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Final Review & Journal Entries

WEEKLY JOURNAL

Week 7 | Learning Adobe Premiere

This week I finally jumped fully into Premiere. I spent quite a bit of time going through all of the tutorial videos on Adobe's site in order to familiarize myself with the specific functionalities of the program. Watching video explanations was much more helpful than reading about the processes of editing. There are so many tools in every Adobe program that it can sometimes be rather confusing, but it seems that once I learned the basics, it was pretty intuitive, especially since I was already familiar with Illustrator and Photoshop. I actually ended up making a practice video this week as well, which was really helpful to be able to play around and get to know Premiere. Once I felt a little more prepared, I started laying out the bones of my video. This included animation and a little bit from the interviews, as well as still images. I ended up having to sort through all of the interview material and add markers to distinguish the many parts and pieces within, which was very time consuming, but helpful to break them up for use. I rented the tripod again and experimented with more animation, creating a couple unexpected process drawings that sprang up out of this experimentation. I also ended up re-filming my "sketchbook tours" for better design and consistency.

Week 8 | Editing, Editing, Editing

I am now much more comfortable with the editing process and features within Premiere. This week, I selected music for my video, which had been something I was worried about but this turned out to be surprisingly simple. I also added in my sketchbook tour clips, which I decided would be most dynamically represented in a quadrant format rather than presented singly. It was really fun to play with the timing of all of the videos now that I have music. The song that I chose has a strong blues beat which was very effective and was enjoyable to sync with my video material. I did one last video this week, which featured a blank sketchbook as well as some final stop-motion animation with my stack of sketchbooks. It was fun to try stop-motion with physical objects rather than drawings. It took a bit more finesse to get the objects to do what I wanted. I recorded a voiceover as well, but I wished that I had done it a few weeks ago when I had the HD video camera because the recording from my tablet made the audio sound very hollow. I had to record myself quite a few times because it was difficult to speak comfortably enough to sound absolutely genuine (not reading from a script). I really got the hang of the layering process this week, and had a much better handle on cutting up clips to get just the parts that I wanted. I feel like I am pretty far along at this point.

Week 9 | More Editing

I didn't do as much this week as I should have. I was at the point this week that I needed to think about the flow of the video at the end and what content might live there. I laid out the bones for the last section and then also started piecing out bits from the interviews that I liked and that I thought might fit well. I also adjusted video color, contrast, cropping and other formatting to increase consistent quality throughout the video. I made adjustments to the audio, and ended up playing around quite a lot with timing and transition within the video, trying to get the right flow from beginning to end. I still have to add in another interview, add text, clean up the audio within the interviews and then render the video.

Week 10 | Final Stretch

I did a lot of traveling this week so I realized that I was quickly running out of time but luckily I was comfortable enough with Premier this week that the final edits didn't take too much time. I added in the last bit of interview footage and then started experimenting with audio quality. I did a bit of reading about this because this was by far the most complicated and confusing thing that I have had to consider so far. The language of the audio controls was much more foreign than that of the design elements, which translate over to Illustrator and Photoshop easily. And it was hard for me to tell what was high quality and low quality. The presets were helpful and made the audio editing process a little easier because it relied less on my very limited knowledge of audio effects. The final piece of the project was adding in titles to a few of the slides to identify my featured guest as well as provide supplementary information in relation to the content. This was also much easier than expected. I did need some help to figure out how to render the video once completed. There were very specific things that I had to know in order to end up with a high quality final product that wasn't an unmanageable file size. It feels great to have created a video with so many different components!

FINAL REVIEW

As with most creative projects, mine started out with a big idea. I wanted to tell the story about the value of keeping a sketchbook using a video narrative that incorporated stop-motion animation, interviews, verbal narrative and still images in a creative way. It sounded a lot easier at first than it actually was. I tend to be a pretty fast learner if I have the resources available to learn, so I wasn't as concerned with learning the technology as I was with figuring out how to convey this story using the medium. Generating ideas was by far the most difficult part of the process. I developed word maps, listed ideas in my sketchbook, looked up other videos and wrote out a basic storyline for the video. It was still daunting to figure out how to actually transform these ideas into actual media, but the best thing that I did was just jump in. Once I started doing animation, playing with filming and recording audio and editing in Premiere, the creativity came along with the process. The sort of responsive creativity that comes out of such an easily manipulated medium was addicting. All I wanted to work on was video editing. I

embraced happy accidents and allowed the parts and pieces of the video to speak to each other in order to find a flow that really worked. This required a lot of experimenting with all of the different content.

So much of the process translated to other art and design mediums and techniques that I was already familiar with, and my familiarity with Photoshop and Illustrator eased the learning curve on a more technical level. Once I had really developed some solid ideas about content direction and even began creating materials for edit, it was much easier for me to think about the technical aspect of the project. To learn stop-motion animation and Adobe Premiere I watched many online tutorial videos and also attended two middle school classes that were working in animation, filming and video editing. This combination of observation, engagement with students already working in the medium, and digital learning helped me develop a strong foundation of knowledge about the video creation process.

Beyond developing ideas for content and methods for conveying the narrative of my video other challenges included refining audio quality, controlling all of the various elements within the video, as well as the editing process itself. The audio controls and the terminology that came along with them were very hard for me to understand. I spent a lot of time reading just to make a few simple changes just because I didn't really understand what the controls really did. I still don't feel like I have a good grasp on equalizing or compressing, among many other of the tools. It was difficult for me to tell what was improved and what still needed improvement, simply from a lack of knowledge and experience working with recorded audio. The second challenge came along once I began adding more and more content. As the layers and elements within the video became more complex, it became increasingly difficult to manage all of it in a way that was efficient. Anytime I made a small change I would have to go back through and make adjustments elsewhere to accommodate that change. The way that features had to be used and the way that the segments could be moved around within the video was very specific so I had to be careful not to work haphazardly, for fear of disrupting the organization of the whole video. Lastly, the editing down process was difficult simply due to the amount of content that I had. It became a process of curating the content; weeding out the best selections for presentation. I have difficulty being concise sometimes, so it was definitely challenge to have to edit probably nearly 25 or 30 minutes of content down to just over three minutes. I now have a new respect for the role of the "editor."

Overall, the project was highly valuable. I jumped headfirst into a creative medium and Adobe program that I knew very little about, but now I am confident in my ability and eager to continue improving this skill. I have already purchased a new HD video camera and look forward to creating videos about my summer internship and my research. As someone interested in programming, telling narratives about place and culture and sharing the arts with wider

audiences, I know that this new skill will serve me well, making me a more dynamic and creative asset within the arts and culture field.