

# PHOTO ILLUSTRATION SERIES

## Project Definition:

Photomontage combines imagery from multiple separate image sources into a single frame composition that conveys a concept. The significance of this art form lies in the intention behind the integration and juxtaposition of this disparate imagery and the new meaning that is conveyed as a result.

*David Evans* in *The Grove Dictionary of Art* defines it as a “Technique by which a composite photographic image is formed by combining images from separate photographic sources.” Meanwhile *Sergey Tretyakov* remarks “It is important to note that a photomontage need not necessarily be a montage of photos. No: it can be photo and text, photo and color, photo and drawing.” *John Heartfield* himself stated that “A photograph can, by the addition of an unimportant spot of color, become a photomontage, a work of art of a special kind.”

For this project, students will create a series of 3 (18” X 18”) panels that will examine the relationship between two opposing ideas (ie. good vs. evil, organic vs. mechanical, realism vs. surrealism etc.) Through the use of digital photography, found imagery and the act of illustration or mark-making, students will explore these concepts and experiment with the seamless integration of both tactile and digital media. With a goal of creating a sense of unity and similarity amongst the set, students will consider the strategic effects of form, color, texture, repetition, and scale.

## Overall Objectives:

- o Students explore the juxtaposition of various types of imagery to create new meaning. (photographs, diagrams, drawings, textures, text etc.) All found imagery sources must be cited as per the FND Citing Sources Handout.
- o Students move from recording and representing to speculating, altering, and re-imagining using photomontage.
- o Students examine the use of layering, scale, placement and framing to communicate their message
- o Students explore various methods of seamless and non-seamless composite imagery.
- o Students explore strategies for creating a series of imagery that employ a sense of unity
- o Students understand how color harmonies can be used as a means of articulating contrast and assimilation between and within elements of the set.
- o Students gain an understanding of the issues associated with color output.
- o Students gain a more advance technical knowledge of how to seamlessly integrate imagery in Photoshop
- o Students practice moving easily between Photoshop and Illustrator within one project.

## Materials & Software Needed:

- o Cutting & Mounting Materials
- o HP-Plotter Color Printer
- o 1-ply White Illustration Board (Enough to mount three 18” X 18” panels)
- o Painting and Drawing Materials
- o Clear Acetate Roll
- o Tactile materials for mark-making experiments: collage glue, paint pens, charcoal, color pencils, markers, cut paper, etc.

## Methodology:

**Research Paper-** Study the background of photomontage in Dadaism, Constructivism, & Surrealism. Explore how this technique was originally invented and how it became instrumental to various artists of the 19th and 20th century. Choose two artists from any time period and compare and contrast their use of the medium. Specifically, choose two pieces (one from each artist) and examine their use of scale, placement, juxtaposition and color. Speculate what the intended meaning of each piece is and discuss what principles of composition the artist used to convey his or her message. *(1 page Word Doc, single spaced, 10pt, Times New Roman, approx. 700-1000 words)*

**Image Collection-** Gather imagery for your project using the NY Public Library Picture Collection (Mid-Manhattan Library, 3rd floor, 212-340-0878). The Picture Collection is made up of over a million prints, post-cards, photographs and illustrations from books, newspapers and magazines as well as photographs, prints and postcards gathered over nearly a century. (DO NOT USE IMAGERY FROM THE WEB FOR THIS PROJECT) Images should be taken out of the library or other printed sources and scanned or photocopied.

**Rough Sketches / Presentation-** In your sketchbook, create thumbnail sketches of what your three panels will look like. Brainstorm how you might use color, repetition, scale, form, and line to create a sense of unity in your set. Remember that all three panels should be able to stand alone as single compositions. Experiment with juxtaposition of images and exaggerate variation in scale to emphasize your message. Your imagery can be manipulated and resized to create jarring juxtaposition and chance association. Try to maintain a focal point and a balance between foreground and background (white space). Develop more detailed sketches at half scale (9" X 9") and scan them in at 72dpi to be shown during your digital presentation. For your presentation, please have the following materials on CD ready to hand in and present:

- 300 words or more articulating your concept (post to the blog as well before the presentation date)
- concept sketches (be sure to demonstrate how you will strategically make use of color, texture, & form)
- Asset folder - all of your digital photographs, scanned found imagery and mark-making exercises
- At least 5 large jpps downloaded or scanned that demonstrate how the work of other artists have influenced your concept.

**Execution-** Based on the feedback from your presentation, focus on your best design direction and begin to prepare your tactile and photographic assets for digital integration.

**Tactile Experimentation-** Using your photographs as reference, experiment with drawing over imagery, manipulating imagery by tactile means, cutting, pasting, painting, etc. Feel free to use a variety of tactile media to achieve the marks you want to make. Think about how these marks might be manipulated in the digital environment. Understand how color will play a role in the integration of your three panels.

**Digital Integration** - Scan all of your photographic imagery and tactile experiments at high resolution and save to a project 'assets' folder. Set up your final Photoshop documents for all three panels and begin to manipulate and integrate your imagery making use of layers, masks and blending modes. Use your revised concept sketches as a reference. Make revisions to your final series based on class feedback. Use the plotter to print your final 3 panels for the final critique. (Be sure to print preliminary small scale color tests)

**References:**

Photomontage, Dawn Ades, Thames and Hudson Ltd, London 1976  
Dadaism, Dietmar Elger, Taschen 1988  
Romare Bearden in Black-and-White: Photomontage Projections, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, 1997  
Cut With the Kitchen Knife, Maud Lavin, Yale University Press, 1993.  
Metamorphoses: Photography I the Electronic Age, Aperture, Edited by Michael Sand, 1994.



Alex Chou / Spring 07



Maggie Tsao / Spring 07



Dawn Balhorn / Spring 07