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BA (hons) Illustration

Module: M4X01560

Ways of Thinking

Task one: Semiotic Analysis



The Grand Budapest Hotel is a comedy about a prestigious hotel with an eccentric hotel owner Gustave H who gets framed for a murder, all while being accompanied by his Lobby boy Zero. The movie was released in 2014 and was directed by Wes Anderson.

Being released in 2014 there was a lot of competition, films such as The Lego Movie, Snowpiercer and Kingsman Secret Service were released within the same year. The Grand Budapest Hotel was held in high regards with a box office of \$174.8 million. Personally, what I found made it stand out was its unique sense of humour and Wes Anderson style of directing.

Wes Anderson was inspired to create the film by reading a 1939 book called "Beware of Pity" by an Australian writer, Stefan Zweig. "I think I read the first page in the store and thought OK, this is a new favourite writer of mine," Anderson recounts when first finding the story in a village bookshop. The story had a "tragic, one-sided romance between a paraplegic baroness and a sympathetic cavalry lieutenant." Which mirrors the relationship in the movie of Gustave H and an elderly rich woman.



I wanted to specifically to talk about the scene of the image above and how this scene impacted me. It was amazing to find how one moment could say so much.

I realised that in this scene what many films seem to lack, the unabashed action of allowing there to be empty space and vibrance of colour. It's very common to fear that there shouldn't be an empty space. That any room is a room to be filled. It was refreshing to see that Wes Anderson was a director who didn't have this fear but actually allowed for emptiness to take up the majority of the scene. "What springs to mind when I mention colour and Wes Anderson? Meticulously symmetrical set designs, for one." Megan Hardling

As for colour, Wes Anderson has a beautiful use of warm saturation, so much so that it has become a staple in his brand of directing. Having orange, it evokes a sense of warmth and memory. The colour is complementary to purple "Opposites truly do attract and by contrasting two characters, the strongest character dynamics are achieved" Page 97 contrast in character relationships

By having Zero as an older man wearing a purple jacket that matches the servants, it shows his past relationship in their position "Costume design has far more to do with storytelling than to do with clothes. Fashion is the polar opposite of costume design because fashion is all about clothes" Jenny Beaven [pg 21] describes why Wes Anderson has done this. Wes Anderson uses colour not as an afterthought, but as a fundamental part of storytelling. To surrounding areas and the characters.

Overall, the directing style of Wes Anderson inspires me to use colour as another form of storytelling, for it to be more than an aesthetic choice. That how a room is formatted could also relate in telling the connection the characters have within that room.

Bibliography

Creating Unforgettable Characters, a practical guide to character development in film, TV series, Advertisement, Novels & Short stories By Linda Seger

Characters rarely exist alone they exist in relationships. Aside from an occasional one character story ... Why don't the dynamic between the characters can be as important as any individual character quality. Chapter 5 creating character relationships page 91

Opposites truly do attract and by contrasting two characters, the strongest character dynamics are achieved. Page 97 contrast in character relationships

Costume design by Deborah Nadoolman Landis

<https://www.tcs.cam.ac.uk/colour-and-mood-in-wes-anderson-s-films/> Colour and Mood in Wes Anderson's Films by Megan Hardling

<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt2278388/plotsummary> (summary of film)

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Grand_Budapest_Hotel

<https://www.imdb.com/list/ls056631446/> (2014 movie list)

<https://variety.com/2014/film/markets-festivals/wes-anderson-talks-about-his-grand-influences-1201091911/>

Task two – Manifesto

1. improvement. In every dream you make try to improve something that you've done before may it be something you've practiced 1000 times, always recheck and draw as if it was the first time.
2. Positivity. It is easy to say you're going to be positive but is another thing entirely too per action of positivity. Michael in everyday life is to try bringing positivity into my life or into the lives of others. I believe that positivity Build you up or negativity only tears you down.
3. Originality. originality is something hard to obtain. It is almost an impossible goal. Though I still strive for it. Originality is a strong driving force in my art career.
4. Environmental work. Michael is to try and encourage others and myself to be more eco-friendly, to be more aware of the environment and our effect towards it. I want to try and encourage in my own life and others to stop using one use objects such as plastics and either have biodegradable ones or have ones that are longer lasting.
5. Narrative. I adore all forms of storytelling so I want to explore the works of narrative. I want to try and have traditional narrative but also visual narrative, this is where my art comes in.
6. Allowing mistakes. This is something rather personal to me. I have grown up as quite a perfectionist so it has taken me a long time to realise that and all mistakes don't have to be bad. Although it is something, I'm still working on I am slowly beginning to introduce this into my life and my artwork.
7. Art for art's sake. A quote by French philosopher Victor cousin. This quote is fairly new but are beginning to embrace it in my life. I found while growing up it is harder and harder to give up the fact that sometimes I can make art without a purpose or meaning. That I can simply create for art because I want to, because it's fun and I enjoyed it. It is certainly a hard phrase to lift by, as media and other artists try to ingrain that's everything has to exist for a reason. That there has to be a reason for everything.
8. Do good to others, and good shall come to you. I have always been a believer in karma. And that what you put out in the world will come back to you. This is a mentality I adopt it when I was quite young, I find that it really has helped me become a good person as I've gotten older. I like to believe in a way, that my art will hopefully do the same. Maybe by putting my arts out there perhaps I will inspire someone and they, in turn, will inspire me back.

Allowing mistakes

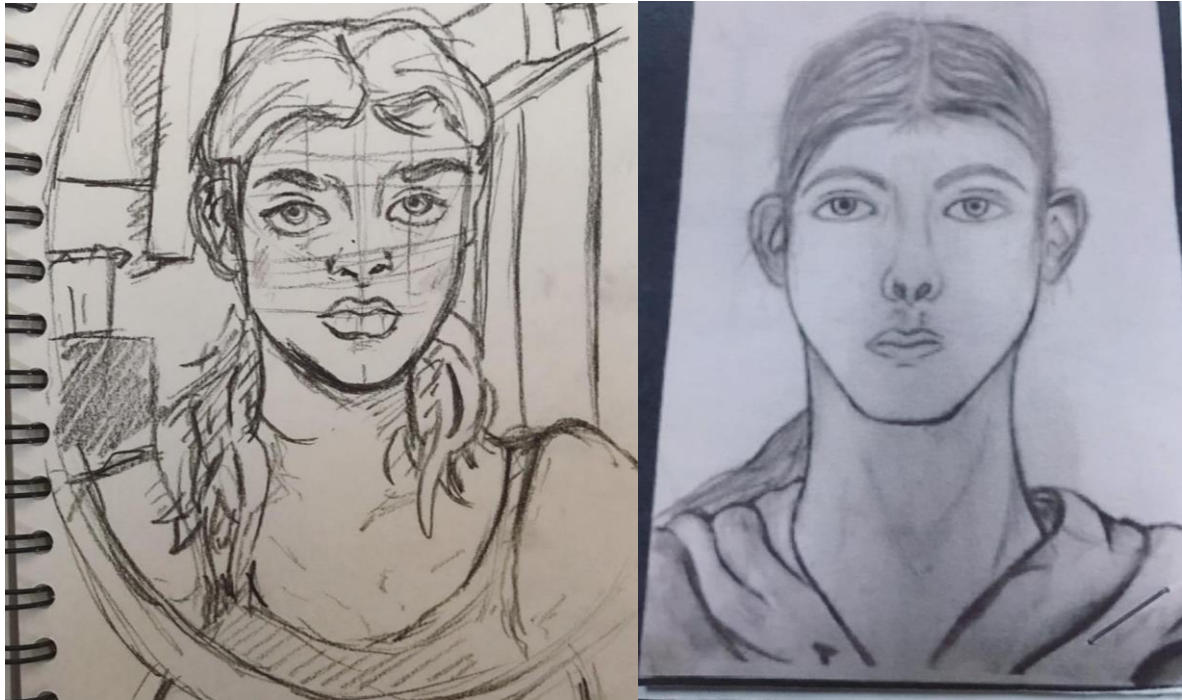


Layered Fish – ink and quill 14th May 2019

I am turning my mistakes into building blocks for a better outcome. A good phrase that really solidifies this idea is the term wabi sabi. I will go to explain this later on. I have decided that this image perfectly represents this mentality I have newly gained. This was the first drawing I did where I fully accepted any mistake that would happen, using ink so these mistakes would be permanent. I found that these mistakes helped build more character on my drawings “Occasionally, each one of us experiences that ‘happy accident’ when an unintentional mark or smudge succeeds in revealing some aspect of the subject which all are deliberate marks have failed to do” Ronald Clark page 13. I find this quote explains it best.

Now for when I stumbled across the term wabi sabi. Wabi sabi is a Japanese term “In this in this spirit I have searched for the various pieces of wabi sabi tarnished, fragmented, and in disrepair though they may be and have been attempted to put them together into a meaningful system.” Leonard Koren Pg 11. a term which which is still fairly new to me but I completely agree with its meaning. In summary wabi sabi and my idea of allowing mistakes both hold the idea of “All things are imperfect nothing that exists is without imperfections” Leonard Koren Page 49.

Improvement



Self-portrait 2018vs2016 – 30 January 2019

I am always trying to embody self-improvement in my everyday life. For I used to have doubts as I was a perfectionist. Such questions like “Should I start by being absolutely precise about what I want to do? But if I prepare a lot of work and then find that it isn't particularly interesting and isn't likely to add relevant knowledge, then I'll just have wasted my time” Jen Webb Page 32 Would constantly run across my mind.

The best technique I've found with improvement is do everything as if it was the first time. “forget yesterday's drawing, or last weeks. This is happening now and every stroke is a new beginning, another chance to take a step forward.” Ronald Clark Page 10. I hope that this mentality will allow me to be to become the best artists that I can be.

Originality



Old Man Bus Driver – 27th November 2019

I strive to be original. I practice this by going about my daily life and looking at random things and trying to re imagine it as something else. I find this to be the most efficient way for me to keep myself original with my ideas. Originality is hard to come by but “each new drawing should be a fresh investigation, I totally new adventure, and not simply a repetition of one that has been made several times before.” Ronald Clark Page 10. And at the very least if i'm not completely original, at least I am training my imagination.

Bibliography

Wabi-Sabi for Artists, Designers, Poets & Philosophers by Leonard Koren

In this in this spirit I have searched for the various pieces of wabi sabi tarnished, fragmented, and in disrepair though they may be and have been attempted to put them together into a meaningful system. Leonard Koren Pg 11

All things are imperfect nothing that exists is without imperfections. Leonard Koren Page 49

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/art-for-arts-sake> Art for art's sake 19th century by the French philosopher Victor Cousin.

Researching creative writing by Jen Webb

Should I start by being absolutely precise about what I want to do? But if I prepare a lot of work and then find that it isn't particularly interesting and isn't likely to add relevant knowledge, then I'll just have wasted my time. Jen Webb Page 32

Life Drawing Perception and Practice by Ronald Clark

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Task three – Observation writing

identify an image and write a semiotic analysis, choose 3 key aspects of semiotics and use them to simplify and focus your writing. Conclude by assessing how your understanding of the image has changed.



I decided to have a screenshot from The Disney film Mulan. It is only for a moment but in this single shot used tell so much about the story. Before I begin truly thinking about it it was just another moment in a movie. The movie like, like the story was heavily inspired by China. The smoke from the explosion is done as traditional Chinese art with swirling clouds. The Moulin team originally had issues developing the art style, Looking to Chinese watercolour for inspiration. Hans Bacher had said “Chen yi had shown me some original Chinese comic books” on page 105 and “it was the lack of perspective and fine detail. It made them look very flat” Hans Bacher page 109. What the Disney team had trouble with the art style, was that previously they were adding too much detail. Now with the Chinese comic helping them they were able to have a beautiful simple style to animate.

In the image you see Mulan almost hugging the explosive. This was the moment where she was truly willing to die in order to save her fellow army comrades, and everyone in China. You can almost feel the emotional connection the explosion has with her character “Empathy for an object ... This desire may be created partly through the object’s openings and its relationship to space, its relation to itself and to ourselves as users.” Material Perceptions page 124. Even within the film she has an affinity with Dragons, it is only fitting that with the biggest decision she made to help defeat the huns that the explosive had a dragon design.

Mulan was my favourite Disney film. As a child it felt it built me with confidence and hope that even though I was a girl I too could be equal like everyone else. The too could also be powerful and adventurous. It's amazing what a film can do to you out. It's amazing what impact it gives to you. "stories are the most important thing in the world. Without stories, we wouldn't be human beings at all" About the author page, Philip Pullman lovely quote that I resonate with this film .

Bibliography

Mulan (Disney visual story telling)

Material Perceptions by Glenn Adamson, Sarah R. Gilbert, Soren Kjørup, Anders Ljungberg, Martina Margetts and Hilde Methi (Documents on contemporary crafts No.5 Norwegian Crafts Arnoldsche Art Publishers)

Empathy for an object ... This desire may be created partly through the object's openings and its relationship to space, its relation to itself and to ourselves as users. page 124

A functional object as a bearer of memories...A particular memory and the feelings associated with it can be uncovered through a sound, ascent or perhaps when we touch our particular surface. Page 124

Dream Worlds production design for animation by Hans Bacher

The Mulan visual development team had problems with the style. They tried to copy Chinese watercolour paintings, but did it the Disney way, with tons of details everywhere and were kind of lost." "Chen yi had shown me some original Chinese comic books" page 105

"it was the lack of perspective and fine detail. It made them look very flat" page 109

northern lights by Philip Pullman published 1995

"stories are the most important thing in the world. Without stories, we wouldn't be human beings at all" About the author page