GCE A Level Advanced Art and Design

Photography Component 2

IZZY

Total Mark 53
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VARIATION
+
SIMILARITY
When I was given the title, the term "similarity" made me think of photography trends and movements that are popular right now. I thought it would be interesting to explore modern trends rather than looking back at old ones. In my coursework I really enjoyed working with unique lighting so I want to continue with this into the realm of "vapour wave". I am cautious going into this movement as it is well known to be used in an uninspiring and derivative manner by students in the pursuit of an internet 'aesthetic', using other people's assets and not developing any kind of thought provoking or interesting journey.

However, I think it will aid the 'uncomfortable' atmosphere in my work. I think it will be interesting to use it to photograph bugs or beasts to contrast (or offer a variation) to vapour wave's usual purpose of beauty. In my coursework I also worked with drawing over the top of my photography to add to that strange atmosphere and create another dimension or reality on top of the photo that may or may not be related, I also want to carry this on in my exam work.

Roe is a perfect example of vapourwave in terms of street photography. The contrast of these cold hues give an atmosphere of fear and that disconnect from reality that I respond in my coursework and that comes from a lot of my work.

This image is especially interesting because Roe has used a static/distance effect as an almost manual glitch. It's done by a mini-like lens attached to the camera which manipulates the moon light in a way editing could not.
EXPERIMENTING WITH LIGHT.

More successful version. Great highlights + shadows editing. Good cool tones to work with.
Here is an unedited version of the photo.

Here it is with altered colour balance but I knew I could push it more blue and magenta, but will push even more in other edits.

Interesting, but does not look like purple light. My friend used to have more contrast.

I wanted to achieve colours that still allowed contrast on the face so I focused on working with the shadows, midtones, and highlights on colour balance.

The top photo shows me working on the highlights which I wanted to be a pinkish purple to emulate a purple light shining on the subject's face. Mostly increased the magenta and blue.

For the bottom picture, you can see I was working on the shadows. I wanted these to be blue for the cool vapourwave colours but also a contrast to the magenta.
unedited

edited

unedited

edited

**Edit on a neutral skin tone.**

Creases too much of a warm undertone?

→ maybe just the shadows not be contrasted enough or too much light.
It was a photoshoot. I don't know why. It really should have been a fun shoot. But I don't know, I just don't feel like it. I'm not quite sure if the shoot will be successful...
Some pictures responded better to the edits than others. I really enjoy how the slime trails act under the lighting - you can't decide whether to be disgusted or not.

The pictures aren't as high quality as I would like them in terms of resolution due to how close I had to get without a suitable lens.
more graphic style:
I really liked the composition of this picture, and feel like it responded well to the "vapour wave" editing. I cloned out the shadow to the left, and it really adds to the alien atmosphere. I'm striving to do this in my work.

I also upped the contrast a bit to make the image appear flatter or more graphic-y in style.

good contrast of pink & blue.

over edited?
I think the photoshoot is very successful for contrasting the gross with the beautiful. I can't help but think of the work I did in my coursework, in terms of reflecting the human brain. It has the capacity to be both grotesque and wonderful.

strange bleeding there could be more interesting. could add to the cyber feel.

more of a low quality picture than there could be there but
Masks

I thought to carry on the concept of contrasting objects I would look into masks as a possible avenue. However I did some experiments with making masks and the results seemed quite derivative and so something I wanted to stay from. Nonetheless here is the artist I took inspiration from - Max Ernst.

I especially like his work in relation to the time period. He contrasts the uptight, oppressive Victorian period with something animalistic. It feels like a reflection of the horrors of the period that hides behind the religious values. It also makes me think of, once again, the contrasting human mind.

Max Ernst

I then of course changed the colour of the lighting; adding blue to the shadows, cyan to the midtones & magenta to the highlights. I think the effectiveness of the photoshoot is the washed out white of the statue which acted as a canvas to the edited light. Some of the most effective compositions are the cropped/cut-up images. It creates an uncanny valley feeling where in some of the images he looks like a real creature. The lighting is using wonderfully warps the identity of the subject, it's a nagless yet unnerving atmosphere.
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I especially like his work in relation to the time period. He contrasts the very oppressive Victorian period with some animalistic feel like a reflection of the horrors of the period. This makes me think of, once again, contrasting human mind.

MAX ERNST

I still am inspired by Max Ernst so took pictures of my statue "Bentley," he is in period clothing but in a ram, an aggressive animal.

Of course, changed the color of the lighting, adding blue to the shadows, cyan to the midtones and magenta to the highlight. I think the effectiveness of the photoshoot is the washed out white of the statue which acts as a canvas to the edited light. I think the most effective compositions are the cropped/cut-up images. It creates an uncanny, malleable feeling where in some of the images he looks like a real creature. The lighting is using wonderfully warps the identity of the subject. It's a magical yet unnerving atmosphere.
Saddled lighting in the eyes in the above picture which makes it look like a man wearing a mask.
I find it interesting how with each
change in the personality of the character,
under purple light he looks
mystical, but under red he looks like
the devil. It can reflect how the
human mind can shift under various
circumstances.
Another artist that incorporates an interesting darkness into her work is Ana Maria Pacheco. I find both her drawings and sculptures as relevant to my work in how they feel like they belong in another realm similar, but more sinister to our own. Her sculptures paleness make it more malleable by the lighting which, obviously, is something I’m taking advantage of as well. I want to incorporate this idea of a more sinister realm into my work while also trying to find that extra level to my photography.

Paula Rego is famous for her sinister depiction of childhood stories and fables, highlighting the darkness that already lies inside the tales. It’s relevant to the gothic atmosphere I have been pushing onto my photography of the goat statue. It demonstrates the importance of tone in photography and I look to Paula Rego for inspiration of how that tone is achieved. I feel as though my gothic photography lacks a fundamental layer to make it complete both visually and as a concept. With this in mind I will continue to brainstorm and experiment to create this extra layer to my work but still considering the darkness that artists such as Paula Rego uses to create intrigue and drama.
Monster is a music video from the song by Dodie Clark but the actual music video—what we will be focusing on—is by the director/artist PJ Liquori. His work has a distinctly Garish style to them, always using bright and contrasting colours; focusing mostly on pinks, deep blues and purple which is, of course, also characteristic of Voporwave. The relevant thing about the music video is the contrast of PJ’s bright and fantastical style and the darker tones behind the video. A perfect example is pictured above, a cartoon ice queen violently ripping out the monster’s heart with blood dripping from her hands, contrasting the pastel blues of her design.

Other interesting parts of the video is Ness sawing off his horns, and him rabidly eating his heart at the end of the video. One of the scenes I liked the most was Ness’s bright bubblegum pink hair contrasting the blood dripping down his face. It creates a confusing narrative as two opposite aesthetics merge together. This is, of course, what I want to do in my work so I want to explore this contrast on gore and the fantastical/bright.

What to do next?
I’m going to contrast the bright and the camp with gore and even satanism to provide a visual contradiction which I think will be interesting and visually exciting.

Possible Photo-shoots:
- Photo-shoots of the devil in pretty lighting
  - garish edits
  - cliche phrases
- Organs - as a food
  - organ jelly
  - organs in a pineapple?
1. I first cut away the background using the cut out studio. I had to especially watch out of areas of landscape shadows so it wanted to treat it as part of the background.

2. I then started creating a name like pattern, each image a different layer that is important, I made sure to have so images go off the screen to give the illusion of an ongoing pattern that repeats.

3. This next stage was important to stop any confusion later on, I marked every other image with blue + the remaining image pink. This was done on a separate layer to be deleted later.

4. I put the two groups in separate folders and applied a colour balance to each folder. Group "A" was edited to be cyan + "B" magenta.

5. Because the background was transparent I could easily apply a background.

6. I favoured garish colours but did experiment which you can see on the next page.

What Paper to Print On?

Normally I just use Matt without a thought but I think the sickly sweet nature of my photos and the "gothic but camp" would lend itself better to shiny photography paper, but I might exp on printing off this "design" on shiny paper too.
I did some more graphic-esque edits to incorporate some weird humour into these photos. The contrast between two contrasting characters and a cheesy phrase is both unnerving and humorous. It reminds me a lot of the work of John Greenwood. He paints abstract things within boxes that are both distressing and bright. Some of his designs remind me of circus tentacle toys and toys, and yet he always includes tentacles. It's such a confusing paradox that would be interesting to explore.

Hang in There!

Hang in There!
I'm really enjoying the contrast of bright and dark and some of the designs I have been doing remind me of the kitchen designs of the 1960s. With that in mind, I took photocopies of an old family cookbook published in 1961. The graphics are horrible, the food disgusting, and it is perfect for my exam. I will take inspiration from the images in the book to create bright 'happy' food with a dark twist. Food is something that connects us all and so is a good way to explore what I'm looking at in the changing human condition.

On the right, I experimented with some photos.
PHOTOSHOOT PLAN

For my first photoshoot using the cookbook I wanted to incorporate a pineapple, 1960s cooking used it a lot and it is so bright and tropical with interesting textures. The contrast will be stuffing mincemeat into it.

It still felt like it was missing something so I’m going to make a polymer clay eyeball so the pineapple almost becomes a being in itself.

ILLUSTRATIONS

BIRD’S EYE

3 DIFFERENT SHOTS.

regular
- top floating
- with eyeball
- no eyeball
- with knife
- top resting against it

DRAMATIC LIGHTING
- no knife
- knife

THE PLATE DISPLAY
- symmetrical
- shot from plate
- birds eye shot
Marc Quinn’s blood head is a wonderful sculpture. The bright red is so inviting and radiant but the knowledge that it’s blood makes it so uncomfortable.

It’s a self portrait, beginning at a time of his dependency on alcohol that he despised. The sculpture itself is reliant on electricity to be kept as well - a clear comparison. In a way this reflects the explorations I’m making into the 1960’s aesthetic and its association with consumerism. I don’t want to make it a solo project as I feel it’s quite derivative. but, nonetheless it’s an interesting concept to draw comparisons with.

The way the sculpture’s are set up to stare at you is also very interesting. It’s a frank and aggressive view of his flaws and alcoholism encapsulated in a beautiful but disturbing sculpture. This aggressiveness is a good point I want to look at with my own photography.

From here I want to photograph something more in tune with the human body than mince meat - a heart. Perhaps with gelatin or in a cake, I want the connection with humanity to be more apparent with the next photoshoot.
I was inspired by the book to further explore the genre.

I included the page of the cookbook on the left as inspiration of how I would edit it.
I love the green light against the cream in this image, it makes it seem all the more sickly. The green is also reflected in the pineapple which creates a menacing atmosphere. However, I do not like the green background as it seems like an unedited greenscreen making the overall image seem unfinished. I'm going to try and change the background to rectify this.

I included the page of the cookbook on the left as inspiration of how I should edit it.
A good hors d'oeuvre makes a pleasant start to the meal. If you have a substantial course to follow, choose a light hors d'oeuvre such as fruit. If, on the other hand, the main part of the meal is light and rather straightforward, a mixed hors d'oeuvre with a wide variety of ingredients makes a very suitable beginning.

HORS D'OEUVRE

An unusual but delicious hors d'oeuvre is to spear a slice or a portion with a slice of stuffed Pomegranate. Cut the melon into six slices, scrape off the pips. Roll the slice of fruit and place them on the melon. Garnish with cubes of cheese. Decorate with black olives and herbs.

Other garnish can be used:
- Herbs
- Tropical Fruits
- Fresh Fruits
- Sliced Fruits
What is my project now?

After exploring the contrast of the gothic and the bright by experimenting with my golemman status, I really wanted to further explore this. I looked at artists such as John Greenwood who also had this similar vibe of the humor in the dark with an aim to capture something sinister and yet camp.

This made me think of the old family cookbook from 1960. Its a design nightmare with clashing colours, ugly fonts and disgusting food photography and it was perfect inspiration. From there I have begun combining the bright and yet disgusting 1960s cuisine with something darker and sinister.

What is represents, as well as just being a visual exploration, is something I find very fascinating. The 1960s represents the height of the nuclear family in a cookie cutter house with a white picket fence and perfectly maintained lawn. Its perfection always made me uncomfortable and it’s a view shared by many as the “perfect 1960s family hiding something darker” has become a trope commonly explored within art. Amy Bennett - who I explored for my essay - does a similar exploration but I want to do it aggressively. Hearts in cakes, a housewife in red and other violent imagery. The 1960s were some of the saddest times for women, their place in the kitchen was still clearly defined and as new suburbs formed, deprived of community, they became isolated and depressed within their perfect house.

My photography is combining the camp, bright 1960s, cutting edge and perfect with a gothic underbelly that leaks from the period. The concept of the Yes Man, a corporate sheep, the perfect housewife, alone and bored, the red scare, where anyone nonconformist was labelled as a commie, and medical horrors of Thalidomide, the iron lung, and women’s hysteria still being a valid concern. The aesthetics of the 1960s works perfectly with this dark layer and is perfect to explore. It also brings up questions about what changes decade to decade to see these aspect as darks parts of the 1960s. Does the human psyche truly ever change? My work extends past tangible information into the realm of the human mind, its dark underbelly and bright dreams is an uncomfortable concept that’s hard to grasp. Using the aesthetics of the 1960s and the dark events of the era becomes a metaphor for aspects of human condition.

The still life paintings Wesselmann produces provides a snapshot of the pop culture of the 1960s and alludes to some of its issues. He focuses on some of the issues surrounding the era as well which is, of course, what I’m exploring too. He looks at consumerism, alcoholism and blinding patriotism in America and reflects it in the modern take of the still life. This is also relevant to my work as my picture of food take on a composition reminiscent of still life due to the nature of the subjects. I will take on board both his commentary and his pop, zany style with my next round of shoots.
I wanted to do a 3 course meal and so started on dessert. I had the image of doing something with a cupcake. They're so perfect and you can imagine a housewife baking a batch. The unsettling twist was the topping of dead bees I had managed to collect over Easter. I positioned the model cat from the bottom of the cake and angled it so it looked in the picture like she was eating towards the bees with the question: may she already eaten one?!

I had a pink background to make it even more cute. I used a rainbow paper plate in some of the shots.
I love how cute they became. The bees themselves are almost cute too, but then you are reminded of the bugs. The inclusion of the hand makes it more grotesque as the realization someone may eat it floats across your mind.
using more meat.

The last meat I used was mince that, although was unnerving, was not as visceral as I wanted. It took a while but I ordered 2 pig hearts to achieve my desire photoshoot.
I did my usual bright graphic twist on the picture and like how it contrast the over detailed greyish heart.

I don't think the painting needs the blood but I do think it is a successful outcome with them.

The purple border makes it too busy.
I wanted this photoshoot with the heart to have a more sinister atmosphere with elements of the domestic sphere. I will take influence from Fuseli’s lighting and use of draped fabric to give off a dramatic atmosphere. I also like how some of his subjects, such as the horse, glow and so will try and incorporate that.
I wanted to fake bright blood leaking substance so made up very thick custard and acid it red. The slime offers a new texture & the red contrasts well with the glores.

The housewife

Throughout the project I have had an image of a housewife performer using the retro dress I owned. I wanted it to be reminiscent of 1960s family portraits. However (PRO)
Instead of kids and a dog it’s Gothic artifacts to refute her loneliness. The red paint both reflected the “female hysteria” and the red scarf that seeped even into the domestic sphere. As you can see I didn’t paint my model entirely and so used a similar textured brush to carefully fill in the areas with the skin still showing.
VARIATION AND SIMILARITY

My work under this title extends past tangible settings into the realm of the human mind. The brain’s dark tendencies and bright dreams are uncomfortable paradoxes that are hard to grasp. To explore these I have taken the aesthetics of the 1960s and the dark associations that come from that era and used them as metaphors. The 1960s evokes the start of bright and kitschy design but is also home to female “hysteria”, the Yes Man, The Red Scare and Thalidomide. Its contrast of camp and gothic reflects what I want to explore of the unpredictable human condition.
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