What is a Picture?

Photoshop assignment

• Perspective
  – Converging perspective is OK in the 3D real world
  – It is not in 2D
• Distracting elements
  – Are usually not distracting in “reality”
  – But are harder to “filter out” in the picture
  – The image does not “read” as well

Reading

• Photo-surrealism
  – Unable to detect discrepancy
  – Non realistic physics helps tell story
• Jet Lighter
  – New approach to making images
  – Photos are the new building block to make photos
  – Very different from traditional montage
  – The same may happen to cinema (Lucas)

Discussion

• Visions of Light

Visions of Light

• Intuition, realize afterwards
• Craft, not art
• Dominance of the actor
  – Must be beautiful
  – No shadow on faces
  – Dietrich more luminous, pops out
• Film noir
• Color in The Last Emperor
• Communication Director Photo-director

• Formal rules / breaking rules
  – The rules are broken, not eliminated
  – Only when necessary
  – The counter-example does prove the rule
• Difficulty with new language
  – Silent to talky, Black and white to color, wide format
• Invention
  – Technological
  – Pictorial, new language
• Importance of fresh eyes
• To be “realistic”, do not use formal rules
**Relativism of realism**

**Questions**
- What makes a picture a picture
- Would a 100% faithful hologram be a picture?
- Could it be artistic
  - Would it be better than a “normal” picture
  - Would it be inferior?
- Example of cinema
  - Static to dynamic
  - Silent to talkie
  - Black and white to color
  - 3D

**What is art**
- Craft (Painting, Cinema)
- Religion
- Beauty
- Self expression
- Emotion
- Enhanced experience

**Plan**
- The chain of representation of reality
- Duality of images 2D/3D

**Reality**
- Objective, physical
- May be imagination
  - But always references to reality

**The Artist**
- Visual system
  - Not straightforward!
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**The Artist**
- Visual system
- Intention
- Context

**The Picture**
- Flat, limitations
- Seen in a given environment, conditions

**The Beholder**
- Visual system
- Interpretation
- Context

**The Chain of Depiction**
- Differences, Mismatch
  - Context
  - Conditions
  - Perception
  - Message
  - Selection

**Context**
- Historical
- Political
- Gender
- Artistic

**Conditions**
- Darker
- Distance
- Etc.
**Perception**

- Is the perception of pictures different from the perception of reality?

**Perception picture/reality**

- Photos usually do not look distorted
- Why is the photo of the photo distorted?

**Picture vs. Reality**

- We see reality the way we see pictures
- Not the other way around
- Make up
- Stage lighting
- Statues as 2D views
- Architecture un-distortion

**Message, selection**

- How can the artist transmit a message and select what the viewer perceives

**Selection**

- Viewpoint selection, framing
- Depth of field
What is a picture?

Selection
- Edge burning

Selection
- Lighting

Selection
- How can the artist transmit a message and select what the viewer perceives
- Caption

Message, selection
- Artist Contact Time Space Interpretation Message
- Reality Light/Light Electromagnetic Material
- Beholder Contact Time Space Interpretation
- We cut between
- Behavior
- Picture

Caption, context
- Christina’s world, Wyeth
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Making pictures

• Simple in principle:
  Draw or paint what you see

• Problem:
  what we see is not so simple

Visual system
Artist
selection
interpretation
intention
message
Context
social
historical
artistic
Light
transfers
optics
perspective
Reality
Objects
Material
environnement
limitations
Picture
optics
perspective

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Making pictures

• Previsualization (Adams)

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Making vs. analyzing pictures

• Practice
• Feedback
• Clouds, Constellations
• Rorschach

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Making vs. analyzing pictures

• Optical vs. Haptic
• What we see vs. What we know

• What we feel/mean
• Other “channels”
  – Sound, data, etc.

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Goals of pictures
**Do we always need photo-realism?**

**Plan**
- The chain of representation of reality
- Duality of images 2D/3D

**Duality of pictures**
- Pictures are both
  - Flat 2D objects
  - Depictions of 3D scenes
- The dialectic between these two essences is crucial

**Duality of pictures**
- Magritte
- Anecdote
- Matisse

**Duality of pictures**
- Magritte
- Anecdote
- Matisse

**2D/3D**
What is a picture?

Is it 2D, is it 3D?
Is it 2D, is it 3D?

What is a picture?
What is a picture?

Is it 2D, is it 3D?

Is it 2D, is it 3D?

Is it 2D, is it 3D?

Is it 2D, is it 3D?
**Is it 2D, is it 3D?**

**What makes it 2D**
- The surface of the picture is visible
- The marks are visible (brush strokes, grain, scratching film…)
- Absence of one visual channel (color, texture…)
- Letters
- Accidental viewpoint
- Absence of shading
- “non-realism”

**Interaction 2D/3D**
- Celtic knots
- Islamic arabesques

**Interaction 2D/3D**
- The image is 3D
- The message is in the 2D

**Do we always need photographs?**
- Focusing on the 2D aspect emphasize the “potential” side
**Perspective correction**

- 3D verticity must be translated as 2D verticity

**Perspective distortion**

- The 3D symmetric sphere is projected as a 2D asymmetric ellipse

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**The School of Athens, Raphael**

- Sphere should project to an ellipse

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**3D and 2D attributes**

- Show a dice to children (~6-7)
- They usually draw a rectangle
- The rectangle can stand for one face

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**3D and 2D attributes**

- Show colored or numbered dice to children (6-7)
- The still draw a rectangle
- But different colors or many points

- The rectangle stands for the whole dice
- The notion of 3D object with corners is translated as a 2D object with corners
Discussion
• Why is black and white photography considered “more artistic”

Assignments
• Feedback
• Image
• Reading
• Piranesi

Reading
• Do not forget Gombrich

Assignment
• Piranesi tutorial
  – Demo version on the class web page
  – Non-photorealistic rendering
  – Tutorial 1 to 3
  – Skip 2.4

Talk
• Vague decision next week

The End
**Degree of realism**

- Non-figurative
- Remote
- Realistic
- Recording
- Photojournalism (objective, “neutral”)
- Holography

**Misc.**

- Different techniques for the same goal
- Knots for 2D/3D, posters, trompe-l’œil