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Experiencing Music

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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
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MAY 2005.



EXPERIENCING MUSIC

MICHAEL GRAY



EXPERIENCING MUSIC

MICHAEL GRAY

evolution of recorded music

technology

v) experience

ling, composition, etc.

gestalt

installation

entertainment

education

trans

narrative

intention

communication

visual aesthetics

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.

uses

text

action

experience

VISUAL REPRESENTATION OF MUSIC

PHYSICAL MAPPING
EXECUTION

intrejection of sound/music

original file

remix

| 01:01 | Getting to Know You

| 02:01 | The Evolution of Recorded Sound

| 03:01 | The Basics: Sound as a Communicator

| 03:03 | The Basics: Into Pictures

| 03:04 | The Basics: Getting Freudian

| 04:01 | The DJ has Left the Building

| 05:01 | Inspiration: Fine Arts

| 06:01 | Inspiration: Films

| 07:01 | Inspiration: Experimental Film / Print

| 08:01 | It's All Relative

| 09:01 | Just Make Something

| 10:01 | Breaking the Surface

| 11:01 | Words to Learn

| 12:01 | Things to Read

| 13:01 | All the Details

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.

GETTING TO KNOW YOU

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.

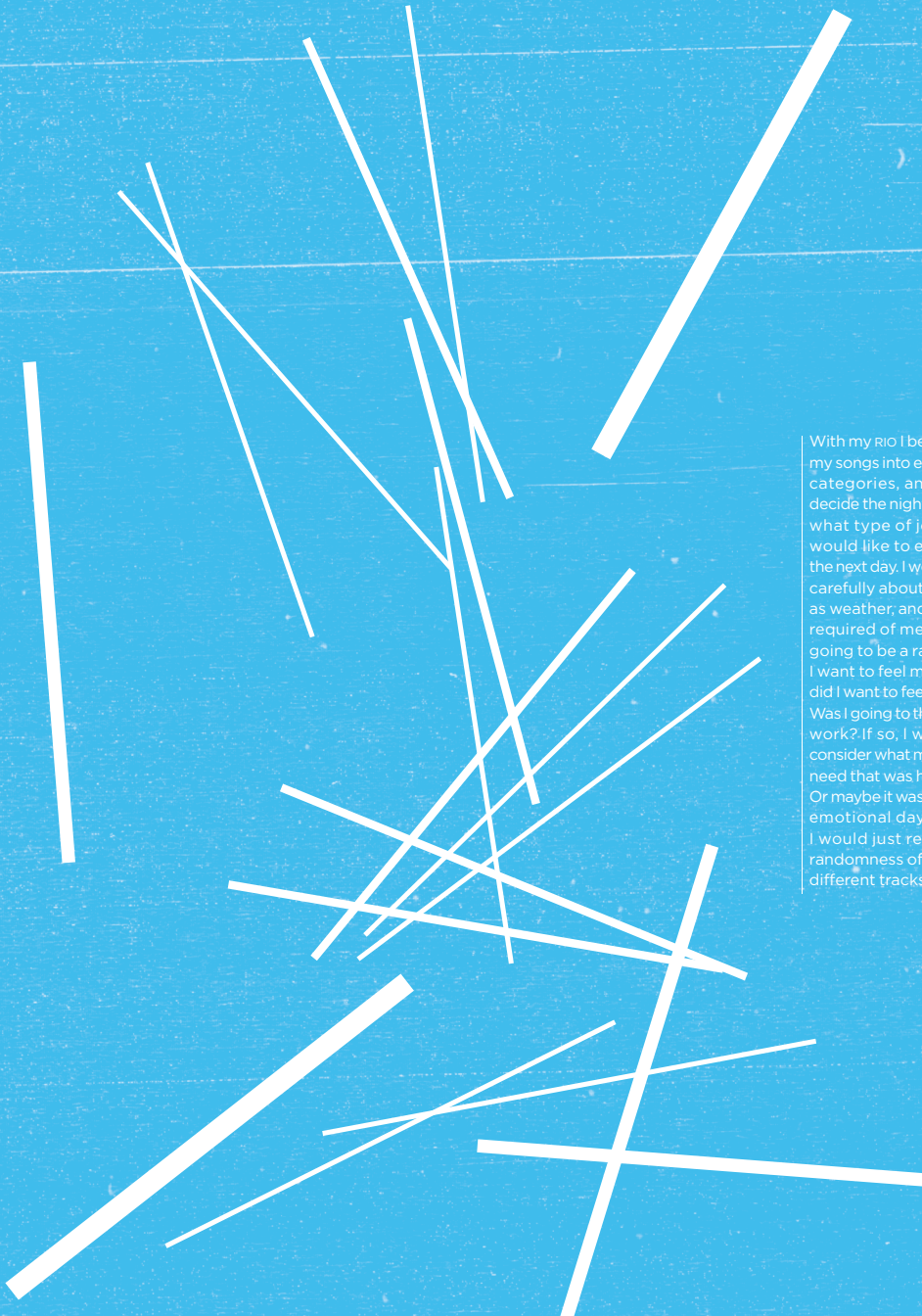
Growing up as a child with only three TV stations and no MTV (Music Television), the only images I had of these artists were the ones I saw in magazines and on entertainment programs. I eventually discovered FRIDAY NIGHT VIDEOS, a TV program that became my visual outlet for all things musical. Once I 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.

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.



1877 Thomas Edison cylinder phonograph, the office dictation machine
 1887 First playback-only gramophone
 1927 American Music Industries introduces the jukebox
 1948 Radio Plus introduces music to the public via the airwaves
 1949 Dr. Peter Goldmark makes synthetic replacement for shellac, and makes the first 33 1/3 RPM
 1949 David Sarnoff introduces 7-inch 45 RPM
 1953 Columbia Records introduces the portable record player
 1957 transistor radios offer portable radio
 1970 s track introduced
 1973 Hip hop introduced
 1975 Sonya Summer's LOVE TO LOVE YOU BABY is the first remixed album
 1979 First cassette tape player, WALKMAN introduced
 1981 Peter Dinklage's first commercial CD released
 1985 Computer with CD-ROM drive
 1987 Pocket discman plays 5-inch CD singles
 1990 Sony introduces the digital audio tape (DAT)
 1997 The p.d.o enters the market
 1999 Peer-To-Peer file sharing changes CD sales
 2000 Web radio challenges commercial radio
 2001 First generation Icar iPod (1500 songs)

THE EVOLUTION OF RECORDED MUSIC

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 gramophone 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 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.

THE BASICS: SOUND AS A COMMUNICATOR

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 rhythmic structure become monotonous and boring. The juxtaposing of fast and slow video and audio rhythms is another application of the dialectic principle that is based on opposing elements side by side. Such an audio-video dialectic will increase the complexity of the screen event without impairing its communication clarity."

I found Zettl's analysis of sound and image to be intriguing, although I am not certain that I agree with his theories. Is it true that the sequencing 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, *QUIET, 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 have 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 effect 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.

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 vj is 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. The vj 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.

THE DJ HAS LEFT THE BUILDING

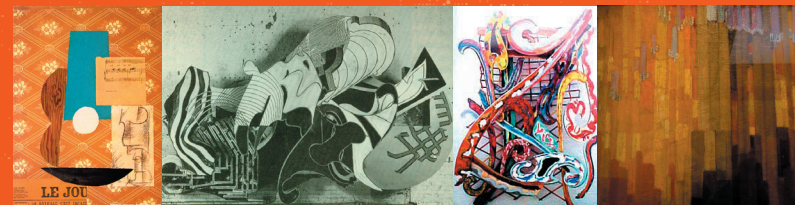
INSPIRATION: FINE ARTS

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.

1.FRANKTISEK KUPKA, AUTOUR D'UN POINT 2.PAUL KLEE, NEW HARMONY 3.WASSILY KANDINSKY, TRANSVERSE LINE 4.FRANTISEK KUPKA, PIANO KEYS—LAKE 5.PABLO PICASSO, GUITAR AND WINE GLASS 6.FRANK STELLA, QUEEQUEG IN HIS COFFIN 7.FRANK STELLA, ABSTRACT SCULPTURE 8.FRANKTISEK KUPKA, NOCTURNE 9.LUIGI RUSSOLO AND UGO PIATI, INTONARUMORI POESIA 10.FRANK STELLA, HOOLOOMOOLOO 11.MAX NEUHAUS, TIMES SQUARE 12.MAX NEUHAUS, THE FOOTBRIDGE AT LORRIANSTRASSE 13.DAVID TUDOR, RAINFOREST IV 14.FRANK STELLA, CONSTRUCTION 15.NICOLAY OBUKHOV, BOOK OF LIFE 16.ALEXANDER CALDER, S-SHAPED VINE 17.CORNELIUS CARDEW, TREATISE 18.JOHN CAGE, FONTANA MIX 19.CORNELIUS CARDEW, TREATISE...



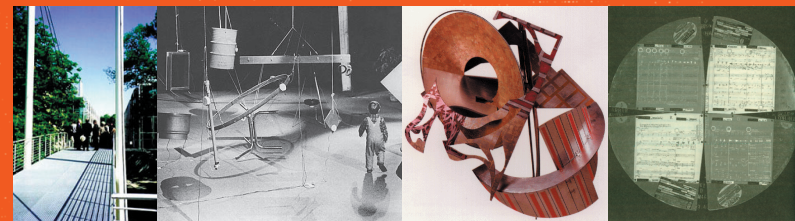
1.KUPKA / 2.KLEE / 3.KANDINSKY / 4.KUPKA



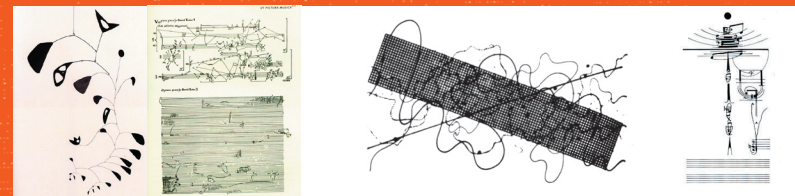
5.PICASSO / 6.STELLA / 7.STELLA / 8.KUPKA



9.RUSSOLO / 10.STELLA / 11.NEUHAUS

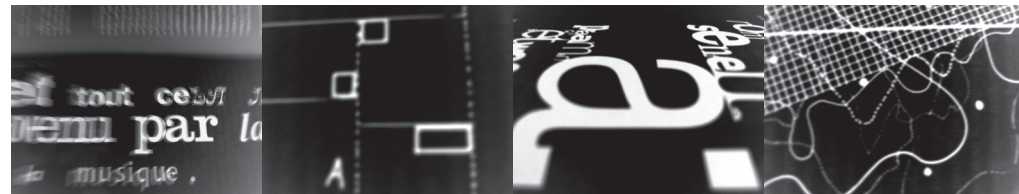


12.NEUHAUS / 13.TUDOR / 14.STELLA / 15.OBUKHOV



16.CALDER / 17.CARDEW / 18.CAGE / 19.CARDEW

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.

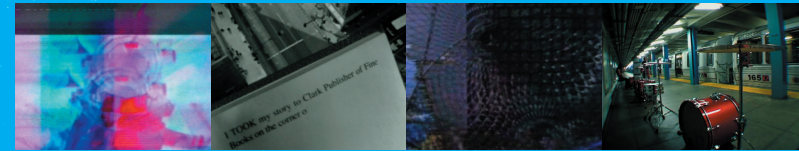


CAGE

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.

1:CHRIS CUNNINGHAM, AUTECHRE;SECOND BAD VILBEL 2:MICHEL GONDRY,BACHELOR:BJORK
3:JAMES HYMAN, BLUE MONDAY;NEW ORDER 4:MICHEL GONDRY,THE HARDEST BUTTON TO BUTTON;
THE WHITE STRIPES 5:MARK ROMANEK, CLOSER;NIN 6:MICHEL GONDRY, LA TOUR DEPISE;JEAN
FRANCOIS COEN 7:CHRIS CUNNINGHAM, COME TO DADDY;APHEX TWIN 8:CHRIS CUNNINGHAM,
FROZEN;MADONNA 9:MICHEL GONDRY, HYPERBALLAD;BJORK 10:MICHEL GONDRY, LA VILLE OUI OUI
11:MICHEL GONDRY, ISOBEL;BJORK 12:MICHEL GONDRY, JOGA;BJORK 13:THOMAS MIGNONE, DIG;
MUDWAYNE 14:NICK KNIGHT, PAGAN POETRY;BJORK 15:CHRIS CUNNINGHAM, ONLY YOU;PORTISHEAD
16:MICHEL GONDRY, PROTECTION;MASSIVE ATTACK 17:ANDREA GIACOBBE, PUSH IT;GARBAGE
18:JONAS ODELL, TAKE ME OUT;FRANZ FERDINAND 19:JONAS AKERLUND, RAY OF LIGHT;MADONNA
20:MICHEL GONDRY, LIKE A ROLLING STONE;THE ROLLING STONES 21:MICHEL GONDRY, STAR
GUITAR;CHEMICAL BROTHERS 22:MICHEL GONDRY, SUGAR WATER;CIBO MATTO 23:JAMIE HEWLETT,
CLINT EASTWOOD;GORILLAZ 24:STANLEY KUBRICK, A CLOCKWORK ORANGE



1.CUNNINGHAM 2.GONDRY 3.HYMAN 4.GONDRY



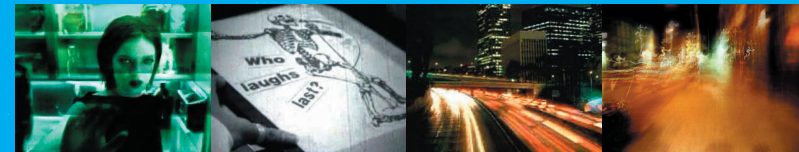
5.ROMANEK 6.GONDRY 7.CUNNINGHAM 8.CUNNINGHAM



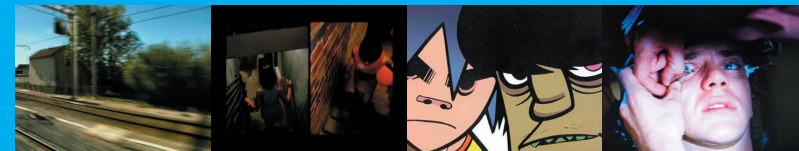
9.GONDRY 10.GONDRY 11.GONDRY 12.GONDRY



13.MIENONE 14.KNIGHT 15.CUNNINGHAM 16. GONDRY

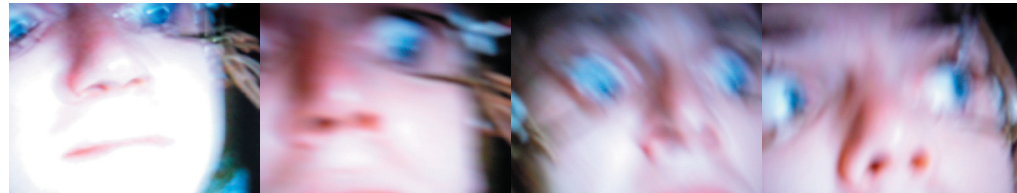


17.GIACOBBE 18.ODELL 19.AKERLUND 20.GONDRY



21.GONDRY 22.GONDRY 23.HEWLETT 24.KUBRICK

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.



CLOCKWORK

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.

1:RE-MOVE.ORG 2:JONATHAN BARNBROOK 3:RE-MOVE.ORG 4:ANGELA LORENZ 5:VARIOUS VISUALS 6:PETER MILES / DÁMÓN MURRAY 7:DANIEL PFLUMM 8:EIKES GRAFISCHER HORT 9:FOREVER AND EVER 9:JOSEF MÜLLER-BROCKMAN 10:BEETHOVEN POSTER 10:P2 11:ONLINE MUSIC NETWORK PROMOTION 11:EIKES GRAFISCHER HORT 12:DIVER+ACE 12:IDN 13:SELF-PROMOTION 13:FLAT-E 14:TONISATION 14:JOHNSON & WOLVERTON 15:SUNDANCE CHANNEL PROMO 15:ROBERT SEIDEL 16:TYPOCRAFT 17:COLLISION WITH A CHICO DIAGONALE 17:HEXSTATIC 18:THAT TRACK 18:HETEROGENEOUS FIELDS OF RESEARCH 19:CITYSCAN2 19:D-FUSE 20:GUERO 20:TRANSFORMA 21:FUNKSTORUNG / FAT CAMP FEVA 21:VJ GRAPHIC 22:VELLO VIRKAUS 22:RED HOT CHILI PEPPERS CONCERT 22:VJ GRAPHIC 23:VJ GRAPHIC 24:VJ GRAPHIC



1:RE-MOVE.ORG 2:BARNBROOK 3:GSIL 4:LORENZ



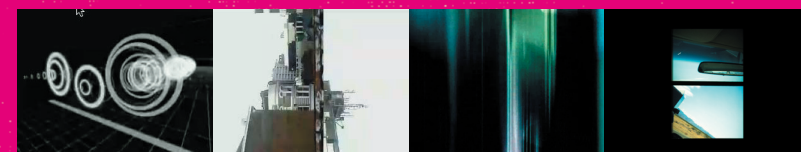
5:MILES/MURRAY 6:P2 7:PFLUMM 8:LORENZ



9:BROCKMAN 10:P2 11:EGH 12:IDN



13:FLAT-E 14:JOHNSON & WOLVERTON 15:SEIDEL 16:TYPOCRAFT

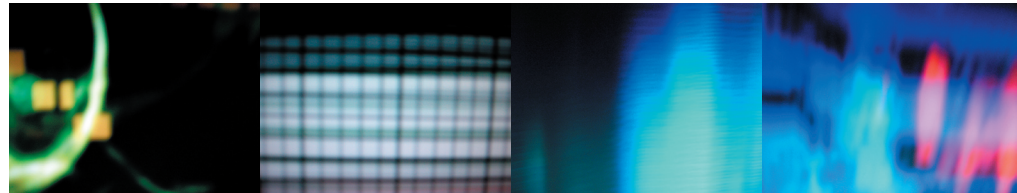


17:HEXSTATIC 18:HFR 19:D-FUSE 20:TRANSFORMA



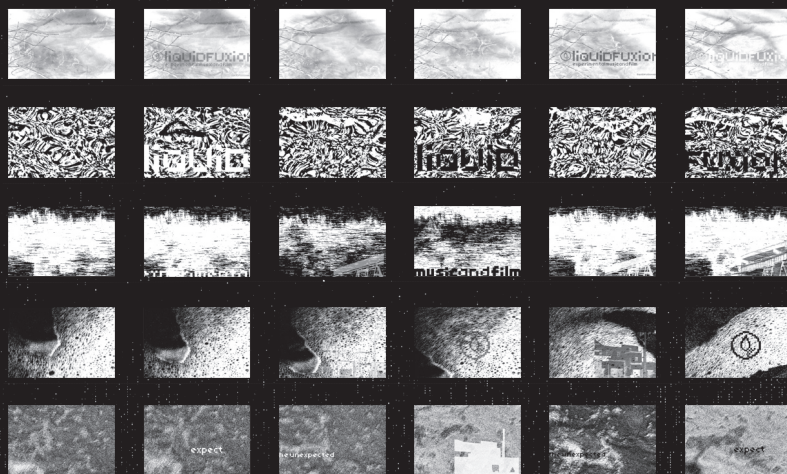
21:VJGRAPHIC 22:VIRKAUS 23:VJVENUE 24:VJGRAPHIC

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 inspired my own work in determining a direction in my creative project.



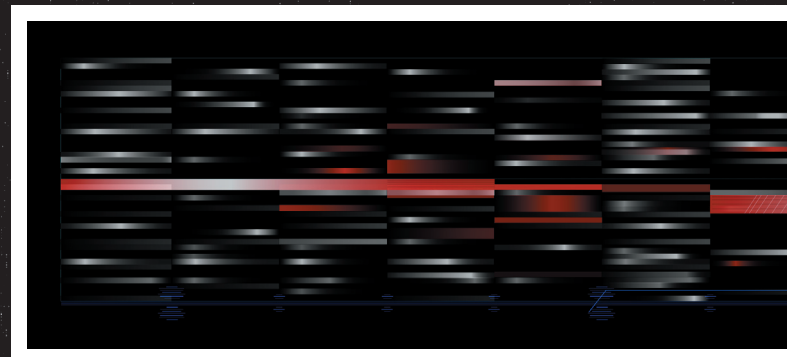
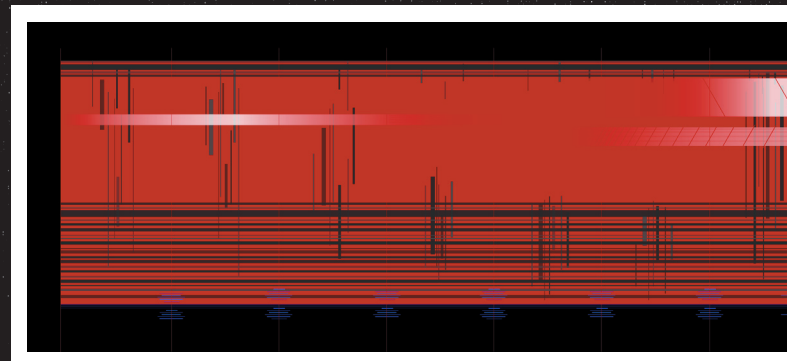
D-FUSE

The following work represents projects completed in the Graduate Workshop classes that relate to, or inspired my pursuit of my creative project. The Graduate Workshop is a series of classes taken over three semesters that are led by the Graduate Faculty. In each class an overall topic, or series of topics, is introduced, however the final form and direction of exploration is decided by the individual student.



LIQUIDFUXION PROMOS

Exploring the element of water, I created a series of promotions for a hypothetical company LIQUIDFUXION, 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 S04



MOTION GRAPHIC MAPPING

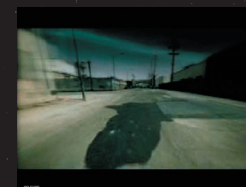
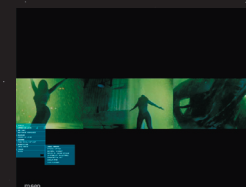
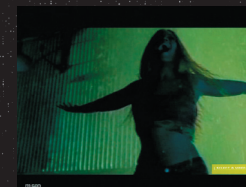
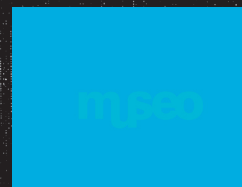
Provided with two motion graphic clips, I created a static visual representation of the items. The original pieces, two commercial motion graphic pieces for Showtime, were filled with liquid imagery and shadowy type that crept across the screen. I started the process by mapping the static and active elements of the piece and created symbols to represent the elements and their progression in the clips. PROFESSORS MCKELVEY / WOOLMAN S04



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



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



rut blus luxemburg

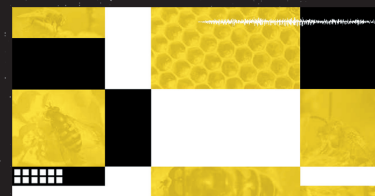


the thing itself studios

LUXEMBURG IMAGE STUDY

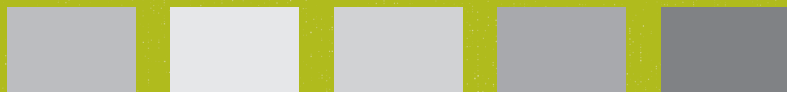
These images are part of a study using photographic theorist John Szarkowski's principles for evaluating the aesthetics of image. An exhaustive formal analysis was created that examined each of five photographic proposed by Szarkowski (the thing itself, detail, frame, time, vantage). I chose an image 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 investigate environment and installation.

PROFESSOR SANDY WHEELER S04



HOPEWELL INTERACTIVE TOOL

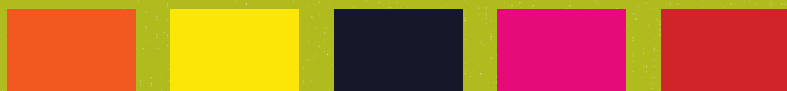
Creating a tool that bridges communication between our culture and an endangered culture, I designed an interface that used sound and image as an educational tool. I chose to explore the Hopewell Indian Tribe that has been extinct for over 1500 years as my subject. The final product was an interface 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



01:GRAYSCALE



02:COLOR VALUE



03:COLOR

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.



04:PATTERN



05:COMPOSITION



06:MOVING IMAGE

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.



07:EXISTING VIDEO



08:FILTER STUDY



09:NARRATIVE

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.



10:FILTER / MOVING IMAGE



11:GESTALT

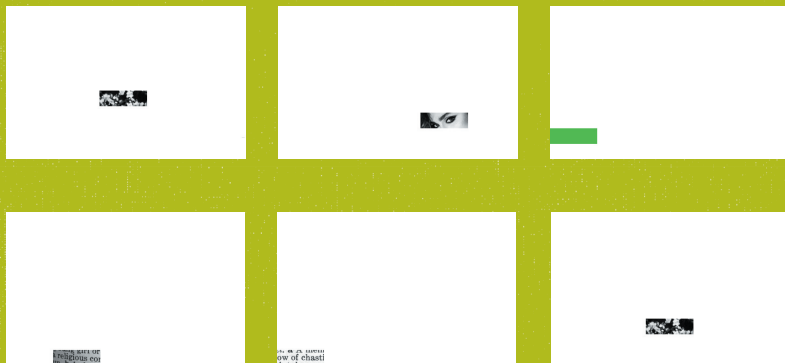


12:GRID STUDY

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.

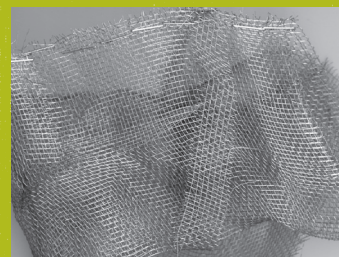
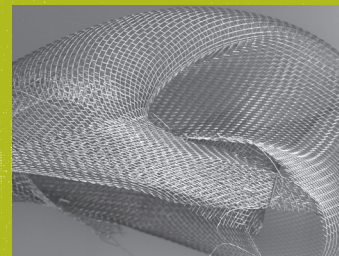
STUDY 12:GRID STUDY. A grid based on the mapping was placed over the existing video. I wanted to determine if items being contained in a grid would create more visual interest in certain aspects of the composition.



13.MOVING REPRESENTATION



14.MOVING REPRESENTATION 2



15:SONIC SCULPTURES



STUDY 13: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 14: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.

STUDY 15:SONIC SCULPTURES. These pieces interpreted the music in three-dimensional form by combining wire, mesh and other found objects.

BREAKING THE SURFACE

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 it's 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.

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.



01:MOBY / BLUE PAPER



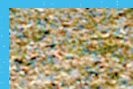
03:ERYKAH BADU / ON AND ON (BOMB SQUAD REMIX)



04:TELEPOMUSIK / JUST BREATHE (SIRARIC GRAVITY REMIX)



05:JANET JACKSON / GOT TIL IT'S GONE (ARMAND VAN HELDEN BONUS BEATS)



06:1 MONSTER/ THE BLUE WRATH



07:MODEST MOUSE / KARMA PAYMENT PLAN



08. WHITE ZOMBIE / MORE HUMAN THAN HUMAN



09. RADIOHEAD / CLIMBING UP THE WALLS (SNEAKER PIMPS REMIX)



10. BJÖRK / PAGAN POETRY



11. JANET JACKSON / TOGETHER AGAIN (DJ PREMIER JUST THE BASS)



12. RES / THEY SAY VISION (ROBBIE RIVERA MIX)



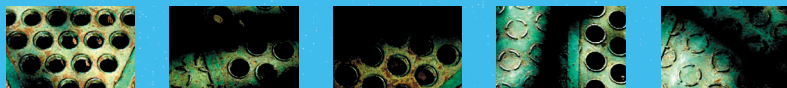
13. MOBY / HOTEL INTRO



14. GARBAGE / ANDROGENY (FELIX DA HOUSECAT THEE GLITZ MIX)



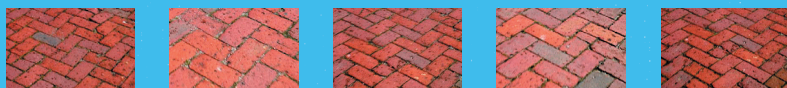
15. STU PHILLIPS / KNIGHT RIDER THEME SONG



16. MARILYN MANSON / THE BEAUTIFUL PEOPLE



17. MADONNA / LOVE PROFUSION (BLOW UP MIX)



18. BJÖRK / TRIUMPH OF THE HEART (SOFT PINK THRUTH REMIX)



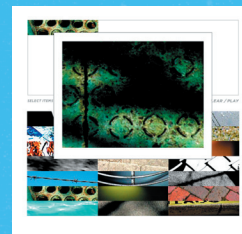
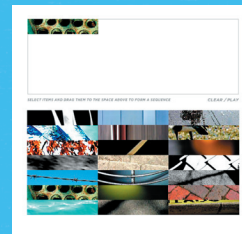
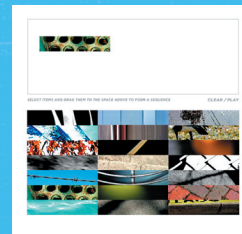
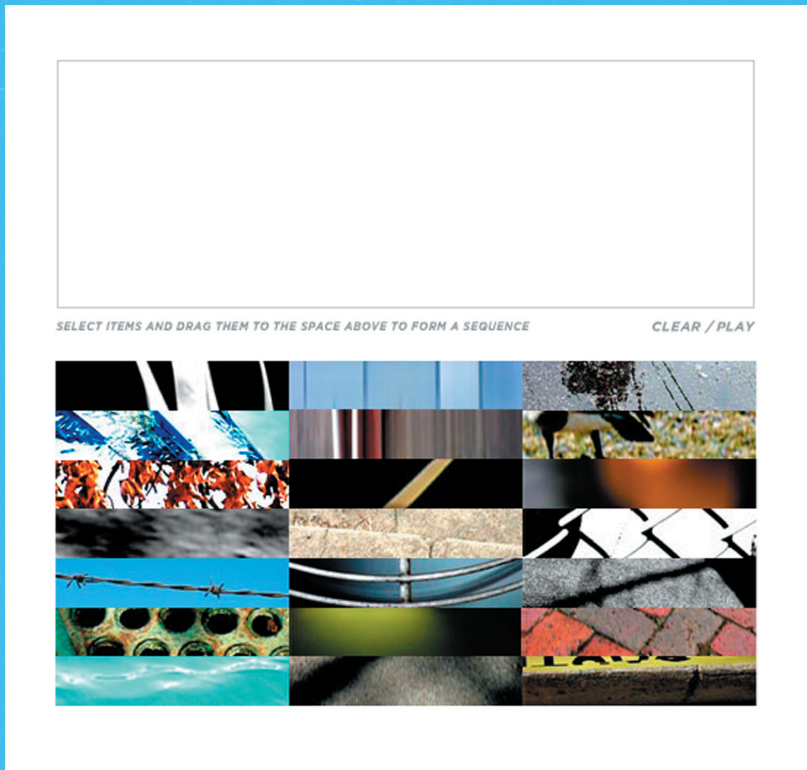
19. SERJANE / MAHAL KITA



20. BJÖRK / ATLANTIC (ATOM'S ACID ETUDE MIX)



21. ROB ZOMBIE / DRAGULA (HOT ROD HERMAN REMIX)



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.

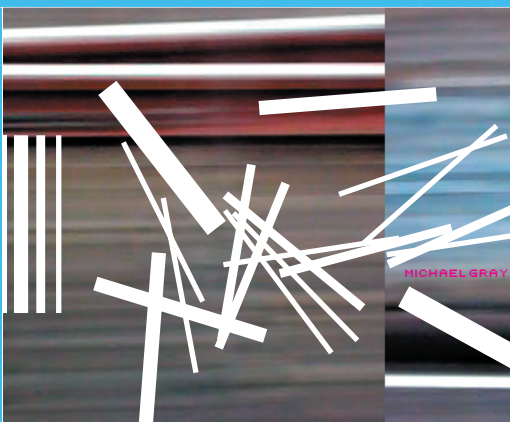
Overall, I feel that my project addressed an area of design that is evolving and changing rapidly. By using design applications that were not intended to be used in such extensive manners, I hope that it encourages others to push their personal creative and technological boundaries.

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.



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 encyclopedia (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.

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