The Art and Science of Digital Imaging

Project two: "Composite Illustration"

For this project you will create a composite image intended to be used as an illustration for a magazine article. Your composite image needs to contain elements from at least 3 different source images, however, you must work to hide that fact. In other words, your final image should look as much as possible like it was generated with a single exposure of a regular camera. Note that your image does not have to make sense logically as long as it works visually (i.e., surreal is okay).

You must first find the article to illustrate. I strongly encourage all of you to use the online Lexis/Nexis database (available off of the Hampshire library online databases web page http://library.hampshire.edu/about-us/database_service.html) to find published magazine articles that interest you. The added advantage of this approach is that Lexis/Nexis does not provide images, so you won't be tempted to mimic what another illustrator has already done.

PART ONE due Tuesday March 1 at the beginning of class

Hand in a typed, one paragraph summary of the article you found. Include a full citation. After the summary include a second paragraph that describes what you want to capture in your illustration. Are there specific images that come to mind from reading the article? Thematic ideas? Take this as an opportunity to brainstorm about the visual you will create.

PART TWO due Thursday March 10 at the beginning of class

Your final composite image along with the files and layers that contribute to it (in the Hand-Ins folder). You get to choose between two ways of finishing this assignment:

1. Photoshop (.psd file). If you finish in Photoshop you must hand in your composite image with all contributing layers **unflattened**. All layers must be **named** and you must use **layer masks** to generate your mattes. Do not apply any of the layer masks (because this "bakes" the layer mask into the layer's transparency, thus throwing away possibly valuable RGB data).

2. rcomp (.tif or .tga file). If you finish in rcomp, you must hand in your composite image and your individual elements as single files in a containing folder. It's likely that most of your elements will be 4-channel TIFFs with alpha values created in Photoshop (though you're free to use rcomp for matte extraction as well). You also must hand in the rcomp script that made the composite image. If you choose this route, you are free to use either Photoshop or rcomp for color modification, element re-sizing, blurring, etc.

NOTE: In a future class, you will be receiving instruction on how to use rcomp to assemble elements and how to export matted elements from Photoshop that can be used in rcomp.

The final spatial resolution of your project needs to be between 600 and 1500 pixels in each dimension. Each element you use must take up at least 100x100 pixels in the final image (i.e., no tiny elements).

When you scan your elements (source images), be sure to use the **descreen** feature of the scanner software if the elements come from a magazine or book or other non-photographic form. The **Time of Day** project handout sheet (online if you lost yours) mentions how to do this, albeit briefly. Also, it's a good rule of thumb to scan at roughly two times the spatial resolution you think you'll need for your composite.

Remember the help that's available to you:

- The class email list: cs197s05@lists.hampshire.edu
- Josh the lab TA will be in the lab from 6-9pm on Mondays
- My office hours are Wednesdays from 1:30-3:00 and Thursdays from 10:30-12:00.
- The rcomp functions are listed in Applications/randh/rcomp_doc/indexFunction.html

Good luck!