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Photography in the World of Advertising

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PHOTOGRAPHY IN THE WORLD OF ADVERTISING

Honors Thesis

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
For the Degree of Bachelors of Art in Art & Design

In the School of Arts & Sciences
at Salem State University

By

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Artist Statement

My portfolio, titled “Photography in the World of Advertising” is a series focusing on commercial product photography. Each image is designed to display a product in a fitting environment, as well as proper lighting, positioning, and coloring. From an artistic point of view, the image should look perfect with no blemishes, crooked objects, or anything that would distract your eye from the product. From an advertising point of view the photos should give you an idea of what the product is, how and where it used, and even persuade the viewer into buying it.

My interest in product photography began after taking a commercial product photography class. In this class, we explored the ways to photograph different products. For each assignment, the class was given a similar challenge with instructions and guidelines on how to use proper lighting, fill cards, props, and backgrounds. After taking this class, I decided to take on an advertising minor to learn more about the commercial product world.

For my portfolio, I decided to explore the crossover between advertising and photography by branching out on my own without instructions or guidelines. Each photo in my portfolio explores a different category of products. I decided to use a mix of on location photo-shoots as well as studio shoots to not only have a range of backgrounds but to match each environment with the product to give the viewer a better understanding of what the product is. Each product presented me with a new creative challenge of making a technically sound photograph as well as a potential advertisement. Through this series, I was able to explore my passion for both photography and advertising.

Reflection

Once my portfolio was complete, I had the privilege of having my work reviewed by two professional photographers. Before going into the review I had some personal critiques of my work that were also mentioned by one of the photographers. I noticed that my prints were slightly brighter than the original digital file. This normally would not be an issue, but because the point of product photography is to show the viewer the absolute best image of the product possible, light prints show that they are not the absolute best image possible. This then gives the reviewer the idea that I had overlooked this issue while editing the images.

Overall, the critique went well, aside from the light print issue. Both reviewers gave me some great pointers and advice. They both began the reviews by asking me how I shot each image technically (meaning what light sources I used, what location I was at, and what camera settings I used). They then went on to tell me which images were my strongest (both reviewers agreed that my Marshmallow Vodka and my Yankee Candle photos were my strongest). They also told me which photos were my weakest (both reviewers agreed that my shampoo and Alex and Ani bracelets were the weakest for technical issues. Because both images were cropped in so much, photo quality was lost and the images were more pixelated than the others when printed on 8x10 paper).

The first reviewer discussed Photoshop techniques with me and explained to me the importance of having strong Photoshop skills in this field in order to make each image absolutely perfect visually. A few examples that she pointed out were the spacing between nail polish bottles should be exactly the same, small scuffmarks should be erased, and anything

that distracts the viewer should be taken out. I attempted to do this in my portfolio, but her professional eye was able to see a few imperfections that my eye could not see.

The second reviewer focused more on the importance of lighting. In the world of photography there are many different lighting techniques that a photographer can use to enhance a photo, especially in a studio. Overall, he said that my lighting was good, but to make it even better I should try to light objects from both sides as well as from the front in order to create more shadows to give each product more shape and make them more dynamic.

At the end of each review, both reviewers asked me my plans for the future, and what steps I have taken so far to make those plans a reality. After spending the semester working on a commercial product portfolio, I decided that I would like to continue working with commercial product photography by pursuing a career in it. Both reviewers agreed that my portfolio was excellent and that a career in commercial product photography was definitely a possibility.



















