

A Level Photography

Induction Day

Welcome to A level Photography

1. **Read** about the technique of photomontage.
Look at and **think about** examples of photomontage.
2. **Write** about photomontage.
3. **Make, develop & refine** a photomontage.
4. **Evaluate** your work.

Here are some examples...









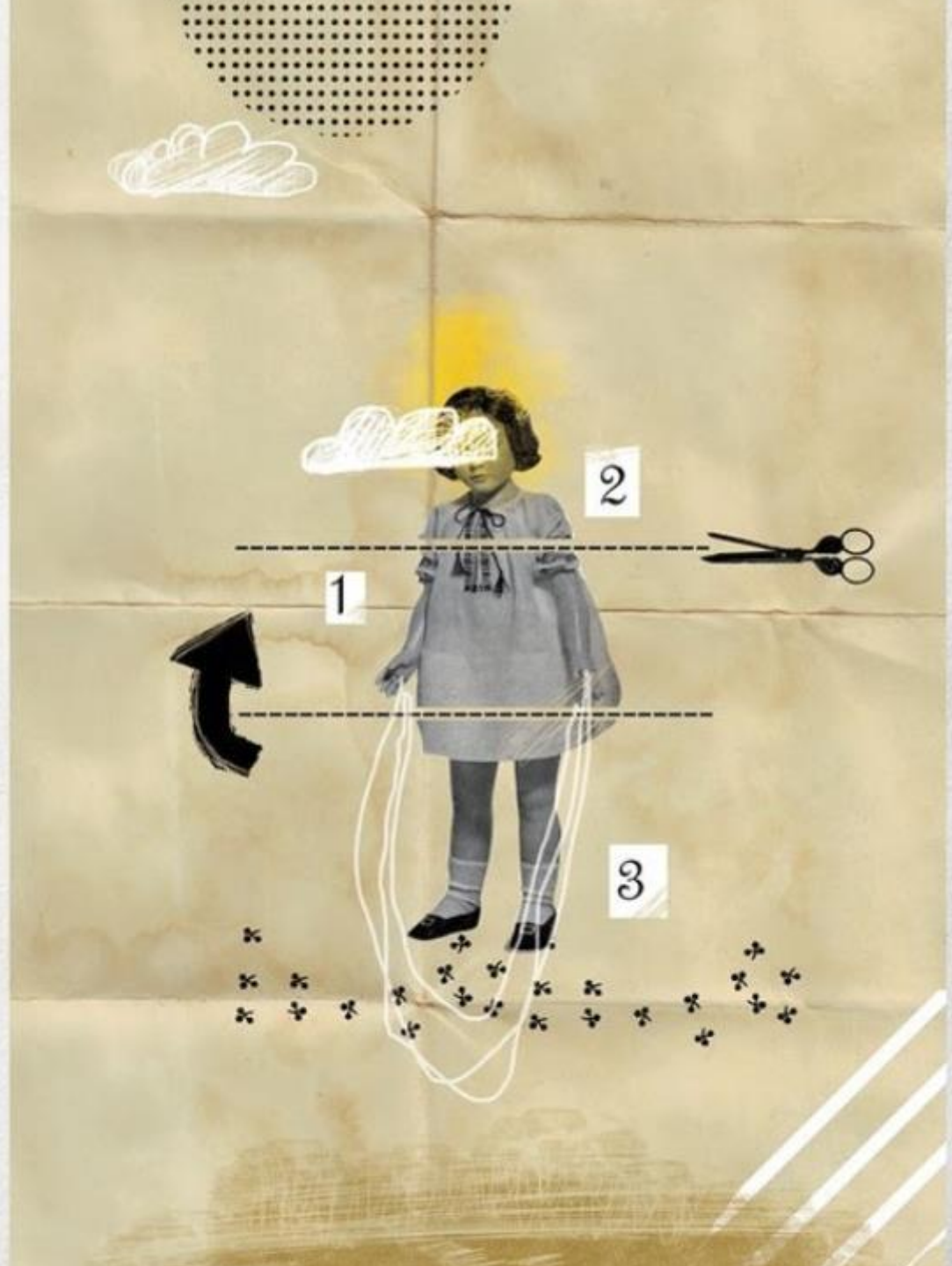
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Activity #1:

Critical & contextual understanding

Read the two texts by Matthew Biro and Nicholas Rombes.

Discuss with a partner and **annotate**, identifying **key words** and **phrases**.

Text #1:

From 'The Dada Cyborg', by Matthew Biro (2009)

Höch's early photomontages were characterised by a strategy of “simultaneous montage” – an overall compositional structure consisting of multiple photomontage clusters separated by small open spaces of blank background. This open-endedness of Höch's early montage strategy also empowered the original viewers of her works by encouraging them to identify the photomontage fragments they found most important and to use their startling combination of elements as jumping-off points to reimagine their contemporary world [...]

In the photomontage *Das schöne Mädchen* (The Beautiful Girl) (1919-20) Höch presents the new woman as a seemingly brainless cyborg. Although the background is still extremely busy and filled with heterogeneous elements, the relative size and positioning of the figure make her the central element and thus the focus. Here, bathing beauty, dressed in a form-fitting black bathing suit, sits on an I-beam, her head – but not her bouffant hairdo – displaced by an electric light bulb. She is surrounded by circular motifs, which seem to stand as symbols of her desire but which also have connotations of danger or menace [...] To the right of the beautiful girl, a crankshaft juts aggressively outward toward the viewer, around which appear approximately twenty-seven BMW insignias of varying sizes.

Text #2:

From 'A cultural history of Punk' by Nicholas Rombes (2009)

With the critic Jon Savage, Linder co-founded the visual punk fanzine *Secret Public*, published in 1978. According to Linder:

I remember the pure pleasure of photomontage. I had spent three years working with a pencil, paint and pen trying to translate lived experience into marks. It was a moment of glorious liberation to work purely with a blade, glass and glue. Almost a scientific methodology. Sitting in a dark room in Salford, performing cultural post-mortems and reassembling the corpses badly, like a Mary Shelley trying to breathe life into the monster. For a short period I'd found a perfect mode of articulation. Punk was cutting out the question, "Can I do this?"

Like Jamie Reid's, Linder's cut-up method was the on-the-page version of ripped and torn. Punk's stitched-together clothes were perfect for the incoherent era that was the mid-seventies: a television set from here, a naked body from here. Pieced together, the governing vision determined by the radical juxtaposition of elements, the gaps in meaning that provide the very freedom to create meaning.

Activity #2:

Compare & Contrast



Hannah Hoch, Beautiful Girl, 1919-20



Linder, Untitled, 1976

Visual analysis:

Being able to express your thoughts about your own and others' work is a really important feature of A level photography.

Write a response to both these images, comparing and contrasting the different ways each artist has used photomontage. Refer to the texts you have read. Include as much **subject specific language** as is useful.

Think about:

- The way each artist has used found imagery
- The type of imagery chosen by each artist
- The way each artists has composed/arranged the different elements
- The way each artist has manipulated the original images (cutting, rearranging, making strange etc.)
- The message or meaning of each image

One question

If the artists were here, what ONE QUESTION would you ask each of them in order to get a better understanding of their work?

Activity #3:

Make a photomontage

- Choose some images from those available
- Think about how you might lay out your collage
- Create a photomontage

Think about:

- Composition – the placement of the various images
- Space - flat or an illusion of depth?
- Pattern and repetition
- Colour and tone
- The use of text (or absence of it)
- Scale – the contrast between different sized elements
- Meanings - how might the viewer ‘read’ your work? Consider your audience.

Critique

Take a look at someone else's photomontage.

Think carefully about it. Then give the artist some constructive criticism based on the following criteria:

- the use of space, shape, line, texture, pattern, colour, tone etc.
- the arrangement of diverse elements
- the overall impact of the design

Critique (cont.)

Describe two elements of the artist's work that you think are successful.

Identify one element of the work that you think could be improved.

Be **specific** and **helpful**.

Development & refinement

Now, in the time remaining, create another photomontage that attempts to develop and refine the ideas, forms and juxtapositions in your first attempt.

Think carefully about **what** should be different in this new version and **why**.

Finally

Write a short **evaluation** of your work.

- Compare the two photomontages you have made.
- Explain which was more successful and why.
- Reflect on what you have learned about photomontage from the texts, the examples we looked at by Höch and Linder and your own experiments.
- What did you find challenging?

