



## Formative feedback

Student name	<b>Michael Millmore</b>	Student number	<b>497132</b>
Course/Unit	<b>3: Body of Work</b>	Assignment number	<b>2</b>
Type of tutorial	AV		

### Overall Comments

Useful evidence of experimentation, reflection and research. While still exploring ideas and researching you need to pin down a focus for future working.

### Feedback on assignment

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

Notes from, and in addition to, our video tutorial, my comments in **blue** -

This tutorial session really helped me focus on what I need to do for A3 and how to narrow my focus to resolve BoW as a coherent project. The conversation covered a great deal giving me confidence that the subject of consumerism/retail/cost of living has much potential to be developed. Indeed, this is also something to be conscious of as the danger is I try to include too much - the most important thing I need to remember from the advice given is that I need to narrow my focus and make a decision about how I am going to interrogate my theme.

My practice has taught me that the smaller, more precise and more concentrated the project, the more chance it has of speaking to wider concerns – audiences are often capable of contextualising it themselves, fitting it to concerns and worldviews they already have.

We only touched briefly on the work I made for A2 acknowledging that this has been a transitional project and exploration exercise that has been most useful in establishing what I don't want to engage further.

While it was a scoping exercise, it was also an aesthetic – which could prove useful later.

I currently have 4 ideas I want to pursue, the advice given was to test each of these, like they are a thought experiment, in order to better understand which is the one to pursue further. This way of refining the early experiments I have made appeals and I hope will enable me to keep the focus I need. Rather than making work in a freeform way with no preconceived notions about where it may lead me, this approach is a natural and necessary way to quickly arrive at a decision about what exactly the final project will look like and enable me to complete the course.

The 4 ideas I have are:

### **1. Local retail:**

I am interested in the tension between large, homogenous corporations and small, local independent traders. I plan to approach some local retailers and ask if they wish to collaborate then interview and photograph them. The process itself will inform how this project progresses and it is likely that the preconceived ideas I have in approaching this will be challenged as I make the work.

Does this naturally lead to a documentary aesthetic, and/or can you envisage using some of your other visual experiments?

### **2. Visual culture:**

The visual information we are surrounded by in retail spaces is fascinating to me, especially the idea that this sits on the edge of our perception. We read this imagery in a complex way that is both sophisticated and unconscious. Photographing this, which will allow further contemplation than is normally allowed in the real world, could throw up some interesting themes and repeated ideas. Shop window displays are the most obvious form of this in the retail landscape and could be a useful starting point.

The unconscious and peripheral could be an interesting visual route into this.

### **3. Cost of living:**

The current crisis in the cost of living and the impact of price inflation is something that worries me and is particularly relevant to now. The way the ONS calculate the cost of living seems deeply flawed and does not give a true picture about the pressure those on low incomes are under. The initial experiments I have made in this area involve photographing bread - a commodity that is both a cheap basic and something that has potential connotations relating to class and affluence. (I am thinking about the gulf between a mass produced value loaf and a handmade, artisan sour dough.) This could also take the form of a documentation of attempts to combat this through foodbanks and charities.

Good to discuss Jack Monroe with you. Bread is also a good starting point with lots of potential routes.

#### **4. My experience of retail:**

Describing my personal experience of working in the retail sector, Les made the comment that I should not discount my expertise in this area. Indeed, this is what has driven my interest in exploring this as a theme for both BoW and CS. I had not really considered this as a subject, but the more I think about it the more I can see how it could be the approach to explore. Making work that is personal could be both practical and authentic. The most obvious pitfall however is how my employer could potentially react to any criticism, although navigating these constraints could also take a project in an interesting direction.

Dependent on how your criticality is framed. Your supermarket is part of a system – the system is the problem. And as you noted supermarkets can operate unilaterally – particularly if they can see a PR/marketing advantage. Rather than temper criticality you could temper identifiability (I just made a word up). You'd be pointing at all supermarkets/consumerism rather than just one.

Next steps are to follow advice and experiment making something based under these four headings. This needs to be quite forensic and dispassionate in approach - choices need to be made quite quickly to enable time to work on whatever form I have decided for the final project.

Useful and reflective notes. Work through this plan. Continue with experimentation. Document the process.

Last time we noted, 'You have a swathe of ideas to examine that require a multiplicity of approaches.' That still probably applies but I suggest that A3 is based on one of the above. However, you could also be blending elements of them together.

## **Coursework**

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

Evidence of thorough working on your blog.

## **Research**

### **Context, reflective thinking, critical thinking, analysis**

Plenty of decent writing and reflection on your blog. Continue to work to situate your practice within a context of photographers and artists – ultimately, it will help you decide on your course of action.

## **Learning Log**

### **Context, reflective thinking, critical thinking, analysis**

Easy to read, reflective and well written.

## **Suggested reading/viewing**

### **Context**

Worth looking at Gerard Hilderly's blog, obviously in hindsight the steps look simple but his progress from A1 to A2/A3 is notable:

<https://gerardhilderlyblog.com/blog/>

*A Primer for Daily Life* by Susan Willis, this is quite old, but I think relevant – and no doubt could lead other useful writers.

*Bread* by Scott Cutler Shershow.

Put any reflections or reviews on your blog.

<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Areas for development</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Experimental images</li><li>• Useful research</li><li>• Useful reflection</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Select your area of research</li><li>• Continue to contextualise with contemporary practice, and...</li></ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contemporary life</li> </ul>
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Tutor name	Les Monaghan
Date	28/02/22
Next assignment due	28/05/22