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SP.757 - Digital and Dark Room Photography

Final Project Write-up

Subject:

Throughout the term I took a lot of photos but I found that very few of them were of people. At the beginning of the class, it was my intention to develop my skills with taking portraits and other shots of human subjects. I decided, for this reason, to focus my final project on one of the shots I had taken of one of my friends.

I captured the "main" photograph over the weekend I spent at home for thanksgiving. I hadn't seen this friend in several months and she is attending college in our home city of Philadelphia. The main thing that struck me about the original photograph was the gaze to the side. The background was out of focus and that drew a lot of attention to the face but the sharp edges and the number of objects still distracted from the subject. I took the original photo with a film camera in black and white but I wanted to work with color during the project.

Techniques:

I also liked several other photos that I had taken because of their striking colors. One was a photo of the Esplanade. Another shot of water I used to bring more detail to the water on the right of the subject. The last shot that I used was one that I had previously taken from the window of a plane. It was a stunning sunrise and I really liked the cloud formations.

My first step was to think of how I was going to compose the original photos into one consistent image that had a theme. The original black and white photograph felt really lonely and although the other pictures were in color, I wanted to preserve the muted feel of the grays.

After developing the black and white image and scanning it into photoshop, I removed as much of the background as possible. Then I replaced it with the image of the Esplanade. I used the water shot to change the water under the bridge on the right. Next, I took the sky shot from the plane and used the cloud formations to replace the plain blue sky of the original photo. It had been really washed out by the exposure.

Next, I really wanted to keep my friend as the main focus of the image and to bring the gaze of the viewer out to follow hers through the right of the photo. I decided to use color and selective focus to move the eye through the image. The background received a blur that was more pronounced on the left than on the right side. Next, I adjusted the colors to decrease the saturation and to increase the hue slightly. I wanted there to be traces of color but I wanted the majority of the photo to seem almost as if it had been colorized from a black and white photo. Then, I worked on blending the back three photos together until they looked seamless and as if they were one photo.

I was pleased with the final product because I feel that I maintained the feel of the original photograph. I also really like the way that the eye feels sort of trapped on the light side of the photo. The darkness of the trees and her hair frames the region to the right. I was successful, I think, in preserving the mood and emotion of loneliness in the original black and white.