
Alina Kisina

City of Home

Curriculum subjects:

Art and Design
Higher Photography
English
Modern Studies

Curriculum for Excellence:

Expressive Arts - Art and Design
Social Studies - People, past events and societies

Alina Kisina's photographic series 'City of Home' might, at first glance, seem merely to capture the daily life of her hometown of Kiev, Ukraine. Yet Kisina's strangely evocative photographs are concerned less with documentary impressions than with opening up realms above and beyond the mundane images that define the surface of her work. For the subway steps, skylines, facades, and factory lots that Kisina depicts resonate with an order that seems not of this world. Her pictures—often quite literally—reflect realms that seem to exist side-by-side with or beyond the everyday subject matter. Kisina's serene, perfectly composed photographs actively lead us into higher realms that are uplifting and light: they cause us to transcend everyday existence and enter into planes of experience that are unknown.

"...Kisina has developed a half-abstract, half-representational photographic style that brings out the spirituality of the mundane objects and situations she photographs using dynamic formal means that are no longer compatible with postmodern irony..."

Raoul Eshelman from 'Performatism in Contemporary Photography: Alina Kisina'
(Series "New Critical Approaches").*

Alina Kisina is a Ukrainian photographer living in London. photography more accessible due to the low cost of the cameras and helped establish the 'snapshot' format photography.

Narrative is a made up story that is created in a constructed format that describes a fictional or non-fictional events. The word derives for the Latin verb *narrare*, 'to recount'.

Activity 1

Discuss what we learn about Kiev

- Alina Kisina has taken photographs of places and objects that are connected to the city she grew up in (Kiev). City's vary throughout the world and the people living in them can have very different beliefs, homes, foods and environments to what we know in Scotland.
 - Look at the photographs and think about what the photos tell us about Kiev and the people living there.
 - Do you think the city she has photographed is like any place you have been to or lived in?
 - In her photographs some people think it's hard to recognize that the location is Kiev, and say that it could be any city. Do you agree with this?
 - There aren't many people in Kisina's photographs, imagine you are a person in her city how do you think you'd feel? Sad, lonely, scared, excited, happy, angry, depressed?
 - Do you think the artist wants us to feel in a certain way when we look at her pictures? Why do you think this? It might be helpful to think about her use of black and white photography as opposed to colour and what she has chosen to photograph.
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Activity 2

Photographing where we come from

- Think about places that are important to you. It could be a room, a building or an outside space. Start by mind-mapping or listing words that conjure up that place.
 - Pick five words from the list to best sum up your chosen place. Now try and take photographs of that place in a way that conveys these words. Remember to try different techniques: for instance, you could photograph the area from lots of angles, photograph from a distance or close- up and move objects around.
 - Now print out a selection of your photographs and present them in a way you think is best to communicate how you feel about the place. Think carefully about the size, layout, colour and number of photographs.
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Activity 3

Photographing reflections

- Alina Kisina's photographs have the affect of looking like she has layered images on top of one another. This surreal illusion has happened because she has taken photographs of reflections.
 - Can you spot which photographs have been made using reflections?
 - Look around you, where can you see pictures in reflections? Try and find windows, water, shiny objects etc and look for images on their surfaces.
 - Try taking photos of reflections. For instance, see what happens when you photograph reflections on a window. You might find the reflection melds with the real world to create an unusual affect.
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