Hello, I’m Henry - Head of Year 1,

We are all busy preparing for your arrival. You will shortly receive some communication from the university about induction but I just thought I would write with some information about Year 1, Semester 1 in Fine Art.

As you may know, this year we will be teaching through a combination of on-line (Zoom) talks, workshops and tutorials and some present-in-person access to the studios and workshops. In order to maintain safe CV19 working practices and appropriate social distancing we have had to restrict access to the department for all students so that only 25% of our students are in the studios at any one time.

As a Year 1 student you will have your own studio space and be able to access the department Tuesdays 1.30-6pm and Thursdays 1.30-9pm and every 3rd Saturday 9am-6pm. Mondays are Art History days with on-line lectures and seminars, Tuesday and Thursday mornings you will have plenty of interesting on-line talks, demonstrations and workshops to engage with and Wednesdays and Fridays are independent practice days, with some LifeWorkArt virtual visits to galleries and art venues in the city on Fridays also.

In the first semester you will take 3 Strands (workshops) in Printmaking, Painting and Sculpture/moving image, each three weeks long. We will let you know which strand you will start with when you arrive. You will be provided with a pack of tools and materials so that you can follow the on-line workshops and demonstrations at home or in the department. You will also need to provide some tools and art materials yourself (please see materials list attached).

I’m also sending you a collage project to complete before the start of term and information on how to keep a ‘Digital Notebook’. This will help prepare you and provide research and ideas for your first project.

Looking forward to meeting you soon

Henry......

Henry Coombes
Lecturer specialising in Moving Image
BA Stage 1 module leader

Lecturer in Fine Art (0.75)
School of Arts and Cultures.
Newcastle University
Excavating the Future

Every year we ask the incoming First Year to work on a short project in the weeks before starting here in the department. It's not assessed in any way, we use the work you produce as a jumping off point for the first project.

If you have any questions, please contact me directly with any questions. henry.coombes@ncl.ac.uk

THE BRIEF

We would like you to make at least 1 collage or assemblage by following the set of instructions below and using fragments of found objects and gathered material.

The idea is to make a piece of work that if discovered in an attic or buried preserved underground in 50 years' time, could be exhibited in a museum as an artefact, a work that reflects a personal response to your particular place and time.

Below is a piece of writing by Walker Percy from the book 'The Movie Goer' as inspiration. In it Percy described a 'sense of place' as the 'Genie Soul'. You may have other texts, films or artworks that you can use to help influence and direct your ideas?

Instructions.

1. Go for a walk, respond instinctively to time and space, record your findings using a combination of methods of your choice, sound, photography, film, drawing etc. Explore different senses, audio, visual, movement, smell, even gut reaction.

2. Collect fragments of found objects and images.

3. Return to your place of work and use the collected material to make a collage:
   - It can be a 2-dimensional work no bigger than A1.
   - A sculptural collage no bigger than 50 x 50 x 60 cm
Use your imagination. Trust your instincts 100%. Do not be concerned about perfection or ‘finished’ work. Favour ambiguity over definition, value mystery over ‘meaning’; try and get a sense of atmosphere.

Please upload images of your collage and any research made alongside it as the first few ‘pages’ of your digital notebook. Enclosed with this brief is instructions about how to keep a digital notebook on a word doc.

Once you have completed collage please send an image of the completed work to my email henry.coombes@ncl.ac.uk by 21st September 2020. I will put together a rolling slide show that will be shown during induction week - imagining a Museum of artefacts 50 years in the future.

Once again, welcome. Looking forward to meeting you all...

Henry Coombes First Year Leader

The Movie Goer

“I am consoled only to see that I was not mistaken: Chicago is just as I remembered it. I was here twenty-five years ago. My father brought me and Scott up to see the Century of Progress and once later to the World Series. Not a single thing do I remember from the first trip but this: the sense of the place, the savour of the genie-soul of the place which every place has or else is not a place. I could have been wrong: it could have been nothing of the sort, not the memory of a place but the memory of being a child. But one step out into the brilliant March day and there it is as big as life, the genie-soul of the place Which, wherever you go, you must meet and master first thing or be met and mastered. Until now, one genie-soul and only one ever proved too strong for me: San Francisco—up and down the hills I pursued him, missed him and was pursued, by a presence, a powdering of fall gold in the air, a trembling brightness that pierced to the heart, and the sadness of coming at last to the sea, the coming to the end of America. Nobody but a Southerner knows the wrenching rinsing sadness of the cities of the North. Knowing all about genie-souls and living in haunted places like Shiloh and the Wilderness and Vicksburg and Atlanta where the ghosts of heroes walk abroad by day and are more real than people, he knows a ghost when he sees one, and no sooner does he step off the train in New York or Chicago or San Francisco than he feels the genie-soul perched on his shoulder.” (Movie Goer. Walker Percy. 1961)

Please see information on the digital notebook on the next page.
DIGITAL NOTEBOOK

As a formal part of the programme this academic year we will be asking you to keep an on-going digital notebook of your studio practice.

The purpose of the digital notebook is two-fold: first it should act as a tool to help you monitor and reflect on the development of your practice; second it will provide a ready source of visual documentation of your studio work as it develops along with reflective commentary that assists the researching, contextualization and critical reflection of the practice as it unfolds. It will also be essential as a point of reference for all tutorials, discussions and reviews of your creative work, whether held remotely or in person.

It is not designed to replace other forms of critical reflection, note-taking, researching or contextualization and we very much encourage you to continue with physical forms of writing, drawing, planning, information and image gathering in the form of sketchbooks, drawings and journals. Indeed it may well be that material from those more physical forms of working ideas through are what get documented and included in the on-going digital notebook.

What form should the digital notebook take?

- It can be in any of the following:
  - An on-going Word document.
  - An on-going PowerPoint presentation (this must be put together as advised in the attached instructions with images resized before being inserted into the Powerpoint).
  - An online blog or website.

It would typically include: visual documentation of various stages of a body of work from inception to resolution; links to rough edits or preparatory/developmental work for time-based practice; research and contextual information including links to relevant texts and other information including visual material; critical reflection of work at various stages; reflection on discussion of your work with tutors, friends and peers; plans for what to do next; visualisations of next steps of development; pages from sketchbooks etc.

- Whichever form or application you choose, you can include links to other material that is located on-line. For example, you may choose to keep a simple Word document as your digital notebook but you can link it to pages on a personal website etc, or to time-based work on Vimeo / YouTube.
- As the digital notebook will be an important component of tutorials and review & feedback it is essential that you keep it regularly backed-up. It is University policy that IT failure cannot be taken into account at assessment when the material has not been backed up separately.
- You should keep an up to date copy of your digital notebook on the University OneDrive platform.
Please establish your digital notebook straight away – the summer micro-project (details attached) should be documented and written up in your digital notebook: this is what you will use to share the work with your tutors and fellow students when we come to discuss work from the project.