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IP Senior Thesis
Discovering “Intrinsic Momentos”



Driving down the street at night my eyes can't stop moving. They dart around noticing every little flicker of light that passes by. I see red and green from the traffic light reflected on the pavement. I see raindrops on my window illuminated in a variety of colors from the neon signs nearby. I see snow on top of bushes glowing blue from the string of Christmas lights underneath. These memories are burned in my mind and fascinate me. I am in awe at the beauty and elegance of light itself, how it transforms the objects that it surrounds and morphs our perception of world around us. This excites me and these visual experiences are burned in my memory, and sometimes my camera. If one could be in love with a thing, Light and I would have a romance.

I have always been drawn to sources of light, collecting lamps such as night-lights, lava lamps, rope lights, medusa lamps, etc. I love experimenting with colored bulbs and shades, putting different objects next to them, turning different combinations of them on to see how the ambient light in the room changes. This fascination transferred into my desire to keep what I saw-- to capture it with a photo. Photography is a natural extension of my interest in light since it requires an attention to type and quality of light. I enjoy all genres of photography, but particularly like capturing close-ups of objects or body parts, which stems from an enjoyment of distorting the ordinary, everyday visuals and making them partially unrecognizable. I view it as reinventing overlooked images, making

them new and exciting again in hopes to spark the audience to begin a habit of paying more attention to their daily surroundings. I enjoy studio shooting also, but for the challenge of capturing the beauty of the object/person while having full control of the conditions and visual choices.

An observation I have made about myself is that I get more intrigued when viewing sets or series of photos. A set of two to five photographs gives me the puzzle pieces to imagine a story or memory more so than a single image. I enjoy coming up with creative stories the photos might tell, or brainstorming concepts the author might be trying to get across. In these situations I spend more time with the work, I enjoy the experience, and I remember the work longer. This is how I want my viewers to feel while viewing my own work.

I knew I wanted my project to involve light, possibly colored light as either a sculpture of some kind or just as the light in a photograph. I looked at the work of artists such as James Turrell and Dan Flavin. Their work has a beautiful and intelligent simplicity. It causes you to appreciate light itself instead of its purpose being to illuminate another piece. Light is its own medium, and I feel that making the right choices about type, color, intensity or placement should take an extensive amount of consideration. Turrell and Flavin have done this and succeeded.

In the Turrell piece shown below in Figure 1, I love the simplicity of a standard shape lit by a single

color. I appreciate the fluidity of the light source and find the glow effect beautiful. This piece has a calming effect on my mood and creates a space in which I feel I could do deep, productive thinking and reflection. I am unaware if this response is what the artist intended. In Flavin's work shown in figure 2, I view the installation as a light and color exploration. I like the consistency of the horizontal white lights above each vertical colored light. Particularly apparent in the blue section is the effect of the blue light mixing with wall color at the point where it meets the white light. This seems like it would have been a significant discovery for the artist and should not go unnoted by the audience. Flavin recognizes the beauty of light itself and how it affects its surroundings, and I share his fascination.

Figure 1



Figure 2



Though these works are beautiful and satisfying to me as a viewer, there is a missing element when it comes to my desire for my own work. The missing piece is imagery. I crave the involvement of photography because it provides more information for the viewer to understand a subject, meaning, or mood. I came across Barry Underwood's work where he combined light sources with nature and then photographed and digitally altered the image. The combination of natural and artificial light creates an image that has a feeling of being fantasy, or fiction. I gave this concept a try, shown in figure 4.

Figure 3



Figure 4

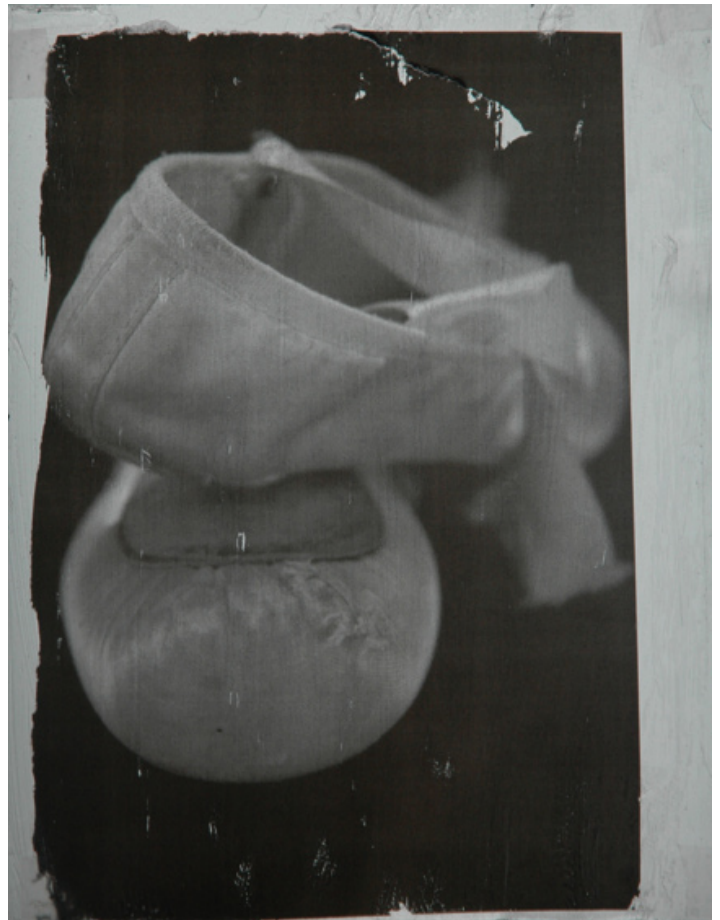


With this concept, light sources are seen in the photo, but aren't actually in the room with the viewer. I enjoy viewing light in photos, but I enjoy its physical presence more. I knew I wanted to incorporate this in my project. I also felt a longing to make images come to life with my hands, as happens in the darkroom process. My introduction to photography began with the film/chemical process and those experiences are very nostalgic for me. I have positive memories of adjusting the enlarger, touching and rolling film, submerging paper in chemicals, hanging both materials up to dry, how the chemicals smelled and felt on my fingers. Another aspect that I feel is missing in digital

photography is the feeling that the work is personal. I feel disconnected emotionally to my work when I pull a photograph out of a printer and pin it to a wall.

The need for hands-on involvement with my work, and a desire to make it more personal and unique, led me to digital photo transfers. The process begins with a digital image printed on a laser printer. The image and the glass or plexi-glass is coated with acrylic gel applied by a brush. The print is placed against the glass and when it is completely dry, a wet sponge is used to remove the paper from the back. Below is my first attempt at this process.

Figure 5



When I began experimenting with photo transfers I was inspired by Michal Macku. Below is an example

of a chemical technique he invented called “gellage,” and also transfers he did onto glass. I love his black and grey images with the use of texture or transparency in order to evoke more feeling from the viewer and express himself deeper. I enjoy the tears and missing pieces in my own transfer, which give the piece a distressed look. It says to the viewer that the work has been touched, handled and is unique. I get a sense with Macku’s work that every detail was a thoughtful choice, and I would like to replicate that in my work.

Figure 6



Figure 8



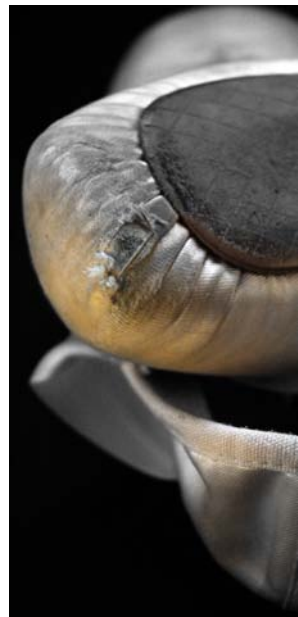
Figure 7



In order to combine all the elements that are important to me when it comes to producing my own work, it feels natural to bring light sources and photo transfers together into one piece. I have decided to make structures that hang on the wall and display sets of photo transfers. Each photograph is independent and has an individual box structure, which contains a light source illuminating it from behind. The structure is constructed out of wood and mansonite materials and finished with a semi-gloss, black paint. The effect

is that the black structure “disappears” in contrast with the illuminated photograph. This is done intentionally in regards to maintaining emphasis on the image content and transfer process. I originally thought the use of colored light in conjunction with black and white imagery would be a choice I would make. This exploration is shown in below in figure 8. I discovered that I received the same level of personal satisfaction from digitally blending color and grayscale images and lighting the prints with diffused, white light. Each light box contains a 13-watt fluorescent daylight,

white bulb, which provides an equal amount of light to



a 60-watt incandescent bulb while producing less heat. This project brings together my desire for a physical structure, photography, the hands-on process of photo transfer, diffusion material, personal touch, light sources, and colored light, in a photo series.

Each light box only contains one image not due to a sudden disinterest in photo series, but for the purpose of maintaining flexibility in pairing the im-

Figure 11



Figure 12



ages. It became important to experiment with groupings and expand my creativity of visual story telling.

The content of the images is somewhat arbitrary and I chose them based on visual qualities, whether they had been viewed publically in the past, and my connection to them emotionally because of the memories they

Figure 13

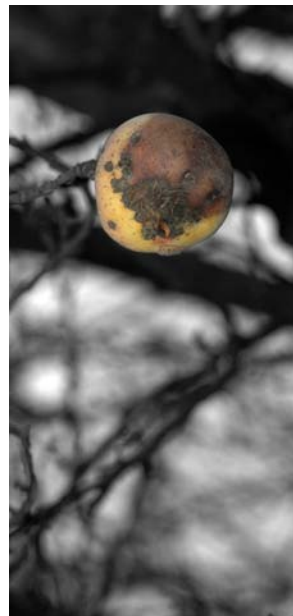


Figure 14



evoked. There are subjects and objects I have always been drawn to but am unsure why, or if they relate to each other. However, I believe that this collection of

arbitrary photographs represents the significance of the individual moments that exist in our memories. Everyday visual notations multiply to become a lifetime of inspirational images. They remind us of experiences, interactions, and other sensory information that cause emotions to surface. By taking photographs I capture these visual memories in a form that can exist externally, which allows them to be shared with a community. By analyzing seemingly insignificant images, I hope to increase my understanding of my own thought processes and expand my inquiries about human

Figure 15



Figure 16



visual memory in a deeper way. As light is connected to photography, it is also an eminent part of my personal memories. Sources, colors, intensities, and qualities of light affecting the aesthetic of an object or environment become the prominent detail in my visual memories and consequently, my photography. These illuminated photographic images are windows into my existence. I believe self-discovery is an important life

long journey. I hope to explore the depths of who I am throughout my career as an artist. Figure 9-21 shows my final solution.

Figure 17



Figure 18



Figure 19



Figure 20



Figure 21

