Independent Film and Digital Imaging Theses   Student Theses

Summer 2019

The Overlooked

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The Overlooked

By

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B.A., Millikin University, 2016

THESIS

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements

For the Degree of Master of Fine Arts,

With a Major in Independent Film & Digital Imaging

Governors State University

University Park, IL 60484

2019

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Abstract

This series was inspired by sports themed wallpapers. I am seeking to create compelling imagery that speaks both to the elegance of completing a simple task as well as the beauty that exists in the small interactions between people daily. By using the principles and elements of design such as line, dominance, unity, and repetition, this series brings into focus hardworking individuals who are often overlooked.

Over the course of the master's program at Governors State University. I have been enrolled as a graduate student pursuing first a MA in Art before deciding to further my education and apply for the Master of Fine Art program in Independent Film and Digital Imaging. I had completed a year worth of classes when I felt as though my work was starting to take form and shape into something special. It was not until my third semester during a class assignment of recreating an artist work that I was introduced to a technique called Joiners (Image 1) (Image 2). The process resonated with me and I wanted to push this technique further. Although I knew it was going to be a fairly new technique, I wanted to challenge myself to push this idea as far as I can. I believe that I am starting to find my style and with the help and direction of my advisors in the program I know that I could evolve this process into my own style.

Image 1

Image 2

Above was one of my first versions of my artist statement where I was influenced by an artist by the name of David Hockney. Learning about Hockney was new, different, and exciting, because it was the first time, I saw myself as a true artist that makes work that he loves. Instead of a person that just creates work, because he has a deadline due. Before Hockney, all of my work was assignment based and it shows by how I explain them. My work was assignment based, because as an undergraduate at Millikin University. I was discouraged by my professor from creating art that I loved which are sports. I can understand why he discouraged me from labeling myself as a sports designer, but I also felt that it handicapped me from becoming the best me I can be. That's why it was like a breath of fresh air when I came to GSU, and my creative freedom had no ceiling. There is also a negative effect to having such freedom. I would say that I almost had too much freedom, where my direction was not as clear. Although, I continued to search for my style within the David Hockney technique, I wanted a chance to embrace this new territory.

To take what I learned about Hockney and to push my technique a step further. I enrolled in an independent study where I focused on evolving the process. This new process is me breaking away from how viewers see a photograph as a traditional rectangle while adding line color and shape. (Image 3) A general background of my technique consists of 2 layering shapes and a layer of geometric lines with a slanted colored rhombus on to the image itself. (Image 4) The first layer is the original image split on a diagonal. The second layer is the circle that is purposely place in the center. The third layer consist of several geometric leading lines. My interest right now is not with the subject itself but with how I can perfectly combine the shapes and lines to make them uniform. I want the viewer to think of depth with the overlapping of the shapes and lines.

Image 3

Image 4

I feel as though the layering of the different shapes adds a certain interest component that captures the viewers' attention to get a closer look at what they are seeing. The shapes can vary from squares, triangles, rectangles, and etc. I wanted the viewer to see how the geometric lines lead you throughout the photograph. Leading lines in an image are often not visible, sometimes the artist may be straight forward, and more often leading lines are hinted within a photograph. (Image 5) (Image 6) (Image 7) In my 3-dimensional series, I am placing visible lines onto the images to lead the viewer across the image. And I want the viewer to feel how the color can help join the process. I choose the color of the leading lines and the center rhombus or shape by the color that is within the image itself. Below are a few examples of expanding my original idea of the way an audience may see a photograph by allowing the image to take the form of the actual shape with the help of the white lines to add depth and perspective.
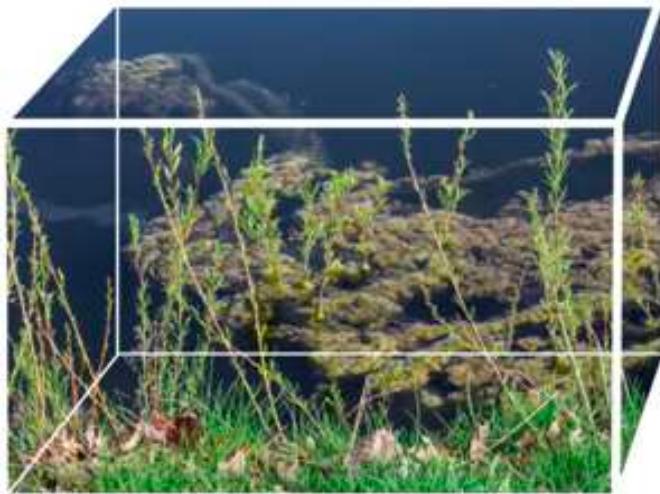
Image 5

Image 6

Image 7

As an artist, I work hard to develop compelling images that speak both to me and to others about the beauty that exists in the average person's hobby, occupation, or career. I want to create sports graphics of athletes, because for me they look cool and different. My art expresses that I love the game of any sports and creating graphic of your favorite is like paying homage to them and acknowledging that they are good. What make my art unique is that I am coming from the graphics from a different point of view since I played the sport. I know a little more inside information on the athlete or sport. I used to do art from just an assignment-based standpoint. But now since I am doing what I love, it's almost like its apart of me or that I can do this in my sleep. It's not a struggle to find things to create like its natural.

Part of my process before I begin editing is to search as much as I can for other photographers/designers that are creating similar layouts like myself that I want to recreate on the computer screen. I do not merely want to capture my subject with my camera; rather, with careful, colorful imagery, I want to shed light on the hardworking society that never gets recognized as glamourous. The love of the game is what motivates me to create art. I want to show the beauty of the sport, and that it's not all about being macho or masculine. According to Canva, there are about 9 different graphic design trends of 2016. I am going to list the trends from last to first. At number 9 there is a style called minimalistic and abstract style. The next is custom illustrations, then dramatic typography. Modular layouts are the number 6 trend on the list. Negative space, geometric shapes, bright, bold colors, and material design are next on the list.

The number one trend that graphic designers use that is in style is modern retro style. (Kliever)I draw the foundation of my inspiration from the internet. From some of my favorite athletic personalities, as well as Brad Lefeld who is a freelance sports graphic design. I stumbled

across some of Brad Ledfeld's work while scrolling on twitter for my daily news. He mentioned in one of his tweets that he was on day like 272 of his 365 days of creating a new sports design each day. Since that I day, I woke up every morning to see what new he came up with and to see if I can somehow draw inspiration from what I was so intrigued about. (Image 8) (Image 9)
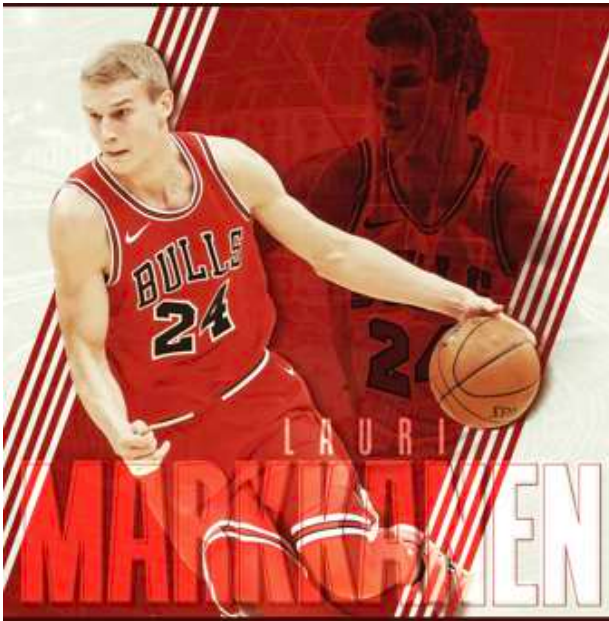

Image 8

Image 9

After watching Brad everyday as he finished his 365-day challenge of creating graphics for or of sports teams. I knew that I wanted to do the same, because I have always done that purposefully or unconsciously. For example, when I created a sports calendar of my favorite team the Chicago Bulls (Image 10) (Image 11). Now I know that it's a possibility, I want to pursue that career or goal that I have set for myself. A quote from Yohji Yamamoto says to "Start copying what you love. Copy, copy, copy, copy. At the end of the copy you will find yourself." (Kleon) I found this to resonate with me, because as a child copying from others was frowned upon. That's how I was brought up, and to have that whole idea turned upside down of to know yourself is to learn from copying is powerful.

Image 10

Image 11

I try with every finished work show the beauty in sports that in some cases perceive the culture to be too macho and that its principles, designs, ideas, and lifestyle are displayed on my computer screen. The challenge, as with any recreated form of artwork from the past, is to not get lost in the politics of the game, but to appreciate the hardworking middle class using the interests that I love. My artwork speaks, not only for me, but for people who believe that regular jobs can be appealing as well. (Image 12)

Image 12

9

Image 13

Above are the start of my initial idea of my average joe series. (Image 13) I first had several test trials to see which techniques worked well with each other. Some were more successful than others, but I started first with these well-known athletes. I chose some of the most recognizable players for self-satisfaction and to myself more engaged to what I am creating. The images above consist of a hand full of layers in Photoshop. There is a background, a layer of the athlete, the team logo, and a couple of lighting effects to add depth and movement to the photograph. According to The Why of Sports Design: Design Principles in Sports Marketing, design isn't just pushing pixels around a screen. You must learn the "why" of design before you can master the "how". (Wilson) Which I do agree. I had to learn the basics of sports design as to how a single image is created. There are unwritten rules that a sports design image must have in order to connect with the viewer faster.

I want people to see the glamour in regular everyday jobs than the ones that already exist or people say that is glamourous. Athletes are believed to be untouchable or on a different level

than let's say the middle class. So, I wanted to bring the middle class and the blue collars on the same playing field as celebrities and athletes. Saying that with whatever social class you are associated with, just know that we are all the same and should be viewed as equal.

Wallpapers can vary in style, color, genre, etc., but I am drawn to his sports wallpapers. As I searched for different types of wallpapers, I realized the people posing for the photographs of sports wallpapers only consisted of athletes and coaches. As a result, I began to collect images of regular hardworking individuals who I may have known, have seen, or passed throughout my day. I wanted to show appreciation to the hardworking individuals that may go unnoticed using sports design and photography. My artwork acknowledges that the working-class related jobs can be as fulfilling as an athletic one.

Once I learned the basics of sports design and somewhat of what I could and could not do. It was time to collect images that better fit the description of Average Joes. I wanted to have visible evidence of my ideas on screen so that I can see what problems I needed to address before moving on. Problems such as: not at all of the lighting effects complement each other. Adjusting the mask of the individual in a way that it looks like the person is in the photograph. As well as color matching to keep the consistency of the individual and their background. Other problems occurred, but they all helped me to be in the position that I am today. (Image 14) (Image 15)

Image 14

Image 15

From the internet images, I moved on to my actual images of Sports photography with my version of a touch of sports design applied to it. I collected some action shots at Kankakee Community College. Where I sought out to capture the beauty of sports. Whether it's the movement of the athlete, the facial expression after the action, or even the preparation behind the scenes. The images shown are the first of my own captured images and personal expression of sports design. After capturing these images, the style that is shown is what I saw in head and

what I wanted each individual picture to have. I feel as though the beauty, its principles, designs, ideas, and lifestyle are overshadowed by the dysfunction of the sports in general. My work is aimed to appreciate the movement of the athletes using slight graphics. A spark, flare, glow, or an exaggerated wind like motion that helps push the concept forward. My artwork speaks, not only for me, but for people who believe that there is beauty in every movement. (Image 16) (Image 17)
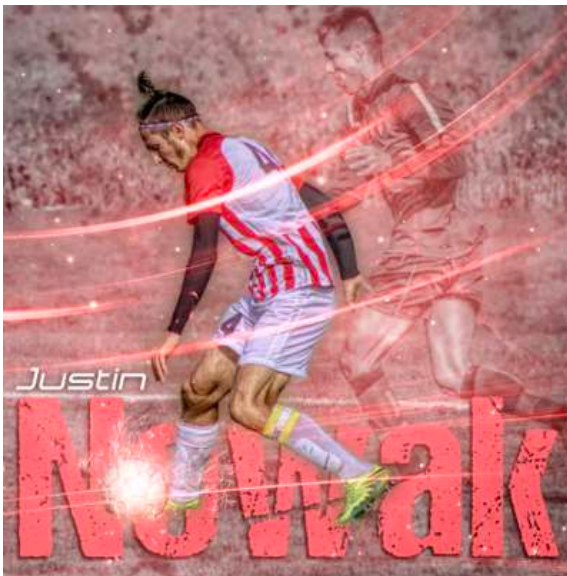

Image 16

Image 17

Once I had established a direction for my Average Joes. I set out to capture them in their surrounding or daily actions. Where my subject matter is of "Average Joes", whether race or gender. Being classified by individual attributes due to the median income, or other characteristics are considered to have traits to be neither dumb nor smart, follows any kind of sport, drinks occasionally, and works five or six days a week. The challenge, as with any recreated form of artwork from the past, is to not get lost in the politics of the game, but to appreciate the hardworking middle class using the interests that I love. My artwork speaks, not only for me, but for people who believe that regular jobs can be appealing as well. (Image 18) (Image 19)

Image 18

Image 19

As a designer, exploring with Sports Design and Photography, I work hard to develop compelling images that speak both to me and to others about the beauty that exists in the average person's hobby, occupation, or career. Part of my process before I begin editing is to search as much as I can for other photographers/designers that are creating similar layouts like myself that I want to recreate on the computer screen. I do not merely want to capture my subjects with my camera; rather, with careful, colorful imagery, sometimes desaturated backgrounds of multiple layers to shed light on the hardworking society that never gets recognized as glamourous.

The last couple pieces of my work are of the Average Joes series, but a creative style applied to them. (Image 20) (Image 21) According to Austin Kleon, in his book "Steal like an Artist. He states that nobody is born with a style or a voice. We don't come out of the womb knowing who we are. In the beginning, we learn by pretending to be our heroes. We learn by copying.(Kleon) I thought to myself, how true is this statement was and couldn't believe that copying is an essential piece to learning how to do anything.

Image 20

Image 21

As I continued to work my thesis. I found that I was heading in the wrong direction as to what I wanted to convey. With, this is my revised thesis along with some new images that I wanted incorporate. I wanted to replace professional athletes with a hardworking individual. Sports photography plays a part as well in my new images. Capturing an unposed hardworking individual daily task like a sports photographer would catch an athlete performing was my intent.

Image 22

Image 23

There are many hardworking individuals that are not represented in my show. The reason is because throughout this process of collection my images. I have either had a personal connection or interaction with everyone shown. The images themselves are composed with about 15 to 20 layers in photoshop. With each element within the photograph is on a layer by themselves, whether it's the background, text, or the subjects themselves. Finally, the layout of subjects and text is what I would call controlled chaos. I want the viewers eyes to scan my photo in a circular motion.

Furthermore, graphic design is all around you. The history can be derived from all aspects of art. The only difference between poetry, printmaking, painting, and drawing is that the techniques can be reproduced faster and transferred over to the computer. I enjoyed each and every one of my positions that I had the pleasure of performing. I have come to the conclusion that I could really see myself working for a sports production team.`Copy your heroes. Examine where you fall short. Whats in there that makes you different? thats what you should amplify and transform into your own work. (Kleon) This series, which was inspired by sports themed wallpapers. I wanted to create compelling imagery that speaks both to the elegance of completing a simple task, as well as the beauty that exist in the small interactions between people

daily. By using the principles and elements of design such as line, dominance, unity, and

reception. I wanted to bring into focus hardworking individuals who are often overlooked.

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APPENDIX (B):

GRADUATE CAPSTONE/PROJECT EXPERIENCE
FINAL TRANSMITTAL FORM

Student Name: ___Gregory C Austin Jr_____

 Student ID #: ___1172902_____

Dissertation/Thesis/Scholarly Project or Capstone:

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 (Title)

The capstone documentation submitted by the aforementioned student has been read and approved by the student's capstone committee. The committee is composed of three members of the faculty, and at least two committee members are from the student's College.

The document is, therefore, accepted and approved on behalf of the University.

_____   _____

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_____   _____

(Signature of Program/Division Chair)   (Date)

_____   _____

(Signature of Dean)   (Date)

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