Flash Website
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S 08

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The class intended to investigate the murder of excess: when did it happen, how could it happen? And at the same time find it's new place in culture. This module looks at the 20th Century with a clinical eye towards finding the traces of adornment, decoration and excess.

By investigating culture at large, from cinema, to art, and product design, we developed a critical view of our current design scenarios. These scenarios intended to merge all disciplines into one. The output of the class was a final presentation that argued the contemporary role of excess in design.

As a methodology we processed the work developed in class with Flash, designing interfaces where the research material becomes dynamic and projective.

The Historicity of the Avant-Garde: Piranesi and Eisenstein

In contrast to the typical Hollywood linear montage, the introduction of a film editing method that relies on the overlay and "collapse" of independent film sequences or shots is very specific to the Soviet filmmaker of the 1920s, Sergei Eisenstein. Eisenstein's theory of montage infringes the classic uninterrupted sequenced system, which structured the cinema prior to its invention.

This new method of organization utilizes inconsistencies between spatial and temporal compositions, assembled together in an identical frame, and therefore generating a conflicting and complex composition. Such compositions are intended to evoke an irrational, incoherent, and irregular overlay of order and chaos as well as a strong clash of themes involving volume, scale, motion, rhythm, and time. The essay focuses on the work of Piranesi and describes the Carceri through an analytical technique that breaks apart the elements of the composition Eisenstien calls the technique "ecstatic transfiguration." As a result Eisenstien interprets the forms as being in a state of "potential movement," as stated by Tufari on the subject. Eisenstien notes that there is a "false equilibrium" in Piranesi's compositions. An it is precisely that false equilibrium that accounts for the compositions potential movement. It is a phenomenon the Russian Formalist called "semantic distortion." The essay by Tufari on Eisenstein's text describes this as a violent alteration that changes the mutual relationship that once mutually bound all the entities within the composition.
Fellini Cinematography: Busby, Eight and a Half, Juliet of the Spirits

"Run Lola Run", "Animatrix", and "42nd Street" evoke a similar ideology of chaos, incoherence and clash of independent events assembled in a single frame, and engendering a wide variety of multifaceted scenes. In "Run Lola Run", the scenes selected illustrate a composition of "events" relying on a disturbance of speed and rhythm (hit and run scenes), and moments of accelerated versus paused time (picture scene at collisions). "Animatrix," exemplifies Eisenstein's editing method more graphically. The animated film allows for film maker to create a composition of elements in different states of motion. This allows the film maker to guide the viewers eye through

a futuristic landscape in a constantly shifting it's pacing through the frame. The film also involves an assemblage of contradictory perspectives of the New York City skyline and a chaotic composition of dimensional scale and volumes. Finally, Eisenstein's theory of the interrupted "180 degree rule" is found in "42nd Street," where the camera angles are now what constitute the composition as well as the fixed versus in-motion frames established to create such a discontinuity in the overall picture.

Joshua Davis' Design Concept

Joshua Davis's design concept underlines the notion of design as a "game", acting as a tool that deconstructs the concept. In order to successfully design, Davis believes that concept should be deconstructed in a creative way. For example, the structure of the objects materializes by their decomposition and reconstructs into other entities. The processes of both deconstruction and reconstruction generate new possibilities and values of the objects themselves and, when comparing the new model being reconstructed with the original one, interesting discussions would occur upon the topic. The discussions are open-minded and public, which is, as Davis mentions "the core stone of the design" and "the core value of design." Design provides an extraordinary array of ability and variety in term of vision because it combines different notions and reveals them in a similar visual style.

Joshua Davis claims that "all theories are false, when you don't agree with them." For him, theory is a device to induce the audience; however, it is not the only basis of his creations. The artist strongly disagrees with the fact that the "best design" is often perceived as a simple, even simplistic.

In contrast to other designers who apply methodology onto the content of the design, Davis's original design content is based on a eastern philosophy -"emptiness" using methodologies as grid systems. The artist relates to those methodologies as "a cage of pure imagination process."What is essential to understand in the artist's design is that the concept of his design id purely organic and the style at the core of his design always diverge from the formal rule. His design is not predictable; it evolves naturally, and is executed without strict intentions. Davis's design is alive, organic, and sensible to the environment; therefore, it is never static or permanent, but always in a transitional phase.