

**this
is
not
a
news
mag**

alex hopkins

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Introducing the project

It was a surprisingly sunny Wednesday morning, I was still a tad drowsy and the fact that the Southwood Site still existed seemed somewhat of a revelation to me. I hadn't stepped foot down here since way back in the days of September, the first day of term. I think. As a result of this, I got a bit lost and was unable to find my way until 0940.

After being on the wrong end of a very loud Mark Ingham I felt substantially less drowsed and ready to start the lecture. He was exclaiming that; "I couldn't swan in 10 minutes late if I was in the industry, so I shouldn't be doing it here." And y'know, he was right. He just didn't know that 20 minutes prior to this, my brain was at the conclusion that due to some crazy witchcraft, The Southwood Site didn't even exist.

So we started discussing the different ways in which the human race is able to learn. In my mind it boils down to just two: 'being taught' and 'experimentation'. Each has its own strengths and weaknesses, for example you wouldn't want to 'experiment' with the laws of gravity by jumping off of a tall building. It is far better to be taught that doing so will result in death, than to go and kill yourself. Learning stuff is useless if you are no longer alive to harness the power of the knowledge.

Next we had a look at a short film about a really cool magazine based in East London. It was a great insight into the industry that one-day I will be a part of. I can't wait, because this film depicts that when I've finished looking at photographs of Mila Kunis, I can turn round and check if it is time for a cup of tea on one of the three clocks labeled - Clapton, Shoreditch or Dalston... and get paid for it. WINNING!

And to finish we were discussing the power of twitter and how useful it would be for us to have an account. Now, I don't know how to use twitter, nor do I have an account so I was unable to take part in what happened next. Now obviously, it is 2012 and some people on the course do have twitter and do know how to use it. There is no need for me to cover what happened next, but what I will say is that person responsible for the "Return of the very loud Mark Ingham" should be ashamed of themselves. You've let us down, you've let the university down and most importantly you have let yourself down.

**"the fact that
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Vaughn Oliver

Determined not to 'swan' into any lecture theatres late this week, I arrived with 15 minutes to spare. I had gotten off to a great start; one less snooze on the old alarm and life was a lot less stressful. I even had time to grab a coffee, a latte in fact. That was an excellent idea, I'd skipped breakfast and had already started to fatigue after a mere bus journey. Yes, that was it; I had decided I needed some caffeine.

Wow, 82 words about coffee, I better be moving on.

"Does anybody know who is going to be lecturing you today?" Are the words being belted out of Marks mouth as I enter the lecture theatre. I boldly reply with "Yeah, Vincent somebody." Mark proceeds to shake his head.

You see the thing is, I've always had a problem with names. My general memory is pretty decent, as in to say, "I can usually get the first letter right". Which as you can tell from the title of this piece I did.

Vaughn Oliver is a very experienced Graphic designer and is definitely someone I can really relate to. He is heavily inspired by music and throughout his career he has worked with many big bands including The Pixies. Wow what a catch!

He went on to explain how he came to work with such a prestigious band and actually it turns out that he started working with them when they were not such a prestigious band.

This set some cogs turning in my head. I dream of working alongside big bands and really influential artists, but maybe rather than aiming for the current "big boys" I need to be getting out there and getting involved with the up and comers. Food for thought.

**"Wow, 82
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Neil Spiller

To be honest this Neil Spiller seemed like a bit of an "oddball". But if you take a minute to look at the greats throughout history you will often find that many of them could be considered "oddballs". Nice save, (he is the dean of the University at which I study).

Whilst we're here, skirting around the edge of speaking complete honesty. I find it an apt place to declare that in actual fact I had no idea what was going on in this lecture until approximately half way through.

So for the first half of the lecture I was completely bamboozled by all the talk of symbols and metaphors. Here are a few quotes from the notes I was taking at the time, "Angel with the Brazilian bush", "Bosch – the owl is a symbol of the devil" Still very confused I was just typing things down which I hoped would make sense later. Fortunately my mind was rescued by all of the amazing artwork and drawings on display. The attention to detail and his level of integrity and commitment were very impressive. From what I was seeing he was an extremely talented guy.

Further research into the goings on in Neil Spiller's life reveal that "He is also Director of the Advanced Virtual and Technological Architecture Research Group (AVATAR). He is author of several books on architecture and digital culture, including *Digital Dreams: Architecture and the New Alchemic Technologies* and *Cyberreader: Critical Writings for the Digital Era.*"

The point at which it all clicked for me was when he flat out said, "these are all drawings which link to an imaginary world of mine". That was it everything started slotting into place. I have since watched back the lecture knowing this it really does make sense from the start. But I wonder whether this was his intention. After all he was lecturing about surrealism and he definitely delivered a surreal lecture.

**"So for
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Nic Clear

I was actually a little late for this lecture. The night previous I had read up on our guest speaker and I was sat on the bus contemplating what was likely to be covered in the lecture.

This moment of calmness was suddenly broken by a youth recreating something which I can only assume he had seen on the formula 1 the previous weekend. You know when the race is all said and done and the drivers who were placed in 1st, 2nd and 3rd are awarded a bottle of champagne and they proceed to shake it up and spray it every where. This particular young man did this. Only it was a bottle of Lucozade and he hadn't won anything, well apart from being the biggest douche on the bus. So anyway this resulted in the bus being evacuated and having to wait for the next one. What a champ.

Right on to the lecture. "Nic Clear is a qualified architect who teaches a postgraduate design unit at the Bartlett School of Architecture that specializes in the use of video, animation and motion graphics in the development and representation of spatial and architectural ideas and practices"

"Architects love stuff that looks complex." This was something, which really stuck with me. Nic was commenting on the fact that most architects tend to get caught up in the smaller details and that providing you have these details in your work you will get a decent amount of recognition. My question is; "If you were to step away from these commonalities would your work still be creditable?"

So we were shown the opening scene from the film Panic Room. I've seen the film before, but had never really dwelled on how it was filmed. The scene was one continuous shot which starts by entering the house through a keyhole and goes on to weave in and out of chairs, tables and various kitchen appliances. Nic went on to explain; "By operating at different spatial levels and by blending actuality and virtuality you are able to create a synthetic world and it is this which opens the possibility of new and interesting architectural spaces."

After revisiting this quote a few times it really began to make sense. Architecture wasn't necessarily just about buildings but was more about an exploration of space.

**"It is
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Stacey Pitsillides

In this lecture the tables had turned. I was on time and Stacey was the one who was late. Her excuse: traffic. I wonder if her traffic problems involved any youths armed with Lucozade? (read my previous posts in this section for an understanding of this)

Stacey is actually one of our lecturers and has recently graduated from Goldsmiths University. I kind of already knew what it was she was planning to talk about, as during the first term I had had quite a long chat with her about what she does outside of teaching. On this particular occasion she had told me about trips she was taking to Holland and America to partake in talks and other such events. Her subject of expertise was "Digital Death".

Where does our online information go once we pass?

One thing that Stacey talked briefly about was Facebook profiles and what happens to them after we die. This is a particularly personal topic for as I still have my late father as a Facebook friend. My sister and I have had discussions about getting the thing deleted but we actually decided upon keeping it going.

Our reasoning was this; it's nice when it pops up with a message saying "Say Hello to Paul!" or he pops up in your friend box. It keeps him fresh in my memory and it is far easier to look through this photos this way. It's a way of remembering.

Further researches into the topic lead me to this;

"Facebook recognizes the importance that a profile can play in remembering departed friends and family. Via a form in its help section, Facebook accepts requests to place accounts in a memorialized state. Once Facebook approves the request the account's privacy is restricted to friends only and certain sensitive information is removed. The profile and wall remain active for friends to post memories and condolences."

I actually had no idea this sort of function existed. My sister and I were actually scared of telling Facebook incase it was automatic procedure for it to be deleted. I am actually going to talk to her and see if this is something we should look into.

**"Where
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Rachel Armstrong

By the sounds of it I missed the pick of the bunch so far! I came in to University on Friday to find the class a buzz with talk of Rachel's lecture. Some people were saying it had "changed their outlook on life" others were saying "she was the messiah" and someone even said they wanted to "be adopted by Rachel."

Personally, I found these comments a bit far fetched. But, I was willing to keep an open mind towards all the Rachel Armstrong love that was floating about.

I had a quick browse through the lecture, but as I was watching it I didn't feel as though I could do it justice without having witnessed it first hand. So I turned to Google. I thought I would do a bit of research on her and maybe find a different topic.

Amongst the sea of information on Rachel I stumbled upon a TEDx talk. Now I've seen a few of these, one in particular was from this kid, maybe 12 years old. He was giving chatting about how he had made successful iPhone applications. The most successful of which was called Bustin Jeiber, which was basically Whack-A-Mole game with Jusin Beiber instead of a mole. In my eyes this kid was a genius, he was somehow making money through the medium of, taking the piss out of Justin Beiber, which is quite an achievement for a 12 year old.

So Rachel's TEDx talk, "Children of the Industrial Revolution". It was pretty damn interesting. This title comes from her analogy of the Industrial Revolution and it being the point at which humanity started to turn earths resources into wide spread energy.

"When I make a machine I am interfering with a relationship that exists between a creature and its surroundings." – Rachel Armstrong

This quote was in relation to a story she told about when she was a child. She and her sister would go outside in to the garden an collect up all sorts of different types of plants, leaves any sort of greenery and house them in old ice cream tubs. Next came the insects. Now, I'm imagining her running around the garden like some sort of "Child Catcher" character (from Chitty Chitty Bang Bang) with a big butterfly net, attempting to scoop up anything with more than two legs and a set of wings.

Once they had their collection of 'Ice Cream Tub Eco Systems' they did what most young children do, get bored of their newfound project and swiftly move on to something else.

What happens to all the bugs and insects I hear you saying. Well apparently they turn into mush once they are left for long enough and it is up to your mum to sort it out for you.

Now this story had a point and a valid one at that. She was using it as a metaphor for the world and the way that we live. Yeah we go around making holes in the ozone layer, causing trouble in the rainforests and all that. But the difference is Mother Nature isn't behind us every step of the way cleaning up and making it all better again.

"Technology distances us from nature"

We, humanity have got to do it for ourselves. So why not do it the right way from the start. We should do it in such a way that we could avoid this, or even use nature to help us.

Oh actually while I remember, at some point she was talking about Neil Spiller.

"Dr. Rachel Armstrong is leading the Hylozoic Groundteam in developing its ground-breaking 'Living Architecture' chemical circulation systems. She is a Global TED Fellow, Teaching Fellow at the Bartlett School of Architecture, University College London and member of Professor Neil Spiller's AVATAR Research Group. "

So, it turns out that they actually know each other pretty well. I have to admit, I rewound the video back a few times just to make sure I had heard correctly. Yes, whilst both of them are involved in architecture and from what I can gather from their respective lectures, they seem worlds apart. But maybe that is what makes for such a great team.

For the next part of the lecture Rachel moved on to the application of her point. "Living technology, its new, there is no on/off button, its doesn't have an electric cable its warm and soft to touch." She was on about using this new "biological" technology to help out with a bunch of problems in Venice.

Venice has a very uncertain future and is suffering badly from rising sea levels. The fact that the whole City is built on woodpiles really isn't helping either. Rachel and her team at AVATAR are at the helm of working to sort this out.

They've got some super duper biological bacteria, which she claims will react with local carbon dioxide and dissolved mineral resources from the water and form itself into an artificial Limestone reef below the foundations of Venice. This would spread the weight of the City away from the narrow pole on to a much larger surface are, thus saving it!

"This is a new kind of technology wich doesn't just take from the environment it gives something too."

Such a brilliant way to round of a very interesting lecture. I have to say I have no idea we as a race had this sort of stuff at our disposal. I have to say that this was probably the most interesting GAMSWEN topic I have looked into thus far.

What have you learnt so far?

Right then, so we're six deep and it's now time for a recap. I have to say I am actually very surprised at the pedigree of the graphic designers giving these lectures.

A real highlight for me was one of the very early ones given by Vaughn Oliver. For me being taught by such a high profile graphic designer, who has had the pleasure of working with some really high profile names, was second to none.

For me it was this lecture, which resonated most with my inner designer. I have always been a musical person and from the day that I decided that I was going to study Graphic Design, working within the boundaries of sound have always been my goal.

I'm sitting here trying to pick out my least favorite of the lectures. Whilst there was an obvious winner I'm really struggling to find anything to dislike about the rest. Maybe I would say Neil Spiller, based on the fact that I was very confused for about thirty minutes. No, that would be unfair.

It has been about a year and a half since I have had to write in the way that we've been expected in this class, it was when applying for university actually. I had real trouble writing my personal statement and it took me weeks to plan it out and actually get round to doing a draft.

The real problem I had was that I just wasn't confident with words. I have never tried to write anything creative before and had always tried to write in a professional manner. My UCAS application turned out ok, but I think this has greatly improved upon that. It's the first time that I am writing with my own voice and it is amazing how empowering that feels.

"The real problem I had was that I just wasn't confident with words"

Manifesto

So in this lecture we were given the task of writing a manifesto. First of all here is the definition: A public declaration of policy and aims, esp. one issued before an election by a political party or candidate.

So what will be in my manifesto? I am going to quickly go over all of my aims in brief before I delve deeper into the mechanics of how I will achieve them and how deep they go.

The two main things in my life are Graphics and Music. Graphic Design is going to be my career and music is my hobby. It has been a hobby of mine for the past 10 years and my goals are still unclear. You see, I write music for myself and no one else. I began studying music production about 6 years ago and after my foundation I decided to not progress on to degree status.

I found that studying something which I do for fun and for myself really hindered my enjoyment of it. I had to cater my music for others and make music that I didn't enjoy which is not what it's about for me. I aim one day to release an album and have my music heard by the masses, but never actually write for them.

With regards to Graphic Design, first and for mostly I plan to pass this degree with at least a 2:1, then move into the industry. I aim to work for a company that deals with creative solutions to problems rather than more "textbook" graphic design.

Making a decent amount of money is not my primary goal, but I do plan on having loads of kids. So money is kind of a necessity. I read somewhere that the average child cost about £200,000. Better get saving.

**"but I do
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Animated Robots

It was 8 o'clock in the morning and it was a surprisingly cold day. This was surprising because we have had some seriously good weather recently I've even had my short shorts and sunnies out! Unfortunately this cold day was met with a cold for me; needless to say I didn't make it in to this lecture.

Laying in bed, unable to sleep because of a blocked up nose I decided to start looking at what I was missing out on in the lecture. The title was "Animated Robots", I had a think for a moment about what animated actually meant and I couldn't really put my finger on it. I could think of examples of animation, Walt Disney, Pokemon and just about any other children's cartoon.

"Animation is the rapid display of a sequence of images of 2-D or 3-D artwork or model positions to create an illusion of movement. The effect is an optical illusion of motion due to the phenomenon of persistence of vision, and can be created and demonstrated in several ways. The most common method of presenting animation is as a motion picture or video program, although there are other methods."

I always loved the Disney films when I was younger, my mum was actually some sort of "Crazy Disney Woman" who would buy every video the day of its release and promptly add it to our collection. I have probably seen all of the early Disney films like Snow White and Bambi at least a million times each, maybe not that many, maybe 50, I dunno.

Another big love of mine was Pokemon, this came slightly after my Disney phase. I'm not sure what it was about Pokemon that I loved but for years I just wanted it to be real life. Maybe it was the idea of always having a cool sidekick that could keep you company.

**"my mum
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Simon Herron

Drawing is something, which I have tended to struggle with for as long as I can remember. My problem isn't so much 'not' being able to draw, but more a case of I must have something in front of me 'to' draw and enough time to faff about and restar about 3 times. I have always thought that someone who is good at drawing would be able to draw these incredibly realistic pictures straight from their imagination. Thus, I am not a 'good' drawer.

For instance, for the past two terms we have been attending Life Drawing classes. In which I have found my self very hit and miss. Firstly, we will generally have between 10 and 20 minutes to draw a whole pose. Here is my first barrier; I've barely done my decisive first few lines after 10 minutes, I don't think I ever got round to drawing a single hand or foot in any of our sessions. On a side note though, my charcoal stuff improved greatly through the sessions, maybe 'cos you don't have to be so precise?

Anyway so this week we were going to be getting a lecture on how to draw. Perfect! Simon Herron was our guest speaker and he teaches Architecture at my University, he also has a pretty talented dad; Ron Herron who has produced some immense work called 'The Walking City'.

Something, which he touched upon, was that often drawing was the first stage in the creative process. Which meant it didn't need to be neat; it was more of a way of "getting things down" and entering into a flow. This was reassuring to me because it meant I didn't need to produce drawings that I was proud of all the time. I have also been told this by Stacey Pitsillides, one of our other lecturers. Hmm, maybe I should take these experienced peoples advice.

"I must have something in front of me 'to' draw and enough time to faff about and restar about 3 times"

The Return of Neil Spiller

"Ah sweet, the 'oddball' was back." I actually thought that he was a lot less 'oddbally' today; I think it was because I was able to understand his lecture for its entirety.

So, Neil was going to be talking about surrealism again, but he actually was talking about a part of surrealism that I have held quite a heavy interest in for some years now. Dali!

I first stumbled upon Dali at the age of... well I don't know; I do know however that it was around Year 5 or 6 at school. My best friend at that time was called Luke and I was over at his house. Probably playing PlayStation or something. But his mum is this really wacky artist Lady, she throws paint about and stuff. I remember her having this book about Dali, which from the first moment I picked it up I was completely captured by the abstract charms that lay within.

I remember looking at his brilliant reflecting elephants piece and admiring the vivid colours and wispy clouds and random man smoking a pipe and weird shaped trees and the EVERYTHING ELSE APART FROM THE ELEPHANTS, before Lisa (paint throwing lady) said, "do you see the elephants?" I remember looking for a while and thinking 'I can see swans but no elephants'. Then it slapped me in the face. It slapped me so hard that this is still one of my favourite paintings ever.

I am actually looking at it as I write this and im still not sure if I will ever find a painting or any piece of artwork that resonates with me more than this does. It is hard for me to put my finger on what it actually is that makes it so special for me. I think its that element of surprise, seeing it for the first time and also the enjoyment of asking people that question – "do you see the elephants?" and waiting for their face. Priceless.

**"EVERYTHING
ELSE
APART
FROM
THE
ELEPHANTS"**

The End

Its been a long 12 weeks, so much has happened. There has been children nearly arrested for throwing about Lucozade, we've explored my addiction to coffee, we had an appearance from 'whacky paint throwing lady' and you know, we've had a few decent lectures too.

But todays 'decent' lecture felt like a really casual affair. We were on the Internet watching films, w00t! Yes, we really were. But the idea behind it was how to create a really good ending.

So we were going through the 'top 20 best ever in the world film endings' pointing out what made a good ending and discussing said facts. I have to say, my 'favourite ever film ending in the world' is the last 5 minutes of Fight Club. Again, if I may revisit a previous reference, I literally 'got slapped in the face' by the climax of that film. Didn't see it coming, didn't see it coming one bit. Similar to my 'reflecting elephants' story, I really enjoy watching Fight Club with people who have never seen it, for exactly the same reasons. I just love to see their face when it all clicks into place..

Before we I end this piece, I would like to explain my thoughts and the ides behind my layout and very minimalistic design.

The whole idea behind my project has been to start by thinking about the lecture and just write. As I mention in one of the articles I have really had a problem with writing in my own voice in the past. The idea came from some thing the Mark Ingham said in the very first lecture and it was this:

"Don't just write, and they he said this and then he said that and then he showed us pictures of a bum-holes and then it was the end. Try to communicate your thoughts and find a voice for your writing." So that is exactly what I have tried to do.

So hopefully you realize that the reason I have very limited character

'top 20 best ever in the world film endings'

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What have i learnt?

Manifestos

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Neil Spiller... the return

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The End

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