



ASSIGNMENT 1 PEOPLE & PLACES

“Vampires Rock the Graveyard”

By Heather List

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“VAMPIRES ROCK THE GRAVEYARD”

The concept of my design was to take the Vampires Rock cast and place them in a graveyard so it looked like they were performing the show in that location. The idea came to me immediately upon receiving the assignment brief and I knew reasonably well how I wanted the finish picture to look.

Gathering the images I had to hand I tested my theme (Image right) I also sketched four possible layouts. (Image below) The next stage in my composites development was to source the images I didn't have.

I knew there was an old graveyard in Preston that would be perfect for my background unfortunately my camera let me down when it came to taking night time photos so I had to take daylight pictures and edit them in Photoshop.



I wanted the background graveyard image to follow the 'rule of thirds' guide with at least one third of the lower half of the picture grass and graves and the top two thirds tree's and sky. I was also looking for a scene that gave me a line of graves across the image to which I could align my figures, but had enough foreground detail so people would instantly recognize they were in a graveyard. To achieve this viewpoint I found I had to take the picture from knee height and angle the camera upwards.

In tests the silhouetted crowd scene idea I came up with in pre-production worked quite well so I created one in Photoshop and added it along the bottom. The crowd scene serves two functions first to create symmetry with the black sky across the top but also as a forced perspective, giving you the impression that you are in a crowd looking over the top at the scene beyond.

Choosing the photos of the figures was simply a matter of finding ones that had good resolution and were posed sympathetically to the theme and each other. When arranging them in the picture I was careful to make sure they were the right height relative to their proximity. I.e. the girls in the background were smaller than the single figures in the foreground. I was also conscious of balancing out the number of figures across the picture so as to fill the space evenly.

In the end I found I had to add extra gravestones to effectively position my figure images. For instance the group of girls along the back has no lower legs so a gravestone was added to cover this up. The same goes for the two guys in black on the right and the guitar playing guy on the far left. Other stones were added so the figures position didn't look odd, i.e. the guy at the front with his foot on a gravestone.

Balancing the contrast, colour saturation and shadows was the most difficult part of the composite. I even considered dropping the colour saturation totally and creating a black and white image. (See alternate.jpg / thumbnails) In the end I turned the Photoshop file temporarily black and white to help me get the white balance on the figures a bit more even.

There is within the picture an unintentional triangle line of direction from the guy on top of the Christmas bat in the centre out to the people in the lower corners. The two groups of figures in the lower corners though were added on purpose to kind of mirror each other and add some symmetry to the picture. The ticket on the left hand side is positioned to act as focal point to draw your eyes across to the text then the fireworks in the top right hand corner.

Photographing the fireworks was difficult as my camera's shutter speed wasn't fast enough to capture them. To solve this problem I videoed the fireworks then captured screen shots using DVD viewing software.

I tried on several occasions to take a photograph of the moon but once again my camera let me down and I had to resort to a Photoshop mock-up to create the effect I was after. The glow behind the trees was not planned it came about whilst testing some effects; however I was happy with the result so I kept it in.

The outer glow around the three foreground figures was suggested to me by a tutor and although I was dubious at first it worked quite well. Another suggestion was to fill the negative space in the trees above the bat with some text; again I wasn't convinced until I tried it. I had been quite content with my image without the text but have to admit considering the concept of my final picture it works quite well.

The repetition of the bats was created using a technique I learned on a Photoshop course at Preston College prior to attending Uclan in anticipation of using the software during my course here. Changing the brush tool into a bat shape worked very well because it meant I could place them wherever I wanted and simply erase them if they didn't work.

I have created mock-ups and composites images using my photos of the Vampires Rock cast in the past for sharing on Facebook and other forum sites. I have also studied other people art work on the sites and I am in the process of using the techniques I have learned within Photoshop to create a design for a T-shirt competition. (See image right)

Although I was aiming for a true representation of the Vampires Rock cast, some of the characters have been symbolized more than once, which lends a surreal aspect to the final image.

