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SP.747 Creative Imaging

Final Project Write-Up

Through my final project, I wanted to convey how I believe we as humans like to pursue big grand schemes and like to feel very important, despite the fact that we are actually very limited in our flesh and quite small in comparison to the world, the nature, and ultimately, God.

I quickly realized how difficult this would be to translate into a composition of mere images. However, I was able to take a picture that conveyed a sense of smallness compared to something with a heavy unlimited presence. I used my Canon AE-1 to take a picture of some people sitting on a bench facing the side of Building E15, the Weisner Art Gallery. I was really struck by how the people sitting on the bench and looking towards the building façade looked very contained and finite compared to the expanse of the wall. It reminded me of how I am really a very small limited being in the face of a sovereign God. I realized that in order to convey this greater idea, I would have to appeal to a common pool of knowledge that everyone could relate to.

I decided that incorporating the famous image of Michelangelo's Adam and God in the Sistine Chapel was vital to focusing the message of my project. It is one of the most recognizable paintings in popular culture, and also very strongly echoes my theme of human finiteness. At this point, I decided to shift my focus even further onto the story of the Fall of Man, as written in the Bible. I had been studying the book of Genesis at church and I realized that a lot of what I wanted to portray about human nature was already present in the story of Adam and Eve's disobedience to God.

I used the Polygonal Lasso Tool to extract the arm and hands of Adam and God from a picture of the Sistine Chapel that I found on Google Images and put them in a layer on top of the scanned negative of the first picture that I had taken. I felt that even though I initially wanted to focus on the feeling that my first picture conveyed, the message and connotations that accompanied Adam's Creation were much stronger and easily understood through this image. Then I realized how my first picture could be interpreted to depict the separation between God and mankind after the Fall. I placed the scanned negative below this to denote this symbolism and to organize my images almost chronologically.

I then wanted to emphasize the separation and differences between God and Man after the fall. I took pictures with my Minolta DiMage E323 of different textures and materials I saw around campus that I felt captured these conditions. To express the mysteriously unfathomable character of God, I took a picture of the ever-changing waves and waters of the Charles River on a particularly sunny day. To contrast, I chose to use a picture of a concrete walkway to show the stubborn and crude heart of Man after disobeying God. I used the Distort option to change the perspective on the walkway so that it matched the perspective in my first scanned picture. I also added a simple Google Image of a tree to represent the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil and strengthen the Biblical reference throughout.

Finally, I added the most important element: the red waves that seem to permeate the entire composition. To me, these waves represent the blood of Jesus Christ, which have I have found personally to be the only way to reconciliation and peace with God. The red waves were created by adjusting color levels and saturation on a normal picture of the Charles River. I also used the Smudge Tool to smear and stretch the waves onto the concrete side of the picture, representing how Jesus is the one that reaches out to my cold heart.

My original intent for this project was to elaborate on random musing that had bothered me for awhile: that we, even as students at one of the top universities in the world, are still frankly quite powerless in the face of eternity. My ideas evolved into an attempt to abstractly represent how Man did stray from perfection and celebrate bigger story of the hope that I have found in redemption.