



# **Senior Project Exhibit**

## Bethany Holtz

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Wednesday, April 27

*Musselman Library*





## Brent Blair

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### Senior Project Exhibit

One of the roles of a Senior Independent Study is to inform both the student and the College. For her project, Bethany Holtz has chosen to expand our horizons with an impressive digital double exposure photomontage of several marine animals whose habitat is threatened by the expansion of the world population. In her presentation, she is providing an opportunity for us to have a greater awareness of the circumstances of these animals and the impact of pollution on their well-being.

The Art Studio Independent Study provides the flexibility to choose a medium that best highlights the talents and artistic vision of the student. In addition, there is an inclusion of extensive research which supports the potential loss of these species. This project brings together the disciplines of art and science in a cohesive approach to the problems these animals encounter with the encroachment of civilization on their habitats.

I am honored that Bethany has asked me to function as her advisor for this independent study. In my photography classes, she has always worked to produce the best possible outcome and consistently gone beyond simply meeting the criteria for the assignments. This project is no exception. The work displayed shows an attention to detail worthy of a gallery presentation and an independent study which continues to exemplify the levels of excellence of the College and I thank her for her effort and dedication.



*Modern Ruins of a Sentinel Creature*

Digital photomontage with appropriated, open-access image  
16 x 24 inches



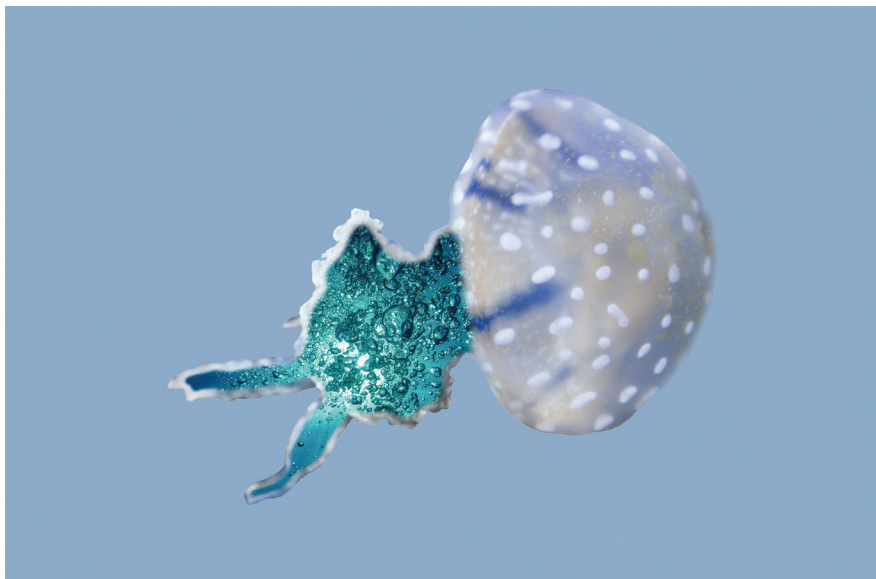
*A Chance to Thrive*

Digital photomontage with appropriated, open-access image  
16 x 24 inches



*Swimming Against the Refuse Tide*

Digital photomontage with appropriated, open-access image  
16 x 24 inches



*Blue Water*

Digital photomontage with appropriated, open-access image  
16 x 24 inches



# Bethany Holtz

## Lens on Habitat Destruction: A Photo Essay in Double Exposure

Bethany Holtz Exhibit

**H**uman greed and ignorance bulldoze through nature, leaving behind scarred landscapes and broken ecosystems. Within the world's aquatic environments, human actions have irreversibly fragmented and shattered habitats of countless animals. Voiceless, these displaced animals suffer largely in silence—their stories untold and invisible. Using my lens to expose their cries, my photography uncovers the narrative of habitat destruction.

In this photo essay, I juxtapose the pristine and degraded habitats of five threatened aquatic species using double exposure techniques, a method where two disconnected images are merged to create one unified work. By balancing light, opacity, color, and transparency, I focus attention upon the habitat loss and degradation threatening these species.

While the deterioration of natural habitats is well known in the scientific and political community, it remains a topic that is hard to visualize. Placed side by side, my photographic series transitions the observer from society's perception of nature to the actual transformed environments which expose the struggles of these afflicted animals.

To display the issue from the internalized vantage point of the affected aquatic animals, I overlay the landscape within the body of the animals, rather than place them within the habitat itself. Isolated within the animals, the unbreakable tether between species and habitat is revealed. Norwegian artist Andreas Lie and Scandinavian graphic designers Hanne and Tobias Scheel Mikkelsen employ a similar method in their double exposure work with terrestrial animals. While these artists join animals within their habitat in a single image, my dual-framed animal photographs create a transitional display which invites contemplation of the ever-changing habitat caused by human development.

It is my hope that my images make the call for change as inescapable as the plight menacing many aquatic species.

# Acknowledgments

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I am immensely grateful to the many people who have supported me throughout my college experience, helped to make my senior project a reality and who have contributed to the person and artist I have become. Often artists are tempted by society's push to pursue a more surefire career path, so the encouragement I have regularly received from my family, friends and professors to pursue my passions despite these trepidations is deeply valued by me. It is through this immense support system that I have found my passion and discovered a way to join my love of art and science through nature photography.

First and foremost, thank you to my advisor Brent Blair and his wife Sandy. From critiquing my writing and photographs to teaching me how to use Photoshop, your guidance and expertise has shaped every aspect of my work. Words alone cannot express my deepest appreciation, respect and the affection I feel for both of you!

My thanks to Vice Provost Jack Ryan, Provost Christopher Zappe and the entire Provost staff for their assistance and support that made this project possible. Many cheers to Dean Robin Wagner, Lauren Roedner and the Mussleman Library staff for making my "stair tower gallery" a reality. My thanks as well to Professor Shannon Egan for her gallery exhibit advice.

The support of my friends and extended family has filled me with hope and ambition for my future endeavors. Thank you to my best friend Rachel for your kind heart and thoughtful advice throughout this experience. Thank you to my science advisor and "biggest fan," Wendy Piniak, for being the warm and embracing mentor I so greatly needed.

My biggest thank you goes to my family. I'd like to thank my sister for her blunt, yet adoring critiques of my work. Maddie, you may try my patience, but I also know if I need someone to call at 1 AM in the morning when I break my camera that you will always be there. And last, but certainly not least, I would like to thank my parents for nurturing my love of art from my early kindergarten toilet paper sculptures to my current exhibit. Your unending patience as I collected sea glass along miles of shoreline for projects and paused to photograph something every few feet, as well as your endless support of my dreams, is appreciated more than you will ever know!

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