

PROJECT 1: TABLEAU VIVANT

A term meaning “Living Picture,” the Tableau Vivant was a popular form of entertainment in Europe before photography, radio, or film. A group of models would recreate paintings, etchings, or scenes from books by posing in frozen attitudes on a stage, often with elaborate costumes, props, and lighting. Tableaux Vivants are still created at the annual Pageant of the Masters in Laguna Beach – a \$4.1 million production featuring 40 art works recreated over a period of 2 months. For this assignment, you will create a Tableau of one work of figurative art, and use it as reference for a new illustration. The illustration will be 11”x15”.

OBJECTIVES

To explore existing artistic traditions and history as a source of inspiration, to examine the role of image reference, both historical and created, in creating an illustration, to develop an immersive composition from a static one, to use warm and cool contrast in a painting.

PROCEDURE

Chose one of the artistic traditions listed below:

- Chinese Scrolls
- European Illuminated Manuscripts
- Egyptian Painting
- Greek Vase Painting
- Persian Miniature Painting
- Ukiyo-e Prints

Research the tradition, and find an example of it that you would like to base your piece on. You must have a high quality copy of this image, at least 3”x3”. The image may be Xeroxed or scanned from a book. A low-res JPEG is not acceptable. Put the copy in your sketchbook. Record the name and period of the piece, and, if appropriate, the artist. Write about what is occurring in the image. Identify all the characters, the environment, and any significant objects in the image.

PHOTO-REFERENCE: Using friends or classmates, re-enact the scene from your image. You may want to arrange equivalents of the costumes, props, and setting, for instance, using a broom handle for a sword. Pay attention to the lightning of your tableau. When you are satisfied with your tableau, photograph it. The artistic traditions listed above tend towards flattened, theatrical compositions. Work against this in your photo-reference. Strive to find the point of view that will create the most interesting composition. Consider the depth of your arrangement: background, middle ground, and foreground. Present your photos in class.

DRAWING: Based on the feedback you receive in class on your photographed compositions, develop your drawing at the size of the final illustration. Determine each figure on separate layers of tracing paper, as well as the background, and any major props. Manipulate the layers of tracing paper around to tweak your drawing. When you are satisfied with the composition, transfer it to illustration board. You may determine if your tableau will be in modern or historical dress.

PAINTING: Execute the painting as a warm and cool value scheme. Use Titanium White, Burnt Umber, and Ultramarine Blue acrylic paints. By mixing the blue and umber paints, you will create a dark near-black color. Adjusting it with a little more blue or brown will make it cooler or warmer, respectively. Adding white will provide you with full range of warm and cool values.

PRESENTATION: When the painting is finished, mat it. The mat should have a second window for a good, clean copy of the source image. Flap the mat with a sheet of tracing paper and a sheet of cover stock.

- 1/18 Project 1: Tableau Vivant assigned
In Class: Research Tableau Vivant source material
- 1/20 In Class: Exercise 2: B&W Texture Matching Scavenger Hunt
- 1/25 Project 1: Tableau Vivant research and photos due
In Class: Begin drawing.
- 1/27 In Class: Exercise 2: Expression studies
- 2/1 Project 1: Tableau Vivant drawing due.
In Class: Paint Tableau Vivant
- 2/3 In Class: Paint Tableau Vivant
- 2/8 Project 1: Tableau Vivant critiqued.
- 2/10 In Class: Exercise 3: Color Texture Matching Scavenger Hunt
- 2/15 Project 1: Tableau Vivant finished.
Project 2: Periodic Table element chosen.
- 2/17 Project 2: Work on Periodic Table thumbnails / finish Tableau Vivant Painting
- 2/22 Project 1: Tableau Vivant Painting due, matted, flapped, labeled.
Project 2: Periodic Table thumbnails and written research due.

PROJECT 2: PERIODIC TABLE

An element is a chemically pure substance consisting of a single type of atom, such as oxygen, lead, or uranium. In 1869, the elements were organized according to their chemical properties and atomic number by Dmitri Mendeleev. This chart is called The Periodic Table, and has, with refinements, been in use ever since. For this assignment, we will create an illustrated Periodic Table. The illustration will be 12"x12".

OBJECTIVES

To use research and ideation techniques to develop narrative from a non-narrative point of departure; to build upon the compositional, referenced, and painting skills from Project 1; to use a near-complementary color scheme in a painting; to balance multiple formal demands with the need to create a striking image.

PROCEDURE

Chose a chemical element, and sign up for it on the posted Periodic Table. Only one person may pick a given element.

Research your element, making note of at least ten distinct facts about it. These may be from the history or folklore relating to the element, interesting physical properties, or uses and applications. To this list of ten you may add any personal associations you may have with this substance. From this list, develop a mind map, spinning out associations from these facts, and then building on those associations. When you have developed a rich map of associations, look for connections between concepts from different branches of the map. Make note on the map of interesting visual and narrative ideas that come out of these connections.

Ideally, you are seeking two things: a basic narrative to depict in your illustration, and at least one other thematic reference to the element. Take antimony as an example. This metalloid substance, which I'd never heard of until seeking out an obscure element to use as an example, doesn't seem very promising, at first. It's shiny, in a chintzy sort of way, and has a number of industrial uses: it's used in plumbing, and matches, and flame-proofing compounds. But then I find out that it was used make kohl, the dark eye makeup favored throughout the Ancient World. Now, all sorts of narrative possibilities open up: Cleopatra being made-up before meeting Caesar; Salome dancing for the head of John the Baptist, even Johnny Depp dressing up as Jack Sparrow. Pretty much any scene from history or myth that involved a man or woman wearing eye make-up is fair game. Drawing connections between Cleopatra's Egypt and antimony's use in matches and flame-proofing leads me to Sekhmet, the Goddess of Fire. So, Cleopatra being made-up with kohl before meeting Caesar is my main narrative for my illustration, and images of Sekhmet (as well as some compositionally prominent braziers) addresses my secondary thematic reference to antimony.

In addition to the narrative content and at least one secondary reference, the illustration should include the atomic number of the element being depicted (in the case of antimony, this is 51).

SKETCHING: Develop 25 thumbnail sketches of your idea. Each thumbnail should be a different compositional approach to the image. Select the three best compositions and draw them larger (around 4"x4') and neater, so that you can present them to the class.

PHOTO-REFERENCE: Collect the friends and props necessary to shoot good references for your illustration. As with Tableau Vivant, use the photo-shoot as an opportunity to explore and refine your composition. Bring at least ten good shots to present to the class. Additionally, collect any other photo-references you will need for your image.

DRAWING: Based on the feedback you receive in class on your photographed compositions, develop your drawing at the size of the final illustration. Determine each figure on separate layers of tracing paper, as well as the background, and any major props. Manipulate the layers of tracing paper around to tweak your drawing. When you are satisfied with the composition, transfer it to illustration board.

PAINTING: This image will be rendered in a near-complementary color scheme. Using a color wheel, determine the palette of your piece. You may use only these two colors, black, and white. Spend some time in your sketchbook making some color swatches with these paints: the 2 near-complementary colors, at least three neutral tones created by mixing them in different proportions, and then tints (the color mixed with white), shades (the color mixed with black) and tones (the color mixed with grey) of all 5 colors. This is a very limited palette, but it can be very effective when considered carefully, and used strategically.

PRESENTATION: When the painting is finished, flap the illustration board with a sheet of tracing paper and a sheet of cover stock.

2/15 Project 1: Tableau Vivant critiqued.
Project 2: Periodic Table element chosen.

2/17 Project 2: Work on Periodic Table thumbnails / finish Tableau Vivant Painting

2/22 Project 1: Tableau Vivant Painting due, matted, flapped, labeled.
Project 2: Periodic Table thumbnails and written research due.

2/24 Project 2: Periodic Table research and photos due .
Illustrator Research due.
In Class: begin drawing.

3/1 Project 2: In Class work on Periodic Table drawing

3/3 Project 2: Periodic Table drawing due

3/8 Project 2: Periodic Table critiqued.

3/10 Mid-Term.
Project 3: Invisible Cities assigned.
In Class: Exercise 5: Color Textures

3/14 Spring Break.

3/17 Spring Break.

3/22 Project 2: Periodic Table due.
In Class: Work on Project 3 thumbnails

PROJECT 3: INVISIBLE CITY

The great modern fabulist, Italo Calvino, released *Invisible Cities* in 1972. The book's framing story involves Marco Polo describing to Kublai Khan the cities in the Khan's empire (the empire having grown too large for the Khan to visit them all himself). The cities are described in series of prose poems, and often less about describing urban geography than exploring philosophical or poetic notions, such as human nature, linguistics, metaphysics, ethics, and memory. We will create images based on some of Calvino's *Invisible Cities*. This illustration will be proportional to 11"x15".

OBJECTIVES

To adapt a visual image from a literary source that uses non-literal and poetic imagery; to expand upon source material in order to have greater insight into its depiction; to fuse disparate historical sources to create a credible non-existent environment; to contrast interior and exterior space using separate warm and cool palates.

PROCEDURE

Read the packet excerpted from *Invisible Cities*, and choose the city you would like to illustrate.

"Day in the Life:" Write 300-500 words about a typical day in the life of an inhabitant of your city. Begin in the morning, and record the inhabitant's routine until he or she goes to sleep at night. Look to your own daily routine for events to transpose upon your inhabitant.

RESEARCH: Research the cities of two different cultures. Each culture should be separated both geographically and by at least 200 years in time. Find images from both of your selected cities for each of the following:

- 5 building exteriors, including personal dwellings and a religious center
- 5 building interiors
- 3 forms of transportation; public art
- furniture, including chairs, beds, tables, and storage
- clothes for men, women, and children.

The more images you collect, the more inspiration you'll have when designing your city.

CONCEPT ART: Design the following for your city:

- 3 building exteriors, including personal dwellings and a religious center
- 2 building interiors
- 3 forms of transportation
- public art
- furniture, including chairs, beds, tables, and storage
- clothes for men, women, and children

Consider what you know about your city both from Italo Calvino and your own writing. Remember that people have lived in this city for generations: their will be older and newer styles jostling against one another; there will be inhabitants who prefer more conservative styles, and inhabitants who are more progressive. There will be noise, and garbage, and graffiti. It should look lived in.

SOME INSPIRATION:

<http://www.rot13.org/~dpavlin/bladerunner/design.htm>

<http://www.fengzhudesign.com/gallery.html>

The Production DVDs for *The Lord of the Rings*

SKETCHING: Develop 30 thumbnails of a scene in your city. The scene should show both an interior and exterior space, and should contain enough specific action that it looks like a scene taking place in your city, not just a study of the city itself. You may want to return to your “Day in the Life” piece and depict some of the actions described there. Choose the best two thumbnails and draw them larger and cleaner as presentation sketches for class.

The “Day in the Life” piece, the visual research, concept sketches, thumbnails, and presentation sketches are all due 3/24.

DRAWING:

Based on the feedback you receive in class, refine your sketches into a full-size drawing, 11”x17”.

COLOR COMPOSITIONS: The color scheme for this project is a warm/cool split. Paint the interior of your scene mixing only cool versions of the colors on your palette together, and paint the exterior using only warm colors (or vice versa). When you are satisfied with your drawing, execute three color studies to determine the most effective way to use this particular color scheme.

PAINTING STAGE ONE: Using a neutral color (not black) that will blend well with your color scheme, paint in the values for your painting. You may also use white paint to re-establish lighter values.

PAINTING STAGE TWO: When the value scheme has been satisfactorily established, begin to lay in the colors with transparent layers of acrylic paint. Do not use white paint at this stage. Build rich, deep shadows with many transparent layers.

PAINTING STAGE THREE: When the color scheme has been established for the painting, you may adjust any final details with opaque paint. When used as highlights, opaque colors contrast well with transparent shadows.

3/10 Mid-Term.

Project 3: Invisible Cities assigned.
In Class: Exercise 5: Color Textures

3/14 Spring Break.

3/17 Spring Break.

3/22 Project 2: Periodic Table due.
In Class: Work on Project 3 thumbnails

3/24 Project 3: Invisible Cities thumbnails, written and visual research due.
In Class: Begin drawing.

3/29 In Class: Exercise 6: Color Studies.

3/31 Project 3: Invisible Cities drawing due.
In Class: Paint Invisible Cities.

4/4 In Class: Paint Invisible Cities.

4/7 In Class: Zoo Studies.

4/12 Project 3: Invisible Cities critiqued.

4/12 In Class: finish Project 3 Invisible Cities

4/14 Project 4: animal tale assigned.

4/19 Project 3: Invisible Cities turned in, flapped and labeled.

PROJECT 4: ANIMAL TALE

Select an animal at the zoo as the subject of your illustration. Go to the zoo and draw several sketches of this animal, including gesture studies of how the animal moves and at least one color study. The animals can be reluctant models, so be prepared to go several times in order to get a decent body of sketches. Additionally, collect photo-references of your animal, including, if possible, anatomical images. Knowing the muscle and skeletal structure of an animal is very helpful.

Research is due 4/14.

In class, draw your animal in the following poses: dancing, sitting in a chair, climbing a ladder, getting angry, and carrying an object. Use your compiled research to make the animal look as naturalistic as possible (as opposed to cartoony) in these poses.

Research a folktale, myth, legend, or other traditional story relating to your animal. It may take some digging, but if humans have come into contact with an animal, then there is a story about it somewhere. Draw at least 50 thumbnails to generate a good composition of your animal in that story. Choose the best 3 and draw them at a larger size for presentation in class.

Thumbnails are due 4/21.

Based on the feedback in class to your presentation sketches, prepare a final drawing, and then a painting. The painting should be proportional to 11"x 15". There are no restrictions on the color palette.

4/14 Project 4: animal tale assigned.

4/19 Project 3: Invisible Cities turned in, flapped and labeled.

4/21 In Class: work on thumbnails/drawing for Project 4

4/26 Drawing due

4/21 In Class: work on painting for Project 4

5/3 Painting critiqued

5/10 Painting turned in, flapped and labeled

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- 1/27 In Class: Exercise 2: Expression studies
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In Class: Paint Tableau Vivant
- 2/3 In Class: Paint Tableau Vivant
- 2/8 Project 1: Tableau Vivant critiqued.
- 2/10 In Class: Exercise 3: Color Texture Matching Scavenger Hunt
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Illustrator Research due.
In Class: begin drawing.
- 3/1 Project 2: In Class work on Periodic Table drawing
- 3/3 Project 2: Periodic Table drawing due
- 3/8 Project 2: Periodic Table critiqued.
- 3/10 Mid-Term.
Project 3: Invisible Cities assigned.
In Class: Exercise 5: Color Textures
- 3/14 Spring Break.
- 3/17 Spring Break.

3/22 Project 2: Periodic Table due.
In Class: Work on Project 3 thumbnails

3/24 Project 3: Invisible Cities thumbnails, written and visual research due.
In Class: Begin drawing.

3/29 In Class: Exercise 6: Color Studies.

3/31 Project 3: Invisible Cities drawing due.
In Class: Paint Invisible Cities.

4/4 In Class: Paint Invisible Cities.

4/7 In Class: Zoo Studies.

4/12 Project 3: Invisible Cities critiqued.

4/12 In Class: finish Project 3 Invisible Cities

4/14 Project 4: animal tale assigned.

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4/26 Drawing due

4/21 In Class: work on painting for Project 4

5/3 Painting critiqued

5/10 Painting turned in, flapped and labeled