

> TIP SHEET

UNDERTAKING PHOTOGRAPHIC CASE STUDIES

- A typology case study usually consists of a portrait of the people under review in the place, space or zone most associated with the trend they are being profiled for. The case study should also contain a number of crucial and visually revealing elements:
 - Room sets — try to capture a sense of how the people live by photographing the main rooms within which they work, rest, play, and sleep. The sitting room/family room, the bedroom, the bathroom, the kitchen, etc., are an important focus of study and research.
 - Intimate spaces — include detailed close-ups of those areas most related to the subject under review e.g. details of bookshelves, DVD collections, magazine racks, food cupboards, fridges, kitchen work surfaces, wardrobes, bedside tables, and any other places where people tend to leave personal and revealing items out on display.
 - People — make sure you include studies of the people in the typology group found in the various places e.g. their dress, their hairstyles, the accessories they carry, what they eat and drink.
 - Technology/personal kit — photograph technology objects owned/used by the typology group either individually or collectively by laying them out on a bed or table. Make sure brand names are always visible.
 - Handbag/rucksack contents — be sure to photograph the contents of any bags used to carry items of value and comfort and always ask the owner to explain the significance (the emotional as well as commercial value) of the objects in the bag(s).
 - Obscure objects of desire — capture objects and products treasured by members of the typology group (such as an old teddy, a dog-eared book, etc.) and make sure you get the owners to tell you why they are so meaningful.
 - The places and spaces they visit — make sure you photograph the shops, bars, clubs, cafés, restaurants, and public spaces people visit as these can tell you a lot about their tastes, values, outlooks, and how they would like other people to see them.
- Make sure that all your visuals are accompanied with clear, precise, and explanatory captions or with short, concise interview-style statements that explain what is being noted in the photographic essay (and why), and the insights it is offering you about the typology in question.
 - Use still photography or moving images made with handycams, cell phones or digicams. Video diaries recorded on a cell phone, PC- or Mac-mounted camera can also provide valuable insights into what people themselves think about as a group.
 - Whatever method you use, always remember that you are testing your skills as a reporter/ethnographer and not as a documentary maker — accuracy comes before artistry, and truth before poetry.