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graphic design

3d modelling
3d modelling

photography
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phys computing
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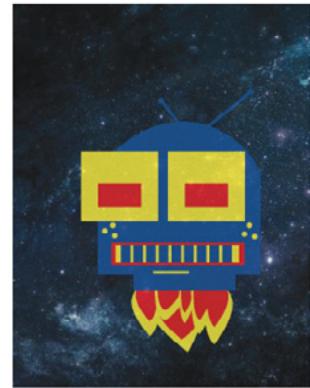
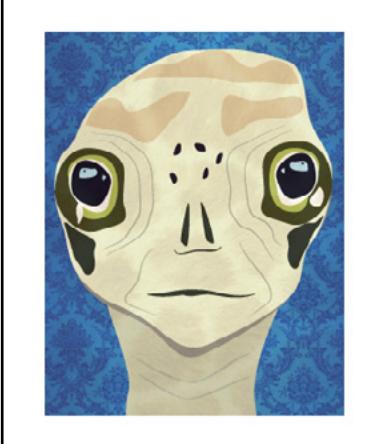
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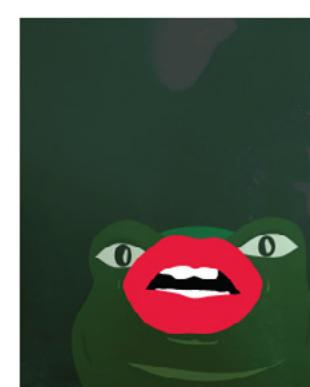
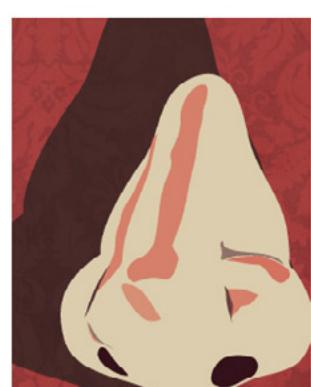
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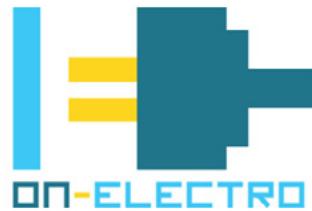
graphic design **characters**



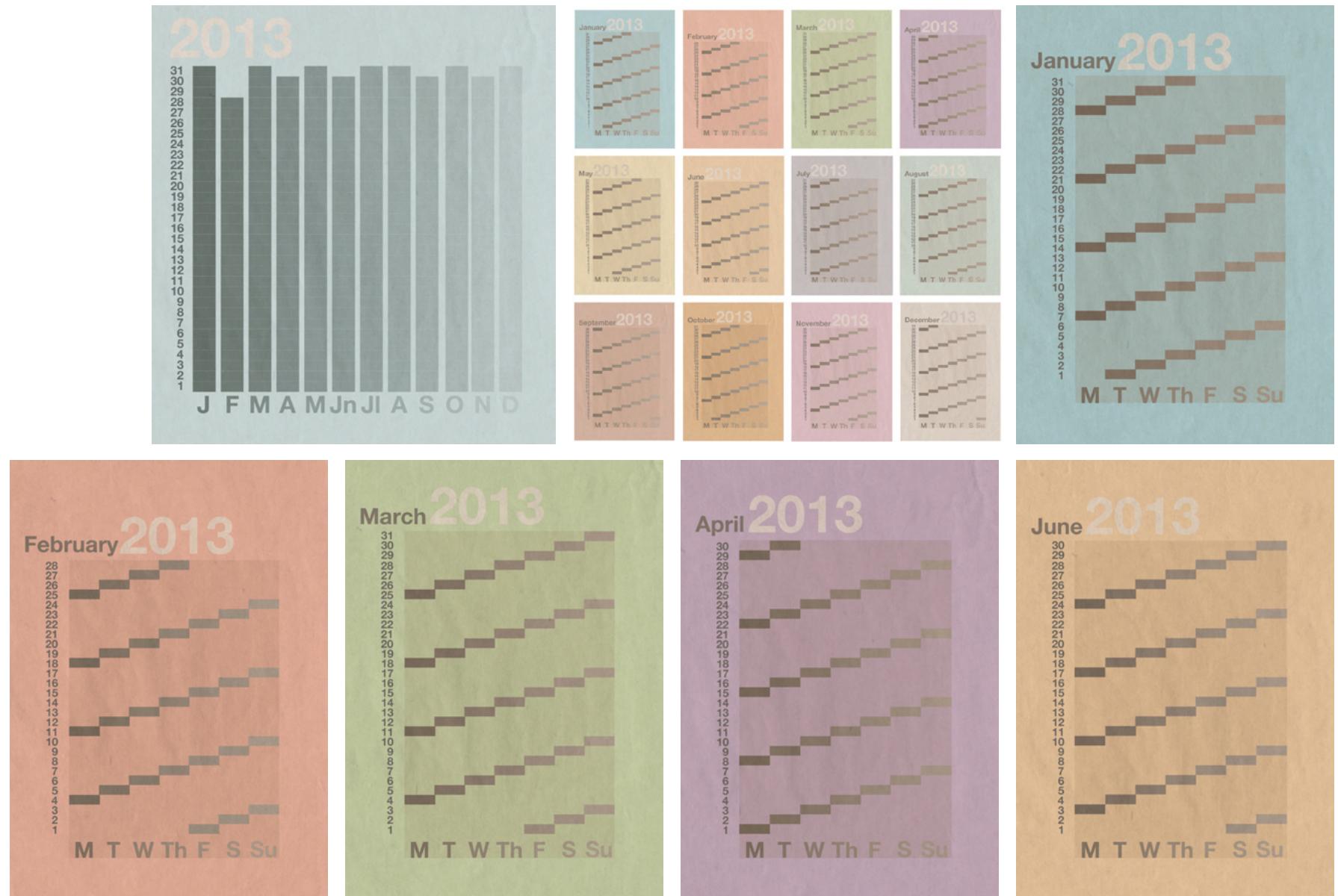
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posters



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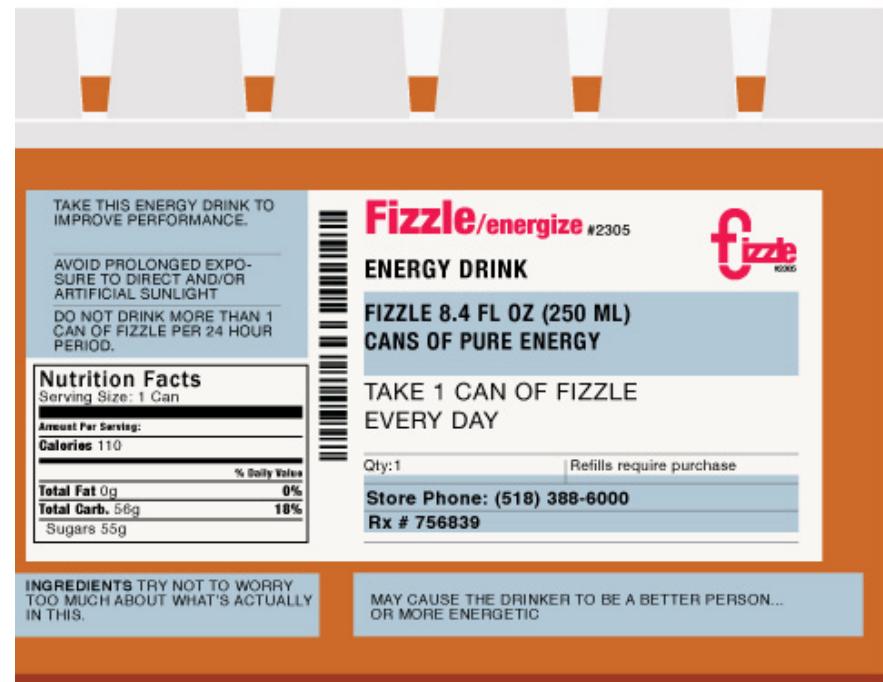




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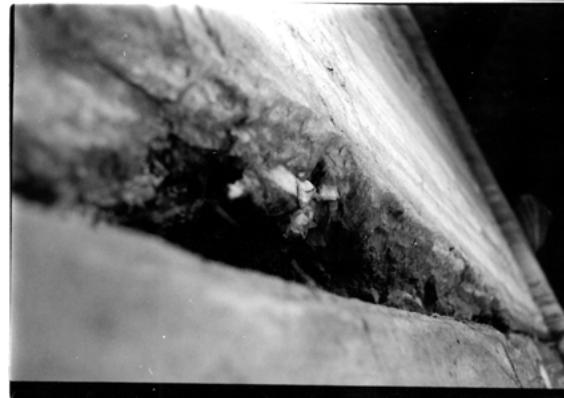
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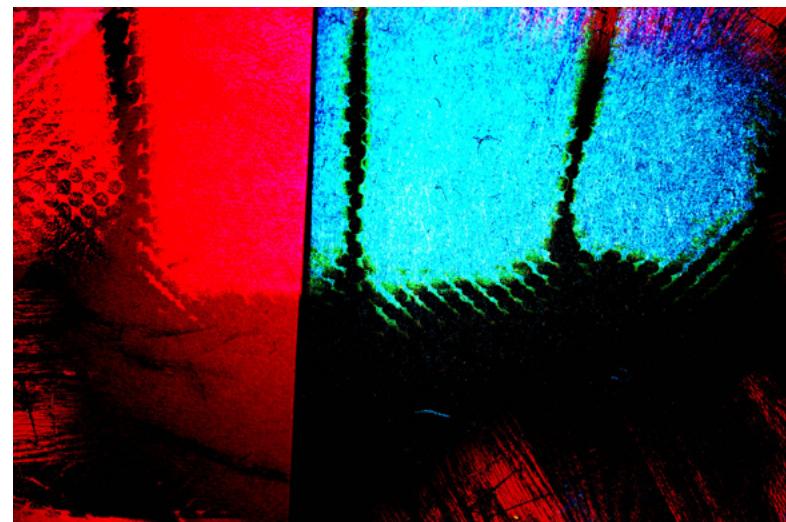
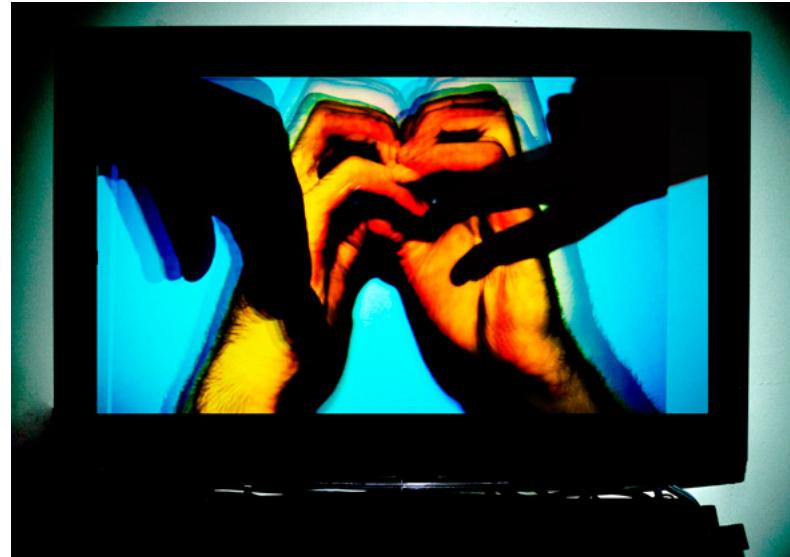
photography
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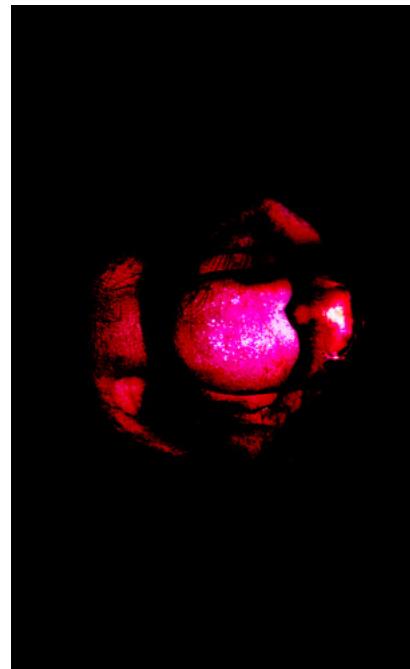
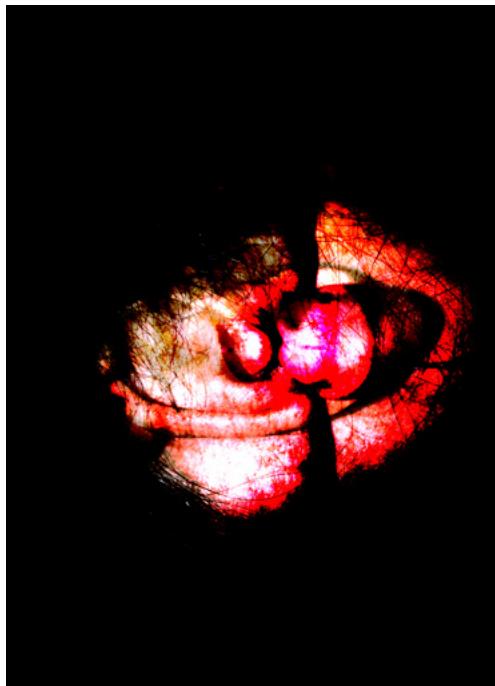
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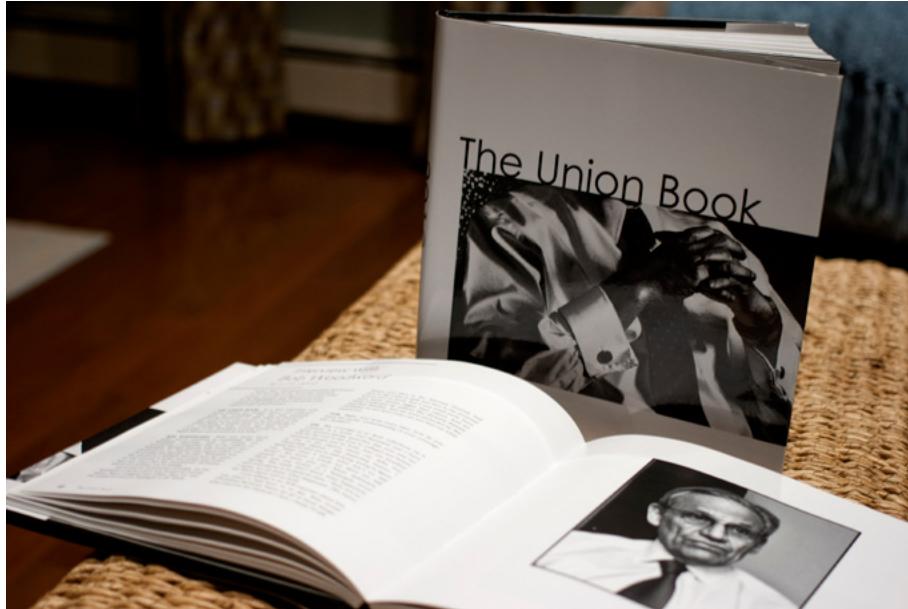
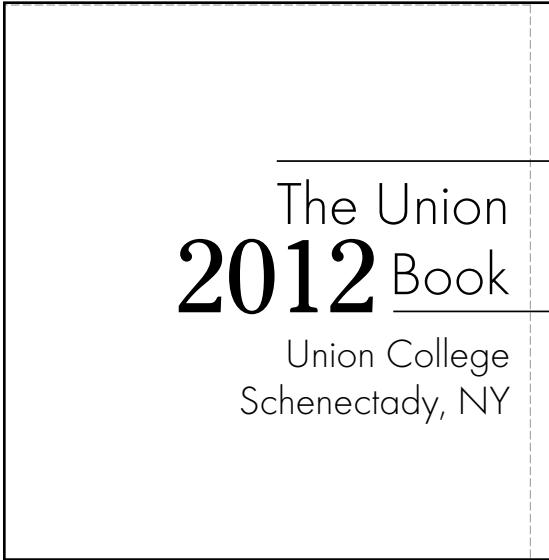
digital art
hands



digital art
self portrait



book design the union book



**Interview with
Valerie Barr**
April 23, 2012

Valerie Barr the chair of the Computer Science Department and director of interdisciplinary Programs. Her area of focus is concerned with the application of software testing. Barr is completing her own series of oral histories on computing in her subfield of computer science.

THE UNION BOOK: Can you please provide a bit of background into your career as a computer scientist and professor here at Union College?

VALERIE BARR: How far back do you want me to go?

TUB: As far as you'd like, maybe when you first started getting interested in the field.

VB: Okay. So, I'm a dinosaur. I learned to program in high school, which in the early 1970s was not the normal thing. And I went off to college to be a math major, which was what I was planning to do. So, senior year, my junior year, a friend of the family sat me down and said, "You shouldn't do pure math because all you can do with it is teach." He said I should pursue something else. I went to Mount Holyoke, went to Mount Holyoke – it's like Union except it had no men – and announced that I wanted to create my own major in applied math.

So, that was sort of accidentally what I pursued. But what really set me on the path for computing were the summer jobs I had. The

summer after my freshman year, I worked at a small company in Connecticut called Intercom. When I walked in on the first day, the guy I was gonna work for basically said, "Here is a problem I need you to solve. There's a library. There's a computer. There's a keyboard. There's a PDP-10. You have fun." And I really had fun. I had a great time.

By my senior year, I really was pretty hooked. But bizarrely thought no one would hire me, so I applied to grad school. And I got into the PhD program at NYU and actually hated it. I ended up leaving the program with my master's.

After working as a professional for eight years and trying to go back to NYU, which I finally ended up at Rutgers, I started Rutgers in January '88, and got my PhD in May of '96. So, in a sense, computing is all I've ever done. But becoming an academic was my second career.

VB: On a good day, it's ten percent.

TUB: Do you see any form of hostility towards women here, as is sometimes experienced in the field at large?

VB: Did you feel any pressures as a woman in the field of computer science?

VB: When I look back at my experience at NYU the first time, it's hard to say for sure. I was twenty when I started graduate school. I took my first term of courses. I did fine. I was the only full-time woman in PhD studies who entered my program. And the first year, female students had just started. In terms of fully funded students, there were almost no women.

At the end of my first term, I went to meet with the department chair who said, "Oh, I think you can take your qualifying exams in January." Essentially, what I had to do was teach myself the entire curriculum, which is three level courses, and teach myself assembly language. And as you might imagine, this did not go well.

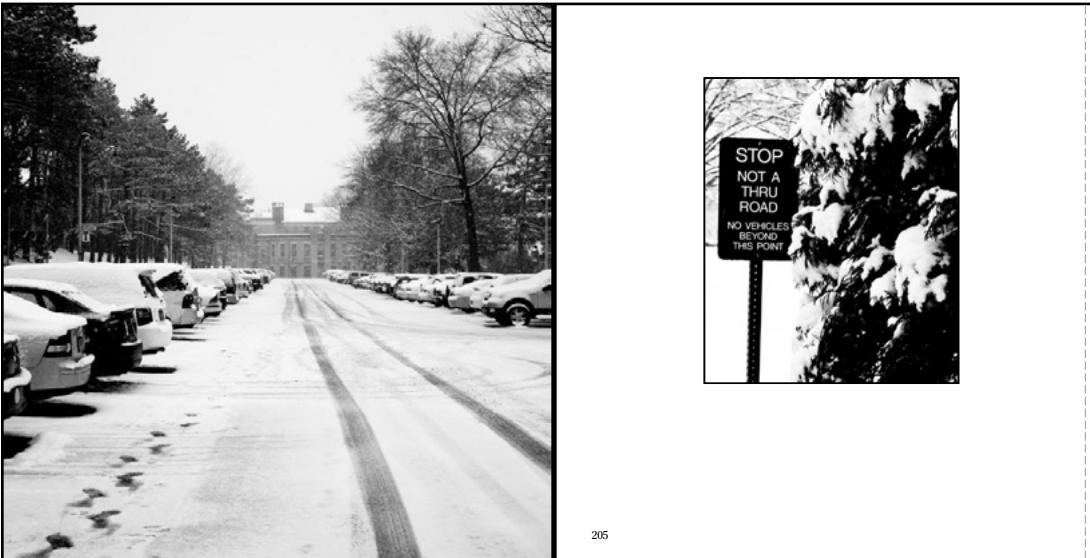
Now, we can look at that two ways. We can look at that and say, "Well, he thought I really needed to prepare for it, I was young, and I probably really surprised that I did not pass my exams." Or we could look at that and say, "That was a set up. He wanted to get rid of me." I don't know.

English, I think, I went to a women's college. I never really had a problem. I went to a women's college; I felt pretty strong about my abilities and I feel very comfortable with what my abilities were and my right to be where I am. I never had a problem saying to people, "Went up and got out of my face." I never felt like anybody was really questioning my abilities. But that didn't stop them from being rude and crude.

TUB: Here at Union, what is the proportion of women computer science majors versus men?

We had a speaker recently, a lovely soprano, that went to NYU. And she talked in RPI. And there were three female students in a room of one hundred and sixty. We'll give a similar talk here, and there may only be one female student.

book design the union book



TUB: Your coverage of Watergate was pretty much unprecedented investigative journalism. Were there any moments that got you on the path you were going down or was it pretty much you and Carl Bernstein that got to where you went?

BW: No, because you're just doing the reporting. There was a point when we accused the former Attorney General, John Mitchell, of controlling this secret fund that financed Watergate, and that they were full of hate and racism. And at the

about this a little here: the day he resigned, he called all of his senior staff, friends, cabinet, to the East Room and he said, "Look, I'm leaving. I have my wife and two daughters, but no in-laws there, and there was no script. It was Nixon unscripted. He talked about his mother and father, and [a] lot of things, and then he never raised his hands at one point, and he said, "This is why I called you all here." And he said, "Always remember, others may hate you. But those who hate you don't win unless you hate them first."

Wow, I mean, here at this moment, he's leaving and he realized it was the hate in him and in his administration that destroyed him. The hate was the poison. He listened to the tapes, and they were full of hate and racism. And at the

David Frost interviews, Nixon said that what Carl [Berkman] and I wrote was more and more true, and that he didn't do much. Now what I meant, why is he carrying that around? And David Frost, in his memoir about the Nixon investigations said, "[A]t this moment, Nixon was just seething. It was just raw hate."

TUB: When you were reporting during the Nixon Presidency, did you know that all of your investigations would in part lead to his resignation?

BW: No, because you're just doing the reporting. There was a point when we accused the former Attorney General, John Mitchell, of controlling this secret fund that financed Watergate, and that they were full of hate and racism. And at the

of the other espionage activities — there was a moment where Carl [Berkman] realized, "We were in the little caissons on the fifth floor off the [Washington] Post newsroom, and he just kind of turned around and said, "This president's gonna be impeached." And I said, "I think so, too." And we can never have a good word in this newsroom because people will then think that we have an agenda." And it was not for a year before the impeachment investigations began.

TUB: Your coverage of Watergate was pretty much unprecedented investigative journalism. Were there any moments that got you on the path you were going down or was it pretty much you and Carl Bernstein that got to where you went?

BW: Well, I'd say from the Navy from 1965 to 1970 during the Vietnam War. And I became 100% a Postman. And I saw a lot of the classified traffic about the war and saw that they just weren't telling the truth about the war. And that was very disturbing. And the people who were writing about the war were saying things like Seymour Hersh, [Cornelius] Mahonay, "Neil" Sheehan, David Halberstam — were kind of saying, "Okay, you know there's this war going on, but they're not telling the truth about it." And we'd get sources and information that say it's going this way. And that was an important backdrop that the government doesn't always tell the truth on particularly big things.

CONCORDY: You mentioned earlier Howard Simson, who was the managing editor of the *Washington Post* at the time. What was his role in the Watergate investigation?

BW: His role was to be a pest. And that's what editors do, they're pests. And he would run around and, I mean, say, "Where's the next Watergate story?" How are we doing on Watergate? Where are we going?" And, "Let's

meet, let's talk, let's think. Let's plan ahead. What don't we know? How are we going to find it out?" He was a great editor.

CONCORDY: After Watergate, you continued to write about the often seven succeeding presidents. Did your style of investigating and reporting change after Watergate or was it affected with the different presidents? How did it evolve over time?

BW: What I try to do — and it's not just the White House, I have written about all of the presidents since Nixon, and also the Supreme Court, the CIA, the Supreme Court, Bush, Bush, the Central Reserve, it's to look at the people who have power and [see] how they use it. There's been nothing like the Nixon scandal, but each president has called out for the [question]: what don't we know about who they are and what they've done?

I did four books on George W. Bush and his administration, and somebody said that it's 102 pages or something like that. It's a book, and it really excavates why he went to war and what was driving him and the controversies and the issues and the difficulties. And I've read a lot of the memoirs of Bush, [George W.] Bush, [Charles K.] [Donald] Rumsfeld, the generals — and they've added some things, but basically the story's in the 1700 pages. And that's the same: find out what happened. If you can.

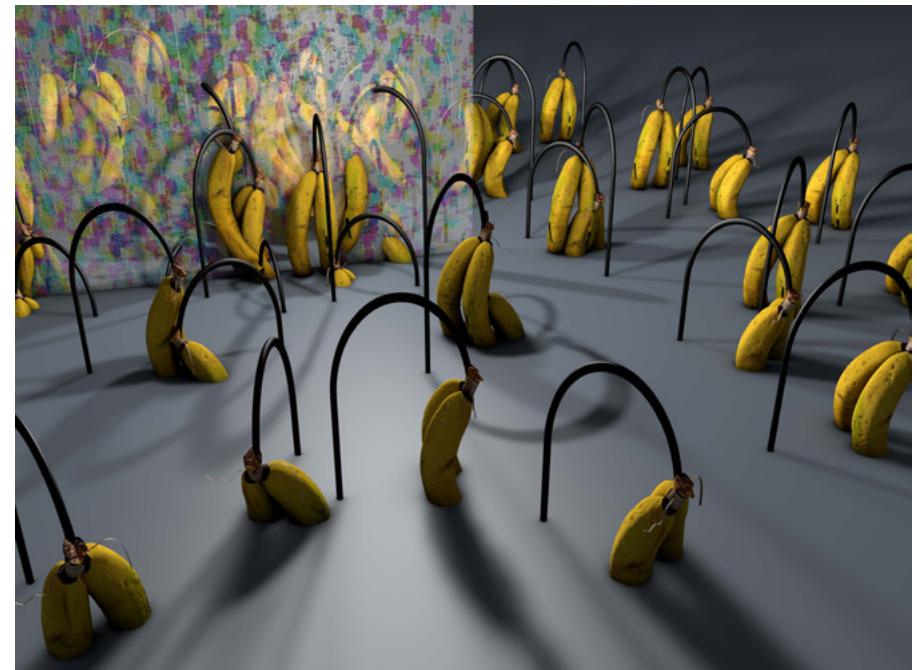
TUB: Especially in your books, *Plan of Attack* and *Obama's Wars*, you spoke a lot about the divisions within the White House. Do you see that as a change in the Nixon Administration, or did that kind of carry through the years?

BW: Well, there's always a fight going on. In a sense, it's healthy that people have different points of view. It even happens in the Obama Administration. The first Obama book I did, I'm

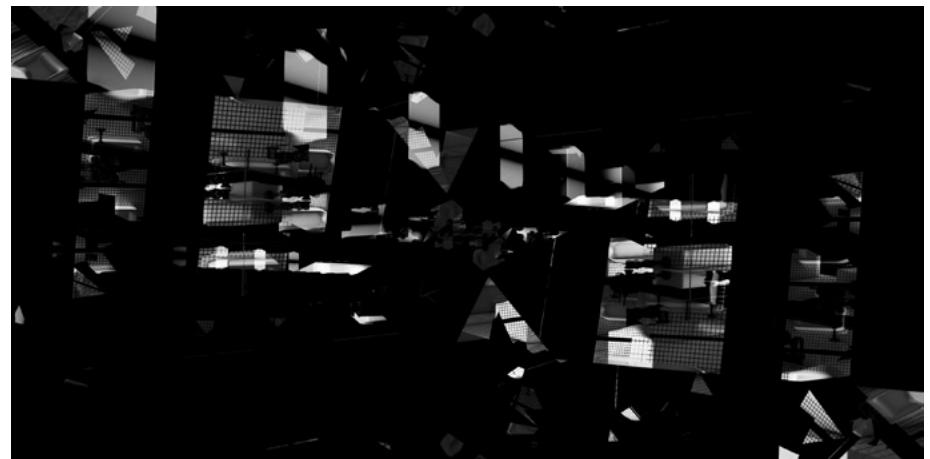
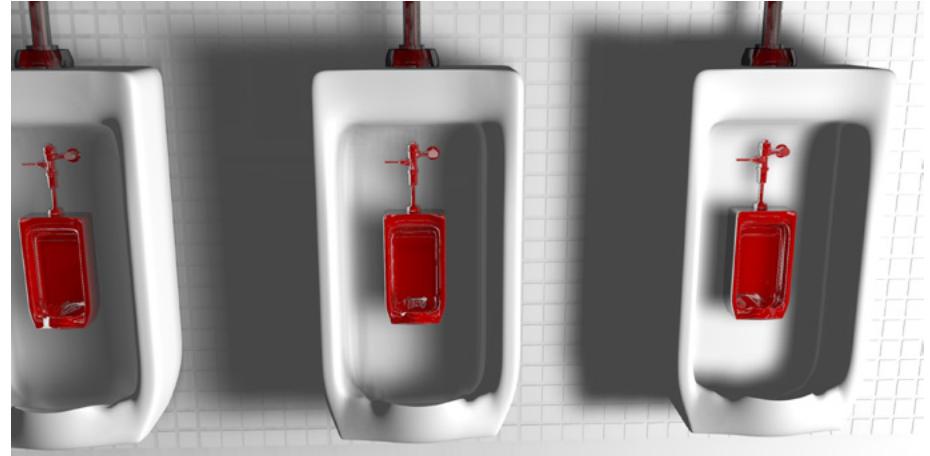
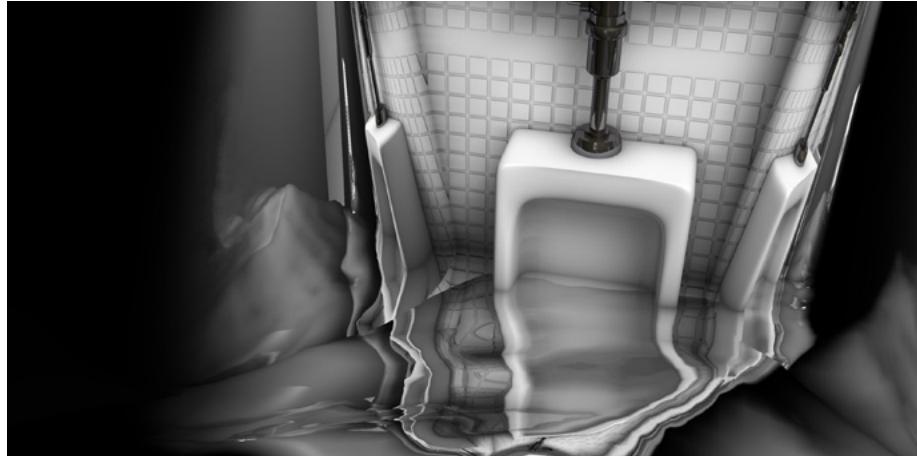
90 The Union Book

91 Bob Woodward

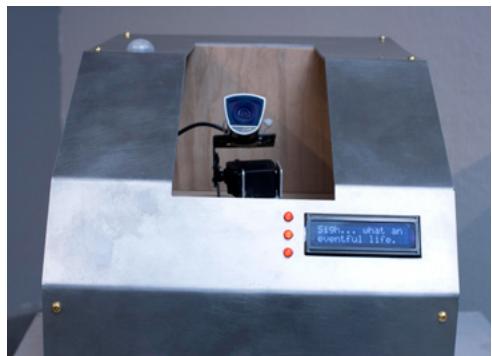
3d modelling **still life**



3d modelling **bathrooms**



physical computing Automatons



The Internet is a relatively new phenomenon that has shaped the modern world around its existence. I seldomly find myself in a room without access to the Internet or social media. I, along with many others in my generation, spend hours per month thoughtlessly surfing the Internet and Facebook without any clear objective. I want to start a conversation on the topic of how the Internet has shaped our society and whether these changes are positively or negatively effecting our lives.

My installation consists of three robots, a computer, and a monitor. Each robot is interactive in the physical world through the use of an Arduino, sensors, motors, LCD screens and LEDs and the digital world through the use of Facebook where they can post photos of their surroundings, status updates or comments. I hope that by watching my robots mindlessly performing the same tasks that we do everyday, viewers will begin to ask the same questions that I have proposed.

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