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Final Written Mediated Assignment

Assuming that “idea/process/artifact” refers to the three different states that media that we create goes through: idea being what goes into its conceptualization, process being all that is involved with the way we create it, and artifact being what the construction becomes after its creation, it seems to me that through careful consideration of these three states the media editor/creator decides the importance and usefulness of the media. Every state draws on the ones preceding it. And therefore the end result is the combination of all three.

“Idea” is of course what comes first. When we create a piece of media it always starts with a spark of inspiration. In class, I often had to take about half of the time allotted to conceptualize and refine whatever it was I was trying to create. While this often lead to an insufficient amount of working time, the results are meaningless unless they mean something to the creator and fulfill their purpose. When time is limited, we often are forced to make a decision, focus on idea or quality? If the time spent conceptualizing is cut short, the end result may feel uninspired and pointless. It may serve no purpose to anyone. But if the time spent conceptualizing leaves inadequate time to make the media the way we imagine or even on time for a deadline, the idea may be noticed but its effect will be diluted. So, when coming up the idea behind whatever it is that we are trying to create, we must leave adequate time for both conceptualization and implementation.

We often draw our inspirations from our past experiences or from other’s work. It is arguable that it is impossible for us to create something truly original, so it is my opinion that we should never try to create something based on nothing. Basing an idea on our own personal experiences not only adds personal meaning, but gives us something real to base the media that we create on that others can relate to. And in my experience, it makes us more passionate about our own work. My favorite project that we did in this class was probably the module 1 final assignment. This assignment called for a lot of personal reflection and left a lot of room for personalization. What I think made it my favorite was the fact that it was based on my experience, my attitude, my desires, and my fears. It was this element of personal meaning that makes me like this piece over a lot of the other work that I did in this class. And if I hadn’t

spent the time I did conceptualizing, I would have probably made something about my hometown and the job I want in the future instead of telling about who I really am. I am glad that I did put in the time to settle on an idea that lead to the



creation of an image that I am proud of and that tells a lot about me, even if I did run out of time to tweak it to look just how I want it because I spent so long coming up with the idea. Every detail has significance to me.

“Process” is of course the time and effort that we put into our creation along with the actual details as to how we make it. Often in the classroom setting we were told certain aspects of “how” we were supposed to complete the assignment but we were always given some creative choices. And it is often these creative choices that set apart our creation from someone else’s. How is usually inspired by our “idea.” If we decided in the conceptualization phase that we wanted to create an animation of some kind, how we do it becomes restricted to access to technology and software, and to our personal skills.

Sometimes, the process can be the main focus of the creation. One example of this is the act of creating something for practice, but a better example is the kind of media editing in which the end result is impressive because of the process. An example of this is the sand mandalas created by the Tibetan monks. The spend days or weeks creating an intricate symbol out of dyed sand in front of an audience. Then at the end they destroy it. In this particular form of media editing, the creation is the main focus. It value comes from the process alone. It is the same concept that makes elephant painting remarkable. Most humans could make what the elephants make, but because the



artist is an elephant, the process defines the value.

Artifact, I assume is what the creation becomes after it is made. Is it valuable? Should it be displayed? Does it serve a purpose? Many of the lessons in this digital media editing course were designed to make us think about what our creations are after they are done. The goal was often that they be informative or even emotion inducing. And towards the end of the semester, we talked about functional media creations like the special interventions.

From what I understand, a big part of the definition of artifact is what the creation tells about ourselves and the world we live in. We know a lot about ancient civilizations from the art, writing, buildings, and other forms of media that they left behind. Similarly, when we create something, it usually gives a bit of insight into the world we live in. In class we talked about Danger Mouse's Grey Album and what it represents. As an artifact, it tells us a lot about Danger Mouse, today's music, the prevalence and importance of mash-ups and the questions they raise, and through all of these we can get a bigger picture as to what our society thinks about this sort of thing. When we watch a movie, we can learn based on how popular the movie was and what kind of people liked it, what does our society like in a movie. And, if we want to target a certain audience, what has this audience shown a liking for in the past. When a creation passes into the "artifact phase," it provides insight into the time and culture in which it was created, the people who created it, and why it was created. In the case of the sand mandalas, what is done with it as an artifact is rich in meaning. When the monks destroy the symbol they spent days or weeks meticulously slaving over, it is a representation of certain aspects of their beliefs.

In most media forms each stage, from idea to process to artifact, reflects the stages that came before it, and through this reflection, new meaning is added. Say I listen to a song (artifact) and really like it based solely on the way it sounds but I don't really know what the lyrics mean. Then I might do some research on the meaning behind the lyrics (idea) and then find I like the song even more because I like what the lyrics mean. Then I find out that it was recorded in a really interesting way (process) like maybe the recording was done at a location that has importance to the song. That adds even more depth to the song, and through exploration of every stage of its creation, I grow to like the song even more. For any piece of media, every decision made from conceptualization to what is done with it as an artifact, adds to the overall experience of this media.

When looked at this way, there are very few trivial decisions in media editing. Every color could represent something, the process used to create it could add value or meaning, and what is done with it after it is complete can completely change what the creation means to them. And what the creation says about the creator and society, though it can really only be viewed when it is in artifact form, is the culmination of decisions made throughout the idea/process/artifact phases.