MASTERCLASS

12-week programme | July to September 2027

Develop your creative practice through photography, conceptual investigation, practical experimentation, critical discussion and collaboration. The Masterclass offers participants time to explore personal narratives, memories, identity, heritage, traditions and myths while developing their own projects.

The programme is semi-structured: discussion, references and practical approaches are adapted to the participants and the work emerging throughout the twelve sessions. Its emphasis is on exploring questions and meanings through photography, rather than simply producing visually attractive images.

AT A GLANCE

Programme	12 sessions across approximately 12 weeks
In-person cohort	Thursdays from 8 July 2027, 4:00 pm, Chester
Online cohort	Fridays from 9 July 2027, 4:00 pm
Mixed attendance	Available as a booking option; arrangements coordinated with the chosen cohort
Time commitment	35+ hours of learning, exploration and socials; most guided sessions last approximately two hours
For whom	Individuals and small groups; beginners and experienced practitioners; undergraduate and postgraduate students

35+ HOURS OF LEARNING, EXPLORATION AND SOCIALS

Most sessions include around two hours of guided learning, with an optional 20 minutes before and 20 minutes afterwards to meet other participants, exchange ideas, socialise and debrief. These informal gatherings support ongoing reflection and collaborative learning. Extended photo walks, planned practical activities and the final presentation provide further opportunities to prepare, investigate and discuss developing work.

Photo walks are planned activities with agreed dates and preparation. For online participants, the experience includes advance discussion of the proposed photography session, independent work in an agreed period and subsequent online reflection and feedback. Location and joining arrangements will be confirmed ahead of each activity.

THE 12-SESSION PROGRAMME

The sequence below preserves the subjects and progression of the original Masterclass programme while allowing the discussions and practical work to respond to individual projects.

SESSION 01 | Introduction to photography, stories and entanglements

Meet participants, discuss interests and project questions; consider personal experiences, myths, folklore and the stories that might be developed through photography. Begin identifying a direction for new work.

SESSION 02 | Creative methods, personal voice and meaning

Examine references to artists and creative methods; explore memories, heritage and individual narratives. Present initial photographs and begin articulating the meaning and motivation behind a project.

SESSION 03 | Experimentation, risk-taking and sharing

Try approaches beyond familiar habits; consider how unexpected outcomes can transform a project. Present work in progress for constructive group discussion.

SESSION 04 | Choosing tools and approaches

Investigate which cameras, processes and ways of working best serve an idea. Discuss practical decisions, image-making methods and the relationship between concept and technique.

SESSION 05 | Photo walk I - preparation and experience

Plan and undertake a purposeful photography session. Explore observation, place, experimentation and individual project aims. Discuss and reflect on outcomes with the group.

SESSION 06 | Reflection and further experimentation

Review experience from the first photo walk, identify new questions and test alternative methods. Begin drafting a personal narrative or artist statement.

SESSION 07 | Project direction and personal statements

Evaluate progress and the relationship between words and images. Share developing statements, discuss emerging meanings and plan the next phase of work.

SESSION 08 | Editing, post-production and rejected images

Consider selections, sequencing and image treatment. Revisit overlooked or rejected photographs and ask what they can contribute to the project.

SESSION 09 | Photo walk II - developing the work

Prepare and undertake a second planned photography session, informed by earlier reflection. Discuss the relationship between the new work, project direction and eventual presentation.

SESSION 10 | Selecting and articulating a body of work

Review the coherence, purpose and presentation of a developing project. Select photographs, refine the artist statement and explore how the work could be shared.

SESSION 11 | Portfolios and collaborative presentation

Prepare a portfolio or group presentation, considering sequencing, format, audience and appropriate ways to communicate the work.

SESSION 12 | Presentations, discussion and next steps

Present selected photographs with personal statements or narratives. Share feedback, reflect on the programme and identify future directions for creative practice.

HOW SESSIONS WORK

Sessions typically combine themed discussion, references, participants’ presentations, practical planning and constructive feedback. Between sessions, participants are encouraged to make new photographs, investigate references and bring work in progress for collective reflection. Exact tasks are adapted to the group.

LEARNING AND PARTICIPATION

What will you gain?

• **Develop a personal project:** progress from an initial question or idea towards a coherent body of work.

• **Strengthen a creative voice:** explore individual perspectives, narratives and meanings.

• **Experiment with methods:** try unfamiliar approaches, take considered creative risks and reconsider assumptions.

• **Develop critical understanding:** engage with artists, references and different perspectives.

• **Build confidence through collaboration:** present developing work and participate in constructive discussion.

• **Plan and evaluate photography sessions:** prepare for practical work, make decisions and reflect on experiences.

• **Refine editing and presentation:** select photographs, develop an artist statement and consider image relationships.

• **Prepare a portfolio:** bring together selected work and narratives for discussion and presentation.

• **Identify next steps:** evaluate progress and consider directions for further creative practice.

Participation and attendance

The Masterclass welcomes participants at different stages of experience. Discussion and sharing are integral to the format, but individual projects can differ considerably. Participants are encouraged to prepare between sessions and communicate in advance about practical requirements or attendance arrangements.

The in-person cohort meets weekly in Chester, while the online cohort meets weekly remotely. Participants selecting Mixed attendance should agree their joining arrangements in advance. Planned photo walks and practical sessions include preparation and subsequent reflection in both formats.

Final presentation

The programme concludes with a presentation of selected work, supported by personal statements or narratives. A portfolio or coherent selection of photographs is developed during the Masterclass; the form of any public presentation or exhibition is not guaranteed and depends on agreed arrangements.

Booking and further information

For cohort dates, current prices, Bring a Friend options and booking arrangements, consult the Masterclass page at chesterphotofestival.com/wp/learn/. Monthly payment options are described separately, and must be individually agreed.

Questions? Email shop@chesterphotofestival.com.