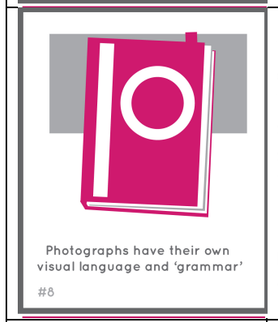
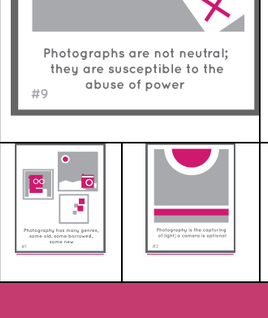
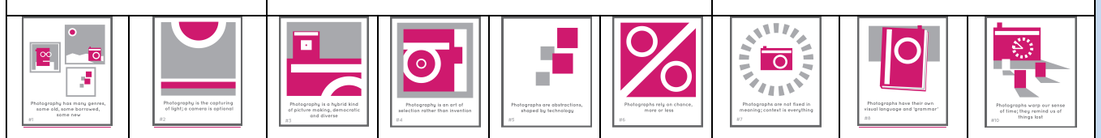
AN INTRODUCTION TO PHOTOGRAPHY (KS4/5)
USING THRESHOLD CONCEPTS

Students will have a choice of how to document their studies, via their own website/blog and/or via sketchbooks. All students will also be encouraged to keep A5 sketchbooks for class notes, sketches, experimental collages etc. High-resolution copies of all photographs selected for coursework use will need to be stored safely, an online gallery such as Flickr, might be considered. Students may also wish to set up a specific Instagram account for the course, for day-to-day experimentation.

THRESHOLD CONCEPTS	**Key questions / prompts**	**Practical approaches** PRACTICAL TASKS USE TRADITONAL ART GENRES - PORTRAIT, LANDSCAPE, STILL LIFE, 'GENRE PAINTING' (DOCUMENTARY) – AS STARTING POINTS FOR EXPERIMENTION (AND SUBSEQUENT RECONSIDERING OF THESE GENRES)
AUTUMN 1 TC#1: **Photography has many genres, some old, some borrowed, some new** Photography has many genres, some of which are borrowed from painting (e.g. still life, portraiture, landscape). Some are special to photography (e.g. photojournalism). Artists/photographers often play with our expectations about genre for creative purposes	How might you order/organise photography, one way or another? *Like/Unlike; Real/Unreal; Old/New; Analogue/Digital; Mirrors/Windows; Hunters/Farmers; Objective/Subjective; Right/Wrong…?* What are the influences of art (genres) on photography?	• Notes, discussions, collaborative sorting (washing lines) of a wide range of images considering genres (and the judgements we make). • A visual presentation in books / blogs – a range of research with personal explanations and justifications, presented in imaginative, experimental and graphic ways (split/contrasting pages, playful venn diagrams, graphs etc.). • Independent experiments in response to contrasting titles (H/W) and / or genre titles – as an introduction to selves. • A series of observational self-portrait recordings using 'traditional' art techniques (to emphasise differences with photography and provoke reflection on required skills for art and photography): *Timed observational drawing; timed painting task with primaries (FAUVISM/EXPRESSIONISM); collage task (DADA)*
 TC#8: **Photographs consist of formal and visual elements and have their own 'grammar'.** These elements (line, shape, balance etc.) are shared with art. But photographs also have a specific grammar - flatness, time, focus etc. 'Mistakes' are often associated with (breaking) the 'rules' and expectations of this grammar […] Some photographers enjoy making beautiful images, others are more critical of what beauty means in today's world.	What are the formal / visual elements? What words are important for a photography student to know? How can the organisation of the formal / visual elements within a photo influence its 'reading'? What are some of the distinctive characteristics of different genres?	• Discussion and structured written analysis of selected images reinforcing/introducing: ○ ***VISUAL:*** *Visual Elements: Colour, Texture, Shape etc., Composition: Balance, viewpoints, leading the eye, Rule of Thirds, Golden Section etc.* (Photo Safari / Right/Wrong?) ***TECHNICAL:*** *Shutter Speed, Aperture, Depth of field* ○ Introduction to terms***: CONCEPTUAL; CONTEXTUAL*** • Produce a series of diptychs / 2 frame images, responding to visual elements and composition key words
  TC#7: **Photographs are not fixed in meaning; context is everything.** The meanings of photographs are never fixed, are not contained solely within the photographs themselves and rely on a combination of the viewer's sensitivity, knowledge and understanding, and the specific context in which the image is seen.	What gives a photograph meaning? Can a photographer control the meaning of their work? Should a photograph require an explanation or title? How does this influence the work? How might the location or format in which you view an image alter its meaning?	**PORTRAITS** TC#2: **Photography is the capturing of light; a camera is optional** Experiments with Camera Obscura, pinhole cameras, shadow prints, Cyanotype experiments TC#10: **Photographs warp our sense of time; they remind us of things lost** Collecting, ordering, responding to a range of previous photographs of selves - from childhood, family albums etc. Produce a series of portrait / self portrait experiments: • formal studio shots, exploring basic camera settings and lighting considerations. *Responses to early practical applications: identity photographs, cultural/ethnographic studies (objective approaches, introduction to New Objectivity*) • Contrast with everyday 'selfies', ephemeral snapchats, snapshots and misleading portrayals – Bob Rogers essay; Trish Morrissey's 'Front'; Amalia Ulman's Instagram feed; Irina Werning; Gillian Wearing's 'Family Album' etc.
  TC#6: **Photographs rely on chance, more or less.** Chance is very important in photography. You can fight chance, tolerate it or embrace it. To some extent, all photographs are the result of chance processes	Can you predict how a photograph will look once the shutter is pressed? - Should you be able to? To what extend does technical knowledge limit or enable chance? What factors can a photographer control? In what ways is it possible to make your own luck in photography?	Produce a series of portrait experiments that are abstracted / distorted through: • use of shutter speed; movement – of subject and camera/photographer; double exposures • choice of viewpoints, focus, depth of field; obscuring etc. • tactile post-production techniques: collage; layering, tearing, folding etc. and re-photographing • digital manipulation: introduction to Photoshop, use of layers, lens blur, adjustment tools TC#5: **Photographs are abstractions, shaped by technology** Introductory notes on abstraction within photography (defining abstraction; early photography / technical limitations; Anna Atkins; Stieglitz, Paul Strand, Edward Steichen; Cubism, Futurism etc.).

AUTUMN 2		TC#4: **Photography is an art of selection rather than invention** Photography is unlike other visual arts in that it begins with a world full of things rather than with a blank slate. However, photography is also an art of production, not just reflection. It does things to the subjects it represents.	Do photographs document or create reality? How is photography similar to other forms of art? How is it different? How do photographs change our relationships to things? Can photography share and express the relationships that we have with others?		TC#5: **Photographs are abstractions, shaped by technology**	Introduction to Documentary photography. (Connection to 'Genre Painting') • Produce a series of images documenting family members/life in response to one of the following: Richard Billingham, Sally Mann, Larry Sultan, Masahisa Fukase, Julian Germain, Bruce Gilden • Written analysis of selected images applying prior learning and reference to Threshold Concepts • Class presentation with explanation / justifications with reference to prior learning
					TC#6: **Photographs rely on chance, more or less**	**STILL LIFE** Introduction to Still Life and documenting environments / spaces / presence through objects • Produce a series of images in response to input on diverse photographers such as Walker Evans, William Eggleston, Peter Fraser, Christopher Nunn
		TC#3: **Photography is a hybrid kind of picture making, democratic and diverse.** Photography crosses different disciplines both in theory and practice. It is a hybrid form of art informed by the sciences and the humanities. Photography is also the most diverse and democratic of the visual arts. It has multiple functions, contexts and meanings. These sometimes overlap in interesting ways.	How has photography been used, in many different ways, to shape and influence your life? Can 'scientific' photographs be considered art? When a photograph documents / witnesses 'art', does the photograph itself become art?	A series of further experiments with photographing objects - how photography can elevate the mundane and every-day into something of interest. Development of studio and documentary approaches inspired by a range of genres and artists: • Experiments with camera (settings) as a means of understanding / revealing what we can't see - Wilson Bentley's obsession with photographing snowflakes; Doc Edgerton's shutter speed motion / experiments • Experiments with lighting / subtle arrangements of simple constructed forms – inspired by Francis Bruguière, Jaroslav Rössler, Morandi, Owen Kidd • Playful approaches – Readymade sculptures and relationship with photography (Duchamp) – inspired by Fischl and Weiss' Quiet Afternoon series; Gabriel Orozco	
		TC#7: **Photographs are not fixed in meaning; context is everything.** The meanings of photographs are never fixed, are not contained solely within the photographs themselves and rely on a combination of the viewer's sensitivity, knowledge and understanding, and the specific context in which the image is seen.	**What means something to you and how might you begin to explore that 'meaningness' through photography?** **How might you use photography to create something new and, potentially, meaningful?** **What would you like your work to mean to others?** **What contexts do you have control of?** **What creative decisions would you like to make and why?**	**LANDSCAPE**		
					TC#5: **Photographs are abstractions, shaped by technology**	Extending on Still Life studio experiments: • Creating own landscapes (with Still Life objects / textures) – exploring form, scale, lighting etc. Brendan Austin, Edward Weston, Barbara Hepworth, Surface of things. Development of a mini personal investigation: • Playful exploration of natural / constructed environment – a randomly generated location (The Boyle Family) opportunity to apply understanding of genres/recent learning - composition, objectivity / subjectivity, abstraction, distortion, typologies etc.
					TC#4: **Photography is an art of selection…**	
SPRING 1 & 2		TC#9: **Photographs are not neutral; they are susceptible to the abuse of power.** Photographs communicate powerful ideas about the world. They can be used to promote both good and bad attitudes. Therefore, students of photography must be very careful to think hard about what they see in other people's photographs and how they make their own.	**How might you use your work as a force for good, or as a means for investigation or self-improvement?** **How will you– through applying new knowledge - make your most powerful work to date?**	**DEVELOPMENT OF PERSONAL WORK*** Students to develop a final outcome: e.g. a series of images, a self-published book, or a short documentary style film (incorporating own stills), demonstrating new learning in an imaginative and experimental way. Planning/outcome should: • Include clear references to prior learning from this year, and relevant Threshold Concepts • Demonstrate improvements - in thinking, making and understanding • Incorporate independent research and analysis • Include quality practical experiments • Conclude with a final outcome(s) / body of work suitable for exhibition • Be supported with a written personal justification *FOR STUDENTS TAKING AS PHOTOGRAPHY (IF YOU ARE AN INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ON A ONE YEAR PLACEMENT, OR IF YOU ARE NOT INTENDING TO CONTINUE TO A2) THE STARTING POINT FOR THIS WILL BE THE EXTERNALLY SET EXAMINATION.	
						

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES: WWW.PHOTOPEDAGOGY.COM; WWW.DEVNICELY.CO.UK