Key Ideas in Photography: five short online lectures from the Open College of the Arts

Wednesday 14 January, 2015

Higher education charity the Open College of the Arts (OCA) has created five free five-minute lectures for anyone interested in knowing more about the fundamental ideas that underpin and motivate contemporary photography.

The lecture series, **Key Ideas in Photography**, was written by Open College of the Arts tutor Robert Enoch, who also works as a freelance photographer and video maker. The lectures include exercises drawing on memory and observation, and suggestions for other material to read and view.

Written for photographers who want to understand better how to interpret what they see in photographs, the lectures aim to help them develop their own work and think about whether to study for a degree in photography. People can sign up for the lectures and listen to them straight away by visiting http://www.oca.ac.uk/courses/photography-courses.html.

The five themes covered are:

- **Visual Records** – using the camera to make a record of life which acts as visual evidence of an event; the lecture raises the question of who is watching whom and references the work of Henri Cartier-Bresson and the Dusseldorf School of Photography
- **Confession** – about the work of photographers such as Larry Clark, Nan Goldin and Richard Billingham, whose work dissolves the border between the public and the private, using the camera as a tool of intimate observation and making the photographer part of the situation
- **Constructed Photography** – looks at manufactured images, including advertising and fashion photography, still life, photomontage, and tableaux and staged photography; Jeff Wall and Cindy Sherman are the most well known exponents of the form
- **Art as License** – considers the responsibility of being an artist and how photographers such as Sophie Calle and Bettina von Zwehl explore unknown creative possibilities by experimenting with working methods, leaving artistic outcomes to chance
- **Interpretation –** makes the case for understanding photographs as a way of informing how we make them ourselves, showing how theorists like Roland Barthes can help photographers make sense of what a photograph depicts and the manner in which it depicts it

OCA Chief Executive Gareth Dent said: 'Together, the lectures introduce key concepts in photography, looking at the work of high profile photographers and the work OCA students have created as part of their degree courses. The lectures are a starting point for anyone thinking about taking a degree in photography.'

OCA offers people the chance to take arts courses through open and flexible learning, and without prior qualifications or admission restrictions.

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