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Introduction

Hello, and welcome to Out The Box, the news mag dedicated to the world of art and design!

Over the next chapters I will take you on a journey through this exciting and engaging world, and how you fit into this world.

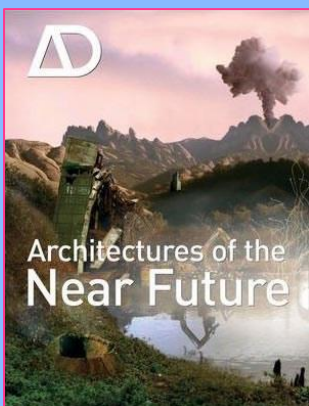
On the following pages you will find a collection of journalistic articles based on various different subjects. You'll find colourful images, tips, tricks, internet links, books, professional advice and words of wisdom and much much more. This tome of knowledge is great for any artist (professional or amateur), designer, writer, 3D artist- whatever your chosen field, there's something in here for everyone.

I found that the lectures were very informative and engaging, giving me a new perspective on the world around me, as well as allowing me to see into the minds of not only other artists, but other professionals from different fields that had something interesting they wanted to share. Check out Rachel Armstrong's 'Evolved, not Made' lecture beginning on page 9, as well as the lecture on Manifestos on page 34.

But don't think that this is just another boring essay written by a robot- this is far from it...



Evolved not made, page 9



Nic Clear, page 35

Book 1: How do I learn?

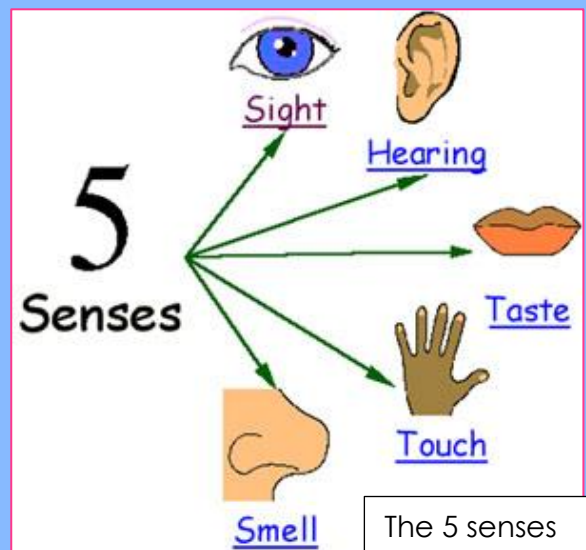
'Reading is the sole means by which we slip, involuntarily, into another's skin, another's voice, another's soul'- Joyce Carol Oates

This was the main question of the first lecture, which was used to engage our minds and get the ball rolling. For this course I was to have 12 lectures on various topics that related to art & design, and I was to learn something new and exciting from each of them.

So how do I learn?

There are many different ways that we take in information and remember it. For the most part of our lives, we stare at a whiteboard in a stuffy classroom whilst the teacher drones on about the square root of pie and $E=MC^2$.

But there are other ways that we soak up information. The way we take for granted the most is our 5 senses. Our senses are what we use to engage with the world, and the people around us- but we don't even realise we're doing it. When we listen to music, we use our hearing. When we watch a film, we use our sight. When we eat our favourite foods, our senses of taste and smell work together. Our sense of touch helps us to experience the different textures the world has to offer. Our senses



The 5 senses

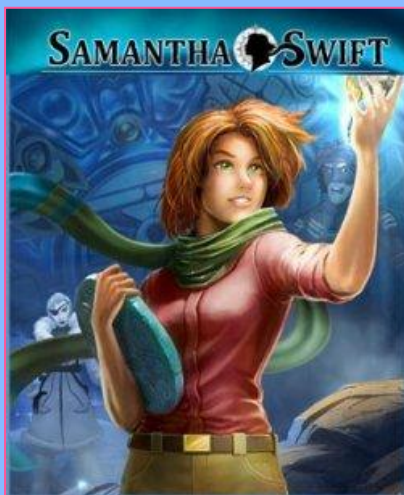
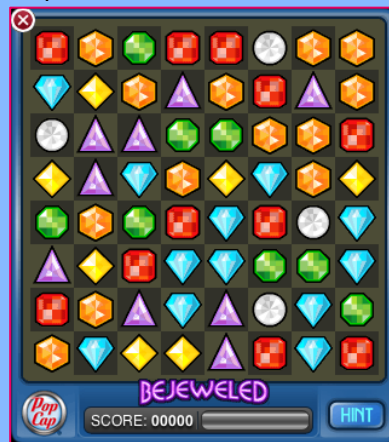
are taken for granted by each of us, and those of us that may not have a particular sense e.g. their sight, have to find other ways to experience the world we live in. Think about all the beautiful colours we see during a sunset- imagine if we couldn't see them or the other things that Mother Nature has given us? How would you, as an artist, find a way to express how you're feeling?

Repetition- The art of doing something over and over again. We often do something over and over again to get better at it. When they made you recite your times table at school they were drilling it into your head- you should be able to do them in your sleep! For some of us, we may prefer to

read up on a subject and do research about a particular subject. Some of us prefer theory to the practical. Artists tend to work by trial and error or experimentation- playing around with different techniques, colours and styles until they get into their stride. Having a hands-on approach suits most of us- what better way to learn something new than by getting stuck in and doing it?

How much do you learn when you're bored?

Haven't you ever noticed that you don't learn as much when you're not interested in a subject, as opposed to when you are? The more enthusiastic we are about a given subject e.g. animation, graphic design, the more likely we are to perk up our ears and let our minds engage with the information being shared. Games have been proven to help us learn, as we learn a lot when we have fun. Contrary to popular belief that games are promoting



Hidden object game
Samantha Swift

How do we remember?

Interesting Links:

Computer Games don't rot the brain: They Help Us Learn- Katie Salen

www.theatlantic.com

An interesting article about how video games can engage the mind.

Reality is broken: Why games make us better and how they can change the world

'Computer Games Can Help Children Learn'

www.guardian.co.uk/technology/2004/oct/27/schools.elearning

A newspaper article about how video games should be part of the curriculum.

Video Games Affect the Brain- for Better and Worse- Dana Press

www.dana.org/news/erebrum/detail.aspx

An engaging debate about how video games affect the brain.

If you've watched the BBC's up to date version of *Sherlock*, you'd see that he stores all his information in his 'memory palace' and to remember and sort through the information he wants, he just locks everyone out and travels there.

But we're not Sherlock. So how do we remember things? Over the years you probably learned mnemonics- phrases, illustrations and anything that aids you in remembering information for later reference e.g. the planets in order:



'My Very Energetic Mother Just Screamed Utter Nonsense'. This method has been proven to help you remember how to spell those words that trip us up e.g. necessary: 'One Cup, two Sugars' or one that everyone knows: 'I before e, except after c'. I'm sure you remember the game show 'Catch Phrase' that used

visual clues to represent well known catchphrases. Gamers are probably familiar with 'Dr Kawashima's brain training' series, which focuses on training the brain and its memory banks.

Can you decipher this catchphrase?

Think outside the box...

How do you learn? Make a mind map of the different ways we can learn and which ones work best for you. Are you more of a theoretical person? Maybe you're more into practical methods and getting on with it? Or, you may find that you use all of the methods addressed above. Think about how you engage with the world, and your experiences. Would they have been different without one of our senses? How would you, as an artist, find a way around that?

Book 2: Vaughan Oliver

Vaughan Oliver is a British graphic designer, motion graphics artist, typographer and art director, known mostly for his collaborative works and his innovative record/vinyl sleeve design. He talked about his approach to design, as well as giving some tips about what it takes to be a great designer. I had the pleasure of meeting Vaughan Oliver in my second lecture.

Oliver has had a very interesting artistic life, taking advantage of the opportunities



Album
Cover
for The
Breeders

that arose for him. He has a unique approach when it comes to his creations. He combines illustration and photography (His chosen mediums often included spray paint, ink & water- experimentation with different media to create a powerful piece of work. He also used hand-drawn typography- as it ties in with the image i.e. becomes part of it) for his record sleeve designs- he worked for record label 4AD, whose signed acts included The Cocteau Twins, Dead Can Dance, The Breeders, This Mortal Coil, Pale Saints, Pixies, and Throwing Muses. He's a firm believer that

music can change moods and inform people, affecting them on a personal level. A lot of his record sleeve designs were for the Post-punk era of music and independent record labels. He felt that this non-mainstream music was music that deserved a wider audience.

Closer study of Oliver's work shows a lot of care, quality & attention to detail. His combination of mediums to create impactful designs shows that art is not restricted by any medium- just by your own imagination. Being an artist and expressing yourself is down to your state of mind. He told me that we shouldn't follow trends- that we should find our own identity and do something different to the mainstream. He tends to be very Anti-establishment when it comes to music and design.

Visceral Pleasures was a collaborative project headed up by Oliver himself. Collaboration is key to Oliver's work as everyone brings their own aesthetics and something unique to the project. He also spoke of Recontextualisation- reconstructing an existing image & applying it to design; re-reading an image. Using a combination of both text and imagery, he gave his work new meaning by showing off the

pg. 7



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Visceral Pleasures

A Lecture by Vaughan Oliver



Synopsis:
This lecture is an overview of Vaughan Oliver's 30-year career in graphic design, spanning all design for music, fashion, branding and publishing.
Vaughan Oliver will talk about his role as art director and designer, discussing the collaborative nature of his work. Oliver will also look at typography in the context of information or illustration.



About the Speaker:
Vaughan Oliver is a graphic designer, art director and consultant with over 20 years of experience in the design industry.
From his initial work for the record label 4AD, his unique approach to design has spread across the creative industries in Europe and the USA. Oliver's experience spans the gamut from publishing, film, architecture and branding to film direction for TV commercials (Blackboard, Sony and Harrold) and fashion (John Galiano and Roberto Armani).

ADM

Monday, 5 September 2011, 5.00pm
ADM Auditorium, Level 2

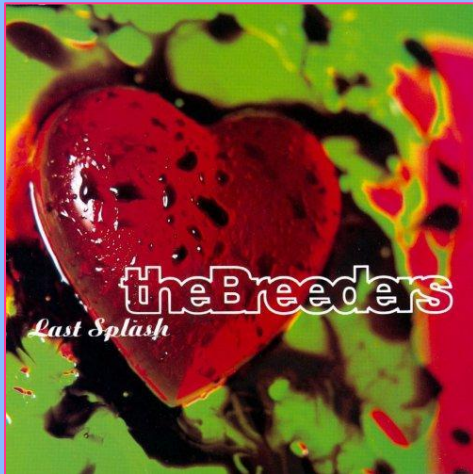
For more information, go to <http://www.adm.ntu.edu.sg/News/Events/What's%20 happening/2011/september/Pages/VisceralPleasures.aspx>

Visceral Pleasures

beauty of typography. He often worked with little or no budget.

Where do ideas come from?

A question that artists from any medium always get asked. What inspires you to do what you do? Inspiration is always there – it can come from any source...whether it be existing works, your favourite artists or people and mentors. Oliver's mentor was a man named Terry Dowling, who served as his graphic guide. David Lynch, a film maker was one of Vaughn's inspirations, as his work included a lot of dark themes that contained sinister connotations. His work was very surrealistic, as well as



Another Breeders cover

fetishistic with nervous, scratchy typography. The way this guy worked was very reflective of the music at the time. He also found some inspiration in the form of fashion designer the late Alexander McQueen.

When it came to designing the record labels themselves, he listened to the music he was designing for- he felt that he couldn't do the music justice without first having a connection with the music itself; 'A connection with the

music/subject matter makes a powerful image' Oliver said, which I find to be very true- if you can't

connect with what you're creating, how can you expect others to?

A part I found really interesting was when he spoke about finding your own identity- something that is really hard to do as an artist. Collaborating and working with others without killing each other can be very good for any artist as everyone on the team will bring a different aesthetic and bring something new and exciting to the table- everyone can learn something from everyone else. Going against the grain and doing something different than the norm will always make you stand out from the crowd and get you noticed than if you follow the group of automatons and stick to the mainstream. Inspiration is always right there if you're willing to see & feel it. The exploration of genres and methods/ techniques e.g. fashion, mixed media can always add a new twist to work and allow you to get over that artists' block-embracing visual freedom can allow you to take yourself as well as your art to new

levels. 'Find your own voice- don't always do things on

'Find your own voice- don't always do things on trend'
Vaughan Oliver



Vaughan's typography work

trend- Where's the progression?' were some very lasting words from Oliver.

What I also found interesting was that your image can really stand out if the audience doesn't quite get the meaning of the piece. The Whole theme may not reveal itself completely – ambiguity & mystery- raises questions and answers. It stays with you longer when you can't quite work it out than if you get it all straight away as it will keep nagging at you and you will keep revisiting the piece, seeing a new element or feeling something completely different each time.

I felt that Vaughan Oliver has given one of the most interesting lectures, not only entertaining me with his lively, energetic samples of work but also giving information that will stay with the serious artist for the rest of their life.

Think outside the box- how would you as an artist go about creating a piece of art? How would you find yourself as an artist and create your own identity?

Book 3: Evolved, Not Made

Doctor Rachel Armstrong is an award-winning architect who explores how technology and science can co-exist and the use of sustainable technologies in the natural and built environment. She gave a very passionate and lively lecture on living architecture and her research on Synthetic Biology and the challenges to humanity to create a sustainable environment.

Synthetic Biology is basically the design and engineering of the living world. How we as humans make things and our sensory engagement with the world. Rachel began by showing us video clips of living cells. I was fascinated by how they moved and how they can join together to create something new- something that we never think about when it comes to the cells in our own bodies. The formation of cells is essential to our existence, as we need to create new cells according to our bodies' needs.

As she dove headfirst into her lecture, I found myself being drawn in by her passionate attitude towards the subject. She spoke of the cosmology of existence- how things are connected through rhythm and how we humans always destroy our own environments as we advance through the ages. *'Look through time & across cultures- humans have always destroyed their own environments by oversimplifying everything'* Rachel said, referring to the fact that as our technologies and we as people become more and more advanced, we cause more destruction to the environment we exist in. The cosmological argument of existence is also about how we came into existence- did



we evolve from early humans? Or were we created by a higher power? (This goal of this argument is to basically prove that God exists). {Reichenbach, B. (2004). *Cosmological Argument*. Available: <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/cosmological-argument/>. Last accessed 09th May 2012.} Humans have always been curious about our existence and the world around us and it's this curiosity that has not only been beneficial, but harmful as well. When we invented the car, we had created a way to get around easier, but also produced pollution, something biology can't use. And as we created more and more things, we created other types of pollution, which

'Look through time & across cultures- humans have always destroyed their own environments by oversimplifying everything'

Dr Rachel Armstrong

are of no benefit to not only our environment, but to us as well. The devastating BP oil spill of 2010 caused extensive damage to animals, their habitats and also took the lives of some people who were drilling for that oil.



Picture: How the BP oil spill disaster affected wildlife. Is this how we treat our world?

She then went into how technology affects us and our environment- how the body itself is not a machine.

Cybernetics is the study of the structure of regulatory systems and is a much more complex form of existence- they are inorganic substances that can resemble human life but are not quite human. These recent technological developments mean that people can replace damaged limbs.

Biomimicry

The natural world always surprises and inspires us. The rational mind has preconceptions of the world due to human experiences but there is always something new and exciting, waiting to be discovered. These new discoveries can be applied to the world of design as well. By looking at the wonders of the natural world, we can bring something new and magical to our own creativeness, especially in architecture and technology. Solving



human problems by using nature's designs is known as Biomimicry. Taking inspiration from or emulating nature's elements can be used in very interesting ways when it comes to design. Take a look at the cactus building; it was based off the design of the cactus plant. The cactus is known for its tough skin and its ability to store water and these have been applied to the eco-design of this building, located in Qatar.

The Cactus Building, Qatar

Another example of

Biomimicry is the use of the Nautilus Shell. The cascading spirals inside this shell have been used as the basis for a lot of designs.

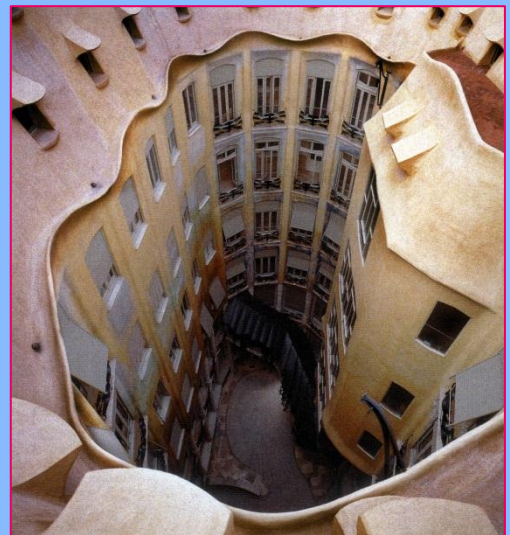


Look at this image. What do you feel when you look at it? Where do you think this shell has been used in modern architectural design?

The Nautilus Shell

Gaudi

Gaudi was a Spanish Catalan architect who often used nature's designs, as well as his love for his home and religion in his architectural work. He was skilled at a range of crafts, including wrought iron work, carpentry, stained glass, ceramics plus others which he used when creating his work. Gaudi was nicknamed 'God's Architect' because his beliefs showed in his work. He became a part of the Catalan Modernista movement in the late 19th century, after years of being influenced by neo-gothic art. His style can be described as organic culminations inspired by nature. Several of his works are now world heritage sites. Gaudi's work is probably some of the earliest forms of Biomimicry and the use of nature in architectural design. Here, you can see how the natural world has inspired the shape of the building and his mosaic on one of the World's longest benches in Park Guell, Barcelona.



For me, I felt that Rachel Armstrong single-handedly made science, architecture and biology the most interesting subject in the world. Her passion for sustainable design was apparent through the way she delivered the lecture and I enjoyed sharing in her passion.

Interesting Links:

[Creating Carbon-Negative Architecture" >>](#)

A talk about sustainable architecture

Rachel Armstrong
(@livingarchitect)

<https://www.facebook.com/livingarchitect>

Rachel's twitter and facebook page

[HOW LIVING TECHNOLOGIES COULD RECLAIM VENICE](#)

An article/ talk about living technologies and how they impact the environment.

Book 4: Surrealism part.1

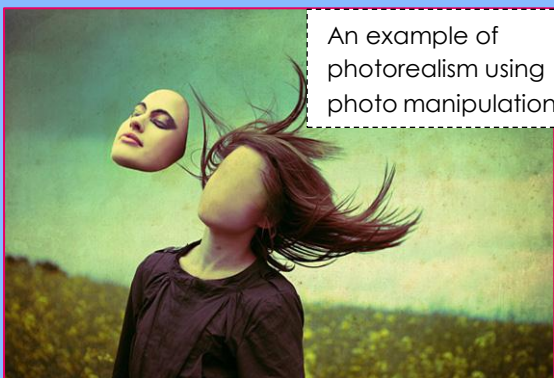
Neil Spiller, the dean of the school of architecture and construction treated us to a lecture on surrealism, and how it fits into the world of art and design.

He told us of his island that he was creating, a project that he had been working on for 12 years and has produced countless drawings and sketches for. The gateway to Neil's island represents liberation from guilt and is the only way to get in. Through this island, he has also been exploring the impact of technology on architecture, which is what Rachel Armstrong has been studying in great detail.



A drawing for Neil's island, called the Baroness filaments.

Surrealism is an art movement that began back in the 1920s. Surrealism is best



An example of photorealism using photo manipulation

known for their element of surprise, self-expression, unexpected juxtapositions and non-sequitur (not making sense to what came before it). Some of the pioneers of this movement include Andre Breton, photographer Man Ray, Max Ernst, Salvador Dali and Marcel Duchamp. Surrealism was born from the Dada movement, which was known for 'going against the grain' and being anti-establishment. Dali, Breton and Duchamp

are Neil's main influences, especially when it comes to his island. The surrealist iconography can be seen in the gateway to his island, which is known as the Angel with the Brazilian Bush, which gets hairier as it gets colder. Neil said that this is linked to a fountain in Rome- the more leaves it has represents more hair.

Neil also talked about The Memory Theatre, which is basically a play within a play within a play which is performed in Camillo's Memory theatre in Venice. I liked the idea of a place where memories come to life and are relived through others. Memories are important to us, and Camillo expressed this through his play. Neil also spoke about the 'Choreography of Chance' which is the celebration and acceptance of our differences, which is important if the world is to move forward- not accepting everyone's differences has caused nothing but problems and misery.

Spiller continued to talk about his mystical island, and all the surrealist inspiration behind it. A children's book called 'Little machinery' (1926) is a book about a self-

History...is a nightmare from which I am trying to awake. –
James Joyce, *Ulysses*

assembling little machine that lives in a junkyard. The modern art relates to

Man Rays' 'Rayographs' and his work with machines. The Augmentation of nature is also part of Spiller's island, which comes out in the little details such as the Dee stools. The Dee stools surround the island and shoot grease into the river with enough pressure. As you can see from the drawing below, they are actually formed from bicycle seats. The Dee stools were named after John Dee, who was an Elizabethan spy and alchemist.



The Dee Stools

Robert Rauschenberg was another of Neil's references. Rauschenberg was known



for his 'Combines' where he combined his painting, sculpting and other skills to create meaningful pieces, which is also known as assemblage. I once studied his work for a photography project, where I used mixed media to create a piece about emotional barriers. Rauschenberg's attention to detail is capable of drawing the human eye to the important elements of his pieces.

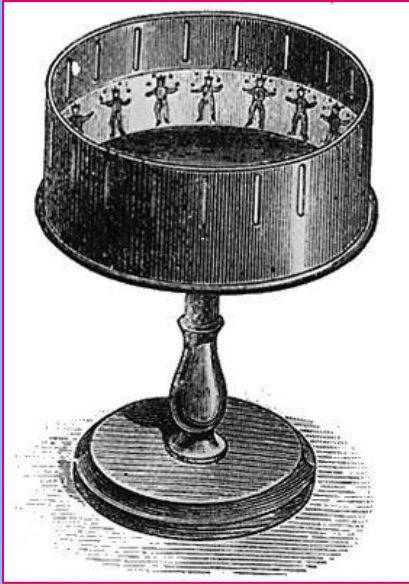
Left: Retroactive I, 1964

This is my favourite piece by Rauschenberg. He took several images and juxtaposed them, making a piece that commented on a culture that was adjusting to the TV era.

All in all, I found Neil's lecture and interest in surrealism fascinating, and I felt that it was a window into the world of unconscious thought.

BOOK 5: ANIMATED ROBOTICS

Animation is movement. That's the simplest way to explain this term. The first use of this term dates back to around 1534, before the first film (1895) or the first photograph (1826) came into existence. Early animations were created through the use of flip books and Zoetropes.



Zoetropes work by having a series of static images, each of which have an action in different positions. When the cylinder is turned, the rapid successions of the images that are viewed through the slits appear to be moving. When we see movement on screen, we are actually seeing loads of still frames. When you film something moving, the camera is taking pictures at a rate of 24fps, which are then played back really quickly so that the human eye sees it as movement.



Human history shows that we've always been fascinated by rebirth and bringing things to life. This is how animation fits into our lives. The earliest animations were brought to life by drawing the static images directly onto the film reel. In a way, we're like Mary Shelley's Frankenstein- we can't control what happens but we want to create life and we can do that through animation.

We were asked to name our favourite cartoon/ animated robots and explain why we liked them. We posted our views on to twitter for everyone to see. One person mentioned that they liked Wall.E, the star of the Disney Pixar film of the same name because he was a lovable and expressive character that he sympathised with. I disagreed, as I didn't particularly enjoy the film. I'm more of a fan of Max Steel, a cyborg superhero from the early Noughties, Robocop and Hasbro's Transformers/Beast Wars. When I asked friends and family, their favourites were also Transformers,



Marvel's Iron Man (technically a guy in a suit) and the various villains from Doctor Who.

How do cartoons affect you?

What is your own personal relationship to animation? When you watch cartoons, what emotions do they provoke? Do they make you feel happy, make you laugh, make you cry? Did you enjoy watching them more with your parents? Ever since animated cartoons were first created people around the world have been enjoying them. What would the world have been like without the likes of Walt Disney, Osamu Tezuka and Hayao Miyazaki? I reckon that the world would be a very different place...

What are the earliest cartoons you remember?

As I was born in the nineties, the earliest cartoons I can remember are The Flintstones, Teenage Mutant Hero Turtles, The Get Along Gang and Looney Tunes.



Anyone else from my generation will also remember Recess, Hey Arnold, Dexter's laboratory, Jimmy Neutron, Woody Woodpecker and Cow and Chicken. From a young age, we've been exposed to this popular media, and although we find them humorous, they sometimes had social/ political connotations e.g. In my opinion, Tom and Jerry are reflective of the Second World War (The Germans were known as Tommies and the British were Jerries) but their earliest cartoons featured racial stereotypes of the time, as did other cartoons of the same era.

We were then shown a film called 'Robots of Brixton' by Kibwe Tavares. He created this film as part of his degree and it is a technical masterpiece. People are replaced with robots and it shows them fighting the police and rioting. The animation is juxtaposed with images from the 1980s riots in London, which is at the heart of this film.



Animatronics

Animatronics are models that use computers and robotics to come to life. They are used in a wide range of applications, including in the work of Meats Meier, an independent artist and animator



who is known for his stunning 3d work and holograms. I once studied him for 'Wish You were here' a project in which we had to write to different artists and write back in their voice.

His work completely blew me away, and it is proof that you can do anything in your chosen area of art if you just put your mind to it.

Interesting Links:

The Modern
Prometheus:

www.maryshelley.nl

Robots of Brixton:

<http://vimeo.com/25092596>

A technically
brilliant film that will
blow you away

Meats Meier

<http://www.3dartspace.com/>

An artist who
explores the 2d/3d
realm with the use
of animatronics
and 3d software

BOOK 6: ON DRAWING

Simon Herron is an architect who loves sharing his passion for drawing with others. He teaches at the University of Greenwich. His lecture focused on drawing

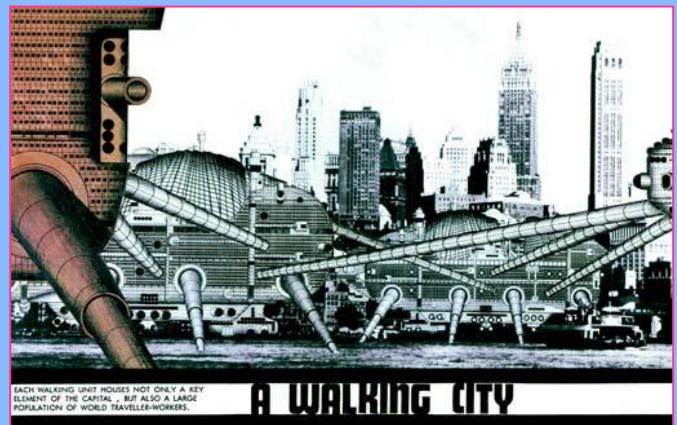


'Once they decide the 'why'- what the drawing has to do- the 'how' becomes clearer... You draw not to illustrate but to discover, to uncover the project. It is a device for speculation, a tool rather than an end product. It can be with a radiograph, with an Epson printer, with light on photosensitive paper, with gunpowder. All media are valid so long as there's an intention'
(Simon Herron in the Bartlett Book of ideas. Pg19)

and the abstract, and the aspects of future cities.

Archigram Architects are a group of artists that formed in the fifties/sixties.

They were influenced by pop movements and were an independent group. Through their magazine, they were able to express their views and ideas. The personal project can best be described as a punk fanzine and is part of the Archigram Archive project. One of the founders of the group was a man called Ron Herron. They had a real purpose behind their drawings, and they looked outside the box when it came to their projects. The magazine itself contained informal happenings, robotic toys and art all between two covers. The drawings were meant to be provocative and draw an emotional response. They also represented a sort of nostalgia for the future...



He then went on to tell us about Thomas Demand, an artist who used cardboard models to express his views. He produced these models to reconstruct scenes from newspapers which are then neutralised and



photographed. I liked that there are still artists out there that like to get stuck in and get their hands messy, as a lot of art is done digitally these days. Simon said that the drawing is to be seen as both a tool of practise as well as a site of construction.

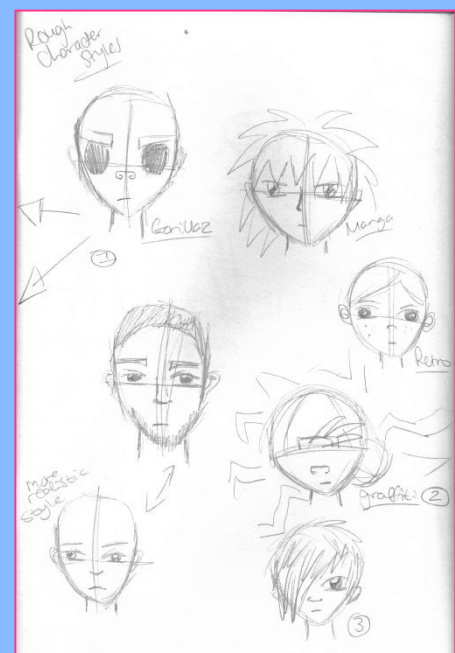
Personally, I felt that this meant drawing is not only for practising and honing your

skills- important for any serious artist- but also as a place where the ideas of your mind can come to life. I found it interesting to see how artists created amazing art before the digital age- using whatever was available at the time e.g. typewriters, junk etc.

Simon then told us something that I had never really thought about before; 'Architects draw through the hands of others, whereas sculptors, painters etc. explore through their own hands' The purpose of an architect is to bring someone else's vision to life through their constructive drawings- they design and build for others but painters and sculptors can just paint and sculpt to express their ideas. Architects draw to figure things out- they play with the idea of making buildings and translates this into their drawings.

Drawings are physical

What did he mean by that? Drawings are just a group of flat lines, right? Wrong- they can be as physical and full of life like you and me. Herron showed us an image of someone drawing. He asked us this: 'Is it the site of the work where he's working or the gesture?' The answer was that the drawing itself was the site of the work. When we draw, it's a physical action and we put our energies into producing an end product. The drawings themselves come to life and become physical themselves. Drawings can be part of a stage for another drawing. They can all be separate things but be part of a bigger picture, leading up to something greater. Simon also told us that drawings were a space of creativity- they



Drawings I did for a group project to figure out the look of the characters.

can be whatever you want them to be, and created by any means available- No. 7 Reece Mews (studio) was where artists used matches to expose negatives- the process of being in the darkroom and working physically to achieve his goal was his space of creativity.

Where does the drawing end?

Good question. As said before, the artwork is the process however the physicality of the drawing is not the end product. It's about capturing ideas that are invisible and making them visible again. They are a reflection of an individual's character and experience. When you begin a project, you begin by not knowing how it will turn out- but the drawing process helps to figure out what direction you're going in. It's like trying to touch a cloud- they're intangible so even though they're there you can't touch them. Simon mentioned that drawings can have a life of their own- they can think- almost like A.I. (artificial intelligence). They can be narrative based- you can draw about an incomplete idea- through the fragments you can uncover and show the whole image, as well as imply space within it. As part of Design and Communication, I had to draw a 360 degree drawing of a space. The separate sections of the drawing didn't look like much on their own but when they were combined they created a whole image. I enjoy drawing a lot, and I'm never more at peace than when I am, no matter where I'm doing it or which medium I'm using. Drawings can open up ideas for debate- they can provoke a reaction within their intended audience. Distancing yourself from conscious decision and feeling/ going with the flow is all part of creating an evocative piece. It all comes down to your relationships with drawings, how you build it up to the end product.

I found Simon Herron's lecture very insightful as it reminded me of my love of drawing and how important it is to any artist within any medium as it helps us to bring out our artistic visions.



Book 7: Digital Death

What happens to our digital selves after we die? Do we continue to live on through the digital world, or do we become lost data?

Stacey Pitsillides raised these questions in her lecture about Digital Death. Stacey has been looking at identity and how we live our lives digitally and what happens to that digital life after we die. Her interest was first piqued in the virtual world of 'Second Life' where she discovered a pet cemetery and wondered what the purpose of its existence was.



Digital Death can be described the death of a living being and the way it affects the digital world or the death of a digital object and how it affects living being e.g. if we lose data or our computer breaks down, how does that affect us?

Stacey's lecture started off with a video called 'Rest in Pixels' she had made in her final year of study. It shows people communicating through 'Second Life' an online world where you navigate your 'avatars' living life virtually. A girl finds out through this second life that someone close to her has died. The film shows how she comes to terms with his death in real life, which she doesn't seem to do very well- she's better at expressing her emotion virtually as she holds a funeral and buries him in 'Second Life'. She then showed another film she had made. It showed the DFA (Digital Foundation of Archiology), who wanted people to donate their social networks. A girl then decides to donate her profile to the foundation.



Game avatars



My avatar, Nebu

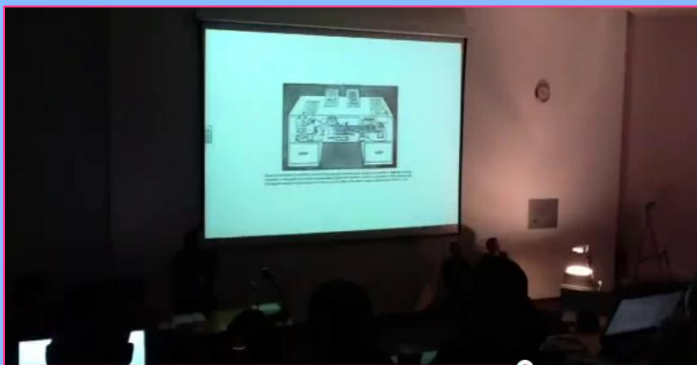
Social Media has rapidly transformed over the past few years with the emergence of Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn etc. and we now spend most of our lives interacting with others through these media.

What makes up everything about us?

Our bodies all work in the same way, yet everyone is different. And it is these differences that make us who we are. But how do our minds work? Why do we think the way we do? Is it our personalities, or our own unique human experiences?

Stacey talked about 'The politics of the dead'. She showed us an image of a mummified body in a museum. We as people walk past this everyday but never think to ask if that's what the body wanted- do they feel betrayed or upset that their body is on display? We don't recognise it as

*'We don't live with technology, but through technology'
Stacey Pitsillides*



human, but as an object. Is this what we become when we die? Stacey mentioned a French philosopher called Jacques Derrida who looked at the 'archive' as part of his work and what it means to

collect things, store memories and why we do it. He once said: 'The archive is to burn your passion; it is to never rest intermittently, from searching for the archive right where it slips away. It is to run after the archive even if there's too much of it.' Stacey explained this as searching for that person you've lost and just when you think you've found that person they slip away again. We have desires to go back to the memories we hold dearly and return to the archives and the memories that we yearn for.

Stacey then went on to talk about The Mermex, which is a desk that was built by a scientist who raised the questions 'What will we think like in the future'. He envisioned the invention of data systems and the internet, as he knew information was important and that information was power. He thought about the use of this desk as a research tool- he never considered the social aspects of these data systems. She said that the interpersonal relationships that we have with technology is extremely different from the ones



that he had envisioned as we practically live our lives through technology. This is especially true for artists, as we connect with other artists through CG communities, forums and social networking sites. According to Stacey, our mobiles are on 24/7 and it's the first thing we see when we wake up and the last thing we see when we go to sleep. I found this interesting as we are always checking them in our daily people and live our phone as an reminders etc. to



our phones and using lives to connect with our lives i.e. we use alarm, to set help run our lives.

Every tool that we properties, and

use in our everyday lives changes who we are as human beings. Our views constantly change due to these technologies. She talked about the idea of the 'Post-human' a human that is profoundly different from the humans before us.

use has reflective the technologies we

Social Networking; a Digital Life

Stacey then raised another interesting point: What do we pass on to others and how? She talked about we share things- you can take a photo, and as you share it with others, it becomes part of a network and is no longer just your photo; it's part of a community and future generations can inherit it. Depending on its qualities, they can be lost, or become part of history. She felt that these corporate companies that we use to engage with the world doesn't necessarily give us greater freedoms, as we don't know what they're doing with our data once we sign their terms and conditions (they have their interests at heart). She asked the question 'Is Facebook really the place where we want our memories to be kept?' She told us she interviewed the

owner of the pet cemetery and that he told her that he had a pet cat who had died and as he had no family, for him it was a huge loss and he spoke about the cat like it was a daughter. As no one would agree to bury his cat in the real world, he built a virtual graveyard and buried his pet in. He now makes money off virtually burying people's pets.



False identity- Is your digital life really you?

Are we nothing more than a profile picture or how do we escape that?

How do we find significance in our digital lives/archives? Can we share this information with others so that they can be appreciated after our death? With the death of Michael Jackson,



of social media. Stacey asked if 'R.I.Ping' next to a photo online was the same as going to a funeral. I found that we have let technology take over our lives so that we've almost become

insignificant- we're just the face behind the profile. How do we know this information is truthful? When we communicate with others over the internet, we can't rely on 'tells' and facial expressions to read a person. We can only read what they tell us? They could tell complete lies and we would have no way of verifying the truth, especially on places like Facebook. So again, is your digital life really you?

What will happen to our digital assets after we die? There are now ways to share our assets after we die. There are now websites that store all our passwords for our online assets, allowing our families access to these social networking sites we use. But then this raises more ethical issues...

Digital death day

Digital death day is a conference where everyone discusses and contributes ideas to what death is (as life has practically become digital)

Interesting Links:

digitaldeath.eu

digitaldeathday.com

The digital beyond.com

<http://homepages.gold.ac.uk/digitaldeath/updates/>

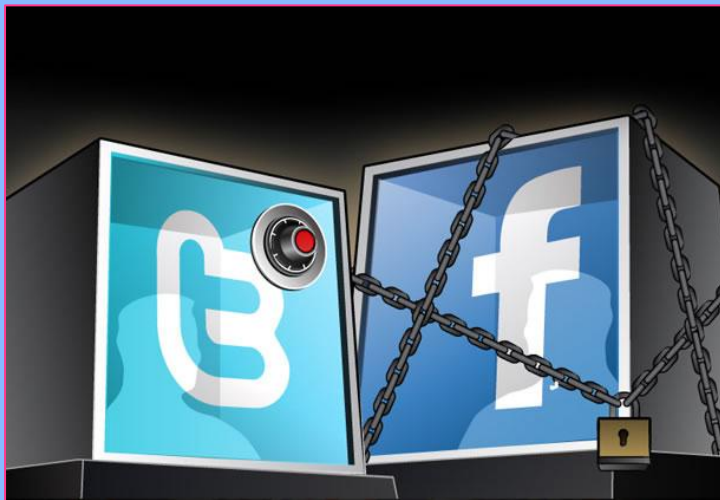
Stacey's blog where she continues to share her curiosity in Digital Death

Digital Death - What Happens Online When You Die

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tH2Pk5fTzWs&feature=endscreen>

A short clip about what happens to our online lives after we pass on.

and what happens to our digital assets after we die. Before we die physically, we can make a will stating what happens to our real life assets. But what about our virtual assets? We can make 'Digital Wills' that state what to do with our digital legacy. As we are connected with so many people, we not only have to think about the personal information we have stored in our profiles, but the information of others that may also have been stored. Once you physically die, the information stored is now bound by the service provider's T's and C's. Facebook will reset your public profile settings, but as long as your family have your login details, they can deactivate your account. However, the data still exists somewhere, even if you think you've gotten rid of it. Another thing to consider is the obstacles that may prevent our digital legacy from continuing. Advances in



technology may make our pictures and profiles unreadable. Our profiles may be lost, or the company may close down. Maintaining memorial sites may also be a problem, as the site may not have the capacity to keep them going, so the profile may be lost due to this. In 2011, Facebook had around 1.78 million deceased profiles, so you have to think about how they would store these profiles and keep them running. After

we die, our identities are available to the public whether we want it to be or not.

The possibilities of digital legacies isn't just limited to just allowing our memories to live on. An example of this is Eva Markvoort, who died of cystic fibrosis. She used her blog to raise awareness of the disease and inspire others who were suffering. Her family continues this by updating her pages.

Stacey felt that we as designers should think more about our digital lives and our relationships with technology as this topic touches lives in an in depth

way. We designers/ artists are going to affect the future with our artwork and the way we interact with others, so it's down to our generation to change the way these systems work, so that they bring significance to our lives. And I couldn't agree more.

Book8: What have you learnt so far?

This lecture was a pause; an interlude between the lectures that had come before and the ones still to come. The lecture basically recapped what we had already learned and how we had absorbed the information.

So far, I have learned that once we die, the body still exists but we don't. Our digital lives can affect the memories of us that are left behind. I've also learnt that you shouldn't let anyone tell you that you'll never achieve your goals, as Kibwe Tavares proved his teacher wrong with his award-winning film. I have also learnt about the importance of drawing, surrealism and about sustainable architecture and how we humans always destroy our environments.

Mark Ingham reinforced what had already been said by Vaughan Oliver: That we should strive to create our own voice as a designer and do something different. Infusing your personal opinions, thoughts and views are important, no matter what you're creating. This makes the piece you creating much more personal and unique, as well as convey the emotions you may be feeling.

What is a record?

There are several definitions of what a record is:

- Something you keep track of
- A list of information to look back on
- A vinyl; a record of a piece of music

As Stacey Pitsillides said, 'information is power'. Learning to record events as best as possible e.g. filming or making notes is a skill that every student needs in order to excel at their course. Whether you film the lectures or write down

what's being said, the information you're storing can be used for future reference and assignments. As you write something down, it helps your understanding of the topic as you are writing it in words you understand. Also,



if you transform these notes into writing soon after, your knowledge of the subject will improve as the information will be fresher in your mind. If you wait a while before doing it you don't remember as much.

In the first chapter I talked about how we learn and the different methods we use to recall that information. Mark showed clips of the different methods that others have used to learn. One of the videos was called 'Networked Student' and it was a short video that showed a student collecting data by verifying online information, and collecting information from others to create a database of information on a subject that he could then refer back to. I found it interesting that he could then share that verified information on an online database for others to use if they needed it. This is what he called a 'Personal Learning Network' and basically empowered him to collect his own information by using the connections he had built up with others. In the digital age, this has been made simpler with the use of social networking sites.

Before writing the first chapter, I asked people over twitter how they learned and I integrated that new information into my article.



Mark recommended that we take the VARK test to find out how best we learn. My test told me that I have a Multimodal learning experience, which is what a majority of people fall into, as they use different ways of learning depending on

the situation.

All in all, so far I have learnt a lot about various different disciplines and how they relate to the world of design. The information that I have gained so far has opened my eyes to a world of possibilities and I looked forward to the coming lectures.

Book 9: Where does inspiration come from?

Artists get asked this question almost every day. What inspires you to create the things you do? Where do your ideas for a project come from? Looking back at Vaughn Oliver, he said he was inspired by many things, including fashion. Rachel Armstrong is inspired by the natural world and Simon Herron is inspired by drawing.

So what inspires you?

For me, I'd say the everyday things inspire me. Sometimes it's someone on a train, or the shape of a tree, or someone else's artwork. I draw inspiration from a range of sources, and I usually carry a sketchbook or a camera with me to record any little bursts of inspiration that may come to me when I'm out and about.

Artist's Morgue

What is an artist's morgue I hear you ask? You're probably thinking it's a place where all your scrapped drawings end up or where we artists end up after we've passed on. But that's not what it is. An artist's morgue is a reference library- a collection of photo references, sketches, collected items etc. that an artist can refer back to when they are working on a project and need references/ inspiration. The different sections are categorised depending on the reference e.g. people, animals, buildings etc.



Other artists and their work can feed your imagination. Sites like deviant art and CG communities allow you to connect with other artists and collaborate on projects, as well as give and receive advice on any on-going projects you are working on.

But what inspires you?

Anything can give you inspiration. And what you create from that inspiration is only limited to your imagination, as Vaughan Oliver stated. It could be a poem, the sky at night, or something someone else has said. The creative



possibilities are endless. Inspiration can come from anywhere, and it's out there waiting for you to find it.

"I just wanted to find out where the boundaries were. I've found out there aren't any."—Damien Hirst (Quotes about life, twitter)

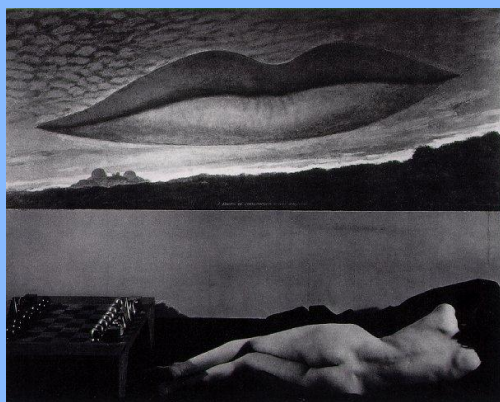
Book 10: Surrealism Part. 2

Spiller gave a second lecture on his favourite subject, Surrealism. This time, it was focused on Nouveau beauty and the terrifying architecture of surrealism.

Andre Breton is one of Neil's inspirations, and has been described as the 'Pope' of surrealism. He then moved on to another of the surrealism greats, Salvador Dali, whose museum is located in Figueres, Barcelona. He talked a lot about the mannequin, and how it practically symbolised surrealism. The Dali museum has a crown of golden mannequins that represents this. The mannequins are blank; they have no expression, giving them an enigmatic look and surrounding them in an air of mystery. It was these mannequins that inspired me to work on my 'Living Doll' series- a series of sketches and digital paintings of doll people.



The first Dada exhibition had mannequins hanging from the ceiling that represented the metaphysical. The mannequins often showed organs, as in surrealism the stomach is the main organ of the imagination. Surrealism's relationship with these mannequins was fetishistic, and this could be seen in Man Ray's fashion photography. The sexual mannequins of the 1930s became more perverse and disturbing, representing corrupted desires.



Neil then talked about Surrealism outside of Europe. Man Ray was an American photographer who worked within the surrealist and Dadaist art movements, but America sometimes didn't see the surreal in his works, showing how different audiences can have different reactions to surrealism- it was invisible in the city of Manhattan.

Something that interested me about this lecture was when Neil was explaining the paranoid critical method- this method has a rational basis and

also has a double significance. Simply put, they 'act under the influence of psycho disorder whilst being fully aware of what they're doing. Neil also talked about the Rue Trajan, which sounded exotic. It's a sign that catapults you through time and can be found in the Hall of masterpieces in the museum. It represents the concept of a surrealist city, and refers to France as this city- Surrealism began here. France is seen as a feminine city, represented by the outstretched female body.

'Nothing is without its surrealist history' Neil Spiller



Dali was influenced by Gaudi, and how his work was characterised by uncontrollable plasticity. Dali's work was transient and destroyed in comparison. He liked the non-functional elements of Gaudi's work, as well as the almost edible nature of it. As Dali despised the clean lines of modernist architecture, Gaudi's work with its natural shapes was refreshing to him.

Neil concluded by talking about the mantis- the female beheads the male after making love. This is symbolic of the dominance of the female in surrealism. I felt that this was certainly true, as studying the work of Man Ray and the experimental films of the Dada movement show an obsession and focus on the female form.

I found Neil's second lecture very inspiring as it allowed me to tap into my subconscious and think outside the box when it comes to my own art.

BOOK 11: MANIFESTOS

What is a manifesto?

A manifesto is a declaration of intentions- it is what you believe in and can be related to design, politics, or can be completely personal. They represent your own passions, opinions, motives and intentions. It's about having a voice about what you want to do in life. They tend to change over time, as well as provoking change. A manifesto sums something up succinctly- they are clear statements.

Mark challenged me to write my own manifestos. What would the first line of my manifesto be? What kind of mark would I like to leave on the world? Mark said that a manifesto could be anything from a few short lines to a poem or a song. As I racked my brain, Mark also asked 'What is important to you?' It was this question that set me on the path to writing my own manifestos.

'The more you look ahead at what's going to happen, the more prepared & easier you will find things'

Mark Ingham

We were then shown existing manifestos. The cult of Done Manifesto was handed out to everyone at the beginning, and one line from it really stood out to me: *'Pretending you know what you're doing is almost the same as knowing what you are doing, so just accept that you know what you're doing even if you don't and do it'* I related to this statement as there's always a point when I'm stuck because I have no idea about what I'm doing but getting on with it gets it done.

I was then shown Martin Luther King's 'I have a dream' speech, which a perfect example of a manifesto as it was used to inspire and call people to action. After the lecture, I looked into other 'calls to action' and I came across this chorus from a punk song: *'We are the ones with the power to devour one and all, Tear down the old foundation brick by brick and watch it fall'* (The God Awfuls, Watch it fall) This very catchy track is about going against the establishment and exposing the government for what it really is. I felt that that this powerful message was lost in the catchy music but is there if you're willing to listen. The last video clip that was shown was 120 Days & Nights of Staggering and Stammering, which chronicles Mark's life and personal views and was created by Mark himself. The rhythm and tempo of

the video was kept throughout the film, and was practically burned into my mind as it was very disturbing. One section I found funny was the part about Marilyn Munroe- it said that she had a son whom she gave up for adoption- and that Mark was that child. I strangely wanted to investigate whether or not that was true.

My manifestos

Below are my manifestos; my beliefs and views of the world, especially in the world of art and design.

I believe that everyone has something special to offer

I believe that trying and failing is better than giving up in the first place and that failing is better than not trying at all

People shouldn't be judged by where they come from, but by what they bring to the table

Art is not about money, but about the way you express yourself

I believe in striving to create your own identity instead of being a sheep

Go against the grain and not with the crowd

I like colouring outside the lines

Be shades of grey

Break the chains that are holding you back and be what you want

'Style is something that can't truly be defined...but it's yours'

'We're all pieces of the same puzzle'

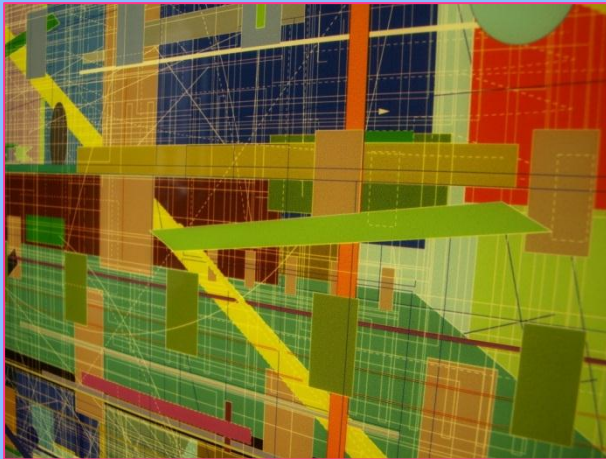
'Life isn't a video game. You can't just delete your data and start again'

'Draw what comes naturally and unnaturally. Draw what you feel and what you want to express. You will be better because of it'

Overall, I found this lecture the most inspiring as it really made me think about what I want in the future and what I would like to share with the world and other artists. Writing my manifesto caused me to consider what my personal beliefs were and how they were relevant to what I wanted to do with my life.

BOOK 12: ANIMATION AND DRAWING

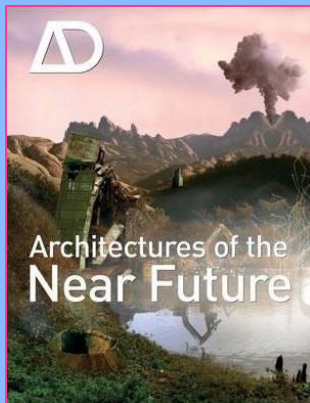
Nic Clear was once an architect running his own business but has now devoted his time to teaching and studying. For his lecture, he used slides of his student's work to tell us how animation and drawing can go hand in hand to express and communicate ideas. He was the one who introduced us to the film 'Robots of Brixton'.



'Student's shouldn't think of themselves as students'
Nic Clear



The earliest animations were around 1913. Nic talked about how the use of film and animation can aid the development of architectural ideas and production. He said that architecture is the architectural profession and is basically the creation of spaces. It can be broadened to include a broad base of media. Nic told us how architecture operates on a rigid pyramid- Architectural representation is orthographic- it uses drawings, plans and elevations and requires the architect to have a strong relationship to drawing. It's this translation from drawings to buildings that leads to the creation of a space.

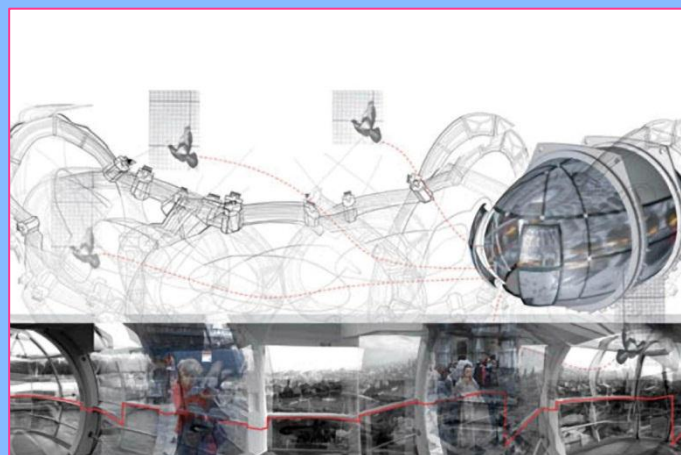


Drawing is instrumental in development of architecture as it couldn't have existed before drawing. This refers back to Simon Herron's views on 'drawing to figure things out'. In any drawing, space is always implied, through the use of negative space and other techniques. Nic described this as the flatness sciagraphy.

He then went on to talk about architecture in mediums other than drawings, most notably, film. He showed us clips from David Finch's *Panic Room*, a film where a mother and a daughter are trapped in their panic room when thieves break into their house. In this film the communication of architectural ideas were questioned, which in Nic's opinion is a good thing- it's good to leave your audience asking questions and to go against the grain- something Vaughan Oliver also believed in. The camera moves through actual and virtual spaces within the scenes; they are known as syndetic spaces and they are the blending of spaces. Nic felt that this film was successful at combining forms of representation and manipulating different types of spacing.

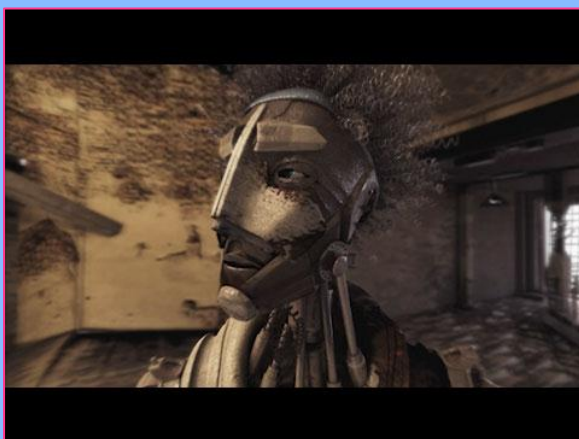
Architectures of the near future

Nic talked about how modern architecture is using technology to represent their traditional counterparts and that computer software is allowing us to realise our architectural visions digitally. Nic stated that there is 'another reality behind the reality we know' and that they're a synthetic mixture of the virtual and actual.



The last section of Nic's talk was about cities and architecture in general. Nic felt that the city becomes a constant building site as work

is never finished. He said that cities are often trapped by mechanisms of architecture and that it dominates the cities. Nic felt that when it came to design work, that the idea is communicated in the work itself, even if it's not perfect. Nic also believes that glitches are good- they show that something's not perfect, which I feel is reflective of people as nobody's perfect.



Kibwe Tavares was once a student of Nic. When he created this masterpiece, he was told by one of his other teachers that he would never be able to get a job with the film, but he proved that teacher wrong by winning an award for it and has done work for various clients such as

Channel 4. I enjoyed this film, especially as I was watching it through the eyes of a 3d animator. I felt moved by this technical masterpiece, as the robots moved and acted like people, and had their own personalities which really shone through. Tavares was creative with the juxtaposed footage/photographs from the 1981 Brixton riots. I also feel that the feel almost anticipated the 2011 riots across the UK.

I thoroughly enjoyed Nic's lecture, as it showed that you can use just about any medium to express ideas and that you can achieve anything you want- just don't let the naysayers get you down. Through Nic's and Simon's lectures, I have realised just how much I love drawing and how important it is to the design process.

The end...

And with an end comes a new beginning. Over the course of these lectures, I have absorbed more knowledge than ever before, and have gained an insight into how different disciplines can feed into the world of art and design.

I especially enjoyed learning about Biomimicry, as well the lecture about Digital Death as it has left me with many questions. I felt that the gamswen course has exposed me to new things I didn't know I was open to learning about and as a result, my horizons have been broadened.

And now I have been able to share this new found knowledge with others. I hope that you have found Out the Box magazine informative, interesting and inspiring, just like I have.

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