

SO Hing-keung

Suggested class activities for Junior Secondary

Artist: SO Hing-keung

Level: Junior Secondary

Theme: Learn the Art of Photography

Suggested length: 3.5 hours

Teaching concept:

In the present digital age, we can take photographs at any time and place with smartphones or digital cameras. It is so easy to take a photograph that it has become a daily activity for many of us. SO Hing-keung approaches photography from an artistic angle, using it to express his personal thoughts and emotions. He emphasises detailed observation of everyday objects and careful arrangement of light and background for his photographic compositions.

Through learning about SO's still-life photography and portraiture, this course aims to help students experience the joy of photography and enhance their artistic interpretation of everyday life, starting with observation. Students learn to uncover the possibilities and aesthetics of photography, and create photographic works with their own personal characteristics.

Required background knowledge:

1. The students should have basic experience in using digital cameras.

Teaching goals:

1. Learn about and appreciate SO's techniques and photographic themes through his video.
2. Learn about the techniques of photographic composition using supporting objects and central subject placement.
3. Learn how to use angle, light and shadow to create different photographic effects.
4. Master the functions of exposure compensation and sensitivity (ISO).
5. Learn to convey the different features of objects or persons through photography.

Suggested class activities:

1. **Introduction of portrait photography (Suggested length: 2 minutes)**

Show the **"Supplementary Teaching Materials ppt" pp3-4**

Ask about the students' experience in taking portrait photos. Show them different kinds of portraits, such as passport photos and photos of people taken in daily life. Motivate them to

learn about portraits by inviting them to share their experience and fun stories about taking portraits.



2. **Introduction of SO Hing-keung and his artistic style (Suggested length: 3 minutes)**

Show the “Artist Introduction ppt” pp1-3

Born in Hong Kong in 1959, SO Hing-keung obtained his Bachelor of Arts Degree (First Class Honours) in Photographic Design from the Hong Kong Polytechnic University in 1994 and later taught at the Hong Kong Polytechnic University and the Hong Kong Art School. He is now a professional photographer and a lecturer in the Department of Fine Arts at The Chinese University of Hong Kong and the Hong Kong Design Institute. He has held solo exhibitions worldwide and has participated in numerous group exhibitions. In 1995, he was awarded a fellowship from the Asian Cultural Council to further his studies in the United States. He received the Fellowship for Artistic Development from the Hong Kong Arts Development Council in 1998 and an award at the Hong Kong Art Biennial in 2001.

His work was selected in Hong Kong Contemporary Art Award 2012. SO employs photography as an artistic medium for creative expression. He adopts diverse photographic techniques, including straight photography, postproduction photography and night photography, emphasising the interplay of light and shadows. His portraits bring the idea of humanity to the fore, and his landscape photography explores questions about life and death.

3. **Play “Artist Video mp4” (Suggested length: 15 minutes)**

4. **Appreciation of SO’s works (Suggested length: 5 minutes)**

Show the “Artist Introduction ppt” p5

Compare the similarities and differences between the portraits in Baroque painter Caravaggio’s painting *Supper at Emmaus* and SO Hing-keung’s portrait photo from the set *Chinese 1-5*.



Caravaggio
Supper at Emmaus /1606
Oil on canvas
Collection of Pinacoteca di Brera



SO Hing-keung
Chinese 1-5 (Section) /1996-2000
Colour photo (Set of five)
Collection of the Hong Kong Museum of Art

Suggested questions:

- Briefly point out the similarities and differences between the two works. (The time, place, portrayed subjects, colour, lighting, mood expressed, etc.)

Conclusion:

- Get the students to pay attention to how the artists create an ambience with the help of light and shadow (i.e. chiaroscuro).
- In Caravaggio's painting, the contrast between the concentrated light sources and shadows creates a mysterious and dramatic effect.
- In SO's photograph, the soft and natural lighting gives a relaxed and natural mood.

5. **Class activity 1: Learn to create various effects with light and shadow. (Suggested length: 30 minutes)**

Show the **“Supplementary Teaching Materials ppt” pp5-7**

- Briefly introduce the basic techniques of photo-taking, including the posture of holding the camera, how to focus, lighting, the single shooting mode and the continuous shooting mode.
- Have the students work in groups to practice still-life photography. They should place objects in the visual arts room at different spots and under different lighting to create various photographic effects. Afterwards, the teacher can sum up the common problems in the students' photos: whether the focus is sharp, the lighting is proper (not too bright or dark), the theme can stand out, etc.

Preparation of taking portraits

Before the day of the photoshoot:

- Think about the theme of the photoshoot.
- Set the date and location for the photoshoot.
- Choose appropriate photographic subjects.
- Think about the required tools (and accessories such as reflectors, flash lights, light stands, tripods, etc.).
- Think about the lenses required.

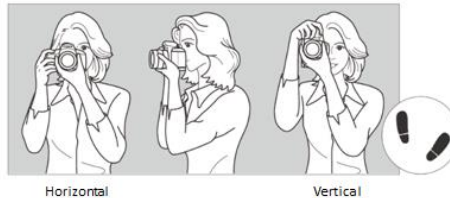
Preparation of taking portraits

On the day of the photoshoot:

- Pay attention to the light of the shooting environment. It may be affected by the weather.
- Adjust the required settings of the camera (such as the aperture size and exposure compensation).
- Select a shooting angle and image composition.
- Arrange the photographic subject's gesture and location in the photo.
- Take portrait photos.

Preparation of taking portraits

Method(s) of holding a single-lens reflex camera:



6. The effects produced by exposure compensation (EV) and sensitivity (ISO) (Suggested length: 15 minutes)

Briefly introduce the functions and relations of exposure compensation (EV)


- Exposure compensation (EV): Exposure is the amount of light captured by the camera in each shot. The exposure compensation adjustment on the camera allows users to generally manage all the settings related to exposure (such as the combination of aperture size and shutter speed). This alters the amount of light captured by the camera.
- Show the photos taken with different kinds of exposure compensation on the [“Supplementary Teaching Materials ppt” pp9-14](#)




Q&A:

- The two photos were taken with an exposure compensation of EV+3 and EV-3, respectively. What are the differences?
(The higher the EV (e.g. EV+3), the more exposure is needed so that the photos are not too dark. The lower the EV (e.g. EV-3), the less exposure is needed so that the photos are not too bright.)
- Under what circumstances is EV+3 appropriate?

- Under what circumstances is EV-3 appropriate?



Exposure compensation(EV)-2



Exposure compensation(EV)+1

- The higher the EV (e.g. EV+3), the more exposure is needed so that the photos are not too dark.
- The lower the EV (e.g. EV-3), the less exposure is needed so that the photos are not too bright.

Briefly introduce the functions and relations of sensitivity (ISO)

- Sensitivity (ISO): The ISO value represents the film’s sensitivity to light. The higher the value, the higher the film’s ability to absorb light. A higher ISO value is preferred when taking photos in the dark. Users normally do not have to adjust the ISO value when taking photos. For outdoor shooting with sufficient lighting, the ISO value should be about 200 to 400. For indoor shooting, the ISO value should be 800 or above.
- Show the photos taken with different ISO values on the **“Supplementary Teaching Materials ppt” pp16-18**



Suggested questions and answers:

- These photos were taken with an ISO value of 100, 200, 800 and 1600, respectively. What are the differences?
(The higher the ISO value, the more sensitive the film is to light. That also increases the noise in the photos and makes them look grainy. The lower the ISO value, the less sensitive the film is to light. There is less noise in the photos, and the photos look clearer with more detail.)

- What are the characteristics of the photos taken with higher ISO values? What kind of feeling do they give?



- Briefly explain how to adjust these settings on a phone camera or digital camera. Allow the students to explore this on their own.

7. **Class activity 2: Manage the light and shadow in photographs (Suggested length: 20 minutes)**

- Have the students photograph objects such as tools, facilities or models in the visual arts room with a digital camera or phone camera. When photographing, they should practice adjusting the aperture size and ISO value, and use tools (such as glass bottles, mirrors, cellophane and mini-torches) to reflect light or create shadows.
- Have them create photographic effects with different aperture sizes and ISO values.

8. **Learning about SO Hing-keung's portrait photos in depth (Suggested length: 20 minutes)**
Show the “Artist Introduction ppt” pp6-10

Ask the students to observe the common characteristics of SO's photographic works. Explain that in most of SO's works, the subjects are placed in the centre of the photo.

Q&A:

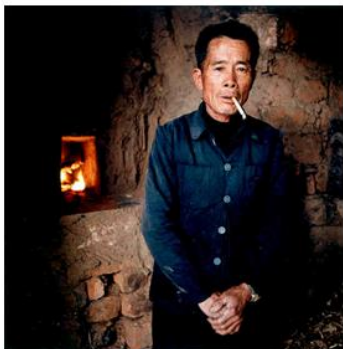
- Where are the subjects usually placed in the photos?
(The centre)
- Is it sensible to place the subject in the centre? Why?
- In each of the photos, what are the characteristics of the person's identity?



Chinese 1-5 (Section)/1996-2000
Colour photo (Set of five)
Collection of the Hong Kong
Museum of Art



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Show the “Artist Introduction ppt” pp11-14

- Refer to SO’s works to explain the effect of central subject placement. Explain how the details revealed in the front, middle and back layers give hints about the subject’s identity.

Placing the subject at the centre will emphasise the subject's existence



1	2	3
4	5	6
7	8	9

Keeping the horizontal plane at the centre will create a richer image



1	2	3
4	5	6
7	8	9

Keeping the vertical plane at the centre will show a more complete image of the subject



1	2	3
4	5	6
7	8	9

Making use of supporting objects



The image is enriched with a "pig" at the background as support.

9. Creating portrait photographs (Suggested length: 40 minutes)

Have the students work in groups to photograph staff on the campus. They should try to make use of symbolic objects or the background to emphasise the characteristics of the subject's job position. (The students can also photograph subjects off-campus.)

Note:

- Instruct students to be aware of safety and manners when taking photographs.
- Instruct the students to respect people's right to privacy. They must ask for the subject's permission before taking any photos.

Summing up the key learning points:

- Light and shadow, exposure compensation (EV) and sensitivity (ISO), composition, background arrangement

10. Materials

Camera, cellophane, spotlight, card reader