

Senior Studio/Contemporary Practices

ARTS 3970
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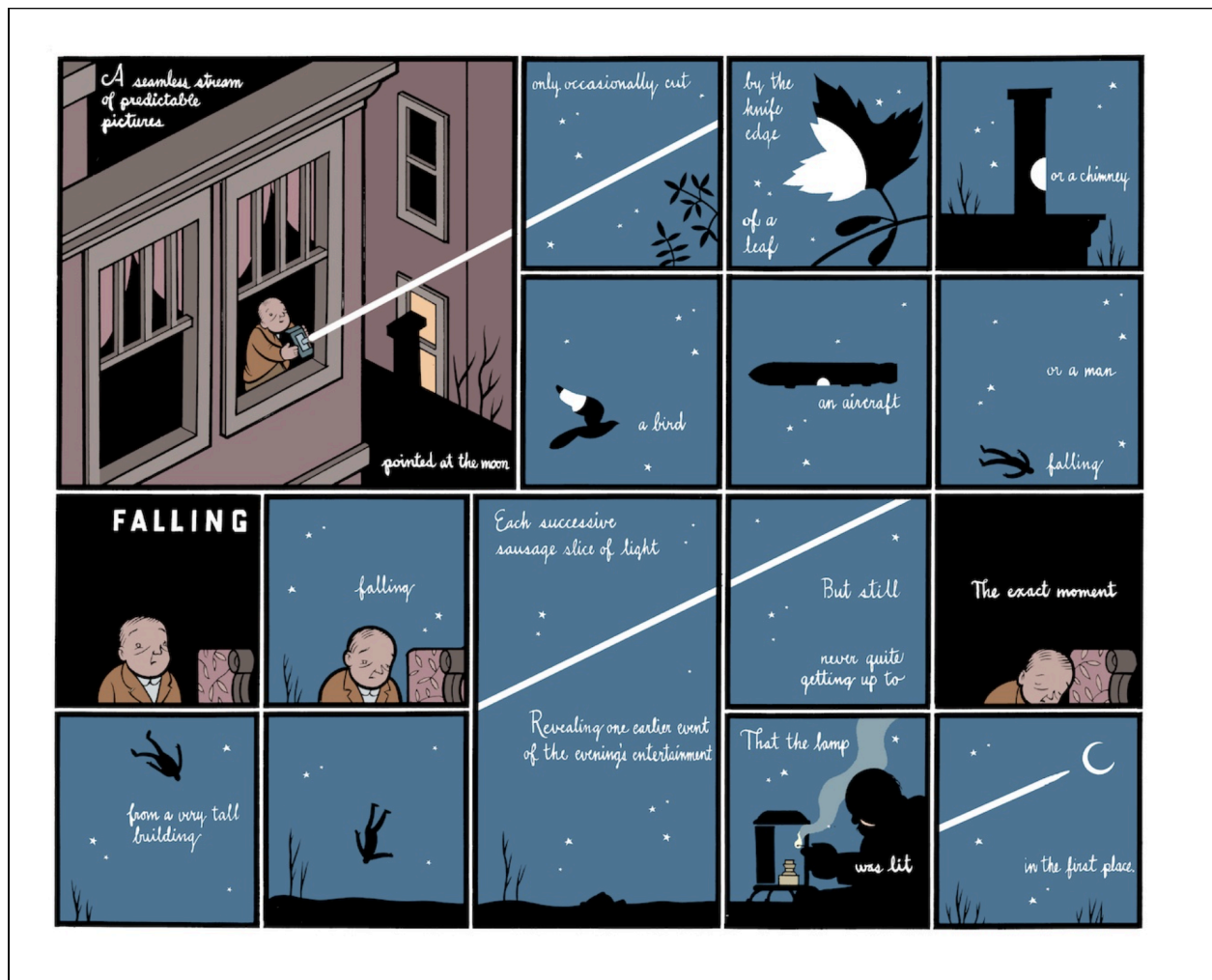
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Weekly Artwork Assignment

Assignment:

Choose a piece, describe what exists in the formal space and how those elements contribute to the conceptual meaning.

A comic from “Jimmy Corrigan, the Smartest Kid on Earth”, Chris Ware, 1993-2000 window



From "Jimmy Corrigan, the Smartest Kid on Earth" 1993-2000, Published by Pantheon Books, 2000, Original artwork: ink, pencil and white gouache on bristol, 16" x 24"

Chris Ware's comic from "Jimmy Corrigan, the Smartest Kid on Earth" is composed as a storyboard. The piece is visibly placed in a grid, composed mainly of squares of the same dimensions, except for one rectangle, which is exactly two squares, and a large square, which is

4 of the standard square unit. There are three parallel lines that streak diagonally from bottom left to top right, each having differing lengths. There are English words in this piece. There is only one word in all capital letters: "FALLING". The rest is in a hand-written script. The English reader would read words left to right, so the pictures within the squares would likely be read from left to right and top to bottom. The viewer starts at the top leftmost square. There is a man who shines a light, the words giving us the cue that he is pointing it at the moon. Moving on to the right, the viewer encounters 5 different objects within the first row of the composition which the light hits: "of a leaf", "on a chimney", "a bird", "an aircraft", and "on a man...falling". The second row, or bottom half of the piece expands on this last encounter of the man falling. It repeats falling twice, once in all capitals and once in the hand-written script. There are two squares, or frames, which depict a figure suspended in air, showing the man's "fall" from the sky. The reminder of the piece seeks to use the words to communicate the meaning. However, the words do not offer much clarity to the viewer, not being anywhere close to the directness of the pointing out of the objects in the top half of the piece, or what I will call the first sequence. The viewer is left with a mystery and the task of making out the meaning of the fall from the sky.

A sense of certainty and familiarity is felt by the viewer in 4 objects which the light points to (top right quadrant), but uncertainty and a sense of tragedy and unease at the man falling. The location of the objects in the sky brings the viewer's mind to a physically high place. Upon encountering the "on a man...falling", the viewer experiences a sensation of the drop or fall themselves. The bottom right quadrant of the piece contains this flow of words "*Each successive sausage slice of light...Revealing one earlier event of the evening's entertainment. But still...never quite getting up to...The exact moment...that the lamp was lit...in the first place.*" It is interesting that the words point to the act of the man using the light to identify objects in the sky with. The text describes this as "the evening's entertainment". In what is essentially a poem, the viewer is presented with a connection of the light's illumination of objects in the sky to being an activity of entertainment. There is a tension between the main figure seeing a man fall from the sky, which carries this force of terror or horror, and the act of a man lighting a lamp. The obvious question this leads to is "what does the light that illuminated from the man in the first square have to do with the falling of another man?" "do they have any correlation?". Why does the artist place a tragedy (a man falling from the sky) in the midst of a seemingly curious and harmless activity of a man pointing a light at the moon on a random evening? The unresolved questions the piece composes is juxtaposed with the clarity of the visual language of the piece. The content could be stated as such "In the middle of a seemingly ordinary, harmless evening, a man falls from the sky (to his death), and there is a sense of regret and grief that the 2nd sequence ends with.

The piece plays with the idea of succession and sequence. It starts off with "A seamless stream of predictable pictures", and then defies that expectation directly with the falling of a man in the middle of the story. Perhaps it poses the question of whether there are causal relationships that we might not be aware of, or if causal relationships exist so directly as we think they might. The central tension of the piece seems to be the occurrence of things that defy expectations and the questioning of whether certain things can be traced to causes. Chris Ware uses subtle

juxtapositions of normality and tragedy, simplicity and chaos, and inversions of expectations to create a piece that seems simply, yet able to hold emotional weight.

Summary/key points:

Squares and 1 rectangle, layout is a grid

There are 3 parallel lines that streak diagonally across from bottom left to top right.

There is a view of the ground shown in the bottom squares and the 1 rectangle.

Suspension

A sense of certainty and familiarity is felt by the viewer in 5 objects which the light points to (top right), but uncertainty and a sense of tragedy and unease at the man falling. The location of the objects in the sky brings the viewer's mind to a physically high place. Upon encountering the "on a man...falling", the viewer experiences a sensation of the drop or fall themselves.

Saying Grace, Norman Rockwell, 1951



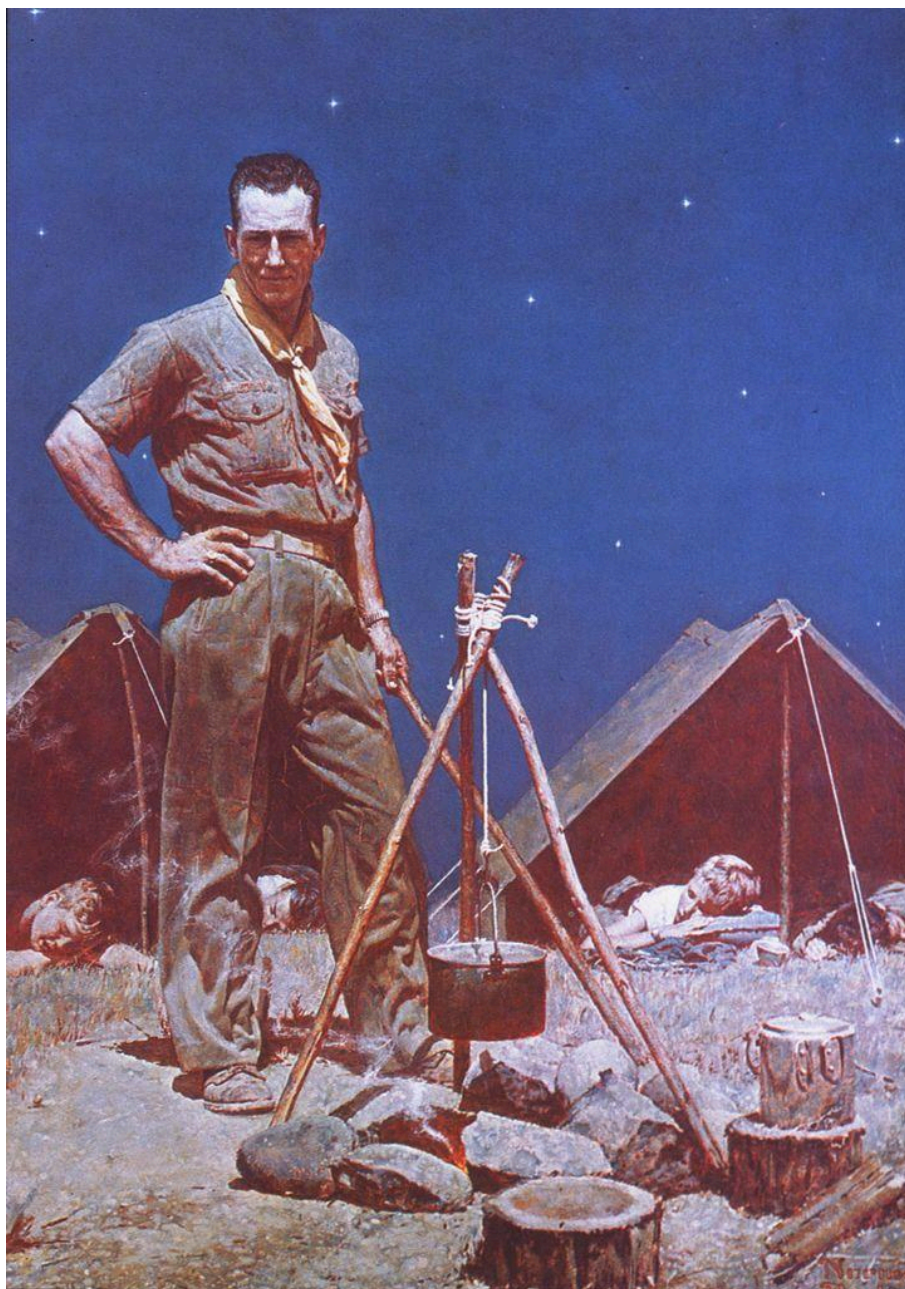
Saying Grace, Norman Rockwell, Cover for *The Saturday Evening Post*, November 24, 1951.
Oil on canvas. 42" x 40"

Rockwell's "Saying Grace" is a picture of one party abiding by their beliefs and acting on it even in public, and civil respect from onlookers. There are two men of about 25-40 years old sharing a table with a woman (perhaps the mother) and a young boy of about 7 years of age. The

setting seems to be set in the morning, as light is streaming into the scene from the large window in which the main figures are sitting in front of. These 4 main figures are sharing a table in a cafe of sorts in the morning. There is what looks like coffee in the table closest to the viewer in the foreground, and a newspaper below a plate. The mother and her son have their heads bowed in prayer of thanksgiving over their meal, while the two men are very blatantly looking at them. The men have expressions that are neutral: neither angry or pleased. They seem to be pondering what the woman and her son are doing. The whole scene is filled with the light that comes from the center window, which comes from the place the viewer is looking straight at. The atmosphere has a sense of lightness due to the way Rockwell painted the light and has a somber-ish tone, which reflects the attitude of the two who are praying. It is very obvious that there are people quite unashamedly looking at them praying. Rockwell makes this gesture obvious as if he is aiming to get the viewer to assess the two parties. One party (the woman and son) are expressing their faith in public, not dramatically, but in the most quiet and assuming manner, while the other party (the two men and other onlookers whom the frame crops most of their face out) are pointedly looking at them. It is a social norm not to stare at people in public, and here, Rockwell is subverting that norm to get the viewer to question what's actually going on. The two men are looking at them with neutral faces with the slightest hint of curiosity. They are also assumingly "expressing" their beliefs – that of respect and curiosity for the beliefs of strangers.

Rockwell painted this in 1951, 6 years after the end of WWII. There was still division across the globe, especially in the Cold War between Russia and the United States, and racism was rampant in the U.S. The painting seems to be a call for civil respect during a time where that was in shortage and not upheld in society. Though the two men might not share the same beliefs as the women and son, they look upon them with respect and even curiosity. In a way, the onlookers "hold space" for the woman and her son. The viewer can "feel" the small risk they are taking of choosing to not suppress their beliefs, as there is a possibility that they could get ridiculed for it. It is almost like Rockwell intentionally puts the gazes of the men and the third man in the left corner on the two figures with bowed heads so that the viewer feels uncomfortable for how they are plainly staring at them praying. The viewer, in a way, stares with the men at the woman and boy, wondering at what the men are wondering about. This painting is a model for Rockwell's contemporary audience, pointing to the larger theme of the need and beauty of civil respect for the times they lived in. It shows that respect for one another in the public space, even if beliefs might differ, is possible.

Scoutmaster, Norman Rockwell, 1956



Scoutmaster, Norman Rockwell, 1956, oil on canvas, 46" x 33"

This picture at first glance has a mystical quality to it due to the depiction of night-time color with the white, almost artificial, gleam of the moonlight shining down on the campsite. The scene is composed of boys shown to be asleep in the background, with their heads poking out of the tent facing the viewer. There is a man standing who is much older and is the "Scoutmaster" of the title of the piece. The viewer sees his face clearly; he is standing in a relaxed position, looking satisfied with the work of the day as the embers of the fire start to die away. The sharp triangular shape of the tents makes a sharp contrast with the deep cobalt blue of the night sky. They

almost look like mountains if one squints their eyes. The triangle shape is repeated in the foreground where three wood sticks are bound together with rope at the top and holds a rope which dangles the pot of liquid or food over the campfire to warm it. There is a slight trail of smoke that drifts upward from a small glow of fire nestled in the pocket of 4 rocks. Rockwell uses a color palette of browns, grays, blues and deep reds. The whole painting is tinted magenta leaning. It gives the picture a quality of being other worldly in a sense, and familiar as the painting contains a lot of ordinary – the ordinary pot, the boys heads on pillows and the scoutmaster standing watchfully which reminds us of the guardian figures of our youth and childhood. This painting is about the boys sleeping safely as the scoutmaster takes a moment at the day's end, while also being about virtues and honor. This is a painting about the safety, pride, and adventure that comprises the life of a scout. The primary way the painting communicates this safety is through the standing figure of the scoutmaster, who is a stand-in figure for the guardian figure or figures that every person can recall from their memory that was that figure for them. The underlying values of the scout program are supported by a glimpse into the thoughts of the master who seems to be equally as happy and proud.

In Paris Parks, Shirley Clarke, 1954



In Paris Parks, Shirley Clarke, 1954, 16mm film transferred to video, 13 min

Clarke's short film is a series of 30-60 seconds of uncut footage, showing a glimpse into the ordinary life of Parisians in 1954 in outdoor parks in Paris, France. The 16mm film has a grainy

texture to it, making it feel as if you could reach out and touch the people in the film. The graininess adds character and a feeling of naturalness, un-editiveness and charm to the piece. The people in the film are ordinary people. They are simply the people that existed at that time when Clarke opened her camera and started recording. It starts with tracking a girl rolling a hoola-hoop down the paved streets and criss crossing between the trees in the park. It transitions to viewing a dad moving a carved horse out of the shed. Scenes of boys feeding bears and children playing on the merry go round horses are shown. The perspective of the artist becomes a perspective through which the viewer sees through to arrive at their own observations. The artist's perspective acts as a framework or lens through which the viewer sees. I found myself thinking less about trying to figure out what the artist is trying to say, and thinking more about trying to figure out what the people in the film were feeling and thinking, and about the differences between life in 1954 Paris and the contemporary world of 2025 in which I was living in. The film captures the daily life of Parisians, and is a snapshot of history. It is also an invitation to simply see what's there. The uncut footage of very ordinary events allows this to happen. The viewer is able to let down their guard when they realize what the subject matter of the piece is. The location: outdoor parks, is generally considered to be a low-stress environment of relaxation and serenity. This piece is contrary to what most art tries to do. A lot of art tries to prove something or do something. This piece seems to just exist and the viewer is treated as someone who is invited to look. There isn't a conceptual rigor to the piece in the sense of following the traditional model of art, that being art seeking to represent or communicate something and the viewer is on the receiving end of the message and needs to decode the meaning. This 13 minute film presents itself as a world that viewers are invited into – a world where the viewer is free to see whatever they want to see, and have their own thoughts. Clarke creates the space for the viewer to move at their own pace within the framework she has set up. Seeing this piece from post-modern 2025, where attention spans are sliced into millions of pieces, primarily due to social media, and incessant advertisements everywhere, was a breath of fresh air. The uncut segments were not excessively long, but long enough to where the viewer is interested in what is happening, has seen enough of that scene, absorbed it and is ready to move on to the next. It felt like a well-paced multi-course meal that leaves you feeling lighter than you were when you first started.

Campbell's Soup Cans, Andy Warhol, 1962



Campbell's Soup Cans, Andy Warhol, 1962, acrylic with metal enamel paint on canvas. Each canvas 20" x 16". Overall installation with 3" between each panel is 97" H x 163" W

This series of 32 panels, stretches the quotidian into another dimension. There are 32 panels of Campbell's soups, though each has a different name. For example, there is "Old fashioned Tomato Rice soup" and the classic "Chicken Noodle soup". There is both uniformity and variety.

Warhol used a projector to project the image onto the canvas, drew the outlines and filled it in with acrylic paint. The object is rendered to be a flat image, not having spatial depth rendered in its form. The exact image is repeated across 32 canvases. The repetition of the can and logo, represents a repeatable process – a nod to the mass production of goods that came with the new technology of industrialization, and the making of conventions and standards. The convention expressed in this set of panels is how the making of the Soup Cans is all done by manufacturing complex with machines, resulting in a consistency from one can to the next. The standards the series alludes to would be the specific dimensions of the can, the specific red of the Campbell's Company, and the composition of elements on the packaging.

The repetition across the cans forces the viewer to see all the panels as one. There is an iconicism to the flat color rendering and bright red against the white background. The pieces feel typographical from the script of the logo to the sans serif of "CONDENSED", to the sans serif name of the flavor and consistent "SOUP" across all cans. The consistency allows the objects to both act as one and be unique as they are different by their unique flavor.

A Pair of Kings, Larry Rivers, 1978



A Pair of Kings, Larry Rivers, pastel and graphite on paper, 27 1/4 x 28 3/4 in.

There are five playing cards depicted in this piece: a 9 of clubs, Jack of hearts, Ace of clubs, King of spades, and King of diamonds. There is a smearing effect on the cards, having an effect that makes the cards feel more dynamic. The drawing of the letters and shapes, and characters represented in the Jack and two Kings are drawn precisely and read as a realistic representation of what one would see in a normal playing card. Rivers uses pastel and graphite – two mediums that can be smeared or smudged. Rivers chooses to smear the identifier portion of the card at the upper left and bottom right, and a little of the King of diamond's clothing and face and the Jack of Hearts clothing into the area outside his "picture frame". Precise lines are

what is expected because playing cards were mass-produced. The effect of the smearing and slight deviation from the original form (as seen in the K of diamond's upside down face) makes the Kings shown in the cards feel alive, in a sense. The smearing extends the form into the outer edges of the card, and adds visual movement. They are no longer still images printed on a card, but have "breath" in them. The smearing also activates those once untouched places of the card. Rivers does the same thing with the shadow (drawn with graphite) on the borders of the cards. The smearing and sketchy pencil lines activate those regions of the page creating visual interest, and contributing to the conceptual meaning of bringing a sense of life and individuality to these once mechanically produced "characters". By characters, I mean the figures represented by the cards. Rivers plays with the fact that there is a face and a body of the King and Jack. They were once all the same looking, and Rivers alters that through the slight deviation from the original and his use of smearing and smudging effects to add visual interest, pulling the character out of the box, proposing questions that relate to individuality and life within a setting of conformity and mass-production.

Untitled (Three Ice Creams), Wayne Thiebaud, 1964



Untitled (Three Ice Creams), 1964, pastel and graphite, 9 1/4 x 12 1/4 in

There are three ice cream cones with big dollops of pinkish purple ice cream on top of each, rendered to the viewer at an angle slightly below eye level. The ice cream cones have a glow, created through Thiebaud's use of value and saturated hues. The way each cone is rendered is consistent with how light would hit these objects in reality. Thiebaud, however, slightly varies the way the values from one cone to another are rendered. There is a levity and playfulness, created through the variation in placement of certain values within the form, and vibrant and diverse choice of hues within the outlines and shadows. The cones are placed in holes to hold them upright, and set against a yellowish cream color tinted with blue to make a light greenish yellow. The local color of a cone is yellowish brown. Here, Thiebaud uses a light value of yellowish orange (more saturated than the realistic cone), uses a strong chroma of orange in the shadows along with red, a strong chroma of ultramarine/cobalt blue and a light value of blueish yellow on the shadow side farthest from the light source coming in from the right front, as a rim light. The magenta used in the color in the ice cream is vibrant and undulled (not mixed much with its complementary color). The lines of the counter's backside contains colors with strong chroma again: a neon green, a thin line of the magenta color of the ice cream, and purplish blue found in the shadow side of the ice cream and front facing side of the counter. The front of the counter is composed of a darker value of red to accentuate the edge, a purplish blue to represent the side, and a warm black to give an outline definition to the bottom edge. He uses white tinted slightly very slightly with yellow and blue to depict the top face of the counter. There are also light strokes of orange around the ice cream, making them look like they are vibrating.

Thiebaud's three ice cream cones come across as playful and express the delight one might feel when eating ice cream on a sunny day like the one in Thiebaud's picture. The saturated yellows and pinks are tempered by the blue tinting of the yellows, resulting in a feeling that captures both warmth and coolness – both of which are found in ice cream and the environment in which it's usually eaten in. The fact that the cones are not rendered to be perfectly realistic is what gives them their charm. By letting the sketchiness of the pastel strokes show, Thiebaud creates a sense of liveliness, showing the viewer a fresh way of seeing these ice creams and their cones.

What Is Missing?, Maya Lin, 2007-present (ongoing)

<https://www.whatismissing.org/>

What is missing is a multi-sited project that shows the ecological changes the planet has gone through over the years. Here is how the website describes the project: "What Is Missing? is a multi-sited memorial to the planet created by Maya Lin to raise awareness through science-based artworks about the present sixth mass extinction of species, connect this loss of species to habitat degradation and loss, and emphasize that by protecting and restoring habitat, we can both reduce carbon emissions and protect species."

I'm going to be focusing on analyzing the website portion of the project. When one enters the home page of the site, a pre-recorded soundscape of a natural environment starts playing. The audio keeps going as a viewer explores the site. Each soundscape audio is played for about 1 minute. The sound adds an immersive dimension, making the viewer feel like they are within a wild landscape. These sounds could be new to one who lives in the city, being not accustomed to hearing natural environments in high detail. There are 5 paths a viewer can click into: "About", "Explore", "Solutions", "What if", and "Share a memory". For each path, there is a consistent animation for the transition from the choose a path page to the page the visitor clicks into. The globe/earth which spins slowly becomes a flat circle with a preset image, and that image disperses back to a globe with more clickable hyperlinks in the form of icons to other pages. That next page has more hyperlinks. When the viewer clicks into one of these, the dots on the globe disperse into a view of the earth in a rectangle view. In "About": the site gives an overview of what it is, and past milestone projects they have accomplished. There are a few videos. The "Explore" section allows the viewer to discover the ecological histories and stories of former abundance and recovery. The "Solutions" section gives viewers information through statistics and data on what had been right in the past and presents research that proposes suggestions that address these problems. The What if section poses What if... questions. Each question has its own page which provides data of what is currently happening and what would happen if adjustments by individuals or groups of people were made. Some of them are thought experiments such as: "What if we rethought the human footprint?", and others are still in the vein of a thought experiment but are more practical such as, "What if we rethought how we spend our money", or "What if we ate less meat?". The "Share a memory" section has written out memories submitted by the general public. They give insight on a memory of an individual's experience on a certain thing they've witnessed in their life that has changed over time or has gone missing in today's world.

This website is something that presents history and memory, evokes thought, inspires action, poses questions, suggests potential solutions, and ultimately presents new ways of looking at the current health of our planet. The site seems to be aiming to inform people about the climate situation, and act as a hub of which catalogs histories and presents various dynamics and variables within our planet. The animation allows the site to become a "space" where visitors can think, learn and be moved to work toward small or large actions that could change the trajectory of the climate crisis by individual people and our collective humanity choosing to do things differently.

New York City Trip, October 9-11

I sit here typing, the dirt from the history lined streets of new york city still on my shoes. We walked a lot during our well spent three days. Two of them were full days. New York City has so much history in it which one can actually feel and sense through the soles of their feet. The compression of the city – narrow streets, tall buildings, ultra efficient but well-worn underground subway, the multitude of diverse faces that criss-cross throughout every large and small space – is what gives it a sense of dynamism and life that isn't found in any other place. I found both

energy and comfort in walking in the city with our group of 12. I feel that I've gained more respect and appreciation for my art major peers after the time spent together. It is special to get to basically spend 12-13 hours together each day for 3 days. There was much talking, laughter and general pleasant chatter – the kind that just cheers the heart and lifts the soul. We literally floated through New York City. Our feet averaged about 20,000 steps every day in 9.4 miles of walking.

The subway

The New York City subway is an incredible system that showcases engineering, aesthetics, and practical functionality at their best. Le Corbusier is a main figure in modern architecture. The “thesis”, if you will, of Modern Architecture is that it seeks a break from past expressions of style and seeks a new way of building. This led them to an approach to architecture that is centered around functionality. Specifically, buildings built in the Modern Architecture movement emphasized efficiency and functionality of the interior. The exterior's appearance should be a natural extension or expression of the interior, determined by how the interior is arranged. The New York City subway system has this element of optimal functionality. The trains need to get people from place to place every day. The material of the train is selected to optimize for lightness, and durability. The maps have to be completely functional. The trick is however, that the functionality is determined by how well it comes across; the aesthetic choices need to serve the readability of the diagram. The LED displays need to communicate clearly and be effective so that someone looking at it on a time crunch will know exactly where they are at and how many stops until when they get off.

3 project proposals, October 21

Topics

1. Ecology and the Environment
2. Technology
3. Everyday Life

Forest soundscape

Ecology and the Environment

A pure soundscape of a natural environment is luxury for a city-dweller. The noise of cars, airplanes, helicopters, and industrial complexes could be thought of as pollutants to the natural soundscape of a nearby natural ecosystem. This piece ultimately attunes visitors toward sounds that do not come from anything that is man-made. It is meant to be a piece that sits in contrast to the city-soundscape, which city-dwellers have become accustomed to.

I am going to use a zoom recorder (placed on a tripod) and a camera (placed on a tripod) to capture visual and audio footage of a forest in Nashville. The final piece will be a 15-20 minute film composed of a series of 45-60 second uncut footage. The goal is to install it in a dedicated room. The piece is ultimately about creating a space for visitors to notice details through both

sight and sound. Some video segments might focus on a particular moving subject and some might just display the landscape. The audio will be amplified on stereo speakers so the visitor feels like they are in the forest.

Mechanical vs. screen based objects

Technology

This piece will be a poster series depicting analog objects. They will have text that is related to the object itself, or ideas about it. The posters will be treated with a texturing effect, like halftoning. The effect draws attention to the materiality of these objects and associates them with methods of print production used in previous eras.

Conceptually, the series of posters aims to draw attention to the tactility of “analog” technology. It suggests that the relationship people had to these objects was through understanding how they worked mechanically. Subjects will range from objects that do not have a screen and technology that do not. Screens are closely linked to the communication of messages in 2025. What does it mean for one to engage with a piece of technology that does not have a screen, but instead has buttons or knobs? The project proposes that screens cause a disconnect from a user’s physical environment, whereas a lack of a screen in analog technology can enable further engagement with a user’s physical environment. Technology that lacks screens also results in a different kind of relationship between user and object. To know how it is used, non-screen technology forces the user to understand the object at a mechanical level.

Ingredients

Everyday Life

This piece will be made of illustrations of ingredients, stacked on top of each other in separate rows. The illustrations will be printed with the risograph. The whole wall will contain illustrations of the ingredients of a certain food. Each row will be the same ingredient, and each successive layer will be the ingredient that one would bring in next in the process of making the food. The stacked rows of prints show when an ingredient was used and in what sequence they were brought in. The topmost row will be prints of the food the ingredients combine to become. The layering of the ingredients has resonances to stratigraphy, or the study of earth’s layers in archaeology. By excavating and identifying the distinct layers, archaeologists can create a timeline. Another object the layers resonate with is a building. Multi-level buildings are made of layers, which are the floors of the building. The temporality and chronology of both strata and building are represented through the layering visual, and the metaphors serve to suggest other ways of looking at the process of making a food.

As of now, the prints will be put in a grid. Alternatives for the arrangement of the prints, such as offsetting the vertical alignment of pieces in one row from the next, will be considered.

Events outside of Class

October 3

Non-aligned panel discussion with Claudia Gastrow, Jelica Jovanović, Vladimir Kulić, Vesna Pavlović, Fredo Rivera, and Martino Sterli

This panel consisted of the people that worked on the exhibition titled “Prefabricating Solidarity: IMS-Žeželj Between Yugoslavia, Cuba, and Angola”. This was a research project that shows the triangle of solidarity between Cuba, Angola, and Yugoslavia in the 1970s regarding sharing pre-fabricating building technology. The concrete skeleton building technology developed in Yugoslavia was not simply exported to Cuba and Angola, but shared in a collaborative way, with each country adapting it to fit their regional context/needs. It demonstrates a period in history where the traditional colonial flow (circulation of building technology and materials from a colonial power to a colonized country) toward a “triangle of solidarity”. Through photographs of the buildings, panels detailing the engineering and structure of the building, panels presenting on the historical context as well as videos that show interviews, this exhibition shows how this circulation of new technology physically expressed a collaborative dynamic between 3 countries in the post colonial development context – 2 independent countries (Yugoslavia and Cuba) and 1 about-to-be-independent country (Angola). The exhibition sets this historical example as a contrast to what happened in the colonial contexts, where building technology circulation was from central power to a periphery country. The exhibition highlights an often overlooked collaboration.

October 31

Nashville Symphony at the Schermerhorn: Star Wars: Episode IV - A New Hope screening with orchestra playing the film score.

I attended this concert in service of the research I’m doing for our team’s restroom installation. Because we are drawing extensively from Star Wars – doing an adaptation on its intro crawl, and using the connotations of the movie being a fantasy story to help communicate our message – I wanted to attend this performance to look at the movie in a context where the soundtrack is played live and watching it with other people. The idea of a group of people being in the same place but having similar and different experiences at the same time, I would argue, is a feature of the arts. In these contexts, people are invited to gather together to experience, learn, hear, or feel things collectively. Yet, no two individuals’ experiences will be exactly the same. Our bathroom project’s premise is that stories can be a mirror to ourselves and society. They are worlds we enter to learn and feel, and leave often with new perspectives of things. The added layer of dimension was the Nashville Symphony orchestra playing the music to the entire 2 hour film. It was inspiring to see the musicians on stage with their music illuminated by stand lights and the conductor making sure they are aligned to the scene on the big screen. The conductor had a computer on his stand with cues that would tell him when to prepare the orchestra to play and where the beats/measures are. There were lines that would move across

from the left side of the screen to the right side, each one demonstrating the length of the beat in the music. It is inspiring to see musicians doing their work in contributing to the creation of this experience for the audience. It made me remember that each note of the music was written down by John Williams, and how each note actively contributes something to the feel of each scene. The music was very well done; the live component gave the film a tangible and visceral quality to it while simultaneously infusing seamlessly with the visuals. This concert experience was helpful for thinking further about what we want the visitor to feel upon entering and being in the restroom installation space, and how we can design the elements in that space to support that set of feelings.

December 6

Nashville Symphony at the Schermerhorn: Home Alone screening with orchestra playing the film score.

I attended this event as I am interested in seeing how different artistic experiences are created and produced for an audience (the general public). Home Alone is a popular film that many in the audience have likely seen. The orchestra playing the film score is a main draw for people. The attendance was good. In this setting, the music quite literally, “comes off the screen” and is created live. Home Alone needed a director, producer, cast...etc. The visuals are filmed and edited. John Williams was called 3 weeks before the deadline to compose the music because the original person would not be able to finish it on time. I find the translation of recorded music to live music for a film interesting. The arts is something that allows people to experience something they’ve experienced elsewhere anew.

Assistantship

October 1

I worked with Sarah Dunham on Vesna’s Woven Wind book. The three hour allotment was split into two 1.5 hour blocks. In our first session, we made a presentation that consisted of displaying a range of book sizes to present to Vesna as a way to start the conversation about determining what size the Woven Wind book will eventually be. We looked through the books Vesna brought in, selected 3 books which show a range of sizes, took photos of both the cover and a spread of the inside. Having an element that was consistent across the photos is a crucial component to help with seeing scale and comparing between book sizes. In this case, it was my left hand which held the book in each photo. We put the photos into an InDesign presentation: 1 slide with all three covers on the page, and 3 more slides showing the inside spread (1 slide for each book). This was our work for the first 1.5 hours. Additionally, we talked about file management and naming conventions. Every time someone completes work on a file and is ready to share or pass it on, it will be titled using the naming convention: YYMMDD Title (year,

month, day). For example, if a file for this project was saved on October 25, 2025, it would be titled: 251025 Woven Wind.

October 20

The second 1.5 hour was spent learning about how the internal elements of a book are structured and started work on arranging the table of contents Vesna gave us. Sarah first talked about the idea that a book's structure is something that can help one understand the meaning of the book's contents better and could act as a metaphor for themes of the content. We talked about breaking from the conventions of how a book is typically structured, and to instead think about how the structure can work in relation to the ideas of the Woven Wind project. Sarah showed precedents for ways designers have used structure creatively. She showed a presentation from her previous work with a project with the Brooklyn Public Library, where there was a page that showed the structure of the book with its pages expanded like an accordion. Sarah copied that page of the presentation from the original InDesign file and put it into the Woven Wind file we were working on. We reviewed edits to be made from last session's work and I started experimenting with creating arrangements of the content.

Oral Presentation

[Link to my oral presentation](#)

Bio (draft)

Dorothy Chen is a 4th year undergraduate student at Vanderbilt. She weaves together her interests which range from music, engineering, fine art, and graphic design. Her work seeks to find a way to express a fusion between aesthetics and functionality and the various ways aesthetics and functionality is expressed in designed objects.

Statement (draft)

The goal of my work is to reattune people to engage with their physical space as an embodied person through showing objects which asks the viewer to see it in a certain way, usually using more than one sense (sight and sound, smell and sound, touch and sound..etc). More specifically, I propose seeing the objects not only as utilitarian, but as "living things" because they have a place and role within history. If objects are alive, that changes how we see and engage in our physical world. I seek to reimagine how we can see the material world around us, not only in a utilitarian manner. One could say that the work critiques the utilitarianism of the modern world, and seeks another way to think about functionality.

DOROTHY CHEN

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EDUCATION

Vanderbilt University, College of Arts and Science

Nashville, TN

Bachelor of Arts: Art

May 2026

Minor: Digital Fabrication

Relevant Coursework: Graphic Design, Drawing II, Contemporary Issues in Museums, Rapid Prototyping, Additive Manufacturing

DESIGN EXPERIENCE

Arrowz

Nashville, TN

Brand Designer

Jan. 2025 - present

- Pioneering and co-leading the UI/UX design of a Vanderbilt student start-up journaling and structured reasoning app, which launched in February 2025.
- Evaluating 15+ user interviews, identifying user pain points and integrating new updates to enhance user experience.

Synesis, Vanderbilt University

Nashville, TN

Lead Website Designer

Sept. 2024 - present

- Re-designed website's information architecture, creating tags for each article published on the website, sorting them, and adding visual hierarchy, improving the navigation experience of 6,000+ users that engaged with the site since changes were made.
- Developed Instagram post templates on Canva, collaborating with the marketing team to reach up to 12,000+ content views a month, and 5,000+ per month consistently.

The Wond'ry, Vanderbilt University

Nashville, TN

Innovation and Design Strategy Intern

Jun. - Aug. 2024

- Developed a 94 page "Design Field Guide" on Adobe InDesign for the Wond'ry's Innovation Fellowship which contains design tools, frameworks of design, and design workflows, acting as a design process reference guide for each semester's cohort.

The Wond'ry, Vanderbilt University

Nashville, TN

UX Studio Designer

Aug. 2023 – Apr. 2024

- Designed mock digital products, developing skills such as user research, identifying pain points, creating wireframes, prototyping, usability testing, creating high fidelity prototypes, and designing and implementing new solutions, culminating in a presentation of a proposed app redesign of the myNissan app to Nissan UX designers and stakeholders.

LEADERSHIP & EXTRACURRICULARS

Grant, Tennessee Arts Commission

Nashville, TN

Collaboration with Professor Angus Galloway and Professor Chris Vanags

Sept. 2024 - present

- Facilitating community engagement with art and the natural world through the form of half day workshops in four Metro Nashville parks, using problem solving and creative imagination to find ways to bridge art, the environment, and culture.

Vanderbilt Commodore Orchestra

Nashville TN

Violinist

Aug. 2023 - present

- Perform advanced symphonic repertoire as a member of 100+ students in fully student-run university orchestra
- Utilize active listening, leadership, and verbal communication skills to solve technical problems and decide on musical interpretation as a violin section.

HONORS & AWARDS

Poetry Society of Tennessee

Feb. 2025

Illustration chosen for the cover art of the Fall 2025 "Tennessee Voices" Anthology

SKILLS

Software: Adobe InDesign, Photoshop, Illustrator, Lightroom, Canva, Autodesk Fusion 360 (CAD), Figma

Skills: Publication Design, Visual Design, Typesetting, 3-D Modeling, User Experience, Communication, Organization, Adaptability

Interests: creative problem solving, editorial magazines, performing arts, art and culture