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Response to "Scenes from The Tempest"

While debating on how to embark on this endeavor of a paper/project, I originally resorted to writing the five-page paper, with three-page analysis. Papers have proven to be my strong suit as normally I have never been truly that artistic throughout my life. Upon reading the play and being presented the task, I did find myself at a crossroad of sorts. Since high school I had picked up the hobby of photography and have put some serious time and effort into improving my skills in the subject. When I saw the potential to use these skills for this project I realized the capabilities of what was possible in attempting this endeavor. Please be aware, I have for most my time as a photographer only focused on landscapes, cityscapes and night photography. I have limited to no exposure to working with subjects as I have always found it to be challenging as well as difficult to muster up the courage to ask an individual's permission to use them as a subject. I have always been a realist/naturalist when it comes to photography and found that my best work is capturing things in the moment, never staged or planned, but as it was happening in front of me. Therefore my skills in working with subjects is very minimal.

Upon making my decision to embark on this photographic endeavor I enlisted the help of two very close friends, Lydia and Tyler. After developing a script with them, we thought it be best to shoot the project in an area with minimal people, and a wide landscape. It just so happened that this would also coincide with the scene of Prospero and Miranda landing on the

beach after the ship wreck. We scouted Jones Beach for about half an hour, when we realized that storms that had plagued us for the past couple days had carved beautiful multi-layered dunes into the sand, providing us not only with a clean landscape, but a multilayered canvas in which we could use height, distance, and light to the utmost advantage.

The purpose of framing the project on the beach was to explore the depth but also the reality of these individuals and their relationship. I considered conducting the photoshoot in Manhattan to give it an urban twist, but I felt that the business of the area would take away from the intimacy I was looking to captivate between the characters. I decided to use the scenes in a manner that even to an individual who didn't read the book, they would be able to still draw off what the story communicates to the audience. Which also led me to another key choice that I made which was to have no voice acting. I wanted the project to be initially silent, to really fuel the imagination and starve the ears so that the brain would do more leg work in trying to understand what was going on. In a sense, I guess I would say that I was trying to invoke a primal insight from the audience that they normally don't tap into.

The decision to add the piano soundtrack came as I was stitching together the scenes. Each time I would preview the film, I kept humming to myself the tune of the piano, and when finally, I decided to start searching possible songs that would match I came across where I had recognized the tune from. Person of Interest was a show that aired on CBS from 2011-2016, it explored the theme of an all-seeing computer that could predict crime and two individuals, John Reese and Harold Finch would use this information to intercept the crime before it was

committed. After the series, John tricks Harold and makes the ultimate sacrifice to prevent a catastrophic event from occurring and save Harold's life. As John is protecting a download from being intercepted by enemy agents, the man who has survived almost all attacks and wounds both physical and emotional finally meets his match, but has come to terms with himself and his existence. The song used during his final scene is the same song I chose, as I feel it helps stimulate the mind into viewing all that's being presented feel the emotion and grit without being led with verbal dialogue.

I decided to also incorporate technology we are all familiar with to pose the parallel between Caliban in the book, and my interpretation through film. I felt that the iPhone was a solid staple to base the theme of survival off as we all are so dependent on our devices. It made sense that in this version of the play, as it does take place in present day, that the iPhone would prove to be vital. Finding an object that could resemble the gift of knowledge to understand language was proved to be more challenging. It wasn't until many days had passed that I realized the answer was staring me in the face. The headphones stimulate the auditory receptors, which are what we solely rely upon to understand the spoken word between one another. Realizing this, naturally I decided to incorporate the headphones. The decision behind the horse mask was to embody the idea of a foreign man who was not recognizable to what the audience considers to be a normal person. I wanted to instill a similar type of feeling to the audience who would watch my film, the same way that the characters of the Tempest experienced Caliban for the first time.

When it came to filming the scene of Prospero summoning Ariel, I wanted Prospero to emulate the image of a powerful man. Therefore I placed him high up within frame, with his tool which he uses to control Ariel. Although he never had a tool or device to control Ariel with, I felt that the leash/noose was fitting in further solidifying his dominance over Ariel.

Additionally, I recognized the value to staging the height of the two characters would be vital to make the scene even more convincing. Finally, the scene between Ferdinand and Miranda presented the most problems. I debated if whether a close scene of perhaps the characters kissing would be appropriate to embody the love they shared for each other, but that felt too much along the lines of the cliché. I wanted to capture the essence of the romance while remaining subtle and discreet. This led me to decide to position the camera further away from the characters, to not only provide distance but to also stimulate that these two characters remained private with their love which seemed like something that most couples strive to accomplish. The lack of (immediate romance) such as kissing or holding was left out to show the maturity of the two characters and maintain the theme of the film, which was to show the progression of the characters over time.

In conclusion, although I have practiced photography for many years, this was my first attempt to execute a scene using a script and the most exposure I have ever had to working with models. I feel that this experience taught me a lot, between working with models and developing a script and embedding symbols within the photos that have a deeper meaning and require more than just a general glance to understand the context of the scene. I feel like this assignment has opened my mind to new possibilities in what I can do with my photography and

has heightened my appreciation for the symbols that authors embody within the texts for the scavengers of literature to find.

Script:

Sun low:

- 1) Prospero and Miranda wash up on shore
- 2) Look out intensely to the water

Early Day:

- 3) Caliban Fixes Water damaged iPhone
- 4) Repay Caliban with Headphones (Caliban Exits)
- ~~5) Prospero and Miranda Age Twelve years~~
- 6) Prospero Summons Ariel

Sunset:

- 7) Ferdinand and Miranda find love with one another.