



Constructed Realities

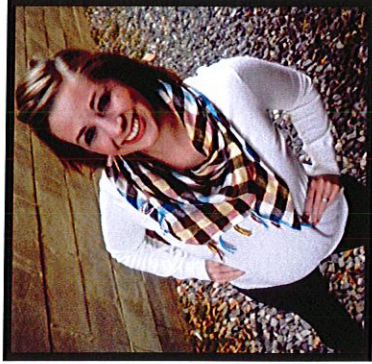
Creative Thesis by Kelsey J. Lefto





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A photograph is one of the most recognizable representations of reality. More so than a painting or sketch, a photograph captures and “proves” things existed within the relationship of space and time” (Bardis). The photographer has the artistic ability and freedom to compose or frame reality in creative ways to capture existence at its most remarkable appearance.

Martin Heidegger once said that “art...is the becoming and happening of truth” (Gilmour, p.8). Before I even knew how to hold a camera, I could represent the world around me through art. While this mostly consisted of finger paintings and doodles in my notebooks, they represented how I saw the world and proved what I thought was most striking about it.

Throughout my schooling, I became extremely interested in the world of photography. I found it is an instant way to creatively express myself. As a personal hobby, photography also allows me to prove and capture the parts of my lived experience I find most striking and captivating. For my creative thesis, I wanted to focus on the theme of “truth” and capture the truths I encounter on a daily basis. I wanted this project to challenge how I see and understand my daily surroundings. My goal was to creatively frame my world so that it is perceived in a whole new light.

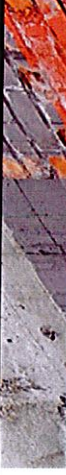
To do so, I drew inspiration from characteristics of Gothic Revival, Romanticism, Impressionism, Art Nouveau, Cubism, and Realism art styles.



“Art...is the becoming and happening of truth.”
-Martin Heidegger



Gothic Revival 4



Romanticism 10



Impressionism 16



Art Nouveau 22



Cubism 28



Realism 36



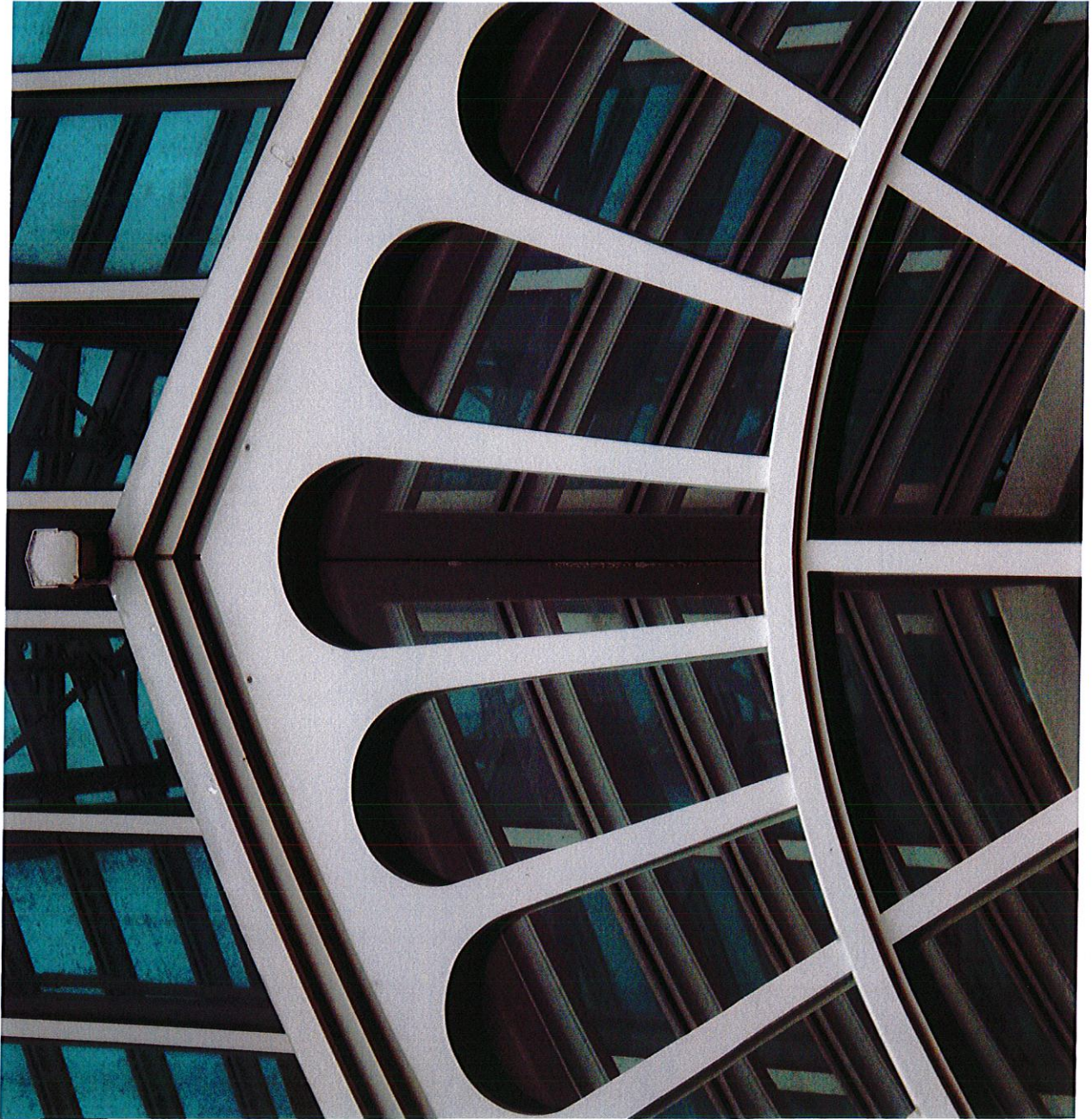
Gothic Revival

A.W.N. Pugin was an architect, designer, and author who felt strongly about the significance of the standards and principles of design. Some of his famous works include the Houses of Parliament and Big Ben.

Pugin based his principles on Gothic architecture and felt paintings or sculptures merely adorned the architecture. Architecture, he believed, is the main form of art. He stated that, "There should be no features about a building which are not necessary for convenience, construction, or propriety" and that "all ornament should consist of enrichment of the essential construction of the building" (Raizman, p.48).

Gothic Revival works are often characterized by the architecture found in many cathedrals, the use of arches and the incorporation of stained glass in the design.

I was inspired by the honesty of materials found in these pieces. I focused on photographing unique architectural elements, especially buildings with arches and glass.



Inspired by Gothic Revival
Photographed in Orlando, FL
Kelsey J. Lefto







Inspired by Gothic Revival
Photographed in Orlando, FL
Kelsey J. Lefto



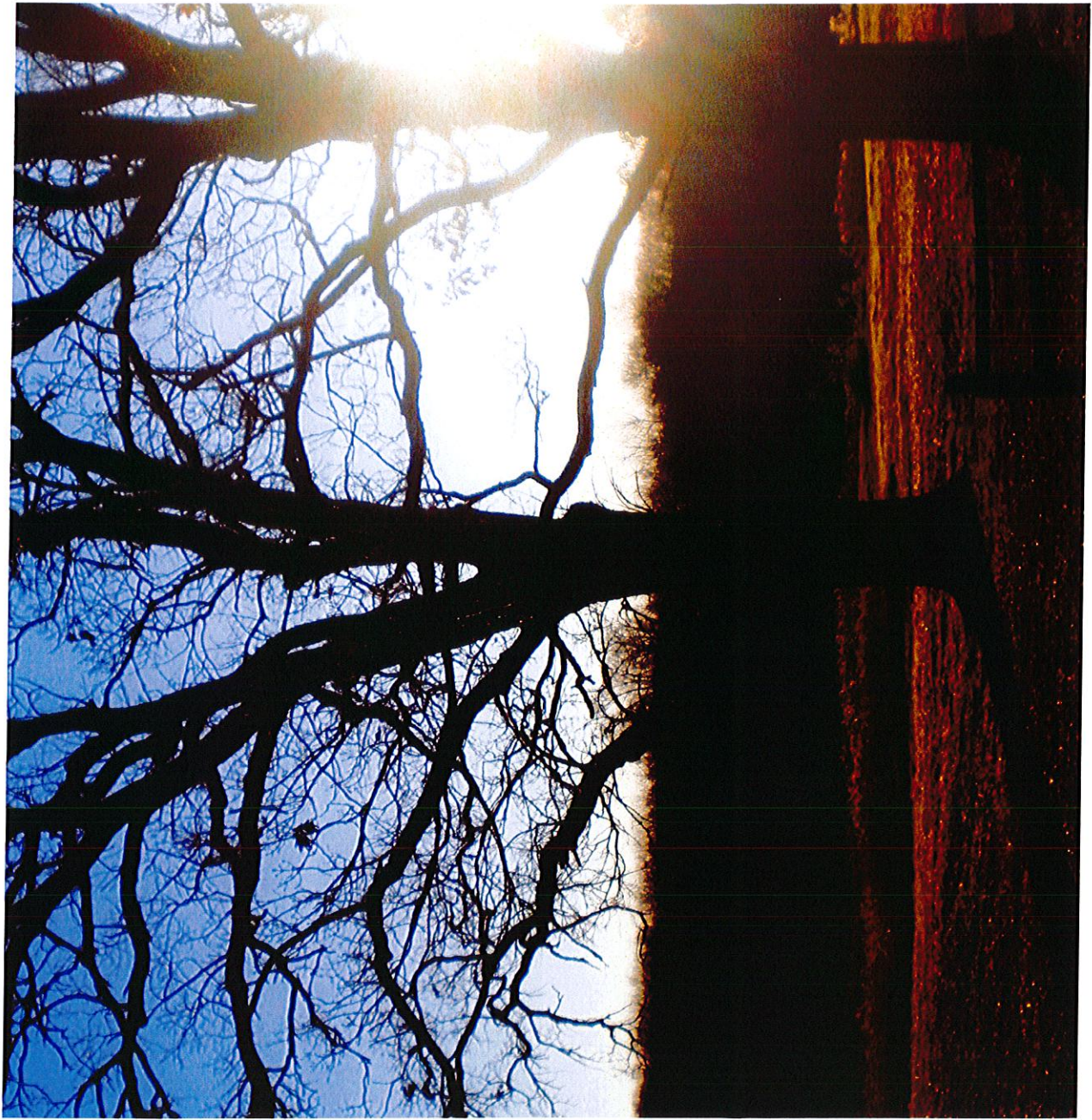
Romanticism

The Romantic movement occurred during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. After the Industrial Revolution there was much questioning of tradition and a tendency to proclaim or express creative freedom and independence. Romanticism was characterized by the ideals of individuality and a desire to break away from tradition.

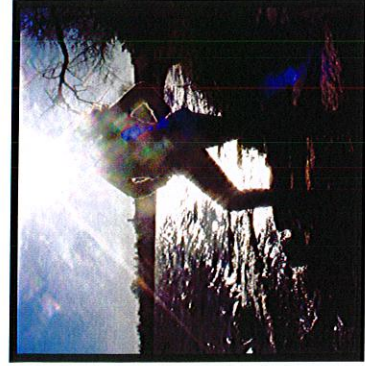
Most Romantic art pieces can be defined by their use of “local color” or natural hues. Romanticism art portrayed the reality of politics and society. Romantic artists expressed and interpreted the world around them through emotion. Some of the greatest landscape painters from the Hudson River School came into existence because of this Romantic spirit.

Most great works of art from the Romantic movement were created from divine imagination and drama to enhance the logical content of the piece.

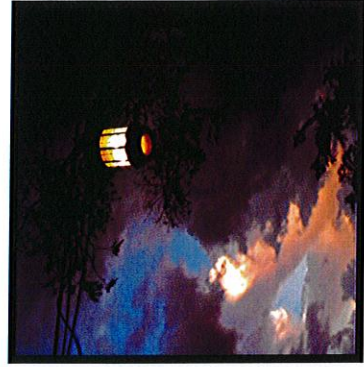
This approach to design inspired me to photograph my natural surroundings in a more dramatic and emotional light.



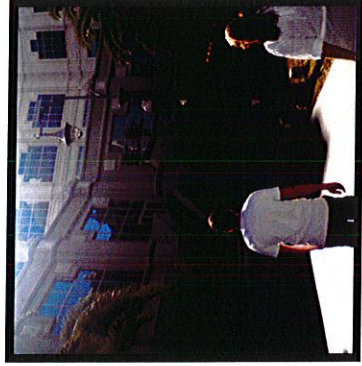
Inspired by Romanticism
Photographed in Bemidji, MN
Kelsey J. Lefto

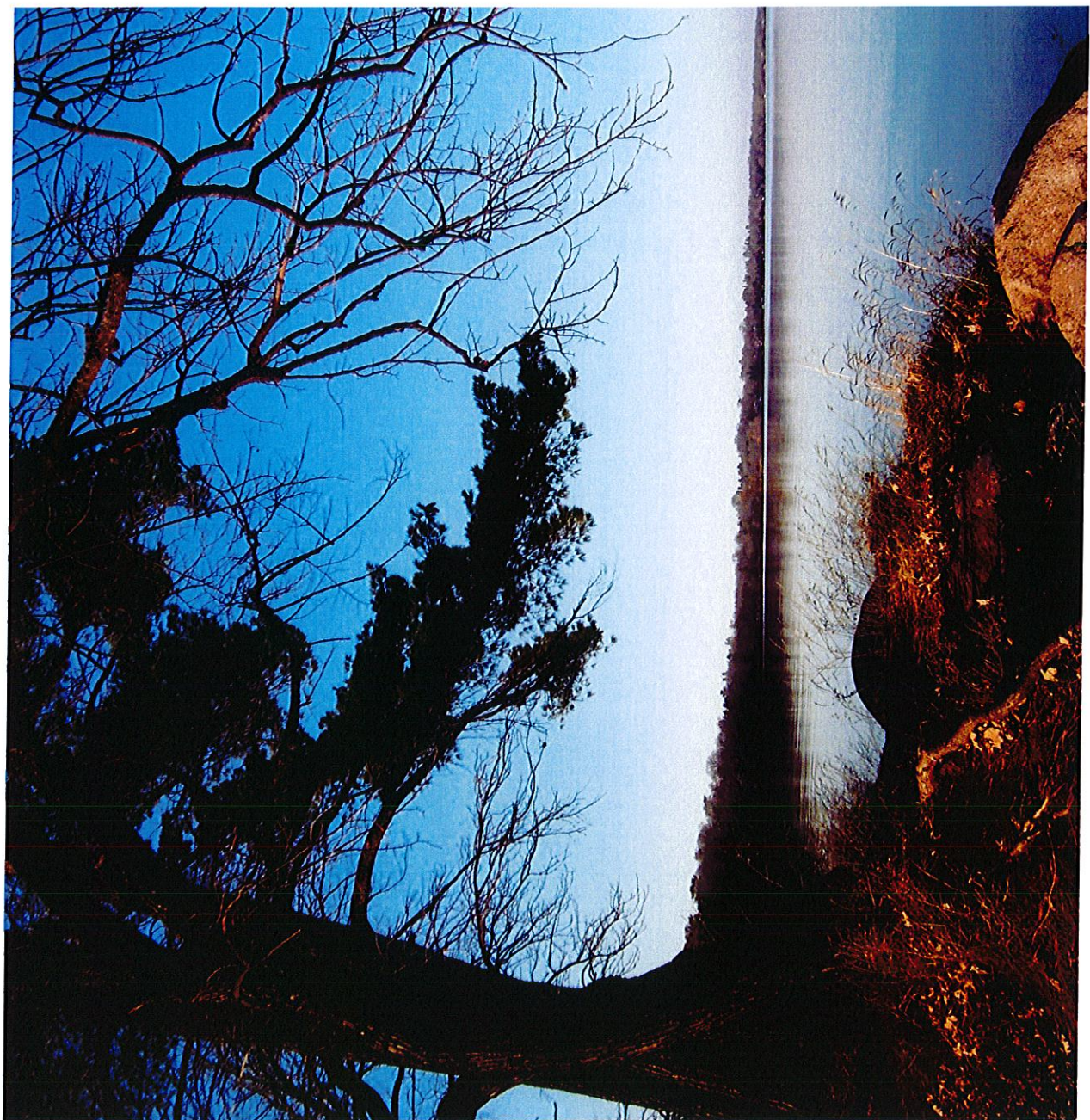


Inspired by Romanticism
Photographed in Orlando, FL
Kelsey J. Lefto



Inspired by Romanticism
Photographed in Las Vegas, NV
Kelsey J. Lefto







Inspired by Romanticism
Photographed in Bemidji, MN
Kelsey J. Lefto



Impressionism

Claude Monet's painting titled "Impression, Sunrise" gave rise to the Impressionist movement in 1874. His work was criticized for being incomplete and more of a rough sketch than a finished painting. However this casual style of painting became an art movement characterized by short brush strokes, vivid color, and emphasis on the way light is portrayed in a piece.

Impressionists often used unique shadows and highlights to create a dramatic lighting effect. It was a new and modern approach to art that rejected previous styles and became well recognized.

This movement inspired me to capture modern life in an "incomplete" or "partial" state. To achieve this I cropped all my photographs so the subject was recognizable, but didn't reveal itself entirely. I also focused on the use of lighting and shadows to create unique effects.



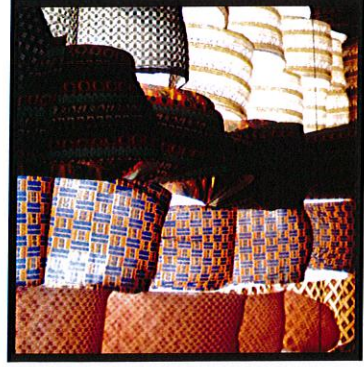
Painting Title: Impression, Sunrise (Impression, soleil levant) 1872
48cm x 63cm or 19 x 24 3/8" - Oil on canvas
Claude Monet



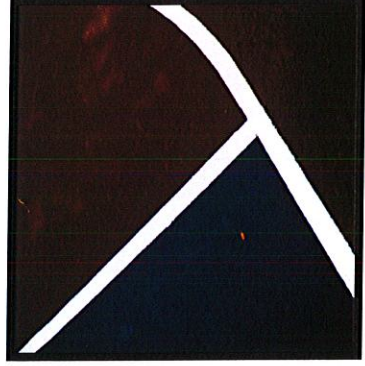
Inspired by Impressionism
Photographed in Bemidji, MN
Kelsey J. Lefto



Inspired by Impressionism
Photographed in Orlando, FL
Kelsey J. Lefto

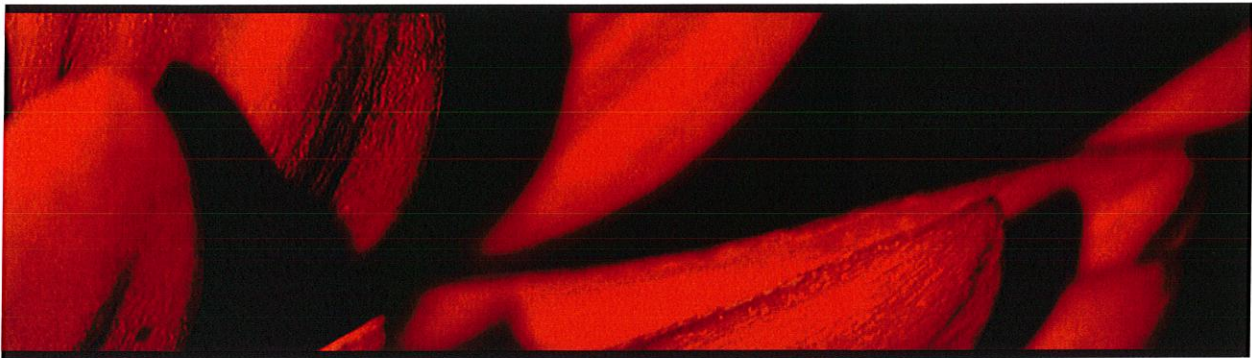


Inspired by Impressionism
Photographed in Plymouth, MN
Kelsey J. Lefto









Inspired by Impressionism
Photographed in
Orlando, FL & Bemidji, MN
Kelsey J. Lefto

Art Nouveau

Art Nouveau is often associated with decorative furniture designs and posters consisting of flowing, swirling line art. This design reform occurred in France during the 1890's and became increasingly prevalent in metropolitan centers. A famous Art Nouveau work is the Métro transportation entrance in Paris designed by Hector Guimard using modern cast iron techniques.

Art Nouveau was a new approach to design that reached broader, more general audiences. The popularity of poster design increased due to the introduction and development of chromolithography. Posters became a popular vehicle of advertisement for the middle class that found leisure in the entertainment and playfulness of dance halls and cabarets. Famous poster designer, Jules Cheret, composed his pieces so there was always a sense of movement and an elimination of detail.

The Art Nouveau designer I am most inspired by is Alphonse Mucha. Born in Bohemia, Mucha

worked in Paris designing poster advertisements to promote the careers of entertainers. He creatively framed figures and designed decorative patterns for each piece. Alphonse Mucha approached the design in an abstract manner and used expressive shapes and dramatic lines to suggest hair and movement.

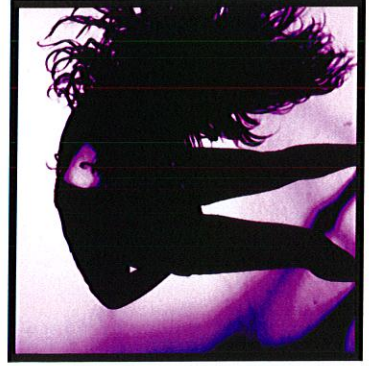
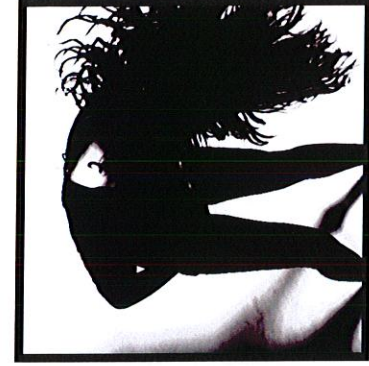
I approached my photography in the same way. I focused particularly on the direction of lines in nature and the physical movement of human hair, captured as expressive shapes digitally on the camera.

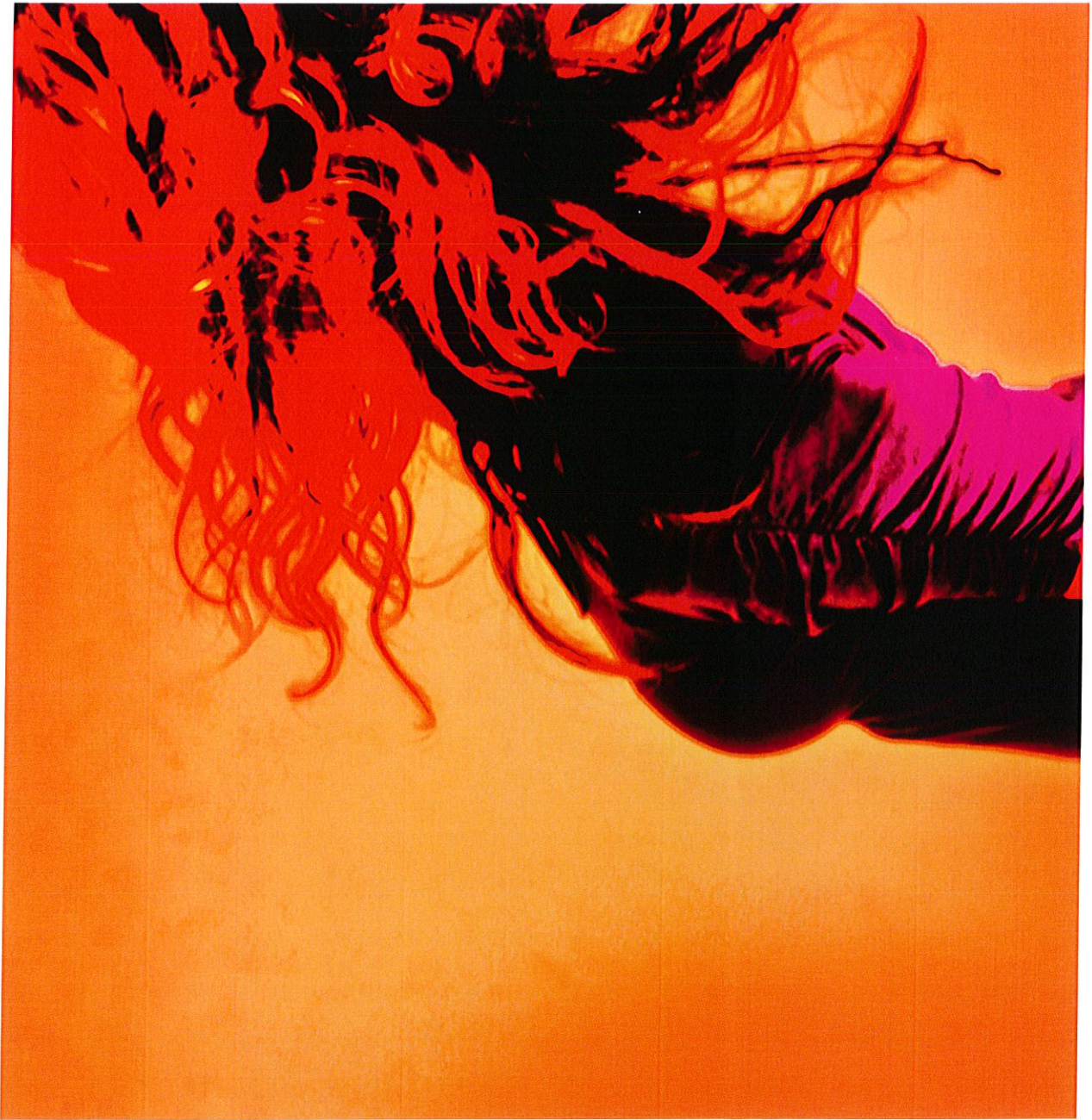


Alphonse Mucha (Czech, 1860-1939), Job, 1896, Color lithograph, 60 x 46 cm (23 9/16 x 18 1/16 in.). MAK - Austrian Museum of Applied Arts/Contemporary Art, Vienna.
© Mucha Trust 2009 / Photo © MAK



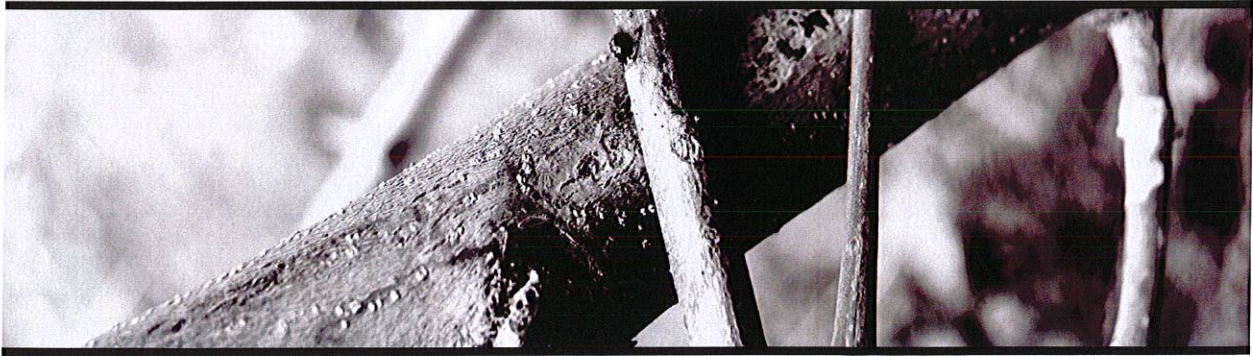
Inspired by Art Nouveau
Photographed in Bemidji, MN
Kelsey J. Lefto







Inspired by Art Nouveau
Photographed in Bemidji, MN
Kelsey J. Lefto



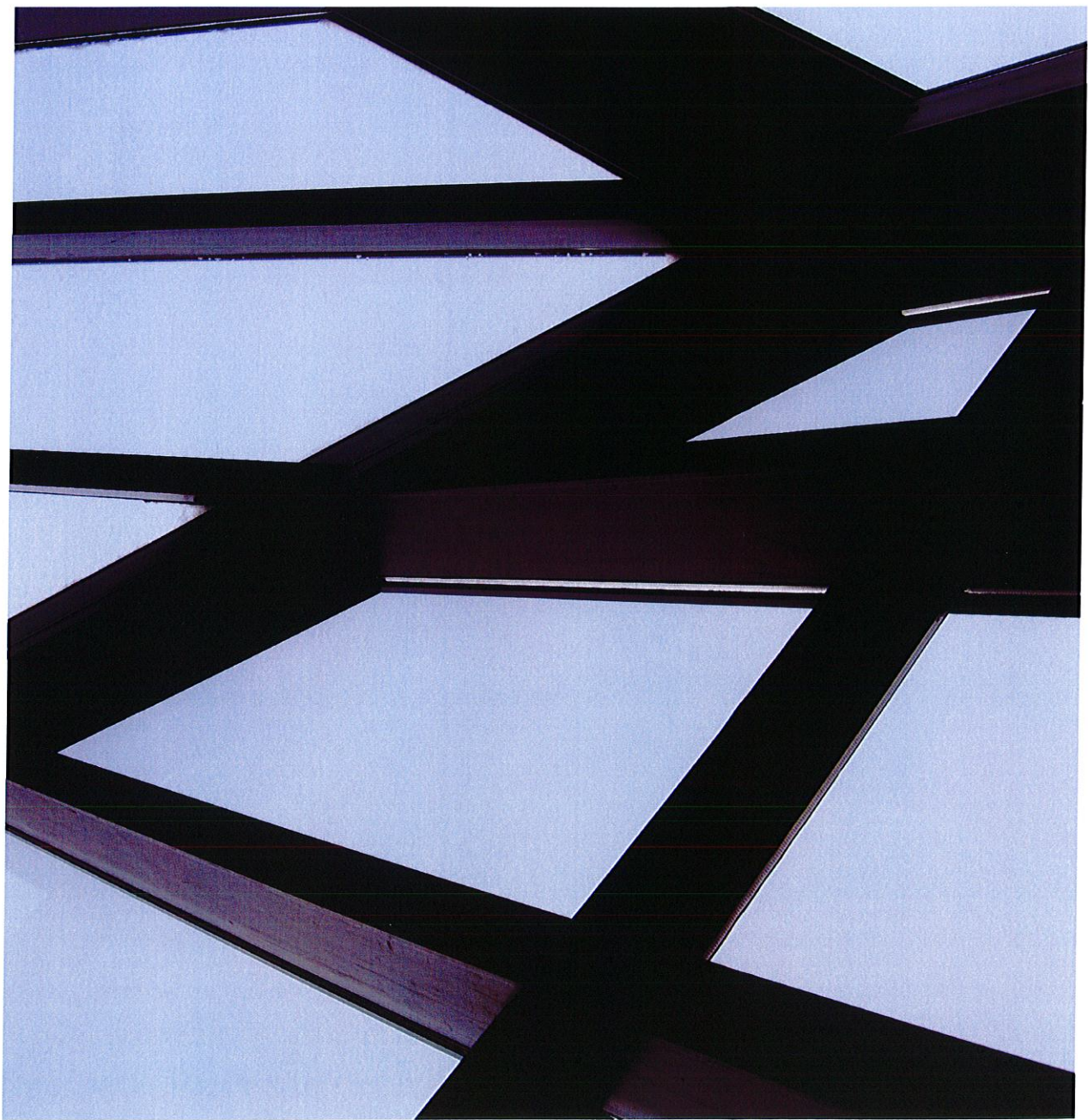
Cubism

In 1907, Pablo Picasso's "Women of Avignon" painting was considered a launching point of Cubism. It broke apart the content and reassembled the pieces in an abstract form. In this way, the piece can be analyzed from many different angles and not depicted from only one direction. Cubism explored the content of the image in more depth and provided a fuller picture of the object.

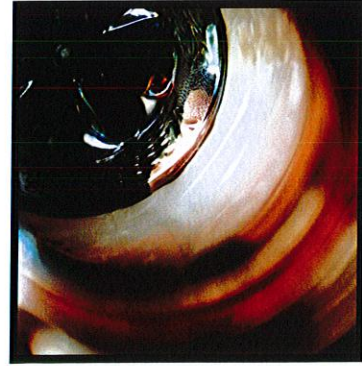
I was inspired by the concept of simplifying natural forms into shapes and reconfiguring them to achieve a fuller understanding of the content. I explored photographing objects and cropped them down to focus on the shapes naturally created within the object itself.



Pablo Picasso, *Les Femmes d'Alger (O Version O)*
Paris, June-July 1911. Oil on canvas, 8' x 7' 8" (243.9 x 233.7 cm). Acquired through the Lillie P. Bliss Bequest.
© 2011 Estate of Pablo Picasso / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York



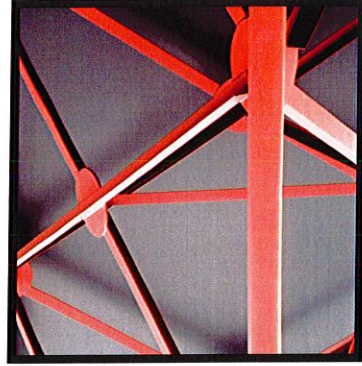
Inspired by Cubism
Photographed in Plymouth, MN
Kelsey J. Lefto

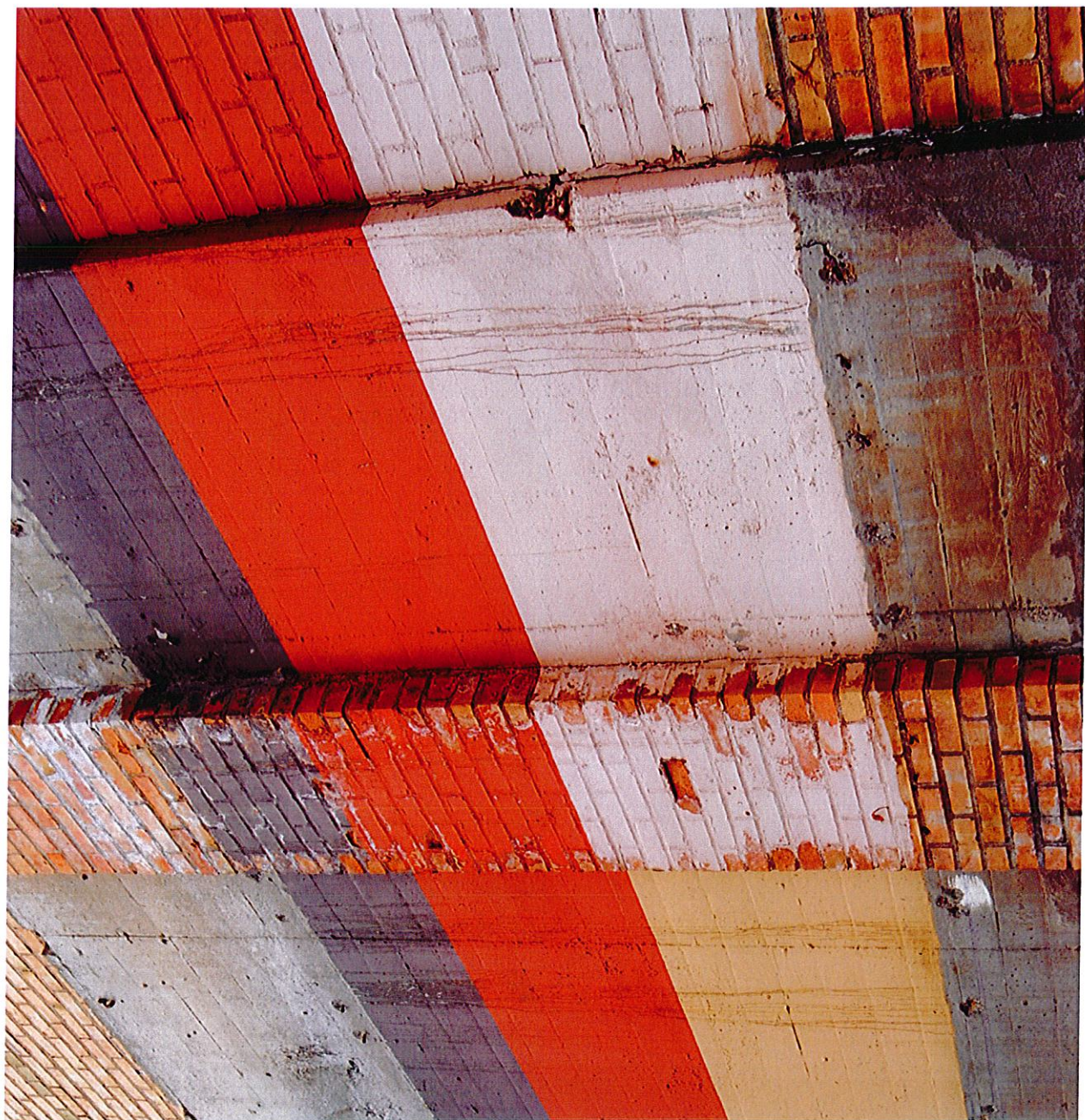


Inspired by Cubism
Photographed in Orlando, FL
Kelsey J. Lefto



Inspired by Cubism
Photographed in Bemidji, MN
Kelsey J. Lefto







Inspired by Cubism
Photographed in Orlando, FL
Kelsey J. Lefto



Inspired by Cubism
Photographed in Orlando, FL
Kelsey J. Lefto



Realism

Realism is defined as the depiction of subjects as they would be seen in their everyday setting. It is often characterized as being an attempt to illustrate life objectively as a third person without elaboration or translation.

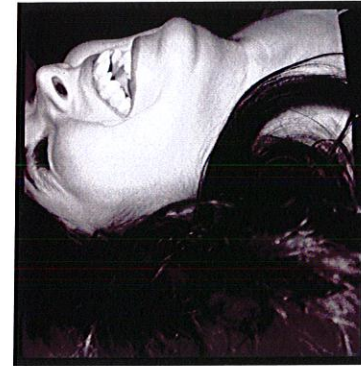
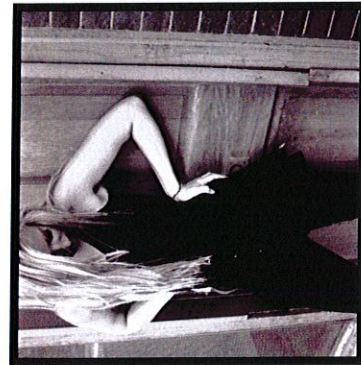
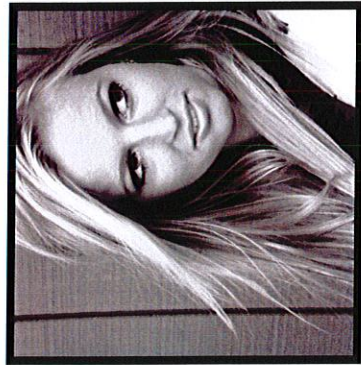
Realists approached their artwork completely opposite of the way Romantic artists portrayed life around them. Realists felt the embellishment of emotion and drama illustrated in Romantic art pieces was not necessary. Their goals were to depict accuracy and the truth. This was often accomplished by showing people in average settings or at their place of work in the art pieces.

A photograph is one of the most recognizable representations of reality. The art of photography allows an individual to closely capture existence and truth as they perceive it.

“Art has the capacity to intensify our encounter with the world” (Gilmour, p.181).



Inspired by Realism
Photographed in Bemidji, MN
Kelsey J. Lefto







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