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|  | Open College of the Arts | | |
| | Tutor report | | |

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| Student name | Madhvee Deb | Student number | 508378 |
| Course/Module | Digital Photographic Practice | Assignment number | 4 |

Overall Comments

Professionally presented, methodically researched and planned. Use of brainstorming techniques have led you to a logical outcome for the assignment concept, helping to resolve your own initial confusion about the possible routes available. Thorough research of magazine styles and use of typography has led to a believable outcome.

As mentioned in our telephone conversation your work is professionally presented but possibly slightly over embellished! Keep the presentation succinct, crisp and professional but avoid over embellishments such as the origami style pockets. Although these look great they do detract from the main content of your work.

Print quality is very high with very crisp typography and good image quality, although the glass has lost detail and tone compared to the original image and looks slightly over processed resulting in loss of some highlight detail.

A very creative approach that demonstrates excellent Photoshop skills and you also argue the case successfully for using and justifying image manipulation processes and discuss ethical dilemma's associated with 'truth in photography'. You discuss and justify a pragmatic approach to the use of image manipulation and are keen to draw attention to ethical problems arising from deceiving the viewer especially in the genres of photojournalism and travel photography. Advertising imagery has long associations with image manipulation long before computers and Photoshop were on the scene. The use of juxtaposition leading to surreal and ambiguous images has always

been an effective way of attention grabbing and imparting messages from advertisers to consumers. During the 60's and 70' the London advertising agency Collett Dickenson Pearce & Partners (CDP) led the way with what became an iconic ground breaking series of still photographic images for the cigarette brand Benson and Hedges. Many leading advertising photographers of the time shot for this campaign including Brian Duffy and Adrian Flowers. Much of the image manipulation was carried out in camera using multi-exposure techniques and physical masks placed inside the 10x8 studio cameras. Further methods were then used on the resulting 10x8 transparencies with scalpels, air-brushes and incorporating high-end printing techniques such as the highly regarded Kodak Dye Transfer process. Various legendary stories came about from these shoots including how photographer Adrian Flowers insisted that his 12 feet tall steel, and very heavy, Cambo studio camera stand must be flown out to Ayres Rock in Australia so he can shoot the rock at sunrise for use in the campaign. Although it is much easier now it is nowhere near as much fun!

Assignment potential (after Assignments 2 and 4)

I understand your aim is to go for the Photography (Painting/Textiles/Creative Writing, Creative Arts) Degree and that you plan to submit your work for assessment at the end of this course. From the work you have shown in this assignment, providing you commit yourself to the course, I believe you have the potential to succeed at assessment. In order to meet all the assessment criteria, there are certain areas you will need to focus on, which I will outline in my feedback.*

Feedback on assignment

Creative concept and approach which has resulted in an excellent 'vehicle' to display your Photoshop expertise and also to demonstrate how your thorough planning and research has underpinned the assignment. One area that has been missed out from your thoughts and discussions is why you decided to implement the idea. You justify the practical reasons but do not discuss where the idea developed from or would a commercial magazine consider using such an image and technique and why? The final image has a surreal element similar in some ways to a painting in the style of Trompe-l'œil, which deceives the eye. Is it this quality that perhaps would attract consumers to purchase the magazine? Is this Trompe-l'œil approach based on the content of the article or is it purely an illustrative device to attract would be buyers? So this technique does cover 'the middle ground' as suggested by the

assignment and uses juxtaposition and surrealism, it is not particularly controversial and is not misinforming the public and therefore raises no real moral issues within the final piece, but would it sell the magazine?

Technically it is reasonable, there are a couple of possible improvements that would help with the final piece. You carefully introduced some shade and 'flare' or reflection on the folded cover which considerably helps with the 3D effect but have not included these techniques on the flat blue border. The evenness of this tone suggests a flat 2D plane and needs some variation in shading. This could be achieved by using a gradation of tone via the gradation tool (lives with the paint bucket) and a layer mask. The direction of the gradation would need to reflect the actual direction of light within the image. If you look at your original image of the hand on the magazine then there is shadow present along the top of the fingers, this shadow places the fingers onto the magazine. In your final piece this shadow has gone and therefore the fingers 'float' and are not anchored to the magazine and do not appear to grip the pages. If you could not use the original shadow then it would be possible to use a drop shadow layer technique to achieve this.

Overall Madhvee this is a creative piece of work that successfully fulfils the assignment requirement.

Sketchbooks

I imagine your sketchbook is continuing to develop?

Learning Logs/Critical essays

Very well documented assignment including techniques and also your thoughts and discussion's on the moral issues involved within image manipulation. You successfully illustrate your own pragmatic and sensible approach to these issues, distinguishing between acceptability within illustrative and advertising genres and non-acceptability within photojournalism and travel photography where altering of image content will misinform.

One area not discussed (although mentioned on your blog) is image manipulation within the 'fine art' arena where techniques are used to deliberately provoke or create ambiguity. Work by artists such as Sam Taylor-Wood use considerable amounts of image manipulation to create images that

on first inspection look un-manipulated! Her series titled 'Suspended' and also 'Bram Stoker's Chair' are good examples of this.

Your blog has detailed postings for the various exercises, I like your technique for the addition exercise and you have produced a convincing image using the new sky and 'Hard Light' blend mode. The use of layer masks and saving the image as a PSD file is preferable as you correctly point out. In many ways this is 'non-destructive' editing as it allows further work if required with no loss of information.

One small criticism on exercise 23, alteration. A good result but the row of what appear to be benches in the background have been cloned without any diminishing perspective and the added seats meet the original seats with a jump in size. Photoshop, as always, has several techniques that would enable this to be achieved. Cut and paste the row of seats onto a new layer and then use 'Distort' to pinch in the end of the row to match the existing row, by including some ground and some bushes within the selection should be sufficient to cover the layer underneath. A more advanced method would be to use the 'Vanishing Point' filter which allows you to clone in perspective.

You make some good critical observations and comments within your blog.

Suggested reading/viewing

<http://www.mymodernmet.com/profiles/blogs/sam-taylorwood-gracefully>

<http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artists/sam-taylor-wood-obe-2595/text-artist-biography>

http://www.duffyphotographer.com/archive_money.html

Worthwhile essay by Susan Sontag which considers reality within photography:

<http://www.susansontag.com/SusanSontag/books/onPhotographyExerpt.shtml>

Pointers for the next assignment

- Be aware of too many embellishments within your presentation
- Attention to detail with post-production techniques
- As discussed produce a web gallery as per the module suggestion
- Ensure that your reflective account covers all the points mentioned in the project description.

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| Tutor name: | John Todd |
| Date | 27 th May 2012 |
| Next assignment due | End of July 2012 |