

# A NEW EUROPE

THEMES AND RESOURCES FOR TEACHERS



The following resources and activities are particularly aimed at teachers and students working at Secondary and Further Education level. Four separate resource packs are available, of which this is one - **CONNECTIONS**. That said, regardless of age or photographic experience, we invite everyone to delve in and experiment.

Brighton Photo Biennial 2018 draws on one of the most important geopolitical events of our time. In doing so 'A New Europe' offers a powerful (if initially daunting) provocation for teachers and students. Our four key themes set out to unlock meaningful reflection, discussions and action, not just on the current state of national uncertainty, but also on the nature of photography itself.

Importantly, these resources are devised to also benefit those unable to attend Brighton Photo Biennial 2018. Visit [photoworks.org.uk](http://photoworks.org.uk) and [Photopedagogy.com/BPB2018](http://Photopedagogy.com/BPB2018) for further information.

## BRIGHTON PHOTO BIENNIAL 2018: THEMES FOR TEACHERS

### EDGES

Geographical edges, borders and boundaries can define identity. The United Kingdom is currently negotiating its exit from the European Union. Brexit has prompted questions about national identity and belonging. Fierce debates rage about future relationships between the countries of the UK and Europe. We are approaching a point of no return, standing on the edge of a political precipice.

### HOME

Home is such a simple word and yet it conjures up a complex range of feelings. A home can be a building or a place. Forced displacement through war, conflict and violence has resulted in a desperate quest by many for new homes, often in unlikely locations. Homes can be static or mobile, safe or treacherous, like nests or prisons.

### MOVEMENT

The movement of people and goods is at the heart of the Brexit debate. Movement brings change, a vital energy, new rhythms, new words. Movement can also threaten, destabilise and challenge. Everything moves, not always by choice, and sometimes so slowly as to be imperceptible.

### CONNECTIONS

An ability to connect lies at the heart of all understanding, whether forging relationships or connecting knowledge and experiences for creative means. But making meaningful connections isn't always easy. Trust evolves through empathy, honesty and sensitive communication; new possibilities arise by remaining alert to the unexpected and being comfortable with uncertainty.

## KEY THEME: CONNECTIONS

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### PHOTO EXCHANGE

**Photographs can be exchanged as tokens of affection, a way of connecting with another person. A photograph might communicate something about your life that words might struggle to explain.** Photographs can be exchanged for other photographs, a sign of mutual appreciation between artists/photographers.

An ongoing exchange of photographs might be compared to a visual conversation, with each exchange providing new inspiration. Creative exchanges might incorporate a variety of responses - for example, a photograph may stimulate a drawing or the writing of a poem or short story.

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A work of art is a gift, not a commodity. . . works of art exist simultaneously in two “economies”, a market economy and a gift economy. Only one of these is essential, however: a work of art can survive without the market, but where there is no gift, there is no art.  
-- Lewis Hyde

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Devise a photographic exchange. This might be with one other person or between a larger circle of friends. The exchange might be a form of visual ping-pong where images are ‘served’ and ‘returned’ without discussion. You might begin with an agreed theme or common starting point e.g. insights into one another’s daily routines, work/home lives or personal interests. Alternatively, your starting images might be less predictable, selected at random.

Consider how a quick photographic exchange using social media (Instagram or SnapChat, for example) might compare with a slower approach such as traditional mail or pinning images up in an agreed neutral place for subsequent discovery and responding.

Without using the internet, how might you anonymously exchange or ‘gift’ an image to a person that you do not know, perhaps someone a considerable distance away?

You might be interested in:

- Micky Allan, *My Trip*, 1976
  - Jim Goldberg, *Rich and Poor*, 1977–85
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**Some useful words:** transaction, interchange; collaborate, associate; respond, reciprocate; engage, stimulate, inspire

## KEY THEME: CONNECTIONS

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### INSTRUCTIONS

**An instruction is usually designed for someone else - a set of tools, procedures and parameters for completing an action or task.** Instructions can be helpful and supportive, or a means of ensuring control and order. Instructions can be rigidly adhered to or defiantly ignored.

Some artists have experimented with making and following instructions as a way to channel their creativity and upset our expectations about what a work of art should be.

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I think art, if it's meaningful at all, is a conversation with other artists. You say something, they say something, you move back and forth.

-- **John Baldessari**

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Design a set of instructions for making one or more photographs. Reflect on the ways in which you normally make photographs - location, subject, equipment, point of view, composition etc. Perhaps your instructions will be designed to require someone else to photograph like you, or to make images that you would like to have made but haven't.

Will your instructions be very clear and precise, or will you leave room for interpretation? Who will receive your instructions, and how will they share the resulting images with you?

What photographic instructions might you devise for someone in very different circumstances, even if they may never get to follow them (for example, from a different country, culture or from a previous/future period in time)?

Who could you ask to create some instructions for you?

You might be interested in:

- John Baldessari, *100 Assignments*, 1970
- Sophie Calle and Paul Auster, *Double Game*, 1999

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**Some useful words:** directive, mandate, prescription, procedure; re-enact, decipher, translate; improvise, interpret, adhere, adapt, renounce

## KEY THEME: CONNECTIONS

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### STEAL LIKE AN ARTIST

**Artists and photographers refer to other works of art all the time.** They have always been influenced by the achievements of artists from the past. Since the 1970s, some artists have used the practice of Appropriation to challenge ideas of originality and to question the place of images in culture. Appropriating the work or ideas of another artist might be described as copying, imitating, borrowing, recycling or re-presenting.

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It is something that artists do all the time unconsciously, working in the style of someone they consider a great master. I just wanted to make that relationship literal.

-- **Sherrie Levine**

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Use the strategy of appropriation to create one or more photographs. For example, you might photograph in the style of another photographer. Or you might re-photograph one of your favourite (or least favourite) photographs in a variety of ways - cropping the image, photographing it on screen, projecting it onto an unusual surface etc. You might choose to play with a particular photograph using digital or physical collage techniques.

How might your images differ from the 'original'? Is your work an act of appreciation, a homage, or an act of visual vandalism?

When is it OK to borrow aspects of another artist's work and call it your own? How does the endless reproducibility of photographs and their dissemination on the Internet further complicate this issue?

You might be interested in:

- Richard Prince, *New Portraits*, 2015
  - Sherrie Levine, *After Walker Evans*, 1981
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**Some useful words:** appropriate, imitate, re-present, transcribe; reproduce, propagate, disseminate; influence, engineer

### PHOTOGRAPHING 'BLIND'

**'Blindness' is often negatively employed as a metaphor for being unaware of a pending situation.** 'Walking blindly towards' and 'unable to see ahead' are examples of this. At a time of national uncertainty, as the status of the United Kingdom in Europe is reconsidered, phrases such as 'Brexit Blindness' and a 'Blind Brexit' have emerged.


The limitation of one sense can lead to a more sensitive reliance on another. But what might it be like to photograph without the aid of sight? Is it possible to engage other senses to help you create a photographic image? Are we sometimes guilty of making quite conventional photographs, like those we have seen before? Do we know too much about the way photographs are supposed to look? How do you make a photograph - or a decision of any kind - when you can't see clearly?

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Photographs touch us emotionally, but also in a tactile sense through our physical encounters with them. That moment of contact is about a particular level of frequency, or resonance.

-- **Tina M. Campt**

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 Make a simple blindfold. Working with a partner, take it in turns to wear the blindfold whilst photographing. Your partner's role is to make sure you don't injure yourself; to help you avoid obstacles and navigate a particular environment. Go slowly and take care. You may wish to set your camera to automatic mode, reducing the risk of technical 'errors', or you might feel brave enough to alter the settings on the camera through touch alone. Pay attention to your other senses. How can they help you? What qualities are revealed by your 'blindfold' pictures?

What environment or subject matter might you choose to blindly photograph - how could this choice contribute to a more meaningful experience, for you and/or for subsequent viewers?

You might be interested in:

- Daido Moriyama, *Farewell Photography*, 1970
  - William Klein, *Tokyo*, 1961
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**Some useful words:** awareness, receptiveness; anticipate, predict, intuitive; sensory, tactile; 'shooting from the hip'

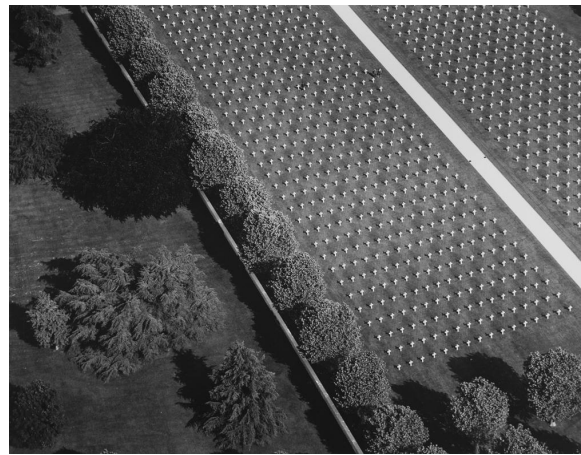
## FEATURED PROJECT: Cross Channel Photographic Mission

The Cross Channel Photographic Mission - La Mission Photographique Transmanche was established in 1987 to explore the landscape and communities affected by the construction of The Channel Tunnel. The mission lasted eighteen years with twenty-six photographers working between 1988 to 2005. Some of the photographers involved included Lewis Baltz, Marilyn Bridges, Christian Courreges, Fabiana Figueiredo, Jean-Louis Garnell, Bruce Gilden, Josef Koudelka, Philippe Lesage, Bernard Plossu and Michel Butor.

Photographers were commissioned to record the impact of this “construction of the Century” from their own unique perspectives. The resulting collection combines rich and diverse insights including formal portraits, landscapes and documentary work.



© Marilyn Bridges, *Vue d'oiseau, Entrée du tunnel sous la Manche* (Bird's eye view, Entrance to The Channel Tunnel), 1992, Commande Mission Photographique Transmanche n°21, 1996, Coll. du CRP/



© Marilyn Bridges, *Vue d'oiseau, Cimetière militaire* (Bird's eye view, Military cemetery), 1992, Commande Mission Photographique Transmanche n°21, 1996, Coll. du CRP/

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Invisible threads are the strongest ties.

-- **Friedrich Nietzsche**

We are like islands in the sea, separate on the surface but connected in the deep.

-- **William James**

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How might you use a variety of approaches to photography to explore a significant (or pending) connection in your life? Potential starting points might be a close relationship, a location of personal importance or an ambition for the future. Aim to produce a diverse investigation that includes, for example: a formal portrait, a landscape, a still-life, an informal snapshot, an aerial view, a close-up, a sequence, an image taken by someone else.

How might this work be collectively presented (for example, in a hand-made book, a digital slideshow or on display in a relevant location)?

Does this type of photographic mission result in a deeper understanding of, or connection to, your subject?