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Composing Digital Media

26 October 2022

Visual Argument

For my visual argument my goal was to create a piece that would catch the viewer's eye, convey a powerful message, and be visually appealing that would make the viewer want to show their friends for the aesthetic as well as the message. I decided to tackle the general issue of unethical corporate practices with an emphasis on hypocrisy. Recently, companies have begun to promote branding to seem more socially aware of larger issues in the world. While some of the motives of these companies may be genuine, many of these new found values contradict their practices, proving that this sympathy is another marketing tool to increase their bottom line. I could have gone with many examples, but I decided to choose Apple, which has been known for employing child labor in Asia, in order to make cheaper products.

My first challenge was being able to use Gimp to bring in different images from the internet and hand drawn into one environment. Throughout this project I used a variety of selection tools to extract parts of images from the internet and incorporate them into a digital work of art. At first, I used the intelligent scissors to trace around a big rock that was intended to represent a cliffside. While this tool was mostly effective, I found that the color select tool was able to select an image component purely off of the color of the image. This was incredibly effective for the apple logo which was able to easily remove the image background. However, I found the most versatile select tool was the fuzzy select tool, which was able to identify where a specific image component started and ended, allowing me to click on a particular image section and it was very accurate at only selecting that image component. I used this tool for the child laborer clipart art when I wanted to only select the child laborer, in order to color it red. The variety and versatility of these select tools was essential in allowing me to bring different online images into one visual argument.

One concept we learned in class that I was drawn to is the idea of visual punning. I have always been intrigued by logos of companies that have subtle double meanings, and I knew I wanted to try my hand using this concept with my visual argument project. The main image of my visual argument is children mining the side of a cliff for Apple. I symbolized this by making the ore that the children are mining the apple logo. When I first had this idea I tried simply putting the apple logo within the cliffside, however I encountered a major issue: the apple logo did not fit the style of the rest of the image. They needed to look more like an ore, in order for the visual punning to be more effective. This allowed me to experiment with a few tools, eventually I decided to use the emboss tool which distorted the apple logo just enough to make it look more like an ore. After completing this transformation, I realized that the cliff side was too rounded and needed a more rigid rock-like feel. I found the waves tool was oable to create corners and edges that were more appropriate for a cliffside. In general, a big challenge for me was converting images from different sources that look like one piece of artwork using different tools and filters enabled me to achieve this goal.

Using color and size to emphasize the points of focus in a visual argument is a concept that I never noticed until we specifically isolated it in class. I thought this was a simple, yet effective tool that could improve my visual argument. Since my message is tragic, I wanted my visual argument piece to mirror this idea. That is why I used gray and black for most of my pieces. Additionally, I used red, a color I associate with blood, pain, intensity, and love to highlight the child laborers. The goal of this color choice is to use the darker colors to set the background, and then incorporate the red to emphasize the pain and emotion we should feel for the children and contrast the environment that the children are placed in.

In conclusion, using the variety of Gimp tools and the visual argument rhetoric that we have been learning in class I was able to create a visual argument that brings to light the hypocrisy of large corporations. I could see this on a quick hitting social media platform such as instagram or Facebook due to its simplistic and straightforward nature.