghosts or elves who guard the village, fish, carry water and take care of crops and livestock when everybody is asleep at night...

Practising: Portraits Martin Schoeller style – 10th of February 2017



Martin Schoeller: Close Up

As a practice I recreated the *Close Up*-style of Martin Schoeller. Using two speed lights with umbrellas on axis and one speed light on a white background.

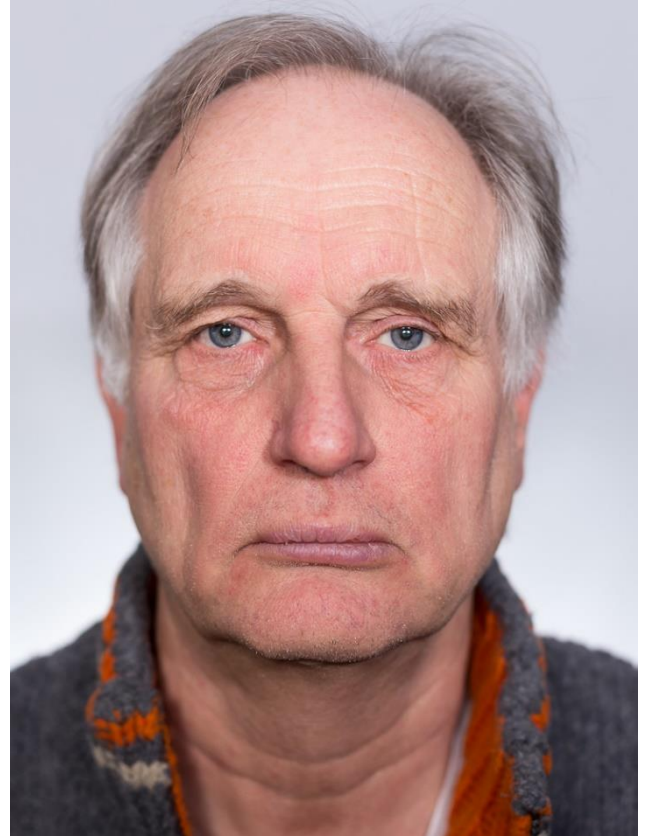


Antoine and Raymond (portraits Martin Schoeller style): 50mm, f/2.8, 1/160s, ISO100

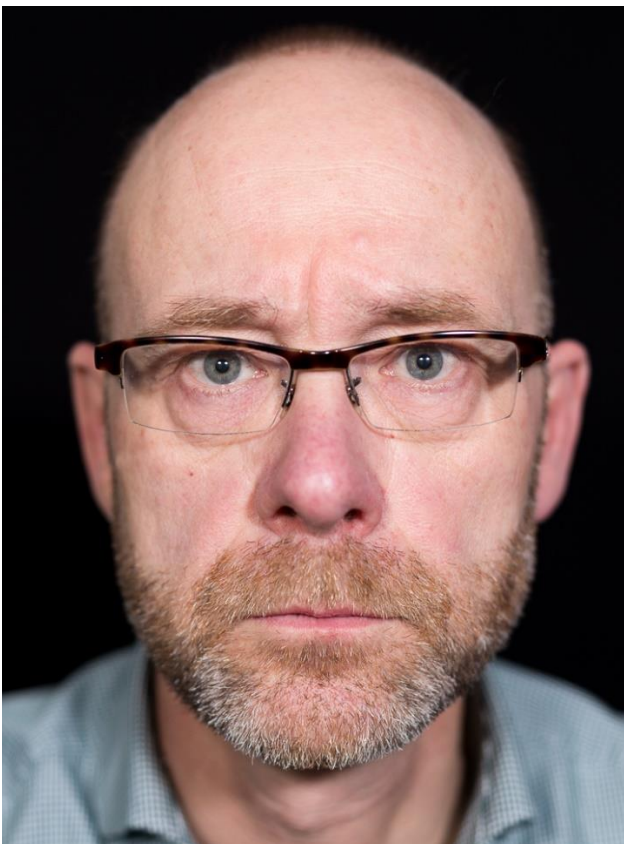


Magdaleen (portraits Martin Schoeller style): 50mm, f/2.8, 1/160s, ISO100

Different backgrounds create an “open” or a “closed” effect. I prefer the portrait on the right.



Janet and Harry (portraits Martin Schoeller style): 50mm, f/2.8, 1/160s, ISO100



Selfportrait Martin Schoeller style: 50mm, f/2.8, 1/160s, ISO100

I don't have the strip lights Schoeller uses. I chose my lights to be rather hard and circular in shape, creating some shadow under the nose and under the chin. I like the background gradient to be subtle. I must control the width of the pupils by getting more continuous light into the setup (but no spill of that light on the subject).



The setup for Portraits Martin Schoeller style

Exercise: Print or not to print – 10th of February 2017

About the use of Guerrero's graphical photograph in British broadsheet newspapers:

Newspapers have to guard their credibility. Printing manipulating photographs in a newspaper is not a good idea. I would have used the photograph as it is. If it were considered too graphical, then I would have used another photograph. Cropping can also be a possibility (which I do not prefer, because cropping this photograph would have significantly changed the scene and the content of the photograph).

Article on the photograph by Kenneth Jarecke (February 28, 1991) of a burnt Iraqi soldier:

<https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2014/08/the-war-photo-no-one-would-publish/375762/>

Exercise: The war photograph – 11th of February 2017

A press release should raise publicity (seduce or persuade visitors to come) and to explain the theme and relevance. Short press release (250 words):

War in Brighton

The third edition of the Brighton Photo Biennial explores photographic images of war, their making, use and circulation, and their currency in contemporary society. Curated by Julian Stallabrass, *Memory of Fire: the War of Images and Images of War*, will run for six weeks from Friday 3 October to Sunday 16 November 2008.

Brighton Photo Biennial 2008 is the largest edition of the photo festival so far, bringing you world-class photography through ten curated exhibitions, an extensive education programme and events throughout the festival period.

On display are photographic images of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the First World War and the war in Vietnam. The exhibitions give you an overview of the evolution of war photography and show you photographs of all sides of the conflicts. Photographs vary from amateur snapshots made with phone cameras to photojournalistic images made with high-definition digital cameras and fine art “aftermath” images made with large format cameras. Subject matter varies from dramatic images of combat to the effects of the war in Afghanistan on women and the quieter, ‘sublime’ images of destruction.

Memory of Fire will give you a lot to see and much to think about. The montaging and manipulation of images, the images the mainstream mass media do not want you to see and the morality of the use of aesthetics in an image of something ugly like war. More information can be found on the website of the Brighton Photo Biennial www.bpb.org.uk.

Exercise: Tribal portraits – 12th of February 2017

Most portraits are made with emphasis on aesthetics, romanticised (the noble savage), showing nostalgia. These images are not to be seen as documenting everyday lives. Of course every photographer brings his gaze to the scene, but these portraits do clearly show the Western (colonial) gaze of the photographers. I am not saying this is a bad thing, but the viewer must be aware of this. The photographs do not document the way indigenous people looked, but document what Western viewers found interesting at that time.

There are two images in the book which I find interesting. One by Antoine Schneck (France, 1963). Martin Schoeller style, with a black background and with better catchlights! I have to try a portrait Antoine Schneck style.

<http://www.schneck.fr/>

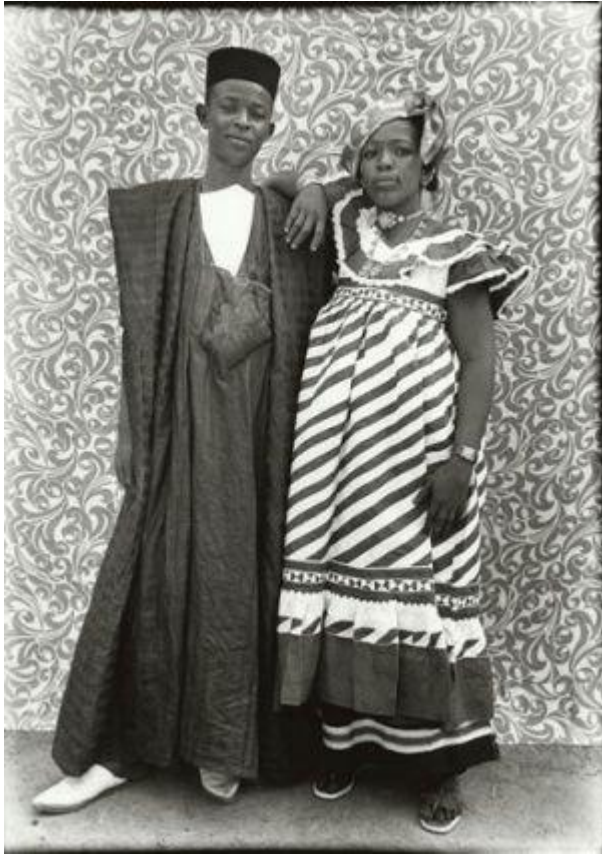
<http://creative.arte.tv/de/folge/antoine-schneck-oder-die-vielfalt-der-gesichter?language=en>

The subjects volunteered to be photographed and the captions tell their names. I think these images are made with respect for the subject, out of interest for the individual.



Antoine Schneck: Mariam Bande, Mahadagha, Burkina Faso, West Africa (2008)

The other image I find interesting is the one by Seydou Keita (Mali, 1921). These images are without a Western gaze, but with a Malian gaze instead. Keita was a photographer with a commercial studio. He used his bedsheet as a backdrop.



Seydou Keita: Untitled; Young couple (1956)

Research point: Honest document of indigenous people – 12th of Feb 2017

Define honesty. I must assume all the bodies of work are honestly made. They are not meant to deliberately mislead the viewer. Do the bodies of work exploit the subjects more than any other? Maybe the question must be rephrased: objectively documented, or documented with respect / dignity?

Every photographer brings his gaze when photographing. This is inevitable. To prevent falling into some of the traps discussed the photographer can live with the subjects for a longer time (in order to really get to know the subjects and to lose his tourist /superficial gaze). Another possibility is using a photographer who is indigenous himself.

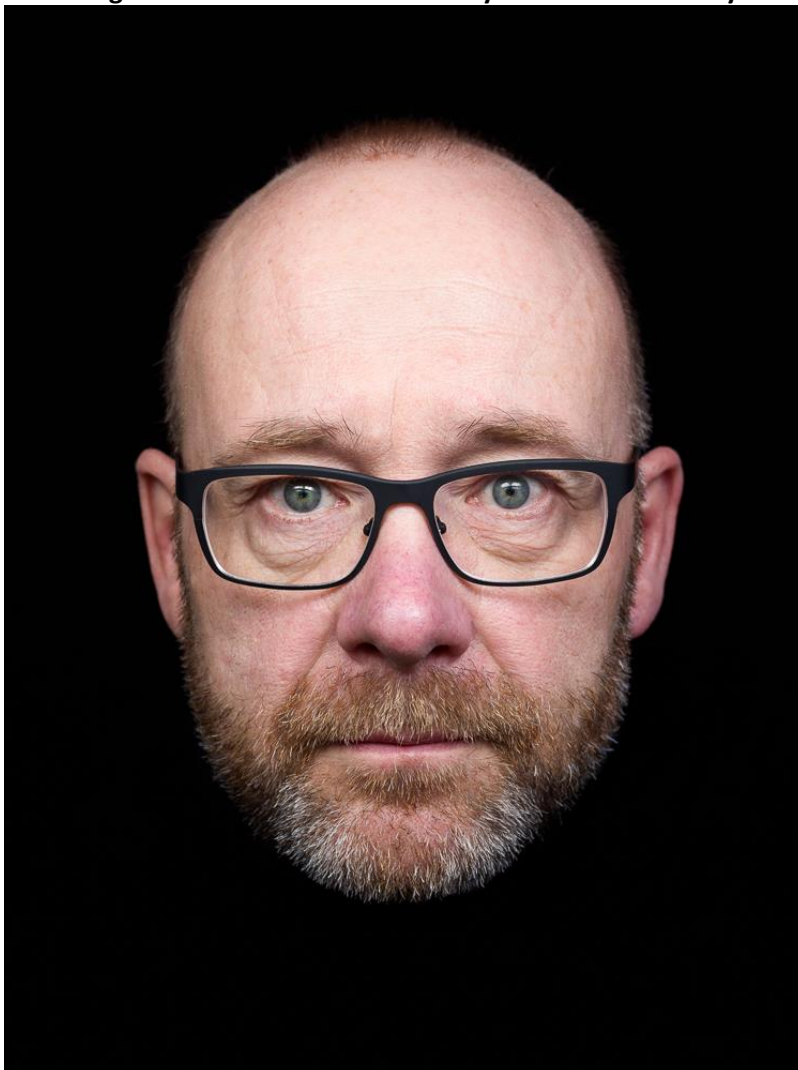
Example of a photographer who maybe has achieved perfect “honesty”: Kevin McElvaney gave single-use cameras to refugees he met in Izmir, Lesbos, Athens and Idomeni. 3 months later, 7 out of 15 cameras came back in their prepared envelopes:

<http://kevin-mcelvaney.com/portfolio/project-refugeecameras/>



Kevin McElvaney: Camera #3, photographer: Firas (Iraq)

Practising: Portraits Antoine Schneck style – 14th of February 2017



*Selfportrait Antoine Schneck style:
50mm, f/8, 1/160s, ISO100*



The setup for Portraits Antoine Schneck style

Reflection: the lights are high, giving a nice shadow under the nose, but making the forehead hot. Lights can be slightly higher than the centre of the lens. The lights filling the umbrellas, while being pointed toward the centre (inward) gives a softer light, preventing hot spots on the face (image on the right). But makes the lighting less interesting and notice the two hotspots on the nose. In the end I prefer the first version (lights high). Also because I don't like the catchlights filling the whole eyes.



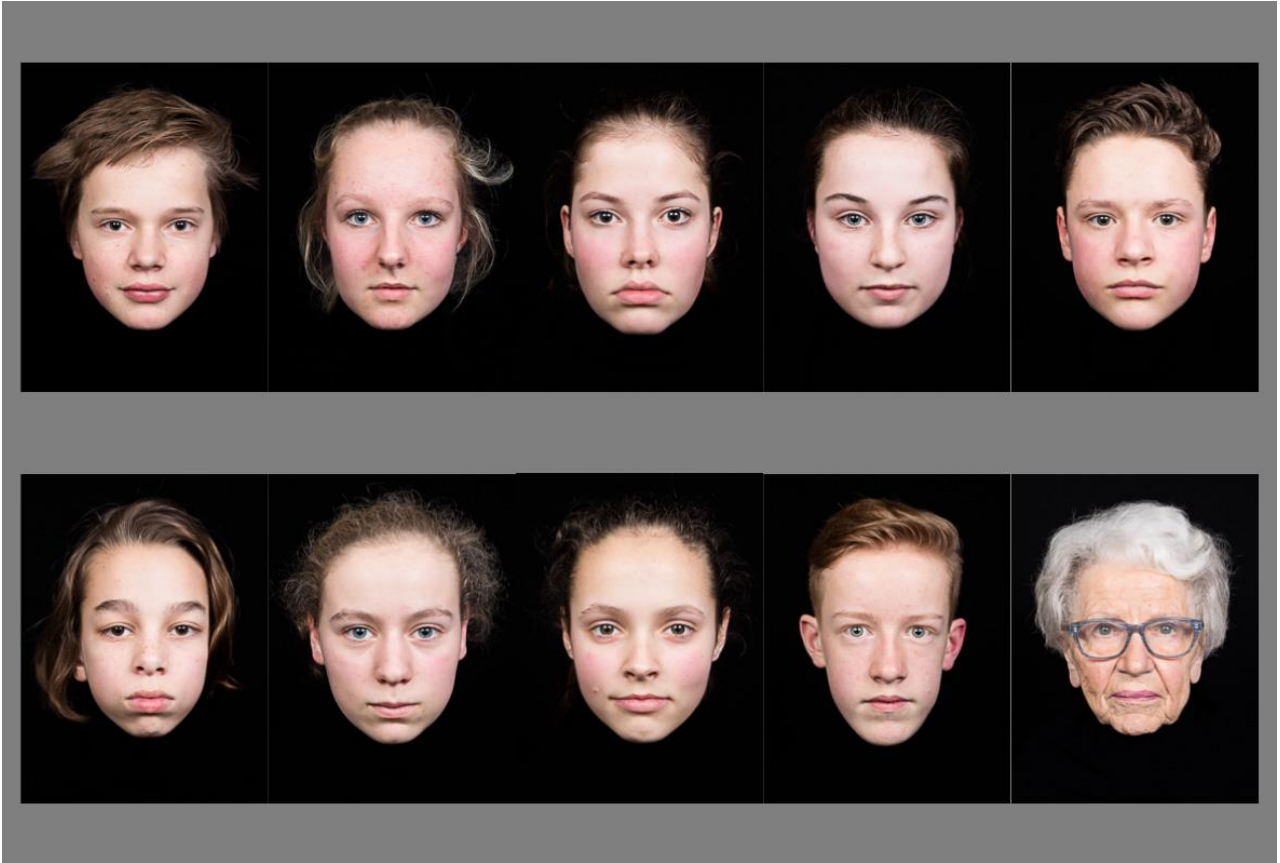
Selfportrait Antoine Schneck style: 50mm, f/8, 1/160s, ISO100 (versions without postproduction)

With the lights a little lower, but higher than the centre of the lens, I made a series of 10 photographs. Being close to the subject with a 50mm lens accentuates the asymmetry of the face. Also it is not really clear whether the subjects are looking at the viewer or not. The big pupils add to a subtle alienating feel. All this produces portraits which viewers tend to look at a long time. Antoine Schneck uses a longer lens and has more distance to the subjects:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=OrzH_LFkQSI



Selection of Portraits Antoine Schneck style: 50mm, f/8, 1/160s, ISO100



Portraits Antoine Schneck style: 50mm, f/8, 1/160s, ISO100

This feels like a (scientific) collection, no context. Associations with physiognomy. The photographs are best viewed individually, large format, then you can study the details of the faces.

Exhibition: Ed van der Elsken in Amsterdam – 17th of February 2017

Last week I visited the Ed van der Elsken (Netherlands, 1925-1990) exhibition in the *Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam*. Van der Elsken was an important Dutch photographer who's imagery provides quotidian, intimate and autobiographic perspectives on the European zeitgeist spanning the period of the Second World War into the nineteen-seventies in the realms of love, sex, art, music (particularly jazz), and alternative culture. A precursor of Nan Goldin. I especially liked his *book Love on the Left Bank* (1956) which I bought.



Ed van der Elsken: Love on the Left Bank



Ed van der Elsken: Love on the Left Bank

Love on the Left Bank is like a photo novel. The story is fictional, but the photographs are a kind of subjective documentary style of his friends he spent time with in Paris in 1950-1954.

Raw, dynamic images, grainy, dark, high contrast. A style which became popular only decades later. The photographs look timeless, but the text makes the book seem dated. This is a reason not to use too much text with photographs. In the future viewers have more room to make different or new interpretations.

Planning the critical review – 13th of January 2017

I am working parallel on assignments three and four. In both I investigate the perceived authenticity of the photograph. I am looking for an answer to the question how it can be that people rationally know photographs can be manipulated but still mostly perceive photographs to be authentic and true. In assignment three I experienced how this works in practice. In assignment four I take on an academic approach.

Sources:

- *Phototruth or photofiction?* (Wheeler, 2002)
- Leslie Mullen thesis (Mullen, 1998)
- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Truth_claim_\(photography\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Truth_claim_(photography))
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Forensic_photography
- PhD thesis on visual literacy (http://www.uni.edu/fabos/ml/readings/visual_literacy.html):
<http://ajungoproject.com>.

Eilderts, C. (2014, March 20). Interview with Carol Eilderts. FORTEPAN IOWA, University of Northern Iowa.

Fabos, B. (2013). *Visual literacy: Aesthetics, semiotics, and the truth behind*

Auteursrechtelijk beschermd materiaal

an image. In J. Jensen, D. Gomery, R. Campbell, B. Fabos, & J. Frechette (Eds.), *Media IN Society*. New York: Bedford/St. Martin's Press.

Iowa Department of Education (n.d.). *Iowa core social studies* [Online]. Retrieved from <https://iowacore.gov/iowa-core/subject/social-studies/6/history>.

Lankhaar, C. & McClaren, B. (1992). *Critical Literacy: Politics, Praxis*

- And 20+ other documents I researched on internet about (amongst others) photographs that create false memories, the truth claim, forensic photography, digital imagery as forensic evidence and the rules of the World Press Photo competition.

Outline of the critical review:

- The convincing power of the photograph
Why are photographs perceived as authentic and true. The truth claim. Indexicality. Iconicity.
- Truth claim and kind of photography
Scientific, medical, forensic, vernacular/snap shot, investigative photography, photo journalism, documentary, fashion, advertising, digital composite.
- Markers of authenticity
Why are some photographs perceived as more authentic than others? Source, context, visual style.
- The future: Will the convincing power of the photograph diminish?
Digitisation is not the issue. The experience people have is. Visual literacy influences the perceived authenticity. What if photographic images could be created using computers only (without any lens-based devices)?
- Guarding the credibility of the photograph
Where credibility is essential to the business aspect. Forensics: procedures, working methods, security, chain of custody, access control. Journalism: Meeting the viewer's expectation of the level of authenticity. Set of rules of World Press Photo competition.

- Conclusion: Ethics
If a photograph in a context suggests being objective and true, than the photographer has a responsibility to be truthful.

Working title of the critical review: *The convincing power of the photograph*

Some possibilities for images meant as illustrations for critical review (practical examples to discuss):

<http://elliedavies.co.uk/>



Ellie Davis: Come With Me 9, 2011



Ellie Davis: Another Green World 8, 2013

Staged / constructed when in the context of the gallery.



Erik Johansson: Impact (2016)

<http://www.erikjohanssonphoto.com/>

Composite images / computer generated images



Normal chest x-ray (<http://www.chestx-ray.com>)

Perceived as unmanipulated when in a medical context



Burhan Ozbilici: Mevlüt Mert Altıntaş shouts after shooting Andrey Karlov, the Russian ambassador to Turkey, at an art gallery in Ankara, Turkey (winner 2017 World Press Photo competition)

Perceived as unmanipulated when in a context of a photojournalism (a trusted source).

Rules of World Press Photo:

<https://www.worldpressphoto.org/activities/photo-contest/code-of-ethics>

<https://www.worldpressphoto.org/activities/photo-contest/entry-rules>

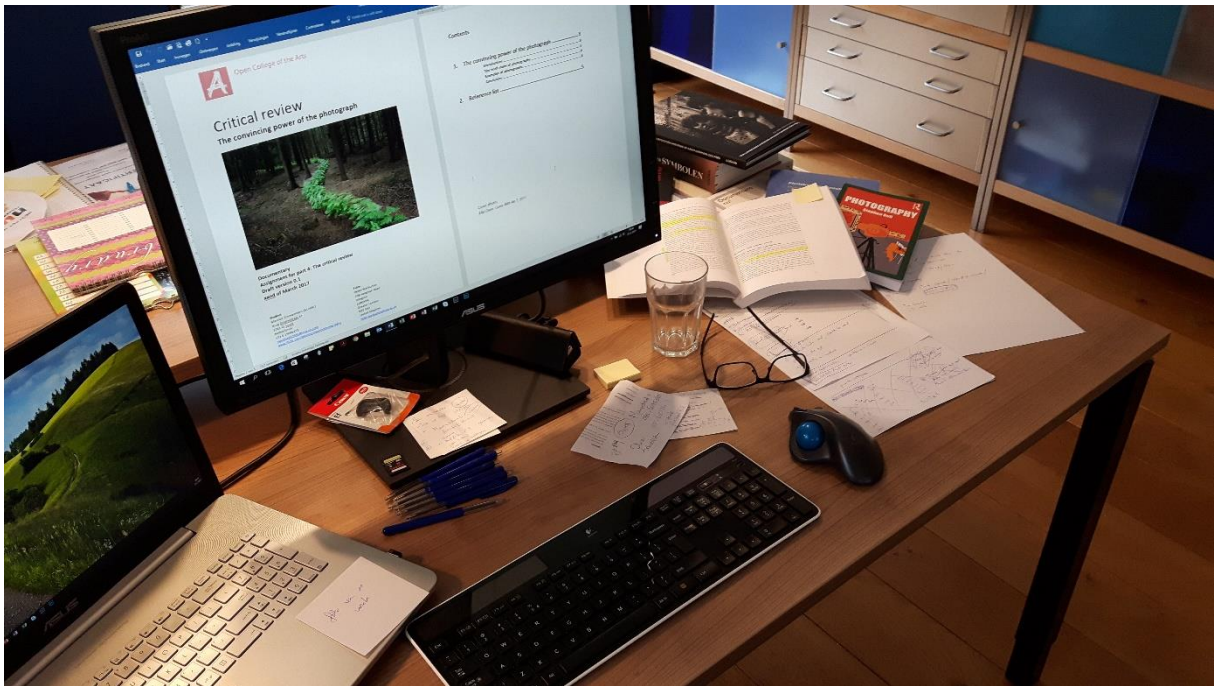
<https://www.worldpressphoto.org/activities/photo-contest/verification-process>

<https://www.worldpressphoto.org/activities/photo-contest/verification-process/how-is-manipulation-detected>

<https://www.worldpressphoto.org/activities/photo-contest/verification-process/what-counts-as-manipulation>

Other sources:

- Mitchell, William J.: *The Reconfigured Eye. Visual Truth in the Post-Photographic Era.* Cambridge: MIT Press, 1992.
- Gunning, Tom (2004). "What's the point of an index? or, Faking photographs". *NORDICOM Review.* 5 (1/2): 39–49.



The making of Critical Review: The Convincing Power of the Photograph (25th of February 2017)

https://www.ted.com/talks/erik_johansson_impossible_photography?language=nl

<https://petapixel.com/2014/09/11/dutch-girl-fakes-5-week-vacation-south-east-asia-posting-phoney-photos-facebook/>

[http://fsjournal.cpu.edu.tw/content/vol5.no.1/01\(p1-p11\).pdf](http://fsjournal.cpu.edu.tw/content/vol5.no.1/01(p1-p11).pdf)

<https://nppa.org/page/5127> (Ethics in the Age of Digital Photography)

Proposal for the personal project – 14th of January 2017

Longlist of ideas

- A series of composite images of people's portraits and a scan of their fingerprint.
- Ready, steady, go! A series of photographs of people, cyclists waiting for a red light, for a shop to open, etc. All frontally photographed.
- Alcohol use and the way we deal with alcohol socially and in our society. Classical documentary aimed at influencing people's opinions.

I have chosen the third idea. A big subject and difficult to visualise. But I want to stretch myself and do this project. The development of a concept and a plan how to tell this story is key. This is the first step and needs to be done before I even make one photograph.

Brief

The habit

Alcohol and our society, our economy, our culture, our history and even the way we socialise are intertwined. Alcohol is considered a "normal" part of our lives. We use it to celebrate, to relax or to (briefly) escape from our daily routines. Alcohol is an "accepted drug" which has its downsides as is shown in the recent German TV documentary *Zum Wohl? Trinkweltmeister Europa* (Joana Jäschke and Esther Saoub, 2016). On average an inhabitant of the EU drinks 10 litres of pure alcohol per year. In the EU we have 23 million alcohol addicts, 195.000 alcohol related deaths per year and additional costs in healthcare and labour market of more than € 150 billion per year.

The aim of the series of photographs *The habit* is to make the viewer aware that alcohol is considered a "normal" part of our lives and make the viewer ask himself the question "But is it really normal?" The photographs should not force an opinion on the viewer, there should be room for the viewer to draw his own conclusions.

The series consists of fifteen b&w photographs which are quiet, non-sensational and do not show people actually drinking alcohol. Aim for images like:

- Group portrait of participants of a wine course.
- Portrait of the owner of an off-licensed store.
- Landscape photograph of a beer brewery, vineyards or the growth of hops.
- City scene showing advertisements for alcohol.
- A soccer stadium which carries the name of a beer brand (advertising links alcohol to being attractive, sportive and even to driving a racing car).
- The use of alcohol in rituals in the Christian church (the blood of Christ).
- Portrait of an alcoholic in rehab.
- Portrait of the owner of a bar or a restaurant.
- Close up of bottles of alcoholic beverages showing there is no legislation for labelling of alcoholic beverages as exists for other foodstuffs.
- Portrait of a young person. In captions telling about his/her drinking behaviour.
- Portrait of an older person. In captions telling about his/her drinking behaviour.
- Law enforcement officers taking alcohol tests.
- Alcohol related injuries in the emergency room of a hospital.
- Alcohol related car accident (aftermath photograph).
- Police officers working in a street with many bars to prevent violence at night.
- Bottle bank in residential area.

Personal thoughts on the subject

Because of a food allergy I must abstain from drinking alcoholic beverages. I have experienced that people sometimes react to not drinking in a negative way almost like I was offending their lifestyle. Alcohol is an integral part of our lives.

Despite the food allergy I sometimes drink alcohol. Is this a sign of addiction, using a substance which is bad for me? Maybe I would have had an alcohol addiction myself if I would not have developed this food allergy. In society the negative sides of alcohol use are denied or repressed. I like to make people aware of this, but without being too didactic or smug.

Research

Sources:

- The TV documentary *Zum Wohl? Trinkweltmeister Europa*:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=40qVxrw1o5U>
- Newspaper articles about this documentary:
<https://www.nrc.nl/nieuws/2016/04/19/documentaire-trinkweltmeister-europa-arte-2130-2-1610143-a1340175>
<http://www.sueddeutsche.de/medien/arte-dokumentation-tv-dokumentation-offenbart-macht-der-alkohollobby-1.2956404>

Inspiration:

Gun Nation USA by Zed Nelson (1965). Zed Nelson lives in London.

<http://www.zednelson.com/?GunNation>

<https://www.lensculture.com/articles/zed-nelson-gun-nation-usa>

<https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2010/sep/01/photography-zed-nelson-best-shot>

<https://vimeo.com/185381185> (30 minute film, Nelson goes back after 16 years...)

In this series Nelson makes the viewer think about gun control and proliferation of weapons in the USA. A big subject which is difficult to visualise. Nelson alternates portraits, close-ups, city scenes and even an x-ray. Nelson tries not to (openly) force his opinion on the viewer. The choice for b&w aids to this perception of objectivity. For me documentary photographs in colour is often associated with subjective documentary. Documentary photography in b&w (historically) connotes objective documentary.

I can imagine it is difficult to let people take their photograph and have them sign a model release. I guess I will encounter the same problem when executing my project. Nelson used a photo booth during his project to photograph gun owners. A smart way of getting portraits of people who would normally refuse because the photographs are about a controversial subject like gun control.

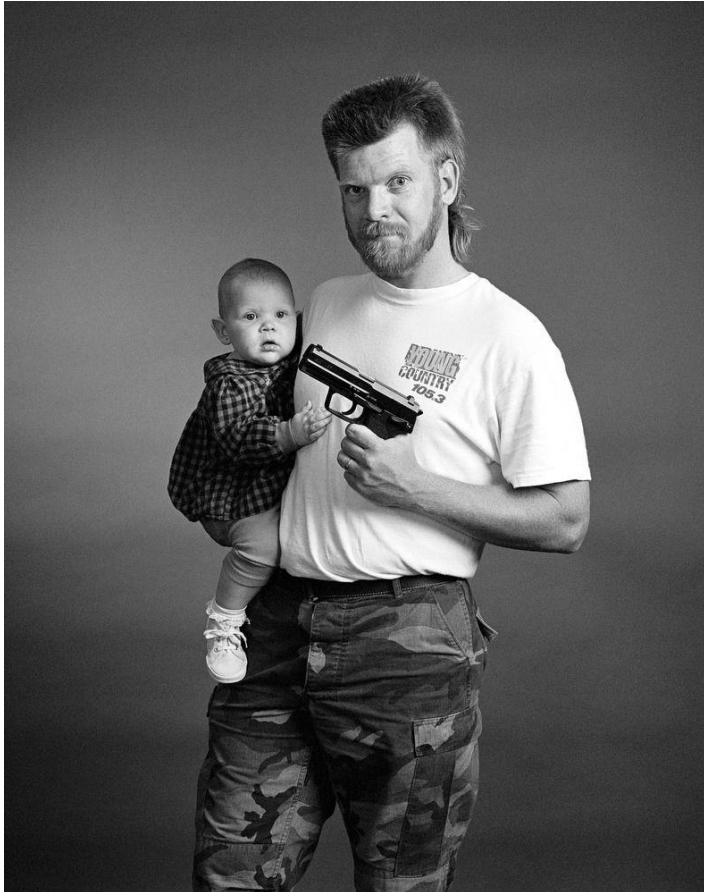
The captions are an important part of the work of Nelson and make the viewer think.



Zed Nelson: "I got a .410 shotgun from Santa Claus last year." Sarah Read, 10, at her father's gun store (1997)



Zed Nelson: Ammunition for sale. Las Vegas, Nevada.



Zed Nelson: "It's my constitutional right to own a gun and protect my family." Mike, father and gun owner. Dallas, Texas.



Zed Nelson: Pro-gun bumper stickers. Las Vegas, Nevada.

Reflection on the work of Zed Nelson: I would not use a backdrop making the portraits. The context is missing. In all the other photographs in the body of work there is a (meaningful) context. The reason for this is the way Nelson approached his subjects (using a photo booth).

Notes on tutorial and rework – 21st of March 2017

These are my notes on the conversation I had with my tutor on the 12th of March using Google hangouts.

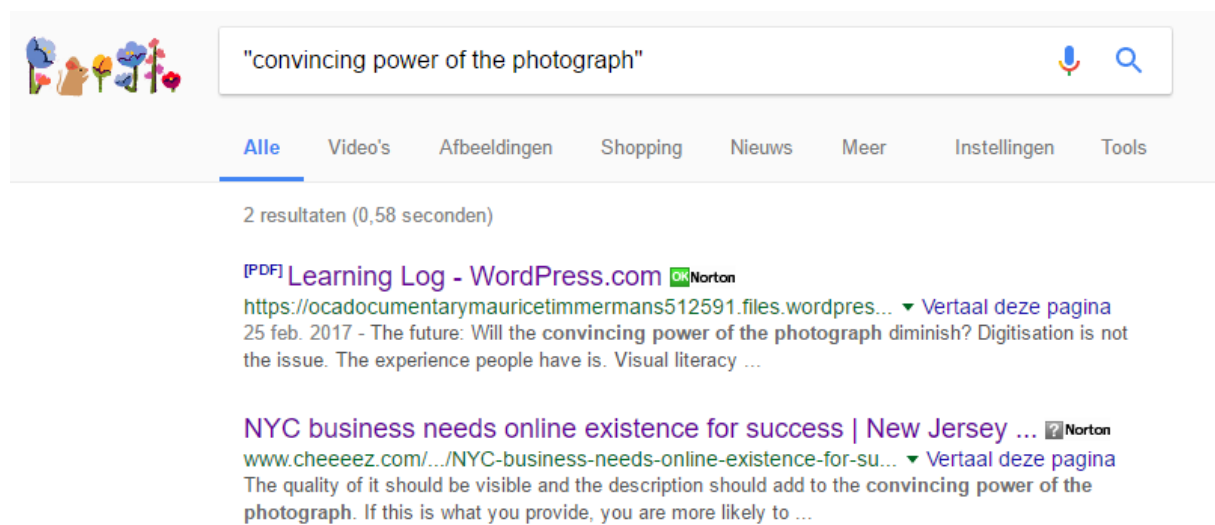
The critical review (part 4)

Comments of tutor:

- The review has many strands of thinking, it covers many topics. Consider simplifying it.
- Consider a simpler structure.
- What is the question you will answer with this review. Describe this in the Introduction.
- Consider changing the title of the review into a question.
- Expand on the conclusion: summarising the key points and make reference to research.
- Consider changing the structure of the review: the Examples sections could be integrated in the other sections.
- Consider changing the title of the section Future developments.
- Consider expanding on the facts that artists are challenging the notion of credibility of the photograph. Consider writing a separate section about this.
- In the section Conclusion refer to the beginning of the review (Introduction) so the circle is closed.
- On page 7 advertising is mentioned. This may need a reference.
- On page 7 Facebook is mentioned. You may use a reference to a website.
- Do not use words like conclude or conclusion until the section Conclusion.
- Consider using a quote from one of the codes mentioned.
- Do not repeat the phrase “the convincing power of ..” too much.
- “Paragraphs” should be called “sections”.
- Did you coin the phrase “Convincing power of the photograph”? Otherwise make a reference to the author.

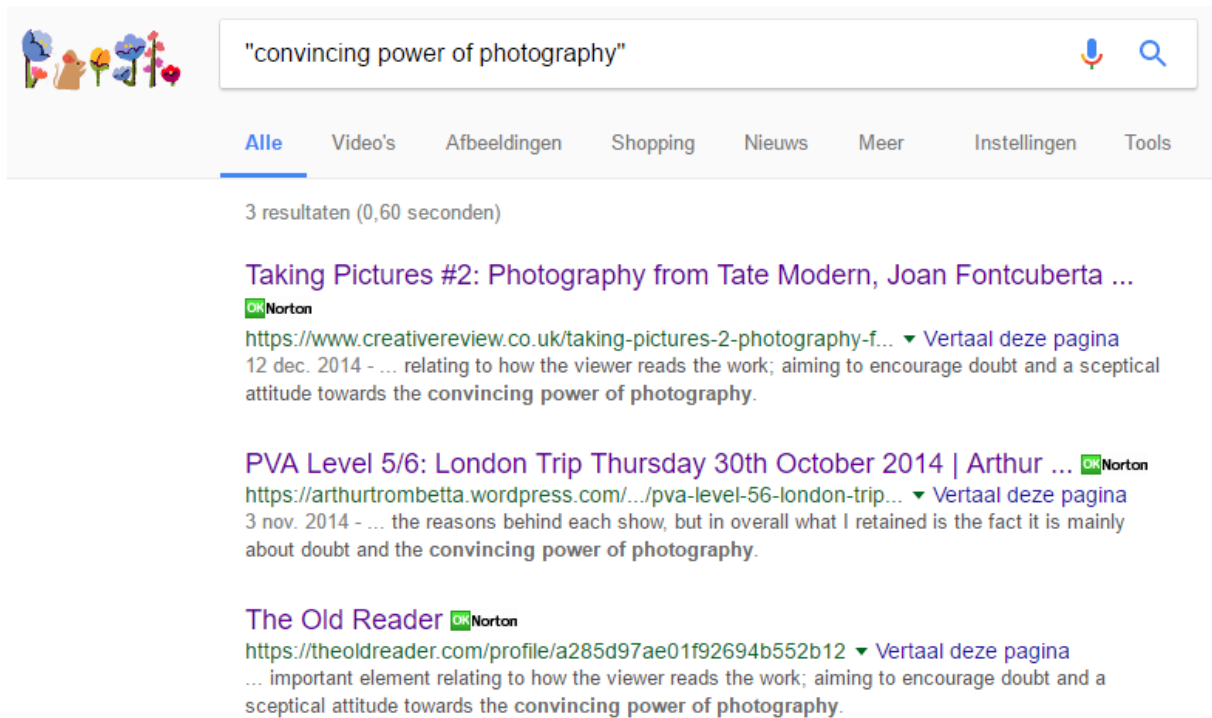
Reflection:

I am not aware of using a phrase which was coined by another author. Many authors use almost the same words and mean the same thing, for example André Bazin. To me the phrase feels like a common thing to say, a nice and interesting use of words, but not very distinctive. I googled and came up with my own learning log and an article which references advertising.



The screenshot shows a Google search interface. The search bar contains the text "convincing power of the photograph". Below the search bar, there are tabs for "Alle", "Video's", "Afbeeldingen", "Shopping", "Nieuws", "Meer", "Instellingen", and "Tools". The search results show two results. The first result is a PDF document titled "Learning Log - WordPress.com" with a URL starting with "https://ocadocumentarymauricetimmermans512591.files.wordpress...". The second result is an article titled "NYC business needs online existence for success | New Jersey ..." with a URL starting with "www.cheeeez.com/.../NYC-business-needs-online-existence-for-su...".

Google search results for “convincing power of the photograph”, March 21st 2017



Google search results for "convincing power of photography". The search bar shows the query and a microphone icon. Below the search bar are navigation tabs: Alle, Video's, Afbeeldingen, Shopping, Nieuws, Meer, Instellingen, and Tools. The results show 3 results in 0,60 seconds.

Taking Pictures #2: Photography from Tate Modern, Joan Fontcuberta ...
<https://www.creativereview.co.uk/taking-pictures-2-photography-f...> OK Norton
 12 dec. 2014 - ... relating to how the viewer reads the work; aiming to encourage doubt and a sceptical attitude towards the convincing power of photography.

PVA Level 5/6: London Trip Thursday 30th October 2014 | Arthur ...
<https://arthurtrombetta.wordpress.com/.../pva-level-56-london-trip...> OK Norton
 3 nov. 2014 - ... the reasons behind each show, but in overall what I retained is the fact it is mainly about doubt and the convincing power of photography.

The Old Reader OK Norton
<https://theoldreader.com/profile/a285d97ae01f92694b552b12> OK Norton
 ... important element relating to how the viewer reads the work; aiming to encourage doubt and a sceptical attitude towards the convincing power of photography.

Google search results for "convincing power of photography", March 21st 2017

All these results make reference to the same exhibition *Stranger Than Fiction* by Joan Fontcuberta (Spain, 1955) in 2014. Fontcuberta is an artist who challenges the credibility of the photograph.

I have made a new version 2.0 of the review. It has a changed structure: I have added a section on challenging the credibility of the photograph and I have integrated the example images in the other sections. To prevent the viewer from feeling there are too many strands of thinking the example images are put in text boxes, so that it is clear to the viewer that these are separate from the main strand of thought, the main line of argumentation. Most of the suggestions of my tutor are followed in this new version.

Brief for assignment 5

Comments of tutor:

- How feasible is this idea?
- Do you have alternatives / backup options?
- Consider carefully the captions you will write to the images.
- Do research.

Reflection:

I am experiencing difficulties in getting access to people and places. I may have to change the angle of the project a bit. I still think the project is feasible, but in this form it will take me more like two years instead of two months, which makes it impractical.

I have developed a second response to the brief (see my learning log for part 5). So I do have a backup option.

Reflection on tutor report and rework – 4th of April 2017

I want to say thank you for the tutor report. These are my reactions / conclusions / what I learned from the report.

- I have followed up on the suggestions which were discussed during the tutorial and made a new version 2.0 a couple of weeks ago. Today I have made a new version 3.0 in which I have followed up on all other suggestions in the tutor report.
- In the tutor report is stated under Coursework: “I don’t feel there’s been much development in terms of the depth of your reflective notes, so I need to redirect you to my previous feedback ... A3 report”. You suggest that I do not follow up on this feedback. In my opinion however this suggestion is not true. As you might remember, in my e-mails to you I told you I have been working on parts 3, 4 and 5 at the same time (parallel). The coursework on part 4 was completed before our tutorial. Please note that research and reflection are expanded and more in depth in my posts in my learning logs after our tutorial on February 16th. If you find that this is not the case, please let me know. Otherwise please change the text in this paragraph in an updated version of the tutor report to better represent reality.
- Choice of images to go with the essay. You ask me how I selected the images. I strived for a variety of images from different genres of photography and ranging from always perceived as authentic (science, medical, intelligence), mostly perceived as authentic (photojournalism) to seldom perceived as authentic (staged and constructed images). I chose the images from work of photographers which a recently viewed. Next time I will remember to write about these kinds of selection and decision processes in my learning log.
- Thank you for your suggestions for further reading and viewing. Some photographers I did not know about. I very much like *Chicago* and *The Prospect of Immortality*.
- In the tutor report is stated that the wordcount of my essay is c. 1500. This is incorrect however. Please note that MS Word does not count words in textboxes automatically. That’s why on the second page of the essay the word count is displayed. The word count in version 2.0 is 2,077 words (including textboxes and excluding cover page, contents and reference list). So expanding on any subject would not be good thing to do. Can you please take out this suggestion in an updated version of the tutor report? Thank you.
- I understand your suggestion of taking the images out of the text boxes. The decision of putting the images in textboxes was taken with a reason. In my learning log on page 39 I have written: “To prevent the viewer from feeling there are too many strands of thinking the example images are put in text boxes, so that it is clear to the viewer that these are separate from the main strand of thought, the main line of argumentation.”. After re-thinking I have decided to keep the images in separate textboxes in version 3.0 of the essay.

2. Reference list

- Mullen, L. (1998) *Truth in Photography. Perception, Myth and Reality in the Postmodern World*. Master thesis, University of Florida.
- OCA Course-book (2012) *Documentary*. Document Control Number: PH2doc050213. Barnsley (UK): Open College of the Arts
- Wheeler, Tom (2002) *Phototruth or photofiction? Ethics and Media Imagery in the Digital Age*. New York (USA): Routledge. ISBN 0-8058-4261-6.