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SP.747 Creative Imagine
Final Project

“Crib Sheet on Flora”

General concept:

My piece is a crib sheet, or cheat sheet, of plants I notice on the MIT campus in Cambridge, MA and near my home in Santa Barbara, CA. I photographed each plant on film and then enhanced several of the photographs using Photoshop. I identified each plant by asking friends, searching on the Internet, or—in the case of the Santa Barbara plants—by making a phone call to the park’s maintenance supervisor.

Personal motivation:

I wanted to do a piece that allowed me to focus on my film photography skills, but used Photoshop as an enhancement and compilation tool. I went through several themes—children, buildings, personal highlights during my time at MIT—but finally decided on flora.

Why flora? Springtime is my favorite season in Boston when color finally returns after many winter months of dreary gray. I seem to notice a new budding or blooming plant every week, as different species begin their cycles staggered throughout March, April, and May. But as suddenly as they spring open overnight, the blossoms are washed away and lost with every rainstorm. So, that’s why I wanted to capture the ephemeral beauty of spring on film where I can cherish it all year long.

Despite how much I appreciate new spring flowers, I am terrible at identifying them and remembering their names. So I decided to compile my best flower photography onto a summary page, complete with an identifying photograph of the blossom, a common name, a scientific name, and habitat (city, state). I decided to use my Athena bannerhead as the background of my compilation for several reasons: 1) I sometimes use Athena bannerhead to make cheat sheets for my openbook exams, 2) Athena bannerhead contains patterns that are simple, uniform, and understated so they go well behind vibrant flowers, and 3) information included on Athena bannerhead is very personal and very revealing about your life at MIT—it contains your Athena username, the Athena printer which you are using, the date and time of printing, the name of your document, and the name of your Internet connection at the time of printing.

Photography vs. Photoshop:

I used Kodak 200 film and had it developed at Walgreen’s Photo Center in Central Square. Adobe Photoshop 7.0 was used to crop and/or correct overexposure. I wanted the focus of this piece to be on the photography and wanted the effects of Photoshop to seem minimal.

Other details:

The Athena bannerhead is for a document titled “SP.747 Final Project”.

The information for each plant is handwritten to incorporate more of my personal identity and to look more like a “cheat sheet.”