

## **ART205 Photography**

### **Photography as a means of communication**

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### **Course Description**

This course in image-making with photography is grounded on the desire and necessity to discuss, express and communicate our views, interests, and fascination of the world we inhabit, how our personal and unique vision along with technical ability allows each of us to tell our own original stories photographically. The course focuses on a series of weekly assignments (working both individually and collaboratively), keeping a visual diary, and the development of serial projects for presentation in the final exhibition. (see details in "assignments" section listed below.)

The students are encouraged to explore and relate to their new surroundings, the experiences and feelings they have here in this fascinatingly intricate and beautiful city, with the people they meet, the culture, history, traditions and aspects of Sienese society here. Using photographic techniques to document and express what they find here, students are able to discuss openly new and valid topics, learning to have a visual voice, a language perhaps still unknown to them.

Great emphasis is put on using one's imagination and creativity, in researching subjects, organizing them visually, and finding individual 'style' to make strong, dynamic, interesting and poetic photographic work.

This course uses a wide variety of photographic and printing methods, from instant polaroid and digital work, to S.L.R colour and black and white work, to pin-hole and hand-prepared sensitized materials. Once the students have grasped the basics of using cameras and dark-room techniques they are encouraged to experiment freely.

Many photographers, artists and performers from all over the world have been invited to our photography course, and have been involved in various experimental, theoretical and technical workshops to provide a stimulating and highest quality of teaching methods and results.

During the course, the following weekly workshops are held to develop the students observation, selection of subject, composition, and technical ability:

- Polaroid and Digital Images, immediate image-making being an exciting way to start the course. The students are asked to work in pairs to create images revealing qualities in themselves. Group bonding activities and working on ideas and creativity.
- SLR Cameras and Digital Cameras: Photographing with manual options and having

more control over the subject and the lighting of the subject.

- Lighting: Studio lighting, daylight and reflecting light, complicated contrasting light sources and exposures, over-exposing and under-exposing. Creating a still-life, making portraits and interiors with available and artificial light.
- Dark-room workshops: developing films by hand, contacting negatives and printing in the dark-room. Working with multigrade filters, burning in etc.
- Pin-hole cameras and photograms: how simple exciting images can be produced with very little technology. To develop creativity and ideas.
- Field-trips into the town of Siena, to villages, to visit historic monuments and buildings, to the countryside, to visit artisans at work.
- Playing with technology and multi-imaging: double exposures, slow exposures, collages and series work. How to go further with the creative possibilities of making photographic images and working images together to build a strong series of images to tell a story. This course invites students to move away from the single frame image to make 2D and 3D artworks using photography and multi-imaging, taking inspiration from this unique city to find aspects and issues to discuss creatively.

Regarding subject matter, we will be looking at the Tuscan land and life, the people, their attitudes, passions, culture and traditions, with themes such as Religion, Art and Craft, Family life, Hunting, Agriculture, Siena Palio, Sport, Food, Environmental issues etc.

We will specifically discussing theoretical, critical and practical subjects such as:

Artists working with multi-imaging and the various methods used.

Possibilities of visual narration of issues explored.

Composition and structure of the taken image as well as the multi-image work.

Exposures and lighting.

Dark room and Photoshop processes

For each student the selection of themes, artistic process and media can be directed by their individual interests. Students will be expected to work on individual and group projects, keep a visual diary, participate in group critiques and present work at a final exhibition.

Slide shows and powerpoint presentations will supplement studio work, looking at historic and contemporary photographic work. We will also discuss the importance of finding new and exciting ways to represent a subject photographically, the importance of selection and composition in the making, and the elements,



relationships and dynamics in images.

## **Prerequisites**

This course is open to students and artists of all mediums and backgrounds, who enjoy photography and wish to develop their personal creative vision in an open-minded and experimental way. While there are no specific prerequisites, students will receive individualized tutoring and advising from the instructor relevant to their level of experience. The small student-to-teacher ration allows students to receive highly individualized instruction.

## **Course Hours**

The course meets a week for a total of 5 hours/week, for a total of 60 hours. Suggested credits: 3

## **Student Learning Expectations**

Students will be able to work technically with a SLR camera and in the dark room with enlargers and film developing equipment. They will be expected to work creatively using different light sources, exposures, depths of field, view points, etc.

Students will receive instruction on the use of digital cameras and Photoshop software, and are expected to expand their knowledge of these methods and techniques.

Students will be expected to use new inspiring ideas, to see in refreshing ways and to find subjects to photograph that excite and provoke thought and discussion.

## **Course Outline**

### ***Week by Week Description:***

#### ***Week I***

Viewing examples of historic and contemporary photography.

What excites us, interests us, disturbs us, inspires us to make images?

Observing, resourcing, playing, reflecting, selecting to produce images using the instant polaroid and digital process.

#### ***Week II***

Slide show on narratives in photographic images.

Workshop on earlier cameras, photographic tools, and the functions of the SLR camera.



Metering, focusing, composing, structuring. Excursion in Siena.

Group crit and discussion.

### *Week III*

The importance of the dynamics in a photograph, and how to create them through choice of subject, composition, use of light etc.

How can we communicate photographically our response to a subject?

Workshop on black and white film processing and use of the dark room .

Group crit and discussion.

### *Week IV*

Darkroom workshop on contacting film and printing images.

Slide show on the History of Photography.

Sat 24<sup>th</sup> Excursion using SLR cameras. Exploring the environment away from the city.

### *Week V*

Darkroom work shop on printing techniques.

(Pin-Hole cameras).

How does this simple and slower photographic process affect the way we look, select, think, create.

Group critique and discussion.

## MID-TERM BREAK

### *Week VI*

Personal projects assignment.

Dark room workshop on further printing techniques.

Independent work session processing and printing



### *Week VII*

Portrait and still-life photography. Workshop on use of studio lighting.

Instruction on the use of digital cameras and Photoshop software.

Photoshop workshop.

Group critique and discussion.

### *Week VIII*

Photo-documentation.

Looking at other people's lives and work.

Working to find different angles, perspectives and compositions.

Follow-up tutorials on the use of digital cameras and advanced functions of photoshop software.

### *Week IX*

The manipulated image.

Double exposures, collaging and multi-imaging.

Dark room and digital work, with individual tutorials and advising.

Group critique.

### *Week X*

Independent work session. Photoshop, editing, digital printing preparation, darkroom printing.

### *Week XI*

Independent work session. Photoshop, editing, digital printing preparation, darkroom printing.

Group critique of students' visual diaries and personal projects.

Printing and mounting final projects.

Individualized advising for students as they work to finalize their projects.

### *Week XII*

Final Exhibition and Group Critique

### *Assignments:*

1 - Keeping a photographic diary. Each day the student is asked to select a 'moment' which represents their day, emotionally, visually, physically. These images are made using digital cameras, kept on computer and presented weekly.

2 - Studying and researching published photographic work from the library. Selecting an image to suit a theme chosen by the teacher (e.g. landscape, urban scape, portrait, night image, artificial light, documentary, a specific colour, fantasy, still life, fashion).

### Homework

Weekly photographic homework will be relative to the weekly researched photographic work.

E.g.:

- Night image (the student will be asked to spend time making exposures with and without tripods at dusk or night)
- Still life (the student is asked to create a still life with found objects and using different depths of field, exposures, light source and viewpoints, to make images of the structure, the details, forms, play of light)
- Documentary (the student is asked to pick a subject for example, relative to 'Italian life and culture' and to find subjects i.e. the market, the Italian home, Italians and eating, artisans, women, religion. Here the student has to develop a 'fast control' of the camera, and to move around the subjects, finding different viewpoints and compositions, with available light. For example documentation of a work place typical to this area to document a specific space and work activity. Montaging and working series images together.
- Colour (the student is asked to develop a sensitivity to this colour, to find this colour in his/her surroundings or create a set-up and try to express what this colour might represent. Here the student will be developing observation, selection, composition and his/her use of creativity to build a 'set-up' scene)
- Portrait (the student is asked to spend time with a selected subject, to choose a setting, organize the lighting, photographing the subject and making portraits which tell their 'story' visually. The student here is very much involved in the total control of the image being made. Plenty of time is expected to be taken to make these images, to gradually build up a 'connection' with the sitter, and work thoroughly technically in the production).
- Multiple-exposure: Idea on idea; discussion on the layered multiple exposure effect: what can be said with this method. Using the Double/Multiple Exposure we explore an

area of the town with contrasting and repetitive aspects.

Further activity; Find different repetitive and contrasting ideas to discuss visually using this process.

- The Narrative; Using photo- storytelling methods, the students in groups will make images in the studio/work room with found and made objects.

-Depth/time/narrative/pattern. Collaging and layering images. Working with other source material and specific set subjects from previous week to build artworks of multi layers and dimensions.

-Images and Installation; looking at our findings and creating group Installation work . Collaboration with Installation group and Instructor.

### **Textbook and required materials:**

Students will be expected to bring with them a digital camera, small medium or SLR format, with manual, which they know basically how to use and a computer with Photoshop installed and preferably some knowledge of use.

For students to not own an analog 35mm film camera, they are available for rent from the school.

Materials will be provided for all technical exercises, the cost of which will be covered by the course fee. However, the course fee does not cover materials to be used for students' final projects. The instructor will be able assist students in finding appropriate materials for their specific undertakings.

There is no required textbook for the course, but students are encouraged to utilize the reference books in the program's library. Additional reference materials will be provided as handouts.

### **Recommended optional materials/references:**

Bright S. "PHOTOGRAPHY NOW", Thames And Hudson, London 2005

Badger Gerry, "THE PLEASURES OF GOOD PHOTOGRAPHY" Aperture

Badger Gerry, "THE GENIUS OF PHOTOGRAPHY"

Cotton, Charlotte. "THE PHOTOGRAPH AS CONTEMPORARY ART" Thames and Hudson world of art , 2004

Sontag, Susan. "ON PHOTOGRAPHY" Penguin 1979

Barthes Roland. "CAMERA LUCIDA" Jonathan Cape 1982

VV.AA. "The Photo Book", Phaidon, London 1987

Gombrich, E.H. "The Story of Art ", Phaidon, New York 1979

Dexter, E. and Weski, T. "Cruel and Tender:The Real in the 20th Century

Photograph", UBS 2003

Bohm David, "ON CREATIVITY" , Routledge 1996

## Grading System

Attendance and Participation	30 %
Homework	20 %
Portfolio	25 %
Visual Diary	10 %
Individual Presentation	10 %
Midterm Essay	5 %

### Individual Presentation

At the end of the course students are asked to submit work to display in the Final Exhibition. They will be asked to present and discuss their work.

### Midterm Essay

Students are asked to write a short paper/article (about 100 words) on a specific subject of interest they discover while away during the Midterm Break. This is to be presented with photographic images.

## Grading scale

98-100 A+	88-89,99 B+	78-79,99 C+	68-69,99 D+
93-97,99 A	83-87,99 B	73-77,99 C	63-67,99 D
90-92,99 A-	80-82,99 B-	70-72,99 C-	60-62,99 D-
<59,99 F			

## Course Policy

### Academic Integrity:

Effective learning, teaching and research all depend upon the ability of members of the academic community to trust one another and to trust the integrity of work that is submitted for academic credit or conducted in the wider arena of scholarly research.





Such an atmosphere of mutual trust fosters the free exchange of ideas and enables all members of the community to achieve their highest potential.

In all academic work, the ideas and contributions of others must be appropriately acknowledged, and work that is presented as original must be, in fact, original. Faculty, students, and administrative staff all share the responsibility of ensuring the honesty and fairness of the intellectual environment at the Siena Art Institute and Siena School for Liberal Arts.

### **Students with documented disabilities:**

Any student who has a documented disability that may prevent him or her from fully demonstrating his or her abilities should contact the instructor as soon as possible to discuss accommodations necessary to ensure full participation and to facilitate the educational opportunity.

### **Participation and Attendance:**

We consider attending class a crucial part of gaining the most from your study abroad experience. For this reason, we allow only **one unexcused absence** per course during the 15 weeks of the program. This means that you are only allowed to miss **one** lesson of each course for unexcused reasons. Reasons for an absence to be considered unexcused include absences related to personal travel (including delays, strikes, missed connections, etc.) or visits from family and friends.

In addition, being late to class on **4** occasions constitutes an unexcused absence. Please also consider that leaving before the end of the lesson or coming back late from a break is the equivalent of an unexcused absence.

**Participation and attendance is worth 30% of the overall grade for every class.**

Absences due to health-related issues are considered excused if the student informs the professor and office by email or phone before class begins.

**No make-up exams or critiques will be considered unless warranted by extreme circumstances [for example, health, family tragedy] supported with proper documentation.**

## **Excursions**

Excursions are organized to visit places and subjects typical to Tuscany, eg., country Villas, crumbling Abbeys, hot sulphur pools, the dramatic landscape, the Mediterranean Sea, interesting people and artisans' studios, as well as to art and photographic shows and sculpture gardens. We try and give the students a taste of the known, but also the unknown, more secret side to this place. The specific scheduling of excursions may vary due to weather and light conditions.