

Media Editing

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Final Project Assignment Paper

When I initially began this class on Media Editing, I didn't know what to expect. I had just transferred to ASU from the Architecture School at Tulane University in New Orleans, Louisiana, and ended up plunging myself into this untried new Digital Culture program, not knowing what to expect. Our first class period did a grand job of introducing me to Media Editing and the interesting and very up-to-date and modernized method the class would be taking. The first simple assignment was merely to edit our own page on the class wiki, a seemingly simple task, yet one that would help us, the students, to learn how to operate within this interface that would become our vessel for the class for the rest of the semester.

The next assignment, and our first project, was to utilize a 2d media editing program, such as Photoshop, to modify an image that we located on Flickr. This fairly straightforward project allowed the participants to really experience and practice the core elements of media editing that became the foundation for our other projects. The initial component of the process, and arguably the most important, is the vision or idea of the editor. How the editor obtains their glorious vision for a particular project is a different matter.

In this initial Photoshop project, I obtained my inspiration simply by browsing Flickr in various ways as we experimented with the interface within the classroom. I stumbled upon an illustration of a clock being adjusted by a firefighter, which immediately made me think of the "Doomsday" Clock from *The Watchmen* by Alan Moore. Since the art styles and imagery, even color palettes, between the illustration and Alan Moore's work were so similar, I decided to build upon these parallels. This vision of excerpts from *The Watchman*, an image in my mind of a dark, burning city as this lone man adjusted this pointless symbol of society's end, as it collapsed around him, drove my creation of this project. The actual process of editing the image came fairly easily to me, as I am familiar with Photoshop. Even still, the process of editing often spawns other concepts or additions as the artist's vision slowly takes form. In the case of this

project, during editing I was forced to create my own quote as I failed to find a sufficient quote from the actual work of Alan Moore. In the end, however, I believe that my own quote better captured the idea I wished to convey. The simple smoke mask helped to dim the brightness of the original image, and add the darker effect I was looking for. In the end, the final product, while admittedly simple, was effective, and that's what counts.

For the second project, I had this idea for a more complex, yet equally provocative, if not more so, composition to the first project. My project became more process heavy than in the first. I gathered various audio clips from various news reports along with a sound effect for the buildup of the media's overwhelming effect on the "persona" which the user is supposed to empathize with. This "persona" is a person whom the audio clip is supposed to reflect. The media clips represent the weight of the world overtaking this person's mind, forcing them to the breaking point, where they become numb to all this suffering around them. At that point, the audio build up fades to static, and then a gunshot symbolizes the persona's choice to end their self, although whether this is due to the massive amount of crises they have been exposed to, or a realization that they have become numb, is not clearly defined. This final "artifact" of audio ended up being quite successful in my opinion, causing a noticeable silence in its wake, as the witnesses to it pondered its meaning. Whether or not the complete vision is fully conveyed (although I believe it is) does not matter, as the users still experience the emotional essence of the piece.

The next project was a video, the vision of which was, for me, inspired by a song and its title. The strong concept evoked by "Dancers on a String" (the song used) really begged for a low color or black and white video of a lonely dance or few dancers and I feel that the resources I chose helped to convey this concept. The process for this particular project was not as smooth as I would've liked. Originally I wanted a different set of flashback clips and the like, but short of filming them myself, I was unable to come up with my desired materials. However, upon scouring my brain I came up with the adaption of Kamelot's "Ghost Opera" music video. I believe that the integration of this video with that of the lonely dancer on the music box could have been better, but that the final product still resulted in the concept I wished to express to

the viewer, providing a floating, detached feeling of reminiscing while still provoking an emotional response.

The social networking project provided a more analytical view of how the media itself functions in relation to the new and exploding phenomenon of social networks. My project became about process, just as social networking itself is much more about process and cultural integration with technology. By examining my own relations with various people, I was then able to understand more fully how they related to each other. Media editing itself is, as I understand it, fairly reliant upon the relationships between various peoples, ideas, and mediums of communication, and this project helped us, as a class, to explore these relationships.

Project four focused on taking skills learned in the editing of media and combining them with a more worldly application. My personal vision was to take multiple technologies and theories I had been exposed to over the semester and integrate them into a functional and realistic real-world application. This idea was for a futuristic vehicle interface, in which the user has much more of the human element computerized for them, so that they have greater control and awareness of their surroundings, providing for a much safer and advanced driving experience. Although the actual process was a simple Photoshop editing feat, the idea and explanation are what I felt really mattered, shifting this project further to the idea and concept side of this Media Editing process continuum. As such, the image of the final product served merely as a visual means to convey the design of the idea as a whole.

Finally, the Life Experience project was introduced via a quite relevant film on Media Editing. This film and the project we derived from it really examine the future possibilities of technology and its effects on Media Editing. Already the media arguably “cuts” the lives of famous people or events into their own “stories”, leaving gaps in facts or using excerpts from greater pieces of fact. As such, for my project I attempted to capitalize and even parody the overactive media’s effect on society in a bit of grim and ironic truth. I really wanted to take these clips of someone’s life and create a ridiculous story based on “misinterpreted” facts. In this, I believe I was extremely successful, especially given my *Piece de Resistance* which I believe

is not simply that for the project, but for the class overall. In this creation I managed to take photographs and quotes from our subject's everyday life and blow them ridiculously out of proportion. These pictures from our subject's life became a tale of a secret agent going through a fairly unexplained mission of espionage. In the end, even this story turns out to be a farce and in a play on some of the other parts of the project (which are ALSO "made up" occurrences based on "misinterpreted" images from the subject), is merely a dream resulting of too much drinking. As such, even this project itself pokes fun at, and acknowledges its own purpose in that media editing is a powerful tool, which should be taken with a grain of salt. Media Editing can evoke all sorts of reactions and emotions within the viewer/user, and that is its purpose, but one should be aware that the media is in fact EDITED and as such might not be the entire "truth" as it may exist in "reality". In essence, this class served to quite effectively further my own understanding and interpretations of how media editing functions in the "real world" (not the show... although I guess it also applies in said show as well) via an examination of the idea/process/artifact principles of Media Editing in a quite applicable and enjoyable manner.