

Detailed Study Guide - Haythams Reel

Module Introduction

Haytham's Reel is a visual storytelling module focused on documentary photography and editorial presentation. Delegates are expected to observe real life closely, capture honest moments, and present them in a clear and meaningful way. The module is not just about taking good photos, but about telling a story through images while staying ethical and intentional.

The module is designed as a competitive visual challenge where delegates are assessed on how effectively they respond to different creative constraints. Each round introduces a new format and task, requiring teams to adapt their approach while still maintaining clarity, intent, and authenticity in their work. Together, the rounds test flexibility, decision-making, and the ability to translate ideas into strong visual outcomes.

Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI):

The use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools is strictly prohibited in all aspects of Haytham's Reel, including but not limited to idea generation, visual creation, image manipulation, video generation, scriptwriting, editing assistance, and design assets. Haytham's Reel is designed to assess participants' original creativity, technical skill, and independent decision-making.

Any confirmed use of AI whether partial or complete will be considered a serious violation of the competition's rules and will result in immediate disqualification from Haytham's Reel, without exception. Participants are expected to produce all work manually and must be prepared to justify their creative process if questioned by judges.

Round 1: 400 ISO

Delegate Cap(3 delegates)

Overview

400 ISO is the first round of Haytham's Reel and sets the foundation for the entire module. This round introduces delegates to black-and-white street photography and focuses on capturing real, unstaged moments from everyday life. The goal is to observe, wait, and document scenes as they naturally happen.

This round is important because it establishes the core values of the module: honesty, patience, ethical photography, and clear storytelling. Delegates are judged on how well they can turn simple street moments into a strong visual story. Since this is also an elimination round, performance here directly affects who moves forward.

By the end of the round, teams are expected to produce a clean, well-structured magazine that clearly communicates a story through images and text.

Step-by-Step Progression

Phase 1: Prompt Allocation

Before the event day, your team will receive **two thematic prompt options**. These prompts guide what kind of story you are expected to photograph.

As a team, you must:

- Discuss both prompts carefully
- Choose **one** prompt to work with
- Agree on what the prompt means and how it can be shown visually
- Decide where to shoot, keeping public spaces and ethics in mind

Some of the prompts may include:

- People on streets / candid faces.
- Food stalls/ Dhabbas/ Restaurant settings.
- Vehicles (Rickshaws, motorcycles, cycles,)

All photographs must be **new and original**, taken only for this round.

Phase 2: Photography Phase (Pre-Event)

After selecting your prompt, your team will go out and photograph in public spaces.

Key rules and expectations:

- All images must be **black and white**
- Moments must be **candid and unstaged**
- Do not direct people or set up scenes

Focus on:

- Human emotion and interaction
- The environment and surroundings
- Light, shadow, and contrast
- Timing and natural moments

Strong street photography comes from observing carefully and waiting for the right moment.

Phase 3: Image Review & Selection

Once shooting is complete, your team will review all the photos.

You must:

- Select **eight photographs** only
- Make sure the images connect to each other
- Avoid repeating similar shots
- Choose photos that work well as a group, not just individually

Think like editors. Ask whether each image adds something new to the story.

Phase 4: Sequencing & Story Flow

On the competition day, you will edit, arrange and layout your images in a specific order.

Your sequence should:

- Feel clear and intentional
- Guide the viewer through the story
- Maintain a consistent mood and theme

Judges will look at how smoothly your story flows from one image to the next.

Phase 5: Magazine Design & Writing

Your final submission is an **8-shot black-and-white magazine**.

It must include:

- A **cover page** that represents the theme
- For **each photo**:
 - Location tag
 - Photographer credit
 - A **25–30 word description**

Descriptions should:

- Give helpful context
- Be clear and simple
- Avoid explaining the obvious

The layout should be neat and readable. Design should support the story, not distract from it.

Phase 6: Behind-the-Scenes Submission

You must also submit behind-the-scenes material showing how your team worked.

This can include:

- Photos or videos from shooting locations
- Clips of team discussions
- Evidence of planning and decision-making

BTS content should clearly show your process, not just the final result.

Evaluation

Judges will assess:

- How well the prompt is understood and shown
- Strength and clarity of the visual story
- Authentic and ethical street photography
- Basic technical quality (focus, framing, contrast)
- Clean and clear magazine design
- Quality of written descriptions and BTS explanation

The focus is on **honest storytelling**, not perfection.

Logistics & Required Tools

Provided Resources:

- Thematic prompts
- Submission instructions

Delegate Requirements:

- Camera or phone capable of black-and-white photography
- Laptop or tablet for writing and layout
- Design or editing software (e.g. Canva, InDesign, Lightroom)

Teams are responsible for their own equipment.

Elimination Structure

- **Elimination Rate:** 40-50% of teams
- Decisions are based only on the magazine and BTS submission
- In case of ties, more importance is given to:
 - Visual storytelling and flow
 - Authentic street photography.

Round 2: Genre Shift.

Delegate Cap(3 delegates)

Overview & Significance

Rebranding Movie / Genre Shift is a creative media activity designed to test participants' understanding of genre conventions, visual storytelling, and graphic communication. In this round, participants redesign an existing movie or television show poster by shifting it into a completely different genre while retaining its core identity.

The activity explores how colour palettes, typography, imagery, and composition can dramatically alter tone, mood, and audience perception without changing the original narrative universe. By reimagining familiar titles through unexpected genres, participants demonstrate creative adaptability, visual literacy, and a strong grasp of media aesthetics.

By the end of this activity, participants are expected to produce:

- A redesigned poster that clearly communicates a new genre
- A short written justification explaining their creative and stylistic choices

Step-by-Step Progression

Briefing Session

- Participants attend a briefing that introduces the concept of genre shifting and visual rebranding.
- Rules, timelines, submission requirements, judging focus, and the anti-AI policy are clearly explained.
- Examples may be shown to demonstrate how genre conventions influence poster design.

Movie / TV Show Selection

- Participants select one movie or television show from a predefined list.
- Each title may only be chosen once to ensure originality and avoid repetition.

Genre Assignment

- Genres are written on slips and placed in a bowl or container.
- Each participant randomly draws one genre.
- The drawn genre is mandatory and must be fully reflected in the redesign.

Research Phase

Participants research the assigned genre to understand:

- Visual and aesthetic conventions
- Common typography styles
- Colour psychology and emotional tone
- Typical poster layouts and focal points

This research phase is essential to ensure genre accuracy and informed creative decisions.

Poster Redesign Phase

Participants redesign the poster while:

- Retaining recognisable characters, symbols, or visual cues from the original title
- Completely shifting the mood, tone, and aesthetic to match the new genre
- Applying genre-appropriate colour palettes, typography, and composition
- Avoiding any AI-generated visuals or assets

Submission Phase

Each participant submits:

- Final poster (PNG or JPEG)
- Editable design file (PSD, AI, Canva link, or Procreate file)
- A short written explanation (5–8 lines) justifying the genre shift and design choices

Evaluation Focus

Participants are assessed on:

- Accuracy and clarity of genre communication
- Creativity and strength of concept
- Visual composition and layout balance
- Typography choice and readability
- Colour palette effectiveness and emotional alignment

- Overall visual impact and clarity of message

Logistics & Required Tools

Provided Resources

- List of approved movies and television shows
- List of possible genres
- Briefing presentation outlining rules and expectations

Participant Requirements

Design Tools (Any One):

- Adobe Photoshop
- Adobe Illustrator
- Canva
- Procreate

General Requirements:

- Personal laptop or tablet
- Internet access for research

Disclaimer: Participants are responsible for their own devices and software.

Elimination Structure

- This round serves as an elimination stage.
- **50% of participants will be eliminated** at the end of this activity.
- Elimination is strictly merit-based and determined by final scores out of 100.

Round 3: Ghalib Ki Kahani **Delegate Cap(6 delegates)**

Overview & Significance

Ghalib Ki Kahani is the flagship and final round of Haytham's Reel. It is designed to evaluate delegates' ability to synthesize poetic interpretation with cinematic storytelling at an advanced level. In this round, delegates translate the emotional, symbolic, and thematic depth of a poem into a short visual narrative while emulating a specific cinematographic style inspired by a Lollywood or Hollywood filmmaker.

Rather than producing a literal retelling of the poem, teams are expected to convey its emotional essence through deliberate visual choices such as framing, lighting, pacing, colour, sound, and composition. The round tests artistic sensitivity, cinematic discipline, and the ability to clearly justify creative decisions.

By the end of this round, teams are expected to produce:

- A cohesive short film (maximum duration: 1 minute 30 seconds) that demonstrates emotional clarity, stylistic accuracy, technical competence, and originality.
- A two-page working process document that outlines concept development, includes a storyboard, and clearly explains creative and technical decisions.

Successful performances reflect a balance between artistic depth and technical execution, supported by clear and professional documentation.

Step-by-Step Progression

Assignment & Briefing (Day 2)

- Teams that qualify for Round 3 are assigned one poem (Urdu or English) and one cinematographic style inspired by a Lollywood or Hollywood filmmaker.
- Assignments are distributed randomly during the Assignment Ceremony and cannot be exchanged.
- Delegates attend a briefing session where the round's expectations are explained in detail, including:
 - Short film duration and submission requirements
 - Structure and expectations of the two-page working process document

Poem Analysis & Style Research

- Delegates dissect the assigned poem to identify:
 - Core emotions
 - Central themes
 - Symbolic imagery
 - Emotional progression
- In parallel, teams research their assigned filmmaker's style by analysing:
 - Lighting and colour palettes
 - Framing and shot composition
 - Camera movement and pacing
 - Narrative tendencies and visual motifs

Concept Development & Planning

- Teams merge poetic interpretation with cinematographic style to develop a unified visual concept.
- Key planning decisions include:

- Story flow and structure
- Visual metaphors and symbolic representation
- Emotional expression without reliance on dialogue
- Shot types, lighting design, colour grading, and composition
- Delegates create a storyboard and begin drafting the two-page working process document, clearly justifying all creative choices.

Production Phase (Day 2 & Day 3)

- Filming takes place on school premises.
- Teams assign roles, manage time, and coordinate resources efficiently.
- Delegates are expected to maintain emotional consistency, visual coherence, and fidelity to the assigned cinematographic style throughout filming.

Post-Production Phase

- Teams edit footage into a polished final film.
- Editing should demonstrate:
 - Smooth transitions
 - Appropriate pacing and rhythm
 - Effective sound design aligned with the poem's tone
- Post-production choices should enhance narrative clarity while reinforcing stylistic accuracy.

Submission & Evaluation (Day 3)

- Teams submit both the short film and the two-page working process document.
- Judges screen all films and may question teams regarding:
 - Storyboard development
 - Concept evolution
 - Visual and stylistic decisions
- Film screenings conclude the round and form the basis for final scoring and rankings.

Logistics & Required Tools

Delegate Requirements

Production:

- Cameras or mobile phones
- Tripods
- Microphones
- Basic lighting tools
- Props, costumes, and filming locations

Post-Production:

- Laptops or computers with video editing software
- Headphones for sound editing

Disclaimer: Teams are responsible for bringing their own equipment. Organisers will not provide equipment and are not responsible for any loss, damage, or malfunction.

Elimination Structure

- **Eliminations:** None (all qualifying teams participate in this final round)
- **Ranking:** Final rankings are determined based on poem interpretation, cinematographic accuracy, creativity, technical execution, editing quality, and documentation clarity

Evaluation Focus (General Criteria)

Delegates are assessed holistically on the following qualities:

- Depth and accuracy of poetic interpretation
- Faithful adaptation of the assigned cinematographic style
- Creativity and originality within given constraints
- Technical execution (camera work, lighting, sound, editing)
- Clarity, structure, and professionalism of the working process document

- Ability to justify and articulate creative decisions

Preparation & Study Resource Hub:

Round 1: 400 ISO

Topics to Study

Authentic Street Photography & Key Photographers Henri Cartier-Bresson – <https://www.magnumphotos.com/photographer/henri-cartier-bresson/> (*Learn about timing and the “decisive moment” in street photography*) Vivian Maier – <https://www.vivianmaier.com/> (*Understand quiet observation and documenting everyday life*) Magnum Photos Street Work – <https://www.magnumphotos.com/photography/street/> (*See how professional street photography is edited and published*) **Street Photography Culture** Film Photography & Street Culture – <https://www.ilfordphoto.com/street-photography/> (*Why many street photographers shoot film and how it affects mindset and style*) Times Square Street Photography – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HcoYfJwGZrU> (*How photographers document busy public spaces over time*) **Publishing & Magazines** Getting Street Photos into Magazines – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1W6nZ4Y9bXc> (*Explains how street photography becomes editorial work*)

Skills to Master

Capturing moments quickly without hesitation; shooting confidently in public spaces; reacting to movement and emotion in real time; noticing light, framing, and angles others may miss; staying respectful and ethical while photographing strangers.

Essential Reading

Magnum Photos Articles – <https://www.magnumphotos.com/articles/> (*Professional photo essays and insights*) British Journal of Photography – <https://www.1854.photography/> (*Street and documentary photography features*) LensCulture Street Photography – <https://www.lensculture.com/street-photography> (*Contemporary street photography and critique*) Burn Magazine – <https://www.burnmagazine.org/> (*Long-form street and documentary stories*)

Inspiration Gallery

Magnum Photos Galleries – <https://www.magnumphotos.com/photography/> (*High-level street and documentary inspiration*) Lomography Street Photography – <https://www.lomography.com/photos/tags/street-photography> (*Raw, film-heavy street photography*) Reddit r/streetphotography – <https://www.reddit.com/r/streetphotography/> (*Everyday street photography and peer learning*)

Round 2: Genre Shift

Topics to Study

- Genre conventions in film and television
- Colour psychology in visual media
- Typography and mood association
- Poster composition and visual hierarchy

Skills to Master

- Visual storytelling through design
- Genre analysis and adaptation
- Graphic composition and layout design
- Concept justification and articulation

Essential Reading (Trustworthy Sources)

- British Film Institute – Film Genres Explained:
<https://www.bfi.org.uk/features/what-genre>
- Adobe Creative Cloud – Colour Theory & Mood:
<https://www.adobe.com/creativecloud/design/discover/color-theory.html>
- Canva Design School – Poster Design Principles:
<https://www.canva.com/learn/poster-design/>
- Smashing Magazine – Typography in Visual Design:
<https://www.smashingmagazine.com/category/typography/>

Inspiration Gallery

- StudioBinder – Movie Poster Design Breakdown:
<https://www.studiobinder.com/blog/movie-poster-design/>
- Every Frame a Painting (YouTube) – Visual Storytelling Essays:
<https://www.youtube.com/@EveryFrameAPainting>
- BFI Video Essays on Film Style: <https://www.bfi.org.uk/video-essays>

Round 3: Ghalib Ki Kahani

Poetry + Cinema Interpretation

1. Poetry and Film: Reading in the Dark — *Poetry Foundation*

A curated collection exploring how cinema and poetry intersect in theme, imagery, and emotional resonance — useful for understanding *how poetry can inform filmic choices*. <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/collections/159668/poetry-and-film>

2. Cinepoetry (Academic Overview) — *Wikipedia / Academic Sources*

Explains the concept of *cinepoetry* — cinema that uses poetic form and rhythm in visual storytelling — ideal for framing your round's creative ambitions. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cinepoetry>

3. “The Filming of Poetry” — *Moving Poems*

Discusses *why and how poems inspire visual elements* and how images and text can generate new meanings together — excellent background for Poem-to-Film translation. <https://www.movingpoems.com/2011/03/the-filming-of-poetry/>

4. Poetry in Film: Performance, Identity, and Crisis — *University Journal*

Academic article examining how *poetic performance functions in narrative films*, informing emotional and thematic cinematic choices. <https://www.mona.uwi.edu/soe/publications/cje/article/1229>

Cinematography & Visual Storytelling (Film Theory)

5. What Is Cinematography? — *Adobe Creative Cloud*

A *clear, beginner-friendly overview* of cinematography fundamentals — how lighting, composition, and movement shape narrative and mood. https://www.adobe.com/kw_en/creativecloud/video/production/cinematography.html

6. Film Art: An Introduction (Bordwell & Thompson)

Widely used foundational text on *film analysis and visual storytelling*, covering narrative cinema, mise-en-scène, cinematography, editing, and sound. <https://interactive.cornish.edu/virtual-library-Documents/bordwell-thompson-film-art-an-introduction.pdf>

7. Introduction to Visual Storytelling (Oxford Academic)

Explains how *choices in shots, cuts, and transitions* influence audience understanding and emotional experience in film. <https://academic.oup.com/book/39668/chapter/339654304>

8. Visual Storytelling in Auteur Filmmaking — *Journal of Media Horizons*

Scholarly article analyzing how *framing and composition define auteur style* — valuable when

delegates justify stylistic choices.

<https://jmhorizons.com/index.php/journal/article/view/1037>

9. Visions of Light (Documentary Overview)

While not an article, this *in-depth documentary overview* is trusted and highly cited in cinematography studies — ideal for delegates who want examples from *professional cinematographers*.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Visions_of_Light