

Sample Answer: Externally Set Assignment Component 2

Cambridge International AS & A Level Digital Media & Design 9481

For examination from 2019



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Introduction

Component 2 is an AS Level component. This is an externally set assignment that is marked by Cambridge International. There is a question paper for this component. You may download the question paper from Cambridge International and give it to the candidates as soon as it is released.

There are two elements to the assignment:

- supporting studies **and**
- a final outcome produced during a supervised test of 10 hours' total duration.

This example is in response to question three on the Specimen Paper

Fashion show

Design a static or moving display that could be used as a backdrop for a fashion show in a shopping mall.

Choose one of the following concepts to develop:

- a series of digitally manipulated images related to the fashion collection
- a moving image or short film that could be played on a loop during the fashion show
- an animation about the designs or designer
- a photographic style gallery of the fashion collection.

Your ideas should show an understanding of the brief, an audience and research into the concept selected. You should present your research and development of ideas and the outcome or working prototype.

Supporting studies

Fashion photographers Here are a selection of fashion photographers that I like for various reasons.



Alessio Belzoni: described as being 'Avant Garde' by fashion writers



Magazine spread by Jason Kibbler

Natalia Vodianova for Vogue US Nov 2014 photoshoot in the Royal Ballet. I chose this as I thought the choice of location was interesting and worked well with the extravagance of the clothing.



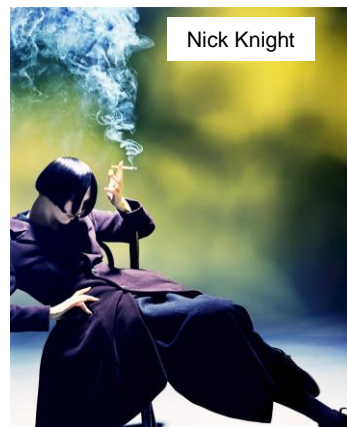
Eva Green by Camilla Akrans

This image is so elegant and yet the juxtaposition of the female form against the cumbersome elephants is strange. It seems to emphasize the woman rather than distract though.

Fashion photography is a genre of photography which is devoted to displaying clothing and other fashion items. Fashion photography is most often conducted for advertisements or fashion magazines such as Vogue, Vanity Fair, or Elle. (Wikipedia)



Steven Meisel: Well-known photographer and noted for taking every cover of Vogue.



Nick Knight

Vogue Paris August 2017 Grace Elizabeth by Terry Richardson



Richard Avedon – 'Dovima with elephants' 1985 for Dior



Annie Leibovitz



Helmut Newton 'The smoking suit' for Paris Vogue

Helmut Newton 'The smoking suit' for Paris Vogue. I love this image as the contrast is extreme and makes the suit seem more masculine against her pale skin. The perspective in the background draws your attention to the form rather than away – it's almost a silhouette.



Bruce Weber

Fashion Trends – Floral

I have decided to focus on the fashion trend of florals for a number of reasons.

- I thought it was best to identify a theme to help me develop my understanding of fashion. This will help me to focus on the new technologies, experimentation and approaches to photography that are seen as fashion photography evolves.
- The fashion trend of florals isn't new and it regularly appears almost every season. Florals and the wearing of floral fashion clothing is a common fashion statement for ultimate femininity with pinks and creams mostly worn during spring and brighter colours commonly for summer statement pieces. Because of all these reasons there are many photographers to choose from for my research into fashion photography following a floral trend.
- Floral fashions meet the brief which states to photograph a series of digitally manipulated images related to the fashion collection.

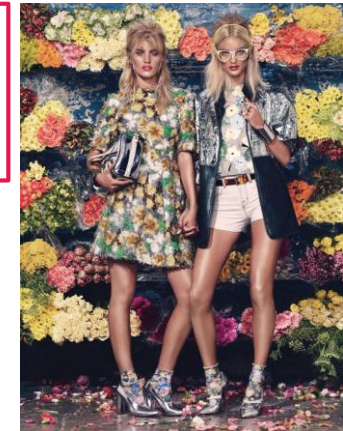
Note: It is difficult to find out with particularly contemporary works who the photographer is for some images as often the designer and art director are listed on articles but not the photographer (I have prioritised the images where the photographer can be credited where possible).



W Magazine:
Photograph by Sharif Hamza; styled by Giovanna Battaglia; W magazine March 2013.



Dresses designed by Stella Liberio. I have chosen to look at this dress designer as an influence to the creative manipulation work I would like to do. The dresses look like they are almost made of flowers and this is an idea I plan on re-visiting.



Shalom Harlow –
'Flower hat'
photographed by Irving Penn 1995

From Left to Right: Marques'Almeida, Chloé, Balenciaga, Dries Van Noten, Erdem (these are all the names of the designers and not the photographers).

Photographing Flowers



Carol Henry is a fine art photographer who does not use a camera. Everything she creates is made in the darkroom on Ilfochrome paper. Known for her botanicals, she projects the light on the positive receiver creating one-of-a-kind images. (Wikipedia)



Charles Jones (1866-1959. Born in England in 1866, he was a trained gardener who achieved public recognition for his horticultural skills. Between 1895 and 1910 Jones experimented with photography and produced a series of stunning gold-toned gelatin silver prints of vegetables, fruits, and flowers. He photographed his subjects isolated from nature, against neutral or dark backdrops. This was unprecedented for the time and foreshadows the photographs of Edward Weston, Karl Blossfeldt and other Modernist images from the 1920s and 1930s (www.howardgreenberg.com/artists/charles-jones)

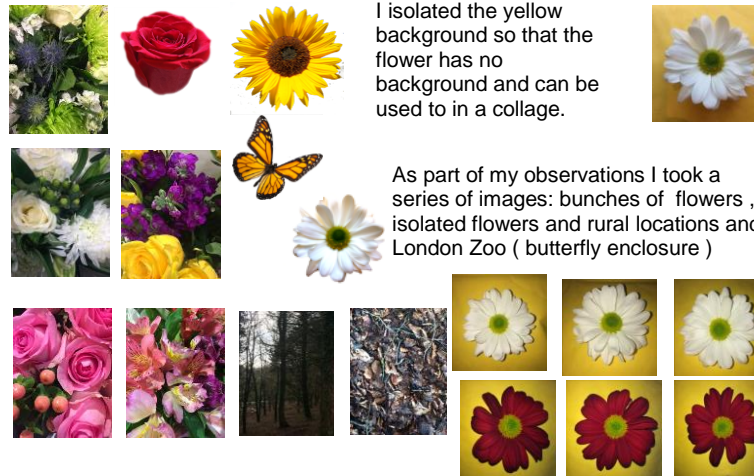
My assessment of Carol Henry:

- Look almost like an x-ray
- Could I experiment with photographing pressed petals on a light box to create a similar result?
- The layers and overlapping petals create areas of transparency and varied opacity
- The contrast with the internal elements of the flower such as the seed heads which look solid is interesting and eye catching.
- The pieces seem to be more about pattern and colour

My assessment of Ron Van Dongen:

The images seem to have a few elements in common such as:

- Short depth of field, limited colour palette with background colour matching the flower as best as possible, single flower placed in centre of frame.



My assessment of Charles Jones:

- More traditional layout and stereotypical image of flowers
- Often a collection / bunch of flowers
- Photographed from various angles making the collection sit less as a series
- Photographed against grey / silver backgrounds
- Limited highlights / lots of grey tones
- Soft focussing
- Sharp but not as detailed as Karl Blossfeldt's work.



My assessment of Karl Blossfeldt:

- These images seem to focus on the strange variations and details in foliage and flora
- The images are shot from the side view against white and give an almost opposite x-ray effect
- Each image focusses on just one type of flower rather than a collection.
- Sharp image



Ron Van Dongen brings a new and fresh contemporary approach to botanical illustration. His wonderfully clear high-key prints are much sought after and his brooding dark flower portraits offer us an illuminated insight into the often strange but always wonderful natural forms that exist in nature. (www.michaelhoppengallery.com)



Karl Blossfeldt (1865 – 1932) was a German photographer, teacher, and artist who worked in Berlin. He is best known for his close-up photographs of plants and living things, published in 1929 as, *Urformen der Kunst*. He was inspired, as was his father, by nature and the ways in which plants grow. He believed that 'the plant must be valued as a totally artistic and architectural structure.' (Wikipedia)

Flower series 1979 Chris Enos**Scale & format**

This piece was taken on a large format Polaroid camera, so the size scale of the print is determined by the technique. The print size is approximately 50 cm x 60cm. This means that the image, is presented larger than life. When a Polaroid is taken it means that there is no negative, unlike film. This means that the image would need to be scanned to be reprinted (when this is done the quality will be reduced). To me, this makes the original image more precious and fragile. It is unlikely you could make an exact duplicate even if you shot a second Polaroid at the time as the lighting may have changed, or the still life could be disturbed. This is apt as it reflects the flowers uniqueness. I like the fact that the photographer has chosen to go so close to the subject and has in fact cropped the flower by choice. This means that the focus of the image is the detailing and the tonal variation in the limited palette. Unlike a lot of photographs of flowers that you just dismiss as being just a flower image.

Emotion

Looking at this image I am reminded about the fragility between life and death. The image is not a stereotypical image of a flower as she chose to take the image when the flower had started to decay and wither. The whole image is used and I think the choice of background colour is very important to the narrative. The dark background feels sad and reflects the impending death of the flower.

**Process & Technique**

Although no information has been provided to support my conclusion I have taken an educated guess: I feel that the image was taken with a responsible slow shutter speed allowing the Polaroid to pick up lots of detail in each petal. A slow shutter speed often means that the camera needs to have a large F/number (aperture) so the image is not over exposed. However as the lighting is subtle and also limited I think the aperture number was small (large hole) this would also allow for the image to capture more detail and would create a very shallow depth of field. The photographer must have used a macro lens to capture the subject so closely and in focus.

**Colour & Texture**

The piece has a very limited colour palette just pinks, blush and black (tonal variation within the pink palette). Because there is no extreme colour clashes the focus of the piece is all about the subtle colour changes and texture details rather than shape, colour and form.



The image as it appears on the photographer's website

Composition

Although my immediate attention is drawn to the centre of the left hand image it doesn't stay long there as my eye moves quickly across the whole picture. Around 90% of the image is filled with visual information and the remaining 10% is the black background which I think is essential to the image. There isn't an equal border to the black background with the petals breaking up the frame and even slightly touching the edge or on the sides being cropped.

Lighting

There seems to be a single light source to the front of the subject / flowers. This highlights the sharpened detail to the front edges of the flowers. The light is soft and as a result there is a lot of colour tonal variation rather than extreme shadow. The background of the image is black and has no evident light source. The petals seem to just blend into the background.

Sensory

The image has a tactile quality due to the level of texture and detail in the petals. I can imagine that the petals are fragile and soft to touch with some edges starting to dry and crisp, this information and sense of touch is all gained through the level of visual detail. The piece also appeals to my sense of smell. English roses have a delicate sweet soft smell and as they age the sweetness in the aroma is enhanced. I can imagine this smell when viewing the piece.

Background information or narrative

The photographer hasn't provided a narrative for the image although she states on her website that the images '*dealing with the balance between beauty and decay*'. This image looks like two lovers who are slowly growing old together and whose beauty and elegance of youth has been changed to textures and detail of a life well lived together. It looks like they are still holding on to their sparkle before the final farewell. It reminds me of my grand-parents as not only is there a tradition of giving roses to a loved one but the muted colours seem nostalgic of age.

My assessment

- 1) I really like the simplicity of the piece and the fact that the two roses look like they have landed like this rather than specifically placed in the way. They don't look set up or over arranged. I think the frame of black background around the majority of the image is good as it enhances the pieces tonal colour range but it doesn't completely envelop the whole subject matter.
- 2) I would like to see the image with one rose, as it would give me something to reflect and compare to the original.

Idea development – Floral creativity layers and collage



Wilhelmina wearing a Halston headpiece, image by Irving Penn taken from Pinterest

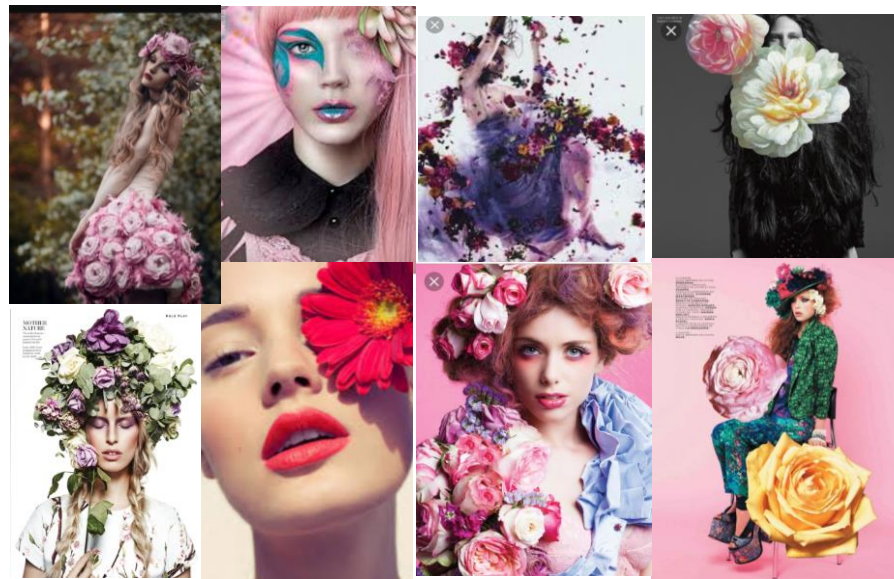
Angela Lindvall floral shoot for Elle



Collage: a piece of art made by sticking various materials such as photographs, papers, flowers, fabrics onto a backing. Composing an initially different image by using elements which are not normally associated with one another (www.dictionary.com)



Bright pink part 2 by Jenny Liz Rome – taken from pintrest



Google image search: floral creative fashion shoot



Ashkan Honarvar's collages speak to humanity's intrinsic obliviousness, heightened by vanity and abused by others. (taken direct from artist website).

I have chosen to look at this artist / photographer as I feel that his work is surreal and beautiful, in fact I think the beauty of them is in oddness of the forms. The collage elements look random but purposely paced, he hasn't cut and cropped them perfectly to size, there is no attempt to hide the collage technique.

I also like the way that he has used insects and birds in with the flowers which contrasts with just having a 'nice, feminine image'





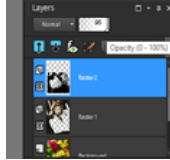


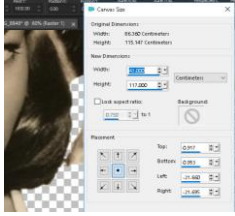







Images I plan to use within my experimentations

These vintage Hollywood portrait images were purchased from a jumble sale in London. They are screenshots from films. It is not possible to find out the photographers name. I really like them as they are very stylised. They all have the following in common:

1. Short depth of field, giving a hazy feel to the image
2. Full tonal range – including highlights and lots of black areas.
3. They were taken during a period of female empowerment – they look strong and focussed.
4. During this time women played with their sexuality and took on male roles in films.



	<p>This is the image that I chose to use on this manipulation task. I chose this as there is some evidence of detail in the dress and I thought the hand cut out would be challenging and test me.</p>		<p>The two images (the flower and portrait) float above each other with the flowers showing through the deleted selection on the portrait. I was pleased with the placement but the dress currently shows no form and I wanted to see if I was able to achieve some shape successfully. I opened a second copy of the portrait image and cropped just the dress area. I increased the contrast on this and then copied and pasted and new layer onto the layered image.</p>
	<p>Using the selection tool on freehand, I selected the dress area. I did try to use the magic wand selector but the background tone was too similar and I was unable to just isolate the dress. Therefore it took a slightly longer time but the result is clearer. The section that was really hard to isolate was the hand. I then use the eraser tool to delete the whole dress.</p>		<p>Here you can see on the layer palette all three images which are currently floating above each other.</p>  <p>You can see the amount in which I increased the contrast. By doing this you reduce the grey tones and the shape folds and detail of the dress appears more to the eye.</p>  
	<p>At this stage I needed to find out the exact canvas size of the portrait as it was important to open a new image (the flowers image) and make sure it was the same size to enable me to lay them on top of each other. I also made sure that the DPI was the same as well.</p>		<p>I then played with the transparency of the top layer (the folds in the dress) as I wanted the folds to show but not block out the flower print. The two images show the top layer at 100% and at 29%. I eventually decided that the transparency set at 59% was ideal as it showed both elements best.</p> 
	<p>Here is the flower image I have decided to use. I thought the yellow would work well with the portrait and also the placement of the flowers seemed to be appropriate for the cut out area. Once opened I then selected the whole of the portrait image and copied and pasted as new layer over the flower image.</p>		<p>This is my final re-creation image. I am pleased with the final result although if I was to do this task again I would make the initial portrait image black and white as it would enhance the vibrant colours of the flowers, plus during the increase in contrast stage the portrait started to take a sepia appearance which I am not fond of.</p> 

Final outcome



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