

A-Level Photography Transition

Transitioning from GCSE to A-Level Photography requires moving beyond simple point-and-shoot to developing critical thinking, technical camera mastery, and visual sketchbooks. You will need to learn how to actively analyse images, justify your artistic choices, and connect your practical work to established practitioners.

This course will encourage you to develop:

- intellectual, imaginative, creative and intuitive capabilities
- investigative, analytical, experimental, practical, technical and expressive skills, aesthetic understanding and critical judgement
- independence of mind in developing, refining and communicating your own ideas, your own intentions and your own personal outcomes
- an interest in, enthusiasm for and enjoyment of photography and film.
- the experience of working with a broad range of media
- an understanding of the interrelationships between art and the design processes and an awareness of the contexts in which they operate
- knowledge and experience of real-world contexts and links to the creative industries
- knowledge and understanding of art, design and media and technologies in contemporary and past societies and cultures
- an awareness of different roles, functions, audiences and consumers of photography

Essential transition resources, platforms, and readings include:

1. Essential Reading, Listening & Inspiration

- **LensCulture:** A premier platform for discovering and analyzing the best of contemporary photography, featuring artist interviews and global project showcases.
- **Art UK:** The online home for every public art collection in the UK, invaluable for studying historical and contemporary British works.
- **Colossal:** Often nicknamed the "Tate Modern of the Internet," this platform highlights inspiring contemporary creative and visual art.
- **A Small Voice: Conversations with Photographers and Filmmakers:** Hosted by London-based photographer Ben Smith. The fortnightly show features in-depth interviews exploring the lives, creative processes, and personal journeys of both emerging and world-class photographers

- **Frames Magazine Podcast:** Intimate conversations with photographers about their process and inspirations.
- **Its Nice That:** Website built by creatives for creatives. Not just photography but a wide range of disciplines to discover.
- **Alternative Photographic Processes A-Z:** Website filled with instructions and recipes on how to work in alternative photographic processes and non-silver techniques.

2. Digital Portfolios & Communities

- **Behance:** A fantastic space to view high-quality, personal portfolios of professional and student photographic work.
- **Pinterest:** Highly recommended for building mood boards, tracking themes, and categorizing artist inspiration.
- **YouTube:** An incredible wealth of tutorials covering manual camera controls, creative lighting, and composition.

3. Subject Theory & Pedagogy

- [Photopedagogy](#): Offers incredible breakdowns of the A-Level curriculum, assessment objectives, and features excellent examples of successful student sketchbooks.
- [V&A Museum Photography Collection](#): A highly authoritative source for exploring the history of photography and major photographic movements.

4. Days out

- **Fox Talbot Gallery – Lacock Museum:** William Fox Talbot is famous for his important contributions to the invention of Photography and is considered one of the founders of modern photographic processes. They are currently running an excellent exhibition from Martin Parr.
- **Martin Parr Foundation – Bristol:** Martin Parr Foundation supports emerging, established and overlooked photographers who have made and continue to make work focused on Britain and Ireland.
- **Serchia Gallery:** A residential and not-for-profit gallery residing in a Victorian home on a hillside in Cotham, Bristol. Founded in the summer of 2021, they celebrate contemporary artists, who make visible what would otherwise never be seen. Open daily by appointment.

- **M Shed – Bristol:** M Shed tells the story of Bristol and its unique place in the world. The Bristol Life gallery on the First Floor explores people's shared experiences in the city.

5. Practical Transition Tasks to Try

To hit the ground running in September, bridge the gap between GCSE and A-Level by completing short, independent practical shoots:

- **Theme "Where I Live":** Photograph your local area, close-ups of objects, and wider street views. Focus on capturing what makes your immediate environment unique to you.
- **Artist Emulation:** Research a photographer (e.g., Gillian Wearing, Thomas Kellner, or Edward Weston). Attempt to recreate their style with your own subjects, and write 200 words analysing why they made specific compositional choices.
- **Manual Mode Challenge:** Force yourself to shoot strictly in manual mode. Take 10-15 photos of the same object while systematically changing your shutter speed or aperture to see how it affects your final image.