

The Documentary Photography Project

Project Overview

Photographers should not put pictures in a box under their beds and be the only ones to see them. If they put film in their cameras it presupposes that they want to record what they see and show somebody else. Photography is about communication.

- David Hurn, from The Picture Essay, a conversation between David Hurn and Bill Jay, published in On Being A Photographer : Bill Jay and David Hurn

As many documentary photographers spend a considerable amount of time, in most cases years, they are continuously refining their ideas about their subject as they immerse themselves into their project. While it is essential to avoid having a preconceived idea that is scripted of what the project will be about and what kind of photographs are necessary to reveal a narrative or what the work is about, a working process of continuous shooting dictates the need to shoot, edit, shoot, edit and so forth in order to refine the project so as to suggest a sense of clarity of what the photographers intentions and conceptual concerns. This clarity of intentions and vision is realized with a body of photographs that speaks of visual, intellectual and emotional complexity through a presentation strategy that has been taken into consideration, including a photographic print portfolio, exhibitions, photographic books, and multi-media presentations.

Assignment

Using the feedback and discussion from the previous critiques, continue to shoot images that reflect more-focused attention on your documentary project in preparation for creating a print portfolio or photographic book that demonstrates a cohesive conceptual concern through your sense of photographic vision and technical craftsmanship. At this stage of your conceptual development, it is essential and necessary that your idea(s) reflect a sense of considered thought, active visual exploration and is articulated with a cohesive vision and voice.

Give particular attention to the following:

- Edit and sequencing of work in the portfolio. Avoid duplication of similar types of imagery unless it is a function of your conceptual concern.
- Consistent image sizing, material sizing and use of materials.
- Refined sense of technical craftsmanship, including correct image density and contrast, color balance and print finishing (retouching and matting considerations).

Requirements

For the documentary photography project presentation, please present one of the following:

Print Portfolio

- minimum of fifteen (15) and no more than a maximum of twenty (20) finished photographic prints that reflect focused attention on a conceptual concern/interest/curiosity through your photographic vision and sense of technical execution and craftsmanship.
- Each finished photographic print is required to be retouched, window-matted / mounted (depending on size) and presented in a sized portfolio box. Number each finished photographic print in pencil on the back of the print / matt.

- Smaller prints, including 8" x 10" and 11" x 14" photographs are required to be matted, while works of a larger size, including 13" x 19", 16" x 20", 17" x 22" or larger, can be presented without matting.
- One-page artist statement (typed) that discusses the work presented in the final portfolio, including why you were inspired to develop the subject matter, how you utilized your photographic vision and use of materials to reveal and articulate your conceptual concern(s) and intentions, as well as the interpretive possibilities you want the viewer to consider.

or

Photographic Book

- minimum of twenty-five (25) finished photographic images in a self-published photographic book that reflects focused attention on a conceptual concern/interest/curiosity through your photographic vision and sense of technical execution and craftsmanship.
- In addition to making contact sheets and edited contact sheets of your idea and concept, you'll need to utilize the Planning The Book worksheet, including page templates, to guide you in your planning and execution of the book as well as determining which on-demand book publishing service, Apple iPhoto, Blurb or SharedInk, you'll be utilizing, and the use of text (written by the subject and/or photographer as well as correspondence between the subject and photographer), found objects and documents.
- The photographic book is also required to be printed a minimum size of 8-1/2" x 11", hardbound and include the following:
 - Title and name of author
 - Introduction and/or afterward
 - Colophon, which is a brief description usually located at the end of a book, describing production notes relevant to the edition. The colophon includes such details as how the book was printed/published as well as copyright and edition information.

In addition to the print portfolio or the photography book, turn-in all contact sheets and edited contacts completed for the project in a manila envelope.

See course calendar for due date. All final portfolios and books will be returned on the date of the Final Exam.