

Mediaworks Fall '04 Daily Sketch Journal

This assignment has two purposes. One is to provide an opportunity for you to develop confidence in drawing so that, sketching out an idea or something interesting that you've seen becomes as easy as writing your name. Or, to expand on Scott McCloud in *Understanding Comics*, a drawing tool as you practice with it, crosses from its place in the detached physical world to become an extension of yourself. The other purpose is to give you a space in which to experiment with images and their possible meanings as you complete a series of directed exercises. This will aid you in developing a personal vocabulary of visual signs as you expand or co-opt the meanings of pre-existing signs in the culture at large. This part of the assignment is based on various concepts described by McCloud, so you'll need to read the chapters cited in each week's exercise before doing it. The sketchbook is also a place in which you can do workshop warm-ups and assignments, but these are to be done in addition to your own daily drawing practice.

Sketchbooks will be collected once at mid-quarter and again at the end of the quarter by your workshop faculty. Credit for sketchbooks will be based on diligent daily practice and the completion of Part 2. Evaluation will be based on experimentation with a variety of image making tools and techniques and evidence that you explored meaning through image manipulation.

Part 1: Self-Paced Daily Sketch Practice

Guidelines:

- Carry a medium sized (approx. 9" x12") spiral bound sketchbook with you wherever you go, and in it record images from the world around you. (Depending on how you work, you may need more than one sketchbook to get you through the quarter.) **Put your name and contact info on the outside cover of the sketch book.**
- At least six days a week make drawings based on signs and symbols you see, and the objects and beings you encounter. Play with making new signs/symbols from the latter. Do a few drawings every day. **Date each day's work.**
- Explore a variety of media, including 2B, 4B and 6B pencils, sign pen, brush pens and collage.
- Each drawing does not need to be on a separate page, but be conscious of how the images relate to each other on the page and whether or not you've given each one enough space. Remember, meanings change according to context.
- About once every two weeks, look back through previous pages and incorporate some of the older images into new sketches by redrawing them in different ways, recombining aspects of them or using different drawing tools to see how that changes them. Mix and match images to see what new meanings they might suggest.
- Approach your drawing as experiments in the creation of signs and exploring the boundaries between denotative and connotative meanings. Are you drawing something as you see it (in a literal, descriptive way), or transforming the object so that it connotes other more abstract meanings?

Part 2: Directed Exercises based on *Understanding Comics*:

Week 2 sketchbook assignment (do one a day): Review Intro-Ch. 2 of *Understanding Comics*

1. Faces: Using basic shapes, create two pages of as many different faces as you can.
2. Abstraction: Using a variety of drawing tools, do a drawing that means nothing but itself (in other words, it's only references are the picture plane, texture, color, density, edges, etc).
3. Collect a range of print images (cut them out, scan and print, or trace them) that exemplify the Reality/Meaning/Picture Plane diagram on pages 51-52, and construct your own drawn/collage version of the triangle.

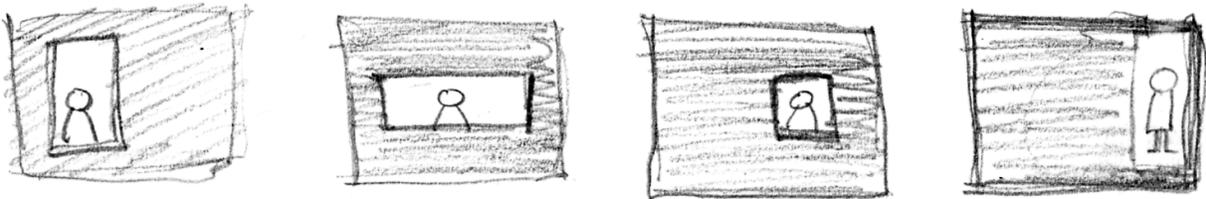
Week 3 sketchbook assignment (do one a day): Read Ch. 3 of *Understanding Comics*

1. Incomplete drawings: Find three logos. On a blank piece of paper, trace lines over part of one of the logos, leaving some of it blank. Look at the tracing and think about whether it's easier or harder to read than the original logo, what qualities of meaning have been added or subtracted. Do another tracing of the same image, but leave out different parts, or use different media. Do a tracing that is simply the outline of the image. Repeat this for the other two logos, using different drawing tools and/or approaches to tracing the logo. Finally, do freehand drawings of each of the logos using at least two different drawing tools for each.
2. Juxtaposition: sketch/collage three pairs of juxtapositions (use an assortment of found images and ones you draw yourself). After doing this, write a sentence or two about the meanings these pairs suggest to you.
3. Create an "establishing shot" of an environment by drawing three or more panels as McCloud has done on p. 88. Choose some place simple, think about what objects in the environment signify the sort of place it is.

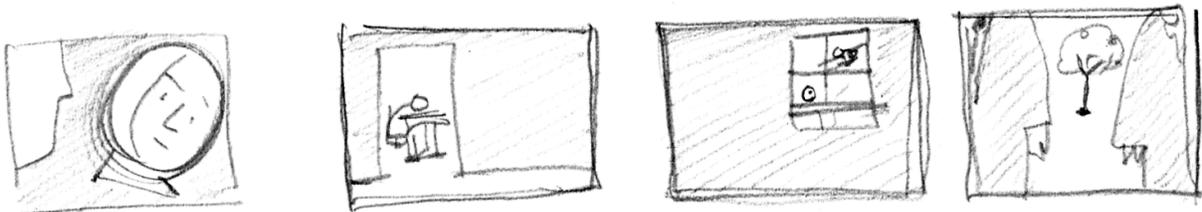
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Week 5 sketchbook assignment: Read Ch. 4 of Understanding Comics, Time Frames, and do at least one of the following exercises:

1. In this exercise, you will play with different ways to compose a frame. On four separate pages, draw 1 frame each that is video aspect ratio, measuring 3" x 4". These four frames are not meant to be read as a sequence, but as individual drawings. In the first frame redraw an object or being from a previous page in your sketchbook. In the second panel, draw the same image, but place it in a different position in the frame. If you want, you can rotate it, you can crop it, you can scale it or reverse it, or any combination of those things. Create different compositions of the same image for frames 3 and 4.
2. Please refer to pp. 100-101. In this exercise you will draw a sequence expressing the passage of time (remember that you can use different panel shapes and sizes to emphasize duration). First draw a sequence using the following narrative: A meets B, B does C, two minutes later D happens. A and B are objects or beings and C and D are actions, movements or events. Second, draw a sequence using this narrative: A meets B, B does C, ten years later D happens. A, B, C and D can be the same as they were in your first sequence.
3. **Do both A & B.** Please refer to p. 98, where McCloud discusses the frame as icon. In this exercise you will play with different size and shape panels within the standard video format frame, using them to create a sequence. **A.** On a blank page, draw a series of 4 frames that are video aspect ratio, measuring 3" x 4". In the first frame, draw a panel like one of the simpler ones McCloud shows on the bottom of p. 99. Repeat this in each of the following frames, using panels of different size or shape, in different places in the frames. Draw a simple image in the panel of first frame. Redraw the same image in each of the panels of the remaining frames. Example:



B. Draw a new series of video aspect ratio frames, but this time, instead of drawing a panel within each frame, draw an object or objects that could serve the function of a panel by framing an image. Example:

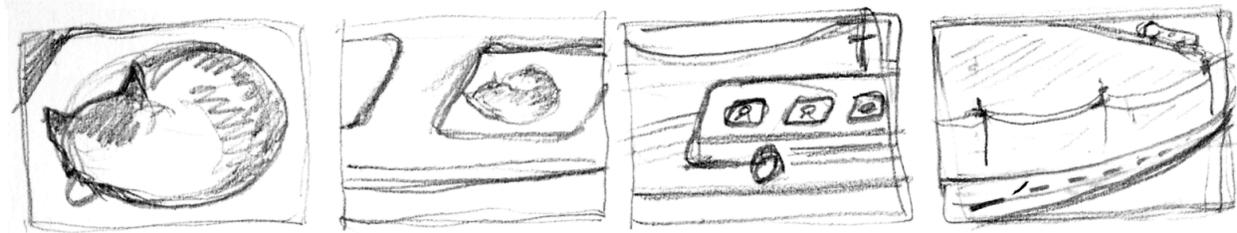


Week 6: Read Ch. 5, *Living in Line*, and do one of the following a day:

1. Vocabulary of marks: Note McCloud's examples on pp 118-120, develop your own approach to express the feelings he shows in the examples. Make a few pages of sketches that use a variety of marks to express the different feelings. Use different drawing tools to make the marks. (You can also refer to pp 124-126 for inspiration).
2. Choose one of your simpler drawings from Part 1 of the sketch journal assignment. Redraw it 3 times. Each time, use a different kind of line. Write a sentence or two about how the different line affects the image.
3. Go back to the page of faces you did for Ch. 2. Choose one face and redraw it several times on a new page. Change the feeling that each face expresses by adding one drawn element. (see pp. 130-131)

Week 7: Read Ch. 6, *Show and Tell*, and do the following:

On a blank page, draw a series of 4 frames that are video aspect ratio (approx. 3:4). In the first frame, redraw an image from a previous page in your sketchbook so it fills the frame. In the second frame, "dolly out" (as if the camera were on wheels and you were moving it away from the object) to reveal additional imagery. Repeat this process for the third and fourth frames so that by the fourth frame you have completely changed the context of the original image. Example:



Week 8: Read Ch. 7, *6 Steps*, and Ch. 8, *Color*, do the following:

1. Vocabulary of color: Refer to the drawings you did for Vocabulary of Marks in Ch. 5. Redraw them using color to enhance the feelings you intended. Then redraw them again using colors that seem to contradict the feelings you intended.
2. Another one of the exercises from Week 4.

Week 9: Read Ch. 9 and do a short comic strip about some aspect of your Thanksgiving break.