# Project Documentation

Following on from my Assessment 1 submission, I focussed on my two favourite etudes, "BH13" and "Synographic". "BH13" explored the idea that open source 3d technology such as Google Earth invades private space and too candidly exposes people and their homes for anyone online to see. It was my desire to push this concept further and take a more in depth look at how applications like Google Earth provide tools that may be considered on par with surveillance technology. I had the notion of creating a project that would give full power to the viewer and therefore assign them the position of "Big Brother". In order to effectively implement this, I chose to employ the technology used for my etude "Synographic" which included photo manipulation in Adobe Photoshop, and a Victorian stereogram viewer. It was the interactive quality of the stereoviewer that attracted me to it. In order to successfully view the stereograms the viewer must physically look through the lens and adjust the distance between the card and their eyes. The act of doing so is extremely intimate and almost immersive, something that I felt reflected the tone of my concept and echoed the immersive quality of the Google application. In order to experience the full 3D effect, the viewer has to actively look into the visor and adjust the distance of the card from the lens; putting the viewer in this position of control allows them to be the 'all seeing all knowing' voyeur.

The 3D environment I selected to be the catalyst of the project is Google Street View. There have been so many stories and debates discussing the moral implications of the open source software. In its early stages, many images were reported to contain extremely sensitive content, including illegal activities, personal information such as addresses and number plates, and images of people sunbathing naked in private places. After thousands of complaints a few lawsuits, Google agreed to black out peoples' faces using face recognition technology, along with number plates and other visible signs of identification. They also removed or blacked any properties that were marked as private or may violate the rights of certain individuals such as rehabilitation centres or mental health hospitals. However, these precautions are not fool proof and complaints are still being made about the 3D application and how it is infringing on the world's right to privacy and self-preservation. I was inspired by the story of a woman who had uncovered her husband's affair after finding a compromising photo of him in Google Street View near their home. I felt there was something rather voyeuristic about being able to spy on people sharing intimate moments, who are completely oblivious to the fact they were being watched.

It was my intention to create a series of stereo cards displaying still snapshots from the Google Street View environment, and with the previous incident in mind, I set about exploring various potential themes. It was very important for me to have a common theme for a number of reasons, the first being that traditional stereo view cards were available in series and followed a common premise, or followed a narrative. Secondly, because I feel it would be easier for the viewer to grasp the concept if there was a visual theme running throughout the images. My first and favourite notion was that I would find a variety of images of people in intimate positions, such as kissing or hugging as I felt it would strongly and explicitly uphold the idea of voyeurism. However, after spending many hours searching through street after street in the Google environment, I found that the company had done far too good a job of removing or hiding images like this, and had to come up with a new idea. So as not to stray too far from my initial thought, I continued looking for people who may be in particularly vulnerable positions or locations. I narrowed my categories down to people behind windows, people in café's eating or drinking, and people on benches. I was quite taken by 'people behind windows', however I had about two images that were really clear, and the others were slightly too hard to make out, also the more I found images of people on benches, the more I came to realise that actually this was a far more interesting subject to focus on.

The possibility of honing in on benches struck a personal chord as I often spend a lot of quiet time on a particular bench in Gunnersbury Park. It is a place I can go to to reflect, relax and watch the world go by and sometimes enjoy being alone.
It is not uncommon to find certain benches dedicated to one or two particular people who may have spent a lot of time using it as a vantage point. Another thing I found supported my choice of the benches is that they provide a viewpoint that tucks you away on the sidelines, normally in a position perfect for people watching. I often enjoy other people go by, usually unacknowledged by those being observed, therefore the thought of myself being focused on by an unseen eye would be quite off putting; "the observer being observed". So, in that respect, I felt the bench theme would be the most interesting to enhance the idea of voyeurism and empowerment of viewer. I chose to focus on London, as I am familiar with various locations and was able to easily target places I knew would contain large groups of people. Another reason for choosing London it it's reputation of being a 'big pond' into which people can disappear and get lost in the crowds. It is a place one can escape to and not be singled out, and is therefore perfect for this "Big Brother" experiment.

After finding eight images of individuals on benches across London, I was able to being making my stereo cards. Firstly I needed to take two images of each still, one for the left eye and one for the right. Then once roughly cropped in Preview, I opened them up pair by pair in Adove Photoshop.
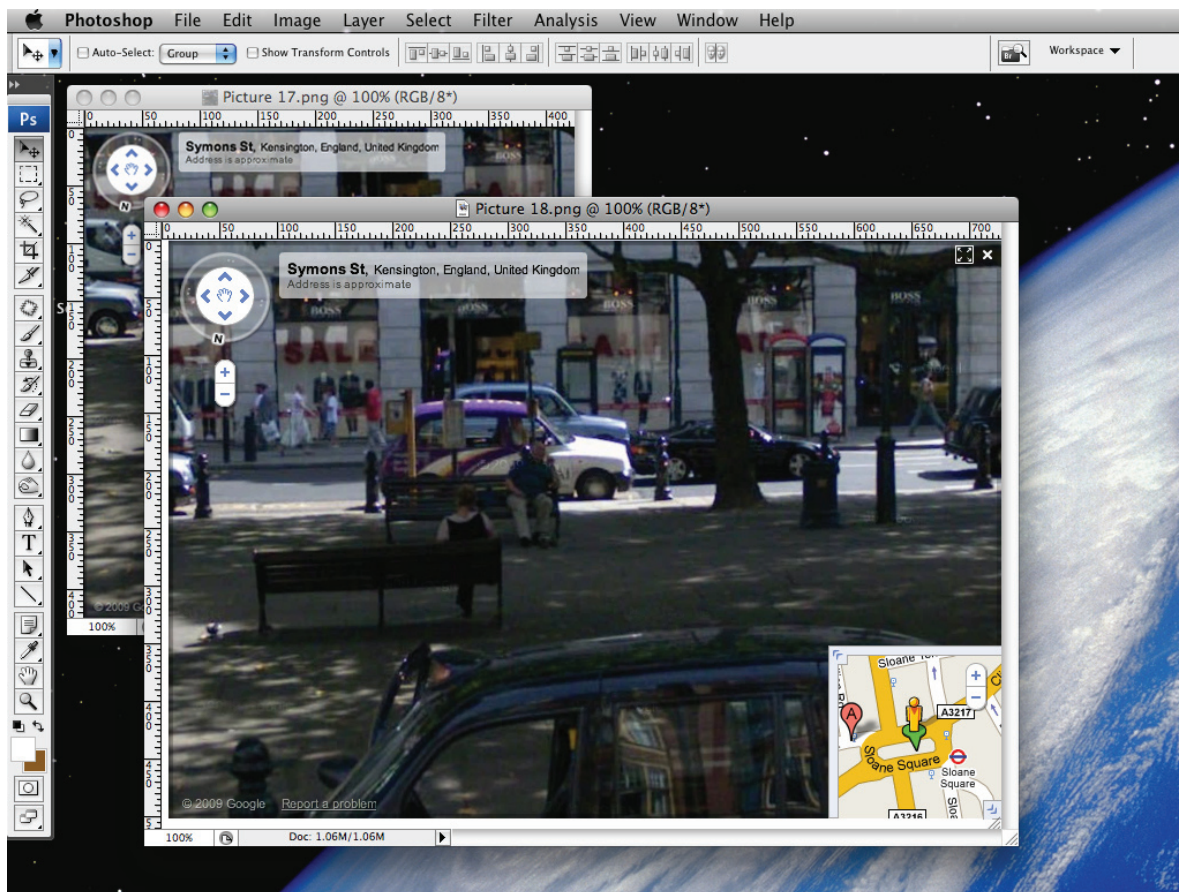
I then set about making sure each image was the right size, getting the correct dimensions was slighty tricky. I first made each image height 425pixels (the correct stereoview card height) making sure the proportions were constrained so the image wasn't distorted in anyway.
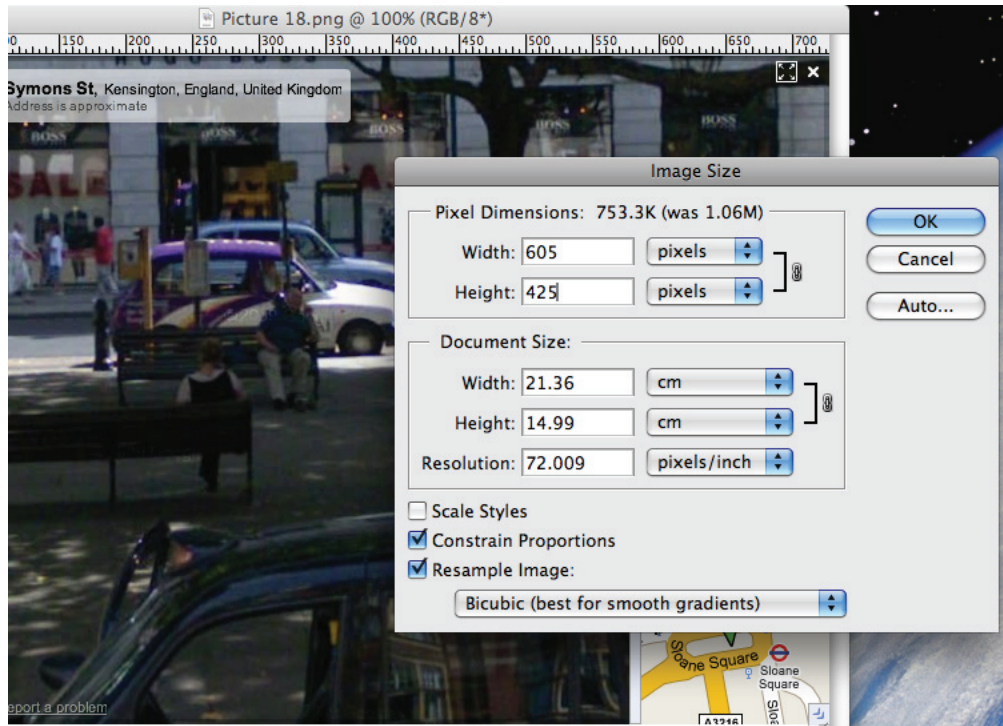

I then cropped each image so the bench was the focus point and edited out any unwanted borders. I chose to keep the Google Street View navigation interface in each image, as a reminder of the digital age and the technology used.
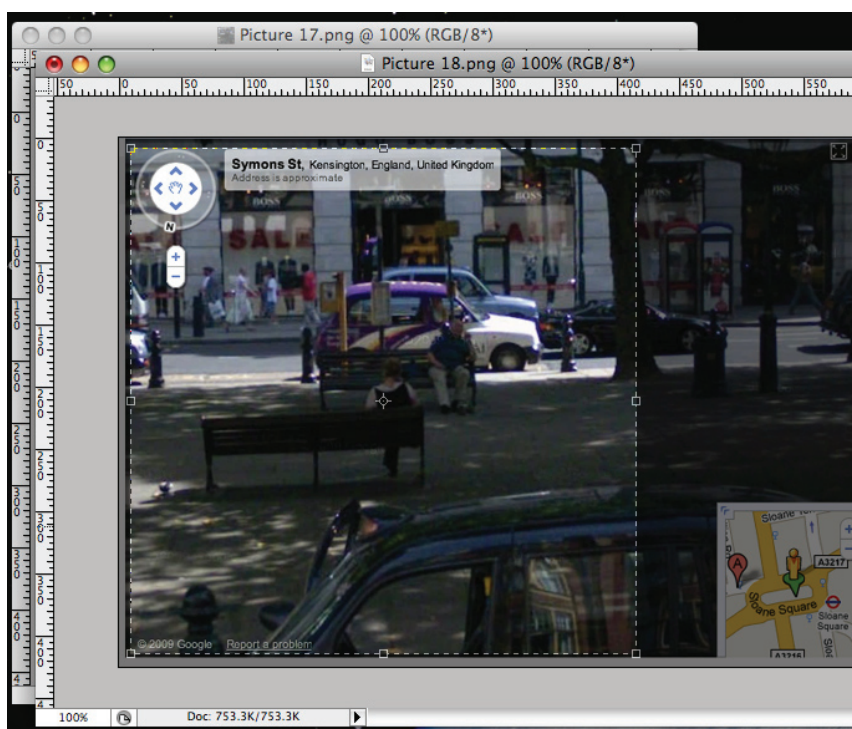
To ensure the images are the right size, I made sure the image size was set to 425x425 pixels, if not this is what it was changed to. It didn't matter if the picture was distorted by a pixel or two, it was just important that it was a perfect square.
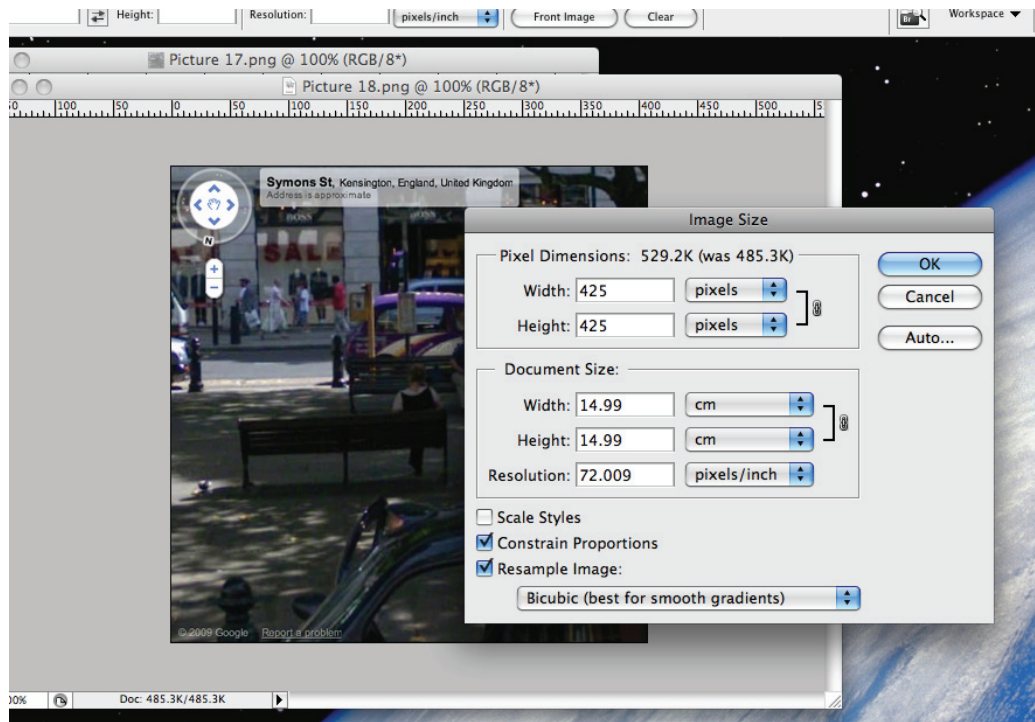
Becuase the two images needed to fit together side by side, i edited the canvas size on one of the images so it would allow the other to be placed exactly next to it.
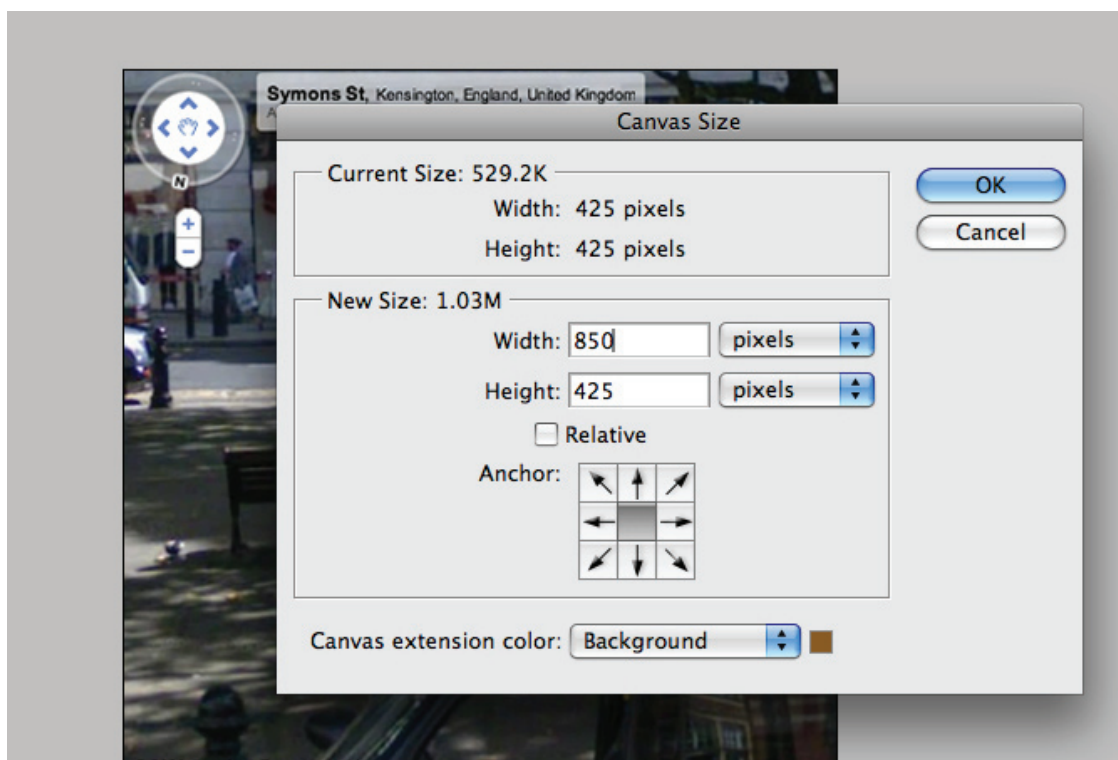
Once the width had been increased, I needed to shift the image to the left side. To do so, I needed to create a layer from the background I had been working on, which I did, and renamed 'left'.
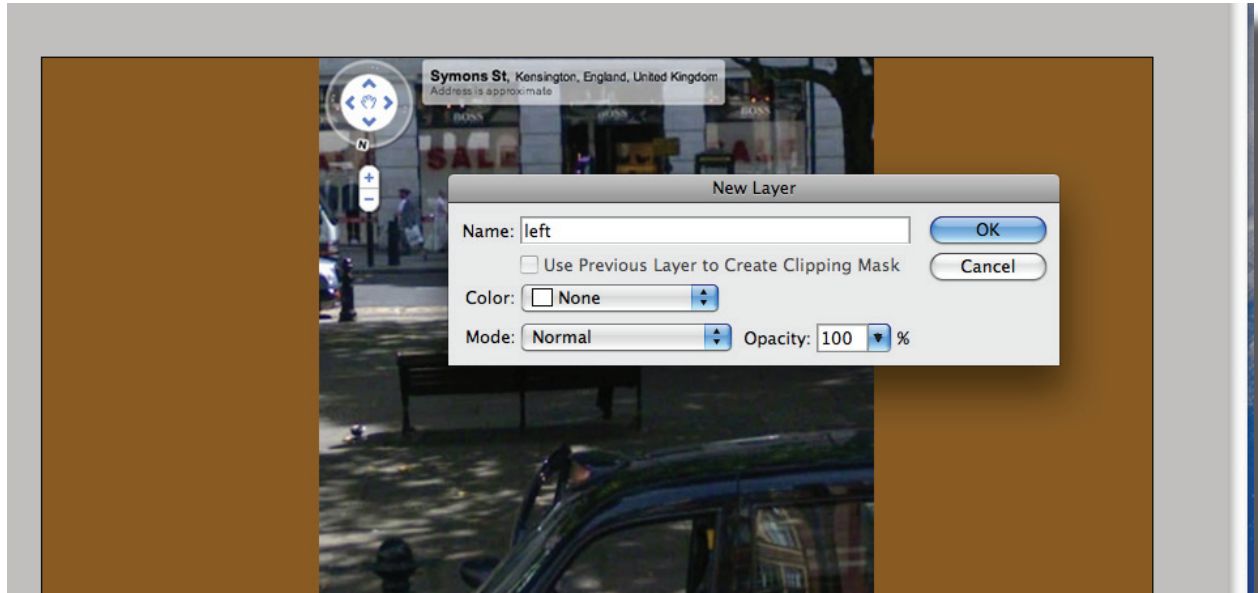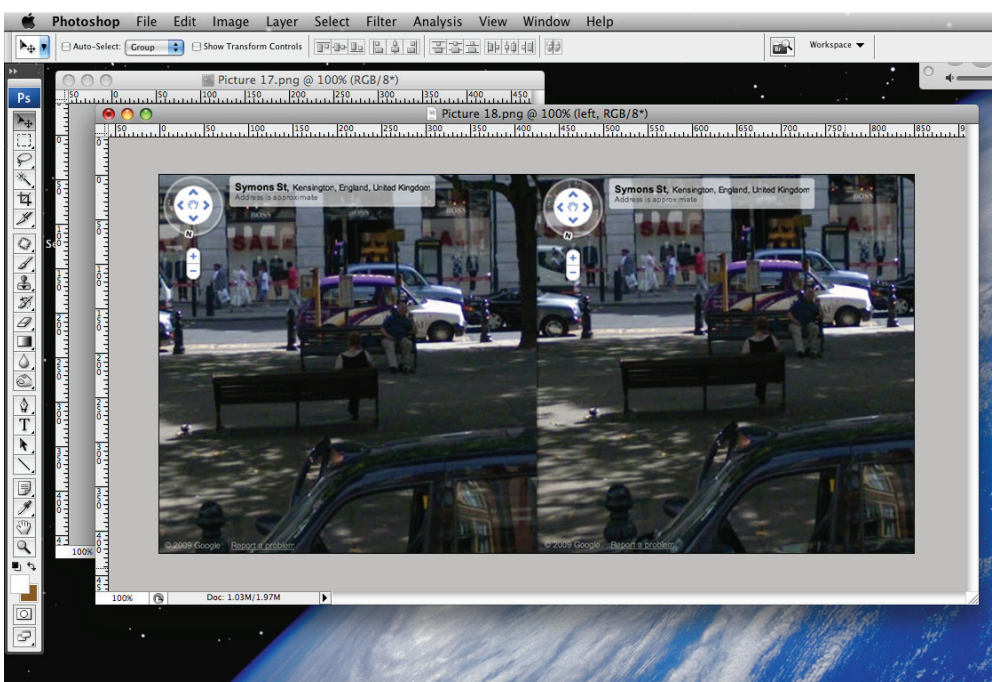

Then the layer was free to be shifted over to the left hand side ready to accept the new layer - 'right'.
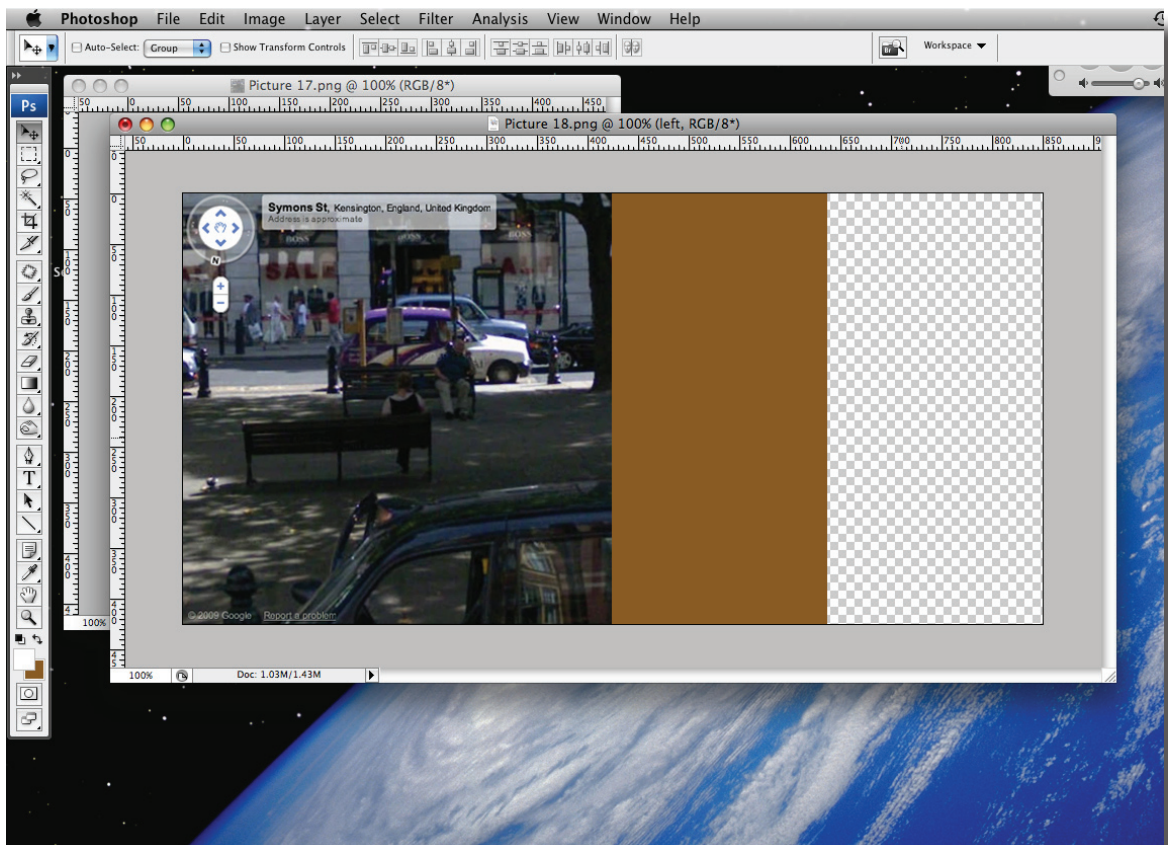
Before 'right' was ready to be placed next to its counterpart, I needed to repeat the necessary cropping steps.
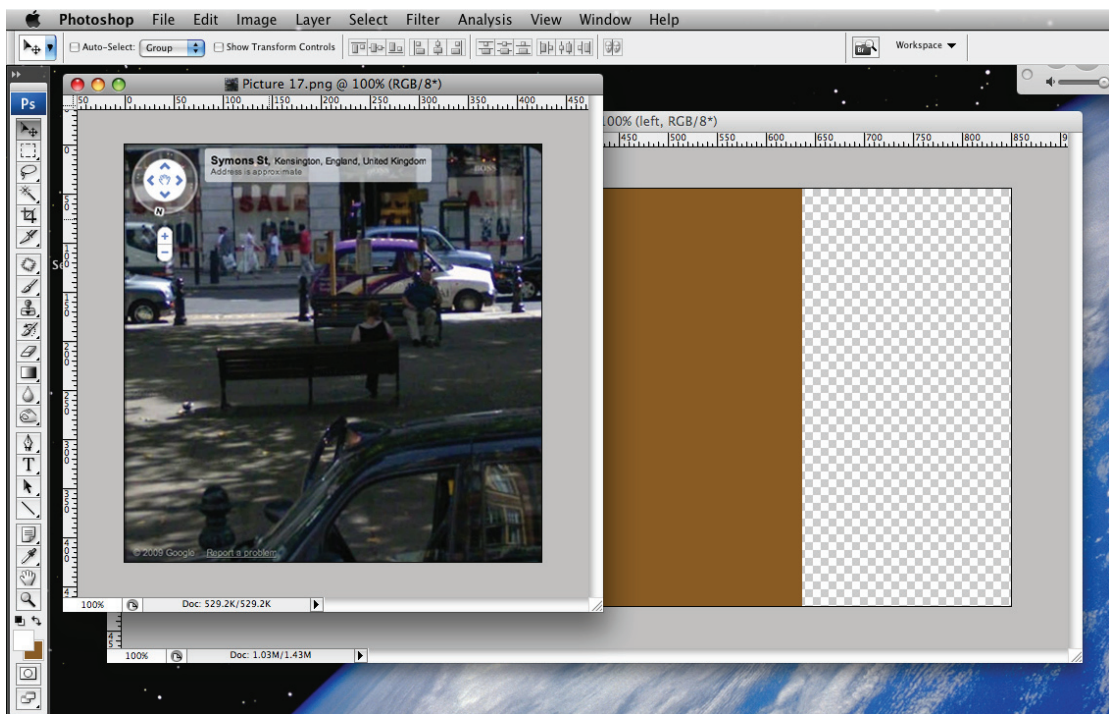

Once the two images were placed next to each other, I was able to merge the two layers into one and could see the stereocard starting to take shape.

The next step was creating the classic stereoview arched top. I used the template I had created for my etude which shows two arches each 425pixels wide.
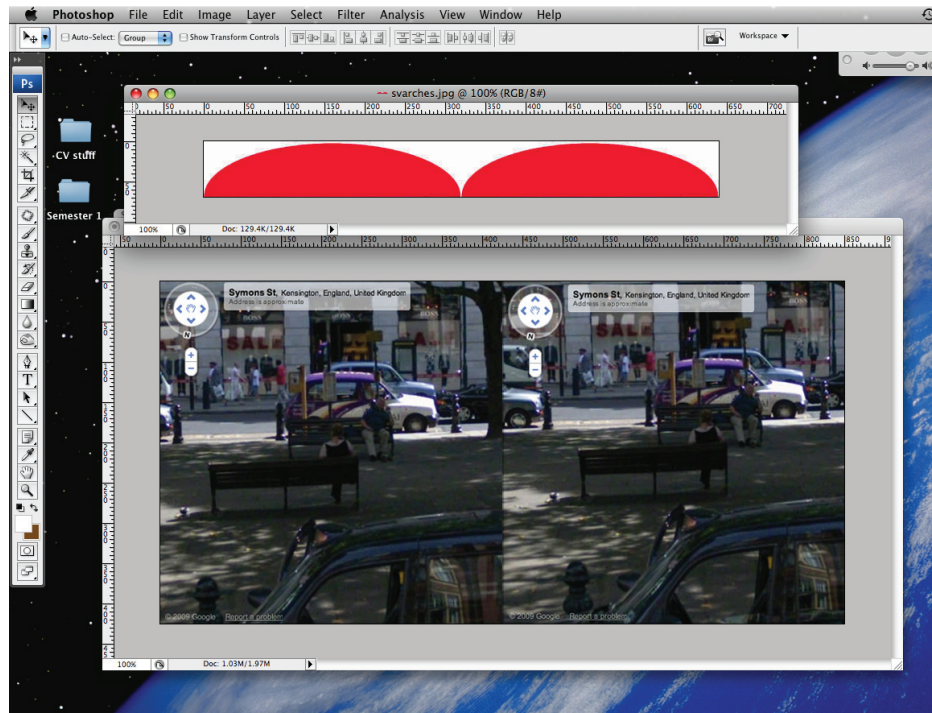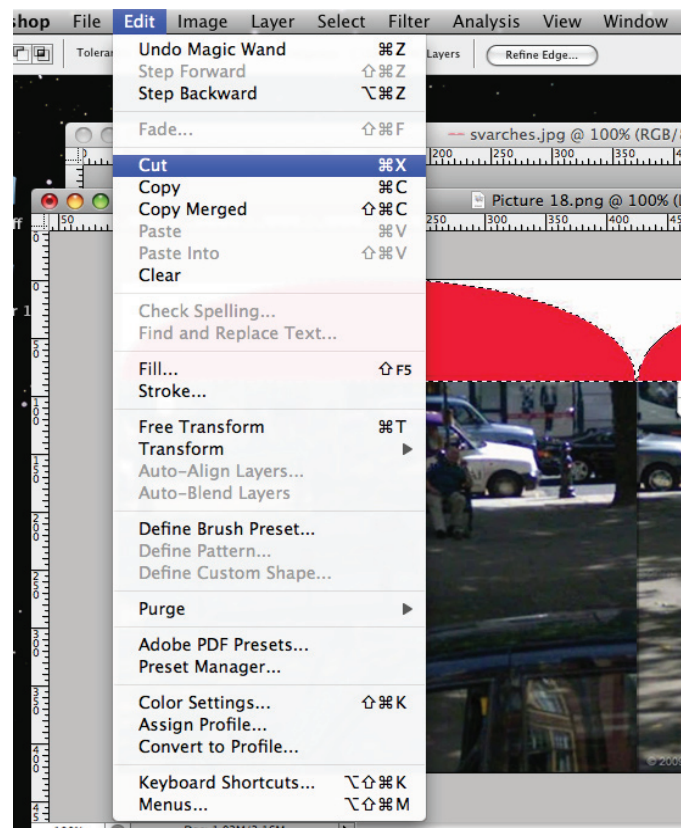

I copied and pasted the arches as a new layer on top of my stereo card merged layer, and made sure each arch comfortabley fit each square.
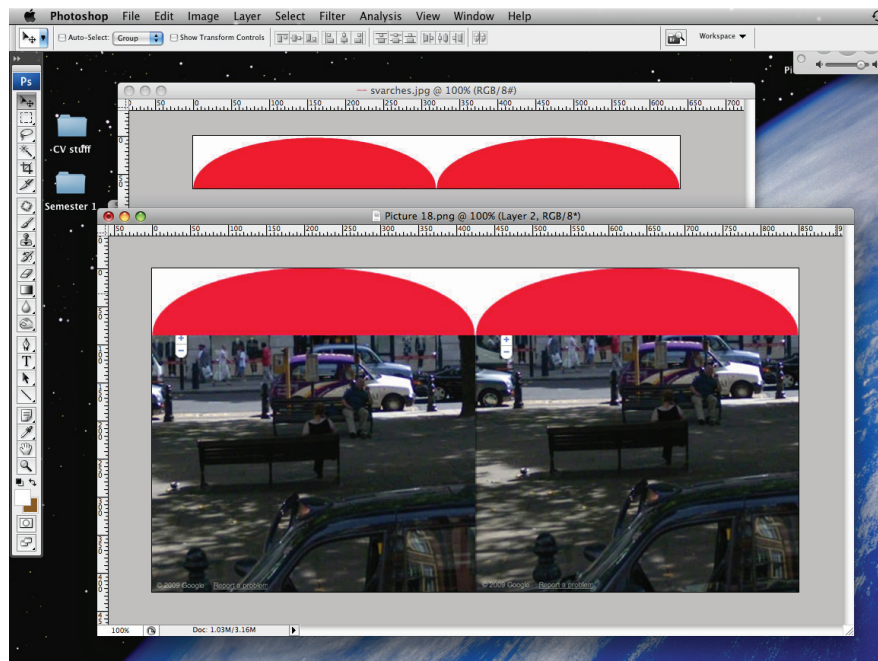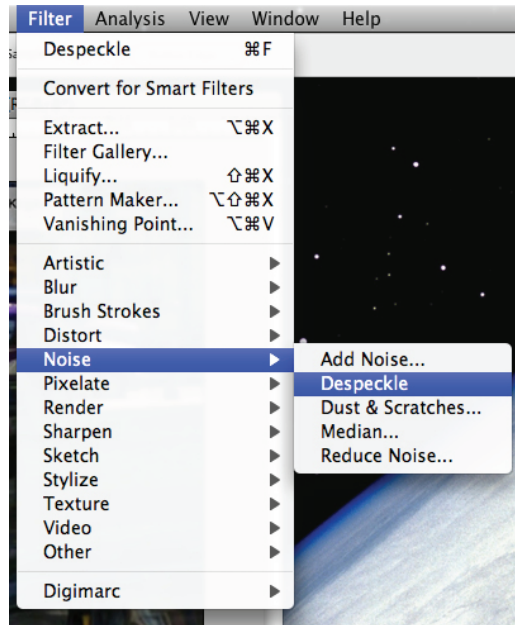
Once I was happy with the position of the arches, I used the wand tool to select the red semi-circles with ease.
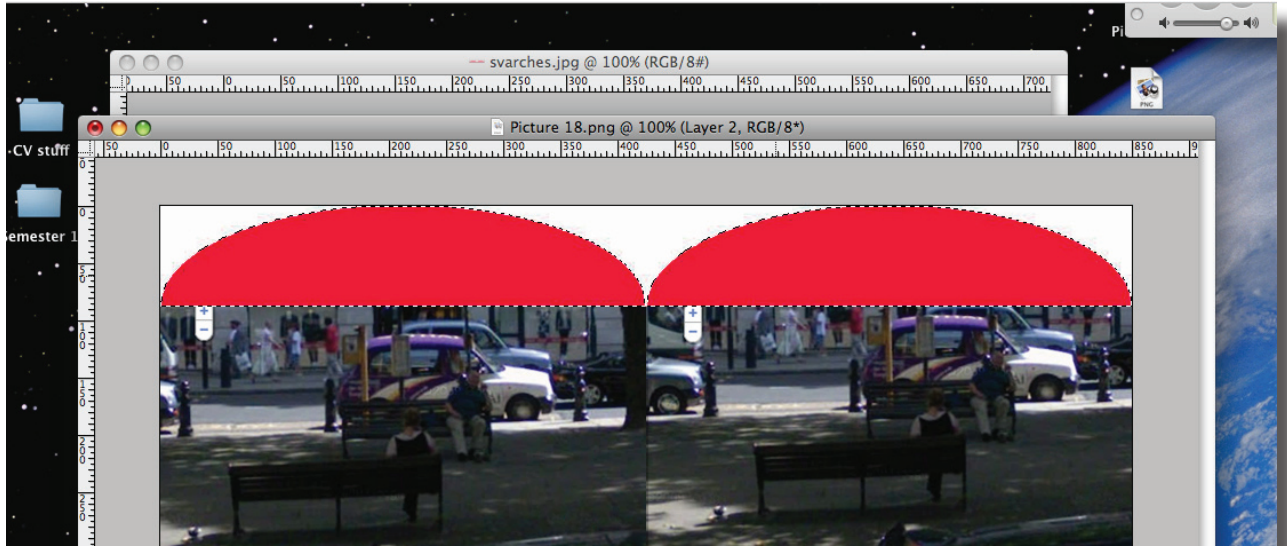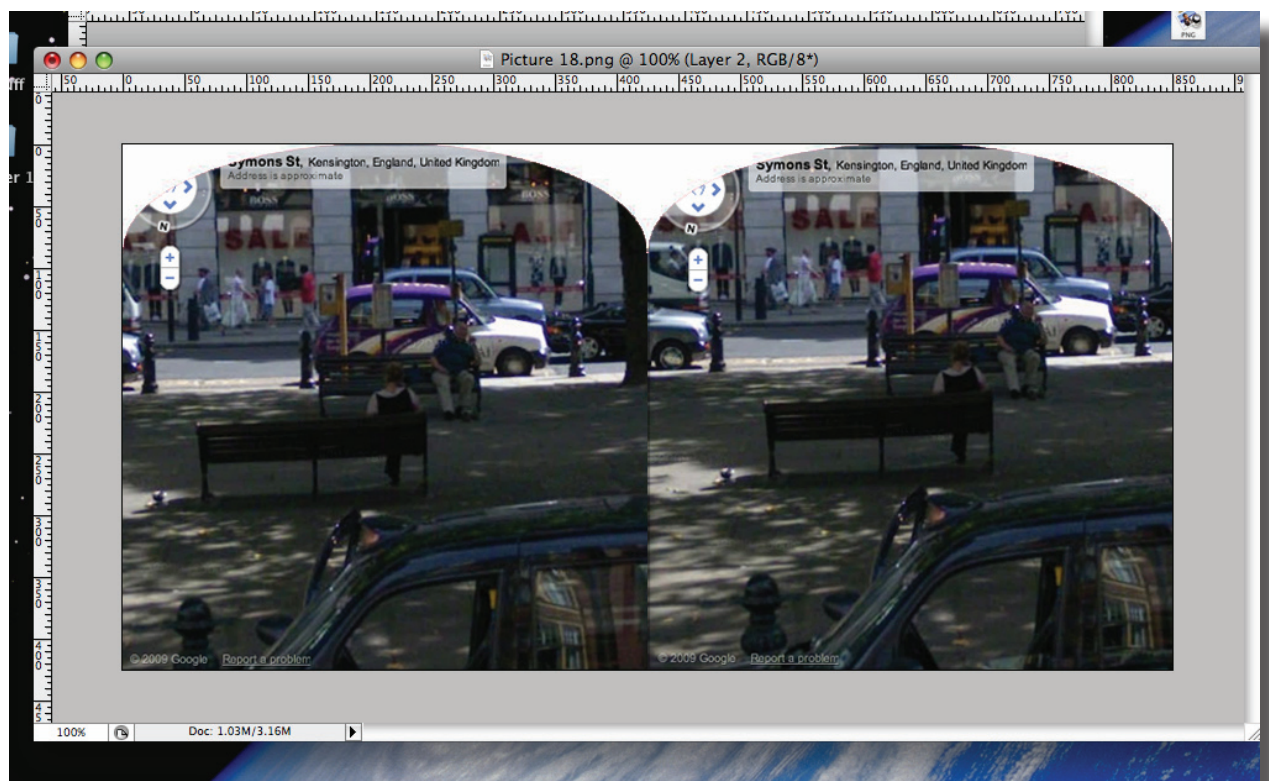

I then selected the 'Cut' option to remove the red objects leaving a clean arch at the top of each square.

As a final tidy up, and to make the images a little clearer, I reduced the pixilation by selecting the 'despeckle' layer filter

And that was how I made my stereo cards! I repeated this process eight times to complete my series.

I was very pleased with the final result and felt that the artefact responded well to the criteria set. At one point I was worried that it may not fully comply with being 'interactive, responsive and real time', but after careful consideration, I was reassured that it would, in fact, be all these things.