**FNAR 128 - Intro to Digital Media**

**Project 3 - Digital Collage - Place and Identity**

**Prof. Alan Skees**

This project encompasses both technical and conceptual development to create a finished piece of Fine Art. We begin the project by looking through the works of select photographers, traditional collage artists, and digital media artists to gain insight into this creative process.

**Part 1 - Research and Conceptual Development**

From the list of artists below you will select one to research and write a **1 - 2 page response paper** of their works. You may select a series from their work, or individual pieces as the subject of your paper. Consider what the artist is communicating in their work and how you are responding to it at emotional, intellectual, or perhaps bodily (visceral) levels. Why do you find the work interesting? Make sure to look for Artist Statements, interviews, articles, and any critical analysis (critique) of their works. I have chosen this list for how the artists works addresses the idea of Place and Identity (see more explanation in Part 3). Many of these artists are working artists and you can find info easily about them online on their own websites or through gallery representatives. Please **be aware of your sources** and use reputable sources beyond Wiki or photo aggregators such as tumblr or the like. Using ArtStor databases though the library website is also a great option. You will be discussing these artists later in class, so try to be as clear and concise as possible.

**Artist Influence List**

* Maggie Taylor
* Anthony Goicolea
* Cindy Sherman
* David Hockney - Photo Collages / Composite Polaroids
* Tom Chambers
* Janieta Eyre
* David Hilliard
* Loretta Lux
* Lori Nix
* Yasumasa Morimura
* Starn Twins
* Sally Mann
* Katrin Korfmann - Horizon Series in particular
* Hans Eijkelboom - he has a number of book series out
* Andreas Gursky - landscape works and interior building images
* Spencer Tunick
* Patricia McClung
* Joseph Cornell
* Man Ray
* Eric Carle
* Richard Hamilton
* Vik Muniz
* James Rosenquist
* Viktor Koen

If you have additional ideas for artists, please ask first and confirm with me they are suitable for the purposes of this project to write on.

**Part 2 - Demonstrations - Technical Considerations and Source Material Creation/Collection**

In this project we will learn to capture and edit digital image data to create works of fine art in both printed and digital formats. Creating a digital piece of work for print production can be quite involved and complicated if done correctly. We will work with these technical considerations in mind:

* **Resolution** - Understanding Screen Resolution (72 - 150dpi) and Print Resolution (300dpi+) will significantly impact the quality of a finished work.
* **Capture** - Using digital imaging hardware such as digital cameras and scanners to capture and archive visual information at specific resolutions. In class demonstrations will include:
	+ Calculating Scanner Resolution
	+ Basic Camera Usage (Please take FNAR 205 - Digital Photography for more!)
	+ Green Screen Techniques
	+ Panorama Techniques
* **Editing** - We will cover a wide variety of compositing techniques based upon masks in photoshop. In class demonstrations will include:
	+ Background Removal or Replacement
	+ Collage and Airbrushing
	+ Refined Detail Masking
	+ Layer Modes
* **Print Production** - We will learn through demonstration and real world experience how to prepare high resolution digital files for print production with a local print bureau (FedEx, Staples, Costco etc).

**Scanning**

**Technical considerations**:

1. A scanner will only pick up an image clearly that is touching the glass, objects that are less than ½ inch in depth work best.
2. Unlike a photograph, a scan does not have a single point of focus, but will keep the entire surface of the glass in focus. This will give you really fine detail to any thing in contact with the glass and softer focus as an object recedes in space from the surface of the scanner.
3. When scanning objects be sure to put the piece of plexiglass over the scanner glass to protect it from scratches. DO NOT SCRATCH THE GLASS!!!

If in doubt of how to scan something, ASK ME FIRST!

1. Moving an image while scanning will result in streaking in the final scan, which can be very interesting.
2. You may need to cover the scanner with the dark cloth (or various colored cloth or paper depending on your objects) or turn out the lights in the room.
3. Experiment with reflective objects or even a mirror.

**General Scanner Settings – (Detailed Instructions will be covered in class)**

1. Scan through the Epson scanner utility found under Go>Applications
2. Set the resolution to between 300 and 600 depending on the final scale of the image. If it is a small image and you know that you will scale the image larger in Photoshop scan at a resolution of 600ppi. 300 ppi should be good for any object that you are going to keep at scale.
3. Set the scan to 24 bit or sharp, millions of colors. Use the marquee to define the area that you want to save in the final scan.
4. Hit the scan button. You can then open the scanned image into photoshop.

Save a copy of the image by going to File> Save as. In the dialog box name the file, navigate to your student folder on your flash drive and hit save. I would save multiple versions of each image so that you can experiment with them in Photoshop.

Students will have to take turns to set up their arrangements and scan them; you might want to work in teams of two. Try different arrangements and positions of objects, making multiple scans to choose from later.

**Photography**

Having experience with photography is a vital skill set for any digital artist or designer. Learning the hard reality that the size and quality of printed work is directly related to the quality and amount of data your camera can capture is important. **Having access to a high megapixel DSLR is optimal** for this project but lower quality point and shoot cameras and cellphones may be sufficient for some types of imagery. Please consult the library for photography gear (DSLR’s, tripods, reflectors) that you can check out and the art dept. may have some equipment available.

**Part 3 - Combining Conceptual and Technical Development**

**Project - Place and Identity**

In this project you will be creating a piece of conceptually based fine art. The idea and themes behind the work you create are as important (or more so!) as the skill and techniques used in its execution. The research you and your classmates have done in Part 1 should only influence the works you create. I am interested in seeing you work through your own ideas and thoughts as you develop and practice your technical skills.

**Conceptual Requirements**

**Place**

Make PLENTY of your own original photographs and scans of a Place that you find meaningful and interesting. (This cannot be your dorm room or apartment, get out in the world and explore.)

Things to think about.

1. What is a place? Is a place internal or external? Is the mind a place? Is a movie a place?
2. What makes a place interesting? Atmosphere, dramatic light or shadows, unfamiliarity, dramatic cropping or angles, blurring, etc.
3. The place is just as an important “character” as the other subjects within the work.

Technical Note: Shoot these at the highest resolution that your camera will capture.

**Identity**

Make MANY original photographs and scans that could express a range of different identities. It could be 20 different personalities. These could be subtle or overt. If in doubt take pictures of: your psycho self portrait, your saintly self portrait, and your sinner self portrait.

Things to think about:

1. Consider facial expressions to convey different personalities.
2. Consider how different clothing or costumes express different personalities.
3. Consider dramatic lighting, props, dramatic angles or cropping, etc.

The work should be a visual conversation for the viewer. How does the Place interact with the Identity of the subjects within your composition. What are the connections between the two. This basic conceptual starting point gives you a huge sandbox to play in! The project's real strength is that you, the student, must think, choose subjects, physically manipulate them on the scanner bed or in front of the camera, then manipulate the captured image based on an artistic objective, not necessarily a technical one. All this requires expressive and formal aesthetic and it reinforces the idea of the computer/software as an artistic medium. I’m interested to see what you decide to explore in your work.

**Technical Requirements**

**Minimal File/Print Size:**

**11 x 17 inches (vertical or horizontal) at 300dpi**

While the project can be executed at this small size, please consider the imagery you are depicting in your work. Some does not “read” well at small scales. As any good artist or designer does before approaching a project, **investigate with your print bureau the size and price options available to you before you begin.** We will discuss in class the multitude of formats that could work well for your concept and artistic vision. I have seen student works from this project that are many feet in scale and have won juried spots and awards in exhibitions. Consider this a prime “Portfolio Piece” for your growing collection of art work.

**Photoshop Techniques:**

This project encompasses quite a few techniques. While you will have experience in class demos with all techniques listed, it is not expected that you use them all in the creation of your work for this project. It is expected that you use the appropriate technique to execute your concept. As the use of masking is the primary technical goal of this project **there should be evidence in your working file (PSD) of layer masking with the appropriate alpha channels included and integral to your images creation.** A combination of a couple of the techniques is generally sufficient.

**Grading:**

Concept - 40%

Craft / Execution - 25%

Technique - 25%

Sketches / Assets - 10%

The Artist Response Papers will be graded separately.

This project was inspired by Collin Williams.