

Sibel Yalin
Culmination
Final Reflection

As we close in on this semester and I reflect on my culmination project, I feel accomplished and already a bit nostalgic. To be honest, at first, my hopes were to create a 3-D design for an installation I wish to create someday and place it in 3 mock-up, digital environments where I could visualize it residing. This is a project I have been dreaming up for many years and already planned ahead for while I was taking Sue's project management class.

However, upon receiving the offer to work at Coachella as the artist credentials manager, I felt as if it were an opportunity I couldn't pass up. I asked Professor Mccullough what he thought and he agreed that I should take the offer. We both decided it would be a valuable learning experience and would look good on a resumé in the future.

As I waited to find out more details on the exact dates I would be needed for the trip and what my hours would look like, I deliberated how I would make this work with my school schedule. I was relieved when I discovered one of the weeks I would need to be away in California fell on spring break- that meant 2 weeks of missed classes. I consulted with all my professors who were kind enough to work with me. I worked hard in the welding shop twice a week for multiple hours getting ahead of my classwork so when I got back, I would be able to pick up where the rest of the class would be. Tech production class allowed me to work EIS so I could make up hours and I worked with Professor Montesinos on a freelance gig outside of school for a boost in participation credit. I had stayed late in the lighting lab a few days to try and get ahead on the workload in Miguel's lighting design class. Thanks to a couple of zoom meetings with Miguel and tips from Rippe I actually made decent progress in Vectorworks. Culmination and Career Seminar classes were luckily recorded so I was able to stay on top of those classes with no problem and had Ryoya's blessing to go forth with my project.

Upon arriving in California, I felt a sense of both fear and excitement. The title of manager definitely came paired with a sense of imposter syndrome that I had to defeat and a certain level of confidence that I had to work for in order to muster up. To be frank, I had been trying to step away from certain box office/credentials positions in order to pursue more design and creative work. So because of this, I hadn't taken a credentials job in 6 months. By the time I made it here, I was worried that I would be too rusty to really hold my weight. Emotionally, I had been through alot since the last time I took a credentials position, having lost three friends a few months ago. One of those friends was from California and actually played at the last Coachella. So this role meant alot to me, in more ways than just a professional sense. Being in California again for the first time since my friend passed was more difficult than I imagined and to be honest, I cried myself to sleep the first night I was there. On the first day of work the next day, I kept my head held high but definitely didn't have the most exuberant energy levels.

The credentials office is a hard place to be when you're healing. It is BUSY, you are constantly at the receiving end of some pretty hostile conversations from guests

who believe they should be let in quicker, are upset their name isn't on some list, or think they should be given more access than what they received. It takes a certain type of person to really be able to stand your ground in a level-headed way while facing frustrated people for 12-14 hours. Of course, not all interactions are bad ones though, and considering the number of people we were checking in daily as well as the smaller budget and team we had, I was very proud of the team we had. It was interesting to take note that as a manager, you see less of the good interactions because you are the one everyone turns to in order to put out the fires that arise. I truly had to tap into a reserve of willpower, endurance, and inner strength to be able to rise above the emotional and mental blocks I was facing in order to be the type of leader I was striving to be for my team.

When I look back at Coachella, I feel a mixture of both pride and defeat. Defeat because I was able to see the difference that experiencing great pain had made within me, yet proud of myself for doing it anyway. Strength sometimes comes from fighting the invisible battles no one really sees.

In hindsight, the feedback I got from my team really helped me see that I was successful in the role. After the event was over, I received messages from some of our staff saying that they looked forward to working with me again and believed that I handled things well. The feedback helped me see that life is hard enough without me putting extra pressure on myself to perform. It felt good to accept that I was asked to do this role because people believed in me and despite the setbacks we faced as a team, we got the job done.

On a personal level, I was shown that although I was grateful for the opportunity, where my passion truly lies is definitely in a more creative position. A big part of what inspired me to pursue entertainment as a career was the engagement of the crowd in a positive, communal, and uplifting way. I have been enamored by mediums like music, large-scale interactive installation, or stage design for their ability to transport listeners and viewers into otherworldly realms. To take a crowd outside of their own heads and onto higher ground. The relief of an escape and safe haven that art and the creative process provides is something I strive to give to the world in my own unique way. If my art can make someone feel inspired, curious, or add to the visual elements of a musical act, I will consider my purpose fulfilled. To me, the experience of seeing and feeling the performances and the crowd's reactions to them is one of the greatest feelings in the world. Therefore, I believe pre-production is where I will find the most joy within our industry. While being in the credentials office, I missed working as a team to build something with my hands and missed seeing the joy of seeing someone really moved by an experience I helped to put on in some way. I am grateful to Coachella for teaching me that about myself and for making me a more resilient person.