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SP.747 Creative Imaging
Project Write-Up

I was really interested in a lecture in my Computational Photography class that mentioned tilt-shift photography, especially after seeing a set of tilt-shift photographs that looked like they were depicting miniature models (you can see them here: <http://www.portfolio.com/interactive-features/2008/03/Commuting>).

I liked that the images transform the natural world into an artificial one. Images of landscapes or street scenes become reduced and the focus changes from the macro to the micro.

After some research I found that "tilt-shift miniature faking" has recently become a fad. There's even a Flickr group devoted to the idea (<http://www.flickr.com/groups/tilt-shift-fakes/pool/>). Although you can achieve the effect with a tilt-shift lens, it seems that a lot of people are using Photoshop or other image editing programs to achieve the same effect. The goal is to reduce the depth of field in an image to achieve the shallow depth of field associated with a macro lens, which makes the subject seem smaller than it actually is. Some of my sources also recommend increasing the color saturation and the contrast to further simulate a painted miniature.

There are lots of tutorials online on how to use Photoshop to create a fake tilt-shift photograph. Some of these are fairly simple, where the user is instructed simply to pick the area they desire to remain in focus and then to blur the rest. Other techniques are more complicated and involve estimating the depths of various objects and then applying various blurs to those objects. Basically I used a hybrid of these two techniques, where I applied a gradient mask across the image and then used that gradient to indicate which parts of the image I wanted to blur and which parts I did not. This technique worked particularly well for this photograph because the bridge and the truck (which I wanted to be in focus) stretches across the image and is fairly narrow.

I also intensified the vibrancy and saturation of the colors in the image. I've always really liked bold, colorful images, so I really enjoyed being able to amplify my image to create an artificial feel.