Project 3: Hybrid Fictions

Worldbuilding is defined as the process of constructing an imaginary world, sometimes associated with a fictional universe. The term world-building was popularized at science fiction writer’s workshops during the 1970s. It describes a key role in the task of a fantasy writer [or designer]: that of developing an imaginary setting that is coherent and possesses a history, geography, ecology, and so forth. The process usually involves the creation of maps, listing the back-story of the world and the people of the world, amongst other features. Worlds are often created for a novel, video game, or role-playing game, but sometimes for personal enjoyment or its own sake. Wikipedia

Introduction
As children, we are presented with a world of fantasy and make-believe. Nursery Rhymes, fairy tales, story books, children’s TV and animated movies present a universe filled with talking animals, fantastical creatures and impossible scenarios. We constructed fantasy worlds of our own, converting cardboard boxes into spaceships and bringing our stuffed toys to life.

As adults this fictional universe continues in our technologically rich environment. Reality becomes virtual, simulated, and mediated. Personal computer games transport us into a constructed reality, while multi-player online role-playing games (MMORPG) transport us into a virtual role-playing world which allows interaction between large number of players anywhere in the world. (Second Life, World of Warcraft) These worlds often simulate the real world, but the best fiction and make believe alters reality to a more fantastic and magical place—to a world where anything can happen.

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Project
Conceive of a story that morphs, evolves, transforms through a sequence of three scenarios and create a 6 panel accordion book to include a cover.

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Project Objectives
To explore visual narratives, sequencing and flow
To explore creative writing methodologies
To continue to work with typography, imagery, and media compositionally.

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Part 1 Form Development
Collect found or personal photographs of both man-made and natural subject matter. Consider the use of microscopic/macro lens view of your selected subjects. In this viewpoint, an extreme close up of the subject, the emphasis is placed on the details not easily visible to the eye. From there you may collage or translate the imagery, drawing and editing the imagery using the steps that follow.

Collage
Use the found imagery. Cut and paste/enlarge and reduce to look at form relationships/flow/connections that would allow unexpected forms and meaning.

High Contrast (hard edge)
Trace the image/surface using a black marker on tracing paper. In this method the image will retain only the major forms.

Gestural
Work on a light table with a carefully selected paper over your image to create a drawn stylization. In this version, the drawing implement will have a strong impact on the final outcome. Conté crayon, watercolor, pencil, charcoal, pencil leads will each create a very different interpretation of the image.

Edit
Evaluate the image and make a selection of forms to keep and forms to eliminate. One way to do this is to trace all the forms with a light pencil onto tracing paper. Remove the tracing paper from the image and begin selecting which forms will be colored in, which forms might be defined by line, and which forms will be removed altogether.

Edit + Refine
Continue to evaluate the shapes and lines generated from the photographs. Select and refine the most interesting form(s). Use that form to juxtapose with others. Consider enlargement, reduction, reconstruction.

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Part 2: Hybrid Characters
The fictional character is another representation in which we are familiar; such as the exaggerations we grew up with on Saturday morning cartoons, Nickelodeon, Cartoon Network, and Disney movies. In recent history, the characterization of subjects is extremely popular through animal, graphic novels, and video games. Vinyl toys from hundreds of artists, as represented through companies such as Kid Robot, have pushed these characterized forms past the youth audience. Often cute in a violent or ugly way, the satiric and adult content of these toys match the audience of Adult Swim or South-Park. Even the child friendly aesthetic of Hello Kitty has migrated and morphed into the fine art world through artists such as Takashi Murakami. From transformers to avatars, fiction abounds. Fictional character development has endless possibilities.

Create 3 hybrid characters (one primary and two secondary) that are bred from juxtaposed or contrasting your natural and man-made subjects along with typographic components such as letters, numbers or punctuation. The final characters can include stylization techniques, drawing and ink, media, and image collage. Use any combination of man-made juxtaposed with nature and typographic elements to create the characters. A method called Exquisite Corpse may get you started. Consider how you combine/juxtapose/attach the forms to make a cohesive character where gestalt is critical. Assign the characters superpowers related to the original images/photos.

Part 3 Visual Narrative Development
1. Develop a narrative/plot inspired by the 3 hybrid characters and the future world theme. Research your future world theme, for example, predictions for future travel/mobility. Use the story map that follows to help develop the narrative and scenes.

2. Using your plot, your forms and structures from part 1 and your characters compose a visual narrative on a 6 panel accordion fold. Create 3-6 scenes (contexts/background environments) based on your plot and using forms from part 1. Compose your characters to tell a visual story. You may add text if necessary. The scenes are supposed to reflect a future world. Consider formal explorations including exaggeration and contrast, and concepts related to dreams, hope, play etc. Consider scale, hierarchy in relation to the type and narrative. The booklet should stand-up on a table. In that sense, it serves as an environment (ie: a background scene or set as in theatre). Mix the media and color. While the fold of the accordion create scenic breaks, still consider the flow of the entire format. The format may include die-cuts (holes), pop-ups, pockets to create physical depth.
University of Houston Graphic Design Program
Intermediate
Fall 2014 Art 3330

Instructor: M/W Sibylle Hagmann www.design.uh.edu/hagmann/intermediate/
Instructor: T/Th Fiona McGettigan www.design.uh.edu/mcgettigan/intermediate/

Schedule

September
Day 1 M/T Oct 27/28
Assign Project
Day 3 W/TH Oct 29/30
Bring imagery, found or personal
Work in class on form + character development
Assign Story Plot
Day 4 M/T Nov 3/4
Review 6 characters (8 x 12)
Work in class to refine story plot
Day 5 W/TH Nov 5/6
Review 3 refined characters (8 x 12)
Assign Panel Book
Day 6 M/T Nov 10/11
Review 3 refined characters (8 x 12)
Review 2 x 16" sketches of story context/scenes (B+W)
Day 7 W Nov 12
No class TH Nov 13 (Block review)
Review 3 final characters (8 x 12)
Review 2 x 16" sketches of story context/scenes (B+W)
Day 8 M/T Nov 17/18
Due 3 characters (8 x 12)
Review 4 x 32" sketches of story context/scenes
Review Panels 1-3 (8 x 8") full size with media
Day 9 W/TH Nov 19/20
Review 4 x 32" sketches of story context/scenes
Review panels 1-3 (8 x 8") with media + characters
Day 10 M/T Nov 24/25
Review panels 1-5 (8 x 8") with media + characters
Assign Cover
Book Production
Day 11 M/T Dec 1/2
Review panels 1-6 (8 x 8") with media + characters
Review Cover
Day 13 W/TH Nov 3/4
Due panel book
Portfolio Due

References

On Collage:
- Cubism, Dadaism, Surrealism, Pop Art, Situationist International artists, Punk.

- Man-made
  car
  bridge
  buildings
  train
  drill
  printer
  pump
  circular saw
  faucet
  bicycle
  satellite
  boat
  motorcycle
  scissors
  sewing machine
  oil platform
  tea kettle
  leaf blower
  camera
  vacuum cleaner
  typewriter
  tractor
  reading Lamp

- Natural
  flower
  mammal
  amphibian
  invertebrate
  sea organism
  reptile
  fish
  bird
  tree
  insect
  shell
  plant
  fungi
  bacteria
  seed
  carnivore
  fruit
  plant
  spider
  shell
  leaf blower
  sea organism
  insect
  flower
  mammal
  amphibian

- Future World(s)

  1. Social networks
  2. Robots
  3. Climate change
  4. Technology
  5. Water
  6. Work
  7. Power
  8. Travel / Mobility
  9. Genetics
  10. Urban environment
  11. Age
  12. Tax
  13. Intelligence
  14. Natural
  15. Education
  16. Commerce
  17. Medical
  18. Governance
  19. Currency
  20. Virus Proof
  21. Borders
  22. Exercise
  23. Drones
  24. Food
  25. Knowledge

Final Formats

1. 3—8 x 12" Vertical Hybrid Characters (Color).
   Flush mount on foamcore board.
2. 8 x 64" accordion book
3. Sketchbook

Final format accordion book with 6 - 8" pages
Title
Main Characters
Characters attributes
Other Characters
General Setting
Setting + Event 1
Setting + Event 2
Setting + Event 3
Conflict
Climax
Resolution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STORY MAP</th>
<th>A story map can help you plot out just what happens in a story.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Fill in each part of the story map.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Use the story map to guide your writing.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Mother Ship of Freedom</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Main Characters</td>
<td>Grande High Emperor of Andromeda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Characters</td>
<td>Aunt Helga, her brother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict</td>
<td>Extraterrestrials are fed up with Earth's traffic jams.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setting Future World</td>
<td>Realm of Travel / Mobility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Event 1</td>
<td>Aunt Helga bashes the streets with a brick.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Event 2</td>
<td>The mother ship of Andromeda blasts the freeways with lasers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Event 3</td>
<td>The Grande High Emperor tells earthlings they must learn to live together.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Climax</td>
<td>Aunt Helga becomes the emperor's emissary on Earth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resolution</td>
<td>Aunt Helga achieves improved travel and is awarded the Galaxy Mobility Prize.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Exquisite Corpse

Among Surrealist techniques exploiting the mystique of accident was a kind of collective collage of words or images called the cadavre exquis (exquisite corpse). Based on an old parlor game, it was played by several people, each of whom would write a phrase on a sheet of paper, fold the paper to conceal part of it, and pass it on to the next player for his contribution.

The technique got its name from results obtained in initial playing, "Le cadavre / exquis / boira / le vin / nouveau" (The exquisite corpse will drink the young wine). Other examples are: "The dormitory of friable little girls puts the odious box right" and "The Senegal oyster will eat the tricolor bread." These poetic fragments were felt to reveal what Nicolas Calas characterized as the "unconscious reality in the personality of the group" resulting from a process of what Ernst called "mental contagion."

At the same time, they represented the transposition of Lautréamont's classic verbal collage to a collective level, in effect fulfilling his injunction—frequently cited in Surrealist texts—that "poetry must be made by all and not by one." It was natural that such oracular truths should be similarly sought through images, and the game was immediately adapted to drawing, producing a series of hybrids the first reproductions of which are to be found in No. 9-10 of La Révolution surrealliste (October, 1927) without identification of their creators. The game was adapted to the possibilities of drawing, and even collage, by assigning a section of a body to each player, though the Surrealist principle of metaphorical displacement led to images that only vaguely resembled the human form.

Wikipedia:

Later (perhaps inspired by children's books in which the pages were cut into thirds, the top third pages showing the head of a person or animal, the middle third the torso, and the bottom third the legs, with children having the ability to "mix and match" by turning pages) the game was adapted to drawing and collage. It has also been played by mailing a drawing or collage—in progressive stages of completion—to the players, and this variation is known as "exquisite corpse by airmail," or "mail art," whether the game travels by airmail or not.

Some have played the graphic game with a more or less vague or general prior agreement about what the resulting picture will be (though such application of reason makes the exercise not strictly a surrealist one).

There have been variations on the original procedure, such as the exquisite corpse wang-dang-doodle—a type of very long, rearrangeable exquisite corpse invented by Ted Joans.

The game of exquisite corpse has been adapted to be played using computer graphics, the construction of Surrealist objects, and even an adaptation to architecture has been proposed. The technique has also been used in making at least one Doom level [1], and at NYU in making films [2].

In music, the composers Virgil Thomson, John Cage, and Lou Harrison (among others) collaborated on Exquisite Corpse pieces, where each composer would only be privy to one measure of music.

A Film exquisite corpse

The stage production Hedwig and the Angry Inch and its film adaptation heavily utilize the exquisite corpse format as a symbol. Near the end of the play/film, as the already bizarre story reaches its most surreal point, Hedwig begins reminiscing about all the relationships and events in her life that have made her feel "cut...up into parts", with pieces going to various important people. The following song asserts that now, however, she has "sewn up" or reconstructed herself, recovered, and become whole, though as a patchwork of sorts ("tornado body and a hand grenade head, and the legs are two lovers entwined"). The lyrics actually contain the term "exquisite corpse", which is also its title. Indeed, the whole tale is a developed exploration of the exquisite corpse concept, examining it via several themes: heavy influence from Plato's Symposium, suggesting that individual lovers are two incomplete parts of a whole; the impact of each relationship in an individual's life; genital alterations related to sex change; and the concept of gender, particularly nonbinary gender, as a construction of components from various sexual identities, combined in a way that results in a unique individual. A more recent film, The Orange Thief, was made using the exquisite corpse technique. The film makers knew of each other's daily scenes only after they were shot and edited, and then worked on a subsequent scene to bolster the previous. This film can be seen online at P AH fest.com.