



## Pre-entry Preparation, Requirements and Recommendations

Congratulations on getting a place on the photography A level course at Comberton Sixth Form. In order to prepare you to start in September here is some further information on some of the potential expenditure of the course and an outline of the summer work that needs to be completed for the start of term.

### Equipment Information

#### Camera

The course will have a very small number of DSLRs available for student use but as much of the photography will be done off site and in your own time we strongly suggest the purchase of a DSLR. A DSLR is a digital camera with a detachable lens, allowing for different kinds of lens-based photography. They also offer a far superior range of functions and image quality than a compact/bridge camera and would put the student at a huge advantage for success on the A level course. Sadly these are not cheap but new models are released all the time. The course will be using Nikon Cameras so it may be an idea to look at these. The starter range of Nikon DSLR cameras is the Nikon D3 Hundred range. The most affordable is a second hand Nikon D3100. These have a *buy it now* price on Ebay of around £150. The prices range up to a brand new D3400 which is around £450.

#### Equipment Extras

In addition to a camera you will need **Photoshop** to be able to work on your editing at home. Adobe Photoshop is now purchased as a subscription service at £8.99 a month. This 'photography pack' provides the latest version of the software with another package called 'Lightroom'. The professional 'creative suite' pack, that includes other Adobe products such as Illustrator and Indesign, costs £45 per month but is available with a student discount for £15 per month. You would not need this version for the photography course but it is worth noting in case the family could make good use of this!

With your camera you will need a decent **memory card** (4 or 8GB minimum). Not essential but highly recommended would be a **tripod** (these start at £30) and a proper **bag/rucksack** for your camera equipment. You can also buy DSLRs in starter packs that contain memory cards and bags. If you want to expand your capabilities you may also wish to look at lighting set ups, flashes, backdrops and macro or zoom lenses. This may be better done later in the course when you will have a better idea of the style of photography you wish to specialize in.

In Year 12 students produce digital portfolios so there is no sketchbook required at this time. A good **memory stick** for transferring files between home and school would also be important.

## Printing & Trips

The Year 12 digital portfolios mean no printing in your first year other than 2 final piece prints. Students will be expected to print their own work for their sketchbooks in Year 13. Any larger work such as final prints will be done through Photobox.com. This offers the chance to print at high quality in large format and involves uploading images digitally to the website for printing. There will be trips to galleries each year. We run a bi-annual trip to Paris/New York and London for Yr 12 and 13 Art and Photography students.

## Summer Project

Try and get the above equipment as early as you can in the summer, read the manual and get to know your camera as well as possible. Youtube tutorials are also a great way of getting to know Photoshop and your camera.

Your first coursework project is to be based on the theme of 'identity'. You will make a start to this over the summer by doing the work below. Please bring the Powerpoint into your first lesson.

Below are 5 photographers to look at on the internet:

**Cindy Sherman** (imaginary film stills) **David Hockney** (research 'Hockney Joiner' photos – these are made by collaging many close-up shots) **Annie Liebowitz** (famous portrait photographer of musicians and actors) **August Sander** (black and white photos themed around people in their places of work) **Tim Walker** (fashion portraits in fantasy settings)

Create a Powerpoint to display the following: Pick 1 of these photographers above:

1. **Research** their work, paste in examples of their images. Write about why you chose these images.
2. Plan and produce a **photoshoot** directly inspired by the photographer. You can re-create favourite images or produce similar work. Take lots of photos, select your best and edit these to the best of your abilities. Place in your best images and comment on the shoot, editing and final images. (4 slides per shoot)

If you have any queries about your course preparation please contact Greg Dean (Head of Art and Design) [gdean@combertonvc.org](mailto:gdean@combertonvc.org)

## **Checklist of purchases**

- A digital SLR (within your budget!) with memory card.
- Memory stick for transferring work from college to home
- Photoshop
- A tripod (highly recommended but not essential)