

Artist Statement for Senior Photoshop Surreal World Building Composition

Title: Spectrum

As the final project for my first semester as a Freestyle Senior, I created a surreal composition in Adobe Photoshop, inspired by my research essay on rent control. Surrealism is an art style characterized by dreamlike qualities, often achieved by juxtaposing unexpected objects or distorting reality. For this assignment, I was tasked with using my Photoshop skills from Digital Media class to visually represent the concepts explored in my English essay. In Digital Media, I learned techniques like AI-powered image selection and cropping, shadow and highlight painting with overlay layers, and color matching with the eyedropper tool. In English, I analyzed the complex impact of rent control laws on California residents and infrastructure while writing my affordable housing crisis essay. Initially, I struggled to see how these differing fields could combine in my surreal composition assignment. However, after some brainstorming, I decided to focus on houses as the central subject, given their prominence in the political issues I was exploring.

While I was still uncertain about how the final outcome would look, I began my project by collecting images of both dilapidated and expensive homes to represent the spectrum of housing affordability. I then cropped these images to be just the outlines of the houses using Photoshop's AI Subject Selection tool, which sped up the process tremendously. Throughout the process, I employed overlay layers and clipping masks to add shading, highlights, and emphasis to specific areas. I then applied Photoshop's pinch and liquify filters to warp these images, introducing surreal elements into the composition. To symbolize my newfound understanding of the issue, I added a large eye overlooking the distorted houses. Finally, I enhanced the eye's appearance and integration with the background using hard mix and overlay layers.

I am pleased with the final surreal composition's eye-catching quality, harmonious color palette, and intriguing subject matter. However, I recognize that I could have better conveyed the complexity of the issue. I wish I had invested more time in brainstorming, planning with thumbnail sketches, and researching inspiration. This would have allowed me to more effectively communicate the message in the final composition.