

Author: Robert Burton

Following Project 4

Assignment 4.

Real or Fake

Planning the assignment

Images will be taken of French national horseman and his colleague taken at an event at Brendan Stud in Sussex August 2011.

My plan being to use an image where the rider's line of sight crosses the page from left to right or visa versa, either at 90 degrees or at a diagonal to give a dynamic implied line. This would then give me an area in the frame (which will be in portrait) to locate some key text headline or another sub-image of the action.

The front cover of the imaginary magazine that I will design will use layers to overlap objects.

The cover should:

Grab attention

Draw the reader to the name of the publication early as they first glance at the cover
Stand out on a shop shelf.

Once drawn allow the readers eye to flow around the cover.

Give enough information about the content in headline or story keywords.

Show the main and some of the sub contents.

Inform the reader.

The assignment should show that I have gained an understanding of the projects undertaken in Project 4 including selecting areas, using layers to advantage and altering these to gain desired effect as well as merging or removing unwanted detail or dust marks etc. The assignment will also use techniques taken from Tom Ang's Digital Master class book and Photographers Handbook which explains much regarding digital photography. Tom Ang's books were recommended by my tutor David Sherwell and I am extremely grateful to David for his guidance.

As I will be using images from a horse show and having done some research into Horse publications, I will call this imaginary magazine '*Horses and Riders*'.

Results and ethical justification

Having taken the photographs with a cover in mind the source Photograph I chose was of Sebastien Poirier riding in the Discovery competition.

The source image was taken in landscape format as many of the other images were; however, knowing that I would be editing most if not all of these images post capture, this was not of concern at the time of capture. Even more so following this enlightening set of projects leading up to this assignment.

Of concern I needed the images at such a position that the lighting angle would be appropriate and the detail of the horse and the rider would both be acceptable.

The source image overleaf achieved this and looking at this image you will see the starting point for this assignment pre-alteration and merging layers etc. Then came the first stage which was the first crop, selectively done to start filtering down the image to become in line with the brief. For example the eye line of the rider creating an

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imaginary diagonal that creates a dynamic draw down the page to the bottom right corner.

Completely original.



Crop of image to work from:

Current background posts etc far too distracting and needs to be blurred or replaced. There is too much clutter at present. To make the 'horse and rider' stand out. I need to be able to bring Sebastien and the horse out of the page far more. Reducing the clutter will also allow me to make the writing stand out, but balanced so as to act appropriately. The heading must be clear to the reader. Plus point is the horse looks good at this stage and emphasises horse power.



Area for 'Horse and Riders' the heading of the imaginary Publication. I want the head of Sebastien to clip over the top of the edge of the heading.

Unwanted Photographer!

Area for sub image if needed. Area where Sebastien is looking in to.

Areas for additional sub title text to entice the reader to enter the publication. The lower one possibly wider than the higher one. The lower subtitle may appear as if the horse is jumping over it, will see as we progress.

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The first alteration to the image is to reduce the clarity of the background and make the unwanted photographer disappear.

To do this I used layers in the image. First of all to create a new layer from the background and I named this Layer 'Blur'. Why? Because that is what I am going to apply generally to the overall layer, a Gaussian blur that will blur the background making it insignificant, as if I had used a wider aperture at the time of taking the image. Later I will cut through this layer using the eraser tool to reveal the underneath layer of rider and horse so they appear sharp. However, the lowest base layer needs a couple of things doing first. According to Tom Ang's hints and tips I need to bring up the sharpness on the base layer and ensure the riders face is light and detailed enough to be able to see. The riders face initially had too much shadow.



This was the first attempt above, however, the sharpening was too much and the pixilation/noise showed far too strongly. You can see that the rider and horse are sharp and that the Photographer top right has disappeared. There is lots of impact and enough area around the frame to add text for the heading of the imaginary magazine and sub-content. I don't like the pole the horse and rider are jumping over and this I need to bring back into focus, otherwise the image is pretty meaningless.

Take 2, this image (right) was better, although the blur has not been applied the rider and horse are sharpened well and the colour and impact is strong. I much preferred this with the jump back in the frame, adding to the story of the horse and rider in action together. The Photographer has been removed at this stage.

I decided to leave the blur of the background and have another go taking into consideration the advice from my tutor and also from the books he has recommended I look at. Tong Ang for example, explains very effectively about using layers and channels. He also makes it easy to understand about tolerance in selection techniques. Combining this with my tutor's recommendation on blurring unwanted sections of an image has



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made this Assignment 4 a very worthwhile learning experience. I have gained so much knowledge on image editing that I feel far more aptly equipped and confident to carry on building work experience in the subject of Photography.

For the next step I tried again at selecting the rider and horse and then after more successfully completing this task I learnt I can save a selection and then reload it when I wanted. And on specific layers if needed, it's a very helpful suite of tools to be able to do this in Photoshop.

The next image is the final step I took to prepare the image for the text of this imaginary magazine.



In its untreated form at present this may not appear great but I knew where I wanted to go and could visualise in my mind how I wanted this picture to look if it were on a shop shelf/magazine rack.

Next up was to commence adding the heading and using the design tools in Photoshop to prepare the heading and subtext. To do this was easy and meant that I needed to use layers for each set of text. Remember that I wanted the rider to just come before the heading text of the imaginary magazine. So I had to control this text and make sure by dragging the layer that it appeared below the horse and rider.



Image left is step achieved and my assignment continued in the quest to add sub content. Please note though that my choice of colour for the heading is that of the rider's collar. This is so that the subconscious of my viewer has an easier resolution to the picture and a link. I have deliberately added the text in this position so that it connects with the rider, again making an easier resolution and flow for the reader. It may seem complicated but in my view this is making an overall image for a purpose; to grab attention and sell the magazine. So the reader's eye needs to flow quickly over the cover without getting bored.

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Next I introduced the sub content picture using layers and text layers for the sub content text. I used several text headlines for the content of the magazine and altered them a number of times to get them right.



The sub heading text here was a little too prominent and the meaning was lost. To me there was a little play on humour trying to associate a rider (albeit one with great skill here) riding upside down as apposed to the right way up.

However, a horse riding fan in my family pointed out this would be silly on a magazine designed for horse and riding enthusiasts because they would not see this so humorously!

The view point was taken in and therefore I changed it to the following:



The above is now the completed image submitted as a jpeg for this assignment. The text has enough draw to pull the eye down the page and around the bottom right, then back up the left hand side to the Magazine title. 'Poyncombe' (an imaginary town), maybe just be a little over stated but I wanted this to be the main headline (coloured as the red in the jump behind, for a colour relationship between the text and image content) and if enthusiasts knew this venue like in the real world where they would know about The Derby for example, then the enthusiast would have their attention drawn in by the shows main heading.

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Original and final side by side:



Ethically when I look at the images together and what they are trying to achieve I don't believe there is any attempt to mislead the viewer by using the tools of the digital trade to enhance the image and advertise or promote horse and rider. If this was a flyer selling the horse specifically and the colour was important to the buyer, then yes - its coat has been saturated in colour to make it stand out for the magazine. It is trying to grab attention not mislead. So if a buyer then travelled a long way to find the horse was not the colour they were expecting then yes, ethically I would agree that this could challenge the correct use of these tools. However, used in the correct way and not for deception then I see no problem with the use of the tools. Looking into the history of photography a little further there have been interesting examples of how images have been manipulated to sell or just to intrigue or fascinate by illusion. For example, the images of the fairies at the bottom of the garden, 'The Cottingley Fairies'. An interesting read online if you get a minute.

I am sure that there will be those that disagree with me, but ultimately so long as there is no deliberate intention to misrepresent or mislead for a fiscal purpose then I think the tools should be used for individual artistic and photographic pleasure for which they were designed.