2008

Journey

Suzann Martinsen
University of Central Florida

Part of the Art and Design Commons

Find similar works at: https://stars.library.ucf.edu/etd
University of Central Florida Libraries http://library.ucf.edu

This Masters Thesis (Open Access) is brought to you for free and open access by STARS. It has been accepted for inclusion in Electronic Theses and Dissertations, 2004-2019 by an authorized administrator of STARS. For more information, please contact STARS@ucf.edu.

STARS Citation
JOURNEY

by

SUZANN Y. MARTINSEN
B.F.A. University of Florida, 2005

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Fine Arts in the Department of Art in the College of Arts and Humanities at the University of Central Florida Orlando, Florida

Spring Term
2008
© 2008 Suzann Y. Martinsen
ABSTRACT

In my drawings and animation, I create a representation of a culture that is instilled in me, yet foreign. The work is inspired from a childlike perspective to depict a personal primitive experience with the Korean culture. The subtleties of the animations are meant to reflect the quiet nature of Asian paintings and to allow the viewer to experience and interpret it as they choose. I want others to see without hearing words in an already noisy world.
For Mom and Dad
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to gratefully thank Scott F. Hall, David Haxton, E. Brady Robinson, Keith Kovach, Carla Poindexter, Ke Francis, Jason Burrell, Charlie Abraham, Dr. Joo Kim, and my fellow Colleagues for all their help and support.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF FIGURES</td>
<td>vii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DRAWINGS</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANIMATION</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENVIRONMENTAL</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FIGURATIVE</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FOLK TALES</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOUND</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANIMATION CLIPS</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONCLUSION</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REFERENCES</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### LIST OF FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Figure 1 (2005)</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 2 (2005)</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 3 (2005)</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 4 (2005)</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 5 (2005)</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 6 (2005)</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 7 (2005)</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 8 (2006)</td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 9 (2006)</td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 10: Ribbons (2005)</td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 11: Raining (2005)</td>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 12 Doorway (2005)</td>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 13 City Lights (2005)</td>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 14 Prayer (2006)</td>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 15 Path to Nowhere (2006)</td>
<td></td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 16 Birds (2006)</td>
<td></td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 17 Hallway (2006)</td>
<td></td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 18 Pond (2006)</td>
<td></td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 19 Peace (2006)</td>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 20 Seasons (2007)</td>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 21 Waterfall (2007)</td>
<td></td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 22 Koi (2007)</td>
<td></td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 23 Bridge (2007)</td>
<td></td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 24 Name (2007)</td>
<td></td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 25 Swing (2006)</td>
<td></td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 26 Drummer (2006)</td>
<td></td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 27 Fan Dance (2006)</td>
<td></td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 28 Fish Tale (2006)</td>
<td></td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 29 Ghost City (2007)</td>
<td></td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 30 Ribbon Dance (2007)</td>
<td></td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 31 Buddha (2007)</td>
<td></td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 32 Masks of Emotions (2007)</td>
<td></td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 333 Old Woman (2007)</td>
<td></td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 34 Jump Rope (2008)</td>
<td></td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 35 Ancestors (2008)</td>
<td></td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 36 Patience (2008)</td>
<td></td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 37 Kite (2008)</td>
<td></td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 38 Walking (2008)</td>
<td></td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 39 Story Teller (2008)</td>
<td></td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 40 Man Woman (2006)</td>
<td></td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 41 Wood Cutter and Tigers (2007)</td>
<td></td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 42 Fox Girl (2007)</td>
<td></td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 43 Korean Venus (2007)</td>
<td></td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 44 Ox (2007) ........................................................................................................ 29
Figure 45 Environmental Animation (2005-2008) ............................................................. 31
Figure 46 Figurative Animation (2005-2008) ..................................................................... 32
Figure 47 Folk Tale Animation (2005-2008) ..................................................................... 33
INTRODUCTION

My intent here is to express visually my personal journey of cultural identity in a series of drawings and animations. I have always had an interest in 2-D animation and, in the age of computer technology, I want to explore the possibilities of 3-D image making and animation. I want to exhibit features of the Korean culture into which I was born but from which I was separated. They resonate deeply, somewhere within me, yet there is a simple strangeness in the process of rediscovery.

I found a collection of Asian artifacts in my late aunt’s house during the summer of 2004. My Aunt Bobbie, who was a missionary in South Korea, kept these among other artifacts collected in her missionary travels. These pieces formed the foundation of my undergraduate work at the University of Florida, which has continued in my present work. I left Korea, myself, at the age of 6 months at the event of my adoption by an American family. As a child, the artifacts that my aunt collected always interested me. During the summer of my aunt’s last days, I spent much time at her house and these artifacts, once again, caught my attention. I began to think about their significance in my life. I chose to document them in photographs for use as subject matter in my art making. The objects that I focused on most were porcelain dolls that depicted ancient life in Korea. I chose to fragment them and, within my drawings, weave them together along with other metaphors. This action seemed to reference my own dislocated/relocated personal history.

Growing up, I had rarely seen or interacted with others within the Asian culture. In the past, socially, I was often reminded of being Asian by questions of where I was from, do I speak the language, or if I had ever been to Korea. It was in those moments
that I would often wonder at my naivety of a culture that seemed like I was expected to
know. Looking back, I may have been embarrassed of the attention I had gotten from
being Asian. My adoptive family always encouraged me to learn about my culture but it
never felt important until I was much older. At the age of eighteen, I traveled to South
Korea and revisited the sites of my life before coming to America. I was impacted the
most when I saw the orphanage from which I was adopted. It was not my personal
experience or memories that interested me, but the experience of seeing the children who
were living there in the present time. It made me wonder how they perceived us. To
them, I perhaps did not come across as a stranger, but my western parents were most
likely a curiosity to them. To have the roles of cultural interest directed at my parents
was intriguing. What is it that we see as foreign and what can we find familiar within
that context? If we don’t know much about something and can find something familiar to
us, we can make sense of it and not be fearful of the unknown. The encounter with the
culture that I might have grown up with and with my experience with the culture in which
I was brought up, has made me more crucially aware of the universality of everything.
These acknowledgments of universal understanding or connections include an emotion, a
story, tradition, and so on. After my trip to Korea and the places I visited thereafter, my
memory of the poverty, loneliness, and joy of some of the people has made me more
aware of the human condition. It has made me highly aware of my personal history and
this narrative is best expressed visually through my art.
DRAWINGS

In the beginning stages of my drawings, it was important for me to clarify my ideas in a series of specific works in a sketchbook. These images served to inspire my current work. Early on, my drawing style was based in realism. It felt liberating to create drawings that had a childlike quality. This style is spontaneous and improvisational—spawned from my memories of experiences and my recent travels. These things are also informed by the various forms of art I have viewed in the past. In the drawings I worked with collage methods from present day Korean newspapers mixing the past and the present. The words are obscure to me in that I do not understand the Korean language.

Figure 1
(2005)
Figure 2
(2005)

Figure 3
(2005)
Figure 8
(2006)

Figure 9
(2006)
I grew up watching popular cartoons in film and on television. When I first saw documentaries about the making of major cartoon features, I became even more fascinated with 2-D animation. From an early age I felt compelled to study the processes of creating an animated film. I found that the conceptual drawings were almost more interesting to me than the animation itself. To see various interpretations or conceptual drawings was fun and unique and has helped prompt me to create a specific, personal, and unique style.

Initially working in 3-D with the Maya animation software seemed quite daunting since I’ve had little past interest in the technical practice of computer imaging. To not be able to create without a pencil or pen seemed to me perhaps too mechanical, too lifeless. When first learning the program, I felt daunted by the 3-D tool set especially since I had no knowledge of how to create the characters and environments I had imagined. I eventually concluded that my knowledge of 2-D image making made it natural to create the works as 2-D within the 3-D format of animation.

It became important for me to reflect and resonate my cultural interest and emphasis within a specific and aesthetically pleasing animation style. The animations I have created is inspired from my drawings and watercolor paintings and from historical Asian art. The segments within the animation are short enough to catch the viewer’s attention, but their cyclical nature allows them to be viewed in both linear and non-linear modes.

Creating an animation for me is like creating a painting and yet one, which comes to life literally through motion and sound. My animation has evolved and developed into
a theatrical style inspired by my interest in the theater. It is also highly inspired by the Asian cultures use of shadow puppets and paper cut outs. I am intrigued by flat, silhouette-based figures and forms collaged together to create a scene. My animations are broken into three forms: environmental, figurative, and narrative.
ENVIRONMENTAL

The environmental works are inspired by Asian Paintings. I am interested in the strange geometric perspective that was used in the traditional painting style. These odd points of view are meant to be calming to reflect the tranquility often times seen in Asian art.

Figure 10:  
Ribbons (2005)
Figure 11:  
*Raining* (2005)

Figure 12:  
*Doorway* (2005)
Figure 13
*City Lights* (2005)

Figure 14
*Prayer* (2006)
Figure 15
*Path to Nowhere* (2006)

Figure 16
*Birds* (2006)
Figure 17
Hallway (2006)

Figure 18
Pond (2006)
Figure 19
*Peace* (2006)

Figure 20
*Seasons* (2007)
Figure 21
*Waterfall* (2007)

Figure 22
*Koi* (2007)
Figure 23
*Bridge* (2007)

Figure 24
*Name* (2007)
FIGURATIVE

The isolation of the figures is inspired by the paintings of Holly Roberts. Roberts uses collage methods with figurative photographs, which she then later paints over to create her characters. The figures are isolated to represent a sense of loneliness or search for self-identity. The muted and often monotone colors of the background enhance the emotional impact emitted by the characters. Unlike Roberts, I chose to create original characters from drawings which later were collaged with other materials to add texture to the surface. Because it is important to me for a viewer to consider or imagine the emotions of my characters, I place them in the foreground to emphasize present time. With little to no background environment for the character, the unknown quality of all else in the view exists as a direct metaphor for my own experience and sense of the unknown. A single character’s motion becomes more exaggerated, like a puppet or a mime the actions are meant to tell a story that, perhaps, only the viewer can imagine or make the mundane everyday somehow interesting.

Figure 25
Swing (2006)
Figure 26
*Drummer* (2006)

Figure 27
*Fan Dance* (2006)
Figure 28
*Fish Tale* (2006)

Figure 29
*Ghost City* (2007)
Figure 30
*Ribbon Dance* (2007)

Figure 31
*Buddha* (2007)
Figure 32
*Masks of Emotions* (2007)

Figure 333
*Old Woman* (2007)
Figure 34
*Jump Rope* (2008)

Figure 35
*Ancestors* (2008)
Figure 36
Patience (2008)

Figure 37
Kite (2008)
Figure 38

Walking (2008)

Figure 39

Story Teller (2008)
FOLK TALES

One common perception of animation is that it is meant to have a linear, easy to follow narrative. Initially, I purposefully stayed away from specific narratives. I especially stayed away from a personal narrative that detailed my experiences or that of a character’s experience of displacement. I wanted to create something that an audience can share within my own interest of finding something identifiable, without specifics. I believed a strong narrative might easily complicate the subtleties of expression or dilute the meditative quality within the works. One could create a dialogue or other narrative for any of the pieces.

Personally, it seems that every culture has stories that are familiar and universal folklore. This universal appeal was interesting to me in demonstrating a cultural tie from stories that I was familiar with, to stories that I did not but could have grown up with, anyway, despite my locational displacement. The stories are deliberately simplified in order to allow a viewer to project themselves within the stories rather than giving them a specific storyline.
Figure 40
*Man Woman* (2006)

Figure 41
Figure 42
*Fox Girl* (2007)

Figure 43
*Korean Venus* (2007)
Figure 44
Ox (2007)
SOUND

In creating sound, I used a condenser microphone to match the action of the animations through the art of Foley. For most of the sounds, I used found objects around my house as opposed to recording natural sounds to exaggerate the final result. For some of the animations, I had to use natural sounds but enhanced them with some of the self-created sounds. The final result is fairly minimal. My goal is to enhance the visuals, not distract them.
Figure 45
*Environmental Animation* (2005-2008)
Figure 46
Figurative Animation (2005-2008)
Figure 47
*Folk Tale Animation* (2005-2008)
CONCLUSION

The past three years working with computer imaging and animation software has given me a great appreciation for this present and future technology that is available to express oneself. I have found that Animation is a more direct platform for expressing my ideas and cultural identity than a still image in painting or drawing. With what seems to be a growing need for information in an immediate manner, I have found this expression of thought through animation to be openly received. In this format it seems you can give a broader in depth connection or exposure to the characters or environments.

I have created a series of works that explores my two cultures and has become identifiable for myself through the emotions or moods that they express visually. I found that creating environments for the characters overwhelmed them and took away the potential of understanding or caring about their own experiences and emotions. Their emotions or actions can be seen as metaphors to our own self-identity or understanding of other cultures. I achieved a more emotional connection by isolating the figures, therefore, targeting a specific mood that they expressed. A viewer may share in my experience of the culture in the same manner: the humor, sadness, curiosity, and meditation, etc. From my observations of viewers of these works, I saw validations of my objective and conclusions in regards to my decisions.

I consider my views to be a personalized western view of the Korean culture and not a true depiction of the Korean culture itself. Despite cultural differences, there seems to always be something universal emerging in my work.
REFERENCES

