## UNDERSTANDING PHOTOGRAPHS

VISUAL	TECHNICAL
<ul> <li>The Formal Elements:</li> <li>Focus - Which areas appear clearer or sharpest?</li> <li>Light - Where are the highlights and shadows? Can you guess the time of day? Is the light natural or artificial, harsh or soft, direct or reflected?</li> <li>Line - What are the dominant lines in the image? Are they straight or curved, thin or thick? Do they create direction, do they outline, do they indicate movement?</li> <li>Repetition - Are objects, shapes or lines repeated in the image? Does this create a pattern?</li> <li>Shape (2D) - Do you see geometric or organic shapes? What are they? How do they relate to each other?</li> <li>Form (3D) - Do the objects in the image appear three dimensional? What creates this effect?</li> <li>Space - Is there depth in the image or does it seem shallow? Is there negative space?</li> <li>Texture - If you could touch the surface of the photograph how would it feel?</li> <li>Tone - Is there a range of tones from dark to light? Where are the darkest and lightest parts of the image? Is there contrast? What is the proportion of greys (mid tones?)</li> <li>Colour - Is colour a significant feature of the image? Are there any complimentary colours? Can you attach any symbolism/meaning to the colours displayed?</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Lighting: Type of lighting e.g. available (daylight, street lights), additional (studio lights, flash, reflector) or combination?</li> <li>Aperture: Type of lens (wide angle, telephoto, macro etc.) f-stops, Depth of Field (DOF) - deep/ shallow, focal point - selective focus, in and out of focus, vignette</li> <li>Shutter Speed: Exposure time, over/under exposed, motion blur, panning</li> <li>ISO: Film speed/sensitivity (fast = higher number, grainier/noisier image), tonal range, contrast</li> <li>White Balance: Colour cast/temperature, colour accuracy, warm/cold</li> </ul>
<ul> <li>CONTEXTUAL</li> <li>Historical: Place in time, local/national/global events. History of Photography - tools and equipment, movements, styles, genres and ideas. Significant practitioners/publications/exhibitions etc.</li> <li>Biographical: What do we know about the photographer? What relevance does this knowledge have to the image(s)?</li> <li>Psychological: How do you feel when you look at the image? What feelings/states of mind are suggested by the image? What theories of mind are relevant to an interpretation of the image?</li> <li>Theoretical: Can you apply any theories to your understanding of the image (e.g. cultural, political, philosophical/aesthetic)?</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>CONCEPTUAL</li> <li>Connections: <ul> <li>What connections can you make to your previous knowledge?</li> <li>What relationships can you see between this image and other images by this or a different photographer?</li> <li>What ideas/views do you think the image helps to communicate?</li> <li>What influence might this image have on the development of your own work?</li> </ul> </li> <li>What have you learned from exploring and analysing this image?</li> </ul>