

Nikita Khrantsov
Essay 1: Photo Essay
English 1121 (Prof. Scanlan)
9/24/24



Autumn Leaves 9/22/24



Brighton Beach 9/22/24



Cozy Day At Home 1/13/24

My Photography Journey

Susan Sontag, renowned for her contribution in photography once said “The lover's photograph hidden in a married woman's wallet, the poster photograph of a rock star tacked up over an adolescent's bed ... the snapshots of a cab driver's children clipped to the visor—all such talismanic uses of photographs express a feeling both sentimental and implicitly magical: they are attempts to contact or lay claim to another reality”(pg 539). This quote is very touching. It's such a common and accessible tool, the camera, yet we never really take the time to think how important it is in our lives. The ability to capture a moment and keep it for the rest of your life is a grand discovery that only started to be available to the masses in 1900, with Kodak creating the first Brownie camera(City of Alexandria, 2010).

This leads us to today, where photos can be anything you would like them to be and taken with an incredible shutter speed, capturing every second of an event. For me, I like to take photos

to capture memories and things that I find to look aesthetically pleasing. I find it to be interesting when I can play around with the angle, lighting and filters to change the entire feeling that a person can get from looking at my photo library. In a lot of ways, photos are just as much of an artform as paintings, if not more due to the unique limitations photos have. Berger explains this by stating how photos are completely dependent on the surroundings, which gives it an element that paintings don't have, the quantum of truth. It's the choice that the photographer makes of "what is absent from the photograph" and "what is present in it"(Berger pg 20). This idea opened my eyes to seeing and taking photos from a different lens.

A clear example of quantum of truth is the first photo that I took on September 22nd called, "Autumn Leaves." The dominant impression are the maroon colored leaves which are captured with a shallow depth of field, making them stand out the most. It is done to embody the essence of Fall with the maroon sweetgum tree leaves sitting on the log, the lake surrounding them and the trees that are starting to yellow are in the far distance. This is how I personally envision Fall, and I always love going to Prospect Park and seeing the seasons change. It feels surreal just how everything can be green in one month and then it all suddenly turns yellow, red and brown. This photo is made to be artistic, as you can see the vibrant colors, landscape, and a nice reflection in the lake. All of these elements come together to bring this photo to life and give the photo a nice pleasant feeling.

The second photo, "Brighton Beach" was on the same day, September 22nd, and I was waiting on the train when I captured this photo. It's slightly more personal, since I moved to Brighton Beach a few months ago and it has been a great experience. The streets are usually busy and full of people however this was early in the afternoon and everyone was still at home. You can see the buildings and cars lined up and leading your eyes towards the end, where the road

stops and meets the trees and light blue sky in the distance. The photo is split into two parts, the right side is dark and the other half is light, creating rich contrast and color. The left side is hit with the sun creating a warm glow on the buildings and highlighting the windows and the different lines/shapes. There can be a few possible dominant impressions however the buildings on the left side are the most prominent. It is an artistic photo and it uses the rule of thirds by having the photo divided into 3 parts of the grid. The bottom third is the sidewalk and cars, the middle is filled up by buildings, and the top third of the photo is the sky. This is done to make it look more attractive and interesting.

Lastly, the photo that I have always enjoyed looking back on and has inspired me is called “Cozy Day At Home”. This was taken 3 years ago and while it is just a picture of a plant, it captures the true essence and intricate patterns it has. I have always enjoyed nature and just started to collect plants during that time. This plant is a succulent and the scientific name for it is *Haworthia Fasciata*. The white spots which run through the sharp edged leaves create a design which is both striking and unique. Even though it is a small plant, with close-up photography, you can really bring anything to life and highlight its features that most people will miss in real life. I chose to have the warm highly saturated filter because I think it really brings a nice comforting feeling when looking at this photo. I have used Instagram’s set of filters to achieve this effect. You could also see a reflection in the background with small dots of orange and white which add a lot to the photo. Overall, it helped me see the potential in experimenting and trying new techniques when taking photos.

Even though these 3 photos may seem different, they all share one thing in common. Ultimately they are all photos I wanted to take because they were worth taking. As much as what people like is subjective and may differ drastically, we all make the choice to capture a photo

because it means something to us. This is what is remarkable about photography and what makes it a unique experience.

(963 words)

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