

Impetus

As a child, I always wanted to be an artist; even though under certain circumstances I was unable to pursue pure arts, I never stopped enjoying it. Over the past two decades, I have spent countless number of hours reading manga, playing video games, sitting in front of my computer browsing drawings, or watching film. Coming from an Asian family that fits the stereotype of having to be a science and math geek, it was not surprising when my father tried to "persuade" me into majoring EE or IE. Architecture happened to end up being the compromise, having something to do with the science and having something to do with the arts.

Observation is one of the aspects that grew keener during my exposure in the architectural field for the past eight years. It made me take notice of the surrounding more, the environment, the people, the detail of things, or even the ways things work. From human interaction, gestures, action-reaction, to changes in nature, falling leaves, shifting clouds, to building corners, window edges, or even the gum on pavements, just to name a few I take notice on. Owning this gift, in my opinion, deeply benefits designers in their work and how they think.



Figure 1. Architectural section

In addition to observation, one thing that I really enjoy about architecture is sections (Figure 1.¹). Being one of the best ways to depict spatial design, expanding ones imagination of how movement takes place is significantly attractive to me. Would people feel relaxed when they are in this open space? Does this turn block the flow of negative space? It is when interaction happens that things get interesting; possibly this is why I am so intrigued by animation. "To give life to," The American Heritage Dictionary's² first definition of "animate," has the capability of achieving these illusions. It is hard to put to words how fascinating this idea of creation is, giving life to ones imagination. We, as the audience, can then be able to see things like flying pigs or talking whales.

¹ http://www.archdaily.com/5918/house-atelier-atelier-bow-wow/1507603707_3d-section

² <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/animate>



Figure 2. Film screenshots

As I thought about what I like and begun exploring the combination of the qualities, the *HBO Voyeur project*³, *Surface*⁴ by Design and Technology alumnus Varathit Uthaisri, and *El Empleo (The Employment)*⁵ by Santiago Bou Grasso (Figure 2.) provides a similar example of what I am aiming for. Showing a different perspective, through voyeurism people can observe behavior and how space takes part in life. In some strange way I feel everything has a link to it. Everything has its story. Person A may not know person B, but person A's banana peel might have had its joke on person B's life and broke his or her back. Call it karma or fate, interconnections in destiny has it mysterious ways.

There is a Chinese saying by Mencius (孟子)," Men are born good(人性本善)." Xunzi(荀子), however, counters with the saying," Men are born evil(人性本惡)." I believe in Xunzi's saying that mankind's human nature all derives from the root of evilness. We are surrounded by it everyday in some form. News is filled with crime, movies are packed with violence yet people want to watch it and during the time being they enjoy it (at least in movies that is). There is this morbid fascination that attracts people in watching. It is contradictory how people believe in utopia but still enjoy action films.

Combining observation, sections (taking apart), and cynicism, peeling off what people normally see and revealing what is underneath is what I am showing: a point of view, a perspective that majority would not care or take notice upon, and let the majority take a step back and possibly think differently.

³ <http://archive.bigspaceship.com/hbovoyeur/>

⁴ <http://www.surfacefilm.com>

⁵ <http://www.artetv.fr/Videos-sur-ARTE-TV/2151166,CmC=2697838.html>

Thesis Concept

[draw] is a mixed media animation about a child depicted as a skeletal calf who is trapped in his constant nightmare, repeatedly re-living the abuse from bullying. The metaphor intends to reveal the physical and emotional impact violence can cause. It is meant for young Americans entering adulthood (18-25) to rethink their negative actions towards the people around them.

Idea behind the title [draw]

I like things with layers, which also applies when it comes to naming or telling bad puns. It's fun. So beyond the obvious as the main character is scribbling, "draw" also refers to definitions of pulling out, attract, and tie. The brackets grammatical usage may be a little farfetched as being "left out material," but for the most part visually it looks like something is being contained and enclosed.

Some of the core questions that I am focusing on are:

- How can I express a state of mind, an emotion, or feeling through visual representation of space?
- Would this visual representation carry the message to the audience? How would I make them understand the allegory?
- How would spatial design play an important part in my animation?

Through this thesis raises the question in whether or not cynicism should be addressed and or accepted. The argument I am for is to reexamine ones cynical behaviors. It is ignorant to ignore what happens even though life does go on, optimistically people would learn from their mistakes.

Ideally I hope people of all age, gender, race, background, or belief can somewhat understand and hopefully enjoy some part of what I am trying to express. Depending on the age and experience, the audience will have different interpretations. Narrowing down, the target audience is aimed towards young adults who have exposure to the darker side of the world and society. In addition, possibly designers because I also want to expose a different eye in seeing things, hopefully it would affect or inspire the way they think.

Success would be determined by the reaction and feedback the audience gives back, whether a "ha, huh, hmm, oh my, whoa" or even a different gesture in how people act. To get there the story and aesthetics have to be carefully thought out and planned. The characters should have its appeal and be relatable.

Animation is the main medium I am using in order to tell a story. In a greater scope and future work I would hope to include interactive stories, but as for the realm now, straight storytelling provides the atmosphere and focus of engagement that I plan. Having a surrealistic environment, animation provides more imaginative creativity over film. Currently the methods of animation might involve mix-media covering 3D animation, 2D animation, motion graphics, and possibly stop motion depending on the different parts of stories.