



Open College of the Arts

Formative feedback

Normally to be written by the student, and endorsed by the tutor with additions/amendments in red.

Student Name	Alan Horn	Student Number	515733
Unit	PH3: Contextual Studies	Assignment Number	1
Type of Tutorial	Video/Audio/Written	Written/Annotated Essay	

Key points

- This is a good essay. You are very good at illustrating your points succinctly.
- This is a topical subject. Photography's relationship with reality is coming under increasing strain with the preeminence of digital imaging. Clearly this is more heated in the documentary and photojournalism realms than in the art and vernacular context. The key issue, as you rightly say, is whether the motive behind manipulation is to deceive or whether it has been done for aesthetic (visual) reasons. A purist would say that any manipulation (removing/adding, changing etc) breaks photography's indexical relationship to the real world.
- Context is vital when dealing with photography's truth claim. You need to spell out more clearly what the intentions of the photographer's were, where they were presenting their images and what the expectations were in those contexts.
- One thing you do really well is express the intractable convolutedness of the argument. The treatment of Marc Feldman by Getty is remarkable precisely because it brings up the notion of the significance of truth in an image. In fact, that could have been a way to make this essay more specific and less general. I mean, less of a general survey of the problems with manipulation and photographic truth, and more about a specific concern within that argument. But maybe you needed this overview to orient yourself. The specifics could be assignment 2.
- Check your text rigorously for grammatical issues like missing commas or spelling.

Other notes

- Photographs have a 'special relationship' with reality and that relationship has been deeply affected by digital imaging. The exploration of this is seminal to the work of artists like Joan Fontcuberta who play with the dilemma of trusting the photograph.
- Andreas Gursky also manipulated his images, but evidently no one complains about 'truth'.
- Have a look at Zoe Crosher's "The Michelle duBois Project", which uses a name/identity playfully and fluidly that "truth" is painfully slippery; here: <http://www.zoecrosher.com/the-unique-series>
- Have a look at Johnathan's work. Also a 3rd year student grappling with these topics. <https://johns-photography3cs.home.blog/category/assignments/assignment-1/>

Tutor name: Robert Enoch

Date: 29th July 2019

Next assignment due: 14th October 2019