2005

Experiencing Music

Michael Alan Gray

Virginia Commonwealth University

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarscompass.vcu.edu/etd

Part of the Art and Design Commons

© The Author

Downloaded from https://scholarscompass.vcu.edu/etd/1307

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate School at VCU Scholars Compass. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of VCU Scholars Compass. For more information, please contact libcompass@vcu.edu.
EXPERIENCING MUSIC

Submitted to the faculty of the School of the Arts at Virginia Commonwealth University, in partial fulfillment for the requirements for the degree of Master of Fine Arts in Visual Communications.

Michael A. Gray
BACHELOR OF FINE ARTS GRAPHIC DESIGN 1999
Ohio University — Athens
Athens, Ohio

MATT WOOLMAN ADVISOR / ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR / COMMUNICATION ARTS & DESIGN

ROY MCKELVEY ADVISOR 2 / ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR / COMMUNICATION ARTS & DESIGN

SANDRA WHEELER READER / ASSISTANT PROFESSOR / COMMUNICATION ARTS & DESIGN

JOSEPH SEIPEL ASSOCIATE DEAN / DIRECTOR OF GRADUATE STUDIES / SCHOOL OF THE ARTS

DR. RICHARD TOSCAN DEAN / SCHOOL OF THE ARTS

DR. F. DOUGLAS BOUDINOT SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES

MAY 2005
EXPERIENCING MUSIC
MICHAEL GRAY
I am exploring the way music alters or enhances the perception of our environment. This creative project allows me to explore and visualize several issues that intrigue me: music (sound), emotion, and visual imagery (film). My goal in developing this topic is to allow others to have an experience related to sound and image, where image is altered and enhanced by the use of music.
MUSIC HAS ALWAYS BEEN AN INTEGRAL PART OF MY LIFE — NOT THE CREATION OF MUSIC, OR THE INTERPRETATION OF IT BEYOND ITS FACE VALUE — BUT THE EXPERIENCE OF MUSIC.

As a child in 1978, my first memory of music was going into my sister’s room, opening the powder blue 45 case, and pulling out the blue sleeve with a giant yellow duck on it. Yes, my first musical memory belongs to DISCO DUCK, but words cannot describe how much I loved this record that brought me so much joy! I remember the sound of the needle as it started circling the vinyl, the way the paper sleeve felt, the image of the Brady Bunch playing on the TV in the background, the blue plush carpet I was sitting on. DISCO DUCK was my first introduction to how music could affect my emotions, and how such a simple beat could bring me so much comfort.

I also have strong memories of the very first 45 that entered my personal music collection in 1980. It stands out because it was the very first piece of recorded music that was truly my own. After nagging my mother for what seemed an eternity, I finally convinced her to purchase Madonna’s LIKE A VIRGIN. As with DISCO DUCK, I still remember how I couldn’t wait to put the needle on to the record. I would experiment and turn the volume down so that I could still hear the words faintly emanating from the spinning vinyl. The song may have been only three minutes, but those were some of the best minutes in my memory. From that point on, I realized that I had an interesting relationship with music. It became my friend, my inspiration, my happiness and my sadness. It became something that I could enjoy on my own, and it could help me through my solitude.

Growing up as a child with only three TV stations and no MTV (Music Television), the only images I had of these artists were the ones I saw in magazines and on entertainment programs. I eventually discovered FRIDAY NIGHT VIDEOS, a TV program that became my visual outlet for all things musical. Once I discovered the music video, it allowed me to change my perception. I imagined myself in the video, being one of the performers. The visuals became so strong that I would automatically associate the video with the song and could recall precisely every beat, every scene, and how they correlated. I wanted to experience the music on a larger scale.

MUSIC HAS ALWAYS BEEN AN INTEGRAL PART OF MY LIFE — NOT THE CREATION OF MUSIC, OR THE INTERPRETATION OF IT BEYOND ITS FACE VALUE — BUT THE EXPERIENCE OF MUSIC.
As I grew older, my taste in music shifted, but the primary reason for enjoying it never did. I was not what you would consider to be a happy child, and my childhood was not the most pleasant time. The one thing I always knew was that if I needed to feel better, I could lock myself in my room and hear something happy. If I needed to cry, I could do that as well. The sound allowed me to transport myself away from my immediate situation, and into a completely different mental environment.

I later expanded upon my childhood relationship to music. A few years ago I began enacting rituals towards music selection that I would use to determine my emotional outlook on a daily basis. I acquired a first-generation Rio MP3 player and realized that the music combinations were endless. By allowing a user to convert traditional CDs to digital audio MP3 files, users were no longer forced to listen to the work of only one artist. They could listen to songs by artist, or by genre in their library in any configuration of play. And so the MP3 revolution began to drastically change the face of how our culture interacts with music, and how I personally interact with it as well.

With my Rio I began sorting my songs into emotional categories, and I would decide the night before what type of journey I would like to experience the next day. I would think carefully about things such as weather, and what was required of me. If it was going to be a rainy day, did I want to feel mellow? Or, did I want to feel invigorated? Was I going to the gym after work? If so, I would have to consider what music I would need that was high in energy. Or maybe it was a grab-bag emotional day: one where I would just rely on the randomness of combining different tracks.

It is now possible to customize our listening options to contain 5,000 or 10,000 songs. The possibilities for limitless experiences are obtainable. Providing enough songs to fill an entire month without ever listening to the same song twice creates the possibility of entirely different experiences for the listener.
THE EVOLUTION OF RECORDED MUSIC

In 1948, radio became a fixture in nearly every home in America, and allowed music to become much more portable than it had ever been before. The trend toward portability continued, and took a drastic change in 1979, when Sony introduced the WALKMAN. The WALKMAN allowed for the ultimate singular experience of music: portability and isolation.

How we technically experience music has changed drastically over the past 125 years. However, recorded music is still very much in its infancy.

Previous to Edison's invention of the phonograph in 1887, the only way one could experience music was in the public arena. Music was a luxury, and its creators were seen as talented artists interpreting sound to the masses. Music was only heard in public venues, such as churches and concert halls. With Edison's invention, music was taken from solely the public sphere and brought into the private domain of our homes.
In Herbert Zettl’s book, SIGHT SOUND MOTION: APPLIED MEDIA AESTHETICS, sound is explained as having five basic functions: information, outer orientation, inner orientation, energy, and structure. These basic functions are imperative in my study. They define how we use sound as a means for communication, but also as a means for direction and balance within our lives. Sound as a principle allows us to see the world in terms of rhythm, composition, and structure.

Zettl discusses the correlation between sound and image, stating, “Sound establishes or supplements the rhythmic structure or the visual vector structure of the screen event. When sound and picture rhythms parallel each other, the total structure becomes unified and stable. However, if the beat becomes too regular for a period of time it can make the total rhythm structure become monotonous and boring. The juxtaposing of fast and slow video and rhythms will not impair the communicative aspect of a piece? It seems as though this theory is not very refined.

For example, depending upon the musical selection and the contrast between image pacing I feel the opposite effect could be met. Sound, as a basic premise, fills our lives, whether we are in our cars, watching television, or walking down the street. Individual sounds join together to form tones and values that provide balance and rhythm. Consider watching a movie without sound, or with only the vocal sounds of the actors included in the sound track. Surely something would seem wrong with the viewing. It is as if our minds have been conditioned to expect music to fill these vacant spaces. Most television programs or movies use music to transition scenes or to impose a certain emotional content to them. Consider, for example, daytime soap operas that use dramatic music and lengthy character shots to enforce the emotion of a scene.

Specifically, Zettl describes music as being, “one of the most direct ways of establishing a certain mood. Music can make us laugh or cry, feel happy or sad. It seems to affect our emotions directly without first being filtered through our ratio, our rational faculties. This is one of the reasons why we readily accept music as part of a scene regardless of whether the presence of music makes any story sense.”

In contrast, in his essay, QUIT, PLEASE, Adam Mars-Jones discusses the lack of silence in modern movies. “When music is a constant feature of a film, the director forfeits the possibility that a moment of music will provide a pivot around which the whole film swings in a new direction.”

There is a definite need to associate film with a time period, whether it is using nostalgic music that reminds us of a certain time in our lives, or helps us to identify the time.

In Sophia Coppola’s 1999 release, THE VIRGIN SUICIDES, sound was used as an intricate aspect of storytelling. For the soundtrack, the French electronica group, AIR recorded a collection of 70s inspired tracks that helped to inform the viewer as to the time period the film took place. However, a dark side was added to the film with the use of music that evoked isolation, despair, and death. In that situation, the music had a chilling affect upon the images on the screen, helping to supplement the story.

However, what Mars-Jones is alluding to is the need for studios to fill our eardrums with booming sweeping sound that overwhelms the visual experience. One can surely never hear one particular Celine Dion song without imagining the movie TITANIC. The music nearly overwhelms all visual representation on the screen. But when we hear Celine Dion separate from the film, which images become most prevalent in our thoughts? Images of a sinking ship? Images of Celine herself? Or, images of Leonardo DiCaprio and Kate Winslet, the main characters in the film. Has the music transcended our perceptions of pure audio, and become instead a visual representation in the film?

In order to pursue my creative project, I determined that I should explore some background information on the following topics: sound, music, video (or music video), and basic psychology.
THE BASICS: INTO PICTURES

With my interest in music and imagery (the images we form in our minds), I could not avoid exploring the idea of the music video. Although in my project I did not intend to create music videos, I felt that there was important history and significance in them.

At its inception, the music video was a simple thing— in concept and execution—that showed an artist performing in a set situation, or at most performing within a very simple story line. In the 90s, videos became a multi-million dollar industry, selling the vision of a song, or an artist. Today, while video still exists, the opportunity of seeing actual music videos has severely diminished. No longer do cable networks such as MTV show videos in full rotation like a radio station program list. Videos have instead been replaced by reality television programs, and are shown only based on financial backing.

In the fall of 2004, I attended the GRAFICEUROPE conference in Berlin, Germany. One of the speakers at the event was Ian Anderson of The Designer’s Republic, a British company that specializes in multidisciplinary design. Ian showed a number of videos from The Designer’s Republic portfolio, and explained that while videos are still being made, they are seen as general losses to the record companies due to the downfall of CD sales. Often new bands make videos hoping to showcase their musical talents and only in order to obtain a contract. A few bands continue to make videos with little concern for profit or the size of their audience.

In general, the overall purpose of the music video was to lure consumers into purchasing a product. Since the incorporation of P2P programs, and broadband internet connections, consumers have gained the ability to download not only music, but also the videos that accompany it. This phenomenon has also created communities where people can share interesting music videos, resulting in a virtual “all music video channel” that spans all cultures.

Within the past few years, thanks to DVD technology, labels have started circulating their artists’ videos in DVD form, either with a CD, or solely by itself. In this manner, music videos can still be seen as being somewhat financially lucrative to record labels. However, it is interesting that just as our culture is becoming more saturated with visuals, this art form is in part dying. With the eventual absence of music video from our lives, how we perceive artists in the future?

In her book, EXPERIENCING MUSIC VIDEO, Carol Vernallis notes that the music video exists for several clear purposes: showcasing the star, highlighting lyrics, and underscoring the music. She also describes that, “in a video, our attention to the song shapes the way we perceive the image, but to an equal extent, what we attend to in the images helps to determine how we hear music.” This point was very inspirational in shaping the direction of my creative project. It seemed to cement what I truly believed about the relationship of music to imagery: can images be solely rhythmic, and still carry the connotations of music, or can music alter the perception of relatively unrelated imagery?

THE BASICS: GETTING FREUDIAN

According to Max Schoen’s THE EFFECTS OF MUSIC, even the same piece of music will always affect people differently. For some it will possibly irritate, while for others it will soothe. The reason for this difference is based in our genetics and our own personal preferences (perhaps altered even more by our personal perceptions). In his studies, Schoen openly admits how difficult it was to test subjects and their emotional reactions to music because of the inability to create a controlled situation. “The freshness of hearing music initially is something which can never be recreated because we can never have the same experience more than once,” he explains. However, Schoen was able to propose some theories as to why specific music may appeal to a listener: 1) the sensory emotional or connotative experience (intra-subjective); 2) associations which it suggested (the associative); 3) use or value considered as an object (the objective); and, 4) its character personified as an object (the character).

Though I agree with many of Schoen’s observations, I find it difficult to believe that there are no common connections in how individuals respond to certain genres of music. Though we are all intrinsically different, there are certain songs that appeal to large masses of people. Perhaps Schoen’s statements apply to a universal response to music, but not to responses on a smaller level. Schoen’s study also proposed the idea that the same experience will not occur more than once. This observation inspired me in my work on my creative project, because that is what I seek to create: a singular, individual experience that cannot be recreated. A basic structure can be recreated—however, the external elements are constantly changing and redefining the environment and the experience.

THE EFFECTS OF MUSIC TAKES US OUT OF THE ACTUAL AND WHISPERS TO US DIM SECRETS THAT STARTLE OUR WONDER AS TO WHO WE ARE, AND FOR WHAT, WHENCE, AND WHERETO. / RALPH WAL
An interesting idea began emerging a few years ago with the reintroduction of the VJ. Though VJs initially began to appear in the 70s, they had largely disappeared from the public eye until reappearing in Europe in the 90s. The VJ, or video jockey, acts as one part disc jockey (DJ), and one part video director. VJs compose visuals based on the music that fills an environment. The VJs are in a strange position at this time, being shunned by the music video crowd, not being accepted by the general public, and not exactly fitting in with the experimental filmmakers. However, VJs have been able to influence some major facets of our culture, including concerts. The idea of VJ-created graphics playing on screens behind live performances is intriguing in that the VJ can help to develop the mood and atmosphere of a concert, or elaborate upon the lyrics to a song. They can encapsulate the experience of an event.

Vello Virkhaus exemplifies a VJ that has successfully transitioned into the mainstream. Also known as V2, his work can be seen for clients such as Sting, Korn, Stone Temple Pilots, Red Hot Chili Peppers and Beck. Additionally, his work has appeared in movies such as THE BUTTERFLY EFFECT and SIMONE.

Tomato, a multi-disciplinary design group in London, has created many pieces for a broad range of clients that address the VJ experience. The work of Tomato blurs the distinction between visual communications and vjing. Many of their advertisements and other motion-graphic projects rely upon music and the relationship between music and image. Tomato’s early 90s video work for UNDERWORLD reflects the same visual interest of the work of the VJ, and probably had some role in inspiring the modern VJ movement.

Regarding my own creative project, I was asked to define how what I am creating differs from the work of the VJ. The images VJs produce are often clichéd or trite, and have no outstanding relationship to the music. They merely appear on screen synchronized in some aspect to the music. My project is significantly different. My project deals with my personal perception of my environment, and how music affects it. I did not structure the project in the tradition of “cool graphics” or in service of entertainment. Perhaps the images are interesting or compelling because of the way I shot them, but there is a general sense that these items are fragments of things that you might see in an everyday environment.
INSPIRATION: FINE ARTS

My inspirations in the area of fine arts are varied: from painting to sculpture to installation. While some works rely upon the concrete, other rely upon the abstract ideas of composition, form and rhythm.

- FRANȚIȘEK KUPKA, AUTOUR D'UN POINT
- PAUL KLEE, NEW HARMONY
- WASSILY KANDINSKY, TRANSVERSE LINE
- FRANȚIȘEK KUPKA, PIANO KEYS—LAKE
- PABLO PICASSO, GITAR AND WINE GLASS
- FRANȚIȘEK KUPKA, ABSTRACT CUBISM
- FRANȚIȘEK KUPKA, NOCTURNE
- LUIGI RUSSOLO AND UGO PIATI, INTONARUMO POESIA
- FRANK STELLA, TIMES SQUARE
- MAX NEUHAUS, THE FOOTBRIDGE AT LORRIANSTRASSE
- DAVID TUDOR, RAINFOREST IV
- NICOLAY OBUKHOV, BOOK OF LIFE
- ALEXANDER CALDER, S-SHAPED WINE
- CORNELIUS CARDEW, TREATED BLOCKAGE
- JOHN CAGE, FONTANA MIX
- CORNELIUS CARDEW, TREATISE

INSPIRATION:
FINE ARTS
I have been inspired by John Cage. His work shows elements of complexity and energy that I envy. An overall feeling of mechanical perfection in craft is prominent, however each item maintains an impression of the artist’s hand being involved in their creation. His translations show an ability to meld unrelated objects into a cohesive solution that bridges information graphics, design and fine arts.
INSPIRATION: FILM

I am inspired by both artists, and directors that share their vision in a unique and unprecedented manner. Whether chosen for content, or for pure visual interest, each has been monumental in my studies.
I watched Stanley Kubrick’s *A Clockwork Orange* for the first time this year and was intrigued by one of the principal concepts in his film: the idea that sound has the potential to affect a person’s adverse behavior. Kubrick’s concept of the correlation of image and sound and its direct relationship to emotion is compelling.
INSPIRATION: EXPERIMENTAL FILM / PRINT

Experimental film allows for intriguing results not normally achieved in the commercial industry. Each of the following pieces seeks to blur the lines of what is visual narrative and what is visual eye candy.
London-based d-fuse, created an interactive video experience for Beck’s newest release, *Guero*. The DVD allows users to listen to Beck’s entire new album visually, by combining tracks with raw footage shot by d-fuse, and with images shot by Beck himself. The DVD borders on the edge of what is contemporary visual communications and image-making, and the art of VJing. The fusion between image and sound, and the reintroduction of the album influenced my own work in determining a direction in my creative project.
MOTION GRAPHIC MAPPING

Provided with two motion graphic clips, I created a static visual representation of the items. The original pieces, two commercial motion graphic pieces for Showtime, were filled with liquid imagery and shadowy type that crept across the screen. I started the process by mapping the static and active elements of the piece and created symbols to represent the elements and their progression in the clips. PROFESSORS MCKELVEY / WOOLMAN 504

LIQUIDFXION PROMOS

Exploring the element of water, I created a series of promotions for a hypothetical company, LIQUIDFXION, an independent film and music house. After capturing digital video, I reconstructed the videos frame by frame to create a stop-motion effect. The video was then combined and several layers of sound were incorporated together to create promo teasers. PROFESSORS MCKELVEY / WOOLMAN 504

MUSIC VISUALITY IS THE SYNE STHETIC INTERPLAY AND COMMUNICATIVE INTERPENETRATION OF MUSIC WITH VISION, SIGHT WITH SOUND, WHEREBY VISUAL IMAGES "DANCE" TO MUSIC AND SOUND IS MANIFEST VISU ALLY. / IRWIN STRAUS
MUSEO VIDEO INTERFACE

**MUSEO**

is a hypothetical music video interface that allows a user to search and sort videos using visual cues. The viewer selects a "control" video based on visual interest, and then selects visual elements that they would like to compare. The system then matches other videos that share the desired traits.

The user, after viewing a video, has the opportunity to see other works by the same artist, director, in the same genre, or of the same time period. **PROFESSOR SUSAN KING-ROTH F04**

---

**SIXTY DAYS INTERFACE**

Sixty Days is a compilation of the major events of the final two months of the 2004 Presidential Election. Using the internet as a primary resource, a news topic was documented each day, and then a word, or phrase, in combination with an image were used to create an abstract interpretation of each of the final sixty days. News was collected from major news sources, message boards, email and forums.

Images were borrowed from web searches, as well as audio files that were clipped from interviews, debates, and recordings. **PROFESSOR ROB CARTER F04**

---

**MONTAGE COULD CREATE IDEAS OR HAVE AN IMPACT NOT FOUND IN INDIVIDUAL IMAGES. TWO OR MORE IMAGES TOGETHER CREATE A "TERTIUM QUID" THAT MAKES THE WHOLE GREATER THAN THE SUM OF ITS INDIVIDUAL IMAGES.**

*Sergey Eisenstein*
HOPEWELL INTERACTIVE TOOL

Creating a tool that bridges communication between our culture and an endangered culture, I designed an interface that used sound and image as an educational tool. I chose to explore the Hopewell Indian Tribe that has been extinct for over 1500 years as my subject. The final product was an interface that used visual and aural clues to build a new language, and relied on the relationship between the man-made versus the natural. PROFESSOR ROB CARTER F04

These images are part of a study using photographic theorist John Szarkowski’s principles for evaluating the aesthetics of image. An exhaustive formal analysis was created that examined each of five photographic proposed by Szarkowski (the thing itself, detail, frame, time, vantage). I chose an image created by Rut Blus Luxemburg as my object for analysis. I then applied Szarkowski’s concepts to the creation of new images, and the manipulation of Luxemburg’s image. The project allowed me to not only experiment two-dimensionally, but also allowed me to investigate environment and installation. PROFESSOR SANDY WHEELER S04
I wanted my creative project to create an experience for the user, simply stated. By combining digital video and music, I wanted to transport the viewer to another time, and place; and I wanted to do this abstractly, in a non-narrative way.

The music that I selected for my project was not of a single style or genre. I felt it was important to use music that you could hear at any given time on your radio. Most of the work of other designers and video artists that I studied relied upon electronica music that lacked vocals, or that could be edited to fit a final product.

I began by making a series of physical mappings of the music selections, noting where the crescendos occurred in music, and how the tonal quality of sound reached different levels in different parts of the songs. The mappings were not concerned with individual instruments or vocals, but rather with overall audio levels.

Over the summer I read a number of books on variously related topics. These books included: MAKE IT BIGGER by Paula Scher, detailing her career at CBS Records as an album cover designer; MUSIC: AN APPRECIATION by Roger Kamien, describing the formal properties of music; PLAYBACK by Mark Coleman, who recounts the effect of technology on music; and TECHNOLOGY by Neil Postman, who defines the relationship between modern technology and society, and countless other articles.
STUDY 01: GRAYSCALE. For this experiment I translated levels of musical intensity to grayscale levels from 0% to 100%.

STUDY 02: COLOR VALUE. Similar to the grayscale study, a single color was used in mapping the music. Values were assigned from 0%-100%.

STUDY 03: COLOR. I replaced the grayscale values with separate colors from a predetermined palette. I chose colors based upon their visual harmony.

STUDY 04: PATTERN. Substituting color values with patterns taken from magazines, I created an alternative interpretation of the music. I arranged the swatches visually; moving from the more subtle patterns and colors to those with much more vibrancy.

STUDY 05: COMPOSITION. Using a primary piece of digital video, I began interjecting other video clips to change the initial integrity of the scene. Items were layered randomly, and had no direct correlation to the music.

STUDY 06: MOVING IMAGE. For this study I used ten separate digital video clips shot in Berlin and Amsterdam, and assigned each as a particular value. Building the files in imageReady as GIF animations I was able to show a progression of images related to each numerical value of volume in the music.
STUDY 07: EXISTING VIDEO. Taking an original video from a particular song, I captured the video and manipulated the speed of the images. I also incorporated my own images that were influenced by the song.

STUDY 08: FILTER STUDY. I created a series of 70 filtered images using a single frame captured from an existing video.

STUDY 09: NARRATIVE. I documented a typical day in my life with video clips. Music was selected to match each aspect of my day.

STUDY 10: FILTER / MOVING IMAGE. Starting with a primary piece of digital video, I began experimenting with the effect of altering the original imagery by use of contrast, brightness and filters.

STUDY 11: GESTALT. Using one of the principles of Gestalt theory, I began omitting parts of the images to see if it could be mentally reconstructed.

STUDY 12: GRID STUDY. A grid based on the mapping was placed over the existing video. I wanted to determine if items being contained in a grid would create more visual interest in certain aspects of the composition.
STUDY 1: SONIC SCULPTURES. These pieces interpreted the music in three-dimensional form by combining wire, mesh and other found objects.

STUDY 1: MOVING REPRESENTATION. A series of images were created reminiscent of the artist, and then made to interact with the music across a large window.

STUDY 1: MOVING REPRESENTATION 2. Similar to the above study, this study was focused in a more narrow panel in an attempt to reduce the amount of visual activity.

MUSIC IS AN UNCOSUMMATED SYMBOL. / SUZANNE LANGER
I began creating the final components of my creative project by shooting a number of scenes from my everyday environment that had a rhythmic quality in their form and composition. I began editing the films together as ImageReady GIF animations. I appreciate working in ImageReady because it allows me to feel as though I can control the images and the pacing frame by frame. Other programs seem to create a disconnect, for me, between the designer and his product.

In order to sync the digital video files to music, I played each of the files to music randomly chosen in my MP3 library. After discovering images and music that correlated, visually or aurally, I manipulated the digital video files in sequence and timing to more closely match the music.

The final step in the project was to create an interface to hold the clips and set them to music. This interface allows a user to select images based upon a short two-second movie clip with sound. Viewers can then organize clips in any sequence and play the sequences back at full length.

At the completion of my studies I felt as though I was still gasping for creative oxygen. (Or, perhaps I was overwhelmed by too much creative oxygen.) From my studies, I gathered many different perspectives relative to what I desired to create, but the final form had not fully materialized. After a long period of consideration, I evaluated my studies to determine which were most successful. I kept going back to the moving image study that I had shot in Berlin and Amsterdam. This piece accurately represents how music was affecting my environment, and my emotional state as I experienced it. This study also successfully demonstrates the rhythmical aspect of the music itself. Though the piece could be distracting in its complexity, I saw potential in it. I also determined that the best way for my piece to become an experience for an audience would be to create an interactive product.
AFTER SILENCE, THAT WHICH COMES NEAREST TO EXPRESSING THE INEXPRESSIBLE IS MUSIC. / ALDOUS HUXLEY

21: ROB ZOMBIE / DRAGULA (HOT ROD HERMAN REMIX)
20: BJORK / ATLANTIC (ATOM'S ACID ETUDE MIX)
19: SERJ TANKIAN / MAHAL KITA
18: BJORK / TRIUMPH OF THE HEART (SOFT PINK THRUTH REMIX)
17: MADONNA / LOVE PROFUSION (BLOW UP REMIX)
16: MARILYN MANSON / THE BEAUTIFUL PEOPLE
15: STU PHILLIPS / KNIGHT RIDER THEME SONG
14: MOBY / HOTEL INTRO
13: GARBAGE / HOTEL INTRO
12: JANET JACKSON / TOGETHER AGAIN (DJ PREMIER JUST THE BASS)
11: RES / THEY SAY VISION (ROBBIE RIVERA MIX)
10: GARBAGE / ANDROGENY (FELIX DA HOUSECAT THEE GLITZ MIX)
09: RADIANT KEYS / PAGAN POETRY
08: WHITE ZOMBIE / MORE HUMAN THAN HUMAN
07: RADIOHEAD / CLIMBING UP THE WALLS (SNEAKER PIPS REMIX)
VISUALIZING THE ART OF WAR

I am exploring visual representation, abstraction and the interpretation of violence into aesthetic forms. Through drawing and film, I am developing a visual language to interpret the subject of war, in order to allow my audience to experience the dynamics of conflict and reflect upon the devastating toll war takes on humanity.

MICHAEL GRAY

On the negative side, I feel that the interface could have improved with more user testing. I would have been able to better understand how the results were viewed, and I would discover any improvements or additions that would have created a more positive outcome.

I feel that this project could be explored and applied in a number of technologically-driven ways. The potential for creating and sharing motion graphics, packaged with shared music files is one area of future research. I would also like to see the project implemented into a desktop background — one that constantly changes based upon the music playing in your computer. I also feel that the project has potential in the area of environmental graphics and installation. Finally, I see potential in this work for design education as it speaks to issues of rhythm and composition in the areas of motion graphics and print mediums.

The completed creative project interface allowed users to pick clips based on visual or aural interest (each button held a two second clip of music and a stationary clip from the movie). By dragging clips into a grid at the top of the interface, a sequence could then be created and played. Movie clips played in the order that they were placed, with each clip immediately transitioning to the next.

On May 5, 2005, the creative project was displayed as part of the MFA exhibition held at Anderson Gallery. The feedback provided by gallery visitors was positive and encouraging. I found that most users wanted to play each of the clips to see what each of the movies were. Many people with whom I spoke said they had spent 15-20 minutes creating their own sequences, and trying different variations.

The project was successful in capturing the attention of the viewer. Many people waited in line to have a chance to create their own sequences. I feel that the project was also successful in allowing users to create individual experiences by interacting with the project.

Overall, I feel that my project addressed an area of design that is evolving and changing rapidly. By using design applications that were not intended to be used in such extensive manners, I hope that it encourages others to push their personal creative and technological boundaries.
It is a common term used for a variety of musical styles, including P2P connections which include music, videos, movies, and more. Current iPods can hold up to 25,000 songs, with new versions of the product being released annually.

DIGITAL VIDEO: Video captured in digital form, often through DVD cameras or digital cameras. DVD cameras allow for higher screen resolution and lower resolution files.

DIGITAL VIDEODISK (DIGITAL VERSATILE DISC, DVD): Introduced in 1997, the DVD is a high-density compact disc for storing large amounts of data, especially high-resolution audio-visual material. A standard DVD holds 4.7GB of information.

DIGITAL VIDEOJOCKEY (D.J.): Often mistaken for on-air personalities on the radio, DJs often create new music out of the playback and mixing of pre-recorded media. DJs create an experience for their audience by the combining and sequencing of music—often referred to as spinning.

ELECTRONICA: A common term used for a variety of musical styles, it often relies upon electronic-influences in the creation of music.

GIGABYTE (GB): A unit of computer memory or data storage capacity, equal to one billion bytes.

MPEG Audio Layers (MP3): An audio compression technology that is part of the MPEG-1 and MPEG-2 specifications. MP3 compresses CD-quality sound by a factor of roughly 10, while retaining most of the original fidelity. MP3 files can be transmitted over the internet, or easily burned to CDs.

MEGABYTE (MB): A unit of computer memory or data storage capacity, equal to one million bytes.

PEER 2 PEER (PEER TO PEER, P2P): Made famous by the company NAPSTER, who was sued for copyright infringement. P2P file sharing allows users across the world to access shared files for download. Common file types traded through P2P connections include music, videos, movies, and computer software.

SEQUENCE: A number of things following one after another, considered collectively; a series. The process or fact of following in space, time, or thought; succession or order.

VIDEO JOCKEY (VJ): Commonly mistaken for on-air personalities found on television, the word VJ is also used to represent video performance artists who create live visuals to music. It originates from a parallel with the term DJ (disk jockey).

APPLE IPOD (IPOD): Introduced in 2001 by Apple, the iPod is a digital audio player. The first generation iPod weighed just 6.8 ounces and held approximately 1,000 songs. Current iPods can hold up to 30,000 songs, with new versions of the product being released annually.

COMPACT DISC (CD): A digitally encoded recording on an optical disc that is smaller than a phonograph record; played back by a laser. The majority of compact discs hold 80 minutes of music or 700MB of information.

DIGITAL VIDEO: Video captured in digital form, often through DVD camera or digital cameras. DVD cameras allow for higher screen resolution and longer recording times, whereas digital cameras produce smaller scale and lower resolution files.

DIGITAL VIDEODISK (DIGITAL VERSATILE DISC, DVD): Introduced in 1997, the DVD is a high-density compact disc for storing large amounts of data, especially high-resolution audio-visual material. A standard DVD holds 4.7GB of information.

DISK JOCKEY (D.J.): Often mistaken for on-air personalities on the radio. DJs often create new music out of the playback and mixing of pre-recorded media. DJs create an experience for their audience by the combining and sequencing of music—often referred to as spinning.

ELECTRONICA: A common term used for a variety of musical styles, it often relies upon electronic-influences in the creation of music.

GIGABYTE (GB): A unit of computer memory or data storage capacity, equal to one billion bytes.

MEGABYTE (MB): A unit of computer memory or data storage capacity, equal to one million bytes.

PEER 2 PEER (PEER TO PEER, P2P): Made famous by the company NAPSTER, who was sued for copyright infringement. P2P file sharing allows users across the world to access shared files for download. Common file types traded through P2P connections include music, videos, movies, and computer software.

SEQUENCE: A number of things following one after another, considered collectively; a series. The process or fact of following in space, time, or thought; succession or order.

VIDEO JOCKEY (VJ): Commonly mistaken for on-air personalities found on television, the word VJ is also used to represent video performance artists who create live visuals to music. It originates from a parallel with the term DJ (disk jockey).
MATT WOOLMAN Thank you for always being so patient and level-headed, helping to reel me in; always offering great advice, a sense of humor and inspiration.

ROY MCKELVEY Thank you for making my project work, your technical genius is amazing. Your encouragement along the way (plus your keen editorial skills) helped incredibly.

SANDY WHEELER Thank you for being Sandy Wheeler, always there with a kind word, and just checking in; you always encourage everything and are a walking encyclopaedia (one that is totally optimistic --- not that it is a bad thing).

ANNE GRAVES Thank you for whatever.

ROB CARTER Thank you for always encouraging your students to push the boundaries, without that I would have never started this project.

DAVID COLLEY Thank you for always telling a great story, and just being David Colley.

MY UNDERGRAD PROFESSORS: KAREN, DON, YOON SOO AND ARLYN Thank you for giving me such a great foundation, and changing my life.

MY FRIENDS Thank you for supporting me and telling me that I would get into grad school no matter how many times I said that I would not.

MY FAMILY Thank you for always pushing me to question the things that are for always supporting me no matter where I end up, and for just everything in general.

EXPERIENCING MUSIC MICHAEL GRAY ©2005

The typeface used throughout this book is Gotham, designed by Hoefler & Frere-Jones. Gotham is based on the classic letters of paint, plaster, neon, glass and steel that are found in the urban landscape (and it's great, especially in mouse-type).

This book was designed using Adobe InDesign. Background textures were created using a Panasonic thermal fax machine. The completed creative project shown in this book, and contained on the accompanying CD, was created using Adobe Photoshop, Adobe ImageReady, Sound Studio, and Macromedia Flash.

All images and sound files are property of their original owners, and are used for reference purposes only.