Aaron Gubrud

AME294 – MW 2:00-3:15

10 May 2010

Media Editing

When I first saw this class being offered while I was looking for that one class that I actually wanted to take I was struck with excitement and curiosity. I wasn't sure what to expect but I knew that as a computer nerd with an affinity for manipulating digital media there was great potential in this class. Upon finding out that this class would be conducted with an emphasis on using open-source tools I was intrigued even further as I knew of at least a few whose power matched or exceeded their commercial counterparts and I was eager to be exposed to them.

The first portion of the class explored image manipulation with the open source tool called the GNU Image Manipulation Program (GIMP). Of all the open source projects to my knowledge this was the one I was most familiar with. I hadn't used it extensively in the past but I would venture to say it is the most famous media editing project of its kind. Our project was to incorporate an existing image (personal or obtained) and supplement it with a piece of text of some sort. This assignment took me by surprise in that I'd never had to plan out a work before I started. In the past I'd had an image I wanted to manipulate in some way and whatever resulted was the product of a vague vision and copious amounts of experimentation. In this case, however, I needed to simultaneously find a quote and an image and make them interact in a purposeful way. It was a totally new approach to this art and I'm glad to have been exposed to this process. My resulting project can be seen here:

http://www.flickr.com/photos/ondskapelsen/4325690297/

The second portion of this class looked at working with audio using Audacity. As a musician I was really excited for this portion of the class. In form with the rest of the class projects, this assignment was very open ended and open to personal interpretation but I decided I wanted to construct something entirely of my own. And with that I sat down in front of my computer with my guitar and doodled until I found a riff I felt I could build upon and started recording. In a sense this was a return to my original ways

of experimentation but at the same time I also wanted to make this a complex piece with a lot going on which required some planning and consideration that needed to take place both on the guitar and in Audacity. I felt like I accomplished my goal with a percussion track, five other guitar tracks and a decent amount of effects taken from Audacity's set. The final product can be seen here: http://soundcloud.com/user9481230/ame294-project.

Our third project was to create an audiovisual piece. This time there wasn't really a set program we were expected to use, although the default editing programs included with the Windows and Macintosh operating systems were suggested. With that, the only real stipulation that existed was that the piece be less than two minutes in length. Again I turned to my musical inclination and decided to make a music video of sorts (which I had done in the past with friends); however I was faced with a tight time frame and lack of access to a video camera. And so I decided to go with what I had available to me and make a sort of collage of nature both in her calm and chaotic set to music which gave me the most intense visual imagery. This meant that I had to consider how the mood of the visual content would match the mood of the music as well as how the images would flow into each other. This required a lot of searching for videos and a decent amount of cutting these clips to achieve the effect I was seeking. The video can be seen here: http://www.dailymotion.com/video/xcir3x_ame294-video

The fourth project for this course was to map out our social networks through various means. This project was interesting in that it made us reflect upon the people we deal with on a regular basis and what our relationships mean. It was also interesting to think about how to represent these different types of relationships visually in a sensible and hopefully stylish manner. These graphs and an explanation of my creative process can be seen here: http://mediaediting.wikispaces.asu.edu/agubrud_4

For our penultimate project it was our task to design an interface for something that exists and fails to function efficiently or that does not yet exist and (per the opinion of the creator) should. In my case I opted for the latter, designing an interface for a proposed website that kept track of the touring habits of metal bands while providing a wealth of other information about the bands which was gleaned from a variety of other sources. Of all the projects for this course, this one required the most amount of beforehand planning. In my mind I had to visualize how just about the entire thing was

supposed to look before I could get started. Then I had to take that mental image and manifest it into something tangible. In order to do that I felt like I had to have my interface be somewhat interactive in my presentation so I used a great deal of layers in Photoshop and a PowerPoint slideshow to simulate a functioning model of my interface. In the end I found that I implemented my design in a way that did my mental image justice. The end result can be seen here along with a description of my creative process: http://mediaediting.wikispaces.asu.edu/agubrud_5

Our final assignment for this course was to explore and analyze the life of Daragh Byrne by means of tweets from his Twitter as well as a combination of digital photographs taken from both a regular camera and a device called a SenseCam (http://research.microsoft.com/en-us/um/cambridge/projects/sensecam/). These three sources of data were organized into a program called Orison which separated the content into each day across a nine-month period from March to November of 2009. From this pool of information we were to construct a narrative (or narratives) about the life of Daragh according to our interpretation of his digital documentation. In my experience with this project, I found it fairly difficult to do much planning because I honestly had little idea where I wanted to go with it. The challenge with this then was sifting through information as I went along and simultaneously determining what I wanted and how to build a narrative with it on the fly. However once I had gathered all of my objects, the project got a little easier as the rest was aesthetics. In the end I felt my submission was successful. The project along with my creative process can be seen here: http://mediaediting.wikispaces.asu.edu/agubrud_6

In all I feel that this class was very important in that it taught me that endeavors in media editing can have purpose and that successful works can be planned and aren't always the product of experimentation (although it can be a valid method in the artistic process). It also taught me that there is an open source program available to accomplish just about every media editing task. With the exception of gripes with speed of these programs from time to time, they are often just as powerful as their commercial counterparts. I feel this class has helped me grow as an artist and its indirect emphasis on planning has even more universal positive influence. It was definitely my favorite of the semester.