Process Portfolio

Visual Arts IB HL

Portrait Photography

Before I began to explore digital photography and Photoshop, I only used darkroom photography techniques. My favorite subjects when shooting on black and white film were all portraits and prop portraits. Many of my portraits included strong contrast and bokeh.

I also studied Imogen Cunningham for inspiration about her own composition of portraits.

The portraits that I was most pleased with were my prop portraits taken with a beach background and baby starfish on my female model's face. The black and white film brought more drama to the photos, and later using dark room manipulation techniques I was able to use spray developer.

Self Portrait Photoshop

In order to get more acclimated with Photoshop, I edited two self portraits I took.

The first photo was one where I wore red lipstick and put glitter below my eyes. I erased the background of the photo then proceeded to duplicate the picture. Once there were three copies I changed one photo to black and white, then made the hue and saturation of one purple, and the other a teal tone. I overlayed the photos on each other and then offset each of them slightly.

The second photo I was wearing a white shirt and had a piece of black tape across my mouth that read "Condemned by a Chromosome". I erased out the background, brightened the photo and then changed the background to a bright pink. I chose pink in order to emphasize the comment I was trying to make about injustice towards women. Pink if often thought of as a feminine color so it fit with my comment about being judged based upon gender.
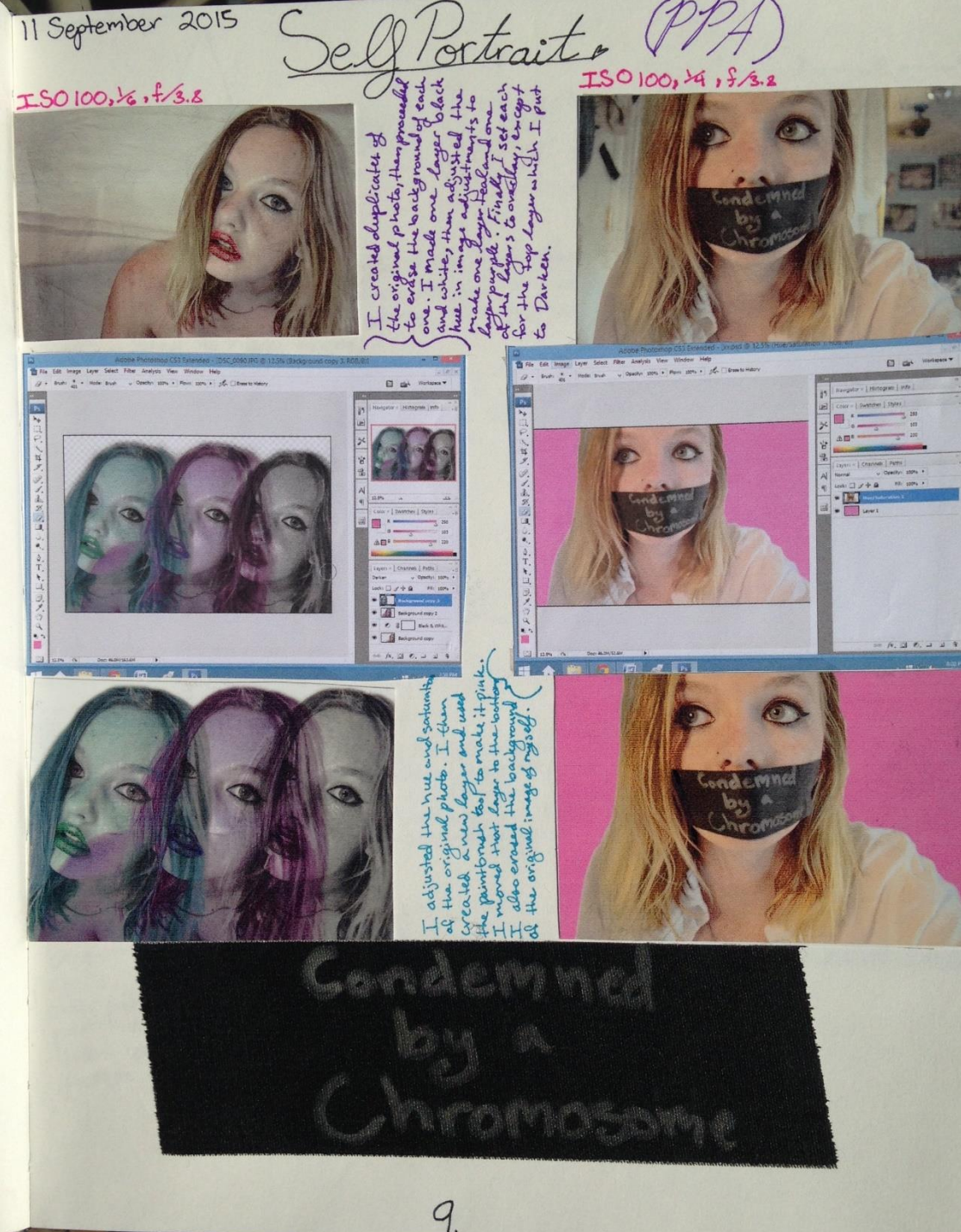
Water Proofsheet

This shoot took place in two places, first in my backyard utilizing my pool and then at Newport Beach.

The first three photos were of my friend's arm where water droplets were placed on it down to his finger tips. I wasn't pleased with these because of the busy background.

The next photos focused on him laying on the ground and bending backwards so that his head was submerged in the pool. I was pleased with these because of the sense of disconnect that came from not seeing his features under the vibrant blue water.

While in Newport I captured some strong pictures of the pier that I found to have very aesthetically pleasing leading lines.
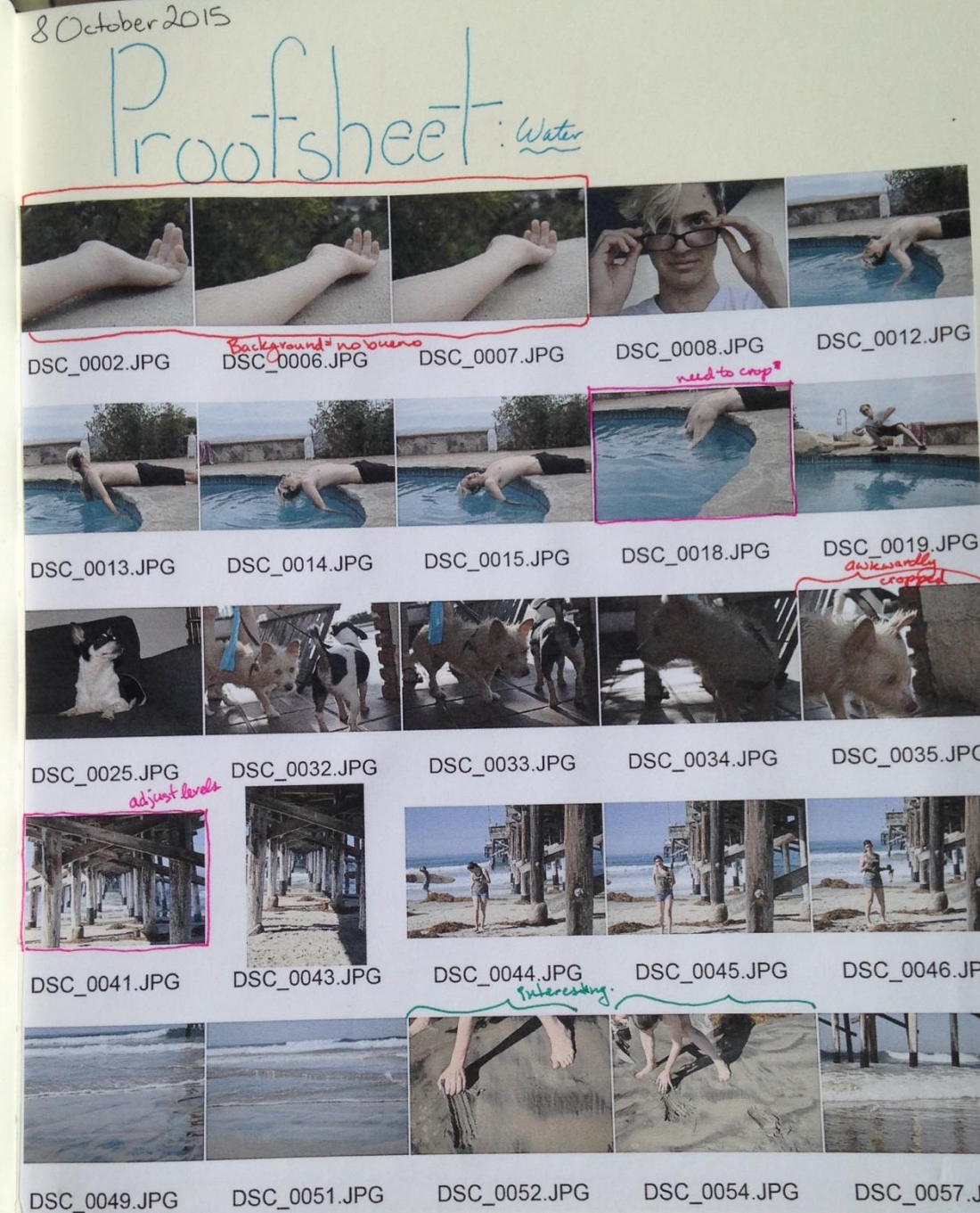
Pin-up Style Emulation

The term pin-up was coined during World War II. Soldiers would pin pictures or drawings of beautiful women up to keep their spirits high. Original pin-up models include women like Betty Grable and Marilyn Monroe who were both known for their curves and retro looks, as well as poses that allowed their personality to shine through in photos. Alberto Vargas and Gil Elvgrin were painters known for their realistic portrayals of women.

For my pin-up emulation I decided to shoot at the beach. I had my model wear a high wasted bikini in order to get the vintage look. I also gave her hair a lot of volume by curling it. I had her makeup based on retro styles by having winged eye liner and red lipstick. I attempted to make the poses seductive and similar to original pin-ups.

The main reason why I was drawn to this style is because of the different beauty standards that pin-ups were composed of. I find the style much more visually interesting because of the bright color and retro style, as well as being more empowering for women.

22 April 2015

Pin-Up

♥ The term pinup was coined during WWII. Soldiers would pin pictures or drawings of beautiful women up. Original pinup models include sex symbols like Betty Grable and Marilyn Monroe, both known for their retro looks and striking personality that shined in photos. There were also many famous pin up artists like Gil Elvgren and Alberto Vargas. ♥

ISO 800, ¹/4000, f/5.6 (Model: Lily Cunanan)

ISO 800, ¹/4000, f/5.6

Gil Elvgren's pinup art

(Elvgren, Gil.

(Elvgren, Gil.

For my pinup styled photos I put my model in a retro, red floral bathing suit. I also put her hair in large curls, used red lipstick and winged eyeliner to create a vintage feel.

♥ ISO 800, ¹/4000, f/4.0

5.

Brave New World
Photoshoot concept

"Straight from the horse's mouth."

Inspired by Aldous Huxley's dystopian novel *Brave New World*. I became intrigued by the many uses mouths have and wanted to investigate it through my photography. I wanted to capture the strength and powers of manipulation that talking can have. During this process I also got to work with the diversity of peoples lips and expressions.

Each photo was a different person's mouth as well as a different action. The two pictures I was most pleased with included one of a person with their mouth slightly open, while another person's hands grab at their face, and the other photo was a freeze motion image of water dripping from someone's lips. I found these both to be very powerful and give insight into the human condition.

Non-Photography Work

For these art assignments I did a gay pride piece and then a more abstract piece of an eye.

The first one I started by making chunks of color using markers, and then by using black paint on my hand to make a hand print as well as many partial prints. After doing this I was still not pleased with the product so I used a black pen to create a ripple effect by outlining the prints repeatedly.

The other piece I made I started by making lines and designs on one side of a paper then flipping the paper over and using puff paint to make an eye, eye brow, and dots all surrounding it on the page. Then I used red food dye and water to wash it all over the page, and flipped it back over to get the final product.

Making these was a good chance for me to work with different mediums other than photography and try to refine different art making techniques. It gave me insight into how difficult it can be going out of my comfort zone of photography.
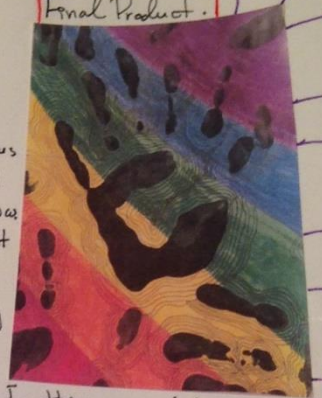
Textures and Surfaces of Theatre

I did an in depth exploration of the textures and surfaces throughout theatre, specifically the technical aspects.

I tried to capture a lot of depth in these photos while showing how big the facility is. Some of the pictures like the one of the rigging ropes gives an endless illusion, which I like because of the endless opportunities theatre can provide for people.

While building on the textures and surfaces I also was able to view the raw talent of people working on their craft.

Textures and Surfaces

Once again trying to broaden my art making, I used empty Corona cans to make a flower/succulent. I took apart the cans then cut out petal shapes and pieced it together using hot glue.

My thought process when making this was that the corruption associated with alcohol consumption and trash contrasted the beauty of nature. I took something that was no longer useful and tried to recycle it into something that held decorative purpose

Textures and Surfaces Misfires

When I first began taking texture and surface photos of the theatre I was unhappy with many of the products. Most of the pictures were close ups of seats, the stage, and lights. Researching the art of Aaron Huey I realized there was a much wider range of subjects I could photograph to still capture this. Adding people into my photos helped to bring the surfaces to life.

Shooting in the theatre for the first time was also difficult because I had not realized how dark it would be for the camera. I had to adjust my settings to shoot at a much higher ISO, and then brighten the photos in post production.

Artist Comparison

I researched and compared Patricia DiBella and Richard Finkelstein while I was working on the textures and surfaces of theatre.

Patricia DiBella utilized oil on canvas and Richard Finkelstein used photography. Although they both used different mediums I was intrigued by how they visually captured the texture and lighting elements involved in theatre. I also found it interesting that Finkelstein's photograph seemed more surreal than DiBella's oil on canvas of actors waiting backstage.

7 October 2015

Textures & Surfaces

Patricia DiBella {Oil on canvas}

VS

Richard Finkelstein {photography}

Patricia DiBella earned an MFA in painting in 2007 from the Maryland Institute College of Art. I was drawn to her series Entr'acte which focused on theatre. She has strong brushwork and use of color in order to bring the painting to life and reveal the textures and surfaces associated with theatre. In her painting titled Cue to Cue I appreciated the textures she made for the curtains, ladders, and piercing beams of light. Even the smooth surface of the floor catches the eye. All in all her use of textures and surfaces emphasizes the beauty of theatre life backstage.

(DiBella, Patricia. Cue to Cue. 2011.) Both Finkelstein and DiBella have strong uses of textures and surfaces in order to bring life to theatrical productions.

Richard Finkelstein has been a theatre photographer for over forty years. I was drawn to his abstract theatrical pictures and use of light to create vivid texture. In the particular picture I displayed, his use of textures and surfaces allow it to almost look like a painting. His work generally emphasizes backdrops and set pieces and silhouettes rather than the actual actors, or are portraits. The photo attached was taken by Finkelstein at the Barter Theatre for their production of The Scarlet Pimpernel.

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Proofsheet- "Metaphorical BS"

This proofsheet was for a series I began to do about cigarettes and smoke, but eventually decided to stop.

The first photos on this proofsheet I took of a model with a cigarette hanging from his lips, as he holds a BB Gun with a match in it. This was meant to represent the deadly decision lighting a cigarette is associated with. I had hoped that the angle of the gun would look not only like he was lighting the cigarette, but also as if he was about to shoot himself.

The next photos I used a female model, lighting and smoking a cigarette with a large white skull candle. I explored different angles to capture different light on both the model and the skull. I was pleased most with the photo where although her cigarette and the skull are perfectly visible, the smoke coming from her mouth hid her face.
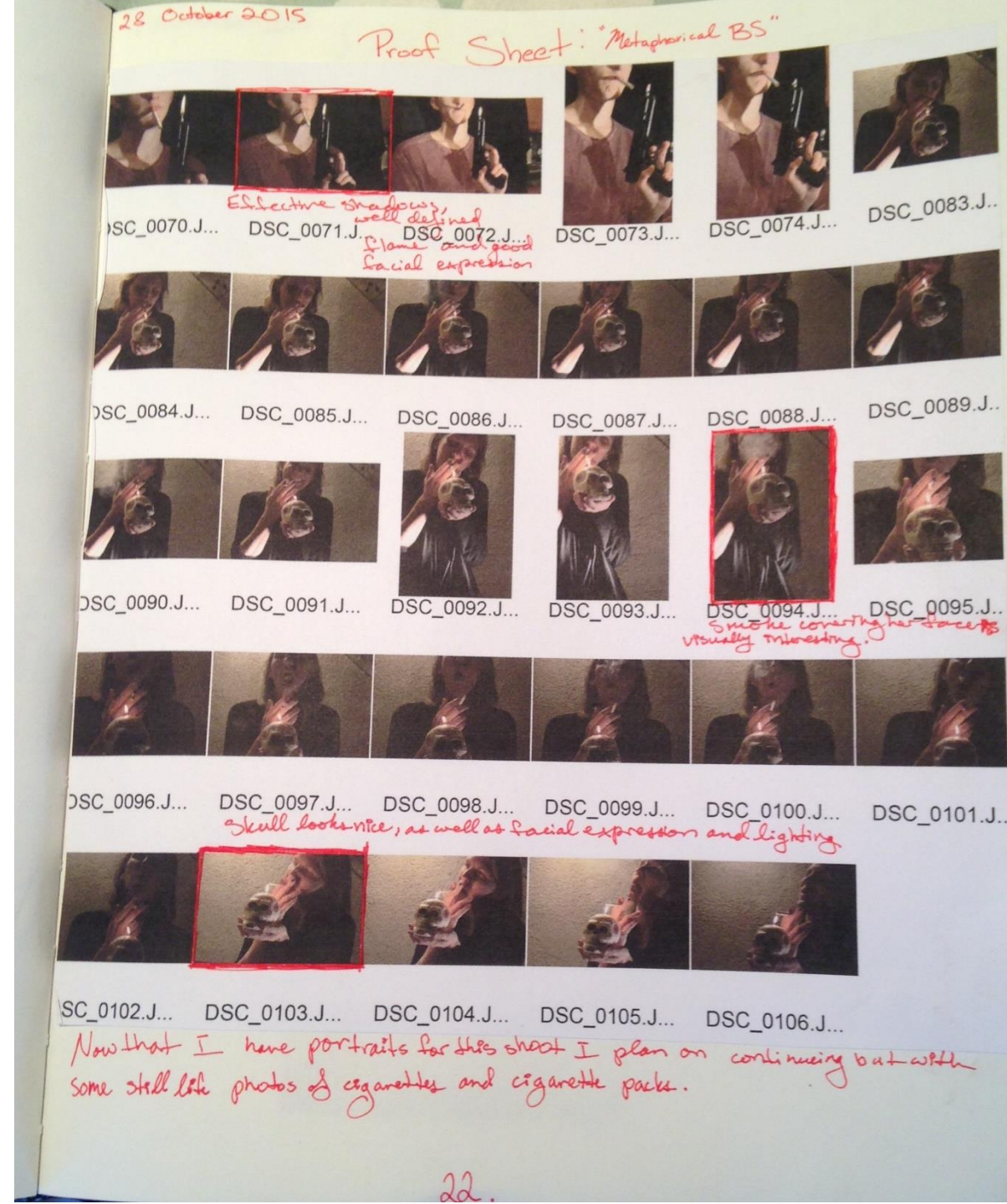
Kitra Cahana

I started to research Cahana's collection of photos of teens. I became interested in her work for various reasons. One of them was because she had received her B.A. in Philosophy and then her M.A. in Visual and Media Anthropology. I also found it intriguing how Cahana inserts herself into communities for months at a time to document subjects.

The collection I focused in on were a group of teens attending a high school in Texas.

I was able to connect her photos of teens to pictures I had taken of my own friends during Halloween. They all appear very natural, and capture kids just having a good time, but also participating in some not-so-appropriate recreational activities.

25 November 2015

Kitra Cahana

~born in 1987, she works as a freelance documentary photographer and videographer. Kitra attended McGill University to receive her B.A. in philosophy. She also attended the Freie Universität in Berlin for her M.A. in Visual and Media anthropology. Kitra inserts herself into communities for months at a time in order to document lives through photography. She followed a group of nomadic youth across America, recorded a Venezuelan cult, and chronicled the lives of teens attending a high school in Texas. Kitra has received grants and awards for her work, including a 2014 TED Fellowship, 2014-2015 artist residency at Prim Centre, and many more.

(Cahana, Kitra. Teens. 2010)

(Cahana, Kitra. Teens. 2010.)

(Cahana, Kitra. Teens. 2010)

my photo

38. ISO 2500, 1/100, f/4.5

Bergamot Station

While visiting Bergamot Station I gathered cards from some of the exhibits I found most interesting. I liked that the graphic design choices such as font complimented the content of the exhibits.

The collection of art in Spiritual Language was my personal favorite because many of the pieces were filled with color and various mediums. The graffiti based pieces that were meant to explain the lifestyle in cities such as LA were especially interesting to me since it gave a new perspective of a city I've grown up so close to.

This visit to Bergamot also gave me a new idea of the curatorial process used for putting on both group and solo shows for art.

Photo Story- Poetic Justice

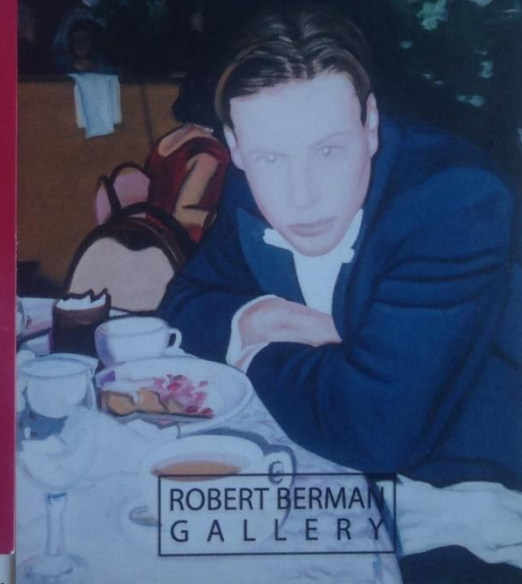I called my photo story Poetic Justice because it was inspired not only by my relationship with absent father, but also by various poems.

This photo story was composed of three photos. The first one I used a photo of my father standing over me when I was a baby and used a lit cigarette to burn the photo where his face was. I then placed the put-out cigarette off to the side of the photograph which was placed on a rock at the beach. After photographing this I used Photoshop to make all of the picture black and white except for the cigarette butt. Next I ripped the photo in half to create a divide between myself and my father. This photo I shot so more of the beach background would be visible. The final photo I took at home. It was a self portrait of myself in front of a white backdrop, holding the piece of the picture with myself as a baby so that it covered my face. This was meant to symbolize my independence from my father as well as my strength now that I have grown up.

Baroque Art

I began to research baroque art because of the exaggerated style associated with it. The drama and grandeur of the pictures was something I wanted to be able to simulate in my photographs of lighting. The style was present not only in painting, but also in theatre and dance. I found this intriguing because of my own work in theatre.

Baroque was often used with religious affiliations which, although culturally interesting, was not something I wished to emulate. I focused primarily on the intense emotion and exaggerated lighting which can be seen through pieces such as *Assumption of the Virgin*.


30 November 205

Baroque

Baroque is a period of artistic style that used exaggerated motion and clear, easily interpreted detail to produce drama, tension and grandeur. The style was present in sculpture, painting, architecture, literature, dance, theatre and music. The style began in 1600 in Rome and spread to most of Europe.

The popularity of Baroque was encouraged by the Catholic Church since the arts could communicate religious themes. Baroque was used to impress visitors and express triumph and power.

Baroque styles use intense emotion and exaggerated lighting.
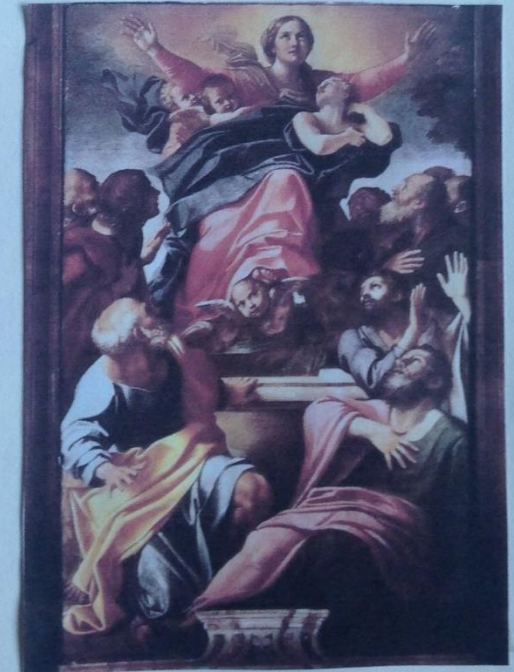
40. (Carraccs, Annibale. Assumption of the Virgin. 1590)

Chiaroscuro

Along with studying baroque art, I began to research chiaroscuro. Chiaroscuro greatly influenced my work since it focuses on the treatment of light and shade in art. The contrast of shadows to the way light falls on the subject was something I hoped to produce through photography.

The shading suggests dimensional value as well as drama. I was also intrigued by the natural look of the light in many of the paintings that I studied.

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30 November 2015

Chiaroscuro

Chiaroscuro is the treatment of light and shade in art. The effect contrasts shadows by light falling unevenly in particular directions. The word itself is Italian for light-dark. It achieves a sense of volume in art.

This technique originated during the Renaissance where artists worked from light to dark using ink. Three dimensional value is suggested by the shading. Chiaroscuro is often achieved by hatching and stippling. Chiaroscuro became highly popular during the sixteenth century in Mannerism and Baroque art.

39. (Merisi da Caravaggio, Michelangelo. Salome receives the head of John)

Contortion

Many of my photos, especially my photo taken from underneath the Newport pier worked with lines. I began to explore lines further by shooting photos with a contortionist model. I shot these photos in the catwalk and stage of a theatre because I could use the lines of the pipes for hanging lights and well as the lines from the wood beams of sets. I had her contort in ways that emphasized the location while creating visually appealing lines with her body.

Many of these included her bending backwards or twisting her legs in various ways making herself parallel or perpendicular to lines already present in the facility.
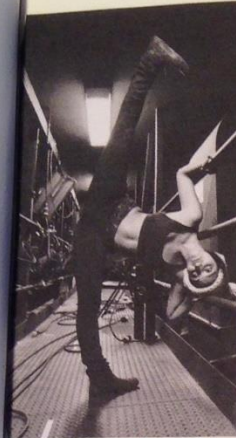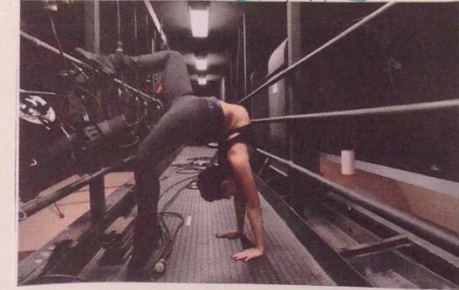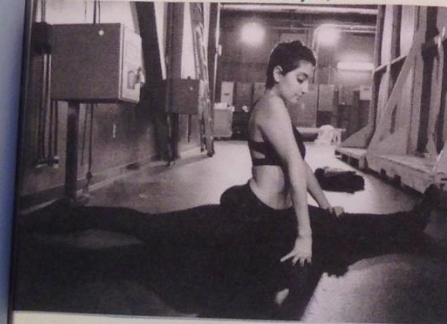
Dance Proof Sheet

This is the proof sheet from the first dance/lighting photoshoot I did. I was trying to find a balance in my photos of getting a good pose from my model while still having an emphasis on the lighting, fog and colors

Through my proof sheet I was also able to conclude which pictures needed to be brightened via Photoshop.

It also allows for a broad view of the different lighting looks I used in this shoot.

It was a solid experimentation of mixing my two fields of art, lighting design and photography.
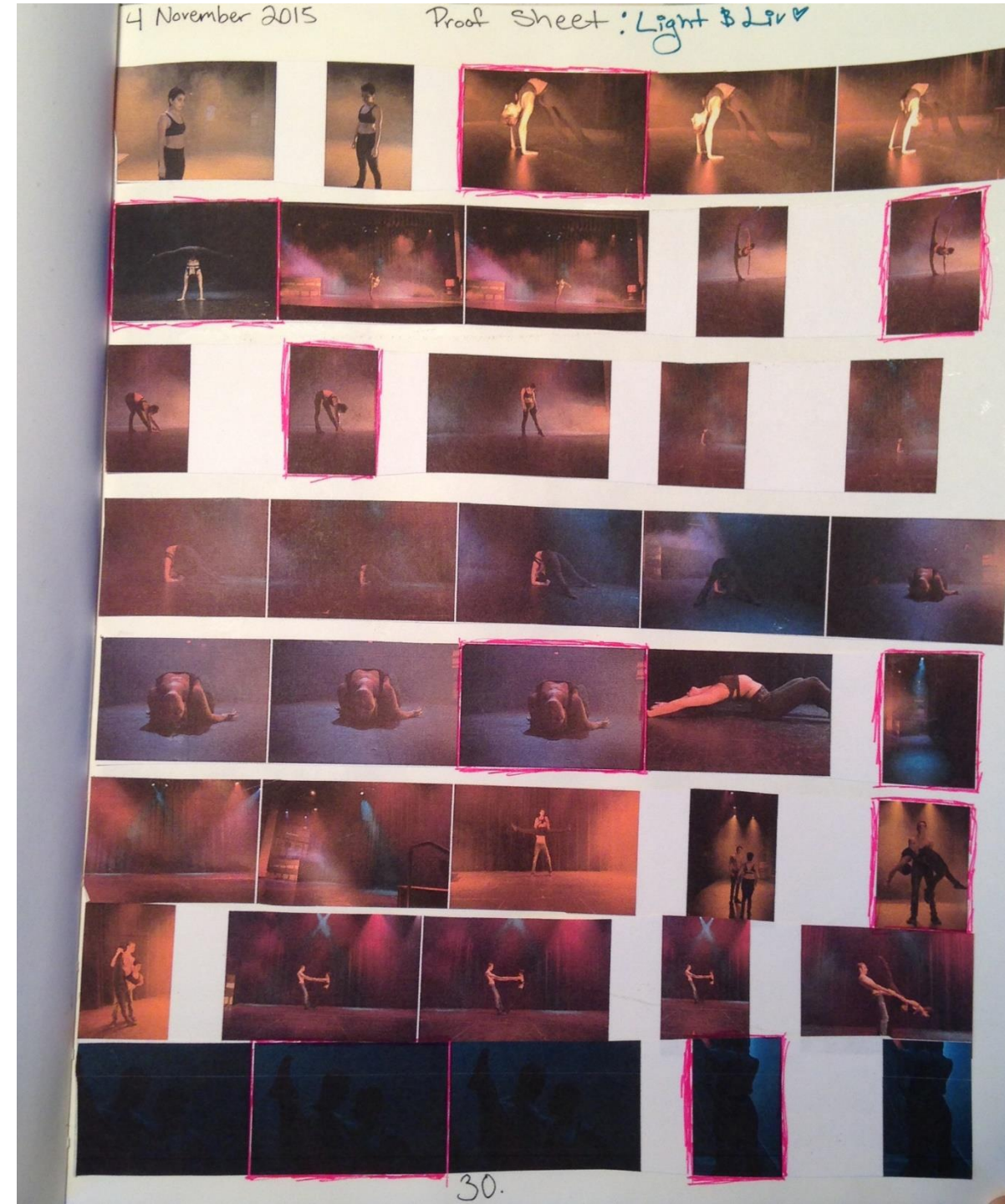
PPA- Maps

For this post production assignment I used two pictures I took of my friend who is a dancer/contortionist, and a world map that I found on the internet. I started by selecting just the model in the photos and erasing all of the background, then copying and pasting the photos onto the same Photoshop file as the map.

I put an effect of Inner Glow, Bevel and Emboss, Color Overlay, and Gradient Overlay on the layers with the dancer. This gave them the pink and green effect.

I also strategically placed her body so it looked as though she was dancing on top of the world map. I tried to have the lines her body and legs make emphasize the lines of the map.
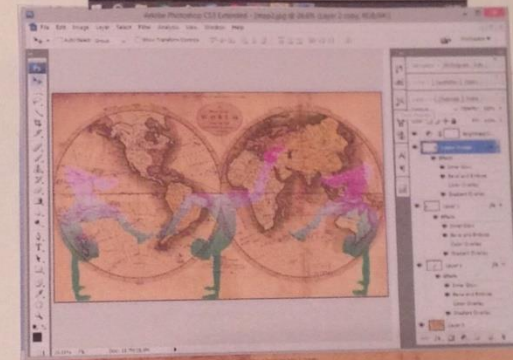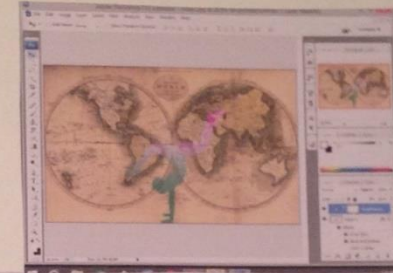
Bill Wadman

In 2007 Wadman launched his career by doing a daily project of portraits called 365portraits.com. He eventually began using dancers as subjects and started a long exposure motion project called Dancers in Motion. It utilizes a long exposure to capture the dizzying movement of dancers.

I liked this abstract way of viewing dancers and had never seen them captured like this. It gave the dance itself more life in the photo. It is also emphasized by the plain black background the photos are taken in front of.
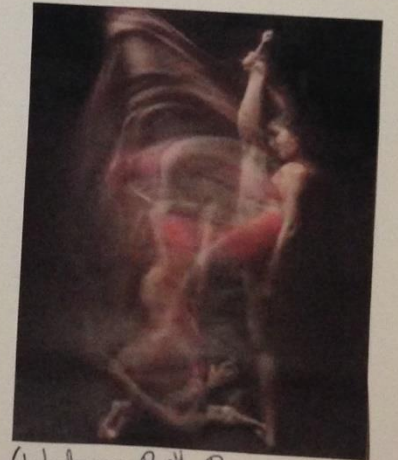

10 December 2015

Bill Wadman

In 2007 Bill Wadman launched his career by completing 365portraits.com, a daily project which won him much praise from various companies. Wadman's long-exposure motion project has been featured in popular photography along with other magazines. His conceptual portraiture has been featured in exhibits throughout Canada and the U.S. He had originally received his degree from Berklee College of Music and had a career as an art director in NYC advertising, but later rediscovered photography. Wadman's work on his photo project Dancers in Motion utilizes a long exposure to capture the dizzying movement.
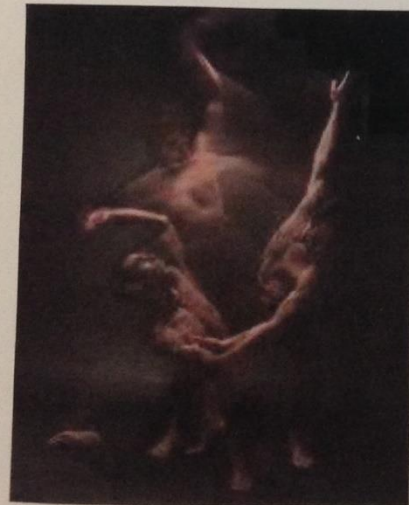
(Wadman, Bill. Dancers in Motion. 2013.)   (Wadman, Bill. Dancers in Motion. Motion #3, 2013.)

44.

Lois Greenfield

Lois Greenfield captures the emotion and movement involved in dancing. She is known for getting fleeting moments of action. She began as a photojournalist covering the experimental dance movement scene from 1973 to the mid 90's. In 1982 she opened up her own studio so that she could control lighting and work with the dancers in a more intimate environment. I know from personal experience how important it is to be able to control the lighting during a photoshoot, although instead of using minimal colors to brighten skin tones, I instead use abstract lighting for my dancers. I am a big fan of Greenfield mainly because of my preference towards freeze motion photography as well as my love of dancers as subjects.

The use of cloth and scarves also emphasizes the movement while adding bursts of color.

10 December 2015

Lois Greenfield

Lois Greenfield captures the emotion and movement behind a dancer's art. She captures fleeting moments of action. She began as a photojournalist covering the experimental dance movement scene from 1973 to the mid 90's. In 1982 she opened her own studio so that she could control lighting and work with the dancers in a more intimate environment. Greenfield created signature images for many contemporary dance companies and commercial clients. Her photographs have been featured in magazines and exhibits across the world. Since 2014 Lois Greenfield has been an artist in residence at NYU/Tisch Department of Dance and New Media. In 2015 she was honored with the Dance in Focus award for her contributions.

(Greenfield, Lois. Ballet. Brittany De Graft.)

(Greenfield, Lois. Contemporary. Maureen Fleming. "The Immortal Rose.)

(Greenfield, Lois. Ballet.)

43.

Dance/Light Photography

I utilized my light design and heavy amounts of fog to emphasize the beams. I also shot at high ISOs because of the darkness of the theatre.
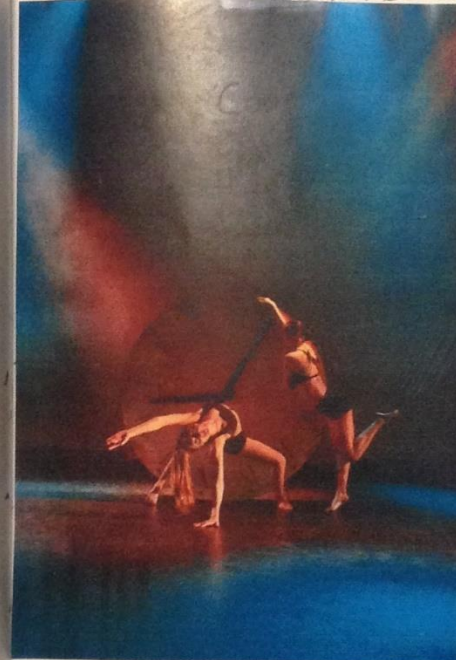
With these photos I took advantage of my skill as the lighting designer for my high school's theatre. I designed and hung the light plot for this photoshoot, then programmed a variety of looks. I asked two girls from dance team to model for me. The two danced and posed with my lighting design and with props I chose such as a large clock. I captured the lines that their bodies created while dancing and tried to use that to emphasize the lines and geometry in my lighting.

I had the girls wear black dance clothes because I didn't want anything bright to take away from the colors of the various lights.
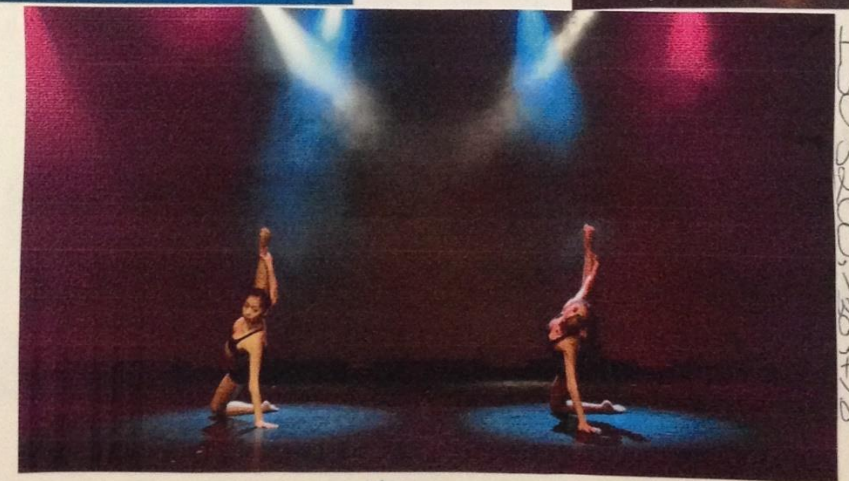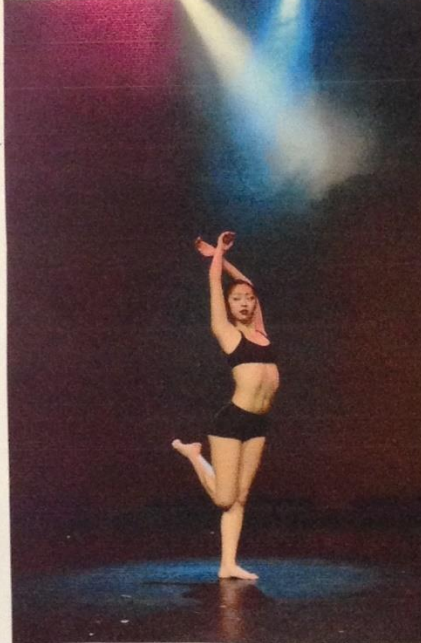
PPA-Self Portrait

I took this self portrait of myself sitting in a chair in front of a pink backdrop and then began to change it in Photoshop. I started by cropping the photo and changing the exposure. I then made two more copies of the same image to work with and set them as Layers 1, 2, and 3. Layer 1 I adjusted to be black and white, Layer 2 I made the hue/saturation a violet tone, and Layer 3 I kept normal. I changed the opacity of Layer 1 and 2 and set the style to overlay. I then slightly offset Layer 1 to the left of Layer 3 and offset Layer 2 to the right, giving a 'trippy' almost blurred effect. I flattened these layers and put it on top of a layer that was a photo of pills. Using the rectangular marquee tool and the eraser tool on the original layer I revealed the pills only in select places. Finally I put a black rectangle on one side, and a white rectangle on the other side with vertical text in Courier New font reading "Your opinion is no longer relevant". I intended for this to be commentary on drug use/abuse among youth and teens. The different layers making the blurred effect take away from reality. The chosen text adds to the disconnect and overall dis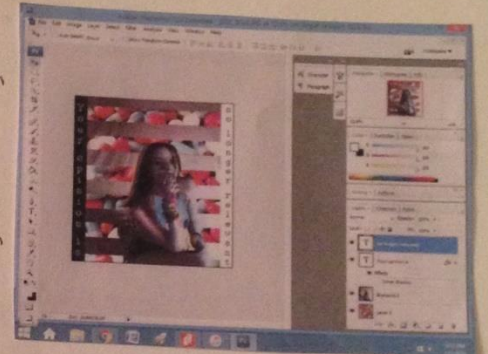tancing from reality through drugs, alcohol, etc.