Precedent Reflection
Michael Karlin | R542 | Dr. Smith

Today

1983

I was born!

1989

Some of my earliest memories with art and illustrations come from comics like the Far Side, Foxtrot, and Calvin and Hobbes. Years of my childhood were spent buried in the work of these authors, reading through their collections over and over again. Something about the cartoony, animated style of this work has always drawn me in.

1993

As I entered middle school, I found myself turning more towards the comic book world, although I never stopped loving those artists mentioned above. From X-men to Spiderman and everything in between, few days passed where I wasn't reading (and if it wasn't a comic book, it was some sort of fantasy novel). I have no doubt that these early influences in my life have had a lasting impact on the type of art and illustration that I find myself attracted to, and as I began working on my 100 things project, I found myself quickly drawn to a more animated style.

1994

Aside from comics and animations, the artwork of video and computer games also holds an important place in my personal history. Growing up in the late 80s and early 90s, a great deal of my time was spent mesmerized by the blinking lights of the arcade and rapidly evolving gaming possibilities. Watching characters grow from barely recognizable 8-bit blobs to beautifully crafted 3-D representations proved to be a wonderful experience.

1998 - 2006

During my time in high school and college, while still finding myself interested in the previously mentioned styles, I also began to explore the works of Japanese anime, and especially those films Hayao Miyazaki. These anime films were crafted in a style that was completely new to me, and I found the aesthetics to be incredibly appealing. The amount of detail that was put into the characters and even the backgrounds was astounding and I was continually impressed.

End of the Early Years | 1983 - 2006

Highlights

Reflecting on my elementary, secondary, and college years, I came to realize that the styles of art and illustration that I love today are clearly rooted in the work I was taken by as a kid and young adult. When I began my 100 things project I had a basic idea in my head of what I hoped to achieve: a fun, yet still professional, animated style. This basic idea came even before I knew what I would focus on drawing, and after reflecting back, I now see why this idea came so quickly, it is what I have always loved! As for the specific content I would draw for this project, I believe the influence and precendence for that came from the next part of my life . . .

2007

In 2007 I entered an exciting and terrifying place known only as the "real world." I began teaching secondary biology and my focus on art and design shifted slightly to include aspects of instruction. For the first time I began to realize that the way I created and structured my presentations, assignments, labs and so on, had an enormous impact on student learning and engagement. This realization helpd me to grow in my instruction and to expand in my exploration of design styles.

2008-2015

One of my major projects during my time in the "real world" has been my professional portfolio. Starting with my Master's degree, I began creating an online collection of artifacts and experiences that could showcase my work. I have gone through two major revisions of my portfolio, and with my acceptance into the IST Ph.D. program at IU, I realized another update was in order. Because of this, I ended up deciding on designing icons and logos for my portfolio, and incorporating the aforementioned styles, as my final goal for this class project.

Version 1 | 2008 - 2011

Version 2 | 2011 - 2015

2010-2014

During these four years I also had the opportunity to teach abroad in Asia and South America. I found myself enamored with the artistic styles of the various countries that I was able to visit, and these styles have also found their way into my own.

Oswaldo Guayasamin | El Grito II

Prince Yongrong | Ink & Colors on Silk

### End of the Teaching Years | 2007-2015

Present Day

And now, we've reached today! As mentioned, for my current project I am working on designing logos and icons for the new version of my online portfolio. All of the styles and influences I have mentioned up to this point are finding their way into this project in one way or another. That being said, there are some very specific styles and ideas that I have discovered during the course of this class, on which the rest of this reflection will now focus. Find out more below!
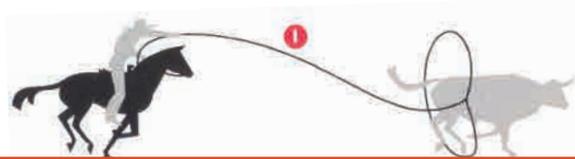
2015

One of the first books that caught my eye in class, maybe because Professor Smith brought it over to my desk for me, was Nigel Holmes' Wordless Diagrams. His beautiful and simplistic style of design immediately appealed to me, as did his ability to incorporate humor.
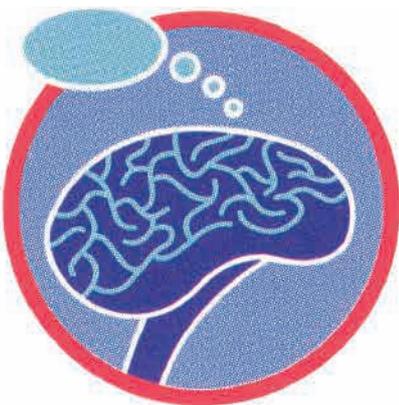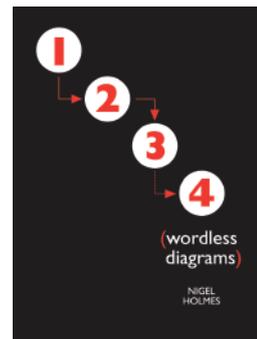
2015

In addition to Nigel Holmes' book from above, and a few others of his as well, another book that caught my eye was Miyazaki's "Pictograms and Icons 2." This book was an enormous collection of pictograms and icons from around the world and from an enormous variety of contexts as well. I found this book particularly helpful in quickly exploring already existing styles in icons, and I loved the fact that it included work from global perspectives as well. While I did browse through a few other icon books during class time, this was the one I kept going back to, as I found it the most enjoyable and applicable to my project.

2015
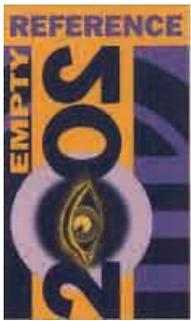
The last book from class that played a large part in my design process was Cabarga's "Designer's Guide to Global Color Combinations." There were quite a few times where I would get stuck falling into the same color combinations over and over again, and this book really helped me break out from those patterns and explore some new and exciting color combinations!
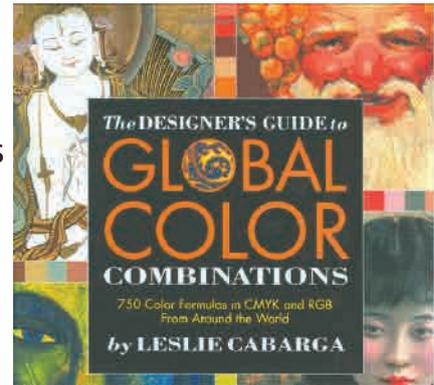

2015

I also had several influences outside of class during this time, most of which came from a site I had discovered at work - Creative Market. Creative Market is a site where designers can share fonts they've created, icon packs, web design templates, textures, and pretty much anything else they've made. One of the icon packs that stuck out the most to me was Squid Ink's "Flat Icon Pack." These icons caught my eye, not because of their style (which I do like, but isn't really in line with what I was doing for this part of my assignment), but because of the how they represented a large range if ideas so simply.

2015

With all that being said, this image here was easily one of the most influential on my design process. I found this image in a brush pack from Favete Art (also on Creative Market) and it instantly hit a nerve for me. It was about 3 weeks before I started class that I found this, but as soon as this project began, it kept popping back into my head, and I knew I needed to dig back through my history to find it again. Out of all the influences described here, I believe this image and quote to be the largest.
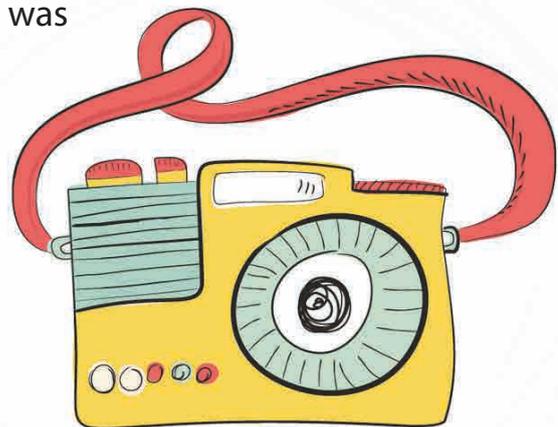
VECTOR ART DOESN'T NEED TO BE TOO CLEAN :)

The Final Project

And so, with all these influences in mind, or at least bubbling up from my subconscious and childhood, I began to work on drawing my 100 things. I knew I wanted to create icons and logos for my portfolio and I knew I wanted a digital, but hand-drawn feel, that had some fun and whimsy to it, but was still professional.

With those key ideas in mind, I set out sketching my ideas. And then, I remembered. I'm not the best when it comes to drawing by hand. Fortunately, I had plenty of paper and some excellent guide material from all the books and resources in class. And I'm proud to say, I made it through the entire project with only having to trace one item: A lightbulb. For whatever reason, getting the curves right on that thing proved to be a little too much for me!

In the end, I am incredibly happy with how my collection turned out. I feel like I found the balance I was looking for, between fun and professional, between digital and analog, and I think the icons capture a decent bit of myself as well. Overall, this has been one of my favorite projects, and I feel like my design skills have greatly improved as a result.

A Few Examples...
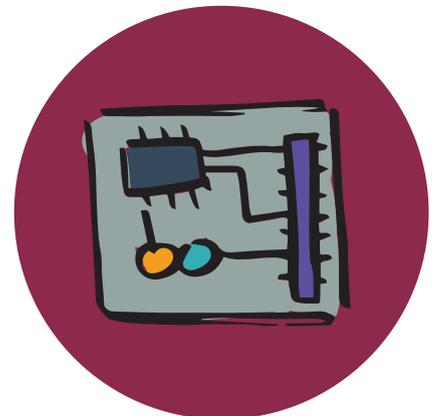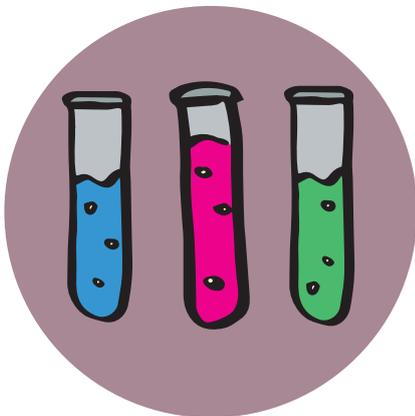
References

Cabarga, L. (2001). The Designer's Guide to Global Color Cominations. How Design Books.

Holmes, N. (2005). Wordless diagrams. Bloomsbury Publishing USA.

Miyazaki, A. (2009). Pictogram and Icon Grahpics 2. PIE Books.

Inchiostro Illustrator Brush Pack by Favete Art:
https://creativemarket.com/Favete/123327-Inchiostro-Illustrator-Brush-Pack

Squid Ink Flat Icon Pack by WebIconSet:
https://creativemarket.com/webiconset/186733-Squid-Ink-Flat-Icon-Pack/