Tanya Hamner  
PH 601 – Photography Concept  
Nik Clements

Concept Statement

**What Livestock Sees**

Growing up on a small ranch in Wyoming and learning the western cowboy lifestyle I fell in love with the old ways of the west. Growing up watching rodeo and listening to rodeo stories from my dad I just could not get enough of the rodeo. My dad was a bull fighter in his younger days and would tell me stories about him bull fighting. We would always go to lots of rodeos that were close around and watch them on television. As I got older, the love for rodeo just increased and I started photographing the rodeo. I set out to capture what the rodeo is about. Rodeo is more than just riding rough stock and roping. It is a family event, that has hero’s and people willing to risk their life for the cowboy. It is a place of respect and very energetic. As I kept on photographing how the kids looked up to the cowboys and cowgirls, I noticed the different aesthetics one could gain photographing rodeo. One could focus on just the hero’s, the crowd, or even just the events and create many different styles and aesthetics.

To make my rodeo photography stronger I decided to take rodeo to a whole new level. I wanted to see what the livestock sees. I decided to set out and photograph the view from the eyeball of a calf, bull, bucking horse, and the cowboy’s horse using a Nikon D300 with an 18-70 mm lens. This lens was able to capture a wide enough angle to show what the animals see. To make this view work in an aesthetic form I chose to shoot medium-based concept focusing on form. The actual subject was the forms in the rodeo arena, the material that is used to hold the livestock. I focused on the chutes, alleyways, holding pens, and the shadows among these forms. The secondary subject is what the livestock actually sees, allowing the viewer to imagine being an animal in the chute waiting to come out, etc. The primary subject is form-based and the secondary subject is expressive. My intended outcome for the work is experiential. I provide viewers an aesthetic look to the material that rodeo uses.

Most views from the animal are based on lines, shape, and contrast. These three elements played a vital role in my body of work. The subjects are at an even leveling in composition to help keep the viewer focused on the subject.

Each photograph was shot with natural ambient light. The light is used consistently in each photograph taking place at a 90 degree angle on the subject. This allowed me to bring the subject into highlights to form hierarchy. I used a yellow hue to bring out my artistic style. One of my key signature styles is using a more yellowish tint in my photographs. Some of the photographs I used bars to frame the secondary subject to work as active framing.

I used hard light and flat spatial construct in this project that kept the body of work cohesive. The hard light really brings your mind to the concept of the rodeo form. Rodeo is aggressive and not soft. To bring this thought into mind, I felt that this body of work needed hard light to show the aggressiveness because it brings the pens and chutes toward the viewers eye. I chose to use shallow focus on a couple of the photographs. I used shallow depth of field to help direct the viewer’s eye in the path that I wanted them to take. To add variety to my body of work I used both low and high vantage points.

My project is intended to be viewed by rodeo lovers. This project will show the viewers a different side of rodeo that they have taken for granted. The photographs will be framed in a black archival mat and framed with a 16x20 barn wood frame. This helps tie my body of work together in a rustic artistic style. With the project being about rodeo the barnwood frame finished the work off strong.

By taking a new approach to the rodeo, this project added a new style of skills to my rodeo photography. I now have figured out how I can use form base as a secondary concept in my rodeo photography. I included medium formed base within my linguistic base concepts in the rodeo arena. This project opened my eyes to a new style and the look will take me further to a new step. This approach will challenge me to use the unfamiliar medium based concept that I have not used much in the future.

**Statement of Future Intent**

When I set out to fine a final project for this class, I first wanted to set out to continue on my interest of using linguistic concept in my ranching photography. I chose to go a different direction for this course to experience and gain skills in medium based concept. As I set out to figure out what I wanted to use as my main subject I discovered the medium based concepts used in the rodeo arena. This really helped me see a whole different side to photography. After completing this project I will continue to use some medium based concept with linguistic base for my thesis development. I feel that using linguistic based as the primary subject and medium based as the secondary subject my photos in the future will be stronger. I will continue to use the ranching and rodeo subjects but in a new concept form.

For my career I would like to be a PRCA (Professional Rodeo Cowboy Association) photographer. I would like to travel to rodeos and be paid to be the arena photographer. I also would like to be able to showcase my ranching photography in galleries.