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# **Innovate**

## **For design thinking**

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**A visual thinking workshop**

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**Blended content**  
**Online delivery**

**5-20 students**  
**[msethjones.com](http://msethjones.com)**

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## Workshop aims

This visual thinking workshop will equip students with a more fluent, sophisticated and instinctive comprehension of critical and creative design thinking techniques and processes.

Through facilitated, collaborative discussions, students will be asked to interpret, negotiate and make meaning from visual images. They will explore the theory, principles and approaches to the analysis, pre-visualisation, production, modification and post-visualisation of the artistic photographic image.

Through solo and collaborative exercises and assignments, students will then be challenged to synthesise their findings with creative design thinking processes to apply the most effective creative and analytical tools to develop innovative solutions to unique visual design problems.

Students will progress through five stages of increasing complexity in regards to the technical, contextual, visual and conceptual considerations involved in both analysing the

photographic works of others, and in capturing and creating their own.

Dealing primarily with communicating pictorial and aesthetic intent through photography, students will explore the structural and psychological language of the photographic image. This unique insight and analysis of both the formal details and visual systems present in the creative process will result in a clearer understanding of how to more accurately read, interpret and convey meaning, intent and aesthetics through visual thinking.

## Delivery methods and strategies

This 15 hour blended workshop will be delivered via Zoom, through five three hour online sessions, scheduled weekly. Aesthetics, methodology and technique discussions will be explored and developed throughout the online sessions, with students required to undertake applied skills, analysis and practical tasks in their own time between each session.

Focusing on both the aesthetic and technical decision-making process, emphasis will be placed on incorporating analytical approaches to problem solving within the creative photographic workflow.

Investigating specialist and exploratory pre and post-production techniques and approaches within the context of creative photography, students will develop a more refined understanding of advanced, specialist creative workflows and the tools and techniques that enhance them.

It is an expectation that students will develop a regular engagement with digital applications and practical skills outside of class time.

## Workshop fees

For organisations with less than 50 employees, Innovate costs 6750 AUD total for a group size ranging from 5-20 students.

Workshop fees are to be paid in full prior to the commencement of the first session.

To convert the total amount to your local currency, [please check here](#).

For larger organisations, or custom group sizes, please [contact me](#).

## Workshop outline

Investigating a variety of exploratory and conventional pictorial approaches and techniques, this workshop examines the systems of visual perception that motivate and inform both contemporary and traditional photography.

Students will explore advanced creative and technical sign systems present in both the pre and post-visualisation workflows of analogue and digital photography as it relates to a variety of photographic styles and aesthetics. Students will analyse both structural and conceptual input and output variances that affect the meaning and intent of the final image. Critical evaluation, interpretation and adjustment are expected in every stage of image conceptualisation, analysis and capture.

On completion of this course, students will be expected to have gained the insight to become aesthetic and analytical innovators in their field, while refining their ability to independently analyse, evaluate and overcome complex obstacles within the creative process.

## Stage I

### OVERVIEW

During this stage, students will learn discrete information related to visual thinking through collaborative discussions and solo or group tasks relating to creative photography. To proceed to the next level, students will need to demonstrate an ability to bridge foundational connections between these separate topics.



### EXERCISE STRATEGIES

Through collaborative visual thinking exercises, students will:

- Investigate, discuss and analyse the following photographic attributes: light, focus, time, motion, vantage point, point of view, framing and cropping
- Develop foundational observational skills, begin to recognise and categorise subject content, learn to language describe processes of perception and establish a shared photographic vocabulary

- Utilise sense, memory and personal associations to make concrete observations about photographic images, constructing personal narratives via photography's unique engine of visualisation.

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#### PRACTICAL STRATEGIES

Through solo or collaborative practical photographic tasks, students will:

- Develop a thorough understanding of point of view, investigating the impact of observing familiar settings from non-traditional perspectives
- Examine the concept of photographic point of view, encouraging students to move around the subject matter and create photographs that express a variety of discrete perspectives
- Explore the impact selective editing has on a sequence of photographs.

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#### ASSIGNMENT STRATEGIES

Through solo photographic assignments, students will develop practical work addressing:

- The variety of ways in which photographers have uncovered the miraculous amongst the mundane

- How experimental investigations into depth of field and focus have impacted how we form perspectives on the world around us.

## Stage 2

### OVERVIEW

During this stage, students will develop an interest in determining what the photograph is and how it is made by building and refining definitions to formal composition, technique and aesthetics. They will begin to view the photograph as more than a simple snapshot, appreciating the thought and craft required to create an image. They will formulate their own unique ideas about photographic art, what it is, how it communicates, and what its value or impact is. As students become more familiar with technique and process, they will develop a natural curiosity about art history, intentions and working methods.

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### EXERCISE STRATEGIES

Through collaborative visual thinking exercises, students will:

- Investigate attributes of photographic composition: shape, line, angle, colour and tone, pattern, depth, and composition
  - Build upon foundational observation skills by developing both their technical knowledge and establishing an understanding of the different decisions photographers make, and analysing the impact these decisions can make on interpretation, while refining their visual and photographic vocabulary
  - Develop a framework for analysing photographic works of art, using the most logical and accessible tools: their own perceptions, their knowledge of the natural world and the values of their social, moral and conventional ecologies.
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#### PRACTICAL STRATEGIES

Through solo or collaborative practical photographic tasks, students will:

- Explore and analyse 'discrete viewing', learning to train their eye and attention on a singular, dominant formal element and selecting and editing high volumes of captured images into a focused sequence
  - Build on their foundational point of view findings by investigating alternative approaches to varying vantage points via lighting, focal point, viewing angle and cropping.
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ASSIGNMENT STRATEGIES

Through solo photographic assignments, students will develop practical work comparing and contrasting:

- How cameras shape our views visually and psychologically, and experimenting with these approaches practically
- The exploration of immediate and familiar locales via new perspectives
- The role of photographs in subverting our pre-conceived ideas and assumptions in regards to how we perceive presented spaces
- Investigations into both modernist and contemporary photographic responses to things and their surfaces
- How surface textures of the real world, in particular objects, can be analysed through photography
- How photographs themselves have a surface - a material reality - and how this surface can be interrogated.

## Stage 3

### OVERVIEW

During this stage, learners begin to make several connections between discrete topics, and are encouraged to begin looking for the meta-connections between them, alongside their cohesive significance. Students will begin to place photographic artworks into the context of history and culture, further assembling and connecting their knowledge of formal composition, techniques and aesthetics, learning to safely interpret artworks by favouring systematic contextualisation over the personal and emotional. Students will be able to comfortably clarify what a photograph is saying, connecting their initial personal and emotional interpretations to their formal contextual understanding, calling attention to the subjectivity of artistic interpretation.

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### EXERCISE STRATEGIES

Through collaborative visual thinking exercises, students will:

- Investigate the elements of photographic content: subject, background, foreground, people, story, mood and feeling and symbol and metaphor
  - Further refine developed observational skills by exploring the context and intended use of photographs and relating context to both subject and meaning by investigating what the photograph is saying
  - Adopt the analytical and critical stance of the art historian, decoding the photographic work with their library of facts and figures, explaining and rationalising the works meaning through correct categorisation.
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#### PRACTICAL STRATEGIES

Through solo or collaborative practical photographic tasks, students will:

- Explore both literal and abstract visual interpretations of sound and music
  - Translate the language of sound into the visual language, utilising rhythm/pattern, melody/line and mood/texture
  - Explore the source and transmission of photographic meaning by utilising juxtaposition to create new meanings from familiar formal elements.
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#### ASSIGNMENT STRATEGIES

Through solo photographic assignments, students will develop practical work comparing and contrasting:

- How artists and photographers have utilised the cameras ability to make accurate records of particular visual phenomena to systematically document and visually classify aspects of the world
- Why the camera, and photography by extension, is particularly well suited to the creation of typologies
- The relationship between photographs and reality, through artists who have questioned the documentary tradition of photography
- How photographs are selections of existing realities rather than discrete, unique inventions; how they are abstractions shaped by technology; how their relationship to reality is more or less contingent; and how their meaning is influenced by their context.

## Stage 4

### OVERVIEW

During this stage, learners will begin to appreciate the significance of all of the discrete parts of information learned in relation to the whole. Learners will understand how the underlying meanings of photographic works, and what the work symbolises, slowly and organically emerge through engagement with the work. Each new encounter with a photographic work will present an exciting chance for new comparisons, insights and experiences. Knowing that the photographs identity and value are subject to reinterpretations, learners will begin to see these as processes constantly in flux and subject to chance and change.

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### EXERCISE STRATEGIES

Through collaborative visual thinking exercises, students will:

- Investigate the characteristics of photographic aesthetics and intention: style, genre and artists intention and purpose
- Refine their ability to explore and uncover meaning in photographic works, combining formal, technical and aesthetic knowledge with subjective reactions, and relate meaning to creative choices and larger, universal issues
- Deepen comprehension of how personal experience, stylistic and formal analysis, the knowledge of technique and the impact of context all shape meaning
- Explore personal encounters with photographic works, allowing the meaning of the work to naturalistically unfold, appreciating the subtleties of the formal visual elements present in the frame, allowing feeling and intuition to direct their own unique pathway to uncovering the underlying meanings of the work.

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#### PRACTICAL STRATEGIES

Through solo or collaborative practical photographic tasks, students will:

- Explore how visual images, images and text and picture sequences tell stories through visual archeology, synthesing their findings into an exercise in speculative storytelling
- Utilise the camera to create a picture sequence that utilises a visual cypher to be decoded
- Compare and contrast the significance of themes and narratives in sequential photography.

### ASSIGNMENT STRATEGIES

Through solo photographic assignments, students will develop practical work comparing and contrasting:

- Traditional and experimental investigations into the relationship between photographs, time and memory, and the manner in which these enquiries have impacted our own perception of space and the conventions of realism, linear perspective and optics
- Explorations into ways in which we can rethink our relationship to photographic moments of the documentary tradition
- Exploratory investigations into abstraction, as opposed to naturalistic representations of subjects, have shaped the development of new visual languages and how these codes have altered our understanding of looking and seeing.

## Stage 5

### OVERVIEW

Moving fluidly from the personal, technical and meaningful stages of interpreting the photograph, learners at this stage will be able to comfortably synthesise all of their findings and insights to both understand and create considered photographic works of their own. With a deeper understanding of the medium, learners will actively compare and contrast photographs to other artworks and media, uncovering and exploring the questions the work raises for them.



### EXERCISE STRATEGIES

Through collaborative visual thinking exercises, students will:

- Investigate the creation and interpretation of photographic memory, discussing what the image shows, means and influences

- Reflect on images and analyse and comprehend them in regards to their visual, technical, contextual and conceptual elements
- Become recreative viewers willing to suspend disbelief through the establishment of a long history of viewing and reflecting on photographic works of art. Drawing on their own history with their favourite works, and with active looking in general, students will begin to combine personal contemplation with views that broadly encompass universal concerns, allowing them to comprehend the complete ecology of an image.



#### PRACTICAL STRATEGIES

Through solo or collaborative practical photographic tasks, students will:

- Investigate the history of pre-digital photographic surrealism and utilise contemporary digital technologies to visualise symbol and metaphor into creative photographic works, comparing and contrasting the visual impacts of modern digital recreations of analogue effects.



#### ASSIGNMENT STRATEGIES

Through solo photographic assignments, students will develop practical work comparing and contrasting:

- The photograph as a both a source and reliable point of evidence, through photographers who have investigated varying means of manipulation to undermine the images evidential status.

## Weekly tasks

### OVERVIEW

Students will be expected to develop a regular engagement with practical photography skills, basic digital applications and image analysis outside of class time, via a range of ongoing practical tasks that will iterate on findings and insights uncovered week to week.



### TASK STRATEGIES

Through solo practical photographic tasks outside of class time, students will:

- Learn to analyse a photography by evaluating their first impressions toward: composition, photographic attributes, content, style and genre, meaning and final impressions
- Develop an ongoing investigation into the impact of visual images on learners daily lives, analysing thematic connections between them, refining their ability to explore overt formal and discreet symbolic meaning, and

clarifying their emotional and aesthetic responses to the works

- Explore a range of photographic techniques: blur, panning, focus, sequencing, depth of field, point of view, light and shadow, frames, shapes and lines, details and silhouettes, alongside how they impact their own and others perceptions of varying photographic topics and themes
- Use drawing to explore the elements of framing and composition and encourage imaginative explorations of what might exist beyond the picture frame.

## Contact me

Innovate is a completely tailored learning program, built upon a fluid, modular learning framework. It is facilitated from start to finish to address your unique needs.

If you would like to learn how to utilise creative visual thinking methods, approaches and strategies to cultivate visionary innovation skills, I can be contacted via any of the means listed below.

Email: [mail@msethJones.com](mailto:mail@msethJones.com)