Waves: An Exploration of Emotions

Aminatta Mbow

Georgia Southern University

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Waves: An Exploration of Emotions

An Honors Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for Honors in the
Betty Foy Sanders Department of Art

By
Aminatta Mbow

Under the mentorship of Professor Jason Murdock

ABSTRACT

Emotions are at the core of every human being. They can dictate the decisions we make whether we are aware of it or not, and can be shown in many ways. For my honors thesis, I created a magazine that explores emotions. I utilized my skills and knowledge in portrait photography to showcase the complexities of happiness, sadness, anger, and anxiety. I also employed my skills in design to not only present these feelings but evoke that specific emotion in my audience with ideas such as color theory and photographic psychology. Color theory encompasses a multitude of practices on how color is used and perceived. Things such as how intense a color is or how different colors look next to each other impact how someone perceives a design or photo. Different colors also have different meanings to the human mind, and I utilized that while creating the magazine.

Photographic psychology is another idea I used during my investigation. It is the exploration of how different photographic elements are used to create a piece and how a person views it. By exploring elements such as light, angles, perspective, I was able to express each emotion clearly to the audience. Overall, I was able to create a modern magazine that shows emotions are not one-dimensional.

Thesis Mentor:  
Professor Jason Murdock

Honors Director: ____________________

Dr. Steven Engel

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waves.
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HAPPINESS
In this photo package, the subject experiences a peaceful happiness. By placing her outside, there is an optimism produced from the beautiful day. The color yellow dominates the photograph as it represent happiness and cheer. She is holding an umbrella, which also represents protection. Her serene state is being protected from the troubles of the world, and the yellow reflecting on her skin further emits her joy.
Perfection is key when experiencing bliss. It is a perfect happiness that cannot be disrupted and radiates off of you. By using pink flowers, a symbol of happiness and love, the subject’s elation becomes more prominent in the overall package. Even though the picture on the right does not show her smile, her happiness emits from her eyes nonetheless. The warmer and bright editing also brings an airyness to the package further aiding in her bliss.
EUPHORIA

Euphoria is defined as a feeling or state of intense excitement or happiness. By utilizing metallic fringe curtains, I was able to surround the subject with beautiful colors, and transform the space as if we were in the subject’s mind. The overall happiness is further pushed by the lens glares produced from lighting the curtains and pulling some in front of the camera.
ANGER
In this photograph, the subject is taking out his anger by ripping a plastic bag. The motion blur captured makes his emotion more present to the audience as if they were there themselves. By desaturating the subject and intensifying the red on his jacket, his rage becomes more ferocious. The increased clarity and contrast on the image, heightens his facial expression making his anger more powerful as well.
Pardon my distain showcases the point of anger that radiates off of you. It is a silent anger that is dominated by the eyes. I produced the images in a dark room using only a red lamp. The low lighting created harsh shadows on the subject and produced a ferocity to the overall image. The color red further heightens the emotion as it is normally associated with anger.
To the world, she may be happy or sad, but inside she is displeased. The shot was captured outside, but by placing the subject and mirror closer to the audience, we are encapsulated by her subtle anger. Around her, the world continues to enjoy the light, but inside her mind the darkness looms far greater.
sadness
Despair leaves you without hope and in distress. By placing her hand on the window and on her head, the subject wants her overwhelming pain to stop. I sprayed water on a glass window to represent her ongoing misery. While editing the photo, I increased the slight blue tint of the window to match the intense sadness she experiences.
Doubt can be a powerful source in someone’s sadness. In this photo package, I showcase the subject as he contemplates his self-doubts. By making the images black and white, the subject’s emotions are more in focus and create a moody aesthetic matching his feelings. I also increased the contrast to further heighten the emotion of the subject.
Have you ever wanted something or someone, but knew you couldn’t have it? This black and white image depicts that feeling. The subject and her dark clothing contrast the lightness of the field, which further evokes her subtle sadness.
These images were taken using a long exposure technique. By keeping the shutter open for a long period of time, I was able to move the camera and capture multiple versions of the subject and the moments in-between.

The motion produced showcases the physical manifestation of what nerves look like. By using a shade of blue, the calming nature of the hue disappears creating a sense of depression in the pictures.
Being overloaded can take a toll on a person. In this photograph, the subject is overwhelmed with fear and worry. She scrunches her eyes because everything around her is too much. By blurring the leaves, the shaky presence in her mind becomes a physical thing and create a barrier between her and the world.
This image presents the overpowering feeling of anxiety. By using many highly saturated colors, the image showcases the overstimulation nerves and stress can produce. The model grabs her face wishing for the loudness, depicted by the colors, to stop. The image being upside down also helps evoke the feeling by creating more movement in the composition.
feel something.