

Topic 2A - Photography Styles

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this topic you will be able to identify some of the more popular photographic styles today. Hopefully, you will also begin to think about some styles that you would like to master.

Photography styles

I want us all to get familiar with some styles of photography that are very popular today. Some of you have probably already mastered or even just encountered the styles that we will look at. I would say that it is difficult to master every style and some genres will not interest you very much. With that being said, it is good to be able to recognise different styles and being able to appreciate the skill and unique approach of each type.

Let us look at some of these styles of photography:

Aerial photography

So, images that are captured from above is known as aerial photography. This is an area that became famous when French photographer and balloonist, Gaspar Felix Tournachon, took the first aerial photograph in 1858. Unfortunately, the photographs he took did not survive. However, he continued experimenting and in 1868 he produced this picture above the beautiful city of Paris.



Introduction to Photography

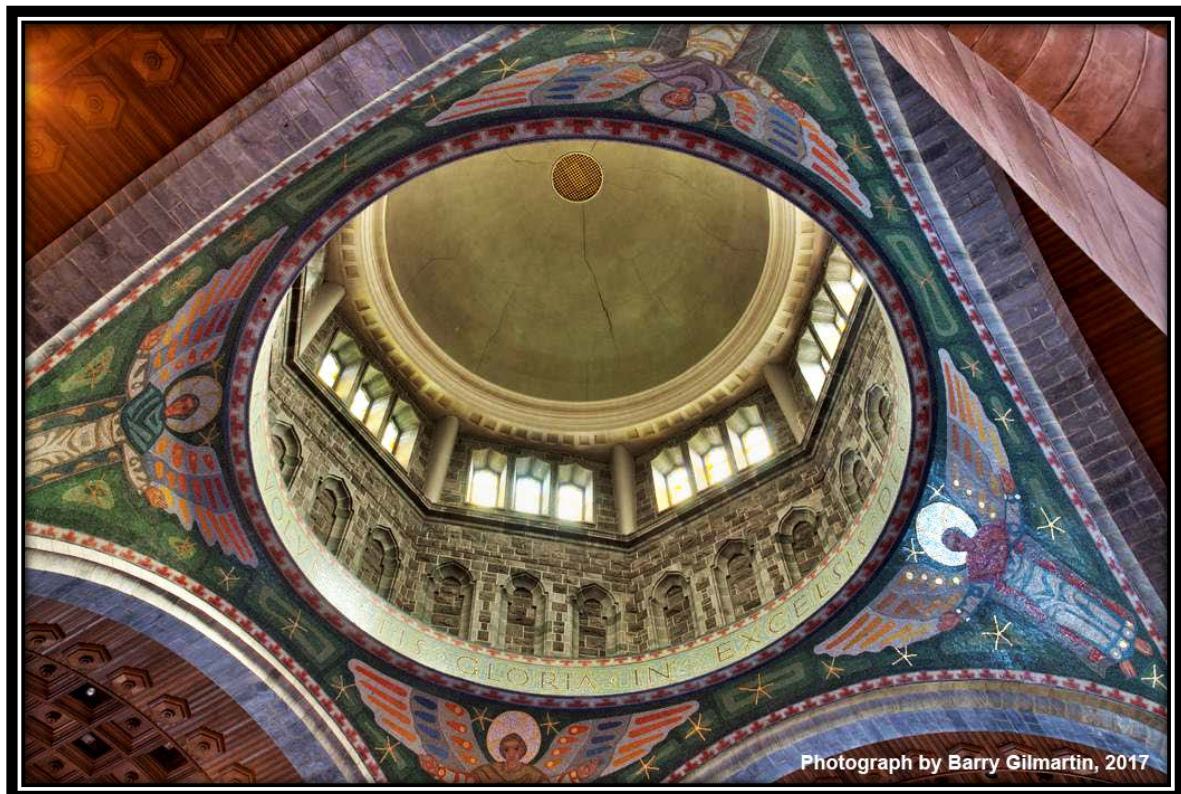
Architectural photography:

Structural or architectural photography can be really visually appealing. We've all been inside or outside buildings before and thought: "Wow! This is impressive!" So, architectural photography includes interiors and exteriors. There are two main challenges for photographers while photographing buildings. These two areas are:

- Lighting
- Image Distortion

Lighting can be tricky either inside a building or outside due to the overbearing presence of the sky when you're outside but then you might have a lack of natural light when you're inside. When there are horizontal and vertical lines in the building, your pictures can appear distorted. Shooting at the right angles can combat this.

The photograph you see pictured here was taken inside Galway Cathedral, the youngest of Europe's great stone cathedrals. The ceiling has a really beautiful dome that floods the interior with light.



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Candid photography

Some of the best photographs that have ever been taken have been taken by chance, in a split second, without the subject of the photograph even realising it. This is known as candid photography. The subjects in the photograph are usually unaware of the photographer, so they usually appear very relaxed and their facial expressions and body language are natural. I often compare this style of photography to observational documentary, a style of filmmaking in which the cameraman lingers in the background recording the actions of an individual who has forgotten that he/ she is being recorded. Wedding photography or most photographs that are captured at events, especially family events, would come under this style. One great technique to achieve relaxed and natural reactions from your subjects requires shooting with a long zoom so that you can maintain your distance and the subject will forget that you are capturing them.



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Documentary photography:

Documentary photography is one that can always be a little tricky to explain because it can incorporate a wide range of subject matter. Its focus is portraying a specific subject or a story that a photographer really wants to highlight. The photography could be based on war, science, sport or social issues. Like candid photography, it is often about catching the natural essence of who or what you are listening or talking to. As the photographer, you will ask questions such as: “Does this picture really capture who this person was? Or does this picture really portray the severity of the fire that caused a hotel to burn down?” Your pictures should tell the story. This is your obligation as a documentary photographer. Some photographers have been criticised for presenting certain events or people in a controversial light through their work, particularly images that have been doctored in Photoshop.



Introduction to Photography

Fashion photography

Fashion photography is one area that is usually associated with high end cameras and is typically used as a means to sell something. Some of the best fashion photography is very creative and it's a multi-million-dollar industry. This type of photography involves serious preparation before the shoot. Everything is planned and nothing is left to chance. After all, time is money and usually the location, lighting, makeup, stylists and the models are not there volunteering for free.



Introduction to Photography

Food photography:

Have you noticed the number of snapchats you get from friends or family of the food they are having for lunch or dinner? Or even all the pictures of food on your news feed on Facebook? Everyone seems to be obsessed with it. This type of photography is called food photography, for obvious reasons. There is a huge market for this type of photography and restaurants, websites and bloggers use it to sell their product or service. Of course, the internet is a big driving factor for this because you can disperse images quickly and freely. If you like this style, make sure to utilise natural light as much as possible. It will make your shots look better. I've never been a fan of flash photography but using a flash here is really a bad idea. Using a flash could mean capturing elements in the texture of the food that you would rather hide. Grease from a big beef burger is the perfect example.



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Landscape photography:

This is one of the most popular types of photography and it is definitely one of my favourite styles. The perfect light can help with your landscape photography, especially when the sun is rising in the morning or setting in the evening. Like most things, I would encourage you to use a tripod to ensure that you have a sharp photograph with everything in focus. Using a long shutter speed, which we will come back to in later topics, will also increase the quality of your landscape photography. There are some great landscape photographers that you should check out online, especially on Instagram.



Introduction to Photography

Night/Long Exposure Photography:

At night, lights around us can transform the way the world looks. Architecture or moving traffic that looks ordinary and boring during the day become magical. As the name suggests, this type of photography requires skilfully using light, shutter speed and aperture, which is a skill we will come back to later in this course. This is a style that I have been really interested in lately and it's a great opportunity to experiment and have some fun with your camera. To get good quality long exposure shots you need to practice and have a good understanding of your camera's manual mode. A colleague of mine, Anthony, loves this style of photography and is quite an expert at this stage. By the end of this course and with plenty of practice, I'm sure you will have captured photographs just like this.



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Photojournalism:

This style of photography is like the documentary style that we looked at earlier. The difference here is that a photographer captures live events as and when they happen and shares the photographs with the world so that we know about it. We see these every day in newspapers, magazines and blog posts. Think about Peter Parker's job in Spiderman, that is exactly what it is. It's all about capturing those unexpected moments at events that have been planned beforehand. The photographer must be well organised and although it sounds like a cliché, he/ she needs to be at the right place and at the right time. Otherwise, you might miss the moment.



Introduction to Photography

Conceptual/fine art photography:

This genre is all about the photographer's vision and their skill as a storyteller or strength at communicating a message or theme. This photography allows us to create our own fiction with characters in a constructed environment. Emotion and the central idea of the photograph are key to the success of this style. It is a great style if you like to experiment with lighting or photographing objects that you find particularly intriguing.



Introduction to Photography

Portraiture:

People watching or observing how people behave is one of the most fascinating things to do. For photographers, capturing peoples' moods and expressions is an intriguing subject, especially if the person is unaware of your presence. This style includes close-up shots or full body portraits. Often, the face is the focus of this type of photography. Therefore, it is essential that the subject's face is sharp and focussed, especially his/ her eyes. If the shots are staged or planned, which in most cases they are, put the subject at ease by talking to them about something other than the photographic activity. This will free them to smile and give a better impression when photographed.



Introduction to Photography

Sports photography:

Sports photography is all about getting up-close to the action in a very fast and action-packed environment. The best sporting event photographs are captured with very long lenses. Using a high ISO setting on your camera will enable you to shoot at a higher shutter speed which should give you a pretty good photograph. Getting shots from various angles will help your work stand out too.



Introduction to Photography

Street photography:

Street photography is all about the everyday life in public spaces or life as it occurs in an urban space. It is very like candid or documentary photography, but the photographer captures the public space as he or she sees it. This style is more than just capturing the tourist hotspots in a city. It's much more expressive and about capturing some real-life scenes. Being patient and observant are key here and being able to react to a story developing in front of your eyes will produce some brilliant photographs.



Introduction to Photography

War photography:

This style is self-explanatory and involves the photographer capturing images of conflicts in war-torn areas. This is often very dangerous and these photographers are devoted to their craft. War photography often includes documenting the aftermath of war, which can make for some very aesthetic and emotionally stimulating work. Keeping shots simple and carrying less equipment are the main prerequisites for these photographers.



Introduction to Photography

Wildlife photography:

This is one of the most challenging types of photography, due to the fact that it can be difficult to capture animals in their proper habitat unless you live in the Serengeti or the Amazon. To prove this, we have this picture of a beautiful tiger. My friend Laura took this photograph during a trip to a zoo and managed to be in the right place at the right time. Like long exposure photography, you need to be comfortable with your camera's manual settings to get the best quality shots in wildlife photography. Of course, being quick and ready to capture the perfect shot at the correct moment is also important.



You can see from these various styles that there is an abundance of skills one can have when taking a photograph. Each of these photographic styles has their very own set of characteristics that make them unique. I'm sure some of you have styles that you would like to focus on, and, perhaps some of you already have experience of working with some of these styles. The important thing to remember is that you need to know what look or effect you want to achieve. You can do this through manual control of the camera, which, by the end of this course, you will be able to do.

What have we learned today? A Summary



Introduction to Photography

We have learned about all of the various styles of photography that are popular today and hopefully there are a few you'd like to master yourself.



Introduction to Photography

Topic 2B - Distinct Photographers

Learning Outcomes

In this lesson, we will be looking at some of the finest work from some of the most famous photographers worldwide. There is no better way to delve into photography than to study the best work by some of the most influential and creative people that work in our industry. This is a nice continuation from the time we spent looking at photography styles. Here, you will see a combination of these styles and better yet, you will see these styles implemented to the highest standard. We will include a wide range of photographers, some from the earliest days of photography, to some who are still with us today. We must look at these auteurs, much like the way we studied the origins of photography and the earliest cameras because the standards these artists and photographers have set have created some of the basic rules that we follow today. This is like the way in which film students and filmmakers study Alfred Hitchcock, Martin Scorsese or Steven Spielberg.



Introduction to Photography

Ansel Adams

Ansel Adams was born on the 20th February 1902 in San Francisco, California. Adams had a tough upbringing. His family's business was badly affected by the great financial panic in 1907 and when he was only four he broke his nose during an earthquake, an injury that marked his facial structure for the rest of his life. The positive result of Adams's somewhat solitary and unmistakably different childhood was the great pleasure and curiosity that he discovered in nature, as evidenced by the long walks he took in the still-wild reaches of the Golden Gate. Almost daily, he could be found hiking the dunes or meandering along Lobos Creek, down to Baker Beach, or out to the very edge of the American continent.

Ansel Adams is probably the most easily recognisable name in photography, even today. Adams' fame and influence are still strongly felt today and many photographers have been quoted as saying that he has had an indelible effect on their work. Adams is renowned for his stunning photographs of a variety of landscapes. He achieved an unparalleled level of contrast using creative darkroom work. Ansel Adams once said:

"I hope that my work will encourage self-expression in others and stimulate the search for beauty and creative excitement in the great world around us."

With an attitude like this, it is clear that Adams had a great passion for his craft and moreover, his desire to share and educate others is truly inspiring. Because of this, he is known to many photographers as the father of landscape photography. In fairness, it's very easy to see why. One can visit the official Ansel Adams Gallery in Yosemite National Park, California.



Introduction to Photography

Dorothea Lange

Dorothea Lange was born on the 26th May, 1895 in Hoboken, New Jersey, United States. She is famous for the photographs she took during the Great Depression. She took the famous photo of a migrant mother, which is said to be one of the best-known photographs in history. In the 1940s, she also photographed the Japanese internment camps. Her portraits of displaced farmers during the Great Depression greatly influenced later documentary photography. One of the great features of Lange's work is the observational nature of her work, reminiscent of the documentary filmmaker, Friedrich Wiseman.

Steve Bloom

Steve Bloom is the author of the very first photography book that I purchased, many years ago. Bloom is the photographer who drew me to explore and study photography. He carefully chooses his shots, capturing the essence of the animal or wildlife he is focused on. What I love about Bloom's work is that he tends to focus on the eyes of the animals in his photographs. In a sense, Bloom is very like a portrait photographer. Lately, Bloom has branched into photographing people who live among animals, spending a lot of time in Africa. He uses a similar approach when framing these people, focusing on getting macro shots of their eyes and facial expressions.



Introduction to Photography

Christian Åslund

Christian Åslund is a Swedish photographer based in Stockholm. The striking feature of his work is his use of geometry and people in urban spaces. His work often reminds me of the way I look at postmodern art - familiar on the one hand but utterly ambiguous and intriguing on the other. With Åslund, the framing of his photographs is key. Everything is finely balanced. Perhaps Åslund's greatest work, to date, is the Honkey Kong series (2013). He has said that this series is a "tribute to classic 2D platform games." To achieve that old-school 2D feel, Åslund shot from as high above his subjects as possible and used a telephoto lens to render the images flat. This is a pretty unique style of photography and one that relies on the photographer's imagination and skill. The quality in this series lies in the transformation of a seemingly ordinary street into an immersive, 2D game screen in which the person becomes a character who looks to navigate through a series of obstacles. Take this example here, one would almost think that the man is in harm's way, hanging on with one hand, with a seemingly bottomless pit at the bottom of the frame. Of course, when one really studies the photograph, it's clear that he has been photographed from above and is lying on his side in the street. The work still retains its effect, however, and Åslund remains one of the most exciting photographers working in our industry today.



Introduction to Photography

Annie Leibovitz

Annie Leibovitz is one of the most famous portrait photographers working today. She has photographed many of the world's major celebrities. Quite often, Leibovitz frames her subjects in elaborate and imaginative set-ups. She began her career in 1970 as a staff photographer working for the recently launched Rolling Stone magazine. In 1973, Leibovitz became chief photographer of Rolling Stone, and she held this position for 10 years. Leibovitz's work is characterised by her intimacy with her subjects. This is evident in her captivating photographs of celebrities, which really helped define what came to be known as the Rolling Stone look. While working for Rolling Stone, Leibovitz began creating her own personal work, which was very important for her artistic nature. Leibovitz desired subjects that would "open their hearts and souls and lives to you." She was awarded The Royal Photographic Society's Centenary Medal and Honorary Fellowship (HonFRPS) in recognition of a sustained, significant contribution to the art of photography in 2009.

Robert Capa

Robert Capa is well known for the many famous war-time photographs he took during his lifetime. Remarkably, he has covered five wars. The name "Robert Capa" was only the name placed to the photos that Endre Friedman took and they were marketed under the "Robert Capa" name. Friedman, like Annie Leibovitz, felt that if you were not close enough to the subject, then you wouldn't get a good photograph. He was often in the trenches with soldiers when he took photographs, while most other war photographers took photos from a safe distance. This dedication to his craft produced some hugely intimate photographs during some of the most turbulent times in US and world history.



Introduction to Photography

Timothy Hogan

Timothy Hogan is an award-winning luxury goods and still life photographer and director working in New York, Los Angeles, and London. He is one of the best luxury goods photographers at work today, in a hugely competitive area. Hogan has worked with clients all around the world and is well-known in still-life and fashion photography. He recently produced a collection of photos entitled, "The FIN Project". The project is built on Hogan's fervent passion for still life photography and surfing. It's a pretty unique topic, one which has not been explored by many other photographers. Hogan's work is always finished with class and style and nothing is left to chance or out of place.

David LaChapelle

David LaChapelle is the final photographer we will look at today. He is known internationally and in Israel as a commercial photographer, fine-art photographer, music video director, film director, and artist. LaChapelle is noted for his colorful, smooth and extroverted style, a style that is charged with sensuality and fantasy. His work is generally packed with accessible popular images, and communicates with a wide and demographic audience. His work has featured on the covers of leading fashion and entertainment magazines. LaChapelle has played a crucial role in the promotion of prestigious brands, such as Diesel and Tommy Hilfiger. His photography often references art history and sometimes carries social messages. His photographic style has been described as "hyper-real and slyly subversive" and as "kitsch pop surrealism". This is most likely as a result from the time he spent with Andy Warhol, who gave him his first job, at Interview magazine in the 1980s.



Introduction to Photography

What Have We Learned In This Lesson? A Summary

We have learned about some of the most influential photographers that work and have worked in our area of study. By learning about these talented and immensely creative individuals, I hope you are beginning to think about what attracts you to photography. What style do you want to develop? What does your work say about you? Do you find fragments of your own personality in the photographs you capture? You will have noticed that each photographer that we have looked at had their distinct style of working. This is a staple of great photographers, something that makes their work stand out. I can look at an Ansel Adams picture of a deep ravine and crystal-clear lake and know that it was Adams' work. Don't worry, the idea of looking at this fantastic work is not to discourage you or to say that you are expected to produce work like we have highlighted. On the contrary, our incentive here is to draw on the creativity and hard work of these pioneers and to encourage each other to enjoy what we do and to always strive for the best ways to tell our stories. Like any craft, it takes time to master the styles we want. However, now that we have learned about where photography came from, what the main styles are and who some of the very best photographers are, we have a better idea of the kind of work we'll be trying to replicate or work towards in the lessons ahead.

