

# Photography

## Standard Mark – 61

	A01	A02	A03	A04	Total
Mark	16	15	15	15	61
Level	6	5	5	5	
	Exceptional ability	Fully confident and assured ability	Fully confident and assured ability	Fully confident and assured ability	

### Keyword descriptors from the taxonomy:

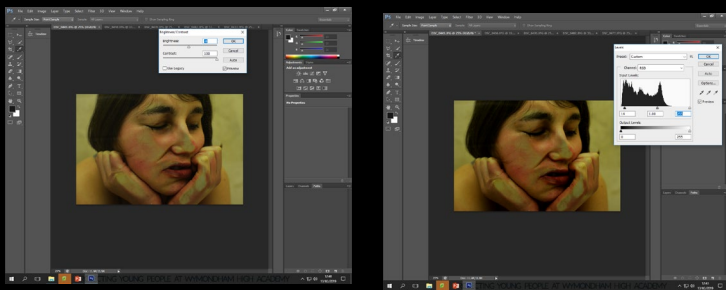
Advanced	Perceptive
Convincing	Refined
Comprehensive	Resolved
Focused	Risk-taking

### Examiner comments:

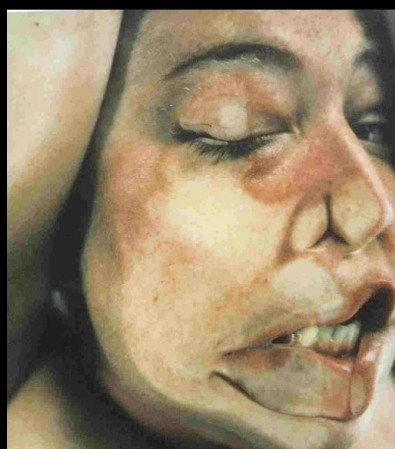
- This Candidate's performance level is Level 5/6, with a total of 61 marks.
- There is evidence of an accomplished development of ideas with a focused photographic investigation.
- The development process explores ideas through a convincing process of perceptive experimentation and review.
- Annotation is comprehensive and reflective and relevant to intentions. The candidate demonstrates a high level of critical judgement and analysis.
- The refinement of ideas and execution of photographic techniques is focused and informed by personal insights.
- Knowledge, understanding and skills are effective and resolved throughout.
- The visual journey demonstrates an assured ability to take risks. The candidate develops an accomplished set of final outcomes informed by comprehensive and focused preparatory developments.
- The Candidate's personal response displays a fully confident and assured ability of the formal elements to communicate their ideas.

# ARTIST RESPONSE

## initial responses to Jenny saville



Original image



**Exposure time 1/60 sec f/3.2**  
**ISO speed 1600 max aperture 1.6**

In response to Jenny Saville I have taken a series of photographs of my subject pressing her face against clear glass. To create this photograph I asked my subject to stretch and distort her skin to give a harsh outcome, then her skin has been squashed up against a glass panel. By creating these harsh textures, I am responding well to my chosen artist. Furthermore, this responds well to my initial idea, showing the unpolished side of beauty, almost like the harsh reality, that can't be escaped. I also believe that this photograph gives a metaphorical message, showing the impact of judging ourselves/ wanting to be something we are not. Here my subject appears to be uncomfortable, whereas through my project I would like to give this message of being "comfortable in our own skin". I then went on to edit my photograph on Photoshop, increasing the contrast and using levels to increase this harsh redness of her skin. I personally believe that this photograph is very successful, with a strong message and well thought out composition. If I were to repeat this experiment then I would have liked to have experimented with even harsher/bigger stretches and manipulations of my subject's face.



# SCARLETT CARLOS CLARKE

## research page

Scarlett Carlos Clarke, born in London is well known for her series of photographs called “**Body Dysmorphia**”. Here, Scarlett focuses on the impact on our offline lives looking into the manipulated selfies thousands of social media users take, as they submit themselves to the pressures and stress to look a certain way. Through her images, she hopes to raise the question and to encourage all of society to reflect on the whole idea. Although her work is inspired and focused mainly around the negative aspects of selfies and social media, scarlett still acknowledges that selfies can be empowering, especially when they are honest depictions. Instead, she is fascinated by the excessive retouching, faked perfection, and addictive nature of online validation. Her previous series have also inspired my project as she deconstructed the image of the “ideal woman” created and expected by men, but I am equally inspired by her images from *Body Dysmorphia*, as she turns the lens on the ideas of female perfection created by women themselves, asking what perfection is and whether this perfect woman even exists. I hope to recreate and respond to these two concepts in my work, looking at the negative impacts from social media as a whole, and the pain women put themselves through in order to achieve the unachievable “perfect” image. Although, most of my photographs will be using female subjects, I am not creating a narrowed view, as it is society as whole (both men and females) who either help social media to fuel these pressures, or experience them themselves.



These photographs are effective and encourage the viewer to reflect and think about the idea of vanity, and self experience. The composition of her photographs are effective and well thought out, with the subjects faces being the centre/focal point. Furthermore, these photos inspire me as they relate to the idea of “polished” beauty. When responding to Scarlett, I hope to look at high-end polished beauty against mirrors Vs the idea of natural and unpolished. The majority of her work includes a mirror, not only does this link to reflection but creates a central focus for each image, making an interesting composition. The texture of her images are softer than Jenny Saville's work. Similarly, the initial mood appears to be warm and brighter, yet there is an underlining darker side to each image. This links to my idea of social pressures and alterations of beauty.



**“Although some girls maybe feel totally insecure and vulnerable and full of self-loathing, there's a narcissistic element that they can't stop feeding with the selfie”**



# ARTIST RESPONSE

initial response to scarlett carlos clarke





# SHATTERED GLASS EXPERIMENTS

## initial responses

The inspiration and idea behind these images is to show a high end/polished side of beauty, one that we all see on our social media and phone screens. However, this was something I found very hard to achieve, simply because I did not have the resources to do this. This can be seen as a negative, however I think that this has just reinforced my message as it shows that it is impossible for everyone, in their everyday home environments to replicate high end Photoshop and polished images, and that instead we should be happy being ourselves.

These initial responses are fairly effective. To create these images I placed some shattered glass on top of a piece of paper and asked my subject to look into the mirrors so that I could capture her reflection. These are effective as they clearly capture my subjects feeling and emotions. However, if I were to re-do these images I would have liked the glass to have been shattered even more so there was greater distortion./ parts of her face in every piece. Similarly, I would've liked to have used brighter backdrops. To give a high end finish to the images.

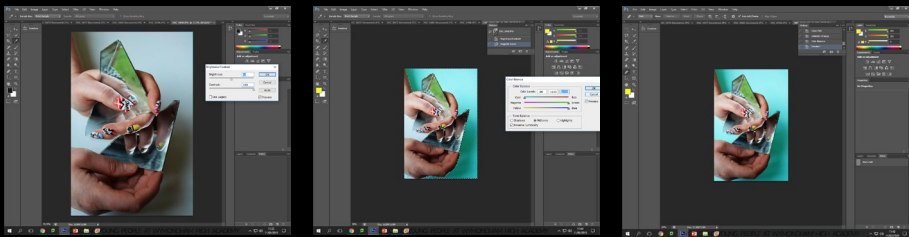
**Exposure time 1/60  
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ISO speed 500 max  
aperture 1.6**



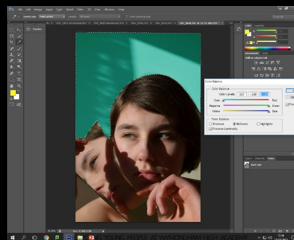


# SHATTERED GLASS EXPERIMENTS

## exploring ideas



This shattered glass response is extremely successful. To create these, I have again began by increasing the brightness and contrast of the photograph before using the magnetic lasso/pen tool to select the background. Then, I have used colour balance to change the background until its a light blue. This is effective as it creates a stronger link the Scarlett Carlos Clarke as most of her work involves bright/pastel colours. Furthermore, this creates a polished and refined finish to the image. If I were to repeat this, I would experiment with different coloured backgrounds and I would also like to have taken the image on a bright backdrop, s then there would be less editing which creates a link to the unpolished side of beauty, creating a contrast between her nails and there background.



This experiment that was an initial response to Scarlett Carlos Clarke, is now a stronger response. I have edited this image on Photoshop in the same way. The way there is still shadows and light reflections in the background makes it more realistic and natural. By having my subjects face/reflection completely natural with a natural lighting against the bright, edited background it has created a conflicting view of beauty. The unpolished/ the polished. This is something that deeply interests me as it has been the focal Point of my initial responses to reflection. I would like to take this idea further and link my previous artists together.



# ARTIST RESPONSE

further responses to scarlett carlos clarke



These images are successful and again I wanted to capture the idea of the process of getting ready, focusing on western/1950s makeup and fashion. The composition of the images are successful, and clearly framed to show the clear stages and final outcome. I also decided to incorporate the like Carlos Clarke as it strongly links to the theme of reflection and her previous work. Similarly I shot some photographs in colour to clearly show the application of makeup whilst responding to Scarlett who uses pastel coloured backgrounds. However I decided to use plainer slightly patterned white curtain as a backdrop as it allows me to edit the colours on Photoshop whilst responding to the 1950s décor of most family homes. This responds well to my artist as it show the effort that my subject has put in to achieve her desired look that she feels is acceptable to society. These images also successfully link to my initial idea of polished beauty. However, I chose to take these shots in monochrome as it gives a natural refined finish to the images linking to the underlining natural beauty hidden beneath the layers of makeup. Again, it is rather nostalgic as I'm recreating the 1950s, whilst giving extra detail and texture to the images. I also chose a sunny day to take these images so that I could use a natural light source linking to the underlining natural, unpolished beauty.

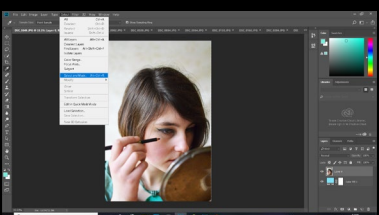
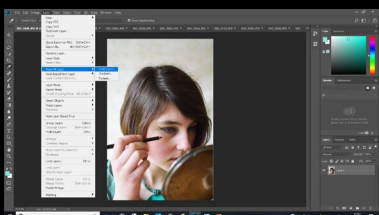
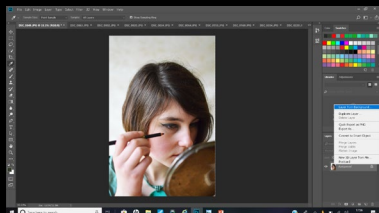
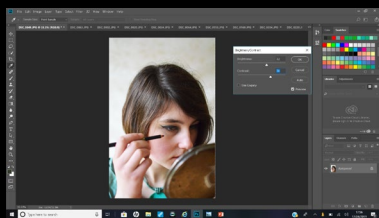




# EXPERIMENTATION

# ARTIST RESPONSE

further responses to scarlett carlos clarke



To create these images I have used a new skill on Photoshop with the select and mask tools to change the background colours to respond more strongly to my artist. This has allowed me to have a smoother edge/finish to areas like her hair which would normally be lost to the background. These are successful experimentations as the backgrounds link well to my artist's use of pastel colours, adding some vibrancy and a warmer/fun mood to the image. Yet, they still maintain the more serious message about how women perceive themselves. I hope to develop these skills further in future experimentations.





# WHERE IS MY PROJECT TAKING ME?

[LINK page](#) / further DEVELOPMENTS

## INSPIRATION PHOTOGRAPHS:

So far I have been responding to the ESA project titled "reflection" by experimenting with the idea of polished and unpolished beauty and the effects of social media and every day pressures. To begin with I have responded to my first artist Jenny Saville, looking at how beauty can be distorted/misshapen. Although my subject remained natural, my experiments show how the pressures of social media and everyday life have caused her to feel uncomfortable in her own skin, as she pulls and pushes her face wanting to distort her own skin. I then went on to respond to my second artist Scarlett Carlos Clarke, focusing on high end perfected beauty and the reflection through mirrors. I first used mirrors to reflect my subject face, but I kept her skin natural to create a contrast between my two artists. Then I went on to edit my backgrounds into bright pastel colours, responding stronger to Clarke.

Then I have created another response linking my artists as I created image responding to Jenny Saville, but with high end 1960s makeup like Clarke.

As a next step I hope to create a further experiment, with my subjects face coated in makeup against a bright background, looking into a mirror to see a reflection of natural beauty. This would link both my artists and combine the idea of polished vs unpolished.



## PREVIOUS PHOTOGRAPHS:

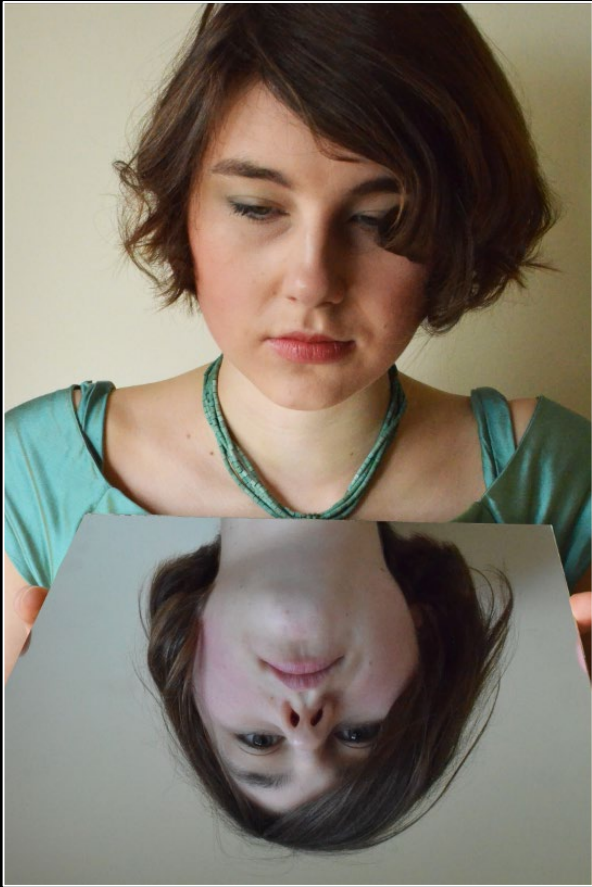




# FINAL RESPONSES TO JENNY SAVILLE AND SCARLETT CARLOS CLARKE

## First experiment

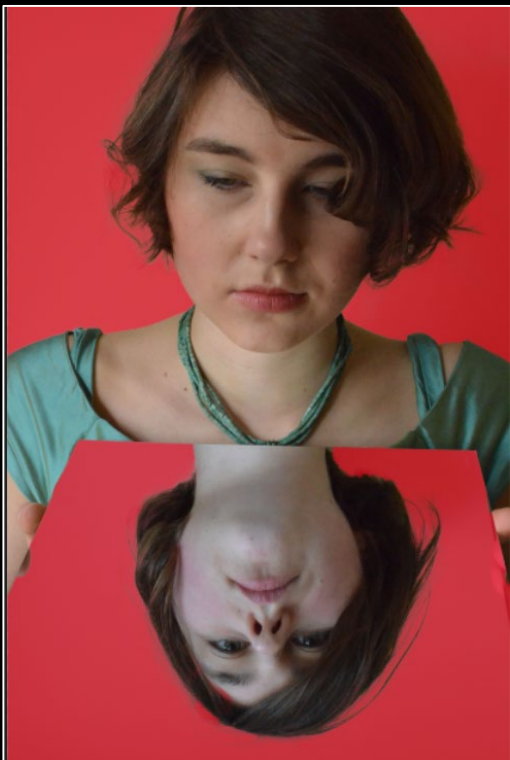
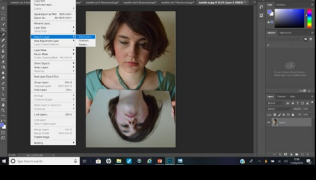
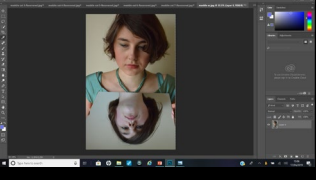
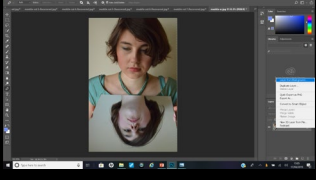
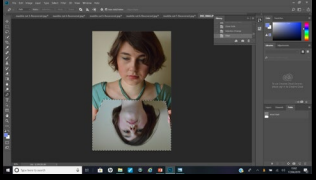
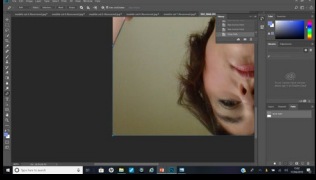
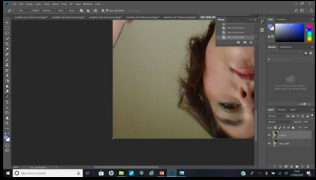
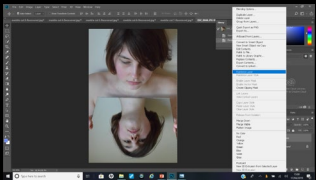
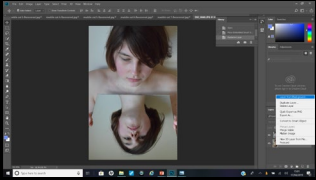
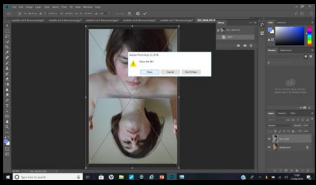
To create this first experiment I glamorised my subject, doing her make up in the style of 1950s fashion. The aim of these photographs was to create a contrast that responds to both my artists, Jenny Saville and Scarlett Carlos Clarke. On one side of the mirror, my subject is wearing layers of makeup, clothes and jewellery which has created a polished, refined sense of beauty. Whereas, in the reflection of the mirror my subject is completely natural, without any makeup, or without her hair being curled and without any jewellery. This shows the unpolished and natural beauty, that my subject has. With this work I didn't want to suggest that wearing makeup is all bad, or should be discouraged as it can help people to enhance their natural self and their confidence however, I wanted to show that in some cases people, mainly women feel they have to put up a mask between their real self and the way society thinks they should look. I may not challenge the women themselves, but all of society. Similarly, I wanted to show that women should feel comfortable in their own natural skin but that ultimately, despite layering foundation upon foundation and using fake eyelashes, people will still see and love you for your natural self (hence the natural photograph of my subject being reflected).



## Second experiment (improvement)

I then went onto create further experiments using the select and mask skills I have previously learnt to change the background which responds more to Carlos Clarke. To do this I had to first use my previous techniques to layer/join the two different portraits before using the selection skills to smoothly change the background.

These are very effective at showing the contrast between my artist messages through the mirror, which links strongly to reflection, challenging the idea of self beauty and the way society creates pressures for women.





# THE RITUAL OF GETTING READY

## GEISHA GIRL

Geisha girls have to spend hours preparing themselves for a performance. Their Hair is washed about once a week, and the design of the style has to be done by a professional. Firstly, A thick white foundation is applied to the face, neck and chest, and the areas that are not covered by the kimono. A line is left around the hairline to create a 'mask' look. And a 'W' like shape is left at the back of the neck, so that some natural skin is still visible.

Black is then traced around the eyes and eyebrows, and Maiko also traditionally wears red/pink around the eyes too. Finally, the lips are then coloured red, but not the entire lip, only parts of them. Once this has been completed, the geisha is ready to entertain/perform. The whole ritual is to beautify themselves so that they appeal to the men who will be paying the tea house for their company. Each tea house will be in competition for the most influential men to attend their house.

I have decided to look at geisha girls, in particular the preparation as it clearly links to my previous experimentations and artists as it still shows how these women spend hours applying makeup and changing their appearance in order to impress others. This is a concept I have been reflecting on throughout my project. Similarly, the fact that they traditionally leave areas of the skin bare links to my idea of the more natural, unpolished beauty. But, the idea of making a mask then links into the idea of applying makeup to hide the natural beauty and create a more refined, polished look. Furthermore, the Geisha girls carefully consider every application of their makeup, along with years of training which also creates a refined finish. For my final piece I have chosen Geisha girls as my inspiration as it has meant that my experimentations have widened into different cultures which shows that these ideas and concepts around beauty and how women desire this "perfect" image created by society, is happening all around the globe.





GEISHA GIRL PHOTOGRAPHS



Applying the makeup





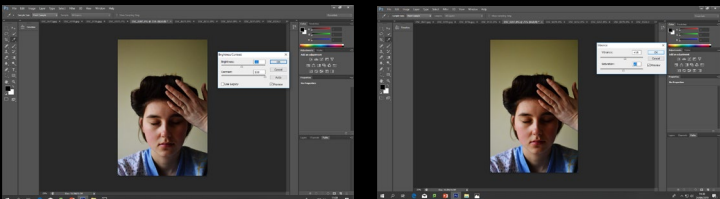
GEISHA GIRL PHOTOGRAPHS

The Destruction

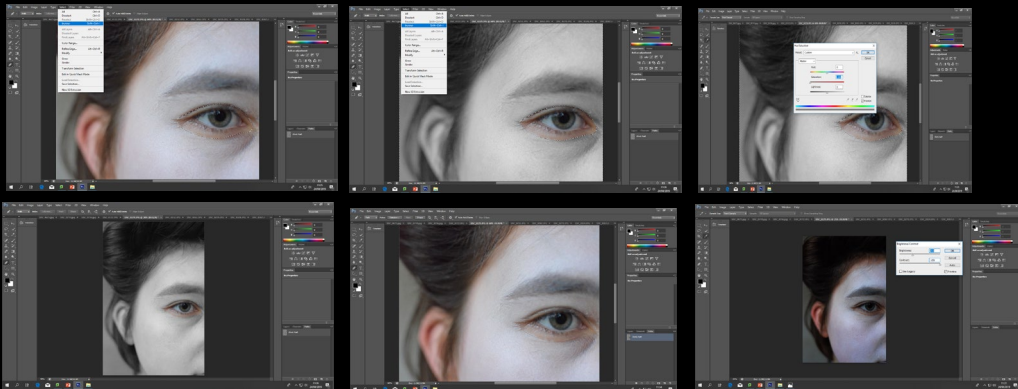




# GEISHA GIRL EXPERIMENTS



To take this first experiment I had my subject positioned in front of me whilst my assistant (acting as a fellow geisha who would've have helped other girls to prepare) began to curl her hair into the shape of traditional Geisha hair styles. To do this we used many clips and rollers. I decided to capture the process of this in my photograph as it relates to my idea of documenting the stages and effort traditional Geisha girls put in to their appearance ready to perform. This links to my previous artist Carlos Clarke. This experiment is effective and I have edited the photograph on photoshop to increase the brightness and contrast. This has added warmth to the image.

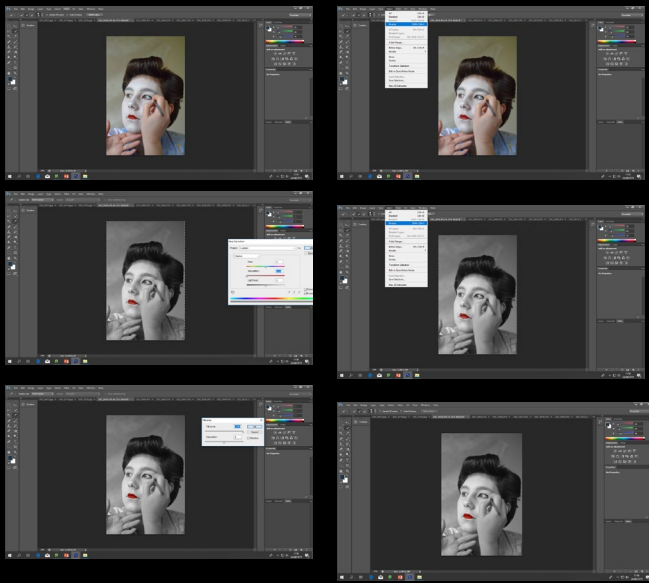


These two photographs are also effective. I have edited them on photoshop using selective desaturation. In the first image I decided to turn everything else apart from her eye (where the foundation stopped) into black and white. This is effective because it creates a focus point to the image highlighting the natural beauty/skin hidden behind the foundation. However, I would have preferred the contrast from monochrome to colour to be softer. This is why the second experiment is more effective as I went on to change the brightness/contrast so that the monochrome and colour blend together smoother.



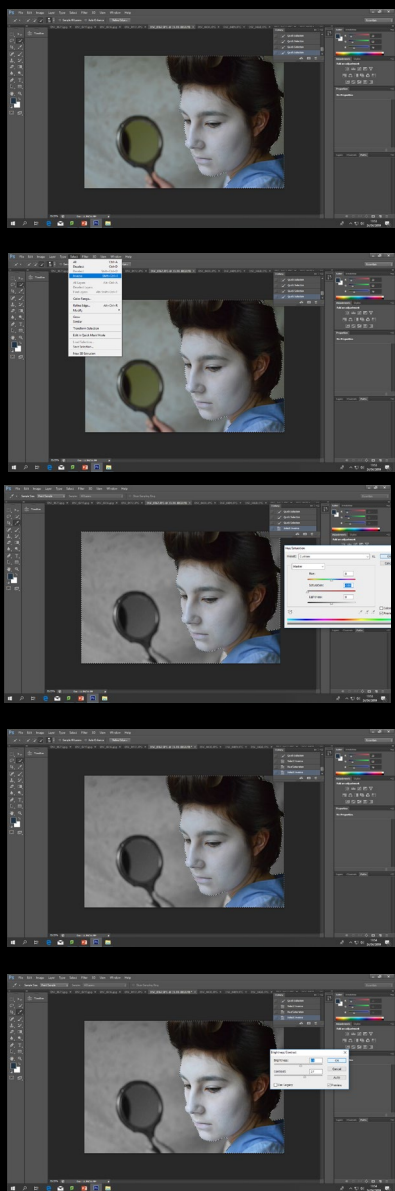


# GEISHA GIRL EXPERIMENTS



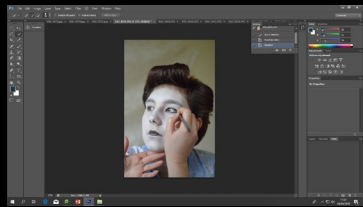
This photograph is fairly successful. I have edited the image using selective desaturation and vibrance tool to make the lips a brighter red against the rest of the monochrome image. This is effective as it highlights one of the key processes and steps of the makeup, which links to my idea of showing how Geisha girls take ages preparing themselves for a performance, to please others. However, looking back I believe the red is too harsh and would have worked better being a little softer so it looks less photoshopped – linking to the idea of showing natural beauty. This also shows how too much makeup can have negative impacts.

This photograph is very effective as the composition is very strong. I wanted there to be a small depth of field so that the background is blurred and the main focus is on the subjects face which is coated in a white foundation. I have enhanced this by using selective desaturation. There is a simplicity in this image, but I think there is a serious message. By having the subject facing away from the mirror, almost in disgust it creates a sad almost darker mood to the image but presents a clear idea – that she doesn't feel comfortable in her own skin or when she's coated in foundation. This is an interesting idea which links in with my whole idea for this project as I have been looking out how women perceive themselves and think they must look a certain way.





# GEISHA GIRL EXPERIMENTS





# JAPANESE HANAMI / SAKURA INSPIRATION

In ancient Japan, cherry blossom had great importance because it was used to divine the year's harvest. However it was also the embodiment of beauty and mortality. Its astonishing beauty was celebrated as a metaphor for life itself. Similarly the Japanese believed the sakura trees contained spirits, and made offerings to them with rice wine. This grew into the tradition of the Hanami party - a celebration of feasting, drinking and making merry. It is during this period that the Japanese are at their most relaxed. The flowers bloom once a year, and the most popular variety of tree is called the Somei Yoshino, which produces pale pink flowers.

I have been inspired by the cherry blossom for the three main images of my final piece as I hope to create a vibrant background in a pale pink to contrast the twelve monochrome images. Similarly, this allows me to reflect further on the Geisha Girls culture as Hanami is an ancient celebration. Furthermore the blossom is known for its distinctively short lifespan. And the flowers have come to represent life's temporality. This links to my project as the Geisha Girls are creating a temporary mask that hides their natural beauty. Similarly, cherry blossoms represent **renewal**. This again links to my project as once the Girls put on a mask and create a new beginning as someone else as they take on a different persona. The Geisha Girls also often have cherry blossom patterns on their kimono to symbolise new beginnings, renewal and the transience of life.



**Cherry Blossom** (*Sakura*) with its distinctive notched petals, blooms briefly and is fragile. It symbolises new beginnings, renewal (early Spring), beauty and the transience of life.





INSPIRATION



These images are effective. I particularly like the soft warm colour that the pale pink cherry blossom creates, which is in keeping with Japanese culture and traditions. Furthermore I like the delicacy of the images and the fragility as the blossom easily falls away. This relates to the symbolism of life being temporary which links to the temporary masks Geisha Girls create.

When taking the images I played around with the depth of fields so that certain petals/flowers were in focus at the front of the images or blurred with the focus on the rest of the tree. This is effective and creates clear inspiration for my final piece.





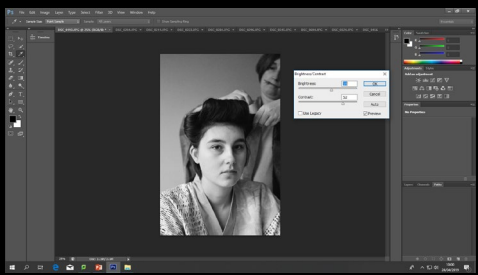
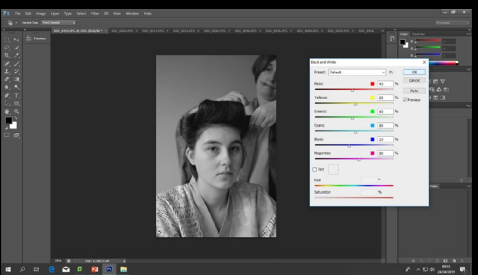
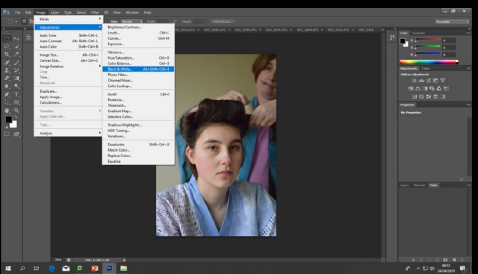
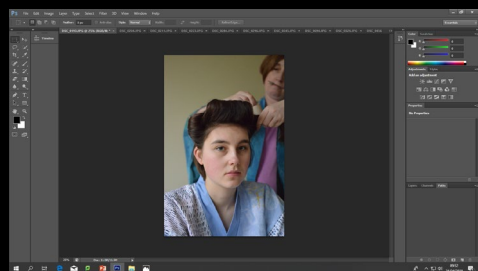
# 12 MINI GEISHA GIRL EDITS

In preparation for creating my 12 mini Geisha Girl photographs that I hope to present in a line below my 3 main larger final pieces, I have taken a series of images that show the stages and process of getting ready. I initially selected 12 images that I feel successfully show the progression. However some of the preferred images were landscape so I will need to double these up to fill the same area as the portraits. Similarly, the images are both in colour and monochrome. With the idea of my other 3 images to have vivid colours or bright backgrounds I have decided to edit all the 12 mini images into monochrome as I believe this will create a striking contrast.

## Original image



12 MINI IMAGES



**F-stop f/2  
Exposure time  
1/800 sec. ISO  
speed -6400  
Max aperture  
1.6**

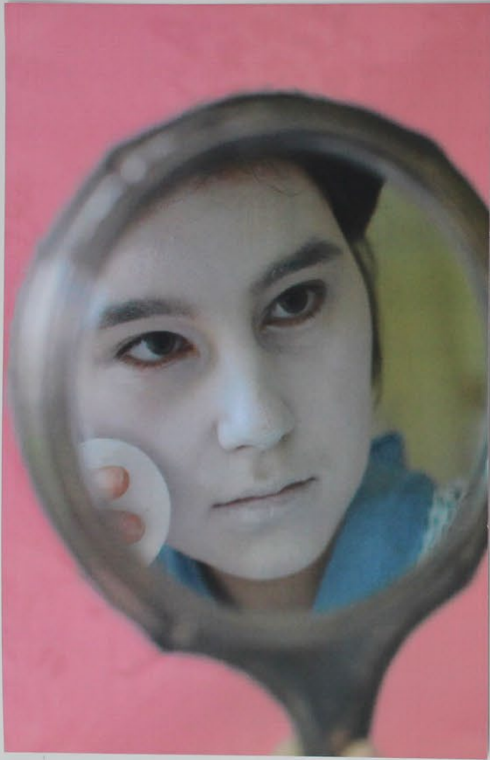








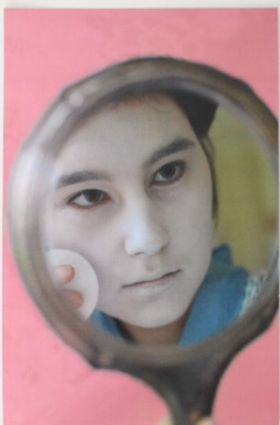
# FINAL PEICE ESA REFLECTION



This final piece for reflection is successful. I have used the same skills on Photoshop to edit the three larger photographs, using the select and mask tool to create a cherry blossom inspired background. This has added vibrancy to the images. I decided to then have twelve mini photographs in a straight line below to contrast cherry blossom to create a striking finished piece. The cherry blossom pink background works very well with the blue of her kimono and the pale white foundation.

This final piece shows how the Geisha girls spend hours preparing themselves for a performance and the effort they put in to achieve a desired "perfect" look. This relates to my overall idea that women feel they must look a certain way. I have also shown the final outcome after the hours of preparation. This is effective as it allows the reader to appreciate the culture and history of Geisha Girls and the time and effort they must put in. However, it also holds a slightly darker more serious message as it creates a mask that lacks natural beauty (apart from the untouched skin). This encourages the reader to question the necessity of makeup. I have also decided to show the destruction of the perfected outcome. By doing this I have not only created a dramatic final piece but I have also created a clear message – that society should praise natural beauty and not drive women to feel insecure in their own skin

## CLOSE UPS



Overall the visual about is effective and the bright blossom colour against the more muted monochrome has worked well. For the purpose of the exam I have just photographed how I would like my images to be viewed, however I plan to mount the smaller images in a perfect line. I decided to use all aspects of the process so that both the natural and polished beauty can be and should be admired.

