

Alexander Guy / Mike Windle
Glasgow 2012

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MW

Hi Alexander, I went to an exhibition in the Wellcome Collection in London recently and saw this sheet of instructions on how to make an artwork (overleaf).

We had a conversation not long ago about the possibility of working together and I wonder if we could make a painting and a film that reference each other, so that the artwork is both things. I had an idea that maybe you could make a portrait of me and I could film you painting it, whilst at the same time making instructions so that someone else could paint it (and film it?).

The exploration would be one of **handwriting** in painting. Perhaps we could explore a similar thing in filmmaking... I'm thinking of the way art and artists are portrayed in films such as "Lust for life" and "Modigliani". Although I have always enjoyed watching the Tony Hancock film "The Rebel" (at least the first half) maybe there are other ways of exploring cliché and the public perception of art than only working with comedy.

AG

subjective portraiture v objective portraiture. its clear that how the artist reacts to the description above would depend on their own moralistic stance, their own reading of the narrative and how the artist then sees the separate elements, joined together in his mind, or imagination. is he a nice man? is he sad or happy. is his car beautiful or ostentacious? is the child a hapless victim or is he painted as a ned? is it sunny, windy? is this a period movie? is it all in black and white? etc.

this description is totally open to the artists perception. if i'm painting your portrait from a tearful description of you by one of your victims ie. police portraiture, that you have molested, it is highly unlikely my picture would

HOPE PRESS.
(U.K. Band of Hope Union).

MR. FOOLHARDY.
(Flannelgraph No. 1.)

This flannelgraph is intended for use on a board not less than 30 inches long, as the distance indicator at the top will be 29 inches long when cut in the centre and opened out. If impossible to obtain such a long board, the two pieces of the distance indicator can be used separately, one above the other.

Reading from left to right, the pictures consist of:- A house with garage (only the end is shown, so it will be used up against the left edge of the board.) A boy. A man. A car. An ambulance. A hospital (and only, for use up against the right edge of the board). A public house (end only). A distance indicator.

Colour the pictures with water-colour paints or with crayons, making them bright and attractive.

The pictures are so closely packed, that the whole sheet can be pasted on to lint or flannel or other fluffy material. Press under books or other weight, and when dry, cut out.

PLACING OF PICTURES AND COMMENTARY SUGGESTIONS.

Flannelgraph pictures must not be placed on the board all together, and then the commentary given. The pictures must be used at strategic moments while the commentary is being given.

Place the house and garage against the left hand edge of the board.

Now children, this is the house of Mr. Foolhardy. In his garage he keeps his beautiful American touring car, which he uses in his business as a sales manager. Would you like to have a close-up of this car?

Place the car to the right of the garage.

We had better put the proud owner by its side. There he is, looking very pleased with himself.

Place the man to the right of the car, at about the middle of the board.

Mr. Foolhardy has to drive round the country on his business, and often when he passes a public-house he goes in for a drink. He is told by the Highway Code not to touch strong drink while driving, but he cannot believe that one or two drinks of whisky can do him harm on a cold day.

One day he was driving towards London and he came to the Blue Pig. Here it is.

Place the public-house at the right hand edge of the board.

Mr. Foolhardy stayed here for a quarter of an hour, and during that time consumed two double whiskies.

Off he went again, feeling very pleased with himself, and he was now so far away from both his house and the pub that we had better just show his car whizzing along.

Remove house, Mr. F. and pub. Move car to left end of board high up.

Now let us see what happened while he was driving home. He was sailing along peacefully at 30.m.p.h., when suddenly, a little boy, playing with a ball, ran across the road in front of him, 75 feet away.

Place boy in front of car near centre.

Of course the driver pulled himself together and applied the brakes immediately. But alas, the car did not stop in time, and the little lad was knocked down.

Bring the car forward and make the boy lie down.

A passer-by phoned for the ambulance, which arrived within seven minutes. Here it is.

look sweet, gentle from her description. if, i was sure she was a liar, how would i illustrate her terrible evidence without feeling some compassion and sympathy for you in my portrait?

do you trust me to make your portrait? we must start by you telling me many things about yourself, not least, what do you look like? do you really think i see the same? are you sure others see you the way you do? then we must discuss your reasons for wanting a painted portrait. what style of portraiture suits you. and when you answer these questions and we both have a strong picture in our minds, is it matching? and how does a spoken or written description manifest itself in my hands? many questions. only the start of the beginning.

MW

I always liked TV shows about making art. I used to watch Rolf Harris and Nancy Kominsky (who sadly passed away last month) from my bed during the summer months signing on at college. I felt pretty superior about the projected garret window behind Nancy in the studio and her overly practical bog roll swinging from her easel. It was a warm kind of smug I felt in the bed - I'm at art school, I know more about this than her audience, I'm on top of the situation, everything's all right with the world.

But in fact I **was** the audience. The sensuality of watching the application of paint kept me watching. It's this that has been the first stop in my mind as I am imagining making a film about painting. Only the first stop of course, the psychological overtones you are talking about may well be the first in your mind as someone who has painted many portraits.

And now I've mentioned psychology and like to speak of **Mirror Neurons**, the things in your brain that help you to understand and enjoy the thing you are watching. The neurons empathise with the activity watched eg when you watch football you imagine **you** are running down the left wing, dribbling and shooting. I was mixing Nancy's paint along with her in my warm bed.

She showed us how to paint a fence quickly with a palette knife, how to add burnt sienna to clouds. Is your portrait going to be a likeness of me with psychological overtones to do with subtle tone and hue of paint, or are there other things to look out for. If a painting can be about many things - do we need to stick with the dark side or only look to the surface. Will too many themes spoil the pudding or can we get it all in? Should we use all of the tricks or none of them in the painting and film?

As far as describing myself, I heard you using the word the word **majestic**... a joke of course... to play down the terrible self-aggrandizement of having a portrait made of yourself. You know me don't you? Is having your likeness done not to find out more about yourself by seeing what others think of you? I was interested to hear on the radio recently that research shows that people who become unemployed find the most difficulty not so much in being poor, as the loss of social standing it creates.

AG

who cast the character of nancy? was it really HER sensitive, confident hand adoringly mixing the sumptuous paint on her palette? who's to say that if this tv idea had been offered a larger budget, you might have been watching paint along with elizabeth taylor? who decided the garret filmset was more attractive than a hollywood bedroom? the ordinairiness of her delivery, her frumpy, friendly neighbour character, her sweet calm reassuring voice over, to me, was a major reason why the image of the **painter** as eccentric, loveable sweet wifey was not so different from that other insufferable person who presented the programme about dogs, with her walkies catchphrase. am i to be the next rolf harris or tony hart in your film? are you going to dress me to look daytime? will the film happily slot in between trisha and a place in the sun?

here's the deal. in this movie, i am sandy. i am a fucked up loner. i dress in black, red and pink. i've got **issues**.

i dont talk like jamie oliver, i dont like many people. even if i try, i am not

daytime material. i do honest paintings and i speak my mind. i can play a number of character rolls but sandy is the painter. he's not any more real than nancy but his presentation, i fear, may not provide inspiration like how nancy could. for me, painting is a roller coaster, a psychological war, full of doubts, fears, elation and hope.

in portrait painting, there is no hiding place for you the sitter or for me. i will construct a recipe, a formula, a seemingly logical, rational guideline that suggests it can be learned and duplicated. then any dumbass pretentious aspiring dinner party artiste can do it too. and they can, and they will make happy, optimistic sandy paintings of their friends, just like how i painted you, and they'll be happy, we'll be happy, and maybe, just maybe, in some dark, lonely, run down bedroom somewhere across town, some unloved kid with little hope, opportunities or dreams will look at me, at you, identify with what they're really watching, see us for what we are and reading between the lines, be inspired to become an artist, a real painter.

MW

You are starting to talk about Sandy in the third person. And about honest paintings, whatever they are. Do we construct personas to guide our way with this (loosely based on our own) - I understand this as a strategy. Perhaps this needs to be done with stage names so we can stretch the concepts. Would it be wise to start small and do this fairly quickly to see what it is? I imagine (and you have pointed this out) it could grows arms and legs in the blink of an eye, evolving too quickly and passing a lot of interesting stuff.

Do you think you need to ask me questions? About me or about how I would like to be captured for posterity? Perhaps if I imagine myself as your patron requesting a portrait... I could email you a image I like for discussion, as a starting point, eg...



Allan Ramsay

<https://images.app.goo.gl/iL4YqTUXWCuy976t7>

Or maybe a photo of me?

Here's a link to the Komar & Melamid site I was telling you about
<http://awp.diaart.org/km/>

What I said about it was that it seemed a very interesting project until we see the actual paintings they created from the data. The realisation seemed really narrow and uninspired. We realise the whole idea is a conceit (making art from marketing data - the worm that eats itself) but the paintings they made could've been a whole lot more interesting. However - perhaps there is some data in there we can use?

Also, all the resources from arts organisations (rather than the Nancy Kominsky School) seem to be aimed at kids. I Googled "How to paint a portrait" and have never seen so many Discovery Zones.

AG

in order to proceed, we need to create a questionnaire, this would establish what century, or period your portrait is to be done in. the answer would then set up more detailed questions related to your selected time zone and what and where, specifically within that period, you would like to travel to. eg country, climate, season etc.

we would then be transported to the timezone of your choice. our dress, our speech or my speech would be programmed into that period of history or in the future and the materials used, the philosophy adhered to, the ideas being discussed about how your portrait was to be made and how, would be

dictated by these factors.

i am basing this sci-fi, time-fravelling format on the assumption that i sandy would have the sufficient data, skills and information to paint your portrait in any period and circumstances that may arise, from within whichever data you choose and select.

the subject therefore concerns artist as post modernist, programmable android, automaton working from data supplied, capable of a multi-systematic, multi-task approach within a virtual setting or landscape. by systematically dehumanising every possible link to emotion, expression, individuality, by stripping bare, the portrait formula of any intimacy the film would then deal with deliberate random conceptualisation of the classical genre, and how successful or not, this radical experiment would transfer.

we know everyone cant paint. it's a fact, but if we devise a foolproof recipe that suggests that by following strict guidelines, or instructions, everyone could paint to a standard that amazes and inspires them, then my recipe for painting a successful portrait will work, or in the few cases when it doesn't, will show whoever fails does so is because they are either stupid, narrow minded, bad, clumsy, lazy, arrogant or ignorant in the extreme. it gives me pleasure to, having laid out clear instructions that a monkey could follow, witness someone who fails and seeing them realise it's cos they're hopeless good for absolutely nothing individuals.

ironically, they're normally people who really believe there is no magic or special touch at the root of good art. that it can be programmed.

ultimately, this film is a tragic modern journey of how by taking scientific, darwinian thinking, or contemporary conceptual artistic rhetoric to its radical conclusion, visually, all is lost where theorising, writing and discussion all lead to pictorial impotence, hence we're back to tony hancock who knew this only too well.

everyone can make art. not everyone is a master. if you believe that by thinking cleverly, you can predict what is genius, your art is more worthless than art made for fun. people, science will always fail when studying beauty. rational, reason, justification don't mean nothing to young lovers.

MW

Good - so what are the questions? I assume I can add some to the list. Will it be things like Komar & Melamid "What is your favourite colour?" Or more knowing prompts? Do we make the questions simple or involved, and should they be able to be answered similarly? Do we offer convoluted and tortuous probings in the hope that stumbled answers will cruelly reveal ineptitude or do we play it straight? I'm assuming we are designing this for future participants - but perhaps you are trying to trick me too (this is starting to sound like a Werner Herzog film). How about this to start...

Q1 - How big would you like your painting?

AG

we'll design the questionnaire, similarly to a website with topic questions leading to sub-windows etc, leading on to even more demands that become infuriatingly pedantic, invasive question after question, seemingly absurd, illegal, irrelevant and pretentious.

so your-how big will the painting be example, would then expand into further questions about, not only the scale, but the size of intended wall, room colour, decor, style, contents, light source. then size of portrait ratio to canvas, bust, half length, $\frac{3}{4}$ figure etc, size of brushes and amount of detail permitted by each scale permutation etc. this would be accompanied by annoying tips and guidance on what you were selecting and samples of interiors etc.

this over-long questionnaire would obviously be a mock up, and nothing much to do with the actual portrait that we are soon to be undertaking, but could make for an interesting sub-plot in the film, you spending days toiling

over questions about ancestry, house pets, makes of car, credit records, holidays, favourite tv, movies, soaps, music and why this, why that, and it's only my fucking portrait, and it's like an interrogation etc. next, they'll be asking my sexual preferences, and click, it asks you exactly that blah, blah...

this could be a good comedy interlude?

the reality is we sit down and discuss all these issues, but the painting will only appear to evolve from these questions and answers. it'll be the same for the instruction manual which i shall seemingly slavishly adhere to. we'll not make it up, but develop and enhance it as the portrait moves from one sitting to the next, assuming you're planning filming it that way.

we could maybe also consider using another actor in this story. if we asked someone else to paint your self-same portrait, following the actual guidelines alongside me, at the same time, and examine the similarities, differences, discuss what are errors and really see this magic process working, like slimming ads on u.s. tv we can capture the awe and wonder on camera of the amazing benefits of following this painting program. then for you, then to do likewise, and others etc, leading to multiple portraits of you made so specifically to this formula, yet so different, yet similar. i could go on and on.

just to say, so far, we're covering a lot of ground, but it won't interfere or disrupt the actual painting itself. i suggest, as we continue to explore cinematic ideas and scripts and other angles, it might be timely to begin planning the doing of the painting or arrange a timetable ahead. i think a whole lot more material will come to us during the painting and filming.

MW

So yes - it's a constantly expanding universe. I think we should be aiming for a practice based PhD augmented with a bunch of writing like this. What now? Do you want to meet up? (How did it go with Dr Neil?) We could meet

in Edin or Glas, near Queen St? Or you could come over for a night for dinner - and a sleepover.



1. drawing from life, different compositions, scales, various light sources until, through looking at sketches, talking about ideas, subject narrative etc we decide on a kind of maritime theme. we then look at various examples of historical portraits in this genre.

2. photographs. take various outdoors, sea behind, different light, weather conditions, clothes, until portrait idea is clarified.

3. combining colour photos and drawings, a list of materials necessary to make painting, plus a suitable size of stretcher, depending on size of image, type of detail, idea of design of the proposed product - a painted portrait of mike, combining maritime language and personal handwriting.

once we are at this stage we buy materials, set up the studio accordingly with lighting, distance apart and then, it is time to arrange the palette, particular to the most practical way of making this painting.

the palette...

MW

I notice at this point you have deleted a photo of me in my “nautical” jumper and an angrily red face taken by my son. Was this because it offended the eye (highly likely), only temporary (for later nefarious insertion) or a mistake?

AG

put the jersey back in. i didnt delete it. it vanished. i will be needing that image.



palette demonstration. looking at the sitter, we organize the palette layout accordingly. keeping warm elements and cool elements apart, the palette reads light to dark, warm to cool over a large enough expanse to allow mixing of paint, relative to amount needed, eg, size of canvas. i will include diagrams explaining this. the main issue is that, even at this stage the layout and scale of the painting are an integral part of the process and directly influence the outcome.

looking at the sitter, therefore, we see 3 basic shapes at the onset. the background, the torso and the head. identify them. tonally, we break everything into 3s. light, middle dark. colour is the same. the actual (local) colour, the colour in light and the colour in shadow.

the palette will have 9 different colours - 3 groups of 3. using the 9 mixed colours, the compositional drawings, the photos and the presence of the sitter, we begin stage 1.

portraiture is about recognition. painting is a gradual recognition of a specific person over a specified time. it is like seeing someone walking towards you from a distance through mist. even at a distance, if we know that person, we recognize their shape, poise, walking style, taste in clothes etc. they are a recognizable silhouette. (film demo of you walking in distance towards camera). as you approach, our eye detects the effect of light on the shape giving form, tone and basic colour. using the 9 colours, session 1 of the portrait is done. the jacket is cool and dark. affected by warm light from the left, its local colour - charcoal blue/grey has a darker area and a lighter one - it exists.

the head is a peachy, apricot local colour worked out in the way you have little problem selecting foundation etc. against a dark background, it would be middle to light tone in that colour, against a light b/ground, it would appear mid to dark tone while retaining the identity of its local colour - ie peachy apricot. the cooler the b/ground, the warmer these colours appear and likewise, the warmer the b/ground, the cooler it appears. we deal in differences between things to identify them initially, before recognizing similarities later.

in this case, the b/ground is light and initially cool. the head is mid range and warm. the jacket is dark. the whole surface of the painting is unified, consistent and orchestrated throughout. the painting is already recognizable as an early stage of a picture of the actual thing. end of session 1.

MW

I am imagining this in voice-over - a female slightly robotic sound a bit like HAL from "2001 : A Space Odyssey".

AG

palette - "captain windle" colours.

titanium white, lemon yellow, naples yellow, cadmium yellow, yellow ochre, cadmium orange, cadmium red, alizaron crimson, burnt umber, ceruleum blue, viridian green, french ultramarine, black,

these colours should be laid out on a palette large enough to make it as easy and practical for painting, mixing, etc for the scale of the painting. as the portrait of captain windle is dimensions 60"x48" approx, then the dimensions of a manageable palette should not be smaller than half. i suggest a palette of min 30"x24".

see diagram 1.

this diagram also shows how the colours are arranged-tonally, light to dark, left to right, and, temperature, warm to cool, top to bottom.

it is paramount to control and dominate the palette at all times. following this method will allow this.

diagram 1b - mixing of local (actual) colours for the painting.

there are 4 basic separate elements, the background, the jacket, the jersey and the subject, ie - what is visible of the captain - his head (front view) and his neck.

referring to preparatory drawings, final photo and the presence of the sitter, there is enough information to mix, on the palette, these 4 colours representing the separate elements in the colours they actually are, eg, the jacket is dark bluish-grey, the face is pale peachy-apricot etc.

mix a colour/tone for the jacket, face, jersey and background in the appropriate places on the palette. see diagram 1b.

the painting

paint the 4 mixed colours, representing the 4 elements onto the canvas in shapes that match your compositional sketches and the photos. if this simple task seems difficult, make it even simpler by drawing the shapes onto the canvas first, ie copying, and basically upscaling the drawing, and then paint the four colours in the drawn shapes.

the portrait has now started. see diagram 2a.

the only possible problem that could arise here is if you begin to think for yourself, ie get smart and harbour ideas of your own, reacting to how easy this is. if you do this, you are no longer following this method and, even at this most early stage, you are on your own, adrift, a little blue boat lost on a vast blue ocean.

having achieved this, go back to the palette, and using the 4 mixed colours, mix a light version and a dark version of each - 8 new colours = 12 in all. see diagram 1c. you now have 3 different versions of each "flat" colour, which, when applied to the painting, allow you to make it appear 3 dimensional with a direction of light and you have begun to create the illusion of space and distance.

the thing here is to keep the 4 elements separated, so in the area for the jacket, or the face, the 3 light, actual and dark versions, only, are allowed to inter-mix.

3 descriptions of the b/ground, the face, the jersey and the jacket now exist on the canvas. see diagram 2b.

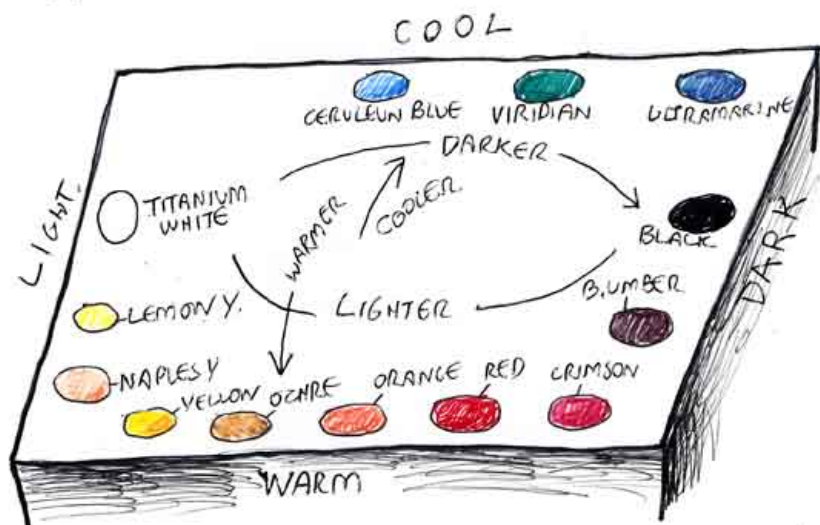
to end session 1 of the painting, before allowing it to dry, we repeat, exactly

the same process, only now 12 descriptive colour/tones will expand to 36 colours. we arrive at this amount by mixing a lighter version and a darker version of the 12 already existing colours. this means we apply an even lighter version of the light version and slightly darker version of the light version which will still be lighter than the actual colour.

with 36 different colour/tones on the canvas, it is a recognizable, unified early start to a process. warning - do not use judgement, prejudice, taste etc as you leave it to dry. do not touch it before you have received further orders.

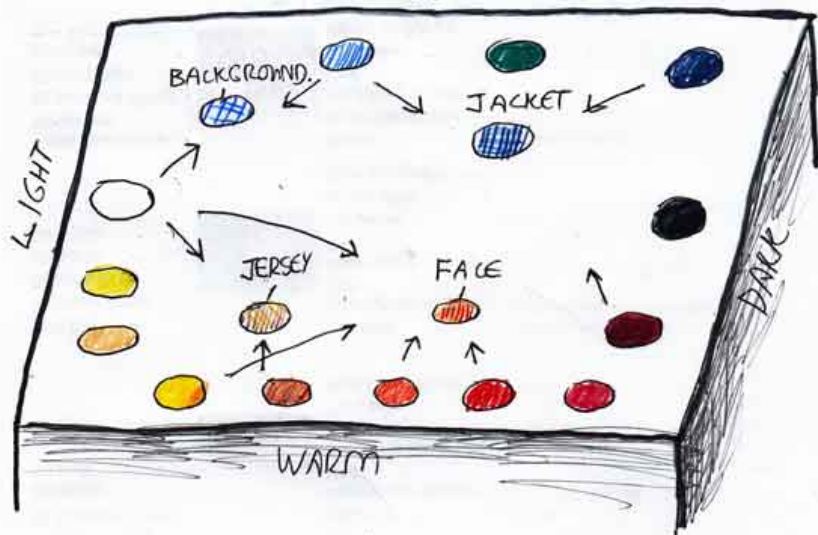
diagrams will be sent to accompany today's writing...

DIAGRAM 1a. - LAYOUT OF COLOURS ON PALETTE,
SHOWING SEPARATION OF LIGHT TO DARK TONES AND
WARM TO COLD COLOURS.



NOTES - THIS COULD BE ARRANGED B TO FRONT IF YOU
ARE LEFT OR RIGHT HANDED,
- DIMENSIONS APPROX 30" X 24"

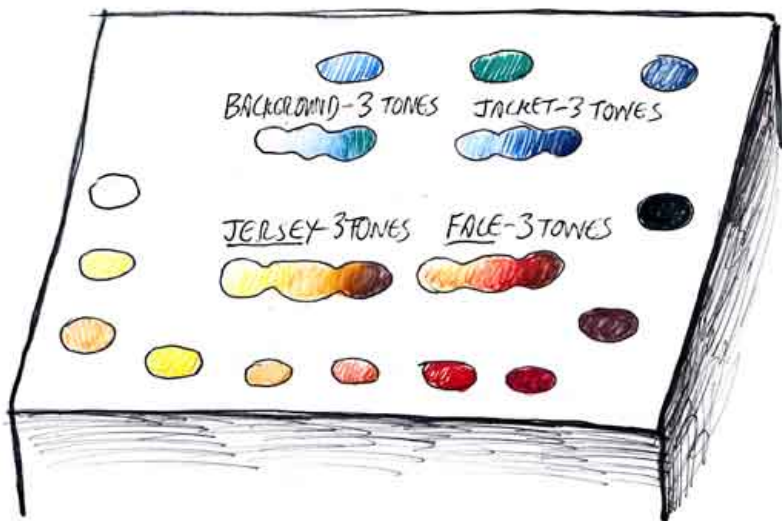
DIAGRAM 1b - LAYOUT OF PALETTE, AND PLACEMENT OF 4 ACTUAL/LOCAL COLOURS.



NOTES - MAKE SURE THERE IS ENOUGH COLOUR TO COVER THE SHAPE ON THE CANVAS.

- LOCAL COLOURS ARE BACKGROUND - LIGHT SKY BLUE GREYISH
- JERSEY - OFF WHITE BEIGE/CREAM
- FACE - PEACHY, APRICOT WARM
- JACKET - CHARCOAL BLUE GREY

DIAGRAM 1c. - PALETTE, WITH 4 LOCAL COLORS,
AND A LIGHTER + DARKER VERSION
OF EACH, ALLOWING THE INTRODUCTION
OF LIGHT + SHADOW + SPACE IN THE
PICTURE



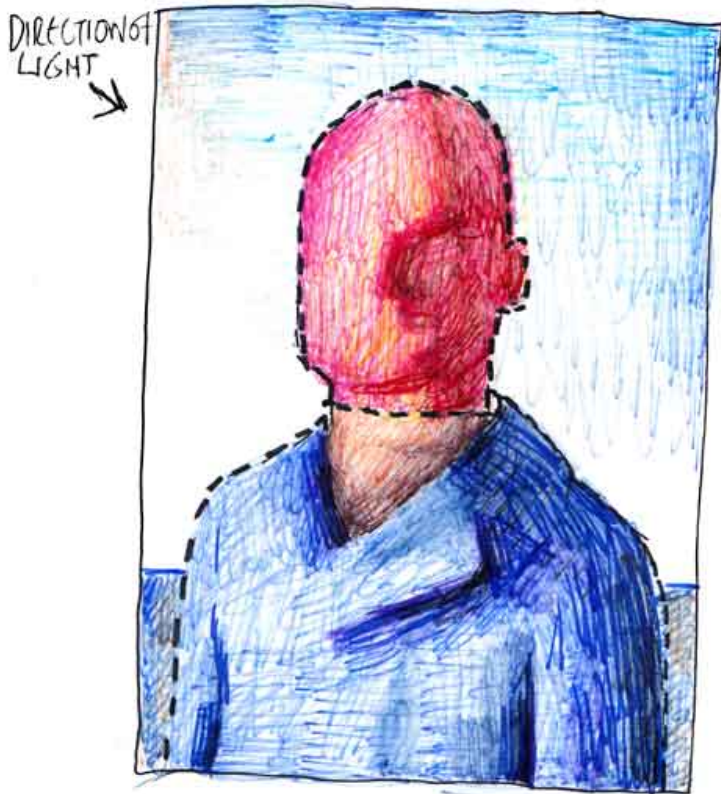
NOTES - NOTICE HOW THE PALETTE IS CONTROLLED,
WARM + COOL STAY SEPARATE, AND THERE IS STILL
SPACE FOR MORE MIXED COLORS.

DIAGRAM 2a INTRODUCTION, ONTO CANVAS, OF 4
SEPARATE LOCAL COLOURS, MADE EASY
BY DRAWING IN LINE TO DESIGNATE THE SHAPES
FLAT



- NOTES - TO PLACE COLOURS IN RIGHT PLACE, REFER
TO SKETCHES + PHOTOS, OR YOU CAN DRAW IT IN.
- KEEP COLOURS SEPARATED.
- TO DO - 10-15 MINS.

DIAGRAM 2b. - INTRODUCTION OF LIGHTER AND DARKER VALUES OVER 4 LOCAL COLOURS, (SEE DIAGRAM 1c) TO CREATE SPACE AND LIGHT,



- NOTES - PRINTING NOW HAS 12 COLOUR TONE VALUES,
- THEN 36 ie 3 VERSIONS X 12 ETC - LIGHTER + DARKER,
- THERE ARE STILL NO LINES,

CAP'N

My wife says that this project fits our neuroses perfectly.

PAINTER

session 2 (a day later)

it's time to reflect a little on the painting before continuing with the next stage.

the painting is not, yet a portrait, but it is a recognizable image of a figure, male, dark jacket in front of a sort of, seascape.

this is as much information as is evident.

the questions that therefore arise are - what type of jacket is it? what material is it? soft, hard, synthetic? etc. questions that identify this vague figure, that turn this mysterious representation into a picture of the sitter - a portrait.

this is what we will begin to do with this next session. describe in paint, as you might try to do with words, or even from memory, what does this person look like?

how does paint describe someone, or something?

how does fabric feel different to touch than skin or flesh?

how does paint make the sky and the sea faraway?

what is the temperature in the scene?

is the person comfortable?

what do i do next?

we are now going to compare what the painting looks like with who ,or what we see sitting opposite. our distant goal is to eventually bring these two visions gradually closer together, we will start session 2 by drawing onto the canvas over what is there, using visual information gained by actually

observing the actual person incorporating the drawing over, and into the painted diagram..

rather than going into details like facial features, at this point, i want you to imagine this as an evolutionary growing thing, a thing emerging slowly, like captain windle is steadily approaching in the mist, and every moment he moves closer, we notice something more, something familiar, and as he nears us, he becomes sharper, and as the light increases, we can discern details that identify him more and more.

for the moment he's just a blur. now we will incorporate lines.

initially, to draw (linear), we use an even darker version of the darkest tones already mixed on the palette. so, for the face, this will be a dark peachy apricot, which to retain its temperature and nature, will be reddish-brown. this we draw on the face part.

on the jacket, draw with dark blue-black, the jersey dark brown, the sky dark grey-blue.

this process of painting more information, purely from your eyes, through your hand, via the palette, onto the painting is done objectively, with no thoughts of how good or not it looks, what style etc. you are just painting what you see, from what is directly in front of you and recording that information onto the canvas. (re-drawing, diagram 3)

now, at the end of this phase, we can see how the combination of shapes and line work together, and perhaps overstate each other. the next question therefore is when does a line describe something precisely, when does a shape, or form suffice, in fact, when does line actually exist, and how many different types of line best describe something? how much line will we keep? are some thinner than others, are some lines soft, sharp, squiggly, long and straight? having objectively drawn what we perceive we see, we now edit and select. the painting starts here - or next time, as the clocks

caught up with us again. be sure to join me next time on the show. to take us out, heres an appropriate tune from one of my favourites, and i hope, one of yours too - music.

DIAGRAM 3 - INTRODUCTION OF LINE DRAWING,
OVER PREVIOUS SESSIONS POINT, TO ~~BE~~ BRING MORE
RECOGNITION, FAMILIARITY AND ACTUALITY TO THE
DRAWING, - "OVERLAYING"



NOTES - ALTHOUGH EARLY SKETCHES AND PROTO-DRAWINGS
CAN BE USED AT THIS STAGE, THE ACTUALITY, i.e.
"BEING THERE" ASPECT OF THE PORTRAIT IS
ESTABLISHED AT THIS POINT. GET TO KNOW THE SITTER.
- KEEP COLOURS OF DRAWN LINES IN THE SAME
TEMPERATURE AS POINT UNDER

CAP'N

We've perhaps touched on a few of these points but I'd like to set them out again...

From Swain's Practical Scriptwriting

Why are we making this film?

What is the topic?

Who is our audience? (The broader the audience the harder it will be) Why are the viewers watching this film?

How much does our target audience already know about the topic?

(Dumbing down or miss-focusing will alienate our knowledgeable audience)

Do we need more assistance? (tech, experts)

A film transcends time and space. Do we highlight differences in this respect between painting and the moving image?

Do we highlight cliches in old TV painting shows?

Film emphasizes, emotionalizes.

A painting is static. We can zoom over the surface, but still a poor filmic subject.

Is the subject too complex? Do we split it into chapters?

Sound / text.

What is the film's core assertion? Back it up visually with proof points.

Films to reference...

Lust for Life / Modigliani / The Rebel / The Horses Mouth / Under Milk Wood
/ over the top pathos-bathos about being an artist

Paint with Rolf / Nancy Kominsky / warm sunny happy mindless
(INTERLUDES considered suitable for mass-consumption, allows
programmers to feel superior)

Blue Velvet / Stalker / Hunger (Knut Hamsun version) / The Hide (2 actors
only - enclosed in a defined space) / the dark side

At this point I imagine a scene zooming into the paint to a microbe level to remind us of our mortality.

Do we have a character to emphasise with? A hero can be inanimate.

Do we have conflict and resolution. Conflict should be indigenous to topic not grafted from outside.

Do we need a story at all?

The formula works this way:

- Hey!* = some element of your film's topic that strikes you as holding potential for capturing your audience's attention—an intriguing situation, a change in that situation, a bit of action, an interesting character, you name it.
- You* = something to involve the viewer subjectively . . . draw him into the topic on a personal level. A starting place? Try striking for known target audience attitudes. Or ringing changes on sociologist W.I. Thomas's famed "four wishes": adventure, security, response, recognition. Or the Gypsy fortune teller's love, health, wealth, trouble.
- See?* = the evidence you introduce to develop your subject, prove your point.
- So . . .* = the conclusion you draw, the point you make, the residual impression you leave.

AG

i see this, initially, as a genuine attempt at making an information documentary about how to paint a portrait. i'm under no illusion that this is, in fact, how it will be. hopefully the film gradually deals with the process of addressing the implausability of such an absurd notion, all these dilemmas, and questions, you raise, and will be a movie about the trials and tribulations of that failed "attempt".

i see it more in fellini or godard territory. as the film tries to simplify and make into a logical format, the process of painting a portrait, with

earnestness and hoping to appeal to amass audience, the real narrative is "the film about the film". the confusion in our parts, our roles.

the breakdown of a formula, the human chaos,

this, i predict, will happen in the ultimate failure of our notion that a successful piece of art is possible to achieve by method alone. this will be underlined by our equally, hilarious pompousity and ham-fisted attempts at engaging with the history of cinema.

ultimately, it's comedy. portentous, classy, stylish, almost french 70's in feel.

the strength of this film rests on after exploring all these areas, the viewer expects to witness another post-modernist satire, doomed to failure, but the subversive element, that will unsettle, will be that the finished painting will, in fact, eventually, after all the doubting, the tantrums and the endless disputes, turn out to be a masterpiece.

"a triumph".

there is the essence of the movie. i'm expecting godard's sympathy for the devil, mixed with 8 ½, have you seen "la nuit americaine"?

MW

Good answer. How about these points... The film may work best coming from the outside at beginning into the theatre which is the studio. The film only has us in it with our neuroses (thanks Catriona) batting off each other in various claustrophobic ways. Perhaps the film ends outside again as a release (the exhibited work?). The main thing is the points need to build (with ebb and flow) to a climax rather than anticlimax.

I shall check out "La Nuit Americaine" again.

Outline : Sequences need...

A point to be made

B what's seen

C what's heard

Sequences should always make a point. Much easier to have points to make and no video rather than vice-versa n'est pas?

AG

i've taken a day away from this, as once again, i was beginning to sense that this has the slight danger of becoming over layered and, again, we could talk our way into a situation where, the idea overtakes the substance and the basic power of the idea is diluted by pondering and prevarication.

whether wrong or right, continuing over extending this pre-amble, will either confuse our dialogue even further, or, ultimately, if not controlled at this point, lead to a situation where the discussion becomes the work and the thing itself is not the centrepiece anymore. my experience, and instinct, tells me that this common malady is a reason why many good honest ideas never materialise, taken over by debate, wit, intellect and reason.

this dialogue will develop naturally and spontaneously during the process of doing - ie, in the making. it is obvious we both share a healthy interest in the conceptual complexities that present themselves surrounding such a project but the strength of the idea is already established. any embellishment, prior to actually just arriving at a do-able time-table and a basic structure will only serve to draw the process out too long and up multiple blind-alleys, interesting as they may appear, but leading only to even more hesitation and doubt.

this morning, therefore, i am going to suggest a plan of action, that after much thought, is the best way, in my opinion, to proceed. i have watched a lot of movies in the late nights and early mornings thinking, how we could incorporate this, or nod to that etc, but most of the references we've

discussed could only have been arrived at, at the time, ad hoc, growing out of a simplistic starting point. what i see, are these films getting shot, and its in the rearrangement and editing where the narrative, and sub-plot are truly uncovered ie - after everyone's packed up i think this is how we can, and should make this happen.

“TEN DAYS” is my suggested working title. that is also how long it should take to make this, the painting, the filming, beginning to end. i think we need a place, a backdrop, a setting. this will be what determines the narrative. in 10 days, together, in a particular place, painting the portrait, filming it and capturing our discussions on how we should do this and why this would be better and dont you think truffaut would have done that and if we had had funding like fellini, we could have done it that way, etc, will give us ample time to talk, dispute, agree, bitch, fall out, go in the huff, mood swings, tantrums, mysteries and experience misadventures totally unplanned and inconceivable.

10 days later, lots of uncut film, a finished painting, we go home, then you make a movie.

i actually have a place in mind already.

fortune would have it that, this week, i have been offered free accomodation on the beautiful island of mykanos, “mike”anos. perfect. this, in my eyes, is the perfect backdrop. it's definitely cinematic, it's maritime, it's sunshine holiday, it's very 70s, it's kitsch. on this island, we could do this project. its available, free, to me and a friend, august. would you not agree, that the possibility of making the portrait there and doing the filming there is all we need, and what happens when we go there is in the hands of the gods?

MW

I think your idea of a TEN DAY limit is an excellent one. I have a number of concerns (not least “mike”anos sounding very like “mike”anus)... much as I know the whole thing will probably change in the editing - the discussion is

useful to understand where the other is coming from. The practicalities of making a painting are one thing, but I'm still trying to imagine the best way to film this. Do we both stick cameras up our arses and paint?

scene

outside, sunshine, visit to portrait gallery, conversations real and imagined (with voiceover, internal, personal concerns)

scene

studio/stage, strong lighting, slide/video projector (w films and paintings), drapes, stuff, smoke machine, strobe, music, guitars (we could make some music there), MIRROR/s (for those occasional Narcissisms)

scenes

various scenes loosely in order of your diagrams - imbued with micronarratives

scenes

mirrors / pulling faces / compositions

tensions between determined and chance events (how can we help chance events happen)

automatic events

scene

outside again, vernissage, unveiling of portrait, mindless platitudes of beautiful gathering

The sublime - our mind recoils at an object so immeasurably more powerful and infinite than ourselves, the experience is of pleasure and of pain. I would like the film once we start to be made without thinking, so it is as if made by others.

Could film's point of view be delivered in the style of a Royal Scottish

Academy how to paint video? Perhaps we could deliver in deliver it from a different POV in each scene?

Genres in film (stylee non-comprehensive)

Robert J. Flaherty, Man of Aran

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B0RAdfRQwvo>

Zombie

Technical approach (Koyaanisqatsi, split-screen, Timecode)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ajNXfx4FBOI>

art installation eg...

Home movie

Sci-Fi - Tarkovsky/Blake 7/time travel

Peter Greenaway (colour)

Fellini 8andahalf (BW) L'Avventura

feminism / serious / Ian Breakwell irony

<http://www.arthistoryarchive.com/arthistory/feminist/Martha-Rosler.html>

Tarantino

R Harris / T Hart / Nancy K

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mg4TvOIfw6o>

Bob Ross

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i3RYOawNITs&feature=related>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RKcMfQrqC7I&feature=related>

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3b6_qcuGLKw&feature=related

DIY show / Cash in the Attic

Framed

What do we like in these movies? Can we suggest these interests easily, quickly & cheaply?

This will be our take on it (this is not scientific film criticism). Each scene to be tackled differently (approached be with great or no subtlety).

AG

the next phase of the doing of the portrait is about long hours spent, the drudgery, punctuated by minor breakthroughs, the boredom that challenges focus, the interruptions, the sitter's impatience at the time spent, the irritability of hours spent together, slow changes and labour, toil and neurotic searching to get things right.

in terms of the picture itself, its about being more and more particular, visually developing and evolving, the type of light, the atmosphere, the likeness emerging, the jacket becoming **the actual jacket**, the landscape, the weather, the orchestration of the sitter, and the jacket and the landscape as one, in one place at one time.

there are methods and a clear system attached to this phase of the painting. there is also focus and discipline required to see one through this time, stamina, fitness, clarity of mind etc. my section on endurance and maximising ones resources should be included with health tips, diet suggestions and exercises for the serious painter. also, i'd like to suggest a section on good sleep for the troubled mind, a note about dealing best with mental health issues through avoiding overwork, stress and fatigue. calmness, peace of mind and self esteem are at the core of making successful work. mantaining physical, emotional, psychological and spiritual

balance in adverse conditions or challenging moments such as this phase of a painting is paramount. patience, humility, trusting oneself consistently over long hours, knowing one's foibles and limitations, recognising tiredness, knowing when, and how, to switch off at the right moments, ie, when it's starting to go wrong, when the darkness descends and you begin destroying, you panic and the portrait deteriorates with your self confidence in freefall.

the days go by, slowly, the mood switches inexplicably, it's a roller-coaster ride, but you know this, you predict what's going to happen, and it does, you know that at a given time, you will be engulfed in pessimism, but you arm yourself, the artist deals with it therefore avoiding obliterating all the good work done before. moments, also, of euphoria, can be gauged so as one doesn't get carried away and start show-boating for the cameras, acting all virtuoso, singing, acting etc. there are going to be moments like this too, but again, the painter knows the pitfalls of over-indulgence in this type of behaviour because, again, the painting fails and dies a death, stripped of its integrity, its intensity and honesty.

during all this long drawn out psychological drama, the portrait is taking shape slowly but surely and because of this, and this alone, the audience empathises and engages with the artist. they are privileged to witness the complexities of the artist's mind at work, laid bare for all to see, when after all of this pre-madonna posturing, a work of true substance is emerging in front of their eyes.

this section of the painting, and the film is the middle bit, and the most obviously theatrical and dramatic. the dialogue, the relationship, the claustrophobic and intense nature of the situation could be exciting and original.

there are many examples of cabin fever in movies, but i don't recall any scenes depicting this level of extreme emotion when it's featured painting a portrait. kirk douglas was good but he was acting. it wasn't a documentary.

also, this all centres round one thing, the portrait which as the everpresent catalyst, allows for all types of diverse sub-plots etc.

i see this section, as a stage play, the acts being the days as they pass all set in the one space.

the next part of the painting is, following this epic battle, its not over, but the real toil is. the portrait's going to be alright. what follows is the new-found pleasure of being in command and the time spent making the painting special.

how to make the portrait alive. how to make the eyes shine, how to make the skin glow, how to make hair soft whilst the beard is bristley. how to make the jacket warm to wear, how to make it's texture recognizeably itchy, how to make the buttons shine and plastic, the wooliness of the jersey, the smell of sea-air, the essence of the outdoors etc

all this can be achieved by technique and method, and i shall smugly demonstrate how every detail is arrived at, and in view of the momentous battle that has gone before, shall enjoy these moments - putting the icing on the cake.

discovering your own handwriting, by sticking to a rigid method, or system (discuss).

The 2 movies that immediately spring to mind, being somewhat thrown off my thought pattern by the inclusion of this wedding snap, I take it the happy couple must be good Captain Windle and your mother-to-be, are "A kind of Loving" and "Room at the top".

The British cinema of the early 60s, of which both these movies featured, is an interesting period and relevant to this project. I've been watching a number of films, recently, of this genre.

Mr & Mrs Windle 1957



This was not what I want to talk about this evening, but I think It's definitely worth noting for styles to be considering integrating into how this film manifests itself at a future date.

Back to where we are in the plot. The portrait, or, the doing of the painting, is now complete and the film, or that part is over.

So what would you like to discuss next?

I have suggested some rather exotic locations, which are still being offered to me. Unfortunately, I cannot continue leading people on. and eventually. these options will fade away.

If, we keep it stage based, ie, 1 location - a studio, then we should be considering, or not, a rough script, no?

Timewise, August is still the best moment, for me to actually do it. That is, of course, if I'm not galavanting round numerous places on the mediterranean spending my new-found wealth, after my show in Dusseldorf.

As of September, I'll be in residence at the St. Enoch centre for 3 months. So thats, roughly my timetable. What about yourself?

I still intend to continue writing, and I shall be starting where I left off - The possibility of programming almost anyone, as in Hypnotism, to paint just as good as me, but the difference being, that it's executed in another hand, involving different eyes. Therefore, the end product bears little resemblance to what they envisaged. quite the opposite, by open-mindedly trying to copy, the amazing discovery they find is in the differences, and their own personal language reveals itself to show this working, the 1st step is getting the client, patient, victim's total trust, faith and belief, so one can stop the brain interfering and spoiling, or polluting a pure idea. If the ego personality is suspended, they are open to receiving new data without questioning and will attempt to imitate you by following your every instruction to the letter.

This is fundamental to my “method”. That's the point of the film.

I'm going to do an experiment now, or in my next visit to take away any doubts, or reservations you may have. This involves demonstrating, by diagrams, how to do a perfect rendition of a double-glazed window. Easy, you might think, but in fact a highly intricate, detailed object when you try to paint it.

I aim to show you by breaking everything into a step by step process, you, too, can paint the perfect double-glazed window. But just like me?....no. I can show you a part of yourself that is unique, special and precious.
(Coming Soon)

Yes August is good to go. It will be interesting to see the differences between the Bob Ross approach (and his million imitators) and the “Guy Method”. Now you are officially Saint Enoch of the Shire does that mean we do the filming there? Or do we spit up the time - instead of a straight 10 days - and do it gradually in a more considered space? Or maybe a mix - one or two days a week in the mall? This may keep up our energy. We could split up the sections suitably. Or maybe one day a week for your 3 months. The painting could be on display as it evolves, with comments by Joe Public. Bit risky?

AUGUST 1st... As August is now underway, it is time to, finally, bring our ideas into action.

Location... It's looking like, after all our various “more glamorous options” have proven impractical, that this movie, and painting, will now take place, either at my studio (boring), or in some other locale. My apartment is a possibility as it can be converted, easily, into different scenes etc, but I think we should settle on this soon.

Budget... My current financial situation is not wonderful, and although this could change any day, I must assume that my input is going to be minimal.

So - Low budget it is. I can supply paints, materials and basic catering facilities.

I suggest, we continue, almost exactly, as planned with theme, idea and process.

I hope we can have time to discuss all this, in more detail, on friday at pittenweem, so, if you are considering NOT going to this Zombie-Ugly Festival, please, you must tell me first. This is the only worthwhile reason I can see for attending such a ghoulish nightmarish occasion, and I dont care to be trapped there, surrounded by mediocre, embittered ex students, all smug and arrogant in their Fife St. Ives, living on divorce settlements, if you decide to give it a miss.

If you go, then so shall I, but if not, I suggest we meet up as soon as possible to get down to details of our Marvelous Summer Adventure ahead.

“Raise the anchors and full steam ahead. I'll be in my cabin. Take her out to sea”







Film at
<https://tinyurl.com/73audbrv>

Alexander Guy
<http://www.alexanderguy.co.uk/>

Mike Windle
<https://www.porty.net/>