

Study Plan for Practice and Research 1

Synopsis

My aim is to create an interactive experience or object that represents a slice of the city Mumbai. Using visual language that symbolically represents the city's dichotomies and conflicting identities, I propose to explore the city's depth and complexity through the combined use of an appropriate form language, relevant technology and multimedia.

It is important to define the term "interactive" here because as a definition it includes a wide variety of experiences, from a mundane shopping website to a sensual and "hi-tech" experience. The Dictionary of Media Studies (2006) defines interactive media as 'media that provide two-way communication between users and their machines or systems and enable users to control their systems and obtain responses from them real time'. However I am also interested in alternative definitions that are based on relative levels of interactivity (Lopes, 2001, p.68):

Whereas in weakly interactive media the user's input determines which structure is accessed or the sequence in which it is accessed, in strongly interactive media we may say that the structure itself is shaped in part by the interactor's choices.

It is important that the final product be defined as "strongly interactive media" because the depth of the experience is meant to be a parallel to my representation of the city as a rich, multi-layered organism.

A family of colours, graphics, popular images, and everyday objects that symbolize Mumbai will create the basis of a 'visual language'. This will be the foundation on which further layers of the experience such as sound and light will be built.

The "slice of life" that I choose to represent will be centered on the theme of bipolar existence. Examples of such themes are: chaos vs. order, ugly vs. beautiful, poverty vs. luxury, virtual vs. physical, west vs. east, and belonging vs. alienation.

Choosing technology to represent these themes will be influenced by a similar concept: low-tech vs. hi-tech. In addition to this, the type of hardware used should be a conscious decision based on my knowledge and research of the political realities behind the use of such technology in the markets today. It is important to be aware of the contradiction that becomes apparent when using such media. Faced with the economic and cultural realities of Mumbai, these contradictions should either be erased or emphasized in my practice and interpretation of the city.

Another factor to take into account is that; as an artist I am in a "post digital age" (John Maeda, 2006). The term refers to a 'distinction between those that are passed their fascination with computers, and are now driven by the ideas instead of the technology'. This is an important aspect of my practice as a student of design and digital media, as it is the concept that drives my use of technology, and not the other way round.

The landscape format has also become important to my practice since my preliminary research led me to the painting *Ulhasnagar* (2001) by Sudhir Patwardhan, an artist whose work is primarily influenced by urban Mumbai and its people. *Panorama of San Francisco from Street Hill* (1878) by Muybridge is also specifically interesting to my practice because he converts what can be seen in one 360-degree turn to a landscape that stretches for 17 feet. In both artworks the

Study Plan for Practice and Research 1

landscape format reveals more of the city than what is seen normally, or parts of the city like they have never been seen before; a disillusioned and yet enlightened reinterpretation of a physical urban space.

The audience or the user will have a pivotal role in changing and interacting with the structure of the artwork. To fully understand their mental models and expectations, I will conduct basic research into popular beliefs about Mumbai, and related images in popular western media such as movies, products and TV shows. The research will be conducted based on the assumption that a majority of the audience is from the west or is a foreigner to Mumbai culture.

Several contemporary Indian artists also inform my practice, providing a large resource of theory, symbols, objects and imagery that are already being used to represent Mumbai and India. For example the use of video and projectors in Nalini Malani work Remembering Toba Tek Singh (1998) adds to an emotional story, and Rummana Hussain's work A Space for Healing (1999) uses everyday objects in combination with colour and sound to create a contemplative mood. Atul Dodiya creates stimulating art by combining everyday objects with pop art from Mumbai and Bollywood, whereas Krishnamachari Bose transforms familiar and common objects like the steel lunch *dabba* by adding video players that instill their own narrative.

With a digital collage of video and images, animation and illustration, I will create an interactive landscape of the city that reveals more through virtual space and interactivity.

Word Count: 797

Reference:

Ali, Atteqa. "Postmodernism: Recent Developments in Art in India". In Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2000-. http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/pmin/hd_pmin.htm (October 2004)

Dominic M. McIver Lopes. (2001). The Ontology of Interactive Art. *Journal of Aesthetic Education* [online] Vol. 35, No. 4 (Winter, 2001), pp. 65-81 Available from: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3333787> [21st October 2010]

Dictionary of Media Studies (2006). p. 121. A&C Black Publishers: London

John Maeda. (2006). No Crackle Pop [online]. Available from: <http://www.maedastudio.com/2006/burn/index.php?category=all&next=exists&prev=exists&this=burn> [Accessed 21st October 2010]

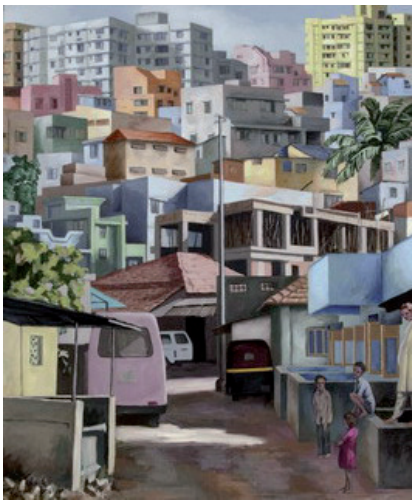
Muybridge, E. (2010). *The Panorama of San Francisco from Street Hill 1878*. Eadward Muybridge. London: Tate Britain

Malani, Nalini. *Remembering Toba Tek Singh*. (1998). Installation view Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane, Australia. 2002 [Installation with video projection on walls, 12 monitors with video clips, tin trucks, quilts, and Mylar flooring]

Patwardhan, Sudhir. Ulhasnagar. (2001). [online image]. Available from: <http://www.sudhirpatwardhan.com/paintings.htm> [Accessed 21st October 2010]

Study Plan for Practice and Research 1

Preliminary Image Research: Artist work



Silent Town, Difficulty in Telling the Truth and Ulhasnagar by Sudhir Patwardhan (Left to Right)



Installation by Krishnamachari Bose

Study Plan for Practice and Research 1

Preliminary Image Research



Memory: Record/Erase, Remembering Toba Tek Singh, and Remembering Mad Meg by Nalini Malani (Left to Right)



Artwork by Atul Dodiya

Study Plan for Practice and Research 1

Workshop and Materials Plan

In terms of facilities, I propose to use web camera's, 2-3 projectors, appropriate software such as MaxMSP and/or CCV (Community Core Vision), relevant technical support and a computer. I will also take part in workshop inductions in case the project involves building supporting structures for the installation.

Intended Reading and Research

Art History:

Danto, Arthur C. (1997) *After the End of Art, Contemporary Art and the Pale of History*. Princeton University Press: New Jersey

Muybridge, E. (2010). *Eadward Muybridge*. London: Tate Britain

Malani, Nalini. *Memory: Record/Erase*. (1996) [online image] Available from: <http://www.nalini-malani.com/video/erase.htm>. Accessed 25th October 2010

R. Siva Kumar. (1999) *Modern Indian Art: A Brief Overview*. *Art Journal* [online] Vol. 58, No. 3 (Autumn, 1999), pp. 14-21. College Art Association, Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/777856>, Accessed: 20th October 2010.

Goethe-Institut (2009). *Modernity and its Visual Response: The Last Six Decades* by Shukla Sawant [online] Available from: <http://www.goethe.de/ins/in/lp/prj/kus/bil/en5107287.htm>

Ali, Atteqa. "The Rise of Modernity in South Asia". In *Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History*. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2000-. http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/rmsa/hd_rmsa.htm (October 2004)

Interactivity & New Media Theory:

Aaron Smuts. (2009). *What is interactivity?*. *The Journal of Aesthetic Education* [online] 43(4), 53-73. Retrieved October 21, 2010, from Project MUSE database.

Further Notes:

- > Olaf, Erwin (2010) – Photographer, Bipolarity themes, *British Journal of Photography* March 2010 – pg. 50-54
- > Indian packaging used as pop art, Indian products in popular western culture, e.g. Idea
- > Kitaj – Japanese American artist.
- > Bharatnatyam: Can I incorporate this Indian dance form that I have learned for almost ten years? E.g. mudra's and emotion/music.
- > Midlands art center in Birmingham – Indian art and dance events
- > Use of Music – India, popular and new age – important factor.
- > Use of tools, methods of using tools, related theory

Study Plan for Practice and Research 1

Detailed Action Plan

Week 3: Research on Bombay in relation to audience, popular symbolic images, contemporary Indian art, and theory, Sketching. Preliminary inductions for technical support, who to go to, how to create it, projector limitations, space limitations, etc.

Week 4: Creating panorama sketches, digital images, symbols, bipolar themes. Trying and testing workability of different concepts in relation to technical capability, and technical support available.

Week 5: Choosing final visual style and symbols, technical

Week 6: Artwork, technical

Week 7: Testing and building mock-up #1 and #2

Week 8: Testing and building mock-up #1 and #2

Week 9: December - Testing and building final mock-up #3

Week 10: Testing and building final mock-up #3

Week 11: Testing and building final mock-up #3

Overview:

November: Research, Sketching, Visual language, Symbols, Landscape

December: Testing, Building, Coding, Mock-Ups, Final Artwork

January: Compilation, PDP