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Final Essay 2

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Stuck With Foliage

I am a person who tends to not take photographs, however I do appreciate all the qualities and details that help make up a good photograph. When I was little my school had a science olympiad team which I joined. At the time I was really enthusiastic but what ended up happening was that we weren't able to pick our topics and my teacher stuck me with botany. For this period to study I had to look at many different plant species and memorize their names and the shape of their leaves. This involved me going through many sites and books all with pictures as examples. The pictures I decided to take were very similar to something I had done in a lab way back then and stuck in my memory. Both of my pictures slightly haunt me due to this. When I was little and didn't know about the technicalities of photography (i.e things like decisive moment or frames) I still understood certain concepts and appreciated it when given the opportunity to do so. Henri Cartier once said “To me, photography is the simultaneous recognition, in a fraction of a second, of the significance of an event as well as of a precise organization of forms which give that event its proper expression.” Back in my days of botany when I was doing this lab I had a specific goal in the back of my mind to try and take a picture of the moment a drop of water fell from the nozzle and touched the water in the sink. I feel that my second picture “Ripples in water” captures the essence of this idea very well. In this essay I hope to analyze both of my pictures thoroughly and be able to compare and contrast both my pictures by the end.

My first picture ”A leaf” is a very simple picture of a leaf floating in water. In the picture there isn't much depth, you cannot really tell how deep the water is, it essentially looks flat. The flash from my phone ends up making lens flares on the bottom of my sink and two on the drain. This photo would probably be seen as a more documentary photo and the lens flares take away from that. Also, in this picture the leaf appears to be more green than it actually was which I’m sure is due to the flash as well.

My second photo, “Ripples in water”, is a lot more complicated than the first one in my opinion. Right off the bat one can notice the ripples in the water that seem to be coming from water drops. When I took this picture nothing was still, everything in the picture was continuously moving. My goal was to take the picture right as a drop of water was about to splash down and right before the leaf moved over the drain so that the picture would also have the reflection of the leaf in the metal. This picture has a much lower reality effect because the light in combination with the ripples in the water seem very unrealistic. In reality the leaf had a lot of curves along the edges but in the picture it isn’t really clear. In the picture they look more sharp than they actually were. Another unrealistic thing in the picture is that if you look really closely you can see light circles around the leaf, it looks as if the light is radiating from the leaf , or as if the leaf had an aura.

The key differences between my two pictures is that, in my opinion, the first is more of a documentary photo (taken in very simplistic fashion), and that the second is more of an unrealistic photo that is meant for someone to feel emotion. The second photo is a good example of decisive moment because if I had waited a second longer or if I had taken the picture a second sooner it would’ve been a completely different photo. In the first photo that is true but to a much lesser degree because the leaf was slightly moving but nothing else was. The studium of both these pictures are very similar if not identical to each other but they both are incredibly different photos. Finally, the second photo also follows the rule of thirds because the main point of the picture, the leaf, is slightly off centered.

All in all, I feel that my first photo was more of a documentary photo and my second one is meant to make you feel emotions such as happiness. It is really interesting to me that two photos with such similar studiums can be such different photos because of simple details. I really liked the idea of decisive moment as this was a concept that I had already had in mind before even learning about Henri Cartier-Bresson.

WORKS CITED

Cartier-Bresson, Henri. *The Decisive Moment*. Steidl, Feb 24, 2015.