

Since last year I have tried to establish an autonomous practice around the concepts of exercises and studies.

I have defined exercises as purely technical explorations, like the solving of a programming puzzle or a short analysis of something, be it a book, a film or an internet meme. The aim is always technical improvement or initial acquaintance with any cultural artefact.

Studies, meanwhile, constitute a deeper research in a particular subject. Their approach must be fluid and flexible, giving itself wholly to the vagaries of the process and let the research be guided by that, not by any sort of precise goal. The only objective with the studies is to investigate matters through active interaction, not just passive content absorption.

I find a subject to be most intellectually rewarding when it is somehow manipulated, touched, when I try to short-circuit it, remove bits and pieces, add something else and see what is the result of that.

Anarchy, freedom, homosexuality, revolution, porn, academics. Recursion, capitalism, life, reincarnation, empty desires, obsessive craving. Can those fit together? How can they fit together? What should I remove? Like wikipedia binge reading, can I start researching stoicism and end up finding out that what I really wanted to get at was fluid mechanics?

My proposal for the Sandberg is a study born out of my interest in gaming and gaming culture. In worlds filled with magic and superb technology, with realities supposedly alien to ours, most stories still deal with variations on trite tropes, like kill all the baddies, save the princess (and the monarchy! even in space!), and most characters are still straight white manly males surrounded by other manly males and big breasted women. Is that the veil of ideology that clouds every human act? Is that the only story that one can tell with games?

In the spirit of Ursula K. Le Guin and her novels where violence is never glorified and capitalist societies are not the only possible future, I want to do like so many game writers and try and create a fantastic world. Can it be non-conformist? Can it feature a Bayonetta-like transgender techno-shaman to spice things up? Is that our main character? Our enemy? Ourselves? And what are her/our thoughts on a supernova that carries the remnants of an objectivist civilisation? Should there even be an enemy or is that just going back to the initial ideas I was criticising a few lines ago? Perhaps our main character should instead be a sentient planet that somehow perceived Kim K's new hair colour and wants to absorb that beautiful being inside itself (let's not judge the planet life choices, ok)? I could certainly design a game around that.

All is fluid, however. The focus needs to be adjusted, as do so many other aspects, but the starting point is there. Fantasy, ideology, fantastic worlds, world building, space, stars, transgender technologic shaman, sentient planet.