Final Project Written Report

As an amateur photographer, I feel most comfortable with shooting portraits. I enjoy using different lighting schemes on a subject to see how it changes the tone of a photograph. Some of the most amazing pictures I have seen have stayed with me not because there was something special about the subject itself, but because the lighting made you see why the subject is interesting.

However, I found that, when shooting in black and white, it is often very difficult to add dimension to a photograph after it has been printed, mainly because the element of color is lacking. This is what inspired me to do a project in which I combined black and white photography with the amazing things that could be done with digital photo enhancement.

Over 5 rolls of black and white film were shot before I could find a suitable picture. I wanted a picture in which the subject wasn’t blank, the contrast and lighting weren’t generic, and the focus was relatively sharp. The picture at right was the one that was finally chosen. This picture displays good contrast, novel perspective, and a very interesting subject. This picture makes me wonder what the subject is looking at that would make her cringe like this.

I wanted to add dimension to this print by adding color. However, I didn’t simply want to throw random colors into the photo. I decided to use the very handy gradient tool in Photoshop to assist me. To do this, I made multiple copies of the original scan. On each copy, I manipulated the colors, contrast, and intensity. From each of these copies, I selected a rectangular region and copied this region as a new layer into the original picture and moved it around until it matched up into the original. I changed the opacity of each layer until I was satisfied.

Finally, I used the Neon Glow filter in one of the copies to make the eye blue. I had to use the inverse glow option because the normal mode did not add glow to the eye, but to the surrounding area instead. The final image can be seen at below.
The title of this piece is “Screens”. This title was chosen because each overlay in color reminded me of an x-ray or camera filter. Each screen is meant to illustrate the deepness of the subject. The base picture itself is grayscale, almost monochromatic, but the color “screens” show that there is much more to the subject. Each color “screen” is meant to illicit a different reaction based on its color and intensity. The base picture itself provokes a sense of uneasiness due to the fact that the subject is biting her lip and staring off into the distance. The fact that only half of the subject’s face can actually be seen adds to her mystery. The image of the blue eye serves as an interruption to the repeating geometry in the photograph.