

Get ready for MA Fine Art: Photograph

As your Course Lead, I'm very happy to welcome you onto **MA Fine Art: Photography** here at UWE. Congratulations on gaining an offer of a place – I hope that you are looking forward to joining our postgraduate community at the School of Arts, UWE Bristol.

I have provided some information below that will help you to prepare for starting with us this September, please read through it and if you have any questions, do get in touch.

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Before you start

The Programme Team are looking forward to welcoming you onto campus in the week commencing 22 September for the beginning of your programme.

Your full timetable will be available to you via MYUWE (login required) once you have started the registration process. Please visit the '[Understanding your teaching timetable](#)' website to find out when your timetable will be published.

[Starting Block](#) is a UWE Bristol initiative that can help you settle into university and get to know our campus, digital resources, and support services. It will help you find your way around, get used to our systems, and practice the skills you need to make a strong start once we meet you.

Preparing and arrival

You can find everything you need to know about registration, Starting Block and the start of teaching, on our [Preparing and Arrival](#) webpage. Take a look at our website to familiarise yourself with our facilities and services such as the [library](#), [study skills](#), [academic support](#), [health and wellbeing support](#) and much more.

Registration

Once you have satisfied all admissions requirements, UWE will send you your login details for our IT systems to enable you to activate your university email account. Once your account has been activated, you'll gain access to the [MYUWE](#) platform where you can

register. Note that your login details for MYUWE are different to those used for the UWE Welcome website. Registration for September programmes will only be open from August onwards. You can find guidance and further information on our [Registration](#) website.

ID card - upload your photo now

We can only print your ID card if you have added your photo to [MYUWE](#). To avoid delays, please upload your photo as soon as you receive login details. For help, go to our [student card guidance](#).

Engage with your programme

There are four activities we encourage you to engage with before you arrive on campus:

1 Start your learning

To succeed within your chosen programme, you will need to think critically about key issues and practices within the discipline. To help you to enhance these skills and be ready to engage with your studies, you should start to research your interests and subject areas before you arrive. You might also explore the [Library](#) webpages to see the wide range of resources available to you once you become a UWE Bristol student.

2 Read around your subject

A key skill which is required to achieve a high level of success within your chosen programme is the ability to think critically about key issues and practices. The books listed below (amongst many more) represent some general but nevertheless fundamental examples of critical thinking around – and engagements with – both historical and contemporary photographic culture and practices. You may have already encountered these texts during previous undergraduate or self-directed studies. Nevertheless, it may be beneficial to (re)familiarise yourself with some before arriving at UWE, in order to gain further insight, inspiration, and to begin to prepare both your critical and creative faculties for postgraduate study. (Please note that this is a suggested and entirely optional reading list, and is not a requirement for beginning your studies):

Adams, Robert (2004). **Why People Photograph**. New York: Aperture.

Badger, Gerry (2010). **The Pleasures of Good Photographs: Essays**. New York: Aperture.

Barthes, Roland (2020). **Camera Lucida**. London: Vintage Classics.

Bate, David (2016). **Photography: The Key Concepts**. London: Bloomsbury.

Berger, John (2008). **Ways of Seeing**. London: Penguin Classics.

Blight, Daniel C (2019). **The Image of Whiteness: Contemporary Photography and Racialization**. London: SPBH Editions.

Bright, Susan (2011). **Art Photography Now**. London: Thames & Hudson.

Burbridge, Ben (2020). **Photography After Capitalism**. London: Goldsmiths.

Campany, David (2020). **On Photographs**. London: Thames & Hudson.

Campany, David (2012). **Art and Photography**. London: Phaidon.

Carpenter, Tim (2023). **To Photograph Is to Learn How to Die: An Essay with Digressions**. Los Angeles: The Ice Plant.

Cotton, Charlotte (2020). **The Photograph as Contemporary Art (Revised 2020)**. London: Thames & Hudson.

Elkins, James (2007). **Photography Theory (The Art Seminar)**. London: Routledge.

Fried, Michael (2008). **Why Photography Matters as Art as Never Before**. New Haven: Yale.

Marien, Mary Warner (2014). **Photography: A Cultural History**. London: Laurence King.

Sealy, Mark (2019). **Decolonising the Camera: Photography in Racial Time**. London: Lawrence & Wishart Ltd.

Sontag, Susan (1979). **On Photography**. London: Penguin.

Soutter, Lucy (2018). **Why Art Photography**. London: Routledge.

Strauss, David Levi (2012). **Between the Eyes: Essays on Photography and Politics**. New York: Aperture.

Strauss, David Levi (2020). **Photography and Belief (Ekphrasis)**. London: David Zwirner Books.

Wells, Liz (2019). **The Photography Cultures Reader: Representation, Agency and Identity**. London: Routledge.

Wolf, Sasha (2019). **PhotoWork: Forty Photographers on Process and Practice**. New York: Aperture.

Wolukau-Wanambwa, Stanley (2021). **The Lives of Images (Volume I & Volume 2)**. New York: Aperture.

3 Position yourself

These tasks are designed to help you arrive onto your postgraduate programme with a developing sense of purpose, and will be discussed in the first weeks of your time on campus:

(i) Prepare a 250-500 word statement that details your ambition for postgraduate study.

This may include comment on why you have chosen the programme; the career trajectory you anticipate following your studies; how you imagine the year might stretch or challenge you; what excites you about the opportunities available; any creative or professional influences, ideas or techniques you wish to pursue. You could describe this brief summary

as your 'manifesto' for study – a framework that will inevitably evolve during your creative development. This will help initiate a conversation at the start of the *Creative Professional Contexts* module.

(ii) As a burgeoning community that will be collaborating and working together closely over the course of coming year, it is important that we all gain some insight into each other's previous experiences, practices, inspirations and aspirations as early as possible. Therefore, before your arrival we ask that each student prepares a short informal presentation – specifically about your photographic/artistic and critical practice, background, and interests – which will be presented to the group in the first few weeks of your studies.

Again, the presentation is expected to be informal; it will not be assessed in any way, and the environment in which it will be presented will be a very friendly and supportive one, so please don't stress about it too much. The presentation can take any form you like – ideally a PowerPoint/Slideshow with images to help illustrate it (which you can share on-screen), but if you'd prefer to make a short film, give a live performance, create an interactive experience or otherwise, that's absolutely fine as well; feel free to have fun with it. Whatever the case, it should include the following:

- A maximum length of 10-minutes.
- Some samples/examples of your own photographic work (as current as possible).
- 1-2 examples of photographers/artists that have influenced/inspired you – ideally one 'historical' example (Big Bang – 2000), and one 'contemporary' example (2000-2017).
- Insight into your areas of interest, and the directions you are hoping to go in – both practice-related and research-wise – during your time with us.
- 1-2 examples of influences or inspirations from outside of the field of photography – i.e. literature, poetry, film, music, science, economics, philosophy, psychology, journalism, political science, fashion, dance, drama, digital culture, pop culture, etc.
- One question to be posed to the rest of the group.

(iii) Consider the following:

RULES FOR STUDENTS AND TEACHERS

by Sister Corita Kent / John Cage

RULE 1: Find a place you trust, and then, try trusting it for a while.

RULE 2: General Duties as a Student - Pull everything out of your teacher and fellow students.

RULE 3: General Duties as a Teacher - Pull everything out of your students.

RULE 4: Consider everything an experiment.

RULE 5: Be Self-Disciplined.

- This means finding someone wise or smart and choosing to follow them.
- To be disciplined is to follow in a good way.
- To be self-disciplined is to follow in a better way.

RULE 6: Follow the leader. Nothing is a mistake.

- There is no win and no fail. There is only make.

RULE 7: The only rule is WORK. If you work it will lead to something.

- It is the people who do all the work all the time who eventually catch onto things.
- You can fool the fans—but not the players.

RULE 8: Do not try to create and analyze at the same time. They are different processes.

RULE 9: Be happy whenever you can manage it. Enjoy yourself. It is lighter than you think.

RULE 10: We are breaking all the rules, even our own rules and how do we do that?

- By leaving plenty of room for "x" qualities.

Helpful Hints: Always Be Around.

Come or go to everything.

Always go to classes.

Read everything you can get your hands on. Look at movies carefully and often.

SAVE EVERYTHING. It may come in handy later.

There should be new rules next week.

More information available here:

Art + Life Rules from a Nun - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IRPyqI3cezo>

Ordinary Things Will Be Signs For Us: Photographs by Corita -
<https://www.jandlbooks.org/corita.html>

4 Connect with others

You can also keep up to date with various activities the UWE Photography community in general at the following links:

- UWE MA Fine Art: Photography - Instagram - @maphotographybristol -
<https://www.instagram.com/maphotographybristol/>

- UWE MA Fine Art: Photography – Facebook - <https://www.facebook.com/MAPhotographyBristol/>
- UWE Photography Website - <https://photobristol.co.uk>

BE PREPARED

Access support

Check the information on our [Disability web pages](#) so you know what you need to do. If you need any urgent additional mobility or other support to fully access all activities during your studies, contact Dr. Steven Paige as your Programme Leader - Steven.Paige@uwe.ac.uk

Get equipped

The University has computers on all our campuses for you to use during your studies. These provide access to our core digital learning tools and any specialist software required for your course. You may have scheduled sessions in computer labs or other specialist facilities, and you will be able to use open-access PCs for self-study.

UWE Bristol licenses many specialist software packages for use on personal laptops for the duration of your course. If you're struggling to meet the financial demands of your course, please contact the Student Money Service team for advice and guidance.

See the UWE website for detailed information on [choosing your IT equipment](#) including [recommended specifications](#).

For this programme we recommend the **Enhanced Specification**.

The core software used in your course includes:

- Adobe Creative Cloud
- Microsoft Office 365

(These packages will run on Windows and Mac devices – but not on all tablets/Chromebooks.)

Also, it is important that you can save, store and back up your digitally-based practical and written work - so we recommend that you arrive with a good quality 1TB (terabyte) minimum portable hard-drive that is compatible with both Mac and Windows operating systems – these are widely available from online retailers.

Photographic equipment

Throughout your studies you will be able to experiment with a wide-range of different types of photographic equipment and materials, in order to expand your levels of practical experience, and to explore a breadth of possibilities within your creative process. Experience has shown us that the nature of a student's practice can potentially change over time, so

prior to the course we do not require or ask you to invest a significant amount of money in new equipment.

Access to a digital or analogue SLR (single-lens-reflex) camera and a computer with both word-processing and image-postproduction software would certainly be useful to you, but if you do not currently have such equipment, please be aware that computer-facilities will be available to you at UWE, and photographic equipment is available for students to loan on a short-term basis (free of charge) through the UWE Central Loans.

International students

[The Global Student Support Team](#) offer information and advice to ensure you receive all the support you need to get the best from your time at UWE Bristol. They are here to help you settle in when you first arrive at UWE Bristol, and they organise social events to help you adapt to your new environment.

Who to contact if you have questions

For any questions about the programme, starting your studies at UWE, or the above information, please contact the MA Fine Art Programme Leader directly:

Dr Steven Paige

steven.paige@uwe.ac.uk

0117 328 2437

Please note: this information has been provided on the assumption that you will meet the conditions of your offer and be eligible to take up your place.

Entry: September 2025

Last updated: Spring 2025