Lesson Plan for Observation by Kwame Baah for Kalpesh Lathigra

Introduction to Large and Medium Format Cameras Workshop

Sessions are limited to 8 students at a time and the workshops are offered as a sign up extra on the MA Commercial Photography Course.

There is an announcement I place on Moodle for students on my MA Commercial Photography Pathway initially to gauge interest. Once it is determined how many students are interested. Dates are announce and a sign up procedure put in place.

Logistics and planning from camera hire, studio booking and technical staff are initiated a month in advance in preparation for the workshops.

The workshops are repeated over a period of a month to allow all students to participate.

They are encouraged to sign up to expand their knowledge using analogue technology.

These sessions are taught over the period of a full day in the photographic studio , I have technician on hand helping me in the studio for practical reasons around health and safety and the number of students using complicated equipment.

Morning Session 10am – 1pm

Introduction

Welcome the students and they are introduced to both format of cameras. Most students are familiar with digital cameras and the technical aspects of using a camera. They are encouraged to hold the cameras and get a physical feel of the equipment which are on a table. Usually the students are buddied up into pairs as equipment is limited.

15-20 min Slide show lecture follows showing leading practitioners work and a video of the cameras in use.

Introducing film format to the students

What is 5x4 Sheet and 120 film and paper positive sheet 5x4

The actual physical film is shown and students are handing examples of the film to have a tangible experience. This is also necessary as they will later in the workshop load the film

How does it differ from other formats

What are the limits of the film in terms of colour and black/white.

Introducing the Cameras

Both examples of the cameras are on tripods allowing for the students to move freely and gather around the studio as I explain the technical aspects of the camera.

Each student will handle the camera and make a some test frames. This will involve using their buddy partner as their subject and vis versa. At this point there is no camera in the film.

Film Loading

Loading 5x4 sheet is both complicated and simple

It is explained that it must take place in complete darkness

They are handed film holders and exposed film is given to the students to practice loading in daylight. Once they are confident they go to the darkroom where they load the actual film that we provide.

120 film is relatively straightforward and students are introduced to film back and taught the loading procedure which is in daylight and significantly easier.

Studio

A simple flash lighting set up is put in place ( students are already familiar with this)

Students then take a series of portraits of each other.

I will be alongside them helping them and walking them through each of the steps of using the camera.

End of session – film is collected and handed to darkroom staff for processing and developing. Students collect the following week. The negatives can be printed in a colour workshop they can sign up for creating a teaching workflow from one practice to another. This allows for a skill set to be built up in analogue photography practice.

Afternoon Session – 2-5pm

Using 5x4 Positive Paper

As the student understand the basics of film loading they are then introduced to a particular process of using a Positive Paper – in essence it gives an almost instant result in the darkroom after making the photograph.

Students are given the paper to load in 5x4 dark slides in darkroom

Students come back to Studio and make another portrait but with new buddy

Students then go into darkroom again and the positive paper is then developed in photographic chemicals in trays giving the students an almost instant result.

This activity allows for both a fun and practical exercise in building confidence in using the large format cameras and has proved to be very popular.

Links to Practitioners who use Large Format

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HkVSEVlqYUw>

<https://gagosian.com/artists/deana-lawson/>

<https://alecsoth.com/photography/>

<https://www.studiobinder.com/blog/what-is-large-format-film-photography/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f88lNhxXue0>