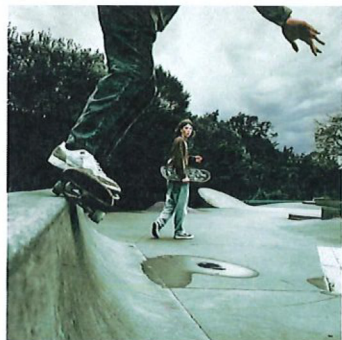


Skateboard lights and shadow

My journey

I got my first skateboard when I was 9 for my Christmas present. Back then I thought I would look cool and that was my motivation. But as the years passed, I moved a lot and situation changed and I lost interest. But at the age of 15, when I came to New Zealand, I thought I needed a way to make friends outside of school and that lead me to pick up skateboard once again. This was successful and skateboarding became a big part of my social life. I met a lot of people through skateboarding and many of them became my friends. I realized that there are so many sides to skateboarding, including sports, a tool to socialize, transport and escape. I was interested in skateboarding because it means different things for each skaters and I wanted to find what it means to me. This was the reason why I decided to do Skateboarding as my theme last year.

What I enjoyed about skate photography was the mixture of documentary photos which I capture the moment and staged photos which I direct the skaters to do something. In order to have the right balance of two, I found it easy to just go out with my friends to skate for a day and shoot as much as I can. This way, I could get lots of kinds of photos that I can pick from. Therefore, having friends who can skate and happy to be taken photos were treasure for me and I couldn't have completed the board without their help.



Intention and purpose

Through my board, I want to capture skateboarding in different lighting condition. I wanted to create a board that explore different techniques that you can use in Photography. Last Year's board was mainly focused on the day time so this year's goal was to go out and take photos during the different time of the day so that I can experiment under different lighting conditions.

Why lights? Why shadows?

When I was creating my Level 2 Photography board, I realized that I am interested in the shadows. I have used the technique of silhouettes. The shadows were everywhere around me yet it made the subject look so impactful. This year I wanted to continue explore shadows but wanted to go beyond and explore the fundamental ingredient of shadows, the lights.

Inspirations

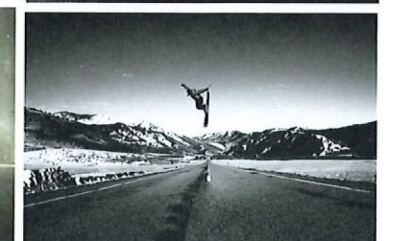
For my artist models I wanted to create a similar work as Roger Deakins and Tal Roberts. Roger Deakins is 15 times Academy awards nominated cinematographer. His work often look at the shadows and silhouettes. Similarly Tal Roberts looks at shadows and silhouette. He is an extreme sports photographer and he takes some photos of skateboarding. Thus his subject matters relates to my work. Some of his slow shutter speed photos are going to influence my work later on but I wasn't looking at them when I chose him for my main artist model



Year 12's board



Roger Deakins work



Tal Roberts work

Board 1 ideas and execution

Compostion

In order to dive in to the lighting of Photography, I wanted to start simple. Start from where I was familiar which was start from day time natural lighting. However taking skate boarding photo in the day time was too broad and in order to condut a shooting plan and schedule I needed something to focus on. Thus, I decided to focus on composition which was also fundamental part of Photography such as lighting.

Artist model inspiration: Tal Roberts

His isolating the subject with the background of the skies attracted me because it made the subject stand out more. His subjects were often extreme sports such as skating, skiing and snowboarding. Therefore, his subject matter was similar to mine so it was easy to recreate his style.



Isolating the subject within the frame.

Using the middle photo to show the information on where they are

Looking at multiple subjects in one photo and their relation

Use of nature in the shot

A line with in the frame creating the sense of connection.

David hilliard's Triptych

David Hilliard's triptych was something that I wanted to try out because it looks at compositions of photos from a new perspective. Looking back on the first shoot I did this year it interesting how what I've learnt in this shoot connecting to the rest of the board.



David Hilliard's work



Tal Roberts work

The idea of isolating the subject in the sky is something that I'll come back to when I go into board 2 and start doing silhouette work. So the use of Tal Roberts doesn't end here.



The original painting of "the last supper"

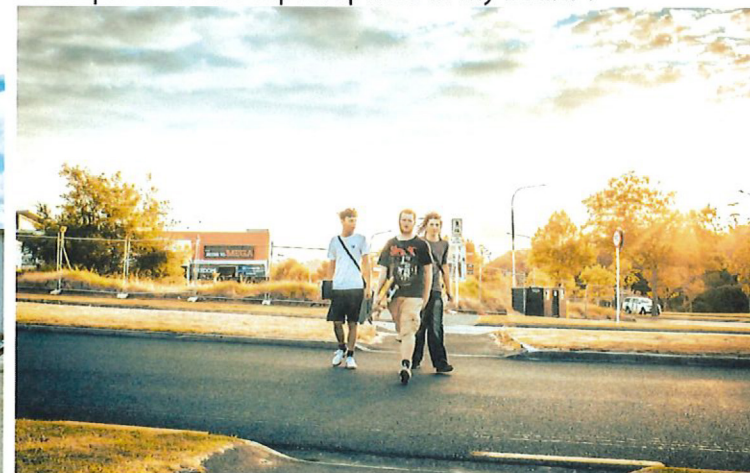
The idea of taking a shot of Skaters spread around in the long landscape frame was something I wanted to execute long time. I got this idea for the composition from the famous last supper painting by Leonardo Da Vinci.



My work



Raw photo of the top left photo in my board 1



Edited photo of the photo in the right

Editing the photos

One of my favourite thing about taking photos is sharing the photos I took. In the present society Social Media takes a huge role in our lives and Photography is not an exception. In order to appeal to the young audience on Instagram I want to present my photos in the best way. Since I started to think so I started spending a lot of time in my editing. I often underexpose the photo and try to use the lowest ISO possible in order to keep the quality of the photo as high as possible. I always look at the colour because the colour gives the information such as the what time of the day, where it was taken and who is in the photo. Also it helps to convey the mood that you felt when you took the photo.

SCRAPPED IDEAS



Some of the photos I have taken didn't end up on the board. For example in the shoot 2 I've experimented with Bokeh and attempted to focus on the technical aspect of Photography. Even though I did like the result that came out of the shoot, I decided not to include the work on my board because they didn't feel like it matches with the rest of my work. In order to create the Bokeh I used the smallest Aperture which was F3.4. I also used the manual focus and in terms of editing them, I saturated color so that it matches with my artist model.



I used Uta Barth for my artist model. Her work often uses colours such as blue and Yellow which I adopted in my work. Also how she looks at the depth of field was one of the reason why I used her as an artist model.



The photo that worked well in Board 2



In order to make the subject stand out I decided to photoshop out the trees in the background. I also edited the photo to brighten up the subject and change the colors.

Frame in Frame
I used this technique to make the subject stand out more. especially because I saw rectangle that has a contracting color to the rest the subject sticks out

I have used the rule of third in this photo. where the two lines connects at the bottom right, I made sure that my subject is placed.

The griding of this photo is something I paid a lot of attention to. the vertical lines that you can see in the photo makes the photo look organized. The horizontal lines in the bottom shows the depth of the photo.



Initially, reflection was supposed to take up more space in the board but I ended up using only 2 photos. This is because I wanted to explore different ways of how lights works in the later on in the boards. Both of the photos that I picked captures middle of the actions and it makes the photo impactful. Moreover, I used the reflection that I found on the tile which is not where people expect to find reflection therefore, it has originality.

Reflection

I included lots of reflection work in my last year's board. I found joy in taking photos of reflection because it added another layer to the photo and didn't feel like I'm just taking photos of people doing skate tricks. Even the simplest subject can be turned into interesting photo just by using reflections. That realization started my interest in experimenting with reflection.

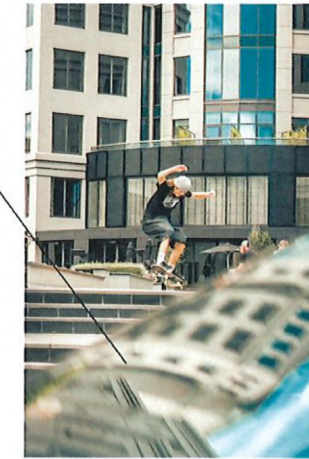


Last year's work with reflection



Using windshield of a car to get a reflection for the street photography

Finding a windshield of a car to create an interesting reflection in my shoot 2 but I ended up not using the shot



During the summer break, I experimented with different ways to get reflection in a different ways. For example, when I was doing street photography in Auckland city, I found out that windshield of cars can create interesting reflection of the subject. I tried this trick for my shoot 2. Even though, I didn't use the photo for the board, I'm glad that I got a trick up on my sleeves to use any time.

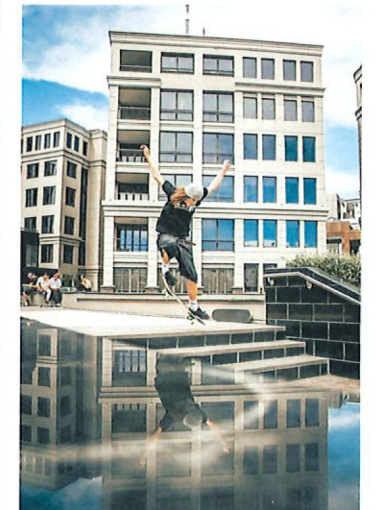


Another reflection I looked at during the summer was using a piece of glass. By carrying around this when I go to the shoots, I can create reflection any where. Because it is a piece of a glass the camera see through it so it gives another layer of reflection on top of the background



The piece of glass that I used to create the reflection

i tried to use some puddles to create the reflection in the underground car park. But there were not enough lights and reflection wasn't clear enough





Flipped my image upside down to make the subject look more alive. It was during the golden hour so i had nice lighting therefore, not much post production was needed. This group shot was inspired from the shot of the film "A clockwork Orange"

the subject in the photo is tiny but I still wanted to make the photo impactful. Therefore, I used composition techniques to do so



Leading line that reveals the subject

By flipping the photo upside down the shadow stands out more in the photo

Cropped in a way it will make the symmetry

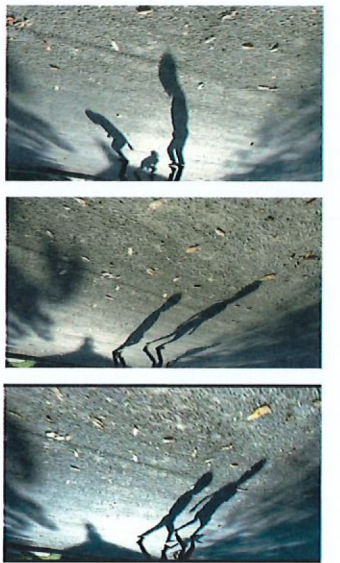
another diagonal leading line

Silhouettes, ideas from various films

After looking at how the lights bounce of I knew the next focus was on how the lights are blocked. I knew I had to focus on shadows and silhouette. Many of my photos have been inspired from lots of films that I've seen in the past and when I was planning my shoots I often watch them again in order to create the same look or feel.

Inverted images

I came up with the idea of inverting an image of shadow from the film The tree of life released in 2011. by inverting the image, it made the shadow more alive and almost like looking at silhouettes. I liked the idea of taking a photo of just the ground but tells so much more stories.



The stills from The tree of life



I had to take the shot at the very right moment when the silhouette of skateboard is clear and it is in the sky.

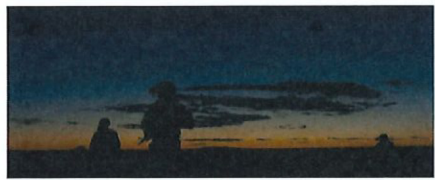
I put the subject in the center to follow my artistic model

Added the street light to balance out the composition



Editing notes:

- Darkened the shadow to create a nice silhouette.
- Saturating the colour so that orange comes off strong (there were more Blue in the Raw image)
- Putting up more contrast on Adobe lightroom



The shot from Sicario



The shot from "A clockwork Orange"

I had to wait few hours for the sky to look like the image in the above from Sicario.

This shoot was challenging because i've never done any shoot under this lighting condition. it was dark yet I had to get fast shutter speed to get clear silhouette



ISO 200
f/4.5
Shutter speed:1/320 sec

It is important to go low as much as you can when you tried to get this kind of shot. It's because skateboard cannot cover the background trees. If it does, you won't be able to see the skateboard's silhouette



Still shot from Roger Deakins' films

Orange background and silhouette

Looking at Roger Deakins' work I realized that Orange coloured background and a silhouette in the centre of the frame was his signature shot. What these shots have in common is that all the shots takes place when the character is walking into a new area they haven't been to. The area always turns out to be a dangerous place where the character almost lose their life. Therefore, the shots like this has an impact on the audience by making them realize that the character is walking into uncertain and chaotic world. What I wanted to achieve by taking a photo that is inspired by his work was to have a visual impact and to have the sense of uncertainty and chaos. After this shot, the rest of my board takes place at the night time and the visual style become more abstract. The purpose of this shot was to finish of the day time section and let them know that it's going into a different world where the chaos is visible.

Night Photography

Another shoot that did not end up in my board was my shoot 5. It was inspired by Lasor Kola. This shoot didn't work well because of lack of experience in it. Night photography was challenging because I wasn't familiar with the low key lighting. Also my camera didn't allow me to use high ISO because I wanted to keep the quality.



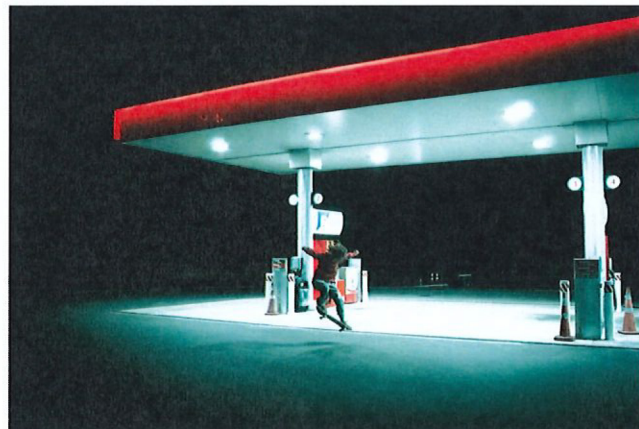
The issue

I wasn't happy with the results that I've got from my shoot4. Lasor Kola was a suitable artist model yet the night photography with the camera I have wasn't getting a good enough quality to satisfy me. On top of that finding the place where there's enough lights were very difficult at night time. Most of the photos came out to be either not happy with the quality or not happy with the composition of the photos.

The solution

From the experience of not being able to work with the low lighting I had to come up with new ideas. I had experience in working for local musicians at the gig scenes. My friend who also does the same thing Bella Fenton had this style of using flash and the long exposure at the same time. I decided to adopt the same ideas due to the lack of lighting equipment's and also to make the musicians more dramatic.

My work



distracting signs. The subject doesn't stand out as much



Belle Fenton's work that inspired me

My gig/concert photography work that gave me new ideas



The ideas at the UFO New Lynn

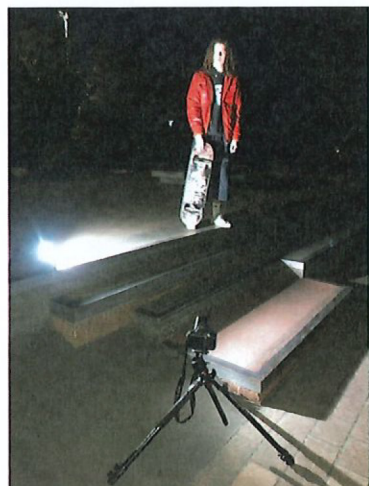


The Weather Here at the UFO New Lynn

After going to few gigs and trying out the technique, realized that it could be used for my school work. This is when I realized that I had issue with getting enough light during the night time but by using long exposure and flash, I can get enough lights to tell what's going on. Also long exposure and how the light works can be another stylized way to explore how the lights work in Photography

Adopting the techniques

The preparation for shoot 7



1. My subject
2. the work light that I brought for the shoot.
3. the camera on a tripod to get the low angle long exposure shot.

Behind the scene of Shoot 7
My subject standing in front of the work light and the tripod that I have used



The fisheye lens that I decided to use for this shoot

The results of the shoot 7

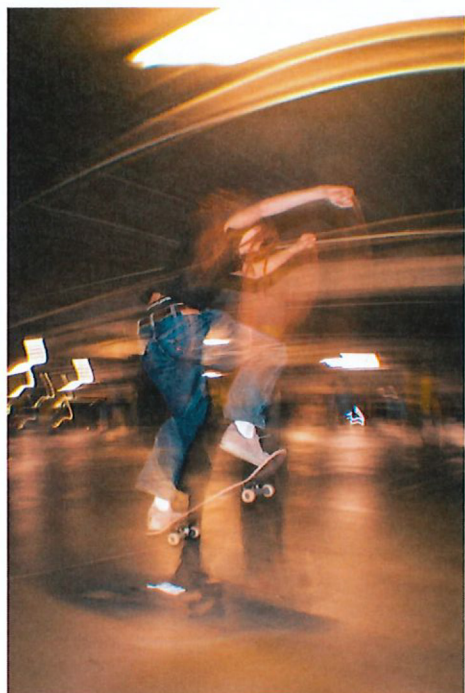
Before going into the shoot my idea for the shoot was use both flash and the work lights and the long exposure but during the shoot I realized that I don't have to stick to the three techniques. This was my first time bringing an artificial light into the shoot so I decided to play around with it without using the flash. As a result the photo ended us creating motion blur and made the photos look more abstract. I've learnt that being spontaneously creates unexpected work and you can only do that when you plan your shoot precisely and know exactly what you are doing and you got the capacity to do so.



Using both flash and the work lights



Only using the flash as my light source



The final shot

The final shot of the board is something that combines the techniques that I've learnt this year. From the composition to the use of colour and lighting it's all there. This shoot was more difficult than the previous shoot because this time the camera was following my subject while the shutter was open. For the last shoot, I used tripod and the camera stayed at one place. But for this one I was riding my skateboard when I took this shot. That's why the subject is clear but you can see the motion blur in the background. This was challenging for me if I did this shoot at the start of the year because there's always a risk of dropping camera if you fall off from skateboard. However, I was comfortable with my camera already and I could trust myself enough to ride skateboard while holding my camera and taking a photo.

Photos that didn't go on my board

The photos on the left are the photos from the last photoshoot but never got on to the final board.

1. I like the techniques that I used but didn't like the fact he was not facing the camera and can't see his facial expression
2. the subject is not in the center and from composition perspective it does not look good.
3. Not much motion blur. It is not as impactful for the audience because the shutter speed is too fast and it looks like he isn't moving.

I had the circle frame around my photo like the image above because I used the fisheye lens. I had to photoshop that out

Capturing at the right moment when the board is going upwards.

Took this shot from his left side meaning his facial expressions are more visible



Using the fisheye lens to make the subject look bigger

Motion blur that makes the subject look like he is moving forward

contrasting color on his jeans

Using various lines to balance up the photos

Using the color Orange which was the fundamental or in the previous boards

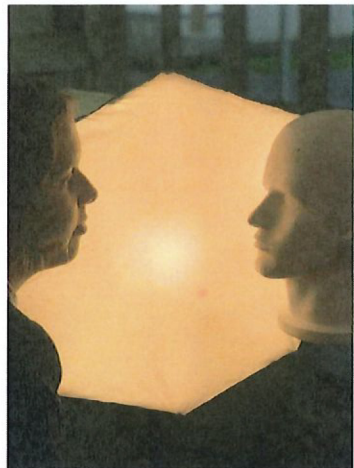
Outside of school work I have been....

Putting on a workshop during lunch time for art of the week in school. I was offered to put a Photography workshop in school and I made a presentation and taught others how I take photos. I explained 8 main techniques that I often use in Photography and how I used them in the photos. After my presentation I let the other students take photos of the random objects I brought with the technique that I taught them.

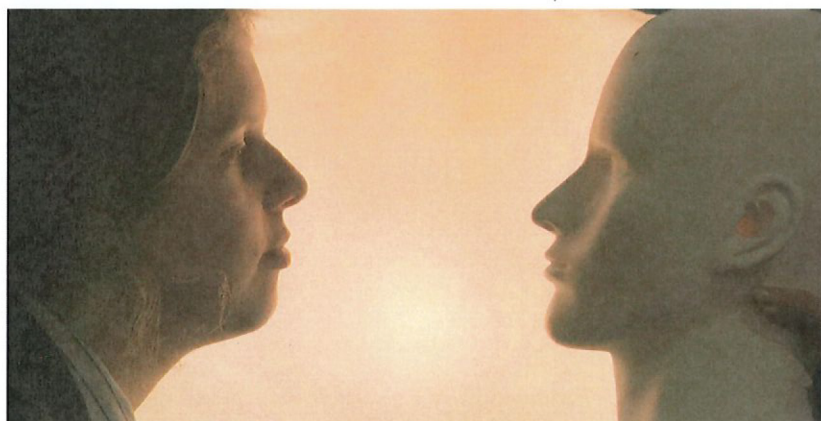
Me holding a workshop at school.



The photos that students took at my workshop. They are using the techniques that I taught them at the workshop



Using Juxtaposition and back lighting



Using depth of field



Performing arts and skateboarding

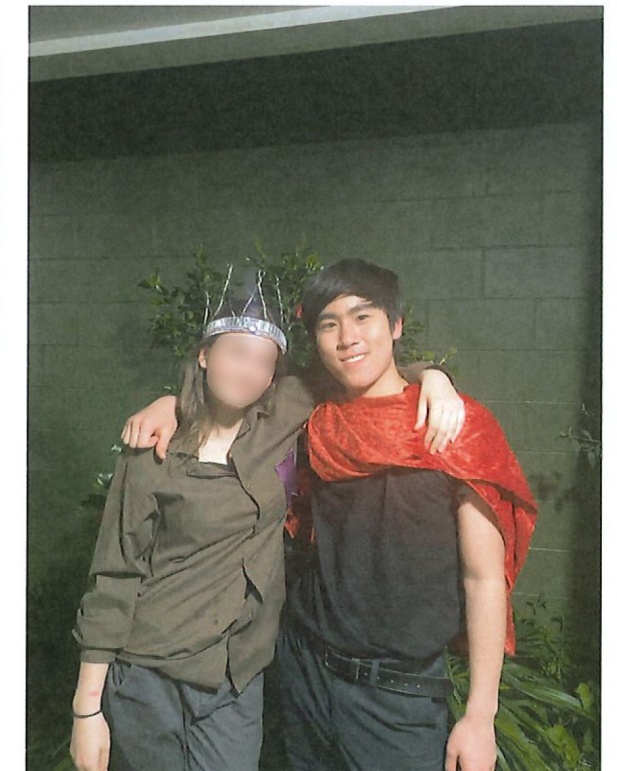
Performing arts have been a big part of my life in last few years. I was doing piano lesson since I was 4, I enjoy doing drama. This year I directed and played in Macbeth, taking apart in Shiela Winn Shakespeare competition. Fortunately I was chose for National Shakespeare School Production and spend 9 days in Dunedin with 47 other students who were also chosen from the competition.

Personally speaking, photographing skateboarding and acting is similar. They are both real and fake at the same time. When I step on stage for any production I am playing the character so it is "fake" but at the same time I am myself. Weather I play Macbeth or Othello or any other character I am me and I can't play the character unless I express a part of me. Otherwise, my Macbeth or Othello would same as other actors and there's no point in ME playing the character.

I approach taking skateboarding in the same way. It's someone else who is riding the skateboard and there are so many aspect of it that I cannot control. It relies on the environment such as weather, the structure of the buildings, lighting, the ability of my models. However, I add my own taste by directing my subject where to stand, bringing specific gears and choosing locations



The group photo at NSSP



Me (on the right) in Othello costuem at NSSP

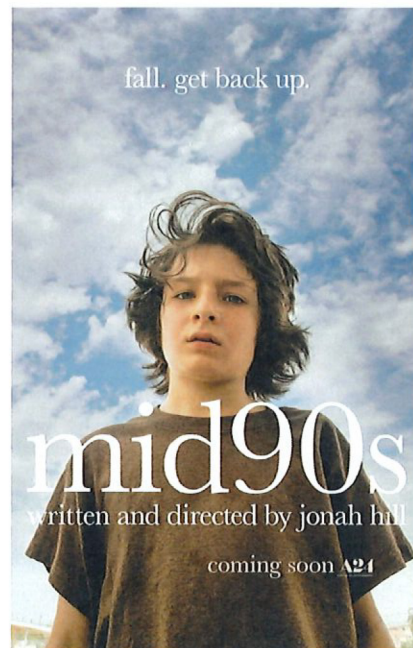
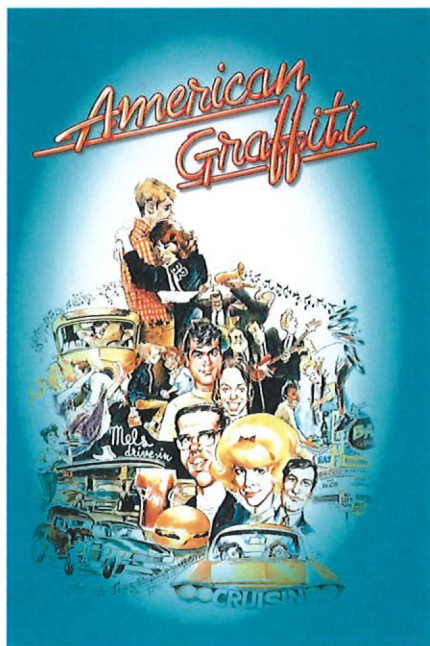
What now?

Making film

Films have been so much inspiration for me this year for Photography. Moreover, I started Photography in order to understand films more so I want to start making films more.

I always dreamed of directing feature films in a future. Working on this Portopholio gave me an idea for a film. Which is a story about a teenager going in to the city to skate in the middle of summer. During my journey meeting with friends and making all the memories were something I enjoyed a lot and I want to tell my story some day. I am imagining the film to be something that's a mixture of "American Graffiti" and "mid 90's". American Graffiti captures few teenager's one day during the summer break. "mid 90's" is about a teenage boy starts to spend time with older skaters. Both of the films were based on the director, George Lucas and Jonah Hill's own experience. Therefore, if I could make a movie that's based on what I experienced through Photography, that would be dream come true.

So far I've directed a short film "the enticement" and I use lots of techniques that I gained with photography. The visual element of the film was a lot similar to what I usually do with my camera in Photography. The use of silhouette, depth of field, shadows, they are all there. So in the future, I am confident to say that things that I've learned will keep influencing my work in moving picture.



Stills from my short film "the enticement"