Design Epilogues

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PREFACE

For the last ten years, I have been teaching Senior design studios that emphasize authentic self-hood as part of team exploration that can only be lived, not trained. Design discoveries and creations happen not only through perception, but also through intuition, such that the boundary is erased between design as a subject and design as an object. The process of making these posters occurs through both group and individual involvement. This transformational process allows for selective recording to transpire as a way of self-reflection. The Senior posters are born from an act of “making” which in essence reveals a thinking process beyond mere techniques. The posters are rich, complex, mysterious, sensual, and at the same time, they allow us to find the universal in the process itself. In fact, this kind of learning, based on “techne,” offers one a special and privileged stance, a unique knowing. True learning occurs in accepting that inexplicable and authentic architecture exists, as “poesies,” ready to explain.

“Techne” is a term, etymologically derived from the Greek word τέχνη (Ancient Greek: [tékʰneː], Modern Greek: that is often translated as “craftsmanship”, “craft”, or “art”.
Epilogues, or summarizing commentaries, happen in many forms on the Bowling Green State campus: from simple interaction between students, faculty, and staff through dialogues between colleagues, friends and guests. This room-sized installation represents an alternative approach to the traditional understanding of a conclusion, using the idea of a visual summary functioning as a design epilogue. It focuses on aspects such as creativity, collaboration, capturing emotions, and learning to challenge the traditional modes of design thinking. All viewers become involved as observers to gain insight into the soul of the design studio - the core hands-on experience in the architectural setting. Something special happens in the studio environment due to the unique group dynamics. This installation tries to capture the generally unrecognized aspect of a studio experience that stitches together the most salient elements of the individual design projects into one coherent narrative. Design epilogue attempts to borrow something from each project that can be used to create something new like this installation. The aspirations for this exhibition were many, key among them: summarize the group experience arising from individual projects, encourage collaborative learning, and de-emphasize the technical process of project execution. The design epilogue room offers a snapshot or even a time-lapse view of the interactive environment of a studio.
“Ekphrasis” is the figure of speech given to the description of a work of art that, within the flow of narrative, makes a break with time and the logic of actions. The point of view sets off for a moment, just a moment, on the world created within the work that is now in another work, another story in a story. The pause of ekphrasis is usually not long. A narrator or other character picks up a statuette, stands before a painting, pauses to take in the imposing façade of a building, along with the fictitious character’s wandering imagination, the reader wanders off into the speculative possibilities offered up by this small break in the action. The break can’t last long — otherwise the narrative flow would trip and fall. It can even be another book. The point is that something visual; but it can be a tune, a song; of art. Most often the object of this device is the puzzle Æneas tries to unravel as he stands before the bronze images is too much for him, or at least too much for the twenty or so lines given to this moment of ekphrasis in the poem. The story of Dædalus, already filled with its function has been recognized since antiquity, how Icarus … and novelist, who literally grew up down the street from Marcel Proust, invented a species of ekphrasis trick that he called the procédé. Placing one interpretation at the beginning of a story and the other at the end, Roussel then set about inventing the circumstances that might conceivably connect the two split-off images. Another application of the idea of the procédé involved a visual-optical method of traveling inside small images. In the poem “La Vue,” a souvenir pen-holder is fitted with a small lens inside small images. In the poem “La Vue,” a souvenir pen-holder is fitted with a small lens. Roussel describes not only the promenaders on the beach, but a yacht and various small craft in the offing. We learn of a fisherman who is calmed out at sea that his jacket is tight under the arms and worn at the cuffs, that his beard is rather unruly and that his left eyebrow is lightly shaggier than his right.”

Ekphrasis is, as one can see, far from being just an opportunity to take a break or introduce new exposition. It makes the stop into a trip, a detour in time, a left-right and a vertical: Four sides give rise to two competing motions of reading, a left-right and a vertical. The main form of the ekphrasis trick that he called the procédé. Placing one interpretation at the beginning of a story and the other at the end, Roussel then set about inventing the circumstances that might conceivably connect the two split-off images. Another application of the idea of the procédé involved a visual-optical method of traveling inside small images. In the poem “La Vue,” a souvenir pen-holder is fitted with a small lens inside a printed view that could be seen by holding the eye close to the lens. Roussel magnifies the potential of this small lens further, proposing that the viewer is able to journey into the world of the scene and partake in impossibly small details. Mark Ford writes: “Roussel’s ekphrasis is not only the promenaders on the beach, but a yacht and various small craft in the offing. We learn of a fisherman who is calmed out at sea that his jacket is tight under the arms and worn at the cuffs, that his beard is rather unruly and that his left eyebrow is lightly shaggier than his right.”}

POSSIBLE ESCAPE
CREATING THE VIRTUAL SPACE OF IMPOSSIBLE ESCAPE

It is hard to ignore the role of the frame in the function of these brief imaginary getaways. In the case of a visual work of art such as a painting, the frame is rectangular — a quadri
dration. Four sides give rise to two competing motions of reading, a left-right and a vertical: One sweeps over and orders the other; the two mesh, providing a kind of GPS for the ordering of enigma. In Giulio Camillo’s “memory the
tone,” a building described in a book published in 1544, a 7x7 grid of images constituting the auditorium (the user of this ingenious memory stood on a small stage, reversing the usual relationship between audience and show), the ascending rows told the story of the birth of the universe, starting with the seven elemental planets and ending with the inventions of humankind. The columns regulated each sweep of narrative as it repeated the cosmic logic at each level, giving a new twist to the same basic story. Right-left, bottom to top, Camillo claimed

MYSTERIOUSLY MEANT
BY DONALD KUNZE
that the user of his memory theater would gain access to not just his own memory but to the collective memory of all who ever lived — or, rather, to the will of those who had ever lived. Quadrature, the cross-calibration of horizontal “situation” with cosmic “birth/death,” amounted to a memory machine, a co-inscription of fate within each tiny moment, a death within life, a dark within light.

This kind of optical access to mnemonic wisdom took, as its model, the idea of the jewel and the jewel’s “impossible geometry” of a small opening leading to a wide panorama in a hyperspace “beyond.” Jewels, when polished and faceted, fascinate. They draw the eye inward and outward at the same time, sometimes creating the phenomenon of asterism — a star image that is both “there and not there.” It is creating the phenomenon of asterism — a star image that is both “there and not there.” It is creating the phenomenon of asterism — a star image that is both “there and not there.” It is creating the phenomenon of asterism — a star image that is both “there and not there.” It is creating the phenomenon of asterism — a star image that is both “there and not there.” It is creating the phenomenon of asterism — a star image that is both “there and not there.” It is creating the phenomenon of asterism — a star image that is both “there and not there.” It is creating the phenomenon of asterism — a star image that is both “there and not there.” It is creating the phenomenon of asterism — a star image that is both “there and not there.” It is creating the phenomenon of asterism — a star image that is both “there and not there.” It is 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there.” It is creating the phenomenon of asterism — a star image that is both “there and not there.” In the opening between Dædalus’s two bronze-imagined doors. This loft is vertical. It is a depth with demonic capability. It is Hades.

We get to the subject of the emblem from the back, so to speak. In the introductory essay describing the project of the senior poster, Fiona Leigh’s essay (“Platonic Dialogue, Mantic Method and Critical Thinking”) is used to justify a process of interpretation. I believe that this follows the path of the Sophist, whose aim is to provide a model of correct analysis to paying students, rather than that of the Philosopher, whose commitment to the “divine,” whatever that might mean in relation to knowledge as wisdom, is clearly Plato’s main interest. Leigh, being a Sophist by definition, perhaps cannot help but wish to soften the blow by which Plato would dismiss most of what goes on in universitites. To find an accommodation that is not Monotheistic is not an option for any careful reader. Plato uses irony and silence to bring about thoughts in the audience. The dialekt is not the allegoric style of theatrical presentation by which Plato constructs his main philosophical works, dialectic is the exchange made between the writer (ab- sent) and reader (silent) in the understanding of what is not directly said. The misidentification of what is said for “what Plato said about ...” is a frequent error made by commentators who do not know about, or do not take seriously, Plato’s famous “Sevenn Letter,” where he admits any serious thinker not to ever attempt a direct statement of what he/she may believe.

EMBLEMS, MOTTO, FRONTISPICE, CIPHERS

Thus, it is not clear that the posters in this as- signment are or should be regarded as primarily about interpretation. It may be, that like their predecessors — the lofty historical heritage of the creation of enigmatic images designed to inspire, accompany, or introduce other work — they are of the species Emblemata, and that their logic is the same as that employed by Andrea Alciato and Otto Vænius, the same as that attributed to the Egyptians in their formation of divinatory hieroglyphs, the same as the signs of nature read as auspices in cultures around the world. It is a true that this prophetic use of images can be subject to what we generally call “interpretation,” but that attribution would reduce this universal cultural practice to the kind of fortunetelling that occurs in tents at county fairs.

When I say that Plato pursues a “divine” component of knowledge, and that the Sophist
lying beyond the front pages in terms of glyphs. The audience received a preview of the ideas of the theatrical value of such a stage set. In the late Renaissance, Italian architects began past exchanges and future potentialities. as the opening, the small aperture, that leads to, this, which open up some opportunity to find pretation is not good. But, in projects such as occupational handicap. The prognosis of interThis is a permanent Sophist affliction, an o...virtual space that had “been there all along.”

The terms "device," "motto," and "cipher" meant essentially the same thing: a silent speech operating from within ordinary speech; alternatively the same thing: a silent speech operating from within visibility; whereby something could be “mysteriously meant.” From within the stream of experience, opportunity to open the small aperture, that leads to, this, which open up some opportunity to findpretation is not good. But, in projects such as occupational handicap. The prognosis of interThis is a permanent Sophist affliction, an o...virtual space that had “been there all along.”

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In the late Renaissance, Italian architects began to write treaties, many of which were introduced by elaborate frontispieces. Like the emblem books of their age, there was an appreciation of the theatrical value of such a stage set. The audience received a preview of the ideas lying beyond the front pages in terms of glyphs and symbols that condensed these future arguments into gestures, personifications, and motifs. The generic term for such advertisements was, as Ernst Curtius tells us, significant: the cipher. “This is the Arabic word σφίγξ. It means ‘empty’ and in the Arabic system of numerals represents the zero. … Now the intellectual his-tory of Germany shows that from Hamann and Winklemann to Novalis and the young Rank the metaphor of the cipher ‘writing’ of nature, of the world, of history, of the human figure, etc., is extremely prevalent, together with ‘run-erglyphics’ in the same sense.” The terms "device," "motto," and "cipher" meant essentially the same thing: a silent speech operating from within ordinary speech; alternatively the same thing: a silent speech operating from within visibility; whereby something could be “mysteriously meant.” From within the stream of experience, opportunity to open the small aperture, that leads to, this, which open up some opportunity to findpretation is not good. But, in projects such as occupational handicap. The prognosis of interThis is a permanent Sophist affliction, an o...virtual space that had “been there all along.”

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In Jorge Luis Borges’ short story, “The Aleph,” a man ("Borges") is invited by his cousin ("Carlos Argentino") to see a miracle that has appeared without warning beneath his cellar steps. By lying on the floor, gazing upward, he begins to see in the middle of the dark space a tiny bright orb. It is not a thing, but rather a hole that penetrates space itself, time itself. Beyond this opening, the prime Borges sees all ages, all times, he sees events that are universally known but also personal, secret things that only he could know.

The Aleph’s diameter was probably little more than an inch, but all space was there, actual and undiminished. Each thing a mirror’s face, let us say) was infinite things, since I distinctly saw it from every angle of the universe. I saw its tenuous seas, I saw daybreak and nightfall; I saw the multitudes of America, I saw a shiny cobweb in the center of a blank pyramid, I saw a splintered labyrinth (it was London), I saw...
—but I saw the infinite universe and the human body, the ant and the medallion, the balanced stones of Andorra, the countless ways of saying good morning, the grass of the meadows, the light of the moon, the rhythm of the blood in the vessels, the conviction that all ends are equivalent in eternity, and all beginnings are alike in time; I saw the man from Chacarita whose name I no longer remember, and behind him a crowd of faces, and in a field the4 yellow grass that unceasingly revives under the summer sun; I saw the mountains of Patagonia and the house that a storm was going to destroy; I saw the waves of the sea and the face of a beggar; I saw a battle and a crowd, a pack of dogs, the strangler fig, the lapis lazuli, the language of the birds, the sun, the moon, the stars, the centuries, the abortions, the teeth of the living and the dead, the worm that eats the whale, the whale that eats the worm, the hour, the second, the instant of eternity; I saw a number of lifeless bodies in that tight little room, and many other hallucinations..."
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