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Assignment no.	Folio 2	Due date	11/10/2018	Name of lecturer/teacher	Matthew Riley
Campus		Class day/time		Tutor/marker's name	

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Advanced Play Design | Folio 2
A playful learning.

Homie | S3677522
Master of Animation, Games and Interactive Media

Abstract.

In this reflective document, I will discuss the various exercises done during the Advanced Play Design classes. I will talk about the learnings from each theme, how it informed my practice in the studio, if not then what did they inform? It will be a threaded collection of playful exercises sewn together as a collective inquiry that helped me understand the relevance of the weekly themes, enabled me to research the relevant works and find inspiration as I progressed through Studio 2.

Background.

The context of play eluded me for the first few weeks unfortunately as I struggled with finding my goal for the Studio project. The format of the class being finishing the task within the allocated duration was challenging as I am used to extensive planning. On top of that, not having a definite image of my studio project also dulled down the output of my exercises. But it was because of these exercises I was able to see a pattern emerging in my work flow that eventually evolved into my inquiry and studio project. It was because of these playful attempts at understanding a particular theme, I was getting aware of what I was doing and was able to ideate, reflect and apply all that into my studio work.

I chose to make a website based upon parallax transitions as that was a technique I often employed in my studio work. For this semester, I have been exploring parallax animation in After Effects a lot so I figured that was the best way to convey my submission was to do something complimentary to that. A website in particular because it is a good archival tool in my opinion and it is a one stop spot for all the work done for this subject.

Please visit the archive of my APD work at

<https://s3677522.wixsite.com/apdf2>

Exercises and Learnings.

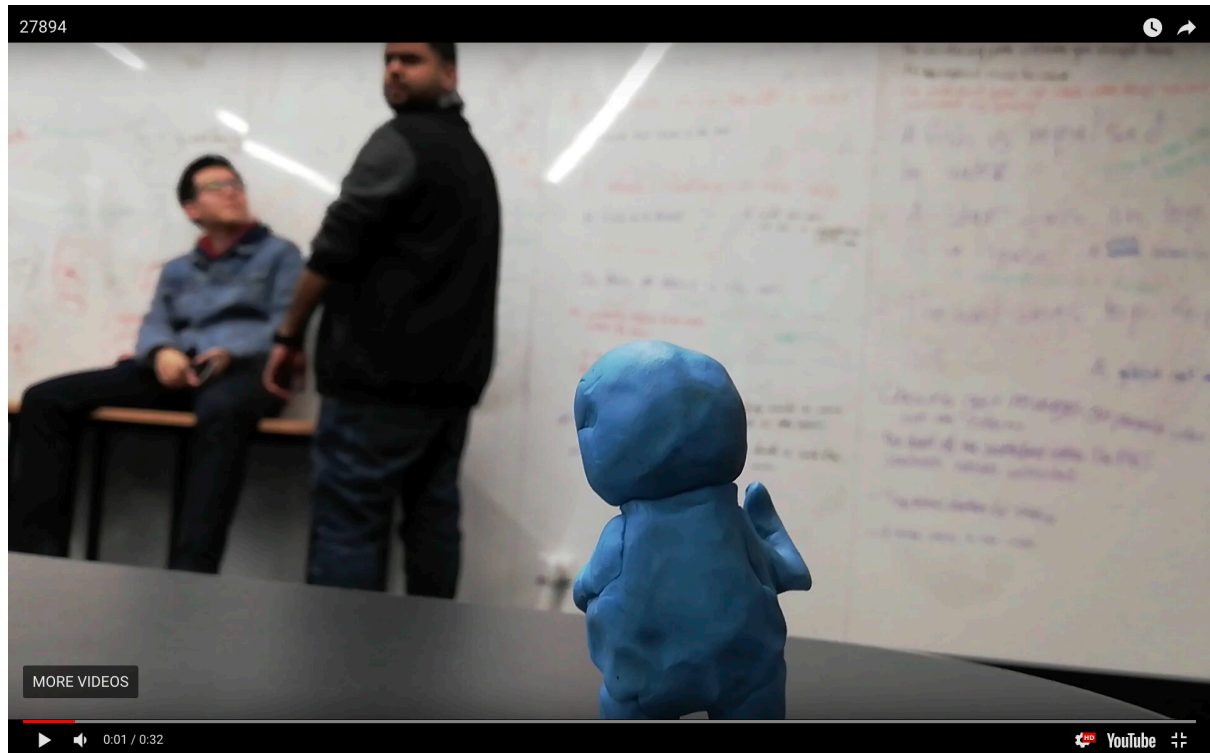
Week 1 | Play and Observation



The very first exercise, something completely unexpected and a bit overwhelming. After running my brain relentlessly and coming up with nothing, I sat down as everyone else was going out to OBSERVE. I had forgotten how important it is to observe instead of just jumping straight onto a computer and make something. This is when I noticed the food getting cold in front of the me, I figured I should just eat first. It struck me that how food finishing increases the visibility of the plate itself. So, I decided to stop motion record that observation as I had never used stop motion before. It didn't achieve much but it was my way of playing around.

At this stage, having no idea for studio work was inconvenient as I had no clue what kind of context I was looking for. However, this was the beginning of the concept that would turn into my studio work. I realized that observing inanimate objects gave me a sense of purpose, drove me to extrapolate a story out of nothing.

Week 2 | Play and Tinkering



This theme was a perfect opportunity to understand the very essence of play, unfortunately back then I was in a rush to see that. I feel as we grow up, we set rules of engagement subconsciously which block us from messing around. As simple as the concept was to understand, it was another thing to actually act upon it. I realized that I had been so accustomed to jumping on to my familiar tools, that I had almost forgotten to play. I decided to do something completely different from what I was used to. I was happy with the stop motion from previous week's exercise and decided to use that as well. I did this with a friend/peer as the idea of playing was constantly itching in my head that it's supposed to be done with others. So, we made a small character using molding clay and made a silly story out of it.

It was fun, and upon further thought I realized I was interested in the idea of material things which could become alive and act on their own. At that point, I thought I was may be retracting towards my Studio 1 project which was similar. It dawned upon me much later that I was onto something. I couldn't situate any similar works within this exercise because I was confused and ignorant of the value of putting context.

Week 3 | Play and Materiality



Things were starting to come along with this one.

Playing with materials, meaning objects around us are fair game. My consideration for studio work was all about giving the agency and narrative in the hands of something inanimate. This exercise was a refreshing approach for me to quickly find something around me and make something out of it. A piece of cardboard was sitting right in front of me so I just picked it. I had walked a minute before outside and saw people rock climbing. That's when I saw a Lego character and Fabian threw some Blue-Tac away. I quickly combined these things and made a story of a Lego trying to rock climb.

As innocent and simple as this was, it was certainly playful. It was also thought provoking and my concept was brewing fast now. I knew through this, that I wanted to play with the materiality of inanimate objects and bring them to life through my animation. I quickly started researching about my subjects to work for. I was still not realizing the idea of context till this point, this pattern of ignorance cost me eventually, both in terms of grades and time.

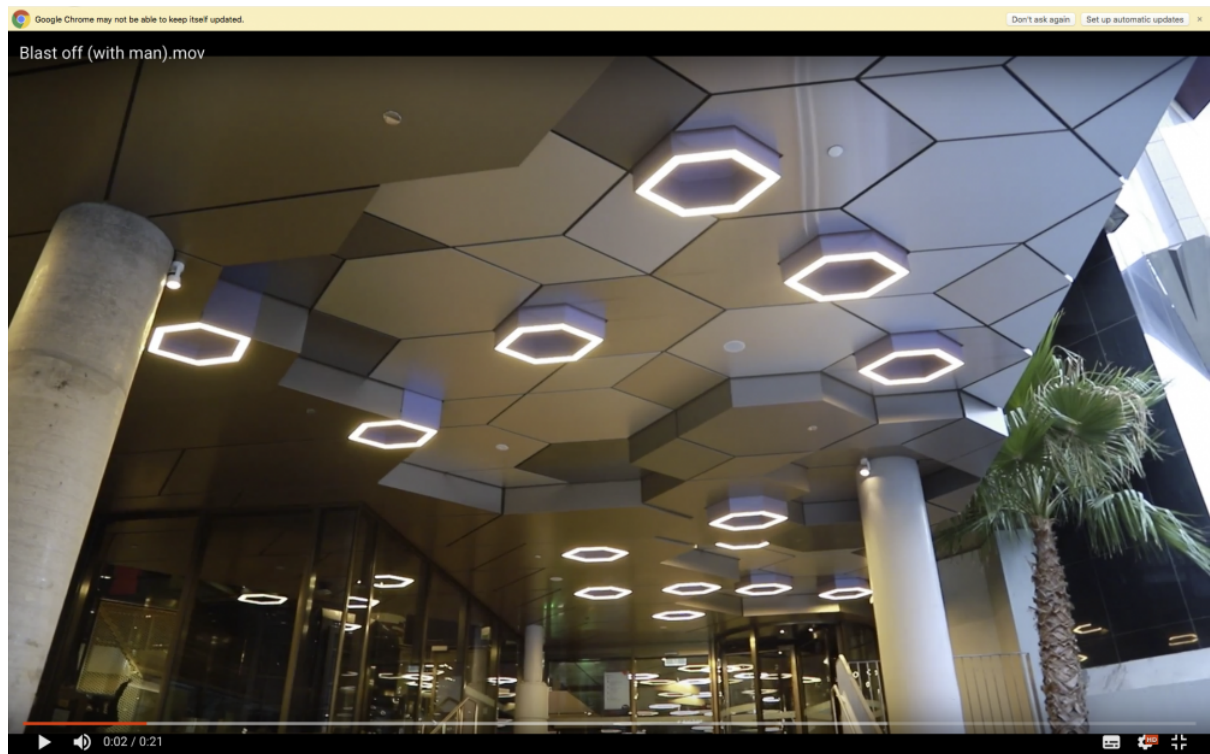
Week 4 | Play and Place



At this point I had a vague idea for what I wanted to do for my studio and had begun my testing. Place is always an interesting thing to give the agency to. I decided to visualize my own interpretation of space and its influence on surrounding objects at the place I work at. I work with PVC balloons and the illumination from a light bulb behind them always made an interesting rim around the border of the balloon. The output was playful and interesting, it also gave me an insight to observe an object independently of its designed purpose. To see how place can drive a narrative.

I did this exercise outside of class because I wanted to keep it playful and as much as I love the university classroom, it's quite monotonous. Interesting observation that came out of this exercise was that I realized that environment can affect the materiality and application of an object entirely, especially light conditions. This understanding contributed quite well in one of my animatic in the studio in the latter weeks.

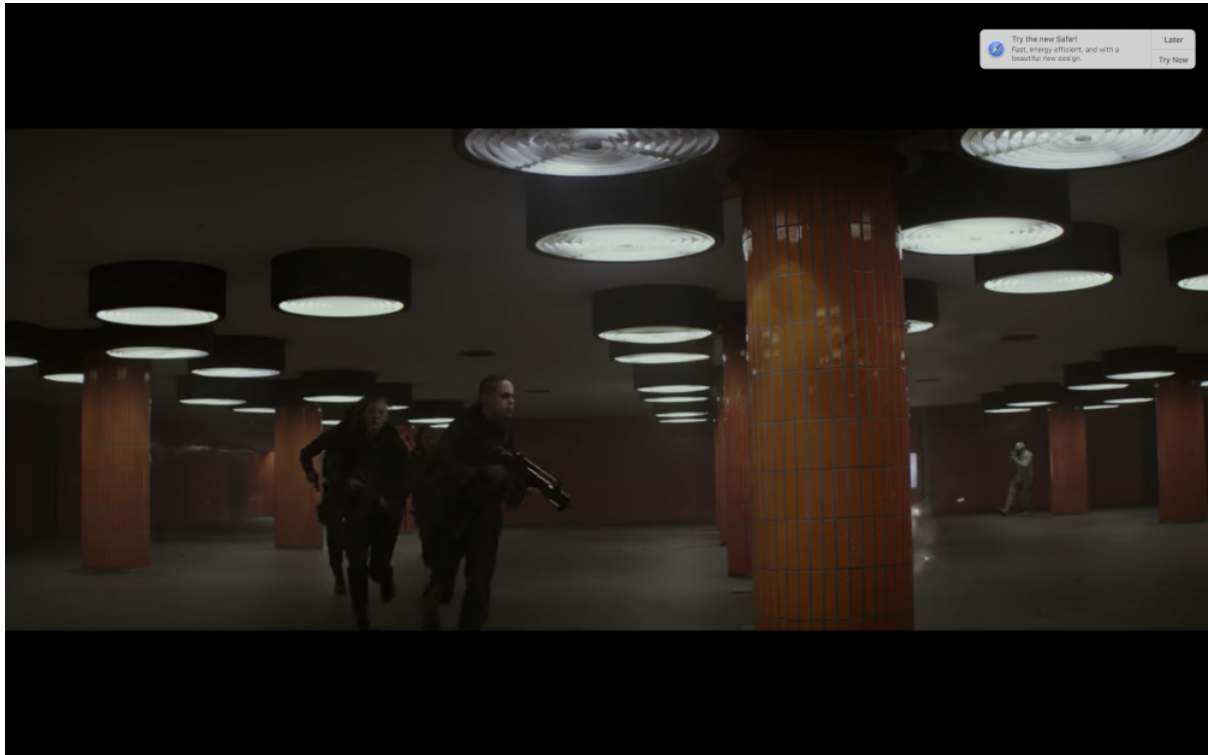
Week 5 | Play and Objects



Objects! This was almost like a sign to me that my stuff was going to work out. It was another good opportunity to explore what I wanted to and test out a different method to see if it would work. It was a bit tricky as I didn't know how to make it playful. This time it was a deeper comprehension of the concept for me, this opened up a bigger picture for me. I was particularly thankful for this exercise. At this point I was considering working on cityscapes and architecture for my studio work. I broke down my interpretation of simple lights on ceiling and connected it to different references and had my own understanding of it.

I took inspiration from Hunger games laser light panels.

Rocket exhausts was another consideration.



At this point, this exercise was helpful enough for me to understand where my work was headed. I had decided to work on architecture and animate buildings. Matt and Max had introduced us to deep concepts like Psycho-Geography and Object-Oriented Ontology. Which ended up becoming my inspiration as well as constraints for my studio work. At this point I was researching works done by other people but was failing to keep a log it. A mistake soon fixed. But at least my concept was in the direction I was liking.

Week 6 | Presentations

The presentation was a good opportunity to reflect back on and see what was emerging out of the work I had done so far. The feedback from the faculty and observing what others have been doing for their work, how were they connecting the studio project with these exercises. Watching people interpret the same theme in different ways, seeing ways of being playful was a good set of information I needed to proceed further.

There were many flaws to what I had done so far, I was ideating but there was no context to support my investigation. It was an important aspect of showing that we were working and investigating and I had completely missed out on that. I was not freely playing which was one of the core values of this subject. The feedback indicated that narrowing down my scope would help me direct my work towards the studio.

At the same time, I also got the feedback for my studio presentation. I came to a conclusion that the technique I was employing for my studio work wasn't going to cut it. I was not doing justice to my inquiry and process by simply animating on top and personifying the buildings in my own way while calling it an understanding of Object-Oriented Ontology. It was time to change tools and techniques. This decision led to me trying different things in the latter weeks which were very informing.

I moved ahead with a much clearer and sharper understanding of the subject and what it was requiring me to do.

Week 7 | Play and Audience



This week it was a fresh start with a much better understanding of what I want to do. I had acquired a technique which I was employing for my studio work (Parallax animation on pictures) and decided to carry out the rest of the Advanced Play Design exercises using that to hone my skills for it and have the themes inform towards my task.

Audience, meaning the one who perceives. I decided to play with the idea of the perceiver and distorted some elements on a building. Making it seem animate and awake. I was able to find some interesting and relevant work by some good artists and was able to grasp the concept very clearly. It was only a matter of practice and iteration from this point. The exercise contributed some pointers on my method which helped me with my studio work.

Week 8 | Play and Time



Time has always been an interesting theme as it has so many potential interpretations. For this theme, I decided to work with a picture I took from my resources for studio which had a signage called "Doomsday". This made me think how nothing escapes time. That not matter how grand or simple, time devours everything. It wasn't exactly a playful thought but I made an apocalyptic themed representation of that beautiful nature by replacing background elements.

This exercise was very informing as it allowed me to understand the narrative strength time holds and how just by using camera displacement and disrupting elements slightly, so much motion can be achieved. I also played around with perspective more than usual. Playing with all these tools helped me a lot in my studio work. I was also able to find some interesting tutorials to produce my desired output.

Week 9 | Play and Force



Forces are vivid and subjective. With my work situating around buildings and animating pictures, I chose to use Time as my force. I found some examples of before and after architecture which had changed dramatically. I decided to use the method from my studio to take a picture of a structure and then using the force of time, change its outlook completely. Of course, this being a 1.5 hours exercise, there wasn't a refined outcome.

I was however, very happy with my speed with After Effects and ability to think and deform any building structure on upon observation. This was a clear indication of how APD was being useful for my studio practice. I was able to gather some good context on architectural advancements and deterioration over the years. How designers and architects work on preserving and renovating such structures. I was able to convey my idea through the short animatic.

Week 10 | Play and Stillness

Bottom Layer Middle Layer Top Layer

Theme Title: Squares

Animated Effect: None

? HELP 🔍 PREVIEW ✓ SAVE

At week 10, my method, technique and cohesion is set. I am done with experiments and am producing work with a much clear focus. I particularly enjoyed this theme because my technique (animating pictures, Parallax) essentially is calm and composed elements moving ever so slightly. I wanted to be playful and not just do something that I would normally do like studio. I decided to make a live wallpaper on my phone for this exercise. I made 3 different images in separate layers and put them on top of each other. I then used an open source app to set it as a combined parallax wallpaper.

The idea was that when the device is laying still nothing happens, but upon slightest of movement that elements start to move around appearing to be individual things moving freely. To me this was a good example of how much lurks behind stillness.

I found some really good references to take inspiration from and build upon.

Ultimately, Advanced Play Design turned out to be a perfect complimenting subject to inform to my studio project. Not just that, but in my case, it was essentially these exercises that helped me derive a concept, explore the work happening across the industry, choose what I wish to work with and keep it together neatly, understand that tools I must acquire and employ while having the competence to manage all this together and produce some informing outcomes, while being playful.

In terms of Community of Practice, I make efforts to be actively engaged with the Advanced Play Design cohort. I regularly view and suggest my peers on their exercises. Feedback is critical so I try and work with everyone when they present. Attendance is also something that I keep in my mind, hence I remain punctual to the class timings and for the exercises themselves. I finish my themes and upload them straight away on the MAGI website within the allowed time.

To nominate a mark for myself, I would give myself a 13. I'm certain there are more ways to indulge and support the community and I will try harder.

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