

Artist's Statement

For my portfolio project I wanted to try something new. I had been thinking of doing portraiture, possibly urban photography or some other fine-art kind of photography (almost abstract). However, I recently learned about a method of photography called the Brenizer Method. This method involves taking multiple (30-70) photos of the same area and stitching them together in Photoshop to create these unique, irregular photos. I gave it a test and I loved it, and wanted to use this method as my main technique for the portfolio project. As for subject and content, I still wanted to focus on the urban, “underground” look. I was born and raised in rural areas of New Jersey so I’m not too used to the urban, industrial (and broken-down, post-industrial) city life. So as a student studying in Pittsburgh, I take it upon myself to photograph these urban scenes, and now to do so using this method.

As I experimented with this method of photography, I had a few unexpected experiences that I learned from. First, I learned to let go of control. Normally when I take photos, I take everything into account (composition, lighting, subject) and really try to perfect everything, even if in post production. However, in this project, after every photoshoot I would come home to collage the photos together and realize the resulting image was vastly different than what I imagined, and this lack of control actually pleased me. I learned to let the photos speak for themselves, to create their own story and composition, rather than controlling everything. In the beginning of this project, I would still try to take control in post production, cropping the jagged edges and fixing the overlap mistakes in the collage, but as the class went on, my fellow students enlightened me to the idea of showing the photos as-is, in their collaged, natural beauty. I think the result is even stronger, more unique and surprising to viewers than my pseudo-controlled method. Another experience through this project was the crazy cool, and weird, distortion effect achieved. It is something that continued to surprise me until the very last photo (the railroad that now looks like a classic Pitt bridge). The distortion occurred in ways I couldn’t predict or imagine and surprised me every time I put my photos together. I believe this is also because I am doing the method somewhat “wrong” (it is meant for use with zoom lenses to create flat images

usually, but I personally would stand as close to the subject as possible and really move my head around, which resulted in these photos being so distorted). That said, whether you call it “my style” of the Brenizer method, or a “misuse” or “re-appropriation” I am so glad to have done it this way.

Overall, I focused generally on portraits, with this one couple that I think fits the look of the underground urban life pretty well. I also liked taking pictures of objects and static scenes using this method, to put focus on some details in a wide scene (such as the light post). Using this method has giving my photography a new spin, and definitely a new approach to how I compose my shots. It creates such abstract, unrealistic yet un-manipulated imagery that it is mesmerizing for me to look at. I also think this project has completed my two other interests at the start-taking pictures of urban life, and doing portraits. Those two areas, mixed with my interest in abstract fine-art photography, seemingly all come together in this series of images I have taken using this method. Perhaps I can use this for future photoshoots. Or if I’m in a tight space and still want to use my 50mm!