

## *The Eternal Circle & Vain Existence*

### **Lauren Voda**

My body of work explores the themes of the cycle of life and vanity in a conceptual still-life, using digital photography as the medium. My photo, *The Eternal Circle*, expresses the inescapable cycle of life by displaying the 5 stages of a flower's life, as captured within the stillness of ice. I obtained this concept from Olivia Parker, as her photos utilise symbolic natural objects and bright lighting to project profound messages, such as her photo 'Heart and Flower', which alludes to life's fragility. Similarly, my photograph, *Vain Existence* showcases the concept of vanity, using multiple mirrors and flowers. I planned to project this message, following inspiration from Krista Van Der Niet, who predominantly uses mirrors and inanimate objects to express symbolic messages, such as her photo 'Botox-dilemma'.

To convey the intended messages, I utilised an array of photographic techniques. For instance, *The Eternal Circle* showcases the stagnation of life's cycle and the endless flow of existence. I portrayed this message through the symmetrical arrangement, sharp contrast, vibrant hues, colour contrast, and use of flowers within ice as the objects created a natural contrast, aiding in projecting the idea. However, I faced a problem while capturing this photograph. As the ice cubes began to move on the mirror, making it challenging to take the photo and maintain a perfect arrangement simultaneously. To solve this issue, I used a tripod, which allowed me to readjust the ice cubes and maintain the same camera angle.

In comparison, *Vain Existence* showcases the vanity and selfishness that plague the world through the contrast, vibrant hues, reflections, and geometric shapes. These elements allowed the flower reflections to be visible and ensured that the focal point was emphasised, aiding in conveying the message. However, when capturing the photograph, I encountered a significant problem with the camera angle, as the camera kept appearing in the reflection, causing a visible distraction. To resolve this issue, I used a wheelbarrow, which allowed me to position the mirrors at a slight angle and create a unique reflection without the camera being visible.

These photos within my body of work, I believe, effectively portray the profound messages I intended to convey. However, changes to the foreground in *The Eternal Circle* and a slight rearrangement of the mirrors within *Vain Existence* will significantly improve the visual appeal of both photos. For example, in *The External Circle*, if the foreground contained the Bokeh effect more clearly, the visual appeal would be greatly improved, but this could only be achieved through having a shallower depth of field, which was difficult to achieve with this arrangement. Similarly, with *Vain Existence*, the background would be more appealing and interesting if the mirrors were more geometric and alternating in shades. Nevertheless, I am thrilled with these photos, as they project the profound messages I aimed for and showcase my conceptual still-life aesthetic in a very visually appealing way.

## *Broken Balance 1 & 2*

### **Lauren Voda**

My body of work explores the theme of humanity's impact on the environment and delves into the alarming future of nature in a compositional and surreal photography style. This theme is visible in my photos Broken Balance Part 1 and 2. Broken Balance is a juxtaposition photo collage that symbolises the demise of nature through human waste and is inspired by the works of Jiri Kolar. My initial idea for the photo Broken Balance, derived from the compositional style of Jiri Kolar, as his striped collage format seen in his artworks such as 'Chaotic Collage' and 'Rembrandt', was the only way I could express the three surreal factors of humans, waste, and landscape in a single frame.

The concepts I wished to convey are evident through the art techniques and decisions I made. For example, in Broken Balance, I primarily utilised texture and depth to express the visual metaphor of the connection between human waste and the environment, as visible through the imposing brick mural and depth created from fragmented stripes of photos. Similarly, the use of greyscale and vibrant colours in the photos symbolises the differing views of humans and the environment, as part 1 shows the radiant, ignorant perspective of humans, and part 2 shows the sombre, dark feelings of the environment. A major problem I faced throughout the production of this photo was the creation of the striped juxtaposition of photos, as it was very time-consuming and was only overcome through perseverance.

The body of work I created, I feel, effectively portrays the theme and intended message I wished to convey. However, slight improvements could enhance the visual appeal even further. For example, with Broken Balance, the photo's theme would be portrayed better if the house and landscape were more visible, as the mural face obscures most of the primary elements of the message. Nonetheless, I am very proud of the photos I created, as they project the profound meanings I intended and showcase my personal and chosen artists' styles in a visually pleasing manner.