Marcus Rust

Visual Argument

Intro/Reflection:

For my visual argument, I chose to make a graphic that attempts to convince whoever sees it to visit a dark sky site. The graphic doesn’t exactly explain why it would be worthwhile, but I hope it can at least spark some interest in finding out potential dark sky sites nearby. Many people, such as myself, have never had the opportunity to visit an area where the sky is truly dark and the spiral arm of the Milky Way is completely visible.

Over the summer, I found a new hobby, a branch of photography called astrophotography, which involves taking images of objects in the night sky such as nebulae and galaxies. Through this hobby, I became more and more obsessed with the night sky. This is why, when presented with this project, I decided to focus on light pollution, an ever-growing problem that almost completely masks the night sky from being visible.

I have experience editing and processing images in Affinity Photo and astrophotography specific software, but I have never used Gimp, nor have I made a graphic. I thought I’d be able to pick up how to use the tools in Gimp because of my previous experience in other editing software, but I found it to be less intuitive than Affinity Photo or Photoshop, this could also be because I’m more used to those interfaces. Overall, I think I got my point across but I’m not super happy with the result as I believe it lacks creativity. I may remake my graphic with more use of the design concepts we learned about in class. I used the opacity slider a lot to decrease the overall contrast of certain objects so they blended into the graphic more easily. I also used the fill tool a lot to change colors of layers as well as using the color picker tool to copy the exact color of certain layers. I made use of a gray to white gradient on the bottom of the graphic that is behind the blue and yellow layer, although it became very subtle after adding layers over it.

Description:

The left side shows the city of Pittsburgh with a yellow skyglow that blocks out the view of stars. Since I thought there was too much empty space above the text, I placed some clouds to further emphasize the fact that the city is no place for looking up at the stars. The right panel depicts a dark sky with a person looking up at the plethora of stars above, with a dobsonian telescope by their side.

My visual argument is split straight down the middle, making use of the balance design concept, covering two different scenes with a sharp cutoff from one to the other. I think I chose a good balance of empty space, not too cluttered but also not an excessive amount of empty space. I think it is a very simple design with an overall low density as there isn’t too much going on which I think is good as it gets the point across even if someone were to simply glance at this graphic on a telephone pole as they were walking.