

Interactive Media Self-Reflection

By Bryce Poehlitz

I was probably an unusual case amongst students in this class, because I took Interactive Media 2 over a year after I took Interactive Media 1. A lot of things happened in that year-long gap - both good things and bad things - that I believe greatly influenced my worldview, and that change in worldview can be seen in the works that I have created in this class.

The difference is greatly visible when you compare my final project for A323 and my final project of A324. My final project for A323 was a political work that used CSS shapes colored in red, white, blue and grey, as the backdrop for some of the things that Donald Trump has said as a presidential candidate, and quotes from Machiavelli's book *The Prince* juxtaposed to provide a form of satire. My final project for A324, by contrast, was merely a collection of various hand-drawn images, many of which were about more fantastical, more innocent, and more playful topics, drawn in black and white.

Over the course of creating the various projects and exercises in both A323 and A324, I realized that I had two different, mutually-incompatible styles of creating art depending on which medium I used to create them. The digital work that I tried to create using strictly CSS, or using programs like Adobe Illustrator or Paint, were very rigid and static. Those works relied on straight lines, angular shapes, solid blocks of color, and (usually) plain sans-serif typefaces. The work that I created using pencil or pen on paper, by contrast, was far more loose and dynamic. Those works used smooth lines and almost curvilinear shapes, handwritten text (sometimes even sloppily handwritten), and were often black and white works that relied heavily on shading and 'textures' created through patterns of lines. On occasion I would try to combine these styles into a single cohesive style, but it was always an awkward and uncomfortable fit (as seen in some of my other Graphic Design projects and my original draft for A324 Project 1.)

For a long time, I had this idea in my head of what a website or digital image was supposed to look like. In many of my digital works before and after A323 I tried to force my ideas to conform to that image of what I thought a website or digital work should be like - even if my particular ideas or art style didn't blend well with that image at all. Part of my experience with A324 was learning to do the opposite - to shape the space to fit with my ideas and aesthetic, and to break away from that image I had in my head of how I thought a website should work. My final project for A324 - the portfolio project - is the epitome of this line of thought, where almost every aspect of the website was hand-drawn, including the text, icons and buttons.

I suppose if I could improve on earlier projects, both in A323 and A324, is that I wish they had a more cohesive style. I hesitated to link my A323 projects in my final portfolio project in part because they are completely different in style from the works that I create now, and they don't reflect the kind of person that I want to present myself as.

Overall, the Interactive Media classes I took really challenged me to take what I liked and what I wanted to be and develop it into something more concrete. Further, I feel like these classes, more than any other class, really prepared me for a career in art or design, and taught me how to express the ideas I tried to communicate. And I believe I probably wouldn't be the person I was now without these classes. What I guess I'm trying to say is that I greatly appreciate the opportunity to learn in these classes with you, Garima Thakur.

Thank you.