Hi Rob, thank you for submitting your final assignment for Gesture & Meaning. Well done for maintaining a solid commitment to the course – it has been a pleasure to work with you and watch your practice develop.

Feedback on assignment

**Demonstration of technical and Visual Skills, Quality of Outcome, Demonstration of Creativity**

- Presented and formatted clearly – I’m glad you submitted this as a PDF, as the type setting, line-spacing and integration of images makes for a much more pleasant viewing experience than on the blog.

- This is a large topic, which you have approached in a well-rounded manner to cover a spectrum of ideas – offering yourself as wide an understanding as possible. It’s clear you’ve also worked to source a wide range of relevant images, creating a varied selection across documentary, fine art and constructed genres. Whilst this is certainly ambitious and admirable, I feel it conflicts with being able to discuss points and illustrations in significant depth. A loaded structure forces analysis to be brief and generalized in places, especially under the ‘Visual Techniques’ heading. This chimes with a peer comment on your learning log from John, regarding the amount of illustrations. I agree that if you even had a few less images, this would allow you to demonstrate more fully, the analysis skills you’ve been developing throughout the unit. I am really pleased to see that you’re engaging with your peers again here and dealing with their feedback.

- As this is a short piece, I think the coursebook’s suggestion of three chapters or sub sections is quite a good tip, as this helps to keep the structure simple (especially
when dealing with such a large subject) and allows enough word count within each to really get to grips with material and strands of enquiry. If re-working this – I think there could be a couple of options:

- You could merge a couple of the sub-sections. Potentially talking about the ‘intrinsic’ and ‘extrinsic’ qualities within a section about the visual or classing ‘extrinsic’ processes that occur outside of the frame or beyond the photographic moment that is presented as contextual and therefore within your section on text. Also – does defining terms need it’s own subheading? I also wonder if you need to go into depth about narrativity and intentional narrative here – we discussed this in our tutorial.

- I also wonder if the section Theories of Narrative, rather than being an isolated section, could be incorporated as points of reference alongside your areas of technique, rather than being a precursor – for example, using your writing on the single image (dots and gaps) to back up your analysis of the McCullin image. Matching up the theory you’ve been synthesizing with illustrations in direct discourse, rather than introducing the ideas and then briefly visiting images later on. This will help you really unpick which images optimize your theoretical research and also which critical references fall slightly short of relevant enough.

- In contrast to this, and where a key challenge lies, is bringing in a deeper visual analysis of the images you are including – for example, in the McCullin image – you state the photo contains enough ‘information’ for the viewer to construct a very specific narrative, but what information are you referring to? I think it would benefit to be more specific here, and where this occurs elsewhere in the essay. Also – pg 2 bottom lines: I would go for more open phrasing, ‘that a viewer would need to construct a self-contained narrative such as’ – as your suggested narrative is not necessarily definitive and is just one possible reading.

- Nick Ut – I would be wary of statements like ‘only makes sense when’ and ‘wild misinterpretation’ – I feel they are quite closed and could be more objective and thoughtful – there are still signifiers present in the image, however less explicit and nuanced.

- Pg 5 - First paragraph: This to me seems like an additional point, beyond the one you just started and yet there’s no illustration to work with or expand on. I would stick to one point here, the Rapunzel image could refer to the idea of the re-written narrative, which I feel is quite different to the ‘decisive moment’ and past/future ideas.

- Your own practice – here you start off with a negative point, when in fact you have explored the very thing you say you haven’t – so I would encourage you to rework this section to focus on your explorations of narrative (referring to your image and key ideas, rather than analyzing your own image in as many words as this). Perhaps consider merging this section with the conclusion to talk about the influence this written work and reading has had on your viewing of your title and subject and how perhaps your viewing of narrative has changed. I also feel this section could
potentially be made more concise if you did this, allowing for more word count in the main body of the essay.

• Well done for including a list of sources at the end – I personally also like to see the illustrations fully referenced here too. Perhaps as ‘Bibliography’ then ‘List of Illustrations’.

**Coursework**

**Demonstration of technical and Visual Skills, Demonstration of Creativity**

Again with A6 as with A5, there is no distinct coursework set – so I would tag your planning and development (and any re-work) in here too and be sure to document your preparation and presentation decisions for assessment.

**Research**

**Context, reflective thinking, critical thinking, analysis**

I would say a strength to this research is that you’ve engaged with a range of texts, from monographs, blogs and reviews to anthologies and books on wider theories of photography. Were there any exhibitions that might have influenced you during this project? I would include these and any other works/texts that you looked at during this time in the bibliography - even if you haven’t directly cited them in the essay.

**Learning Log**

**Context, reflective thinking, critical thinking, analysis**

I think a brief evaluation, having the assessment criteria in mind, will be just as helpful here, as with all other assignments. You’ve been developing your learning log and depth of documentation with each assignment that you’ve submitted – my advice at this stage would be to proof your work and links – especially navigation menus; ensure posts are tagged to optimize their visibility; link to further research within ideas development posts if they are elsewhere on your log.

**Pointers for assessment**

• Remember to upload reports for each assignment.
• Some students like to write an introductory blog post for assessment on the homepage; clearly outlining the structure of the blog and where to find things – I think these are quite useful and a professional touch.
• In our tutorial we discussed presentation considerations:
  o Previous submissions have been presented in folio box, loose prints. Perhaps next step is to consider simplifying the presentation and refining the overall vision.
  o We acknowledged that G&M unit has 6 very different briefs with bespoke outcomes and therefore presents a greater challenge than previous assessment submissions in terms of consistency and packaging.
  o Devices like setting an over-arching and relatively minimal visual treatment combined with refined and consistent typesetting could help. Also having
an integrated approach to separators using finer elements such as ribbon, when done finely and well, can act as simple and effective markers between assignments.

- Print sizes – various sizes were discussed and 16 x 12 was identified as a solid size for Level 2, I noted a professional preference to photographic print sizes rather than A-sizes.

Suggested Research: Whilst they aren’t folios per say, looking closer and reflecting on production, design and conceptual considerations that go into the making of limited edition photobooks which combine prints and books. For example: Burtynsky: Essential Elements and Paul Gaffney: We Make the Path by Walking. There are plenty of other examples you could look at as these are becoming popular, especially among the more established names and those self-publishing. If you look at Aperture or Mack, I’m sure you’ll see well-documented pieces.

Remember to document your decision making at this final stage. Best of luck!

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<th>Helen Warburton</th>
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