



My Report

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Introduction

This report discusses the background of imagined world that I have been building for the last three years and some of the work that surround it. It explains the different inspirations that have helped me form my ideas, which come from a wide range of various TV shows, books, games, and other media (such as Pinterest), as well as history and the supernatural. The aesthetics culture of each island in my created world is inspired by various historical eras, so each of these will be discussed in relation to my work. It will also discuss the artists and creators that inform the physical creations that make up my world. It will additionally touch upon a small bit theoretical aspect of worldbuilding in relation to my artwork.

The artists discussed in this report were chosen because of the worlds they have created. These include writers that have created detailed worlds that have become popular, such as the 'Wizards World' of J.K. Rowling. Although it could be argued that her world is too black and white, secluded, and only showing Britain and the United States, it is still a complex and thorough world. As the focus is on worldbuilding, the report will not focus on other work that the artists are known for.

Artist Research

There are different worlds that have become part of everyday life that most people do not realise as they are ingrained into popular culture. One of the most known worlds at present is Hannah Beachler's work on creating 'Wakanda' in the *Black Panther* film (2018), with the rules, history and how it links to the other Marvel cinematic universe (MCU) movies. Her work should be regarded as a piece of art because she created a detailed country with a new alphabet and made sure that it was consistent with the continent of Africa where the movie is set.

Charles Avery is an artist that is an inspiration to me because of the way he shows his created world across drawing, sculptures and written work. In his work 'The Islanders' (2004 – present), he uses mathematics, philosophy, economics, and anthropology within it. As he uses anthropology, his world is viewed as "an encyclopaedic investigation of an imaginary island" (Arts Council Collection, 2022), showing the history and the culture of the Island seen from the point of view of an explorer. His inspiration comes from different artists who use philosophical questioning, and he added some resonances from his own life, such as the upbringing he had in a seaside town in Scotland.

Hannah Beachler's work on building 'Wakanda' (*Black Panther*, 2018) is what inspired me the most. The way she joined research on the ways of African culture and the original Wakanda from the comics by Stan Lee and Jack Kirby was seamless (Del Barco, 2019). For working and creating this she has been nominated for twenty-three awards for which she has won eleven of them (IMDb, 2022). The work on 'Wakanda' shows perfectly how the detailed country with African Culture is shown, mixed in with the technological advances and the history of the country with some parts reconned from the comic of the same name. With this work she made history as the first female production designer in a MCU film (Del Barco, 2019).

J.R.R Tolkien's world of 'Middle-Earth' is an inspiration as his world is one of the most known and written about. His books describe each place and the races in such fine detail that other artists have created paintings and illustrations that some have been published in books (Reeve, 2002). The Middle-Earth world is an important piece of work as it has a detailed history, a language that he created and different races. It is a dream for any worldbuilder as he was creating 'something so convincing that the reader could believe in it (in a sense) as actual history' (Foster, pg.vi, 1978). There have been numerous books written about it, for instance illustrated guides and books on the maps of the several countries in 'Middle-Earth' and information about the important places and events that happen in the books.

Stan Lee was a comic artist that co-created Marvel Comics with Jack Kirby. This was thought-provoking as to how to blend magic and science together. It makes him the architect of a world that combines the paranormal, superheroes and the ordinary, with even adding space and aliens. The creations that he built are now part of pop culture because nearly everyone knows a character from the comics. The mainstream popularity began with the 'X-Men' franchise in 2000 and the 'Spider-man' (2003) trilogy, before the beginning of the MCU in 2008 with 'Iron Man' and 'The incredible Hulk'. However, there has been some fillers with 'Daredevil' (2003) and 'Hulk' (2003). Due to that the MCU has become important epically to fans (The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2021).

Eric Kripke is the creator of 'Supernatural' and 'Revolution' and the developer of 'The Boys' which are all diverse and focusing on the paranormal (Supernatural), Superheroes (The Boys) and a dystopian future (Revolution) (Welch, 2022). Through it his work on fantasy show 'Supernatural' as it is, has become one of the most popular built worlds in the last decade. The world that he has created for 'Supernatural' was about different urban legends, different horror stories of towns, of roads or little towns in continental US that has disappeared. Not only those stories are important to the world's mythos, but in the fourth season he began to add religion starting with Christianity which added more to the creation (Ausiello, 2020). The show's 15 years run has made it part of pop culture with a large fandom, who themselves have been used in the show in certain episodes (Sstry, 2014).

Cassandra Clare is a writer that built a world with the supernatural as the baseline of her books. It develops when even more details are added to the history as more books in the *Shadowhunters* series become available. Her work has grown huge among the fans of her work, which has been turned into a film and there is also a television show. The beginning of her work was due to her desire to write about a "magical battle in a New York tattoo shop" (Clare, 2022), with the cityscape of Manhattan being the inspiration (Clare, 2022). In The World of 'The Shadowhunter Chronicles' the main characters are Nephilims (Half Human and Half Angel) that have magical tattoos runes on their bodies. They live in a society that hunt demons and their secret world is hidden from ordinary humans. (Clare, 2022).

Lewis Carroll created Wonderland for 'Alice's Adventures in Wonderland' and related stories. This world is as famous as Tolkien's 'Middle-Earth' as it has been produced into TV show, manga, anime and other media. There has been a movie or TV Show iteration of this book every ten years ever since 1903. It even has books that are based on it that have been written by other authors. Some of these are 'Heartless' (2016) by Marissa Meyer and 'Alice in

Zombieland' (2012) by Lewis Carroll and Nickolas Cook. The world has weird and wacky creatures that live in 'Wonderland' like the Mock Turtle or The Jabberwock. In the book, the main character (MC) has to go through the very psychedelic world of Wonderland. The eccentric or curious situations that happen are somehow linked to the nature of the world (Carroll, 1865).

Deborah Harkness built her magical world within our ordinary world (Harkness, 2011-Present). Given that she is also an historian, she explains the background of her creation in the books in a detailed and informative manner. The way that she describes how the buildings look and how they were once used, transports the reader into her world. It has become quite popular as there was a TV show on Sky One (Discovery of Witches 2018-2022), with each season based on one of the first three books. The universe she built is a balance of the mystical and science as these are important parts of the books. The idea behind this world was her curiosity on the paranormal, and if they did exist, 'what on earth do they do for a living' (Harkness, pg12, 2018). For her, a move to popular culture was a shock (Harkness, 2018).

Roland Emmerich may be the creator of Stargate with the 1994 movie, but it was Dean Devlin that made it into what it is today with the first TV series (Stargate SG-1) and so on. It has become so widespread, that it has made it across to different media such as spin-off TV shows, films, comics and games (Lambon, 2022). One of the reasons of its popularity it is because of how Emmerich portrayed the female characters and how he tackled the problem women face in the military (Quora, 2018). Instead of altering anything in our world, Stargate was set on a diverse range of planets, each with different rules and customs (Stargate SG-1).

Before worldbuilding for film and televisions, creators were building worlds for books. One of the most successful world builders for books is C.S Lewis; the creator of 'The Chronicles of Narnia'. These are different stories set in the world of 'Narnia'. He came up with the idea for Narnia when one of the World War II refugees staying with him in the countryside to avoid the threat of bombing, became captivated by a wardrobe and was looking for another way out (Imbornoni, 2017). The work is considered as a fantasy classic as it has inspired other fantasy literature (Schakel, 2018). The world is described in detail in the seven books so that the reader can imagine that they are there, feel the ambiance it creates and envisage the creatures (from different mythology) and the animals with even the made-up life forms (Schakel, 2018).

Another world builder for books is Andrzej Sapkowski, who created *The Witcher*. His world started as a short story about a professional monster hunter and was written for a short story competition in Poland. Although the story did not win, it became important to the Polish fandom. When the fans demanded more, he was compelled to develop the world further by writing other short stories to expand it (Purchase, 2017). The series of stories first became popular in Poland in the 90s, and was later adapted to film with '*The Hexer*' (2001) (IMDb). However, it did not become popular in the rest of the world until 2007, when the 'CD Projekt Red' developed a game based on this world and the main character. It has now become a successful Netflix show, first released in 2019. The world is comprised of different kingdoms that are in separate regions. The non-human beings are classed as second-class citizens and humans are the dominant species after they won a series of wars. The history of the creation

is that before humans appeared, it was dominated by non-human beings and looked at how and where they settled (Sapkowski 1990-Present).



Figure 1. Concept piece of Kaer Morhen Castle from The Witcher 3 Wild Hunt (JHS, 2022).

Practical Research

This section is about my practical work and the projects that I have created, as well as work that I have planned for the future (including projects I have planned but will likely never do). It is also going to include elements of inspiration that I have always used in my artworks such as space, criminology, witchcraft, mythology and the supernatural, as well as some new inspirations that I want to use in my current work. Furthermore, I will mention some influential, interesting historical periods and how they have motivated some of my artwork.

My main exhibiting style tends to be installation. As I like making things with my hands, I was aiming to do either an installation or sculpture but decided on an installation because I like to create artworks that have more than one piece, and it allows me to showcase more of the elements of my created world. In the last three years I have also tried my hand in digital art, which eventually worked itself into my installation work. Before I started working in my installation style, I used to mainly draw in monochromatic pencil. The work I used to do was TV show couples, which I still do time to time outside of main project. Although my work has evolved a lot over time, TV has remained a constant inspiration for my work.

I am doing a lot of work in resin as part of my installation. This has become a constant material for me since I first started using it in 2018, as it is a flexible medium that can create anything if there is a mould for it. In my creation I designed a lot of pieces that used resin that I had to polish. Due to the volume of resin objects I made, I developed my own way of polishing, involving different types of cloths, polish, and oils that I mixed around to create the shiny

finish that each of my resin piece have. This unique combination is something that I work hard to make. My resin work does not always turn out perfectly, so I sometimes must sand down layers of hardened resin and scoop out soft resin to re-pour and try again without wasting too much material. For deeper pieces of work, I often must do it in layers to prevent bubbles from forming.

The aesthetic of my work is a unique combination of witchcraft, mythology and mystical influences, along with crime and forensic influences. A central aspect of my work is incorporating the supernatural within the modern world. I have read a lot about the supernatural and mystical beings, and they are mainly set in the past. This made me think about creating a supernatural world in the present and include different types of paranormal being existing at the same time and space. In my world I also want to show the way that people migrate and how supernatural beings followed the same migration patterns, showing how different mystical beings exist in different islands.

The installation work that I do now is different from my previous work, but the themes and categories of my early work all formed part of my journey to get to my current work. My early work focused on illustrations of couples from different TV shows, games and movies. I also did several various art pieces that fell outside this theme that were linked to modules on my bachelor's degree. At the end of 2018 I made a series of digital art of nebulas while testing different bushes on PROCREATE (iPad software). This software is the one used for my digital artwork (see Figure 2). This lead to try to work on a sequence of digital Space art that did not lead anywhere in itself, but I utilised the skills that I had learned to use digital art in the work I am doing now.

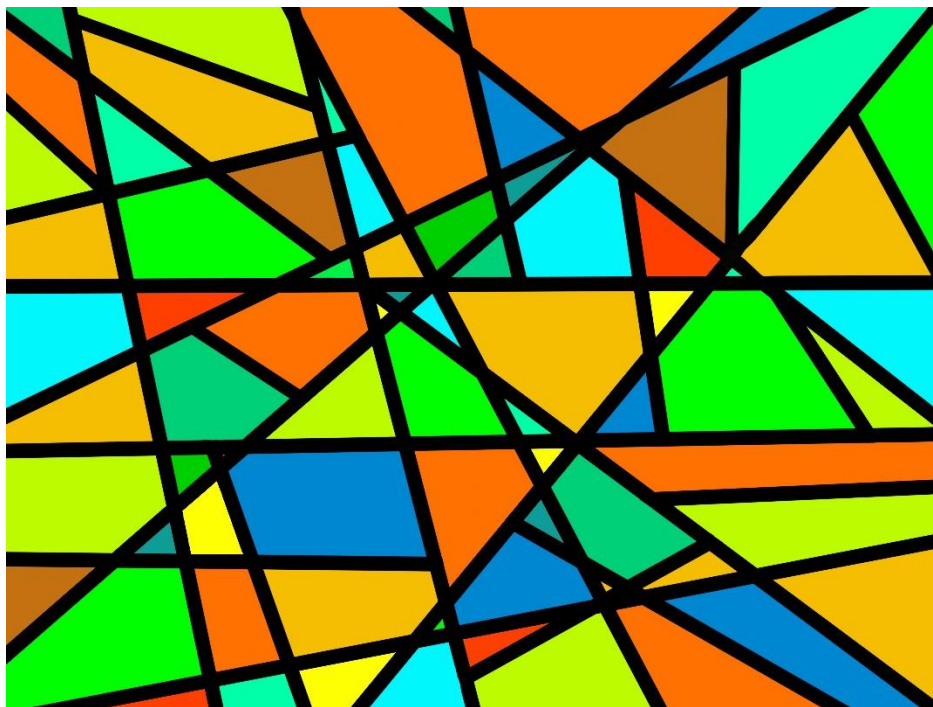


Figure 2. Piece of abstract art – unnamed. Created with PROCREATE (Isabella Horrillo-Bula, 2022).

The items I am making for my practical piece are all connected to the world I have created, but currently the works are linked back to the 'Witches' lair' (2021) piece for my undergraduate work. Although the work includes some of the same objects, the work is always ephemeral as the installation changes each time. As well as a different arrangement, the installation will have newly added pieces and older pieces taken away every time it is displayed. This piece will never completely be finished as the work is constantly changing and I am constantly adding to it. As I am always creating new works there are too many new pieces to mention each item individually.

As well as adding pieces into my 'Witches' Lair' (2021), I am running multiple smaller projects at the same time, comprising of pieces that link to the created world. One of these projects is a series of letters between the two main characters (MCs) that I created for my world. My first idea was to seal the letters and then open them, but I went with putting the sealing wax on the flap. I did this on a silicon heat mat because I needed to be able to peel the wax off the mat. Another project that I am working on is creating and polishing more resin pieces for the Alter and Lair. Apart from those two projects I am trying to make a detailed list of attributes that my MCs and the supporting characters have, along with the profile of the supporting characters. I would like to have my characters fleshed out with details that only I know, to help give their character more depth when inserting their possessions into the installation. I will be working on the history and the culture of where the two main protagonists live, and how this links to their background and their jobs as Government agents within the created world.

Looking forward, I have a few ideas for new projects for the future. One of these projects is to create a series of books that will cover different subjects surrounding the Islands I have created. They will include a book of recipes, one on different supernatural occurrences around the Islands, and a comprehensive history of the Island. I am also keen on linking some of the works with the music that I was listening while I was creating the pieces, which was mainly modern classical music. Listening to this music created an inspirational environment while I was developing my world, so I would like to somehow link that music to the created world. I have not mapped out all my projects for the near future as my ideas come from many places so new ideas for my ongoing project always come into my head. The moment I get an idea that I feel is worth doing and relevant to my project, it goes on my list of tasks to complete. One comprehensive task on my list is adding a stable government to my island so the place does not collapse into chaos, and the characters live by ethics and are accountable for their actions (the ethical model still needs to be decided upon) and its politics. Another thing that I will do in the future is the geography as I do not have the right climate, yet I cannot do anything regarding to geography. Due to having no time to think about anything to do with sociology or to see the relevance to the contemporary world I have not done it in the current time, but I will in the future. I am also going to start taking the lesser-known magical beings and add some of them into my world.

As well as building up a list of ideas for the future, I have also had ideas that I have rejected. A prime example of this was to create a language for my world. However, I decided against this as it requires a lot of skill, and I would have to consider different dialects and the different

nuances of language from different socioeconomic classes. I then would have to decide if I wanted to create a new alphabet system. Then I would also have to think about if I would have a literal translation of each word, or if I would use a code system. If I did not do that, I would have to translate every word in the English language. Due to the complexity of language building, I chose to use English as the main language and drawing on the inspiration from different time periods and their language for each different countries in my created world. I also wanted to create a book on the laws, but again due to the complexity of developing laws and the dauntingness of the task, I decided not to do it. In the end, I decided that I will use the laws of the country that I live in. I even thought that I could adapt and reword past laws that are now obsolete which I thought that can be even more daunting.

The way that I work helps with the way that I create the world. I work with music, and I tend to obsess over one song for a few days or weeks. When I listen to that song again, it makes me remember the piece I was working on when listening to that song. The way that I get my ideas is by browsing photos and drawing on Pinterest. Sometimes this leads me to design my own version of the work, and other times it inspires me to create a piece that might not have anything to do with it with what I've seen, but the thought train from the image takes me to a completely new idea. I tend to work on multiple projects at the same time. This is due to my attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) which makes it impossible to concentrate on just one project or task, but I use this to my advantage by creating multiples pieces at once.

Each Island that I created is based on a different time period, which forms the basis of the design for that country. Each island is going to have one time era that will influence the design of the clothing and the transportation and even how it will affect geography, geology and the climate. While each island has a historical period it is also going to be linked to the current era in technological advancement, medicine and more. With imports and exports, there will be no shortage of anything made in other countries, and it is a way that my world is linked to the rest of the wider world.

I enjoy the idea of reusing random objects in addition to making them fit into my installation of the 'Witches' Lair' (2021) that I keep expanding. Some of the reused objects in my work are used because often, recycling objects are easier to shape and make it into something that I want. Since the objects are limited, it can make each of my pieces unique and one-of-a kind because I might not have enough of the material to do more. I like to use this process whenever possible as I can create pieces from things that I find around my home or are given to me by family members.

I wanted to bring some feminist concepts within my work, so I named the capitals of each of my islands after important female figures of the past. The reason I chose them was because they were interesting to read and learn about and they were impressive women of their time. To find a list to choose from, I browsed on Pinterest to find 'Important Historical Women'.

Theoretical Research

Worldbuilding is a complex art. It can be a fully created world, or partly thought out. Worlds can be presented in the form of a book such as a novel, comic book or graphic novel, a game, TV show, film, or a combination. There are worlds that become bigger by adding more information or new characters and storylines and expanding on the different cultures and everyday life capabilities. Unlike normal books where all the maker needs are the setting, these worlds need to have a strong structure because without it the creation collapses (Kieffer, 2015). There will be features that the audience will know and others only the architect of the domain will ever know, as they have to ask themselves questions about everything to make it a functional world (Wenstrom, 2021). The most important question is that a builder has to choose between real-world fantasy where the creator is editing the real world by changing something in it or adding second-world fantasy by creating a new land or universe (Jenkins, 2022).

The history behind worldbuilding is entrenched with literature, painting, film and usually combined with science fiction, fantasy and role playing (Wolf, 2012). Each world created by an author where the primary world is changed, is an example of complex worldbuilding. The world could have a trans narrative character that can expand the world. This idea has been around since the first century with a real historical figure of King Nebuchadnezzar II of Babylon “who appears in or is mentioned in several books of the Old Testament” (Wolf, p.115, 2012) and in further historical manuscripts. This shows that the idea of worldbuilding is an old idea. It was important to the people that lived in a world and only knowing the area where they lived in, and the rest of the world was still unknown. That then became closely intertwined with the mythical which became the ideas of myths. With myths being an early example of worldbuilding. In some parts of the world, the legends and myths have remained a constant part of their culture as they have been told and retold. This meant the myths of certain regions stayed within that location, and the world of the myth persisted strong through oral tradition.

Research is very important to worldbuilders as their worlds come from using real-world historical events, cultures and even societies as the basis for their fictional worlds. It is also important to make sure that any information that the artist is keeping the same from the real-world is accurate and the research must show that. Any research that is done for the world can be considered. Even physically ‘creating your world is research in itself’ (Siler, 2019) as the way the area looks becomes a part of it because it can make the artist question the landforms that leads them to new paths. When trying to develop the world the designer should ask themselves many questions to determine the everyday functions of the world. These questions could be anything from how the waste is disposed of to the traditions and the holidays that exist. Since every small detail is important to worldbuilding, the author should know the answer to all of them even if it is not mentioned in the story (Siler, 2019).

Framework is more in-depth research as it is to help the creator to put their ideas down on paper. These techniques are for organising and visualising their worlds and to make them know where they are in the plot. They can use mind-maps to help the creator decide what will be included in the world and to keep track of the details. Diagrams and other visual aids can be created to help the architect of the world decide if they want a top-down worldbuilding which means ‘starting with the big picture’ (Duplessis, 2022) or bottom-up worldbuilding

which is ‘starting from a small change’ (Duplessis, 2022). Keeping notes of all the changes becomes essential when world building becomes more complex. It especially becomes important when there are multiple nations or fractions that have different cultures (Breuleux et al., 2019).

Geography is important since ‘in this world or that of the imagination, it provides the grounding from which all else springs’ (McCoy, 2012) from the terrain, climate, and natural resources. Geography is not limited to location, as it includes the way that the other structured systems of the country link to culture and even the way civilisation settles. Worldbuilders must think of where their work is going to be set in since it is also the blueprint for designing the creation (McCoy, 2012). A world is affected by the way civilization interacts with the world and thrives in it. When the maker is telling the story it does not mean that they tell the audience everything as some details should be inferred (Wolf, 2012).

Culture in worldbuilding can be widely different as it is the basis for civilization. Society in worldbuilding is dependent on distinct factors of the surrounding area. For example, a nation or a world that has lot of oceans would have more jobs, foods and hobbies that would reflect this. Building a culture is ‘a means of structuring a world... [it] helps to unite other structuring systems’ (Wolf, 2012). That is to say that it also gives an insight to the characters and their experience. In the real world the architect of the world can build the customs and never stop as one thing in the society can be linked to another thing (e.g., politics and religion or technology and economy) and it can be a thing that the creator will never stop building upon (Tod, 2020).



Figure 3. Different depiction of Punk’s worlds. (AndreArt Pintic, 2022)

There are many genres used in the creation of worldbuilding, as the only limitation is the creator's imagination. There are a wide range of different subjects that can be used to make the story go in a certain way, which can fill in the world. Science is an important subject as it is often the inspiration for the story, but there are many subcultures based on historical or futuristic aesthetics that form the design of the world.

Cyberpunk is an example of an aesthetic that has had worlds created as it is an alternative way to show reality that concentrates on the idea of the cyber world of ones and zeros, technology (both high and low tech) combined with the impoverished, androids and cyber enhanced humans (Sterling, 1986). It is one of the punks that is in sci-fi subgenre (Figure 3). The genre was formed in the 1980s, with popular movies that used this aesthetic, but there has been a surge in movies featuring this aesthetic made in the last two decades. Some of the inventions that have been on different cyberpunk shows and films have been created in real life, as technology advancements have made it possible to make some of the concepts a reality. A good example are smart phones or tablets which could have been inspired from *Star Trek*.

Hydropunk is a subdivision of Steampunk and Sci-fi. It is based on steam powered machines that run on water. This is similar to Solarpunk but with hydro power (Bytes, 2022). There is not much information on this punk as it is not as known as the others. There are two ways that this idea works; the first is that the world is set underwater, often with the government using the water as an energy source and features underwater myths. The other type is a utopian world that has no pollution and uses water to run the cities (Grotto, 2013). Both iterations of the punk are typically set in the future about the same time that Cyberpunk and Solarpunk are often set in.

History is important in the real world due to people wanting to learn about the past, to keep us from making the same mistakes in our future and our children's future. It is as crucial in worldbuilding since it can shape the cultures, the societies and the physical geography of the world. Conflicts, mythology and legends are part of every culture's history and the beliefs are linked. The world's architect uses history as a way for the audience to feel 'that a world has a past history is also necessary for it to seem complete' (Wolf, 2012). The more complex a world is the more depth and realism the history is needed to be able to draw spectators by making it feel immersive and appealing (Wolf, 2018).

My final piece was set out to adapt to the space I was given for the exhibition. This changing shape adds to the ephemeral nature of the work. The ephemeral nature of my work makes the final piece different from my final piece last year as I am constantly adding work to my collection as well as changing some of the original pieces that broke or needed updating. The way that this exhibition was set up made me change some of the things that I liked to fit in the space.

As this report has shown, the world I have created is still in its infancy, but it is an ongoing project that is constantly growing. The artists discussed in the report are some of the many inspirations that influenced this project. Also influential for this project are the numerous subgenres that have inspired the aesthetics of the project. This report does not mention any

art movement due to the word count limitations, but postmodernism has been an important art movement for my aesthetic, as well as art deco and art Nouveau. This report could have also shown the reasoning behind the practical work, showing where the ideas came from and a more detailed investigation into how worldbuilding works. The world I have designed is still not completed but hopefully the report, sketchbook and exhibition have shown the basics of the created world.

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