

Reflections on Tutor feedback: Assignment 3

This is the feedback on assignment 3 as received from my tutor, Robert Enoch. It's a great feedback for me as it simply demonstrates how I could have made my assignment more effective had I kept those things in mind. I value it also as this is my first time with people's photography and any pointers/help will only make my journey better and fruitful. Like my tutor pointed out that things will come with experience. I am sharing it with you so we can all learn from this and make our future work better by keeping in mind these pointers. The text in bold italics are the tutor's comments followed by my response/points taken in normal text underneath it.

Overall Comments

Another good assignment; playful and ironic. A tongue in cheek pastiche of Hollywood gangster characters re-staged with Indian men. The result is a curious culture hybrid, a Bollywood Hollywood!

Really good acting from your brothers who clearly know their Pacino's and De Niro's well. And really interesting lighting through-out, although I'm not sure why you didn't go with a colour 1970's Godfather look. All those warm tones plus a bit of grain to rough up the digital sharpness.

I give up. This is like a hide and seek game. ☺ When I do work in color, I am advised that I should have done it in B&W, and now this. I guess am still unsure and hesitant to effectively understand what to use where. My thoughts were that B&W will effectively bring out the what am trying to portrait, but am not too sure. I definitely preferred it this way but it is food for thought and I will try out the colours as well.

The only real issue I have is the location looks a little unlikely, a bit too 'small' and tidy for a gangster hideout. The table for example looks like it's just been polished, when I reckon after a few drinks the ash would be missing the ash tray.

Good point. Noted!!!

#5 is the best because it's the most ambivalent and the one image in which you've found something new and not merely referential.

Feedback on assignment Demonstration of technical and Visual Skills, Quality of Outcome, Demonstration of Creativity

1. A wise guy is always right

Your first picture shows a really nice big smile from the wise guy in the leather jacket. There's a sense that he is oppressing the man in the hat. Precisely that kind of peer bullying is so pointed in the 'You think I'm funny' scene in Goodfellas (that may have been called Wise Guys in India, it's original title). So, a nicely captured 'moment'.

The setting is too clean, like I said above. It would've been nice to see a car headlights coming 2 through the venetian blinds, some mess, some flaking plaster! Remember, most

of these gangsters come out of poverty and that's where they are 'at home'. This is another quite typical side of gangster movies. Also, the use of props is good, but be careful not to 'tell' the viewer what to think too forcefully. The placement of the gun, the bottle's label facing the viewer, look a little too carefully placed.

I am almost embarrassed to admit that I actually took great pains to keep this clean – In fact my lighting was reflecting on the glass behind the blinds and I actually moved it so that my image is not cluttered, even though I had liked the result as it exactly did what my tutor is referring to. Other points noted. They make total sense.

2. God forgives, Italians don't

A title like this deserved a change of setting and a more visually illustrative scene. Be careful not to use your titles to provide variety which is missing in your images. This is not a vengeance scene, they're still at the table together.

I really wish you hadn't used the props here, particularly the bull, which is way too obvious. The best thing about this photo is the two faces of these characters - really good Italian Bollywood gangsters! This is a portrait in its own right. You could also have considered the typical widescreen format to emphasize the cinematic references.





It makes such a big difference to the image when you crop it this way. I see what he means and have noted the points.

3. Family first

A very direct but well made reference to The Godfather. The cigar is a nice touch, giving the 'Godfather' a mean, domineering look.

4. The briefcase

Way too many props. I get the scene. The stole something and it turned out to be a pandora's box. Good idea. But why the Sambuca and the gun again?

Good point. Noted

5. In our business you get paid by fear

There's something new here, an ambivalence in the relationship between the two men that gives the image weight.

On a purely visual level, the two-point composition with one man standing and the other sitting, works really well. The smoke begins to look ethereal because of the potentially dangerous look of the gunman. It's also interesting that the gunman is pointing the gun at the camera, giving this image a psychological twist. It's as if the source of the anger that fuels the violence of these criminals is in fact among themselves yet it is deflected away at 'proxies'. As Freud said, the true trauma is too difficult to deal with so it is deflected. And that is the beginning of something new and far more nuanced than just a remaking of Hollywood's stock characters.

Oh wow! Am so pleased. I always liked this image and yet I almost didn't add it. Am so happy to read the above comments. Reading this, I realise that I should go with my gut more often.

Coursework Demonstration of technical and Visual Skills, Demonstration of Creativity

Some really wonderful, exceptionally studious and creative images in your coursework. You are one of those students who is drawing so much from FiP. It's great to see it.

Your Search images make me want to visit India where so much life is lived outside. There are so many potential leads in this collection, some iconic images, the candles, the painted buildings, the people and the markets and the customs. Marvellous, colourful life.

Your women in saris on the back of motorcycles is also wonderful. A really Indian series. And I love the tiger!

Research

Context, reflective thinking, critical thinking, analysis

You've really gone into your research with a passion, judging by your list of references. I hope you will start to whittle down a few key practitioners to learn from. In many ways, you're doing a lot more work than the course demands.

I am not sure if that's a good or a bad thing. But what I have realized from reading his overall comments is that I need to be more careful with details. I do realize that this prolonged delay in submitting and stretching the completion of assignment did make me lose touch with my own thinking many a times. I will be more careful in effectively putting together an assignment. Yes, I am influenced by some key practitioners and I do intend to study them in more details.

Learning Log

Context, reflective thinking, critical thinking, analysis

Summarize how you have applied what you've learned from the course to your assignment photographs. Also note down what you've learned from other photographers in executing the assignment.

Your initial thoughts for this assignment were interesting and very challenging for any visual artist to distil into a conclusive and effective image. That's something that will come in time and with experience.

I do hope that I will learn in time and with experience. And am highly motivated after reading his comments and pointers to make my work better. I realize my mistakes or rather I realize what I could have done to make it more effective and I shall aim to incorporate this feedback into my learning.

Pointers for the next assignment

The key to the next assignment is understanding the symbolic meaning of objects and environments. Take a look at this picture by Geert Goiris, <http://www.geertgoiris.info/index.php?album=re#2> It's an albino kangaroo. Now, clearly, we associate those animals with Australia. So where do you think it is? The point here is that there's a surreal mismatch or contrast between what we are seeing and our remembered

associations. The meaning of the kangaroo is changed. It looks so sad, so degenerate. Just compare it to your wonderful living tiger.

Summary

Strengths	Areas for development
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Good approach to the assignment.• Interesting background references.• Good visual skills and some promising results.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Taking the narrative that step further, away from reference, towards nuance and a new relevance.