

Before



After Transformation



Artist Statement

For my Cosmic Visions final project, I wanted to create something that combined the themes of the class with a new skill I had just begun learning. I recently started using Photoshop, and I wanted a project that would let me practice the tools in a real way rather than following tutorials without purpose. I also wanted something grounded in my own environment, something easy to interact with and experiment on. That is how I ended up using a single Tylenol capsule and the shadow it created as the basis for this piece.

When I first shined my phone's flashlight on the Tylenol, the shadow surprised me. It stretched into a long, thin streak with a bright point at the end. The shape felt strangely astronomical, almost like a small comet. Since my goal was to put new Photoshop skills into action, I photographed the pill on the carpet and imported the image into Photoshop. The project began as a technical exercise. I wanted to practice selecting objects, using Content-Aware Fill, duplicating layers, and adjusting perspective. Once I saw how neatly the pill's shadow could be isolated, the idea of turning those marks into a constellation formed naturally.

My first step was removing the pill from the original photo. I used Content-Aware Fill to cover the area with matching carpet texture. This was one of the tools I had been most eager to try because it felt like real Photoshop work rather than something basic. After that, I used the lasso tool to select the shadow and duplicate it. Each duplicated piece became a single "star" for my constellation. I repeated this process many times until I had a collection of identical shadow segments that I could arrange freely.

Building Orion's shape became the creative core of the project. I rotated each duplicated shadow to match the constellation's main points. This required a lot of trial and error since I was still learning how Photoshop's transform box works. Little by little, the pieces began lining up in the familiar pattern. The three stars of Orion's Belt were the easiest to place because of their even spacing. The rest, especially the limbs and shoulders, required more adjustments.

At this stage, the constellation looked like it was floating above the carpet rather than sitting on it. The carpet had strong diagonal lines running across it, and the shadows needed to match that direction to feel grounded. This led me to experiment with perspective and warp transformations, tools I had never used before this project. I grouped all the shadows together and transformed them as a single object so that the constellation would align with the carpet's angle. Aligning the constellation with the carpet lines made a surprising difference. The pieces suddenly felt like they were part of the floor rather than random additions.

Conceptually, this project ties into the course by exploring how humans create meaning from scattered points. Constellations are not real structures in space. They are interpretations that connect stars into shapes that feel meaningful. My project mirrors that idea. The shadows are nothing more than duplicated streaks of light from a pill, but once arranged correctly, they take on a recognizable cosmic form. It reflects the idea that the universe is often understood through the patterns we choose to see.

There is also an intentional contrast between the mundanity of the object and the vastness of the concept. A Tylenol capsule is something associated with tiredness, stress, and daily life. Using it to build a constellation turns an ordinary moment into something imaginative. It suggests that the boundary between everyday objects and cosmic imagery is thin and flexible. A small shadow on a carpet can become a star if the viewer is encouraged to see it that way.

Overall, “Orion on the Carpet” is both a beginner’s Photoshop experiment and a reflection on how cosmic meaning can be created from simple materials. The process helped me understand how visual perspective, repetition, and transformation can shape perception. More importantly, it showed me how the themes of the course can intersect with ordinary life. The piece is a reminder that the universe can be recreated from unexpected places and that imagination can turn even a Tylenol shadow into a constellation.