

## **Dear First Year Students,**

Welcome to your first year at Newcastle! It will be a very exciting year for everyone.

Each year we ask the incoming First Year students to work on a short project in the weeks before starting here in the department. It's not assessed in any way, so there's no need to worry about it. We use the work you produce in response to the brief as a jumping off point for the first project this coming term. We also use it to make an informal exhibition in the studio spaces during Induction Week as a focal point for a social event to get know one another.

If you have any questions, please contact me directly: [henry.coombes@ncl.ac.uk](mailto:henry.coombes@ncl.ac.uk)

### **THE BRIEF**

The piece of work should be a 'collage'. You can use drawing, found images and other gathered materials.

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. It will be a work that reflects a personal response to the particular place and time that you have chosen.

I enclose a piece of writing by Walker Percy from the book 'The Moviegoer' as inspiration, he described 'sense of place' as the 'genie-soul'.

As a starting point, perhaps go for a walk, or visit a particular place or building. Respond specifically to time, place and space. Record your findings using a combination of methods of your choice - sound, photography, film, drawing etc. Explore different senses perhaps - audio, visual, movement, smell, touch, even gut reaction.

Use the collected information to make a 2D collage – no larger than A1. Think about what it is that you are trying to communicate to a future viewer about your chosen place. Think about how you can communicate to a future viewer what it is you think and feel about your chosen place.

Play. Use your imagination. Do not be concerned about perfection or trying to produce a 'finished' work. Favour ambiguity and openness over definition, value mystery over 'meaning'; try and get a sense of atmosphere – the 'genie-soul'.

Please bring the piece of work when you come into the department on the second day of Induction Week (Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> September). We will show you where to put them in the studios and help hang an exhibition of the work.

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

**Henry Coombes, First Year Leader**

[henry.coombes@ncl.ac.uk](mailto:henry.coombes@ncl.ac.uk)

## The Moviegoer

*"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)