

**DIFFERENTIATING BETWEEN DIGITALLY
CREATED AND DIGITALLY
MANIPULATED PHOTOGRAPHIC IMAGES**

BY DANICA SOLDO

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AND DIGITALLY MANIPULATED PHOTOGRAPHIC
IMAGES**

BY DANICA SOLDÓ

**This document is a script submitted for the subject Theory of Photography IV
and is a partial fulfillment for the B Tech Degree in Photography at the Central**

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I hereby declare that the work contained in this script is my own independent work and that all the sources consulted or cited have been indicated in full.

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Signature

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Date

ABSTRACT

In today's society the level of art consciousness is considerably higher than a few decades ago. It is, however, still questionable whether people understand the artistic value and aesthetics of photography as an art form. The aim of this research is to investigate digital photography in order to show the difference between digitally manipulated and digitally created photographic images. In order to reach a conclusion on this aim extensive literary research was conducted into the field of digital photography and digital fine art photography.

Firstly the research aimed to differentiate between "*created*" and "*manipulated*" photographic images, by looking at the international history of digital photography and photographers that made use of both creation and manipulation to create fine art photographs. An introduction to digital fine art photography in a South African context was conducted to give an overview of more recent photographers in the field, also setting the ground work for the researcher's discussion of her own work and the techniques and tools available to photographers.

The discussion of the researcher's own work and the techniques and tools used to create them is done in detail. Along with the full colour images, as examples of the use of the tools and techniques, it gives a clear explanation of the difference between digitally created and digitally manipulated photographs.

Through combining these studies the research has fulfilled its aims by:

- investigating and applying the techniques involved in digital fine art photography
- investigating photographers working in the field of digital fine art photography
- giving a written explanation and a visual representation of the differences between digital creation and manipulation
- giving a written account of all the images and the methods used to create them, and
- gaining an understanding of people's perception of fine art photography through the use of a questionnaire.

EKSERP

In vandag se samelewing is die vlak van kunsbewustheid aansienlik hoër as 'n paar dekades gelede. Dit is egter nog debateerbaar of mense die estetiese en kunswaarde van fotografie as 'n kunsvorm verstaan. Die doel van hierdie navorsing is om digitale fotografie te ondersoek en die verskil tussen digitaal gemanipuleerde en digitaal geskepte fotografiese afbeeldings duidelik te stel. Ten einde 'n konklusie te bereik is breedvoerige literêre navorsing in die veld van digitale fotografie en digitale kunsfotografie gedoen.

Die eerste doel van die navorsing was om die verskil tussen “*gemanipuleerde*” en “*geskepte*” fotografiese beelde duidelik te stel. Dit is gedoen deur te kyk na die internasionale geskiedenis van digitale fotografie en fotografe wat gebruik gemaak het van beide skepping en manipulasie om kunsfoto's voort te bring. 'n Inleiding tot digitale kunsfotografie is ook onderneem om 'n oorsig te gee oor hedendaagse fotografe in die veld, asook om 'n grondslag te gee vir die navorser se bespreking van haar eie werk en die tegnieke en werktuie wat beskikbaar is aan fotografe.

Die bespreking van die navorser se eie werk en die tegnieke en werktuie is in groot detail gelewer. Saam met die volkleur fotos, as voorbeelde van die werktuie en tegnieke, gee dit 'n baie duidelike verduideliking van die verskil tussen digitaal geskepte en digitaal gemanipuleerde fotos.

Deur al hierdie studies te kombineer het die navorsing sy doelwitte bereik deur:

- die tegnieke betrokke digitale kunsfotografie na te vors en toe te pas
- fotografe wat in die veld van digitale kunsfotografie werk na te vors
- 'n geskrewe verduideliking, asook 'n visuele voorstelling van die verskille tussen digitale skepping en manipulasie te gee
- deur 'n geskrewe rekord te gee van alle beelde en metodes wat gebruik is om hulle te skep, en
- deur mense se persepsie van kunsfotografie te bepaal deur gebruik te maak van 'n vraelys.

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CHAPTER 1: HISTORY AND BACKGROUND

1.1 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of this research is to investigate digital photography in order to show the difference between digitally manipulated and digitally created photographic images. Extensive literary research into the field of digital fine art photography, with the aim of differentiating between digital photography and digital photographic art, will be conducted.

During the 1880's photography underwent a drastic change. The pictorialist movement at this time helped revolutionise the perception of photography. Up until this time photography was considered to be merely reproduction. The high-art movement, together with the pictorialist movement, elevated photography into an art form in its own right. This was achieved by imitating painting in photography. There was strong reluctance to this change and it took many years for photography to gain recognition as an art form with its own aesthetic values. The Photo Secession in 1902 was a group of photographers, led by Alfred Steiglitz. They were greatly responsible for the major changes that earned photography the respect that it deserved. After many contested and controversial changes, photography was finally able to come into its own, without having to imitate painting or any other artistic mediums (Langford, 1998: 101-113).

Even though photography gained recognition in the years after the pictorialist movement and the Photo Secession, its success was limited. In the present technological age a similar problem presents itself. Even though photography earned its place among the older fine arts, most

modern day professional photographers would not class themselves as artists, but rather as fashion or portrait photographers. This is because their medium may be recognised as an art, but that does not necessarily mean they are creating art. They are merely using an artistic medium to create photographs, which are not necessarily artistic or creative in nature. Since the introduction of the digital camera, the digital fine art photographer is now assumed to be a talent-less fraud. Photographers suffered from the same assumptions during the Pictorialist Movement, when painters of the time denied photography's artistic value. Painters considered photography to be a scientific medium of reproduction. Similarly, artists today regard digital art to be a method used to manipulate mediocre photographs into so-called artworks. An educated opinion is that this has to do with a lack of understanding as to the difference between creating and manipulating an image. This comparison between the current trends in digital photography and the Pictorialist Movement in the 1880s is essential in order to understand why there is such an urgent need to differentiate between creation and manipulation. This difference will be made clear both visually (portfolio) and in writing (script).

It is the understanding of researchers in the field of fine art photography, that there is a general misconception as to what digital photographic art actually is (Jarvis, 2002: 2). Is it a digitally manipulated image or is it a digitally created image? What is the difference? It is the intention of this research to answer these questions and to prove that there is in fact a difference between manipulation and creation. Thus, the aim of this research is to:

- investigate and apply the techniques involved in digital fine art photography
- investigate photographers working in the field of digital fine art photography
- give a written explanation and a visual representation of the differences between digital creation and digital manipulation
- give a written account of all the images and the methods used to create them, and
- determine people's perception of fine art photography with the use of a questionnaire.

Conclusions will be drawn from this research in order to fulfil the aims mentioned above.

1.2 DEFINITIONS

CREATED

The Concise Oxford Dictionary defines creation as: “a product of human intelligence, especially of imaginative thought or artistic ability” (1990: 272). In this research the word “*created*” refers to artwork that is made, be it from photographs, paintings, etcetera. Creating artwork involves imagination, creativity, intelligence, insight, technical excellence and the ability to express something, whether it is anger, beauty, emotion, horror or an opinion. This is the primary function of any art, expression. All emotions, ideas and expressions begin within the artist, through a creative process.

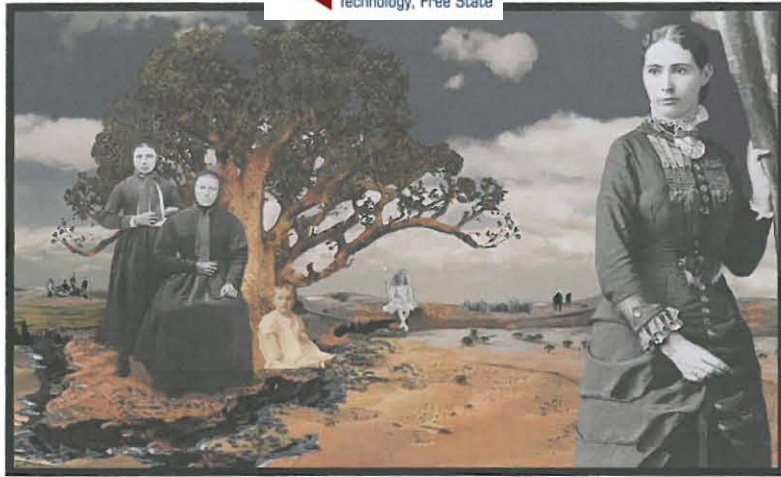


Figure 1, “In the way of tradition” by Martina Lopez
http://www.art.uh.edu/dif/lopez/tradition1_lg.jpg

“In the way of tradition” by Martina Lopez (figure 1, page 4) is an excellent example of a digitally created photograph. It is a composition of different images, using selective colouring for dramatic effect. This image shows creativity and took time and exceptional skill to create.

MANIPULATED

The Concise Oxford Dictionary defines manipulation as: “(1) handle, treat or use, especially skilfully (a tool, question, material, etcetera). (2) manage (a person, situation, etcetera.) to one’s own advantage, especially unfairly or unscrupulously” (1990: 722). In this research the word “*manipulated*” refers to photographs that have been changed with the intention of creating a false image or improving the technical aspects of an image by cropping, removing dust or scratches, changing the colour or brightness and contrast of a dull image, etcetera. Manipulating an image requires only a mediocre knowledge of cameras, camera equipment and basic computer skills. It does not involve creativity or extensive knowledge of computers, techniques, art or photography. The image

“Shadow series, Mattie” (figure 2, page 5) is a prime example of digital manipulation. The original image was made with a pinhole camera therefore it is slightly out of focus. This image is poorly composed and has been digitally manipulated by using a solarising effect and changing the colour.

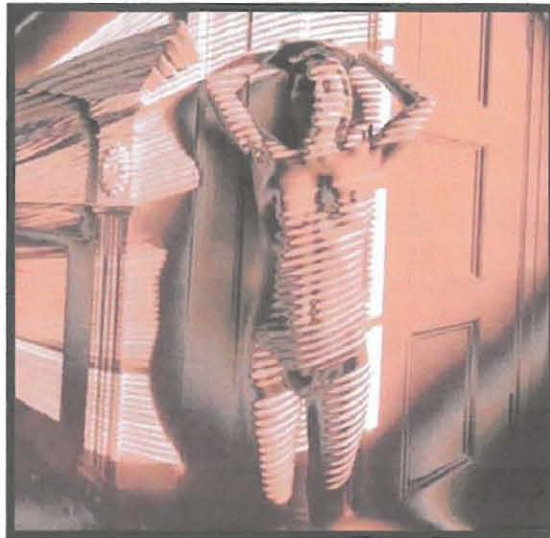


Figure 2, “Shadow series, Mattie” by Dan McCormack
<http://moca.virtual.museum/mccormack/maccormack03.htm>

1.3 POSSIBLE PROBLEMS

Since digital photography is a relatively new artistic medium - keeping in mind how long other mediums, such as painting, sculpture and conventional photography have been in practice - useful information on the subject is quite scarce. Many books have been written about digital photography, but very few of these books discuss the aesthetics of digital fine art photography. They discuss digital cameras, techniques and photo editing equipment such as Adobe Photoshop. Very few of these books define or differentiate between created and manipulated digital photographs. Although it has been difficult to find adequate, useful

research for the purpose of this study, this confirms the statement that there is a lack of understanding about what digital art is. The problem is to convince people that digital photographic art is 'real' art, worthy of merit, which can possibly be solved by defining and differentiating between creation and manipulation in this field.

1.4 BACKGROUND

Experience has shown that some people still consider all photography to be reproduction, devoid of any real creativity or aesthetic value, an idea that has been around since photography was born. People believe this about digitally created / manipulated photography even today. In his essay "Toward a Digital Aesthetic", Jarvis (2002: 1) states that there is a misconception "that making digital art is an automated pastime requiring no more knowledge or artistic input than punching the "art" button". It is thought that many so-called art lovers believe digital photographic art is that easy. In his book *Creative Photography, Aesthetic Trends 1839-1960*, Helmut Gernsheim (1991: 13) states:

...the question is not whether photography is an art per se - neither music, literature, painting nor sculpture can make that claim, although they are classed among the fine arts - but whether it is capable of artistic expression.

In the age of such advanced technology we find ourselves, not only as artists, but also as photographers, asking the same questions.

The problem stems from the assumption that if everyone can operate and own a digital camera and/or a computer, then everyone can make good photographs. In the 1880s advertising slogans were already in place persuading the public that photography was easy enough for anyone to

practise. When Kodak introduced their ready-made photographic materials and their new 'compact' cameras, their slogan read: "*You press the button, we do the rest*". This helped to lessen the artistic appeal of photography (Gernsheim, 1991: 115-116). Today we are threatened by the same demons, so to speak. In his essay "An Art Lover's Guide to Digital Art", Jarvis (2002:2) discusses how the ordinary viewer of digital photographic art does not know how the image was made. They are naïve enough to assume that a digital artwork is just a "mouse-click away". Today's advertising campaigns are reminiscent of the old slogans of the 1880s, suggesting that anyone who purchases photo-editing software for his computer can create digital artwork. Anyone who has ever worked in Adobe Photoshop knows that this is certainly not the case. Art is not created solely by the medium, tool or subject matter available to the artist. All true art and creativity starts in the mind as an idea. The camera, paintbrush and computer are simply the tools used to express or visualise this internal creativity. There is no inquisition into the value and artistic worth of literature since the invention of the word processor, so why should photographic art suffer investigation now that we have the digital camera and the digital darkroom. (Jarvis, 2002: 1)

1.5 A BRIEF HISTORY OF DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY

The digital age in photography started in 1981 when Sony created the first commercial electronic still camera, the Mavica. Photographs were stored on mini discs and then inserted into video readers which were connected to TV screens or colour monitors. Although the Mavica was nowhere near the digital cameras of today, it was the first step in creating this digital explosion. It was Kodak that introduced the first true digital camera in August 1986. This camera had the world's first mega pixel

sensor, which was able to record 1.4 million pixels. This in turn could produce a 5x7 inch digital photographic print. Within a year from the introduction of the first mega pixel digital camera, Kodak released seven products used for the recording, storing, manipulating, transmitting and printing of electronic still video images. (Bellis, 2005: 1)

On February 17, 1994, the consumer market was targeted with the first digital cameras that could be used with personal computers. It was the Apple QuickTake 100 camera. It did not take long before a series of these cameras were on the market and soon companies such as Kinko, Microsoft, IBM and Hewlett-Packard jumped on the bandwagon. Soon inkjet printers were enabling the average person to print photographs in his own home. (Bellis, 2005: 2)

In 1987 Thomas Knoll, an amateur photographer, started working on a rough idea, which would eventually become one of the most used photo-editing programmes in the world. Thomas and his brother John, a computer enthusiast, combined their work and knowledge to come up with an application called Display. By 1988 it had developed into ImagePro. In that same year, while trying to find investors, they approached BarneyScan who agreed to include their product with their slide scanners. In 1989 Adobe signed a deal with the Knoll brothers to develop their product. One year later, in 1990, Adobe Photoshop 1.0 was released to the public. This is how Photoshop was born. There have been many versions released since then, the most current being Adobe Photoshop CS. Photoshop has undoubtedly made the whole photographic process quicker and has opened many doors for the digital fine art photographer. (Story, 2000: 1-3)

1.7 SYNOPSIS

The problems that digital fine art photographers face now are the same problems that all photographers faced over 160 years ago. History has indeed repeated itself. Painters were disgusted at the thought of photography being considered art from the time the phrase was first used in 1839. The same can be said about digital fine art photography now.

Digital photographic artists are still being questioned about the means by which they create their art. It is an educated opinion that the focus should not be on the medium or manner in which the artwork was created, but instead on the artistic content of the artwork. It is therefore recommended that before one dismisses digital art as manipulation, one should first ask oneself: What is digital art? Salvelio Meyer, the South African conceptual documentary photographer, had the answer to this question when, in an article in *Camera and Image Magazine* (2002: 37-39), he said:

The idea of digital manipulation is still met with much resistance from traditionalists, but I am guided by a strong sense of ethics and am not trying to mislead or fool anybody ... for me the importance lies not in 'how' the image was created, but in what it says. I love sharing my work and want people to read the image like a story; to be stimulated and perhaps even find their own meaning in it.

CHAPTER 2: INTRODUCTION TO DIGITAL FINE ART PHOTOGRAPHY IN A SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Before one can differentiate between digitally created and manipulated images, one should first consider what fine art photography actually is. The term fine art could be interpreted differently by various people, but for the purpose of this study it will be defined as: “A picture that is produced for sale or display rather than one that is produced in response to a commercial commission” (Hope, 2003: 10). Many fine art photographers demand that photographs be “personal images that meet self-imposed criteria, and that they are, as a result, very close to the heart of the photographer and are representative of his or her interpretation of the world” (Hope, 2003: 10).

Work that meets the above-mentioned criteria is created, not manipulated. Any form of art needs to express something, whether it be emotion, personal beliefs or views. These criteria always require technical skill.

2.2 DEFINING DIGITAL FINE ART PHOTOGRAPHY

The fine art photographer does not merely pick random subject matter to photograph and then scan negatives onto a computer and manipulate them in Photoshop until it looks like art. The whole process of creating any art is far more complicated than that. Many photographers, claiming to be digital artists, are merely editing mediocre work. They make use of cropping, colour correction, selective toning, filters and masks to improve

the quality of studio work and landscapes. This is, by definition, pure manipulation, as images made in this way are not created as such, they are edited. The entire Digital Revolution and the concerns it raises are misguided in that manipulation occurs not only on a computer but even in traditional darkrooms by way of burning in and holding back light, using masks and different chemical solutions to alter colour (Liebenburg, 2002: 39). A created image is a planned execution of an idea, feeling, emotion or expression that is skilfully completed. Manipulating or editing techniques, such as cropping or colour adjustment, may be applied in order to create the final image, but this is by no means pure manipulation. Robert Heinecken (Daney, 1997: 1) makes an insightful statement by saying:

Many pictures turn out to be limp translations of the known world instead of vital objects which create an intrinsic world of their own. There is a vast difference between taking a picture and making a photograph.

2.3 PETER ENGBLOM - ZULUSUSHI

Peter Engblom is a South African photographer, based in Zululand. His most recent collection of work, entitled *ZuluSushi*, has been exhibited at galleries and museums all over South Africa. His work is difficult to define, as it is neither pure manipulation nor creation. It is a combination of the two. The entire collection of work is a documentation of events that never took place. It is a photographic journal telling the story of a group of Zulus, led by Mpunzi Shezi, on their visit to Japan in 1911 (Wasserfall, 2002: 1). The images are meant to be a comical breakaway from the serious issues in world culture today. Although the images may seem real to some, they are purely fictional (Bezuidenhout, 2001: 1).

In an interview for the German magazine *Photographie* (2003: 1), Engblom explained that his work was “based on the fact that ethnic identities are basically constructs that we are swindled into believing.” He is a self-proclaimed exhibitionist “creating photographic lies”. His work, even though it is based on manipulating history, is still created. He used a Yashika twin lens camera to photograph Japanese models and local people in Zululand. He then scanned the negatives onto a computer and used Photoshop 3 to create his collages from a variety of different images (Anon, 2003: 1). Figures 3-5 (page 12 & 13) are examples of Engblom’s work.



Figure 3, “Ingungumbane with Koye” by Peter Engblom

<http://www.finearts.co.za/exhibitions/engblom.htm>



Figure 4, "Measuring spiritual vacuum" by Peter Engblom
<http://www.finearts.co.za/exhibitions/engblom.htm>



Figure 5, "Goyzui sute-dokoro Nashi" by Peter Engblom
<http://www.finearts.co.za/exhibitions/engblom.htm>

2.4 JOHAN WILKE – SKIN DEEP

Johan Wilke's work is a prime example of digital manipulation, as opposed to digital creation. His exhibition of forty-eight photographs, entitled *Skin Deep*, held at the Johan Wilke's Studio at Bromwell Mews in Cape Town in April 2002 was part of the Cape Town Month of Photography. His work was described as "an in-depth study of the culture of 'Body Art', comprising, tattoo, piercing and scarring" (Wilke, 2002: 40). The intent of the body of work was to be "documentary style photographs of Body Art being created, portraits of the artists and nude studies" (Wilke, 2002: 40). All of the images featured in the exhibition were photographed with an Olympus E10 digital camera and were then digitally printed. The images did not seem to fulfil the description of the work. The images were all posed, not documented and the nudes were not studies at all. The nude was merely taken to show off the huge tattoo on the model's back. (figure 6, page 14)



Figure 6, "Image 1" by Johan Wilke
Camera and Image. February/March 2002
Pages 42 & 43

Wilke used the lighting to produce early pictorialist painterly effects in the photographs. The images were all sepia toned and selective colouring was used. The images seem to have potential at first, but on closer examination one notices all the untidy work. The blur tool in Photoshop has been used to give the impression of movement (figure 7, page 16) but is done very badly and is very obvious. The combination of the new sub-culture of Body Art with old-fashioned sepia toning is unsettling. The techniques used to manipulate the images do not complement the subject matter or enhance the photograph. The images are badly composed with toes and heads being cropped off and certain images have been cropped in the wrong places (figure 8, page 16). This body of work may be a good parameter for differentiating between created and manipulated images. The images, prior to manipulation, could be considered weak, poorly composed and unplanned by an educated photographer. The question one should ask is: After manipulation, are these images improved or are they still weak, poorly composed and badly manipulated? Were these techniques applied simply to give average images an artistic edge?

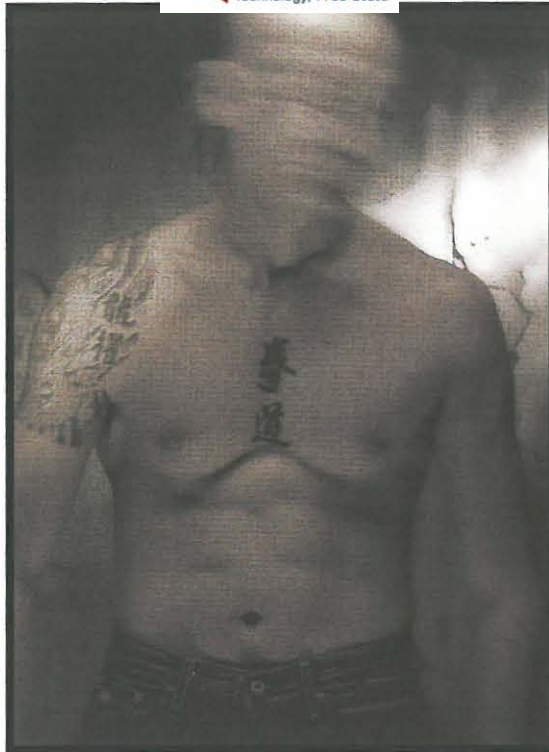


Figure 7, "Image 2" by Johan Wilke
Camera and Image, February/March 2002 Page 48



Figure 8, "Image 3" by Johan Wilke
Camera and Image, February/March 2002 Page 41

2.5 SALVELIO MEYER – PROCESSIONS AND TRANSITIONS

Salvelio Meyer, the Spanish South African conceptual documentary photographer, is a former student and lecturer of the Port Elizabeth Technikon. Meyer has travelled all over the world and worked as a traditional documentary photographer for many years until he was compelled to create his own “complex stories” (Liebenberg, 2002: 26-27). He was inspired by the new technologies available in photography and was interested in the Digital Revolution that swept across the world in the mid-1980s. Meyer wanted to “recreate crucial moments” that he had “experienced and recorded” in his mind over the years but was never able to catch on a single negative at the time (Liebenberg, 2002: 26-27).

Meyer makes use of his old black and white negatives in order to create new images. All of his work emphasises the line between reality and fantasy, sometimes ugly and sombre and other times beautiful and comical. Whatever it is, it is always thought provoking and his work demands attention. Very few photographic artists have the ability to make images that stand apart from the rest, but Meyer has successfully achieved this. He makes use of old photographic materials such as negatives and combines this with new digital media such as scanners and software, for example, as Photoshop in order to merge the past and the future to create completely original images. His work is pure creation of digital photographic art. In an article called “Processions and Transitions: A Profile” published in *Camera and Image Magazine*, Meyer describes his work:

My images simply show the way I see life. I am not political or religious in the least and have no such motives in my work. But I do understand that these factors play an important role in the way society functions, and my work might show this impact.

All of his images express some form of emotion and required much planning and work to skilfully execute these plans. This type of work is an excellent example of digitally created fine art photography as it fits all the criteria of digital fine art photography, namely:

- It is expressive
- It is well composed and technically well executed
- It was made out of a need for personal expression and not in response to commercial demand
- Manipulation techniques were used in order to create a new image, not to enhance an image

His work is personal and is executed with passion, precision and incredible skill. The images are tidy and even though one knows that they are “superimposed” the neatness lends realism to the final product. The images are surreal yet truthful. Figures 9 - 12 (pages 19 & 20) are just some examples of Meyer’s talent, “Speak no evil, Salamanca, Spain 2001” (figure 9, page 19) being one of his strongest images. These images, when compared to Wilke’s images, clearly differentiate between creation and manipulation of digital fine art images. (Liebenburg, 2002: 37-39)



Figure 9, “Speak no evil, Salamanca, Spain 2001” by Salvelio Meyer
www.zonezero.com/exposicions/fotografos/s_meyer/int.html



Figure 10, “Talking to God, Salamanca, Spain 2001” by Salvelio Meyer
www.zonezero.com/exposicions/fotografos/s_meyer/int.html



Figure 11, “Holy transition, Salamanca, Spain 2001” by Salvelio Meyer
www.zonezero.com/exposicions/fotografos/s_meyer/int.html



Figure 12, “Franco, La Maya, Spain 2001” by Salvelio Meyer
www.zonezero.com/exposicions/fotografos/s_meyer/int.html

2.6 CONCLUSION

Having investigated the styles of these three photographers, it is clear that there is indeed a difference between creating and manipulating a digital image. Even though some of the techniques employed by the different photographers are similar, the final results are quite different. One needs to understand not only how, but also why an image is made. If one employs digital manipulation in order to improve an image then it is pure manipulation. If one employs digital manipulation in order to create a new original image, then it is pure creation.

CHAPTER 3: TECHNIQUES AND DISCUSSION OF OWN WORK

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter deals with the different techniques used to create and manipulate digital fine art photographs. Each description of a technique will be accompanied by the author's own examples of the said technique, as well as a detailed description of the procedure used to create each image.

All the images to be discussed were created on a computer using the programmes Photoshop CS and Photoshop Elements. The final images consist of 35mm negative film scans and/or 35mm digital photographs. An Epson Perfection 4990 was used to scan all negatives and different media.

3.2 FILTERS

Filters are used to alter the appearance of an image. There are many different types of filters, each offering a unique appearance. Artistic filters, for example, can render photographs into paintings or sketches. Filters are able to render different effects in a variety of ways via their settings or preferences. A selection of filters will now be discussed in detail.

3.2.1 ARTISTIC FILTERS

Artistic filters can make photographs look like paintings by applying painting styles such as fresco, watercolour or coloured pencil. The plastic wrap filter can render the selected area in 'plastic', as can be seen in the photograph "Stephanie Wulf" (figure 13, page 23). The effect of the plastic wrap filter is visible over the hair and the shirt. These areas were selected using the magnetic lasso tool and were first sharpened using the unsharp mask tool in order to get a neon glow. These selections were then wrapped separately, using different amounts of brightness and smoothness.



Figure 13, "Stephanie Wulf" by Danica Soldo

3.2.2 BLUR FILTER

The blur filter has several different types of blur which enables the artist to create different effects. Lens blur is one of the most complicated types, involving the adjusting of shape, radius, blade curvature, rotation, brightness, threshold and depth of blur. It also requires a selection of the distribution of blur between uniform or gaussian blur.

An example of lens blur can be seen in “Guardian child” (figure 14, page 24). In this montage, three separate images were combined to create one entirely new image. The two figures in the photograph have been blurred in a uniform way to give a hazy appearance. The lighting was adjusted using the shadow and highlight tool then the curves were then adjusted. Lens blur was selected in order to have maximum control over the amount and type of blur needed for this image.



Figure 14, “Guardian child” by Danica Soldo

In the images “Soul in autumn” (figure 15, page 25) and “Sadness follows” (figure 16, page 25) the gaussian setting was used to soften the

backgrounds. The models in the two respective images were selected with the magnetic lasso tool and the inverse (the background) was then selected and blurred. In order to bring some colour to the image lens flare was inserted in figure 15 by using the render filter.

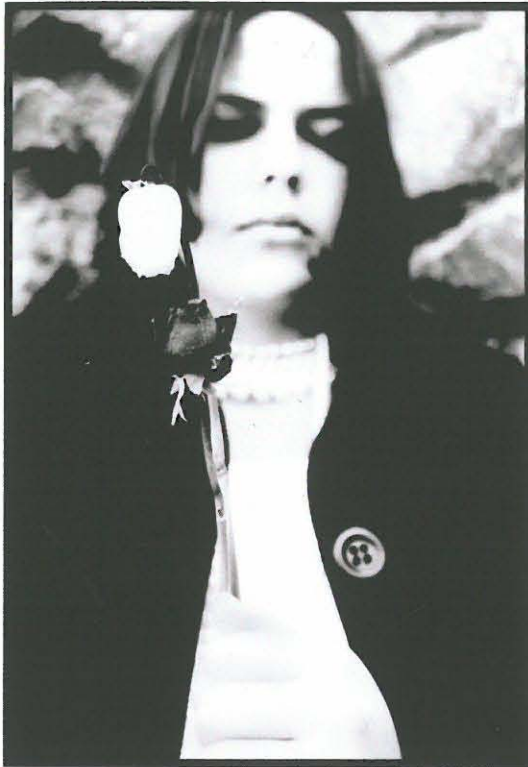


Figure 15, “Soul in autumn”
by Danica Soldo



Figure 16, “Sadness follows”
by Danica Soldo

3.2.3 DISTORT FILTER

The distort filter is used to alter a photograph by changing the shape of an image. Settings such as glass, spherize, ocean ripple, shear, and wave or twirl can be used to change the shape or dimension of an image. The diffuse glow setting is able to remove harsh lines from an image to give it a softer appearance. The amount of grain, the glow amount and the clear amount can also be selected. The glow colour is matched to the selected

background colour in the paint pallet in the tool bar. This filter gives a ghostly appearance, especially if the glow is white. In the image “Round table” (figure 17, page 26) the glow amount was very high and most of the detail on the model’s face has been removed. This filter does not have much effect on smaller details, as can be seen on the model’s skirt.



Figure 17, “Round table” by Danica Soldo

In “Angelic blessing” (figure 18, page 27) the lips of the model have been darkened in order to make them stand out more. Her skin tone was very even and clear, as the clear amount setting was quite low. A similar technique was used to create the image “Round here” (figure 19, page 27), although the contrast in this image had to be adjusted dramatically. The shadow on the face and neck of the model was entirely reconstructed

using the burn tool. This image has a slight solarisation effect, created by altering the curves of the image. The diffuse glow is a favourable filter to use for the softening of an image.



Figure 18, “Angelic blessing” by Danica Soldo

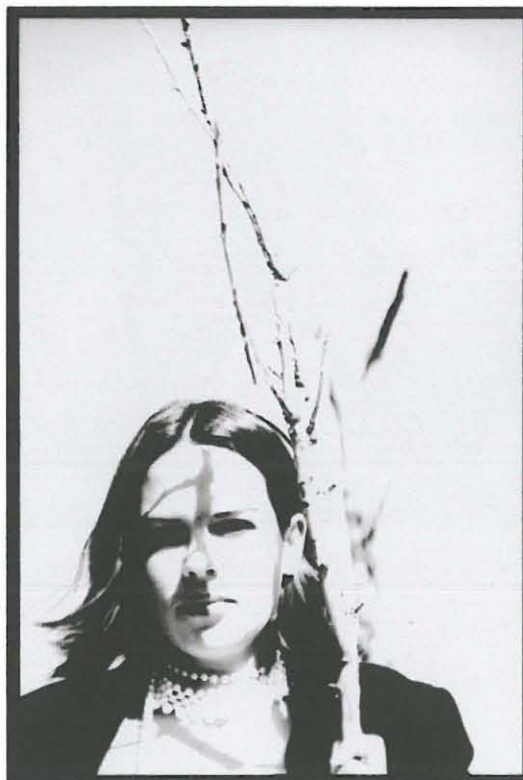


Figure 19, “Round here” by Danica Soldo

3.2.4 NOISE FILTER

Noise refers to grain, scratches, dust marks and speckles and the noise filter allows the artist to either add or remove this from an image. The despeckle setting removes speckles or grain, while the add noise setting conversely allows the artist to add grain or speckles to an image. The dust-and-scratches setting removes imperfections or marks on the image or erases parts of the image, as seen in “Vision” (figure20, page 28). This image also makes use of the distortion filter, spherize, which bloats a part of the image. Median is similar to the blur tool, softening the image and removing outlines, rendering clumps of colour without any definitive shape.



Figure 20, “Vision” by Danica Soldo

3.2.5 RENDER FILTER

The render filter has the following settings: lens flare, lighting effects, clouds, difference clouds and fibres. The lens flare setting has a choice of

50 to 300mm zoom lenses, 35mm prime lenses, 105mm lenses and a movie prime lens. Lighting effects allow the artist to change the light type from spotlight to omni to directional light. The image “Zune 4” (figure 21, page 29) made use of a spotlight lighting effect, which forms a circular shape on the wall. The natural lighting over the body of the model was slightly dimmed by adding this filter effect. Decreasing the hue, which is found in the image adjustment settings, dulled the overall colour of this image. The shadow on the floor in the doorway was digitally added for visual effect. The image “Divinity” (figure 22, page 29) also made use of lighting effects. In this photograph the angle is much wider, so there is no circle effect caused by the spotlight. The contrast of the image was set very high in order to eliminate lighter lines in the image, leaving only the strong outlines. This effect can also be achieved by using the diffuse glow setting.



Figure 21, “Zune 4” by Danica Soldo



Figure 22, “Divinity” by Danica Soldo

3.2.6 SHARPEN FILTER

The sharpen filter is used to sharpen images. It has different settings, allowing the artist to sharpen either the whole image or just the edges of the image, but only showing a slight improvement to the overall sharpness of the image. The unsharp mask setting, however, allows considerable sharpening, to such an extent that the subject may look 'dirty'. This tool can bring out veins and imperfections in the skin tone of a subject and has a tendency to show the colour pixels if the radius is set too high.

"Vanishing" (figure 23, page 31) is a good example of the correct use of this sharpening effect. The original image was focused perfectly and the unsharp mask was used to enhance the texture of the subject's jersey and scarf. The subject was selected using the magnetic lasso tool and then the unsharp mask was applied causing a white glow around the subject's head. The inverse (the background) was then selected and blurred. The jersey and scarf were reselected and the unsharp mask was applied for a second time, causing a neon blue glow around the edges.



Figure 23, “Vanishing” by Danica Soldo



Figure 24, “Sunshine” by Danica Soldo

In the photograph “Sunshine” (figure 24, page 31) the unsharp mask was used to sharpen the edges, giving the background (the bed and linen) a more gothic appearance. This brought out more of the texture and increased the contrast of the image. There is a substantial contrast between the background, which is dark and sombre and the subjects, who are bright and joyful. The subjects were selected using the magnetic lasso tool, and the saturation of the inverse section (the background) was dulled dramatically.

The photograph “Mechanical” (figure 25, page 32) was originally an out of focus colour image. The unsharp mask was used to sharpen the image and the face of the model was broken up into parts, copied and then pasted over the original parts. These sections were scaled and distorted to

make the image look reconstructed. The saturation of the image was decreased and the hue was altered to give a cold effect.



Figure 25, “Mechanical” by Danica Soldo

3.2.7 TEXTURE FILTER

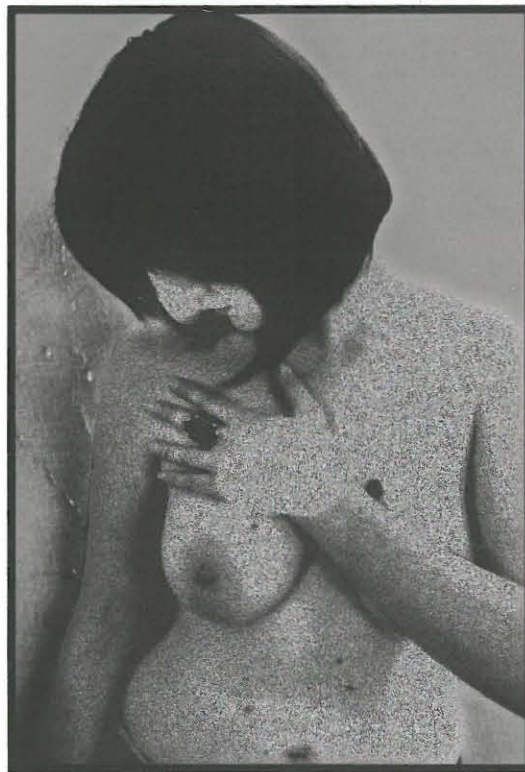
The craquelure setting allows the artist to apply and set the depth, spacing and brightness of cracks on an image. This can be used to make an image look aged or to break up an image into parts or blocks. The photograph “Caged bird” (figure 26, page 33) makes use of this technique. The

background was texturised using the canvas tool. The overall contrast of this image was dropped to give the image a faded look, which works well with the craquelure effect.



Figure 26, “Caged bird” by Danica Soldo

In the third image in the series “Solace” (figure 27.3, page 34), the craquelure tool was used over the body of the model. The background was covered with the plastic wrap tool to make it appear to be bubbling. The first image (figure 27.1, page 34) in this series the author used the noise filter, median, in order to create a clumpy effect without any distinct lines or shapes. The edges of the image were erased using the liquefy filter. The second image (figure 27.2, page 34) the author used another texture filter, the grain filter, to add noise to the image. In this image the plastic wrap tool was also used for the background, but was changed from RGB to greyscale, as grain has a tendency to work better in monochrome than in colour. This series provides a good visual example of the techniques rendered with the texture filter.



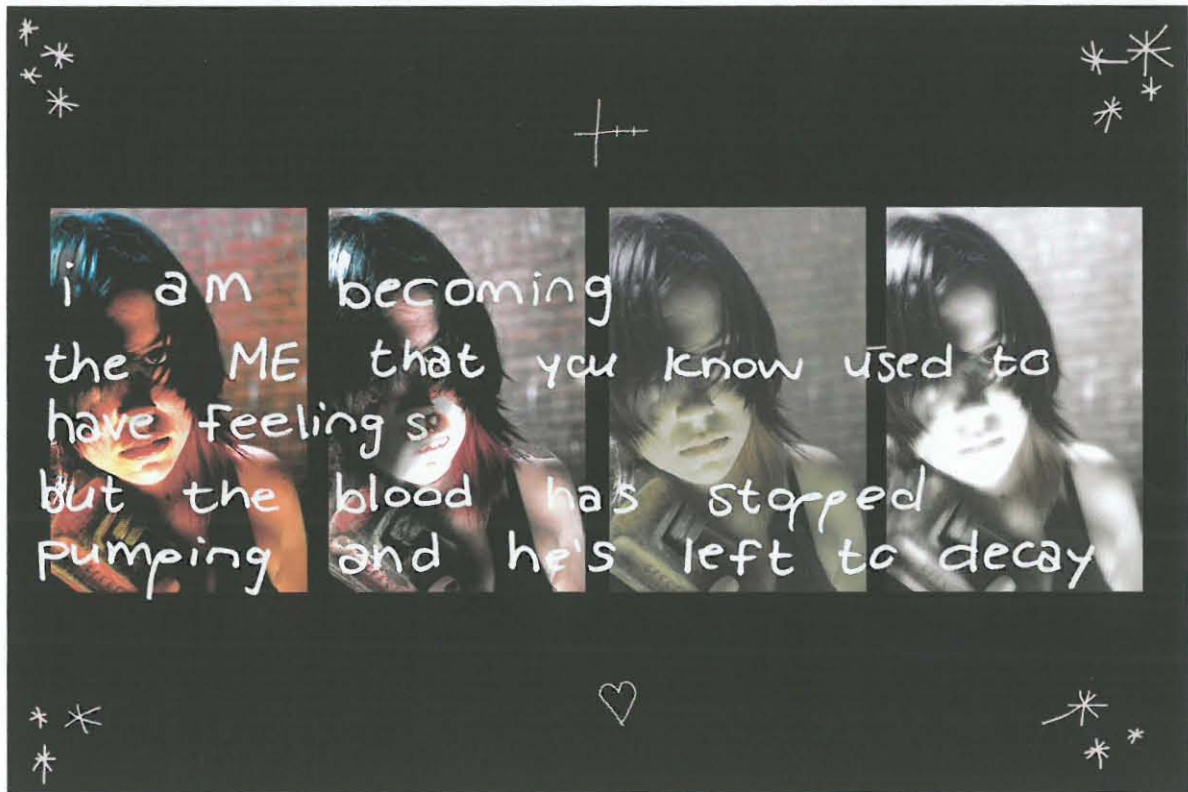
Figures 27.1, 27.2 & 27.3, "Solace" by Danica Soldo

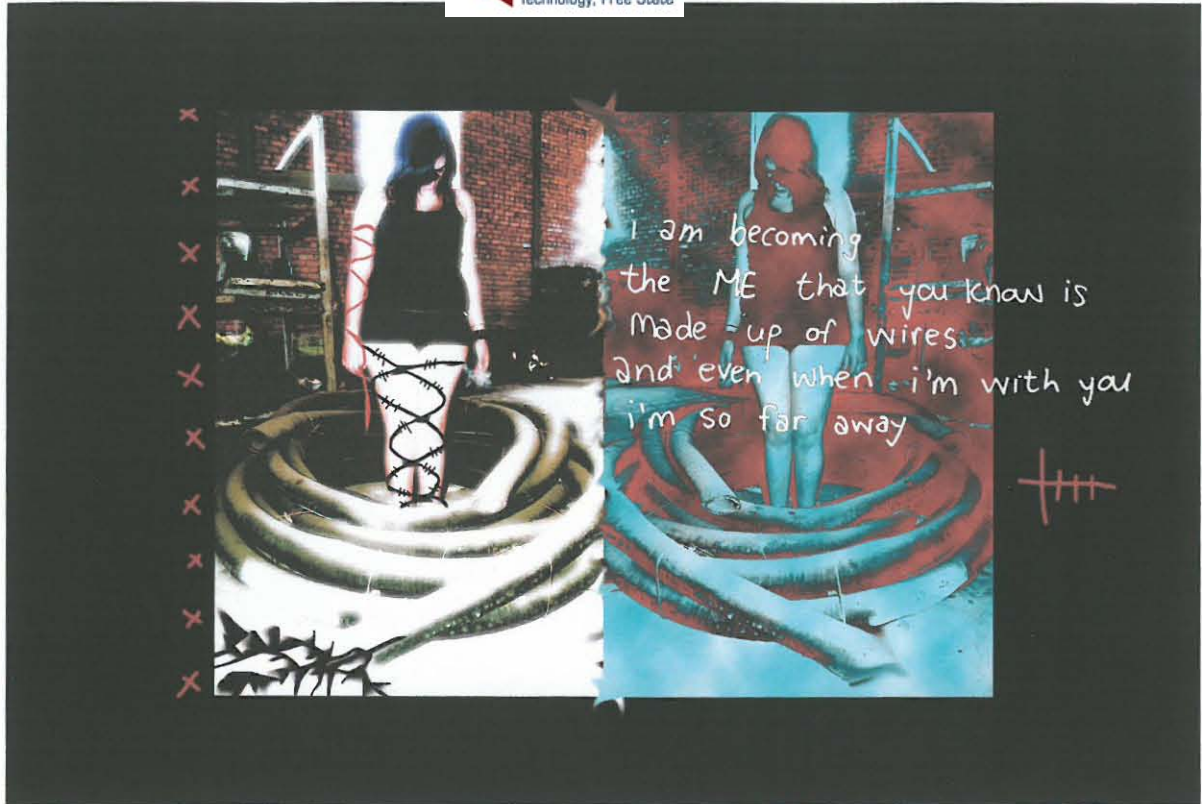
3.3 USING TEXT

Text is often used in graphic design to expand the visual image. Photography plays an important role in this field of applied art and text is necessary to explain what the image is about. Although it is believed that “an image is worth a thousand words”, this is seldom the case in fine art photography. The photomontage series “The becoming” (figure 28, page 36-38) could easily be misunderstood or not understood at all, but the text tells a story of a girl becoming tougher, a girl that is dying inside even though she appears strong. The lyrics, written by Trent Reznor, from the band Nine Inch Nails, inspired this series. The text was handwritten and scanned into the computer, inverted and blended into the image layer. The drawings on the images were done digitally using the paintbrush tool.

Another image inspired by a song is “Thought I knew you well” (figure 29, page 38) by Tori Amos. It is a simpler image not containing any additional paintwork or handwritten text. It consists of two separate images, one with selective colouring, both with borders and typed text.

Text can be inserted into an image for the visual effect only, where the words are not all legible or have no relation to the image at all. Adding text to a photograph makes it interesting and, if used correctly, can create a successful image. The image “The writing on the wall” (Figure 30, page 39) is a prime example of a successful image where the text is merely decorative.





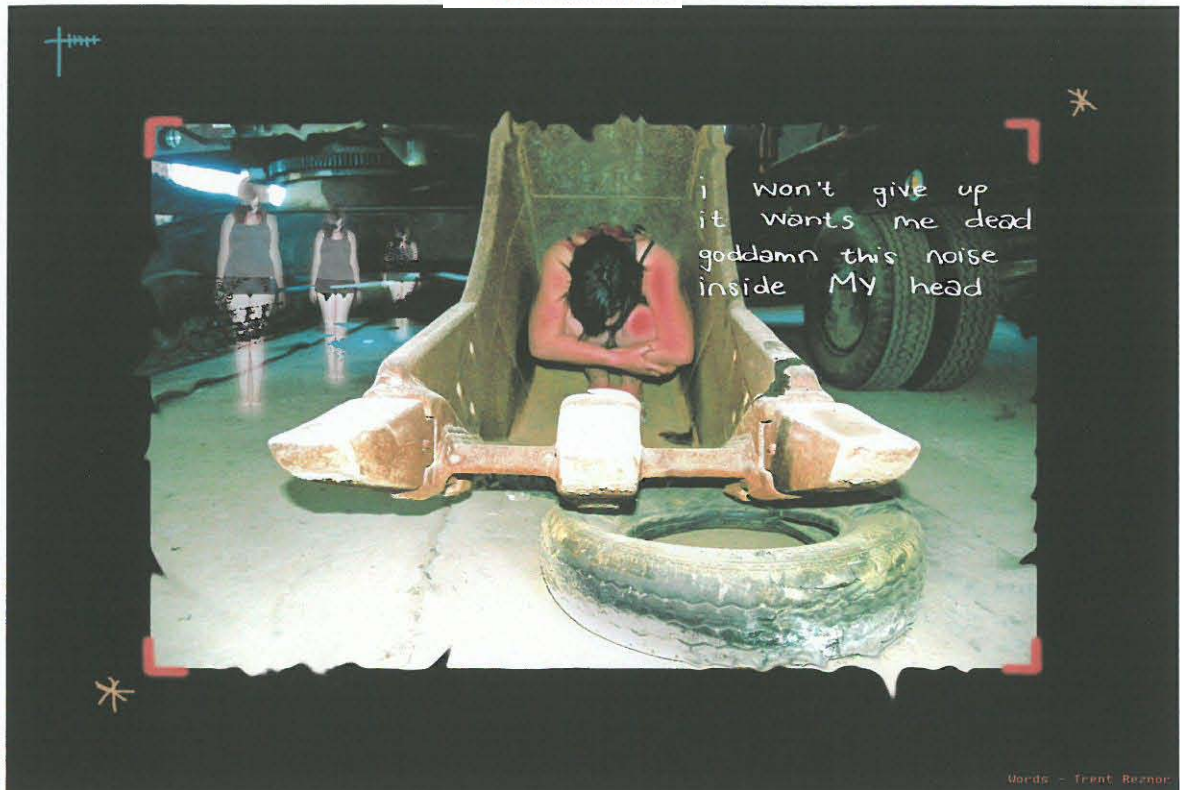


Figure 28, "The becoming" by Danica Soldo

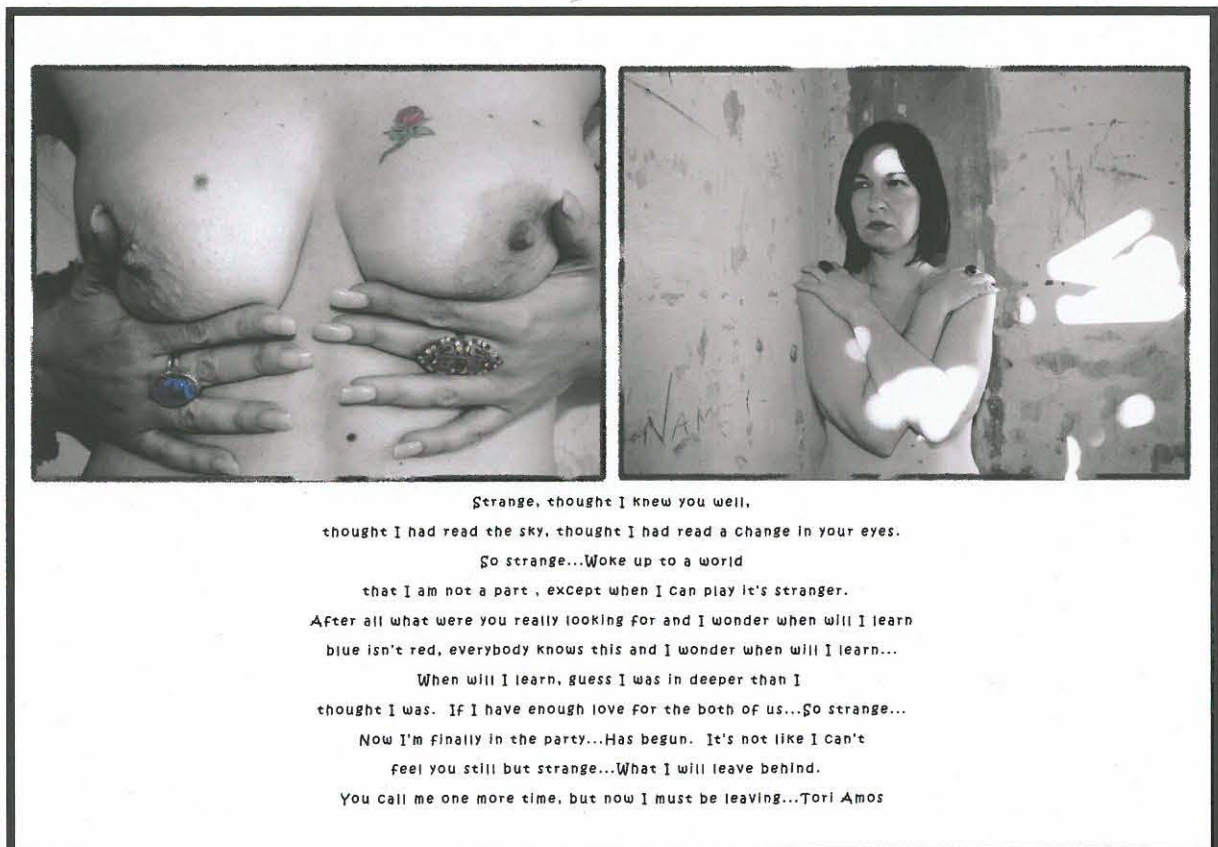


Figure 29, "Thought I knew you well" by Danica Soldo

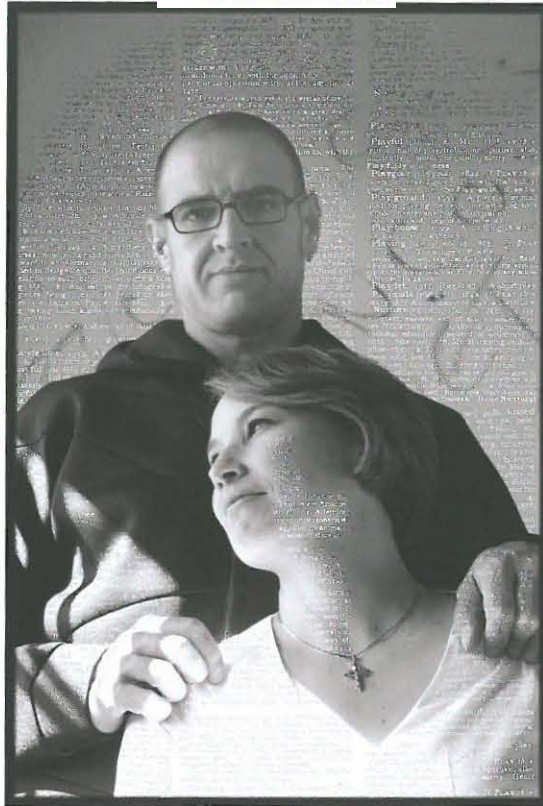


Figure 30, “The writing on the wall” by Danica Soldo

This text was taken from craft paper, scanned onto a computer and dragged over onto the image. The dark parts were removed using layer-blending options and this left only the white text with the image behind it. Parts of the text were then removed using the eraser tool.

“The end part 1 & 2” (figures 31.1 & 31.2, page 40 & 41) has typed text on the walls of the image. The text was wrapped into a shape to change the perspective. Making the original image greyscale, increasing the contrast and then changing the hue to blue altered the colours of this image. Increasing the brightness and saturation intensified the ‘blood’ dripping from the subject’s wrist. The lyrics were taken from a song performed by The Doors, which were written by Jim Morrison (Worobiec & Spence, 2005: 44-47), but the song did not inspire the images as such. The lyrics were only added after the images were completed.



Figure 31.1, "The end part 1" by Danica Soldo



Figure 32.2, “The end part 2” by Danica Soldo

3.4 DIGITAL PHOTOMONTAGE

Photomontage was often used in the beginning of the twentieth century and was particularly popular with propaganda campaigns during the Second World War. This technique involved cutting up photographs, pasting them together to make new images and then re-photographing them. This process has been made much more convenient with the advent of photo editing software. Images can now be cut up, using the magnetic lasso tool to select the desired parts and the cut and paste tools can be used to create a new image. A main image is selected as a background and other sections are merely pasted onto it. This technique still requires exceptional skill and precision and is time consuming, but is still more time-efficient than doing it by hand.

Once all the images are cut up and put onto the background, they appear as separate layers. These layers can be blended together with the use of layer blending tools, lighting effects, blurring effects, changing the opacity or feathering the layer. Any effect, tool or filter can be used to work on each individual layer. Some images may require a lot of blending and use of different filters, whilst others are left untouched, depending on the individual image (Worobiec & Spence, 2003: 28-37). The following images (figures 32-39, pages 42-47) are examples of digital photomontages and they include all of the aforementioned filters, techniques and tools, combined in different ways.

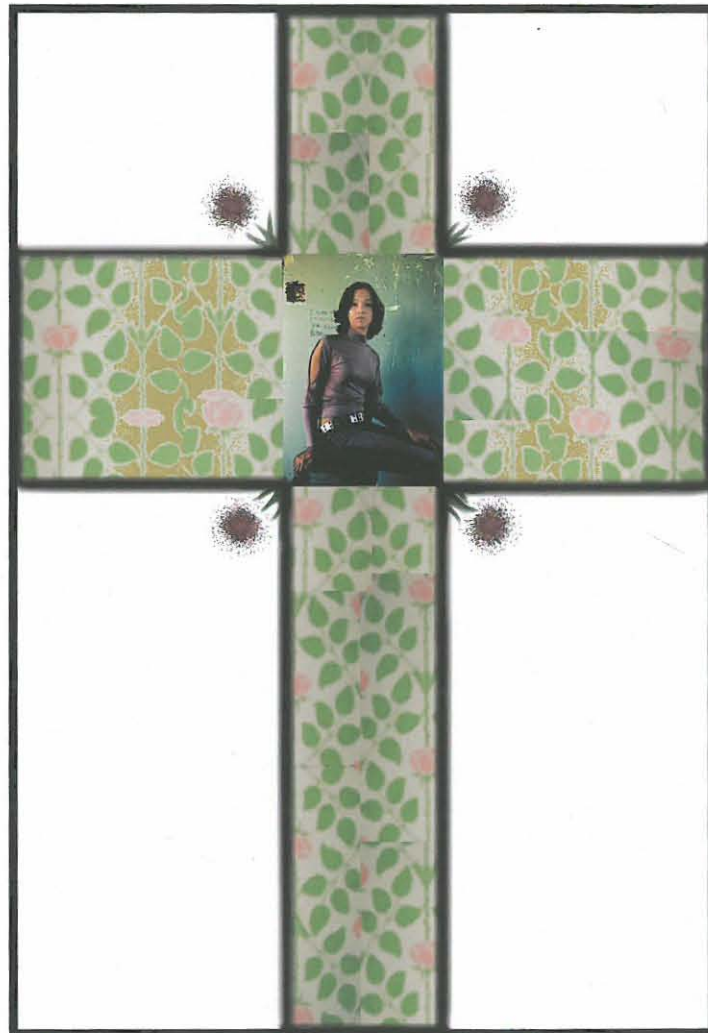


Figure 32, “Cross to bear” by Danica Soldo



Figure 33, "This girl's portrait" by Danica Soldo

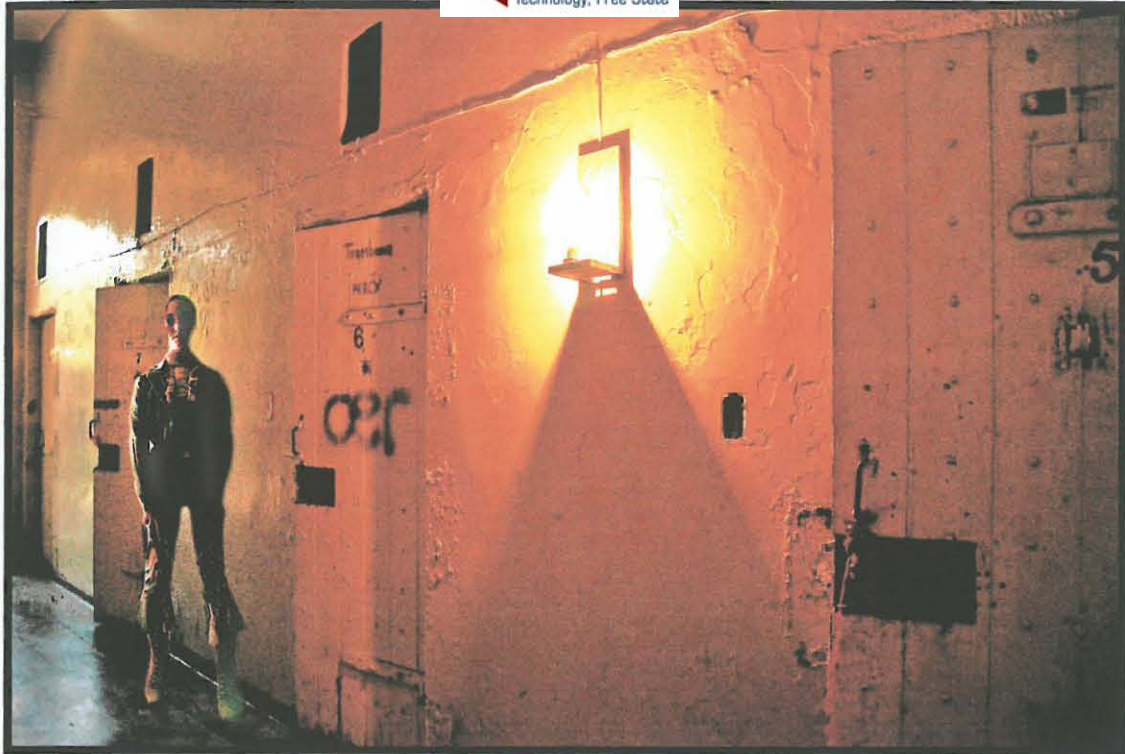


Figure 34, "Escape" by Danica Soldo



Figure 35, "Fly" by Danica Soldo

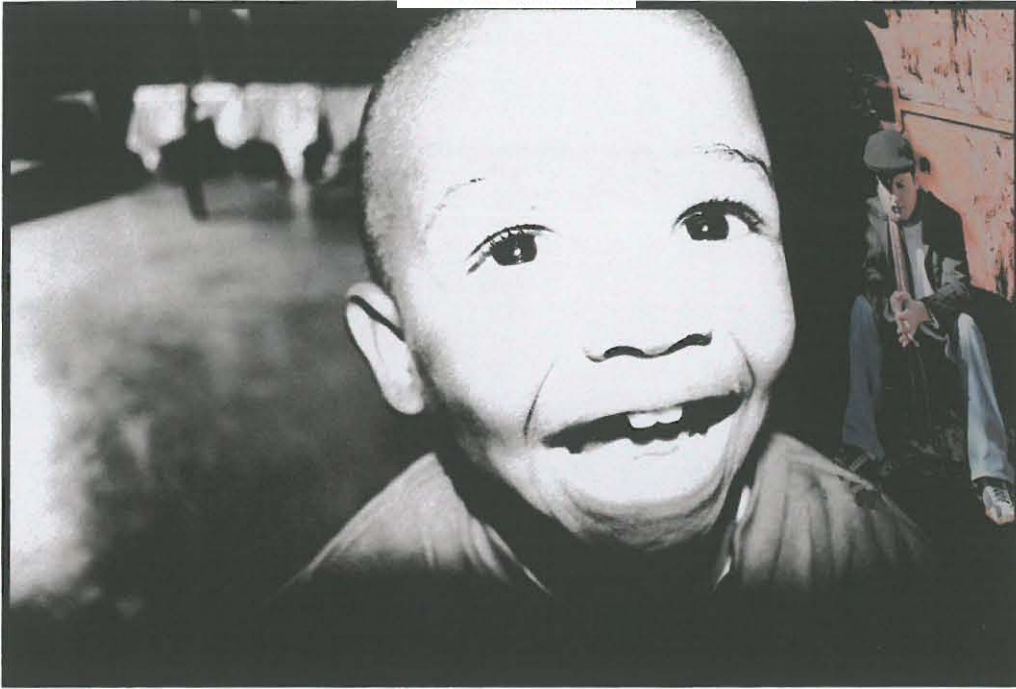


Figure 36, "Terror" by Danica Soldo



Figure 37, "Elri: Portrait" by Danica Soldo

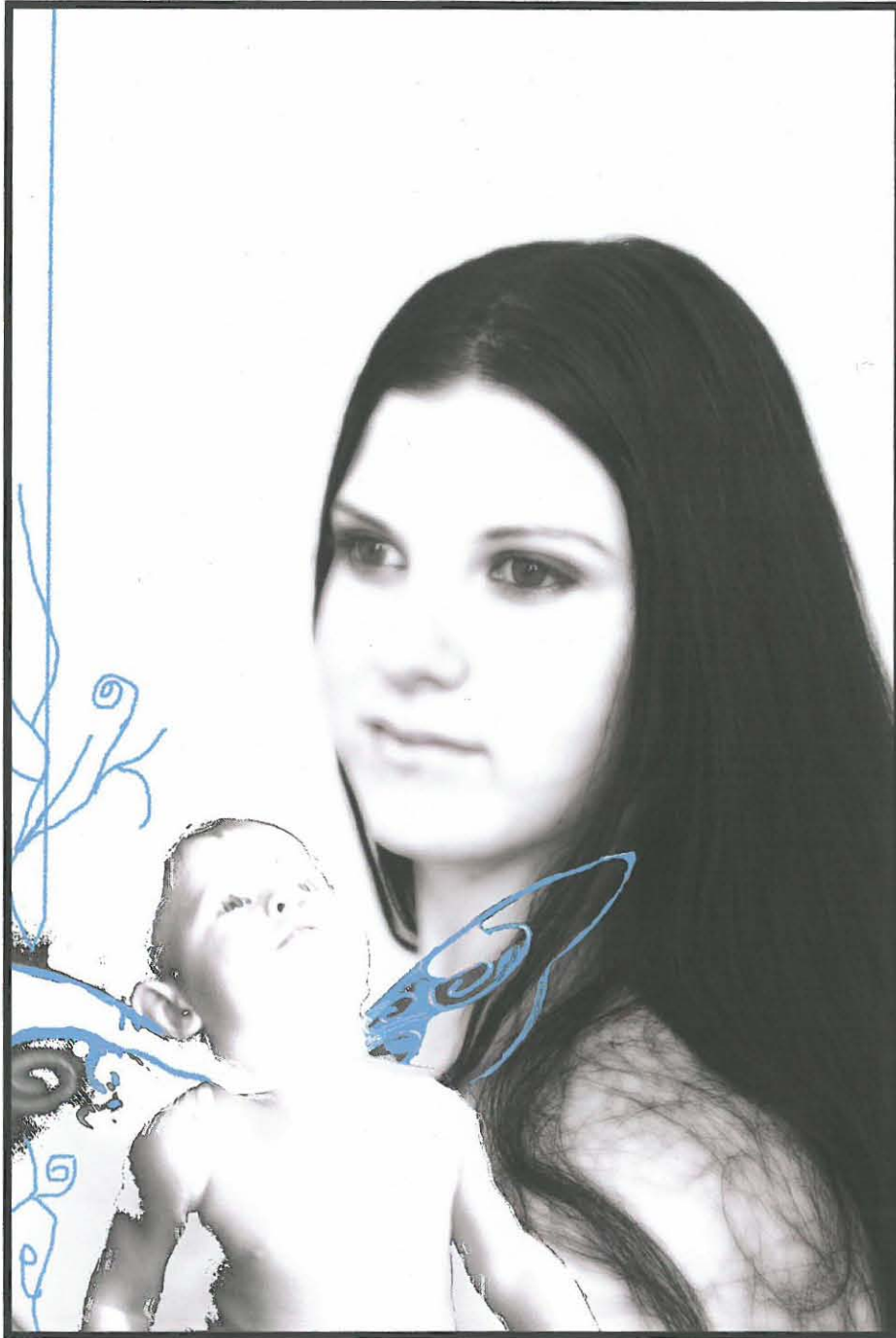


Figure 38, "Beauty queen" by Danica Soldo

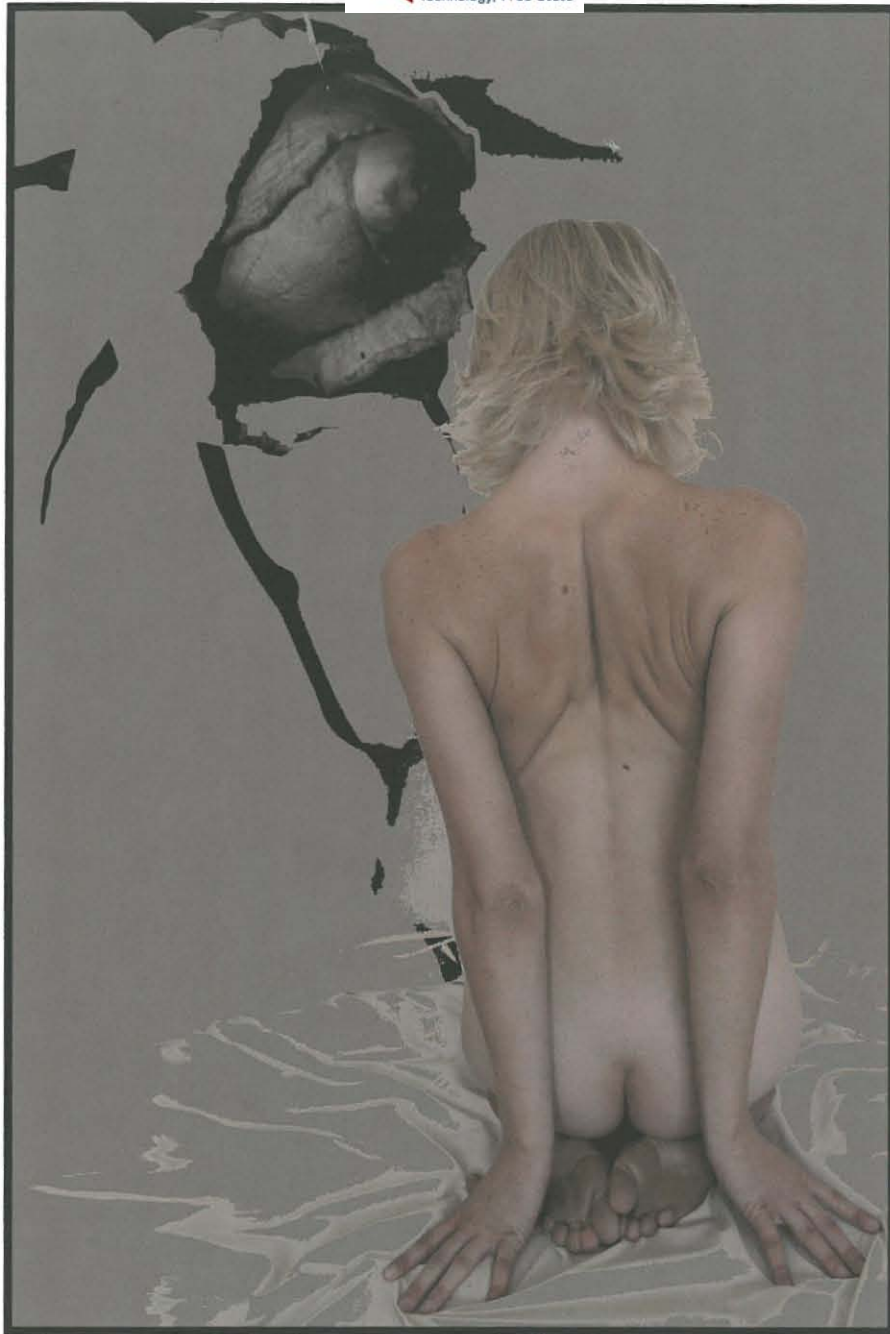


Figure 39, “The rose” by Danica Soldo

3.5 SELECTIVE COLOURING

This technique requires skill and precision to be executed properly. It is a method used to keep one part of a photograph in colour and change the rest to monochrome. If the selection is not cut accurately, it will look untidy when the image is enlarged.

The desired section is selected using the magnetic lasso tool and then it is copied and pasted, this will create a new layer which is kept in RGB colour. The background is then converted to greyscale or simply desaturated. The brightness and contrast can be adjusted if required. Once the technique is mastered, it becomes less time consuming to complete accurately (Worobiec & Spence, 2003: 84-87). The images “After the storm” and “The shape of things still to come” (figures 40 & 41, pages 48 & 49) are basic examples of this technique, while “Wallflower” (figure 42, page 49) is a slightly more complicated example. This image was duplicated as a layer and kept in RGB colour while the background was converted to greyscale. Parts of the subject were removed from the duplicate colour layer using the eraser tool.



Figure 40, “After the storm” by Danica Soldo



Figure 41, “The shape of things still to come” by Danica Soldo

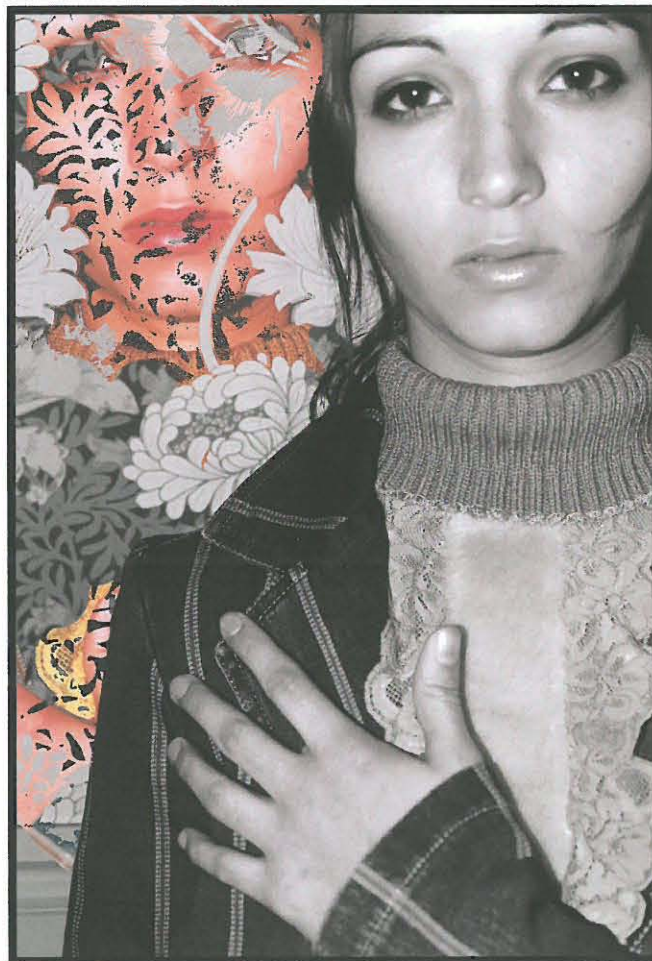


Figure 42, “Wallflower” by Danica Soldo

3.6 SERIES OR SEQUENCE IMAGES

The major work involved in a series or sequence is required during the actual photo shoot. The digital medium has only facilitated a more creative and efficient way of presenting these images. A digitally created series or sequence can incorporate any of the aforementioned techniques, or can simply make use of the images in their original form. In other words, it is possible for series or sequence photographs to be assembled on one photograph, without any form of blending or montage. “The end of sorrow” (figure 43, page 50) is an example of a straightforward sequence shot.

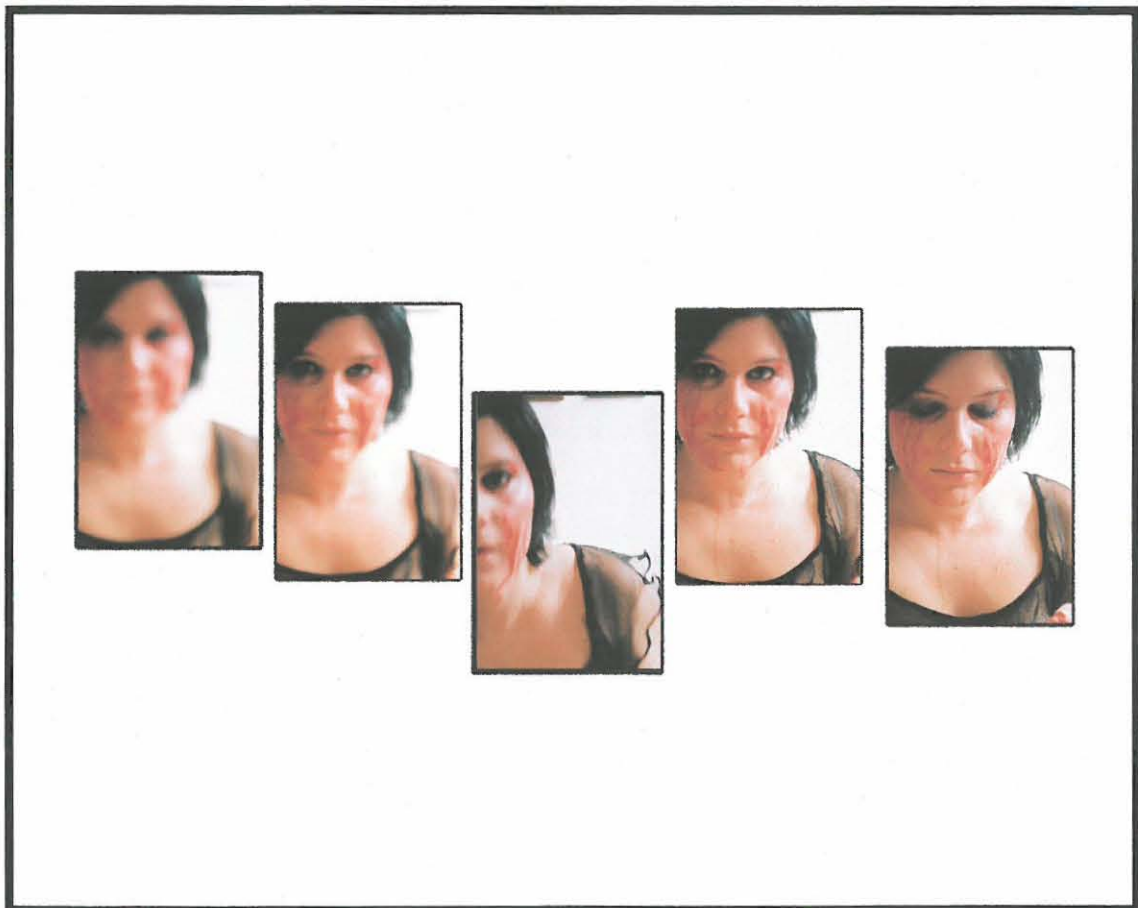


Figure 43, “The end of sorrow” by Danica Soldo

3.7 BLENDING LAYERS

Blending layers in a photo-editing programme is a convenient way of joining different images together into one new image. This tool is imperative to the digital creation process. When a layer is selected, a window opens up and gives you a variety of options. Blending options include bevel and emboss, stroke, outer or inner glow, drop or inner shadow, pattern overlay, stain and gradient overlay.

The general blending mode options include normal, dissolve, overlay, hue, saturation, pin light, hard light, vivid light, hard mix, colour dodge, darken, lighten, difference, exclusion and luminosity modes. The layers opacity and colour can be adjusted. The channel mixer, which allows you to select grey, red, green or blue can be controlled by removing the selected colour from either the selected layer or the underlying layer. This tool gives the artist a huge amount of freedom and control. (Worobiec & Spence, 2005: 16-33)

The combination of the aforementioned tools, techniques and filters together with the blending options allow room for unlimited creativity. It is not possible to discuss all the available combinations of techniques, but the following images are examples of photographs created with the blending of layers taking priority over other techniques and tools used in the creation process (figures 44-47, pages 52-53).

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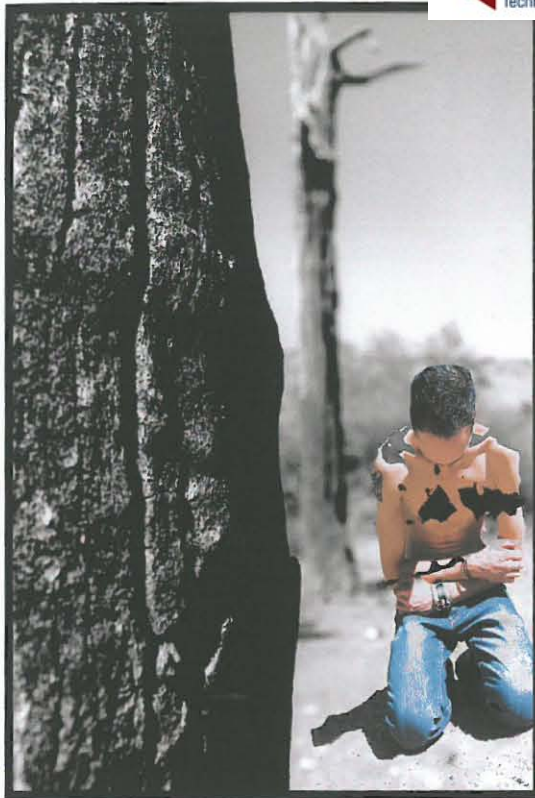


Figure 44, "Terrible pain"
by Danica Soldo



Figure 45, "Tree people"
by Danica Soldo

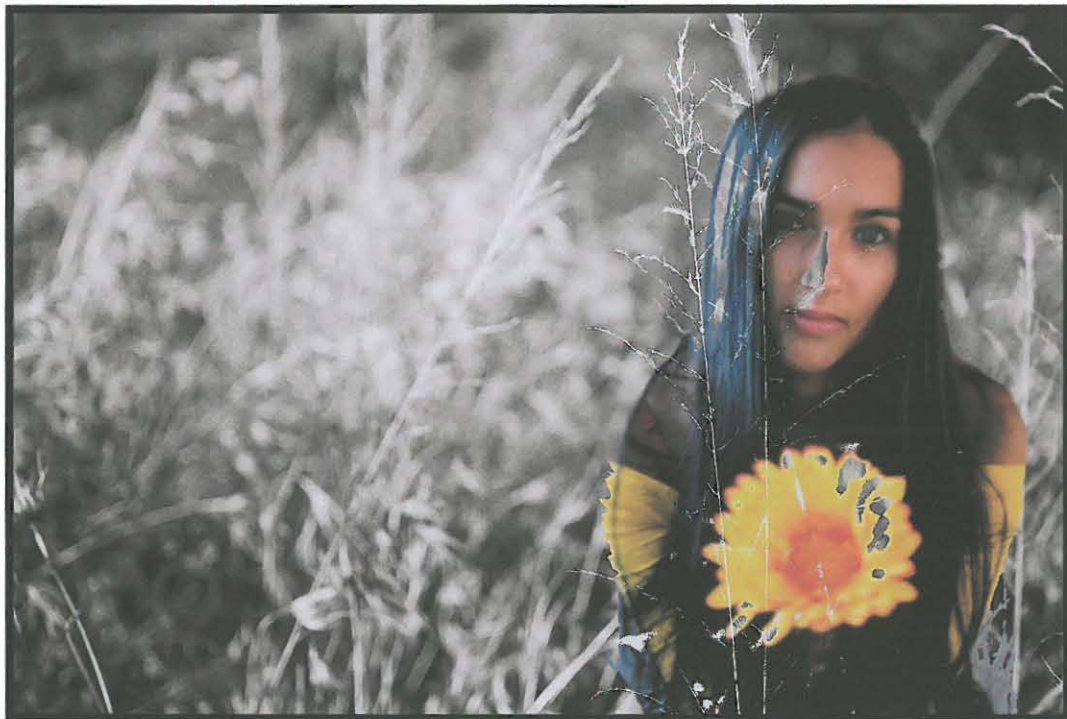


Figure 46.1, "Lost treasure 1" by Danica Soldo



Figure 46.2, "Lost treasure 2" by Danica Soldo



Figure 47, "Retro vision" by Danica Soldo

3.8 USING A SCANNER AS A CAMERA

Very few people who own scanners use them regularly, this holds true for photographers as well. Using a scanner to capture an image has the same effect as photographing a subject using a macro lens, which costs considerably more than a scanner does. Using a scanner as a camera is advantageous as it saves time, money and effort. It is much easier to access an image that has been 'photographed' with the scanner than to go through the whole process of developing film and scanning in negatives. The disadvantage is that not all objects can be brought into an office and made to fit onto an A4 size flatbed scanner. However, if an object is too large to fit in the scanner, it can be scanned in parts.

Images captured by a scanner have a surprising amount of detail and allow the artist to view his subject matter in an exciting, new way. Small, soft, natural objects, such as leaves, feathers, paper, fabric and flowers, are well suited to this technique. Hard or rough objects may damage the scanner and tend to be messy.

The process of capturing an image with a scanner involves placing the object facedown onto the glass of the scanner. This tends to make composition difficult, as the artist does not have a front view of the object. The artist can resolve this by composing the object on a sheet of glass, viewing it from below and then recomposing it on the scanner. Once the composition is complete, the resolution and target image size must be selected from the scanner options. The object is scanned according to the set requirements and transferred into the desired photo-editing programme. (Worobiec & Spence, 2005: 34-41)

In the photomontage “Wedding day / Mira and Veselko” (figure 48, page 55) the photograph of the bride and groom, taken twenty-eight years ago, was scanned, retouched and added into the landscape background. The butterflies were scanned from wrapping paper, while the image of Christ on the cross was taken from a children’s bible. It is a simple example of the use of a scanner in creating a digital artwork as it consists only of photographic and paper scans. The series “Pride and gluttony” (figure 49, page 56) and “Dark angel” (figure 50, page 57) are simpler examples of photographs where textured craft paper was scanned to add dimension to the images. The scans were dragged over the final images as separate layers, blended and selectively erased to give the desired effect.

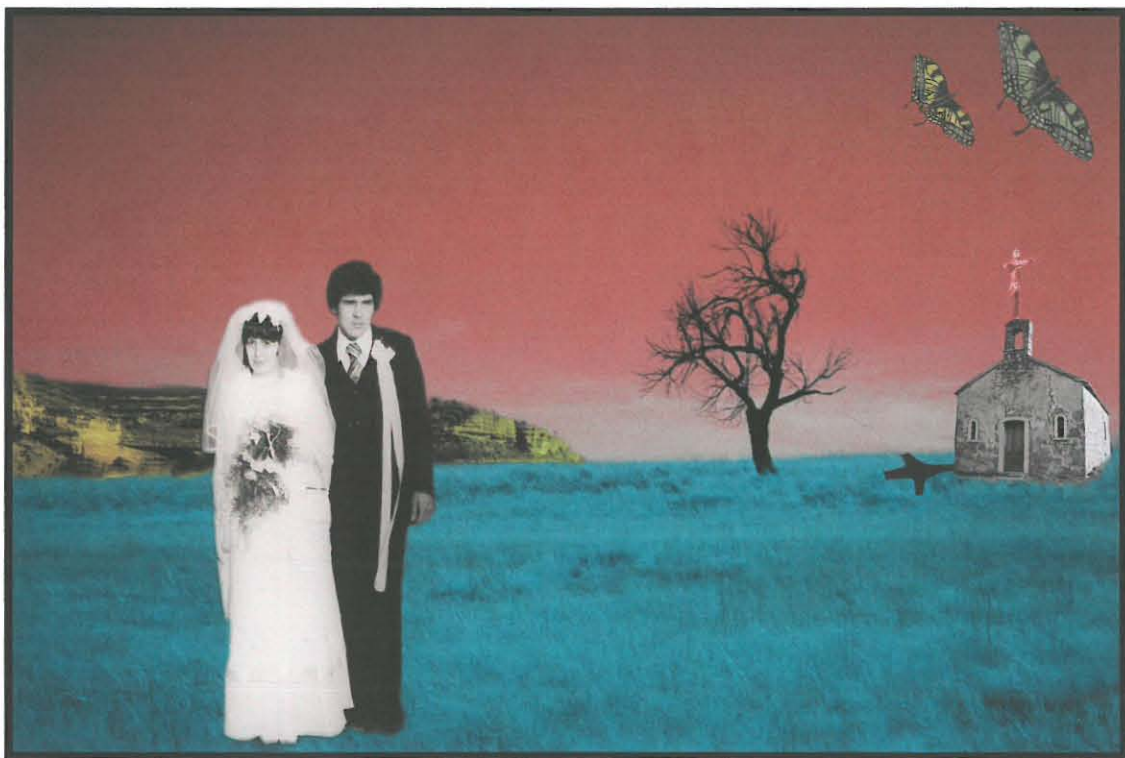


Figure 48, “Wedding day / Mira and Veselko” by Danica Soldo

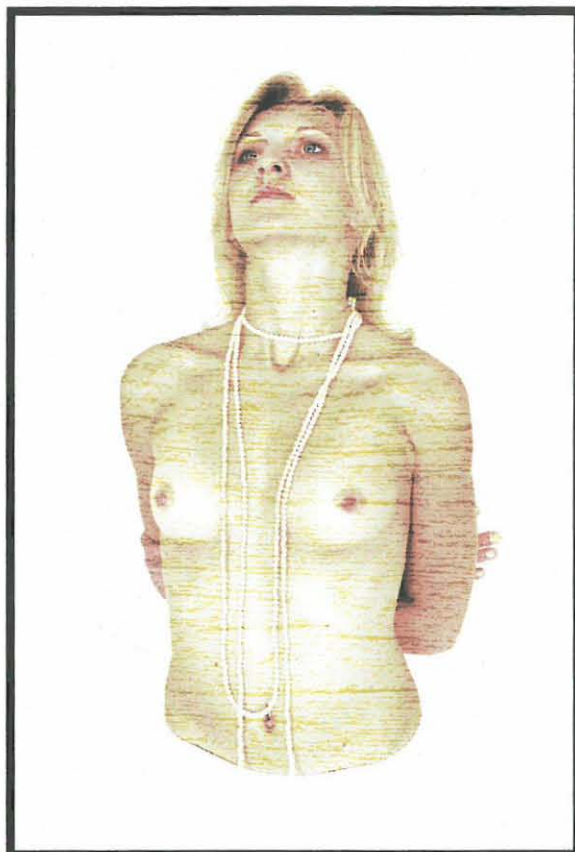
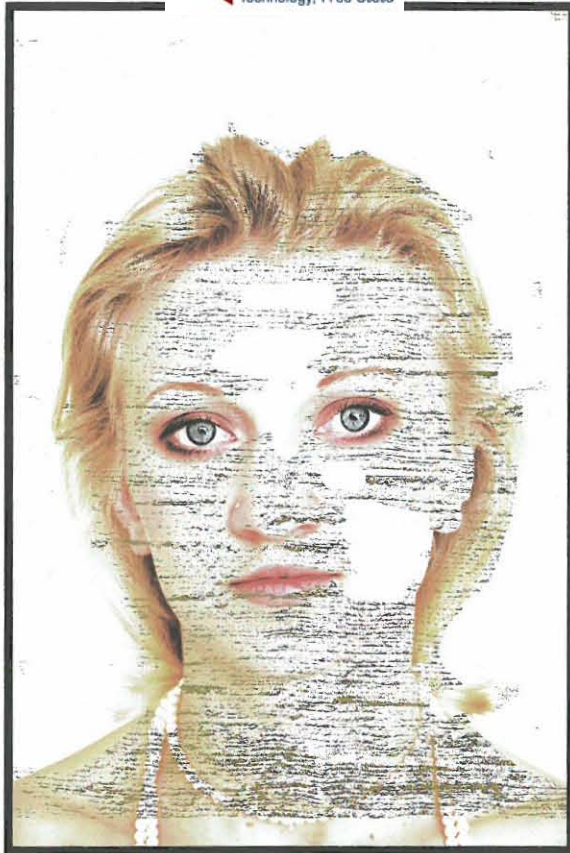


Figure 49, "Pride and gluttony" by Danica Soldo

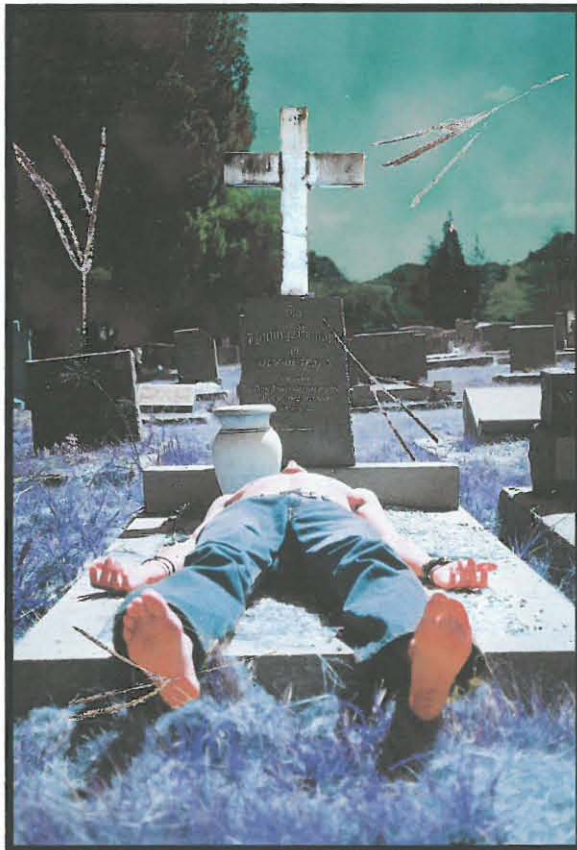


Figure 50, "Dark angel" by Danica Soldo

“Burn” (figure 51, page 58) is a slightly more complicated photograph as it makes use of objects other than paper. It comprises a colour negative and a piece of bark, scanned through an additional sheet of glass to protect the scanner. The bark was dragged over the background image as a new layer, blended and selectively erased. The opacity of this layer was dropped substantially to give the final image a softer appearance.



Figure 51, “Burn” by Danica Soldo

“Blue is the colour of my pain” (figure 52, page 59) was made using a digital photograph and a scan of a dry leaf. The leaf layer was made blue using the hue and saturation adjustment tools. The second layer was erased around the edges to fit into the leaf’s shape. This layer was blended by removing black from the existing layer and blue from the underlying layer. The holes in the leaf had to be carefully erased and blurred to give the leaf a more defined shape. This image shows the amount of detail that can be captured by a scanner.

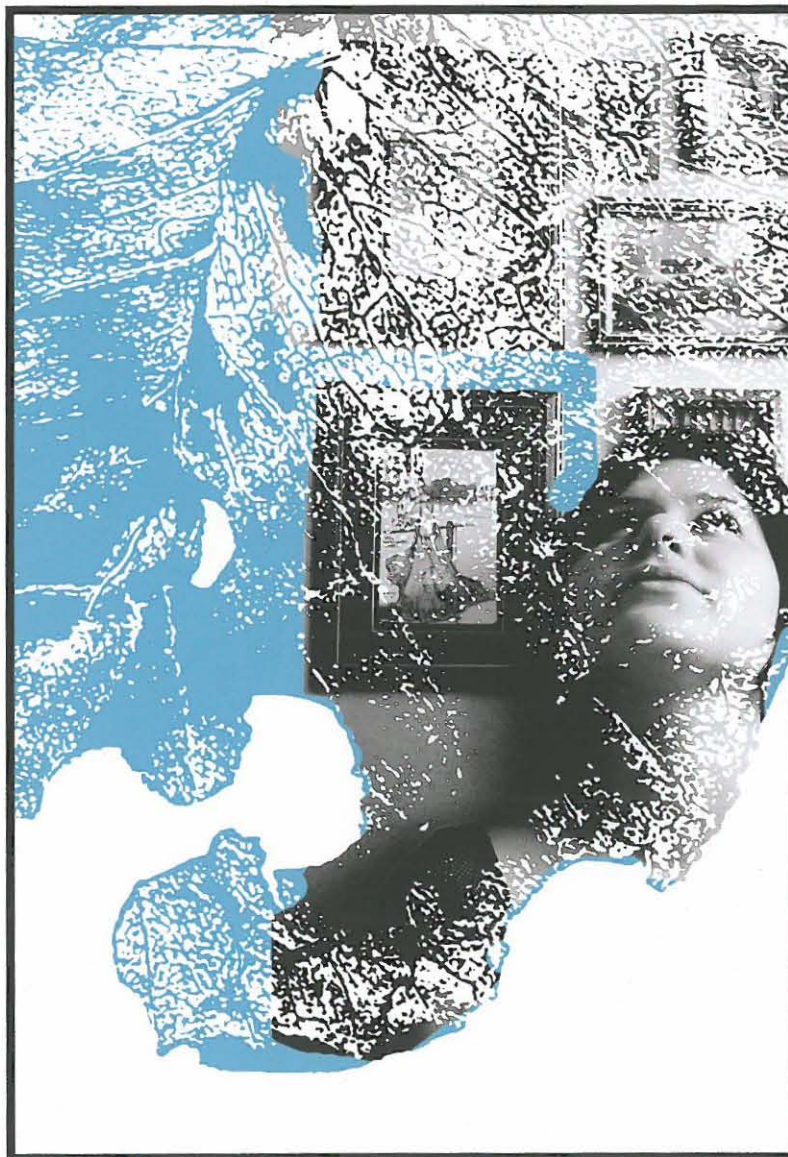


Figure 52, “Blue is the colour of my pain” by Danica Soldo

3.9 CONCLUSION

There are too many techniques available in digital creation to discuss in detail in this research. These techniques have opened many doors for the fine art photographer in the way of creativity and time. An artist can apply the aforementioned techniques in any number of ways, to create almost any type of image the photographer desires and each combination of techniques will produce a unique artwork. However, with all the digital techniques available, the main tools required to produce any successful artwork remain skill, creativity and imagination.

CHAPTER 4: QUESTIONNAIRE

4.1 INTRODUCTION

A questionnaire was drawn up in order to give a clearer view of what the average person believes digital photographic art entails, after all, these people are the potential buyers of such art. If people do not understand the difference between created and manipulated photographs it stands to reason that they cannot possibly know what a digitally created artwork entails.

The target audience of the questionnaire consisted of people who have an interest in art, but not necessarily a good knowledge about the aesthetics involved. Art is not only bought by other artists, but by people who have an interest in it, some of whom may very well have a good knowledge of art, but this is not a necessity. A person does not need to know how something was created in order to like it, however, having knowledge about something might increase the appreciation of it. The target audience was selected with this in mind. All the participants are interested in art in one way or another; they work in creative jobs, study a creative medium or have purchased art at some point. Their fields of work include drama studies, web design, graphic design, company director, accounting, journalism, management, IT and film editing.

The questionnaire was given to the candidates, who were left to answer them on their own, to avoid any input from the moderator. The questions required honest answers without the participants feeling intimidated or asking for explanations about the questions.

4.2 QUESTIONS AND FINDINGS

The questions and subsequent findings of the questionnaire are listed below:

1. Do you consider photography to be a form of art?

100% Answered YES

2. Do you understand that photography is an artistic medium that can be used to create artistic photographs as well as non-artistic photographs?

100% Answered YES

3. Can you differentiate between artistic photographs and non-artistic photographs?

70% Answered YES

30% Answered SOMETIMES

4. Do you respect photographic art as much as painting, in terms of artistic value? Explain:

70% Answered YES, saying photography can be just as pleasing as painting and has its own aesthetic values and principles.

20% Answered MORE, saying that photography requires more creativity and emotion was expressed more effectively through photography.

10% Were INDIFFERENT, saying that each medium is unique and should not be compared to other mediums.

5. Do you think that painting requires more skill than photography? Explain:

90% Answered NO, saying both painting and photography require equal skill and creativity.

10% Were INDIFFERENT, saying each medium is completely different and should not be compared to other mediums.

6. Do you consider digital photography to be an art form?

80% Answered YES

20% Answered SOMETIMES

7. What do you think digital photography entails?

70% Answered that digital photography involves the use of a digital medium, i.e. digital camera, computer, and does not make use of film.

20% Answered that it is merely an easier medium that allows more creativity.

10% Were INDIFFERENT, saying they do not know what it entails.

8. Do you know the difference between a digitally created and a digitally manipulated photograph?

100% Answered YES

9. If you answered yes to the previous question, please explain the difference:

Out of the 100% who thought they could differentiate between a created and manipulated photograph, only 60% correctly explained the difference. They made reference to creation involving the building up of a new image from existing images, using manipulation techniques to create a different image and explaining that manipulation involves editing an original image to enhance it. The remaining 40% made reference to creation being animation or the use of pixels to create images,

while others said digital creation involved using a computer, which is completely incorrect.

10. Have you ever purchased a photographic artwork?

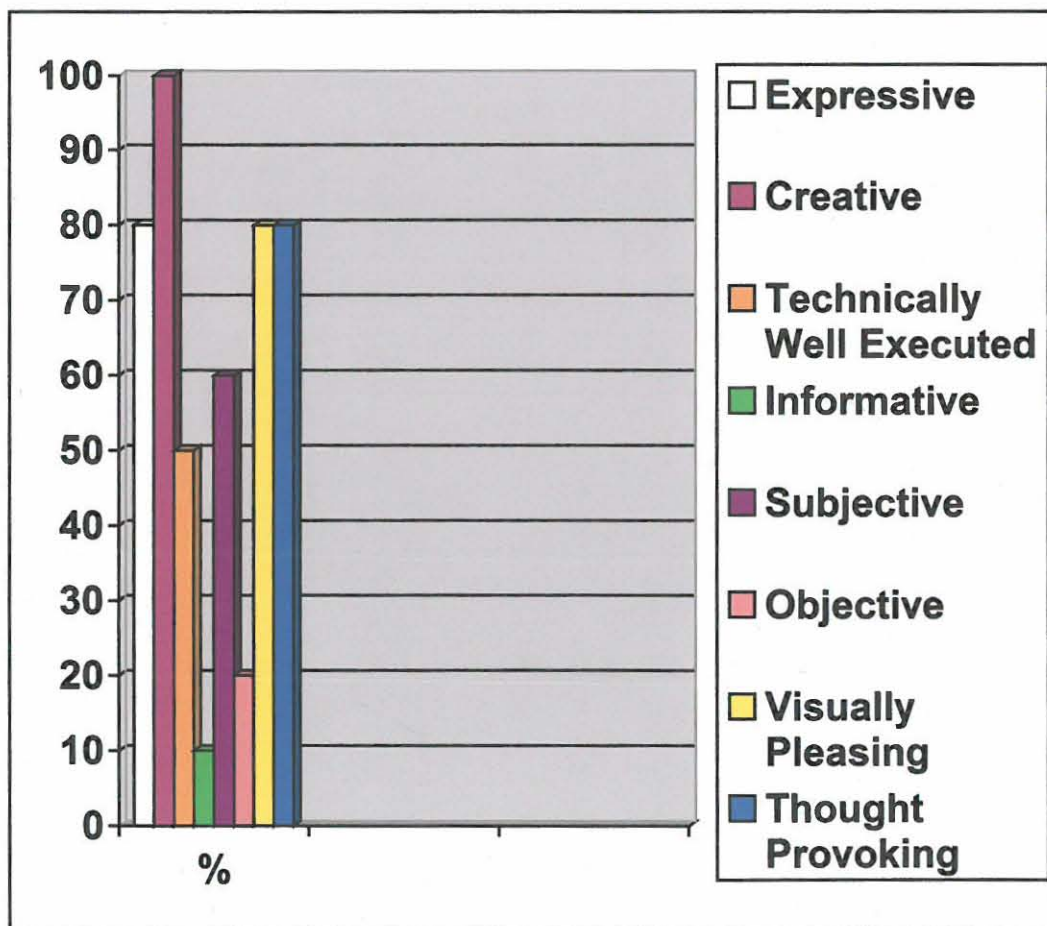
70% Answered YES

30% Answered NO

11. If you answered no to the previous question, please explain why:

The 30% that answered NO said they do not have the funds to purchase art and that it has never been necessary to purchase an artwork of any kind.

12. What criteria should all artwork conform to (please select all that apply)? It should be...



These results show that most people require art to be creative, expressive, visually pleasing and though provoking, while it is less important that art be subjective or objective, informative or technically well executed. This shows that while people understand what constitutes art, they still think the visual aspects are more important than the technical aspects.

13. Should a photographic artwork ...

10% Answered that it should tell you about the photographer / artist

20% Answered that it should tell you about the subject

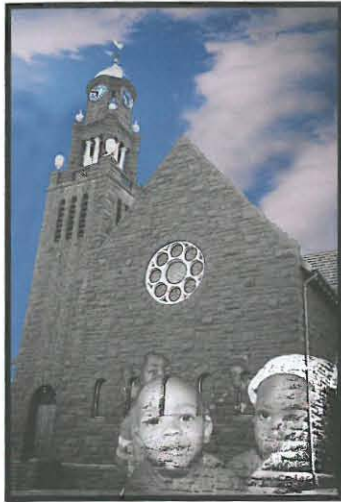
70% Answered that it should be open to the viewer's own interpretation

14. Do you consider the following types of photography to be art or merely a reproduction of events / subjects?

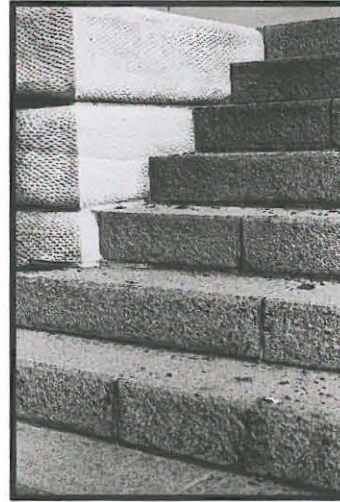
TYPE	ART %	REPRO- DUCTION %	BOTH %
Wedding	50	40	10
Portrait	50	30	20
Photojournalism	20	80	0
Fashion	60	30	10
Fine & Decorative Art	90	0	10
Urban & Landscape	50	10	40

15. Please explain, in terms of artistic content, whether the following photographs are fine art or purely reproduction:

A



B



<u>IMAGE</u>	<u>FINE ART</u>	<u>REPRODUCTION</u>	<u>BOTH</u>
	%	%	%
A	90	10	0
B	60	30	10

4.3 COMMENTS

While most people understand that photojournalism, by design, has to be objective and therefore is mostly reproduction, they still consider something such as wedding photography to be mostly art. Wedding photography is mostly reproduction, considering that the bride getting ready, the church service, the family portraits and the reception photographs are all documentation. Urban landscapes and landscapes can be visually pleasing and creative, but they are still only a reproduction of a scene. This goes to show that if people find something visually pleasing they consider it to be artistic, without any consideration as to

how the image was made, the technical execution, the symbolism or the creative/expressive qualities.

The aim of this questionnaire was to determine what people perceive photographic art to be. The findings prove that there is indeed a basic understanding as to what digital manipulation is and there is differentiation between creation and manipulation. However, there are still questions about what constitutes fine art and what constitutes decorative art. The participants were unconcerned about how images were created and more concerned about how the image looked. This justifies the original intention of this research, which was to differentiate between digitally created and digitally manipulated photographic images.

5. CONCLUSION

The aim of this research was to differentiate between created and manipulated digital photographic art. In this research, it was assumed that most people claim to know the difference between a digitally created and a digitally manipulated photograph.

If people could accurately differentiate between manipulation and creation they would possibly have a better appreciation for digital photographic art. Differentiating between digitally created and manipulated photography can facilitate understanding that photography is indeed an art form worthy of respect.

The painter has his imagination to guide him in the creation of his art while the photographer has to suffice with the reality of everyday objects and people. The photographer needs more artistic skill and more creativity, as he cannot photograph his imagination, he can only photograph what is in front of him. It is the way he photographs it and the way he puts it all together that makes it art.

This research concludes that digital creation differs from manipulation in that the latter only corrects or enhances the original image, while digital creation involves building an entirely new image. A created image makes use of manipulation techniques, but comprises a variety of different artistic mediums and tools to create the final product. Creating a digital artwork involves a considerable amount of technical skill and time. The questionnaire proved that while the average person, who is interested in art, may be able to verbally differentiate between creation and manipulation, he is unable to do so visually.

From the descriptions of the techniques, the findings of the questionnaire and the discussion of photographs, which serve as examples of these techniques, the difference between creation and manipulation of digital photographic art is clear. The aims of this research have been fulfilled by:

- investigating and applying the techniques involved in digital fine art photography
- investigating photographers working in the field of digital fine art photography
- giving a written explanation and a visual representation of the differences between digital creation and manipulation
- giving a written account of all the images and the methods used to create them, and
- gaining an understanding of people's perception of fine art photography through the use of a questionnaire.

Although the Digital Revolution has provided many advantages for the fine art photographer, he is still required to be an artist. Photoshop may well have provided photographers with a quicker, more cost-effective way to make photographs, but it cannot make an artist out of every person who purchases it. The tools, filters and techniques in any medium will only create a successful artwork if they are used correctly and creatively, which requires skill, patience and practice.

Manipulation tools, such as cropping, colour correction and saturation, may be used to create artwork, but if used without skill and creativity, they are useless.

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