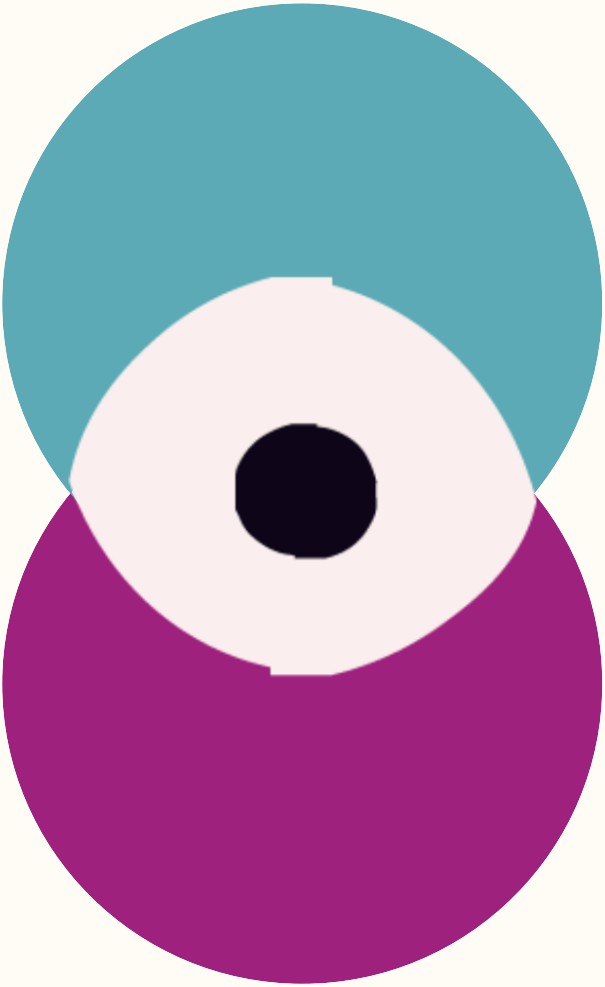
LEARNING JOURNAL



FOCAL POINT

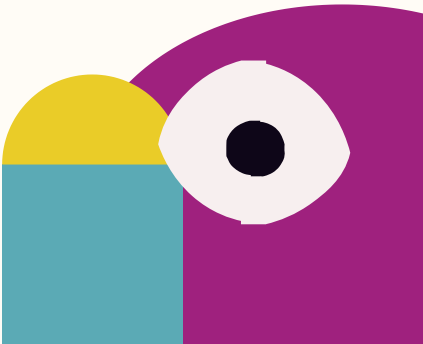
Photoclass 2027

THIS JOURNAL BELONGS TO

Name

Cohort

Start date



ABOUT THIS JOURNAL

This is your record of the cohort. The lessons live online; this is where you slow down and put your own thinking on paper. Each unit gives you one page for a printed photo and a set of prompts to write against. Work through it at the pace of the course. The writing is for you, not for anyone to grade.

Date your entries

A month from now the date is the most useful thing on the page. It tells you where you were when you wrote it.

Don't overthink it

First honest answer beats the polished one. These pages are working notes, not an essay.

Write something now, even if it's rough

Prompts later in the cohort ask you to look back at what you wrote at the start. There's nothing to return to if the early pages are blank.

There are no grades here

Nobody marks what you put down. Be honest instead of impressive.

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Getting Started

BEFORE WE BEGIN

Experience, goals, and mindset.

- Before We Begin
- Syllabus
- FAQ
- Meet Your Teachers
- Setting Yourself up for Success

YOUR PHOTO

Choose your favorite photo from this unit's assignment and paste or tape a print of it here.

paste or tape your print here, or
click to add a photo

Date

Camera and lens

Why this one

Where are you right now?

Describe your current relationship with photography. How long have you been shooting, what gear do you have, and what draws you to it?



The photo you're proud of.

Think of one photo you've taken that you actually like. What is it, and what made you happy about it? You'll come back to this at the end of the cohort.

Setting Yourself up for Success

What do you want to walk away with?

Write down your goals for this course. Be specific. “Get better” is a starting point, not a goal. What does improvement look like for you?

Setting Yourself up for Success

What's holding you back right now?

Name one or two obstacles, like gear, time, or confidence. Knowing what's in the way is the first step to getting around it.

How do you plan to show up?

What does realistic engagement look like for you this cohort? Write it down so you can hold yourself to it.

Unit 1

INTRODUCTION & THE GEAR

Cameras, lenses, focal length, and digital workflow.

- Understanding Photography
- Inspiration & Feedback
- What is a Camera?
- Types of Cameras
- Lenses
- Focal Length
- Raw vs. JPEG
- Digital Workflow

YOUR PHOTO

Choose your favorite photo from this unit's assignment and paste or tape a print of it here.

paste or tape your print here, or
click to add a photo

Date

Camera and lens

Why this one

Inspiration & Feedback

Whose work stopped you this week?

You were asked to find work that resonates. Describe it. What specifically made you look twice?



What is a Camera? / Types of Cameras

What are you shooting with?

Document your current kit, including your body, lenses, and any accessories. There's no judgment on what you have or don't.

What don't you know about your own camera?

Name one or two things your camera can do that you haven't explored yet.

Lenses / Focal Length

How does focal length change what you see?

Pick one focal length you used this week. How did it shape what was possible in the frame?

Raw vs. JPEG

What are you shooting and why?

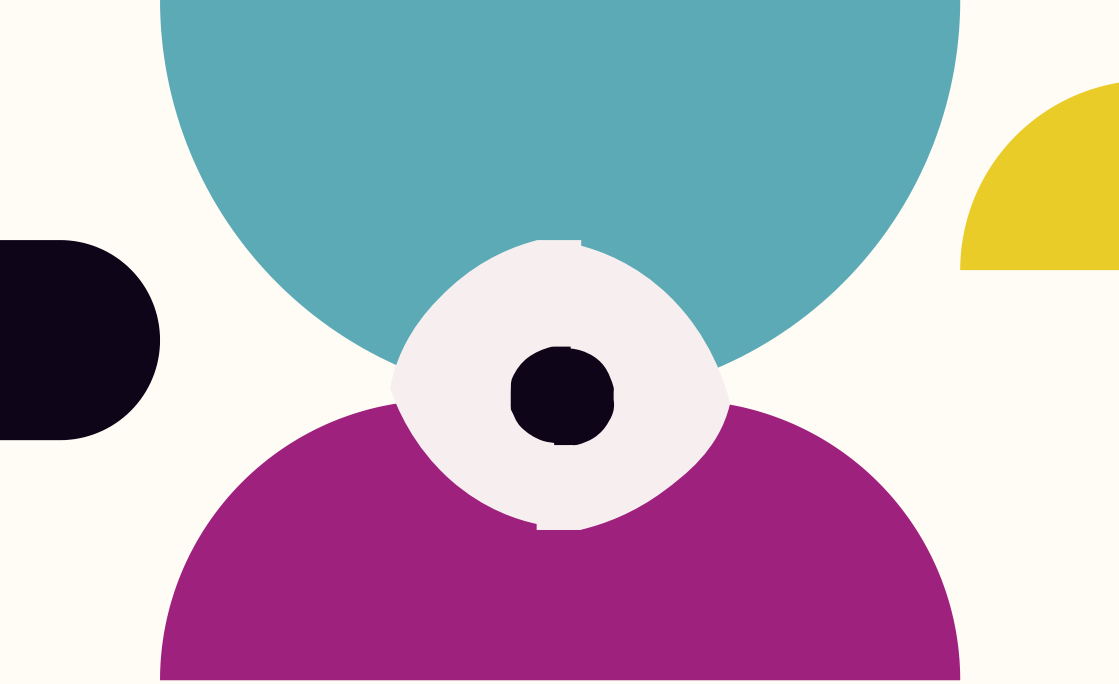
RAW, JPEG, or both? What led you to that choice? Has this unit changed how you think about it?

Digital Workflow

Where do your photos actually go?

Describe your workflow from capture to storage. Is it working? What would you change?





Unit 2

PHOTOGRAPHY BASICS

Exposure, the triangle, and seeing light.

- Exposure
- Histogram
- The Exposure Triangle
- Aperture
- Depth of Field
- Shutter Speed
- ISO

YOUR PHOTO

Choose your favorite photo from this unit's assignment and paste or tape a print of it here.

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click to add a photo

Date

Camera and lens

Why this one

Histogram

What is the histogram actually telling you?

Describe a shot where checking the histogram would have changed something. What was the exposure doing?

The Exposure Triangle

In your own words.

Write out how aperture, shutter speed, and ISO relate to each other, in a way that actually makes sense to you.

Aperture / Depth of Field

What did depth of field do for (or against) you this week?

Describe a photo where aperture had a real impact on the result. What did you choose, and why?

Shutter Speed

Motion: frozen or blurred?

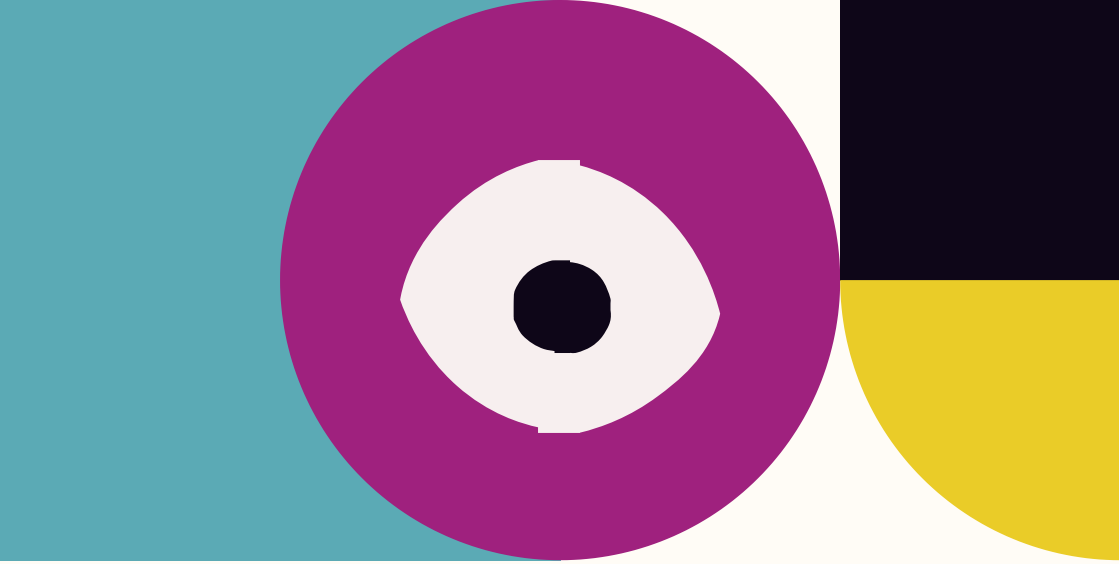
Did you shoot anything in motion? What shutter speed did you use, and did it give you the look you wanted?

ISO

Where's your camera's noise threshold?

What ISO did you push to? Was the grain acceptable, and what does acceptable mean to you for the photos you make?





Unit 3

THE ART OF PHOTOGRAPHY

Natural light, artificial light, composition, and color.

- Natural Light
- Artificial Light
- Creative Uses of Light
- Basic Composition
- Basic Color Theory

YOUR PHOTO

Choose your favorite photo from this unit's assignment and paste or tape a print of it here.

paste or tape your print here, or
click to add a photo

Date

Camera and lens

Why this one

Natural Light

Describe the light in one photo you took this week.

Where was it coming from? Hard or soft? How did it shape the subject? Don't just say "good light."

Natural Light

The light you wish you had.

Think of a photo that didn't work because of the light. What was wrong with it, and what would the right light have looked like?

Artificial Light / Creative Uses of Light

Have you used artificial light yet?

If yes, describe what you used and what it gave you. If not, what would you want to try first?

Basic Composition

What compositional choice made the biggest difference this week?

It could be horizon placement, how close you got, or what you left out of the frame. Describe the decision.



What role did color play in a recent photo?

Was it intentional? Did you notice it while shooting, or only after?

Unit 4

POST PROCESSING

Workflow, editing, and developing a consistent style.

- Workflow
- Post-Processing Objects & Landscapes
- Post-Processing Portraits
- Real Time Processing

YOUR PHOTO

Choose your favorite photo from this unit's assignment and paste or tape a print of it here.

paste or tape your print here, or
click to add a photo

Date

Camera and lens

Why this one

Workflow

What's your current editing setup?

Think about your software, import process, organization, and backup. Does it work, and what would you change?

Post-Processing Objects & Landscapes

Walk through your edit.

Pick one photo you edited this week. What did you adjust, in what order, and why?

Post-Processing Portraits

How does editing a portrait differ from editing a landscape for you?

Think about skin tone, shadow detail, overall feel. What did you have to think about differently?

Real Time Processing

What does your editing style look like right now?

Describe the qualities that show up consistently. Warm or cool? High contrast or flat? Are you happy with it?

Real Time Processing

Whose editing do you respond to, and why?

Name a photographer whose editing you admire. What specifically appeals to you?

Unit 5

THE DECISION PROCESS

Visual narrative, feedback, and creative inspiration.

- Visual Narrative
- Study the Masters
- Photo Essays
- Culling
- Break the Rules
- Inspiration
- Receiving Feedback
- Giving Feedback

YOUR PHOTO

Choose your favorite photo from this unit's assignment and paste or tape a print of it here.

paste or tape your print here, or
click to add a photo

Date

Camera and lens

Why this one

Visual Narrative / Photo Essays

What story are you telling?

Look at a set of photos you took recently. Is there a thread connecting them? What does the series say that a single photo couldn't?

Study the Masters

Whose work did you study, and what did it change?

Describe the photographer you looked at. What in their work is worth borrowing, and how might it show up in yours?



Culling

How do you decide what stays?

What makes you keep a photo? What makes you cut it? Are you too lenient, too harsh, or somewhere in between?

Break the Rules

What rule did you break, and did it work?

Describe the photo. What convention did you ignore, and what did ignoring it give you?

Inspiration

What's fueling you right now outside of photography?

That could be books, music, other visual media, places, or people. What's feeding your eye?

Receiving Feedback / Giving Feedback

What kind of feedback actually helps you?

Think about critique you've received. What landed? What didn't?

Giving Feedback

What did looking at someone else's work teach you about your own?

After giving feedback on a classmate's photo, reflect on what you noticed.



Unit 6

GOING FURTHER

Focus, metering, and flash.

- Auto & Manual Focus
- Autofocus
- Manual Focus
- Metering Modes
- Flash & Flash Accessories

YOUR PHOTO

Choose your favorite photo from this unit's assignment and paste or tape a print of it here.

paste or tape your print here, or
click to add a photo

Date

Camera and lens

Why this one

Auto & Manual Focus / Autofocus

How well do you actually know your camera's AF system?

What mode do you default to? Have you run into situations where it struggled? Describe the subject and the light.

Autofocus

Focus and recompose, or move the point?

Do you typically move your focus point or focus-and-recompose? What situations make one approach better for how you shoot?

Manual Focus

When did manual focus actually serve you?

Was it low light, macro, an adapted lens, or astrophotography? Describe the scenario and what made manual focus the right choice.

Metering Modes

How are you metering, and does your scene demand more thought?

Think back to a scene with tricky or uneven light. Did your meter give you what you needed?

Flash & Flash Accessories

What's your relationship with flash?

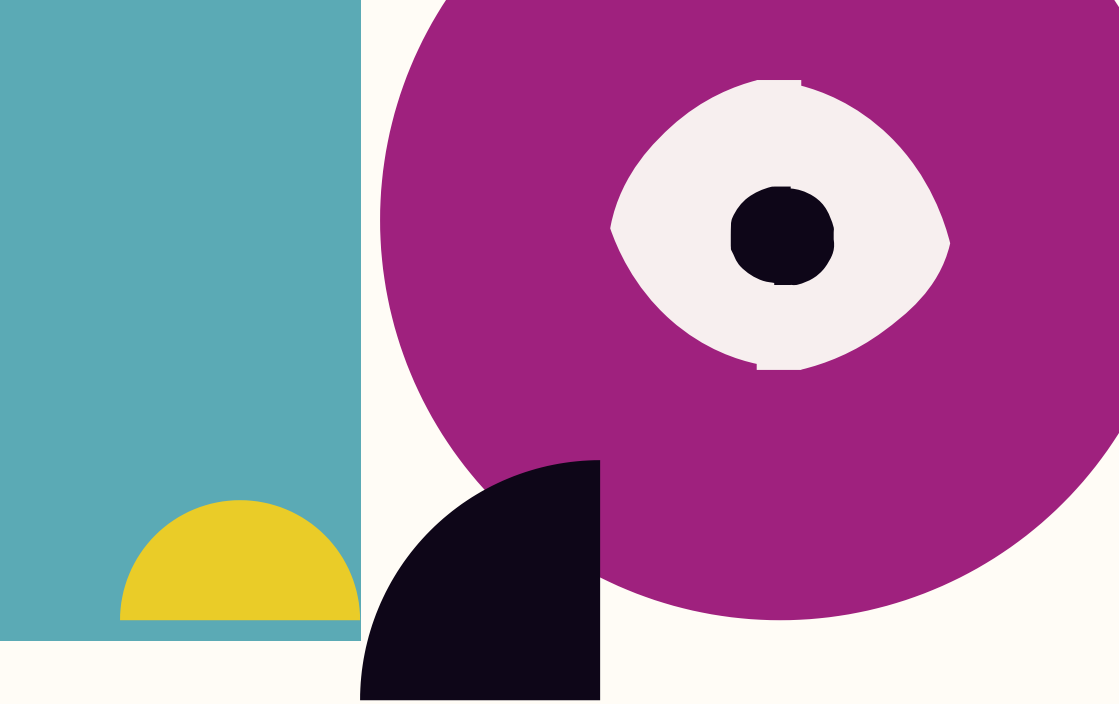
Comfortable, or does it feel like guesswork? Describe your experience and what you want to understand better.

Flash & Flash Accessories

Hard light, soft light, modified light.

Describe the difference between hard and soft light in a way that makes sense to you. How would you create each with gear you have access to?





Unit 7

PERSONAL PROJECTS

Goals, brainstorming, planning, and beginning.

- Revisiting Goals
- Brainstorming
- Beginning a Project
- Reflection

YOUR PHOTO

Choose your favorite photo from this unit's assignment and paste or tape a print of it here.

paste or tape your print here, or
click to add a photo

Date

Camera and lens

Why this one

Revisiting Goals

Go back to what you wrote at the start.

Pull out your Getting Started entries. Read what you wrote about your goals. What's changed? What hasn't?

Revisiting Goals

What surprised you about your progress?

Something you improved at that you didn't expect? Something you thought would click by now that still hasn't?

Brainstorming

Use this space.

Write down every topic, subject, theme, and half-thought without filtering. What do you keep coming back to photographically?

Brainstorming

What's the thread?

Look at what you wrote above. What feels like it could sustain a long-term project?



Beginning a Project

The working concept.

Describe your personal project idea as it stands right now. Include the subject, approach, and rough scope. It doesn't need to be final.

Beginning a Project

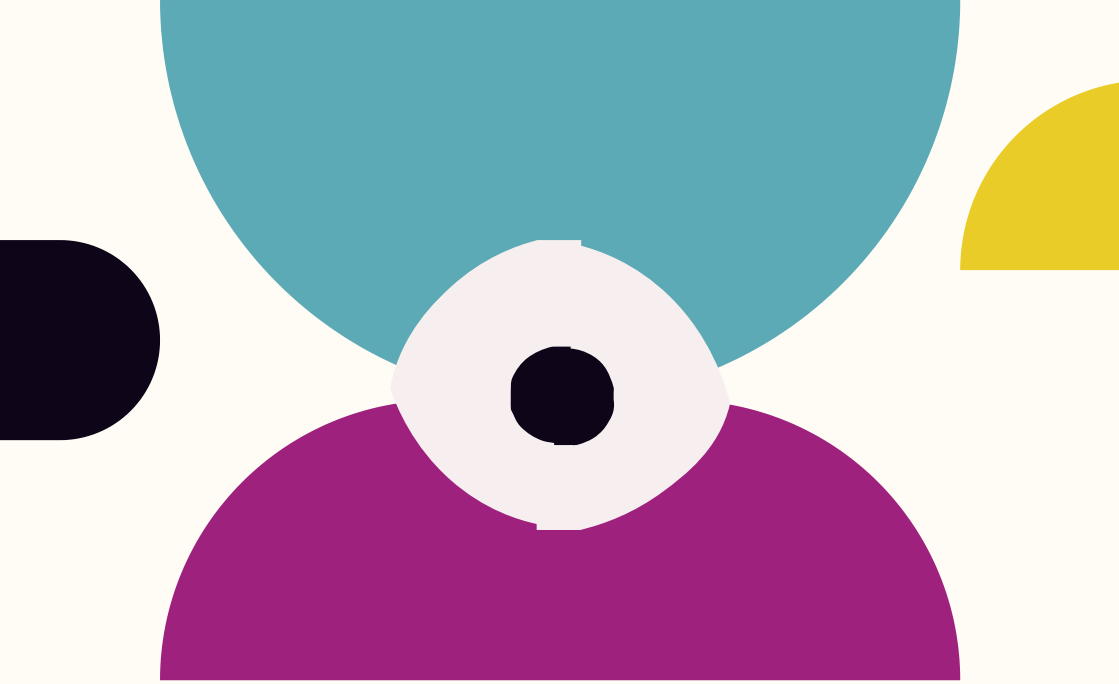
What's the first shot?

Think of a specific photo you could make in the next two weeks. Where, what, and when?

Reflection

What did the first half of the cohort give you?

Describe where you are as a photographer right now compared to when you started. Be honest.



Unit 8

THE ART OF PHOTOGRAPHY, PART 2

Lighting, composition, and color revisited.

- Lighting, Part 2
- Composition, Part 2
- Color, Part 2

YOUR PHOTO

Choose your favorite photo from this unit's assignment and paste or tape a print of it here.

paste or tape your print here, or click to add a photo

Date

Camera and lens

Why this one

Lighting, Part 2

How has your understanding of light shifted?

Compare what you knew at the start to how you think about it now. What clicked?



Lighting, Part 2

The hardest light you've had to deal with.

Describe a situation that gave you trouble. What made it difficult? How did you handle it?

Composition, Part 2

What compositional habits have you developed?

Look at a set of recent photos. What tendencies do you notice? Are they intentional or default?

Color, Part 2

How do you use color now compared to when you started?

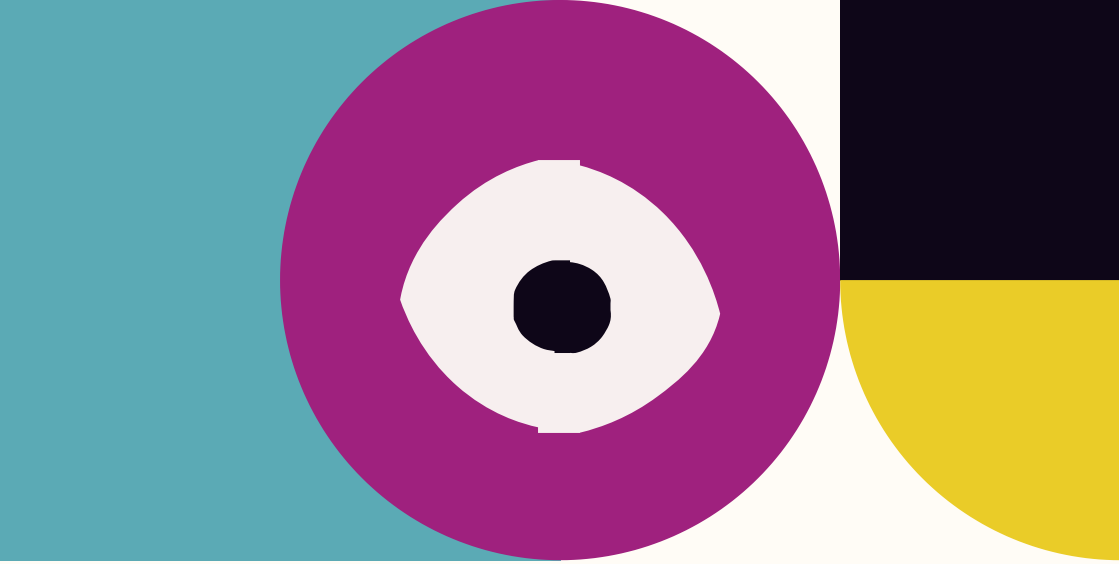
Are you more deliberate? What does color do for the photos you're making in your personal project?

All three

Light, composition, color in one photo.

Pick a recent photo where all three felt intentional. Describe the decisions behind each element. Did it work?





Unit 9

EXPLORATION

Inspiration, genre, and trying something new.

- Inspire Yourself
- Genres
- Try Something New

YOUR PHOTO

Choose your favorite photo from this unit's assignment and paste or tape a print of it here.

paste or tape your print here, or
click to add a photo

Date

Camera and lens

Why this one

Inspire Yourself

What's inspiring you right now outside the course?

Name two or three things. What are they doing to your eye?

Genres

What genre do you gravitate toward, and why?

Name the genre or genres you naturally shoot in. What draws you there?

Genres

What genre intimidates you?

Is there a style you've avoided or feel like you'd fail at? What makes it feel out of reach?

Try Something New

What did you shoot this week that you normally wouldn't?

Describe the photo and what it was like to work outside your usual zone. What was harder than expected? What was easier?



Try Something New

What did the new genre teach you about the one you usually shoot?

Did working differently change anything about how you approach your usual work?

Unit 10

WRAPPING UP & NEXT STEPS

Confidence, reflection, and going further.

- Confidence in Sharing
- Putting it all Together
- Going Further

YOUR PHOTO

Choose your favorite photo from this unit's assignment and paste or tape a print of it here.

paste or tape your print here, or
click to add a photo

Date

Camera and lens

Why this one

Confidence in Sharing

What stopped you from sharing your work before, and does it still?

Think about what sharing felt like at the start of the cohort versus now. What shifted, if anything?

Putting it all Together

Find the photo you wrote about at the very start.

Look at it now. How do you feel about it? What do you see differently? Don't be harsh on past you.

Putting it all Together

What's the most useful thing you learned this cohort?

It could be a technique, a habit, a mindset shift, or a way of seeing. What actually stuck?



Going Further

What would you tell yourself at the beginning of the course?

Keep it to one or two things, and be direct.

Going Further

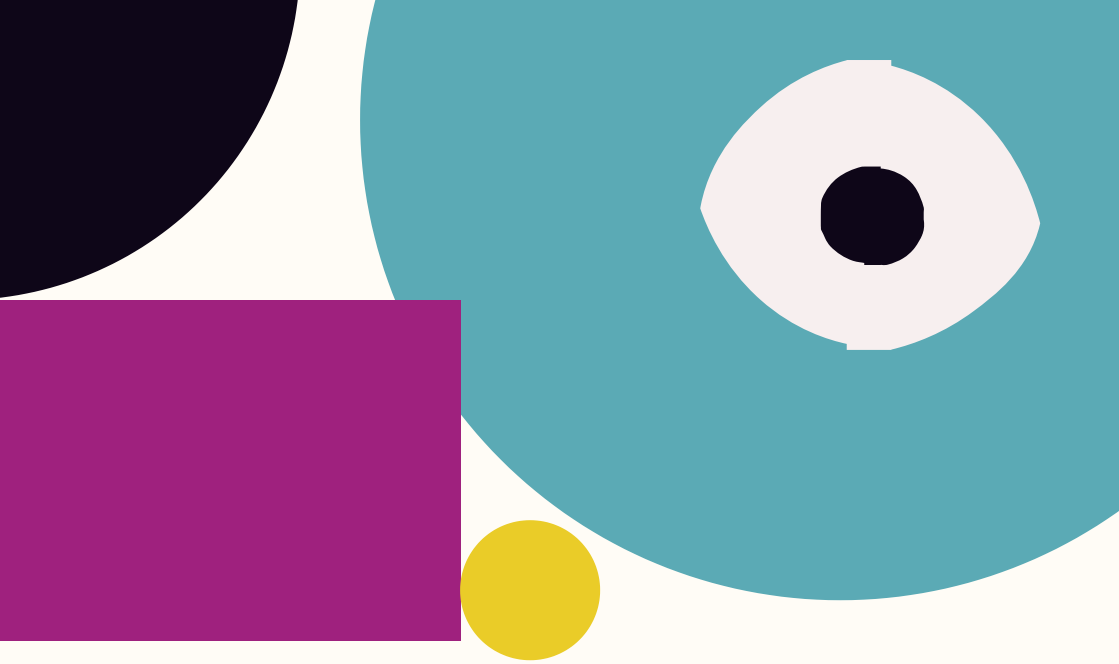
Where do you feel more confident now?

Be specific. What can you do, decide, or see now that you couldn't at the start?

Going Further

What's next?

Name one concrete thing you're going to pursue after this course ends, like a project, a course, or a challenge.



Final Project

PRESENT YOUR WORK

Present your work.

Final Project

Ongoing Practice

YOUR PHOTO

Choose your favorite photo from this unit's assignment and paste or tape a print of it here.

paste or tape your print here, or
click to add a photo

Date

Camera and lens

Why this one

Describe your finished project.

What is it? What's the through-line? How many images are you presenting, and in what format?



What changed from your original concept?

Compare where the project started to where it ended up. What shifted, got cut, or surprised you?

Ongoing Practice

The photo you're most proud of from this project.

Describe it. Why this one? What does it represent about where you've gotten to as a photographer?

This cohort in one sentence.

Say it plainly.

Ongoing Practice

What will you keep doing?

Name the habits, practices, or intentions you're carrying forward.

NOTES

NOTES

NOTES



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