Markus Rennemann

DSC 294: Media Editing

Media Editing

Throughout the semester, I've come to the understanding that media editing is a very complex subject that encompasses a wide range of different sources. While I started the class with the initial idea that I knew what media is and how I would be working with it, the various projects that I've undertaken have given me a new view on how interrelated media is. Essentially, I've come to the conclusion that every form of media takes influence from other modes of artistic expression, which allows the artist access to a limitless palette from which to create new, diverse works of art.

To understand how all-encompassing the field of media editing is, one must first know what role the individual mediums from which it draws from play in the overall process of making art. The stereotypical notion of art is that it is generally separated into three different parts. These three parts are graphic art, typically exemplified by artists ranging from Picasso to Banksy; aural art, such as music and the audio engineering involved in movie-making; and visual art, which ranges from blockbuster movies to the art of Bill Viola. Each individual field has its own idiosyncrasies, but in actuality, there is a surprising amount of overlap between every form of art.

In class, the graphics section served well to introduce everyone to the idea that image-based art can be influenced by literally anything without tarnishing the artist's integrity. By now, society is saturated in pop-culture so much that it will inevitably lead to the incorporation of newer technological tools into the artist's selection of influences. This new trend was best exemplified early in the year when the class was assigned the task of generating a piece of art on the spot that has its basis in a tweet by Kanye West. The amount of creativity shown in the entire class's output demonstrates that even seemingly mundane things can be used in an endless amount of unique ways that display the author's personality in a way that only he or she can. The



"'Simplicity is the ultimate sophistication.' - Leonardo Da Vinci"
-KANYE WEST
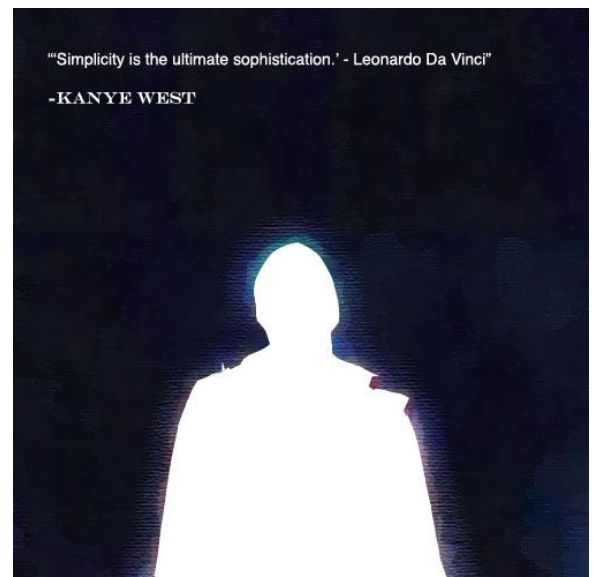
assignment also serves as an introduction to how various artistic fields overlap, the aforementioned example being graphics and music.

The second section that was covered in class, audio, asked for much more creative input by the students. Some of the most conceptually interesting methods in this area include the post-modern idea of mash-ups, in which old sounds can merge with new ones in order to create a type of culture shock that can be hard to attain elsewhere. The projects given included things such as recontextualizing two songs by a single artist and creating a mash-up of one's own. In my project, I chose to take a creative risk by attempting to display the two sides of Aphex Twin, a musician I am particularly fond of. I selected radically different pieces of music, one consisting of long drones of sound and the other being a hyperactive drumbeat. While I initially thought that it would be hard to try and combine the two in a way that is both interesting and listenable, I found that they fit nearly perfectly over one another. This project allowed me to gain a new understanding of not only one of my favorite musicians, but also of the dynamics that go into creating audio that is interesting and complex.

The third major field within the general scope of art concerns visual works. This topic includes an extensive assortment of things that range from movies shown in theaters around the world to art pieces that only appeal to a niche audience. In class, we were again assigned a project in which we were allowed to express our own creative intentions via the recontextualization of other works, this time in the field of visual art. My video involved everything from images of Coney Island to archival footage of a Chinese Lion dance, all of which I used to convey the differing viewpoints on what is deemed beautiful in cultures throughout the world. While it seemed as if we were only learning about video in that particular section, what made the project the most complex in the class so far was the fact that what we were doing utilized everything we had previously learned, graphics and audio, in a unique way that didn't seem like it was an overload of work. This is the reason why the video module was the first part of the class where I finally started to understand the concept of media editing.

Building upon the three main fields of art, the class began to focus on more abstract forms of media that one may not typically associate with the subject. The first topic in class that diverged from the well-established sub-genres of art that I previously described was social networking. For me, this was the most interesting module so far because instead of working with concepts that we derive from outside sources, each student worked with things they acquired

from personal experience.  The most interesting project that we did involved mapping out how different social circles interact with each other.  As seen in my picture, my family is strictly separated from my friends, which made me think deeply about how two of the most important things in my life were so firmly distinct regarding their relationships to one another.
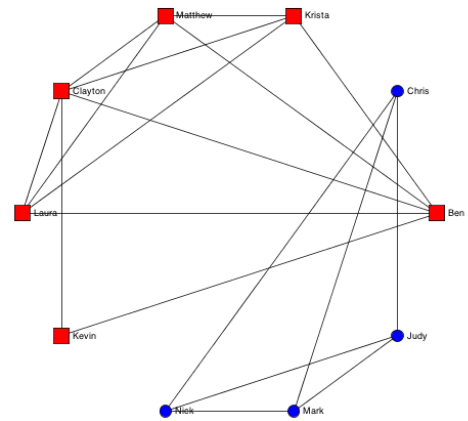


The fifth subject that we covered in class involved yet another diversion from topics you typically associate with art, this time being the concept of interfaces.  At this point, the class began to demand much more creative input from the class, and I also noticed that we were working in groups more often than not.  While we were still using the main idea of editing, we were taking it one step further in that we were editing things that directly affect a large amount of people.  Things such as visual design, user needs, and multi-function specifications were all taken into account, which made for a topic that was both difficult to conceptualize, but ultimately rewarding when it came to an end.

The penultimate section that we covered was spatial interventions, which continued the class' push into areas that affect numerous individuals.  The most striking aspect of this topic is that we were working with physical space and how it affected people.  This, along with the final module, life, were unique to the class because instead of creating ideas from artistic inspiration, we were given the task of making something which may affect only other people.  These two sections were the ones that I think impacted me the most in terms of how I view the editing of media because these two topic are ones that I'd never given any deep thought to before.  I now understand that a lot of thinking went into literally everything that surrounds me, from the seat of my chair to the locks in my door.

Throughout the semester, my personal experience with various forms of media has forever been altered because of the unique ideas that were taught in the class.  While I started out with basic knowledge of graphics, audio, and visuals, my view of art has expanded extensively because of how we were assigned to think about how art works in real life.  The process of editing media is invaluable to human life because it directly affects each and every one of us in ways that we usually don't even realize, and that is probably the most important thing that I've learned so far in the field of digital culture.