



Open  
College  
of the Arts

## Tutor report

Student name	Simon Chirgwin	Student number	512973
Course/Module	AoP	Assignment number	2

### Overall Comments

This has been a successful assignment and I was impressed with the obvious effort you have put into producing a serious series of photographs, so well done! There were a few issues I noted but nothing too problematic –I noted that several of the pictures seemed a little too tightly framed –a product I suspect of having to fit the assignment aims rather than being a little more relaxed and free with the camera. Overall though this was an accomplished assignment and you have made some really interesting pictures.

### Assessment potential

I understand your aim is to go for the Photography Degree and that you plan to submit your work for assessment at the end of this course. From the work you have shown in this assignment, and providing you commit yourself to the course, I suggest that you are likely to be successful in the assessment.

### Feedback on assignment

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

- There were some very strong images here –specifically the photographs of the stone structures -Single point, horizontal and vertical, and distinct shapes 1 &2 were all pictures I would have been happy to have made myself (and indeed do remind me of some of my earlier work). They work for me because they are visually well composed as well as having a subject matter that begs questions –what is this place, and what happened here? The sea is obviously important and the lighting suits the subjects well.
- This however works against you a bit in some of the other pictures –the swing and the side of the metal barn both are crying out to be a little wider or

for you to have been further back to let us viewers see the landscape more. – You could still have had the distinct shape of the barn by being back far enough to have it at a similar scale to the wall in Single point, and the swings would have still looked diagonal if they too, were shown within their landscape.

- I would probably consider dropping Implied Triangles-1 from the edit – compositionally it doesn't sit well with the other images – the perspective is wildly different than the others thanks to the wide lens and close foreground. Implied Triangles 3 could also have, like the barn and the swings, been somewhat wider – I want to know what the structure to the right is. As a replacement for the first Implied triangles shot I would suggest 140801Fujifilm-40 – the triangle could be in the posts, the grass or the tarmac and it fits well with the cool, grey aesthetic that runs through the images whilst adding something new to the series.
- The Two – points image, although visually in keeping with the series and well composed, is showing some technical flaws that you might want to think about. These are somewhat dull technical issues so I apologise in advance but once you have that side cracked, you can put all your focus on the conceptual side of your studies. I checked the metadata and noted you are using a 35-70mm f/2.8 lens (presumably the mid-90s Nikon one?). As you are at f8 things should look better than they do. It looks like there is some camera shake, which is unusual at this res at 1/200 so I might consider sticking the lens on eBay... If you are going to use it more, then try to avoid the extremes of the zoom range. There is also quite strong fringing around the uprights of the building.
- I'm not sure if the D50 has Liveview or not but if so, and if you are open to using stop down metering and manual focus and really want a 35-70mm, look at the Contax Zeiss 35-70mm from the mid-90s. It has to be an MM version rather than an AE version to be adaptable to Nikon (look for the smallest aperture, f22 I think, to be in Green), and then get an adapter from David Llado at [Leitax](#). It's a bit of a fiddly conversion but once done it is supposed to be about the sharpest zoom ever made... I don't have or use this lens but have done the conversion on the following Contax lenses for use on a Nikon D800: 28mm 2.8, 35mm 2.8, 50mm 1.7, 60mm 2.8 C Macro, and 100mm 3.5. Stopped down a couple of stops these lenses, which collectively cost about a grand (plus adapters on top), outperform any Nikon lens available at any price for landscape work...

## Prints

- The prints were presented well and this shows your commitment to the course which is excellent.
- The colour was pretty close to my screen – certainly acceptable but I would need to know the lab they were produced at to get a profile to do a decent check to see if there were any major issues – I thought the greens were a little yellow but only slightly. This was mostly apparent in the grass in images such as Single point. The sky was also a little heavy but again, this would be

something you might have to adjust whilst looking at the image through the printer profile (Soft proofing in Lightroom or Proof Colors in Photoshop). There certainly doesn't seem to be anything wrong with your colour management workflow which is the main thing I am checking for.

- One little piece of advice –consider making your borders a little larger so that the prints can be easily handled at the busy assessment event. ½” is about right normally for an A4 print.

## Learning Logs or Blogs/Critical essays

### Context

The log is coming along well. The one area I thought you might benefit from some additional work before the next assignment is your documentation of the work you are looking at. There are some good posts on this (Joërg Colberg's notes on Winogrand for instance but you could do with adding some frequent and brief comments about photographers and photographs that capture your attention, and also brief quotes perhaps and your thoughts from the reading you are doing.

### New Topographics

#### Websites

New Topographics –Wikipedia - [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New\\_Topographics](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_Topographics)

Lewis Baltz - <http://www.tate.org.uk/context-comment/video/tateshots-lewis-baltz>

Robert Adams - <http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/articles/p/photographs-by-robert-adams/>

Frank Gohlke - <http://www.frankgohlke.com/>

Bernd and Hilla Becher - <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artists/bernd-becher-and-hilla-becher-718>

Stephen Shore - <http://stephenshore.net/>

Joe Deal - <http://www.robertmann.com/artists/deal/about.html>

Henry Wessel Jr -

<http://www.pacemacgill.com/biography.php?artist=Henry%20Wessel>

Nicholas Nixon - <http://fraengelgallery.com/artists/nicholas-nixon>

Jon Schott - <http://www.johnschottphotography.com>

#### Books

ADAMS, R. 1994. *Why People Photograph*, New York, Aperture Foundation.

ADAMS, R. 1996. *Beauty in Photography*, New York, Aperture Foundation.

ADAMS, R. 2006. *Along Some Rivers: Photographs and Conversations*, New York, Aperture Foundation.

ADAMS, R. 2008. *The New West : landscapes along the Colorado Front range*, New York, Aperture.

BALTZ, L. 2012. *Texts*, Gottingen, Steidl.

BRITT, S. & NORDSTRÖM, A. 2010. *New Topographics*, Göttingen, Steidl.

DI GRAPPA, C. 1980. *Landscape: Theory*, New York, Lustrum Press.

FOSTER-RICE, G. & ROHRBACH, J. 2010. *Reframing the New Topographics*, Chicago, The Center for American Places at Columbia College Chicago.

GOHLKE, F. 2009. *Thoughts on Landscape: Collected Writings and Interviews*, Tucson, Holart Books.

## Suggested reading/viewing

### Context

As you have already made a start on reading some books I will hold off sending a list of critical reading this time and instead am attaching a list of the work of the photographers associated with the 1975 exhibition New Topographics: Photographs of a Man altered landscape. This was a highly influential exhibition held in George Eastman House, Rochester, New York State and the aesthetic you have used here fits in well with the work these photographers produce(d).

## Pointers for the next assignment

The next assignment calls for you to explore colour relationships within the frame. It would be great if you could approach it much like this assignment and attempt to produce a coherent series of photographs that go beyond the requirements of the assignment.

Tutor name:	Dave Wyatt
Date	22/09/14
Next assignment due	17/11/14