

Visual Design & Web Project

Assignment - 1

Image Manipulation Report

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Theme

All the base images used (not the final, composite image) were shot and owned by myself for a conceptual portfolio photoshoot session featuring Ragashilpa M.R, a freelance model based in India. The photoshoot was themed around fantasy/fiction novels and movies - Such as Game of Thrones (2011), Avatar (2009) etc.

The images straight out from camera were run through some basic corrections like exposure and colour, and to add more impact to the overall feel of the work, backgrounds were replaced. Since this was a portrait series, face has been retouched using surface blur and dodge tool. All adjustments were carried out using masking feature (Caplin, 2012) along with selection tools, brush tools and move tool. This allows non-destructive editing flow. Judicious use of dodge & burn was applied to impart highlights and shadows in order to direct attention of the viewers (Caplin, 2012). Gaussian blur was also added in certain images for the same reason.

All the base images and their corresponding contributing images are included at the end of the report for reference. All images were edited using Adobe Photoshop 2021.

Additional images used for the creation of the composites were sourced only from royalty free image providing websites such as Pexels.com, Unsplash.com etc.

1. "Someone's Entered the Pyramid."



Concept : The model is placed in what is intended to mimic the inside of a pyramid, looking up as if something caught her attention.

How this is achieved :

The subject was first isolated from the original image (reference image 1.1). The background was assembled by combining two images sourced from unsplash.com (reference image 1.2 & 1.3)



(a) Reference image 1.1



(b) Reference image 1.2



(c) Reference image 1.3

Key Tools and Techniques used :

1. Adjustments > Black & White : To turn the image black and white.
2. Selection : Model was selected using quick selection and masking.
3. Merged images 1.2 & 1.3 to form a background layer and reduced it's brightness.
4. Added visual sense of depth to the background layer by applying gaussian blur filter and a layer of curve adjustment (to add a gradient of light that starts from the right and fades towards the left).

2. Goddess of War



Concept : Goddess of war.

A warrior holding a Sai, an Asian martial arts weapon. The first unedited image below was chosen as the main base of the edited image above. The light box needed to be removed from the side of the frame to minimise distraction, and the face has been swapped with the second image below in order to achieve an aggressive or dominating facial expression.



(a) Reference image 2.1



(b) Reference image 2.2

Key Techniques / Tools applied :

1. Background Erase : Achieved using crop tool, clone stamp and generative fill.
2. Face replacement : Another image from the photoshoot series was chosen from which only the face was selected and brought on top of the base image and was fine-tuned using masks and brushes.
3. Dodge & Burn : To add highlights and shadows to the overall image, curves adjustment layers were used paired with their respective masks. This is most prominently visible on the face where additional light has been added by increasing exposure.
4. Colour temperature : The final image has been made warmer than the original images.
5. Sharpness : The final image has been added extra sharpness using Camera Raw Filter's sharpness slider (Raster image was turned into smart object for this filter) and the image was exported as 'Bicubic Sharper' from the Save for Web option.

3. Meta-Cognition



Concept : Meta- Cognition, **[3]** in psychology, is a person's ability to be aware of their own thoughts and emotions and have thoughts/emotions about those thoughts and emotions in real time. The subject on the left is placed in close-up facing out of the composition (Caplin, 2012). The close-up composition gives more visibility on the facial expressions, whereas the second subject on the right is placed relatively smaller, facing in to the composition (Caplin, 2012), connecting the relationship between both subjects.

How this was achieved-

Started off with reference image 1 (below) and extended the canvas to the right to form a wide canvas with blank space on the right, which was filled with another image of the same subject (image 2, see below) and hieroglyphs picture serving as a common subtle background to mimic an ancient cave/pyramid.



(a) Reference image 3.1



(b) Reference image 3.2



(c) Reference image 3.3

Key Tools/Techniques used :

1. Crop tool : To extend the canvas from reference image 1.
2. Masks : To erase parts of the image and bring the subjects to the foreground.
3. Curves : To reduce background layers exposure and basic dodge & burn to add highlight and shadows.
4. Adjustments > Black & White : To turn all images used for the composite black and white or monochromatic (greyscale).

4. “You’ll never be one of the people.”



Concept: This work was inspired by Avatar movie (2009), where the supporting character is crying after realising she was cheated on and yells “You will never be one of us” at the protagonist.

This was executed with the HSL function in photoshop to shift hues and turn skin colour to blue and make the lips red using HSL with masks. Dodge and burn was done using curves adjustments with masks.

Key Techniques used :

1. Adjustments > HSL : By picking the skin tone colour range and shifting the hue slider, the colours can be changed. This was later fine-tuned with subject selection and masking. Applied to both skin and lips.

2. Image rotate function.
3. Crop tool.



(a) Reference Image 4.1

5. "To Arms"

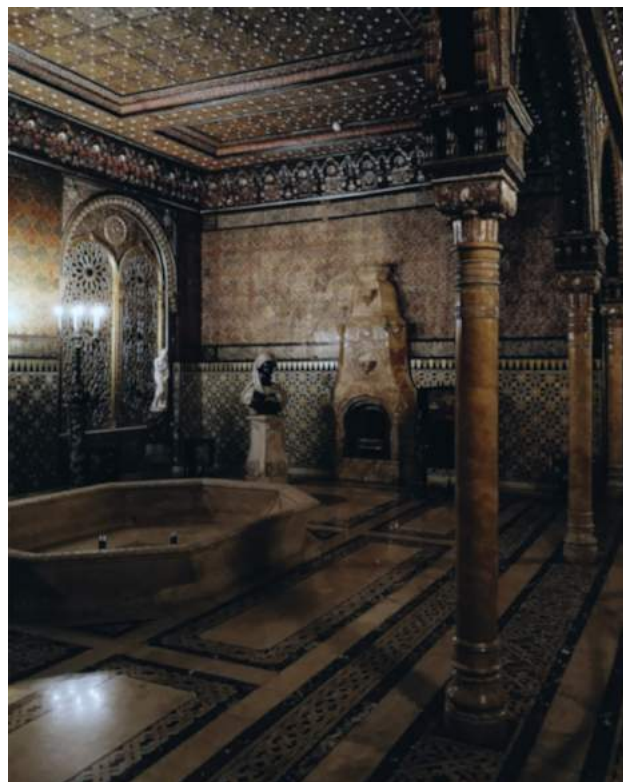


Concept : Goddess of War (2)

This was made by compositing one layer of background image (reference image 5.2), a layer of subject image (reference image 5.1) and one layer of foreground element (Scratches, reference image 5.3)

Key Techniques & Tools used-

1. Subject selection (of reference image 5.1) using quick selection and masking; placement of the same on top of background image using move tool
2. Using blend modes (set to screen) on reference image 5.3 to eliminate it's black background.
3. Colour temperature : Used to make the final image warmer.
4. Artificial light added in background (left) using brush tool with blend mode.
5. Using HSL & curves to match colour tone of subject.
6. Gaussian blur on reference image (5.2)



(a) Reference image 5.1



(b) Reference image 5.2

(c) Reference image 5.3

6. City Tour



Concept : Girl in city

This composite consists of only two layers, where the subject (reference image 6.1) was selected, isolated and placed on the background image (reference image 6.2).

Quick selection tool and masking made the selection process easy. A key point taken into considering during the time

of choosing the image for background was the camera angle - It had to be similar to the camera angle of the subject image - This made it easier to composite as no artificial image skewing was required. Both images were in similar but not in the same shade of blue, and to match the colours, HSL adjustment was made. Another key element is the gaussian blur applied to the background layer to mimic the blur on a DSLR camera. This blur was fine-tuned using masks with gradient on them to gradually increase blur strength towards the top of the background image (reference image 6.2). A global filter was applied (Adjustment > colour lookup) to add blue/cyan colour to the whole image.



(a) Reference image 6.1



(b) Reference image 6.2

References

[1]

Avatar, Cameron, James. Avatar. Twentieth Century Fox, 2009.

[2]

Caplin, S. (2012). Art and Design in Photoshop. London and New York: Routledge

Available at : <http://vufind.lib.bbk.ac.uk/vufind/Record/690690>

Last accessed : 26/02/2024

[3]

Teaching for Effective Learning, Queens university

Available at :

https://www.queensu.ca/teachingandlearning/modules/students/24_metacognition.html#:~:text=Metacognition%20is%20the%20process%20of,how%20you%20think%20and%20learn

Last accessed : 26/02/2024