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A guide to running your own 10 week after-school photography club

Introduction

This guide is designed to help you to deliver a ten-week photography club at your primary school. It contains ideas, activities and technical advice. Each session will take approx. an hour. You can either undertake each assignment in order or create number cards for your club participants to draw out of a hat.

This really is just a guide and we welcome your feedback on it - we're keen to hear what works for you and to see the work created.

If you are an InspirED subscriber then we can support your club with creative and technical advice and support. We even have some cameras that you could borrow to get you going. Not a subscribing school? Visit our website to find out more: www.inspiredsomeset.org.uk

Created by professional photographer and Creative Technologist at Somerset Film Richard Tomlinson, this guide is FREE to use by schools in Somerset. We simply ask that you include InspirED in your exhibition credits. You may decide to charge to participate in your after-school club, if you do then might we suggest you use those monies to pay for your either your InspirED subscription and benefit from even more creative support or put it towards buying materials or investing in equipment!



Before your club starts

1. In line with your school's child protection policy – make sure you collect written parental permission for everyone in the photography club to be photographed. Take a look at the Somerset Film website for a release form template you can adapt for your own use.
2. Undertake a risk assessment – this activity may be new to you so things to think about include tripping hazards such as tripod legs.
3. Book out all your kit before you start the club. Make a check list and ensure that whatever you use is charged before your club starts.

And finally...

4. The photographs your group produces are works of art, so present them in the best way you can. Transform your classroom into a photo-gallery and plan a year long programme of exhibitions with your group.

Give yourself a huge pat on the back for inspiring others to be creative with technology. You never know what it might lead to.

If you're looking for opportunities to exhibit the work your club has created then get in touch.

Let us know too how you got on! No doubt you'll have spotted a gap in this guide and we'd really value your feedback.

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photo project #01



Your assignment - Scavenger Hunt

This photography project is one of the simplest to start - you seek out objects to photograph based on a list. Hunt for objects that start with the same letter of the alphabet. Seek one subject for each letter in the alphabet or try to spell out a word. Look for objects that are the same shape or colour.

This activity helps younger children develop their knowledge and understanding of the world.

Kit needed:

- a digital camera or tablet
- a projector/computer to share pictures with the group at the end of the assignment

Schedule

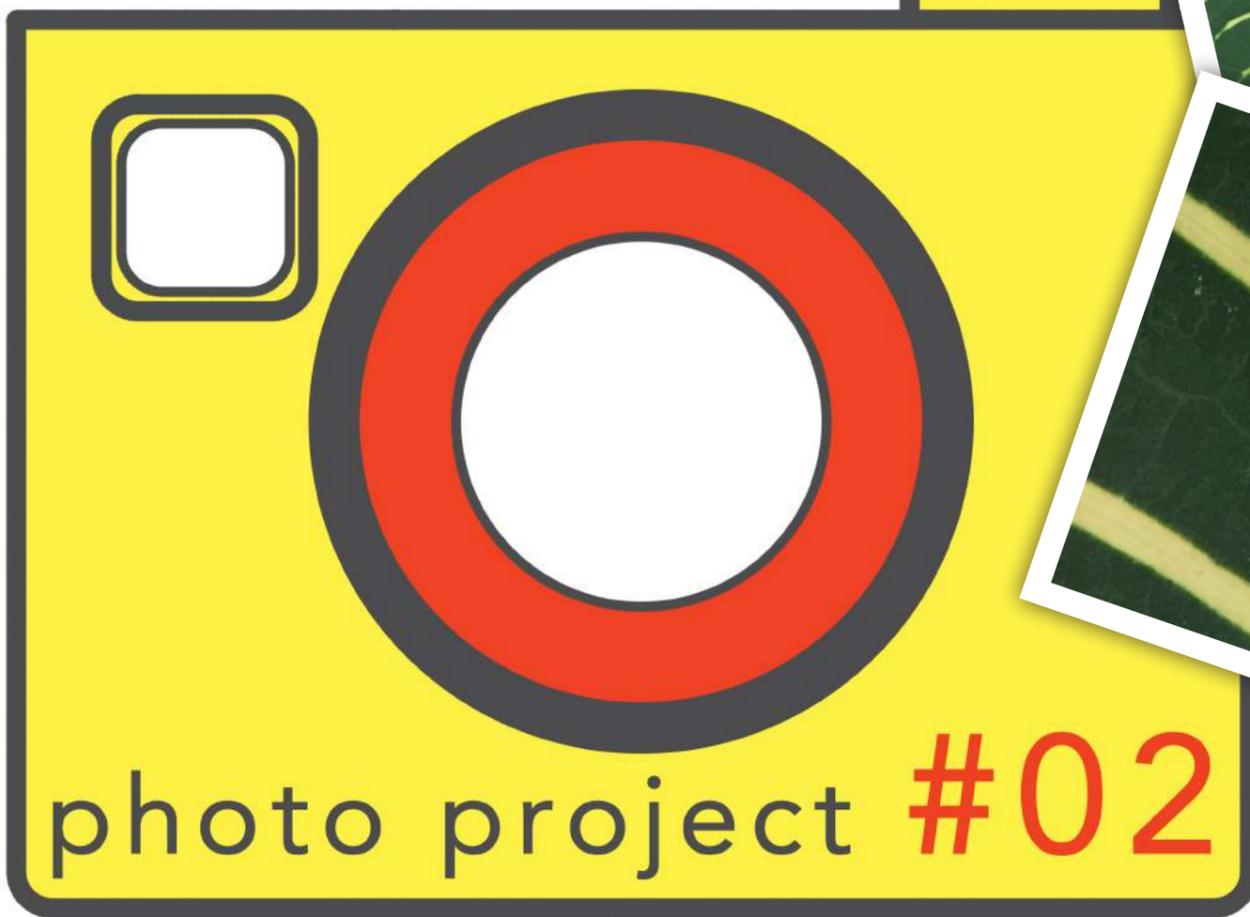
Prepare a list of items for your group to find. Perhaps make the list specific to the garden, include items like: flower, water, spider web, cloud, bug. Alternatively, set the group a trickier task by listing themes such as: nature, architecture, texture, noisy or moving. Explain to the group that they have 30 mins to capture as many pictures as they can.

(30 mins)
Photo-walk

(15 mins)
Review pictures with your group.

top tip
turn this into a game, 1 point for an item, 2 points if you include yourself in the photo

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Your assignment - Guess what it is

Take your group on a photo-walk and ask them to take pictures of objects, both 'close up' and 'far away'. Back in the classroom show the close up image and see if the children can guess what the object is, then reveal the far away picture with the answer to see if they're right.

Kit needed:

- a digital camera or tablet capable of shooting close up pictures (see how close your camera can get to the object)
- a projector/computer to show pictures to the group at the end of the assignment

Schedule

(15 mins) Take some time to explore camera technique. A close up picture can be achieved by simply moving closer to the subject or zooming in, or a combination of the two.

Some cameras have a Macro setting specifically for close up pictures.

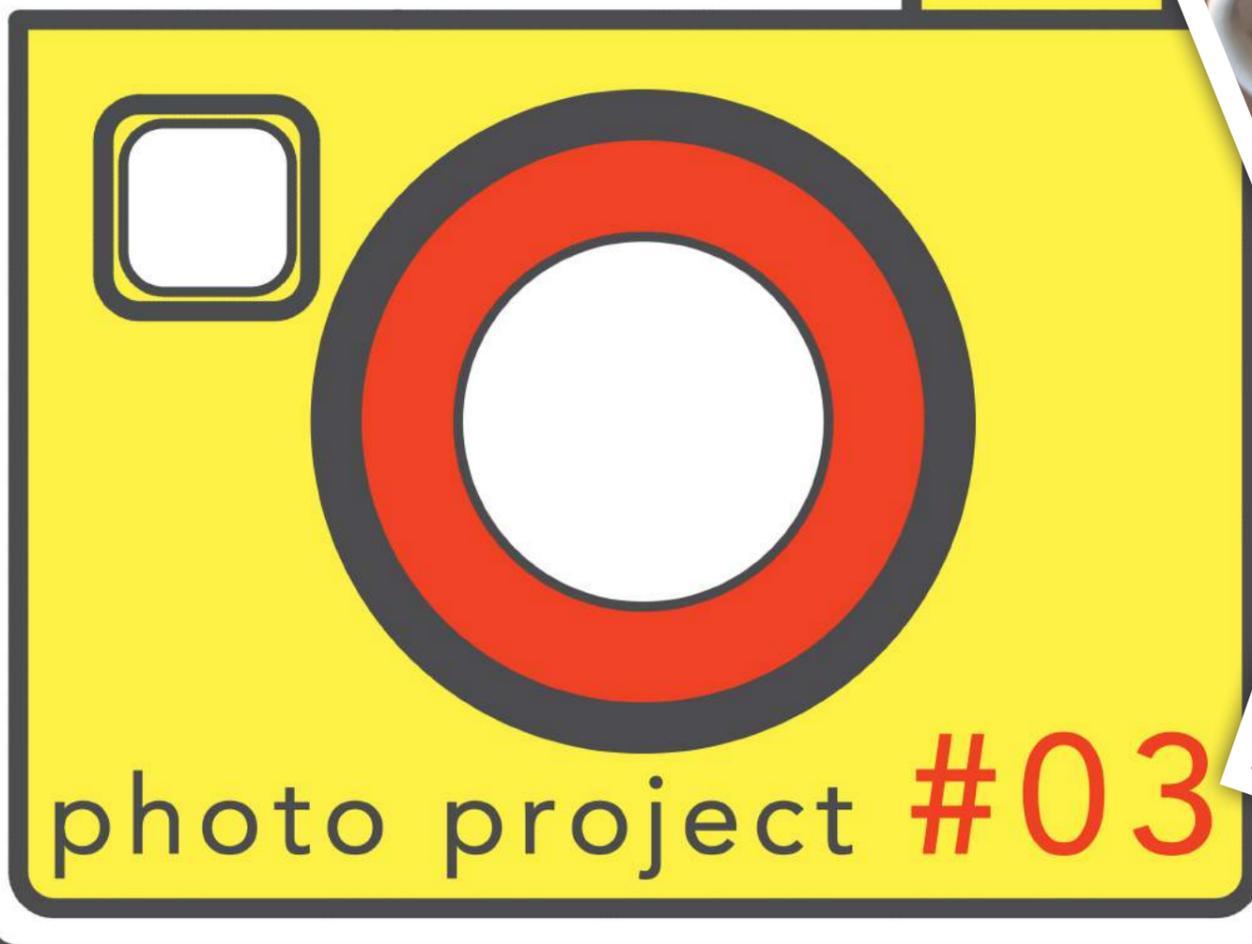


(30 mins) Photo-walk

(15 mins)
At the end of the assignment play the game 'Guess what it is'.

top tip
Crop the close up pictures using free software like GIMP
www.gimp.org

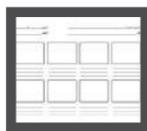
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Your assignment - Miniature Stories

Create an amazing photo-story adventure featuring familiar toys and environments. Let your group take the lead in producing a simple storyboard that, maybe, takes an intrepid toy on an adventure through the classroom or garden. Once you've shot a scene mark it as complete on your storyboard, this will help you remember what scenes are remaining.

download our storyboard template [here](#)



Kit needed:

- a digital camera (ideally with a macro setting) or tablet 
- printer (to print photo story display)

Schedule

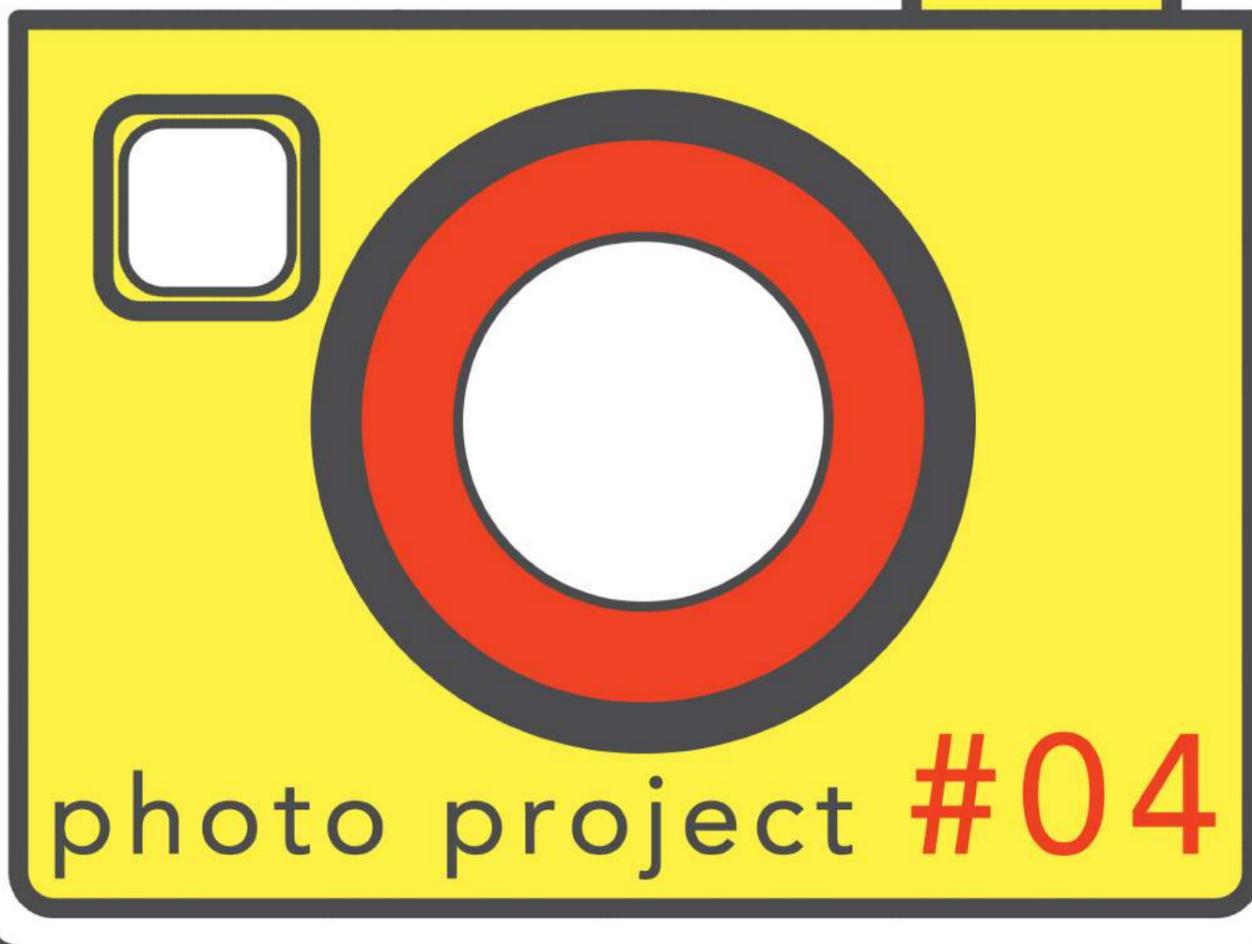
(15 mins) Take some time to get everybody thinking about composition. Placing the toy in the right position, in relation to the location, is really important. The interplay between toy and location is what makes these pictures fun to make and funny to look at. This exercise gets you thinking about effective storytelling without words, only picture!

(30 mins)
Photo shoot

(15 mins)
Review your pictures and tell those stories.

top tip
Use natural light!
A flash will flatten
the scene and make the toy
look superimposed

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Your assignment - Letter Hunt

Go out and about photographing objects, buildings and natural shapes that look like letters of the alphabet or numbers. This is a great exercise in encouraging children to really 'look' at the world around them. Letter hunting is an activity that can take place indoor or out. Be clear that you are looking for everyday objects that look like letters, not letters on signs!

Back in the classroom produce a unique alphabet of characters.

Kit needed:

- a digital camera or tablet
- printer and laminator to produce letter cards for creative writing (see top tip)

Schedule

(15 mins) To do this activity we really need to look carefully, up and down as well as straight ahead. Letter shapes can be found in the: branches of trees, architectural details, cloud formations. The photographer may need to shoot from an unusual angle and position to reveal the letter shape they see through their viewfinder.

(30 mins)
Letter hunt

(15 mins)
Review the pictures with your group. Is there a whole alphabet?

top tip
Give each participant the assignment of spelling out their name

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photo project #05



Your assignment - My Best Things

Taking photos can be a very therapeutic exercise and can be used to refocus the mind on the things you really like.

If a child is in low spirits and finding it difficult to engage with an activity, or with other children, a stills camera might be the key to better engagement. Ask the child to list five or six things that make them happy in their world and set them the task of finding ways of capturing, or reflecting, these things through photography.

Kit needed:

- a simple digital camera or tablet

Schedule

(15 mins) Make a list of objects, places and people we would really like to photograph. Remember, when we stop to photograph something we create a more meaningful relationship to the person, object or landscape we are photographing.

(30 mins)
Photo-shoot

(15 mins)
The pictures that have been taken will be a brilliant starting point to a conversation about what makes you happy.

top tip
Don't get too concerned with technique, this is a simple exercise in enjoying pictures

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photo project #06



Your assignment - Shadow Play

Taking pictures of shadows allows the photographer to reference an object without making the object the centre of interest within the picture. Shadow photos have two main elements, the shadow and the surface it's landing on.

Go outside when the sun is low and capture shadows made by objects and people. Run the same activity indoors using an angle poised lamp.

Kit needed:

- a digital camera or tablet (a camera with a wide lens will emphasise perspective of long shadows)
- a projector/computer to share pictures with the group

Schedule

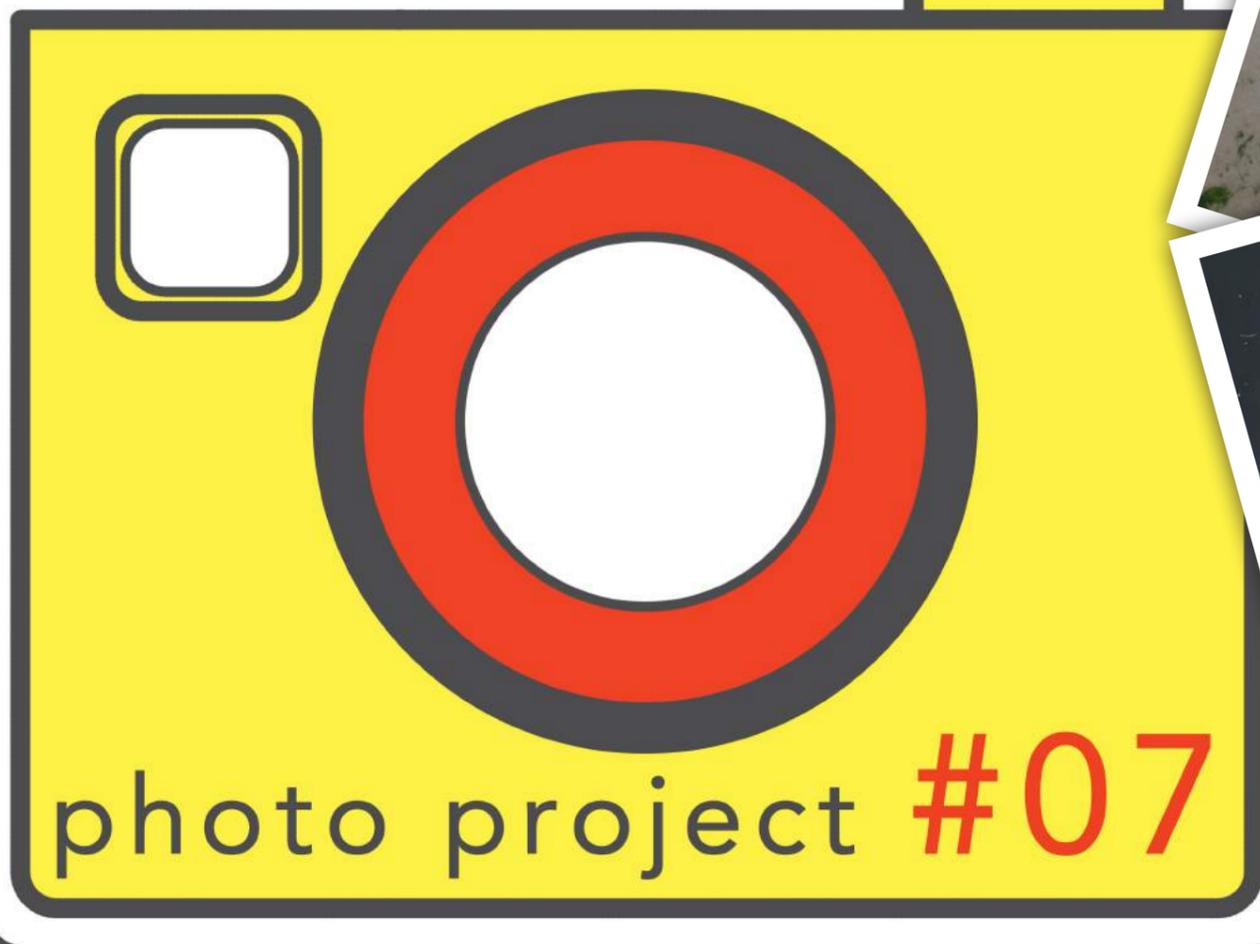
(15 mins) Photography is all about capturing light. It is easy to forget, however, that amazing shapes and patterns reveal themselves as shadows. Talk to your group about what shadows are and how we might use unusual camera angles to capture them.

(30 mins)
Shadow
Photo-walk

(15 mins)
Review the pictures with your group. Play the game: 'who's shadow is this?'

top tip
Use a tripod mounted camera to place an objects shadow in the middle of the frame

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Your assignment - Reflections

Set the task of only photographing reflections. Smooth shiny surfaces and windows often reflect strange and distorted views of the world and are a great talking point when captured in a photo. Explore how different types of surface (concave, convex, curved) bend shadows. Look down on the ground, small puddles provide interesting worlds of reflected silhouettes. This project encourages the photographer to think about the world around them in abstract terms.

Kit needed:

- a digital camera or tablet
- projector/computer to show work at the end of the assignment

Schedule

(15 mins) Think about locations around school where you're likely to find reflective surfaces, in both natural and built environments. Some of the most beautiful reflection photos are created using water. When you're out in nature look for reflections in streams and puddles.

(30 mins)
Reflection
Photo-walk

(15 mins)
Review the pictures and ask 'can you describe the distortion in each, photo?'

top tip
Be observant,
actively look for
anything that makes a
fascinating reflection!

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photo project #08



Your assignment - Textures

When an object, such as a tree trunk, is illuminated by light coming in at an angle the texture of the bark can jump right out at you. Work with your children to look for interesting and complex textures and patterns found both in the natural and built environment. Shooting textures is a great way of revealing details that the casual observer may not notice.

Get the children to describe the textures they've captured using descriptive words and metaphors.

Kit needed:

- a digital camera or tablet
- a projector/computer to share work at the end of the session

Schedule

(15 mins) Spend some time at the beginning of the assignment explaining what we mean by texture. Showing examples of pictures that reveal textures that could describe words like: smooth, flaky, rough, crinkly.

(30 mins)
Texture hunt

(15 mins)
Review the pictures with your group. Group together pictures that portray similar textures.

top tip
Get close to your subject. Close up pictures are often more abstract and striking.

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photo project #09



Your assignment - Framing

Framing is a brilliant way of drawing attention to objects within your photograph. It's a compositional technique used by photographers to give images a sense of depth and lead the eye toward the main subject.

Ask your group to take photographs of objects that are framed by trees, archways, tunnels or doorways. Looking for objects that are naturally framed by other objects is an exercise that really makes you look at the world around you.

Kit needed:

- a digital camera or tablet
- a projector/computer to share work with your group

Schedule

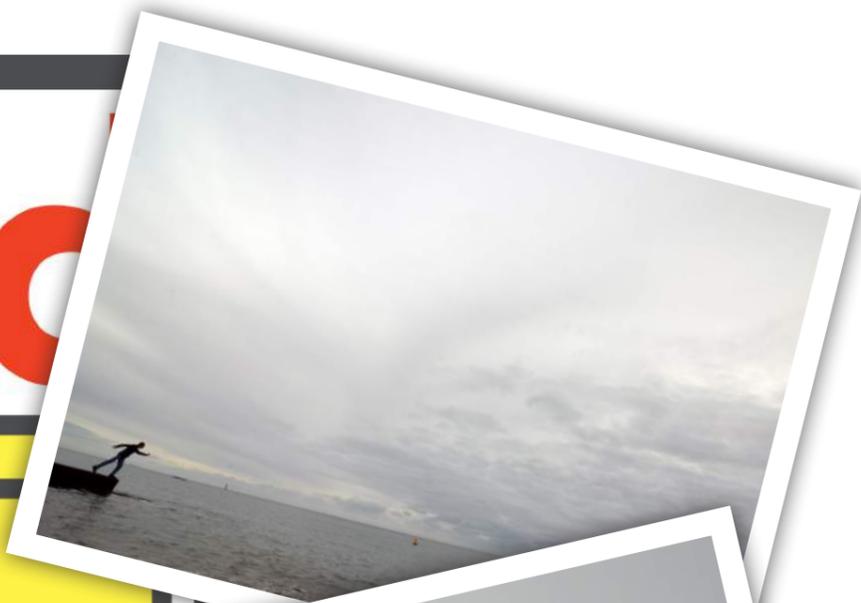
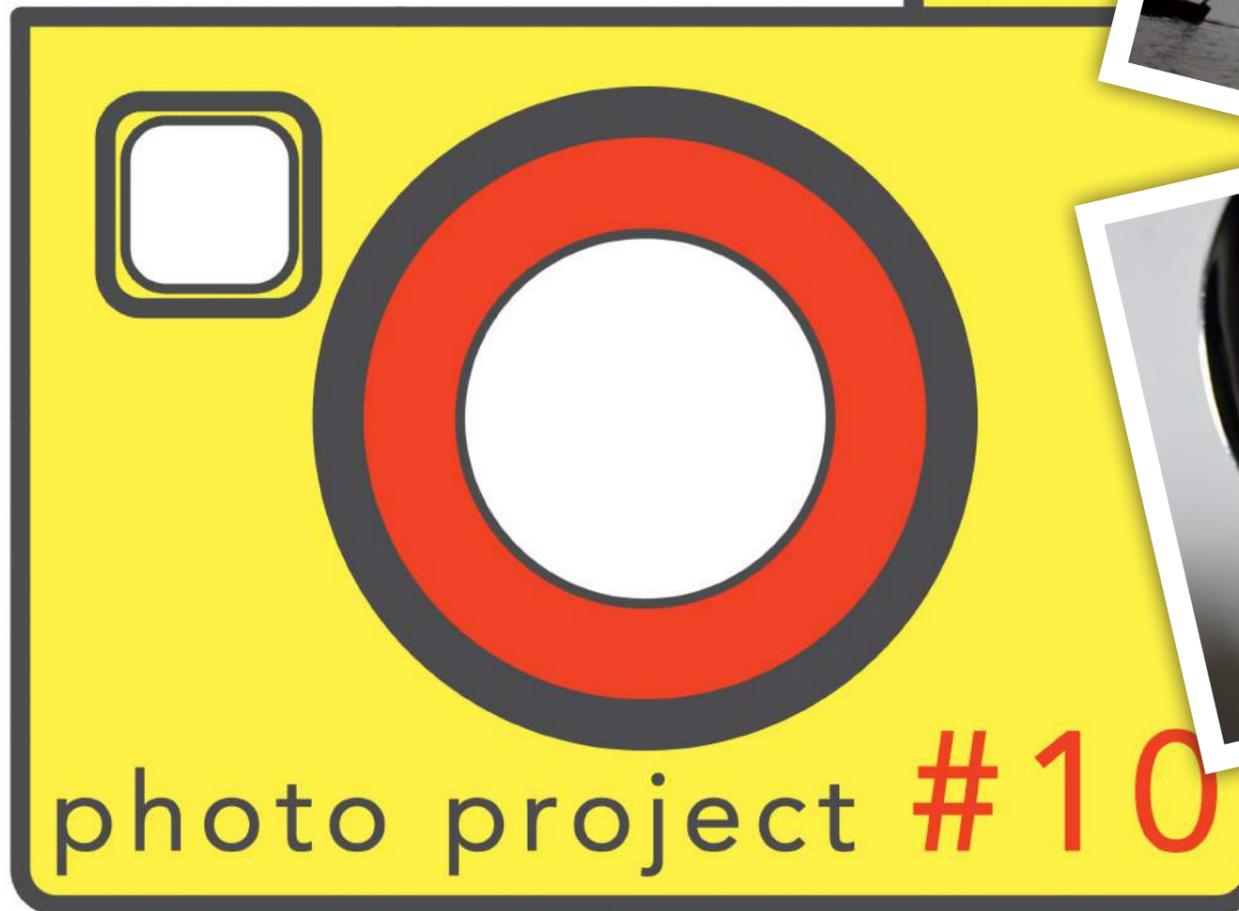
(15 mins) Take a look at camera technique. The photographer will probably need to locate themselves in a particular position in order to take a picture of an object that's framed by other objects. Explain to the group that this activity is not for the casual photographer and they'll need to think carefully about how they construct their pictures.

(30 mins)
Photo-walk

(15 mins)
Review your pictures with your group.

top tip
In some instances a blurred frame will add a sense of mood and depth to your picture

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Your assignment - Unusual Selfies

Throughout art history the self portrait has been a popular theme. There are many ways to make photo-self portrait: on a sunny day strike a distinctive pose and shoot a picture of your shadow, take a picture of yourself taking a picture of yourself in a reflective surface, get really artistic by taking a small mirror out on location with you, if your camera is equipped with a self timer place yourself within an environment as a character from your favourite film.

Kit needed:

- a digital camera or tablet
- a projector/computer to share pictures with the group at the end of the assignment

Schedule

(15 mins) Look at famous self portraits through art history. Work with your group to explore how they might include an image of themselves within their pictures. They could ask a friend to help them 'press the button', it's still a self portrait as long as they're directing the shoot. This technique will allow them to appear in the background of their picture.

(30 mins)
Photo-walk

(15 mins)
See who's made the most abstract self portrait

top tip
Do you want to edit pictures digitally? Have a look at:
www.picmonkey.com

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Get involved in our fantastic competition in association with the prestigious Royal Photographic Society! All you need to enter is a good eye for a picture, access to a camera and a good imagination. We need amazing pictures on the themes of:

- Belonging
- Desire
- Natural World
- Portrait

We'll be announcing the winners at a celebration event in July and their images will be exhibited at The Brewhouse in Taunton in September 2018.

Full details and online submission form at:
www.somersetfilm.com/photo-competition

More on InspirED at: www.inspiredsomeset.org.uk

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