

**Reflective Essay**

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## **Reflective Essay**

I am a Senior at Old Dominion University (ODU), and I will be graduating from the university with a bachelor's in game design. In this reflective paper, I am going to go into detail on my skillset, and the numerous artifacts, which I have made over the course of my time within the Graphic Design and the ODU Game Design program. During my time at Virginia Peninsula Community College, I pursued an associate's degree in graphic design. The classes I took at VPCC taught me valuable skills such as Typography, Multimedia Graphic Design/ Animation, Photography, and the development of Software such as websites.

### **Multimedia Graphic Design/ Animation**

Multimedia Graphic Design is among my strong suites, at VPCC I learned how to create vector graphics and ads, before then learning how to make these come to life in the form of animations. My first animation is an intro for a fictional film "Dark Secrets" this movie was intended to be a dark fantasy mystery with story, with elements of horror. I began my making a map for the trailer and then started making strange symbols and bizarre banners which would be important to the narrative later but keep the audience guessing until then. Next, I needed the animation to match the music, so I sped up the scroll of animations and included the actor names in this sequence. Finally, the title had to be impactful, so I combined all the previous sigils I crafted and placed the title fizzling in to catch the audience's attention. The second animation is an infographic called "A Generation Lost" which was on the total death count of WW1, I knew this had to be a somber and otherwise impactful animation as it needed to represent the lost generations of the past. The color palette was bleak and the aside from the country flags, devoid of anything more than red, white and black. Colors synonymous with despair. The rest of the animation includes a series of climbing graphs which count out the total number of losses each country sustained before

pooling all the dead together into a pie chart. This pie chart was a great challenge to make with numerous issues arising as parts of the circle would fail to fill in properly, but in the end, I finally got it to flow perfectly giving the audience a better understanding of how many people from specific countries died. The finale animation was the “First Modern War” teaser trailer, the goal was for assignments was to create a short graphic which would air on a tv station. My graphic was to air on The History channel in preparation for their release of the television series, “The First Modern War,” this to keep a similar tone to the was predecessor to the infographic above in which I recount the total losses of the conflict. So, I made sure the music was ominous, sounds unnerving, and the tone overall depressing. The scene follows as the camera slowly rises from a trench and into no mans land before a loud gunshot cuts our viewing short, the tragedy was meant to speak on the futility and frivolous name of war where death can come at any moment.

### **Photography**

Photography is a hobby of mine, even before I began taking classes at VPCC and ODU I always had a fondness for taking photos, especially abstract ones. My first photo is among my favorites, it is titled “A Way Home” it was taken while my mom was driving me home after our return from Greece. I was very tired on the drive back and it began to rain which was quite soothing as we began our journey home. While taking this picture, I really wanted to encapsulate the sense of comfort and the longing to return home after being away for so long. While shooting this photo, I wanted to capture the drive in an abstract nature, to do so I was sure to focus the camera itself to focus the raindrops of the windshield while letting the rest of the environment seamlessly blur. The headlights of the oncoming car are the audiences primary focus, proving a beacon of light amidst a sea of darkness. The next artifact I would like to speak on, is the “Landing” photograph, this was a peach core which I had removed from a peach I was eating. While inspecting the core,

I became fascinated by the intricate nature of something so small and seemingly irrelevant, the many grooves, bits of peach flesh and engraved nature gave me inspiration. Placing the peach core on a dock pillar, I shot some close-up pictures of it in which I focused the camera on the many details of the core. Was it a ship which had crash landed onto a sandy planet? Or perhaps, a creature resting on the beach? Or maybe it was just a peach core, the only limitation is the creativity of the viewer. Another artifact I would like to discuss is the ‘Out of Water’ image which I made by slowing down the shutter speed and tracing a boat with a glow stick thus outlining the vessel and making it appear as though it was hovering above the water. I had a lot of fun designing this photograph, I kept up with the abstract nature making it almost seem as though the vessel is illusory or otherwise spiritual. I wanted to really draw on this fact as the audience will interpret the meaning in a multitude of ways.

### **Game Design**

My final key skill is that of Game Design, this is what I am majoring in at ODU and it is also the skill I would say I’ve had the most practice in. In my portfolio, I have displayed three of the 3D world/ scenes designs I have created each vastly different from the last. The first is the “Ruins by the Sea.” This sunset depiction is of a castle and lighthouse ruin, on the jagged coast of a forest during mid-Autumn. Ancient ruins of civilizations long past illuminated by the waning light of a distant star, as we stand aside them in awe of their magnificence. I wanted this scene to inspire a sense of wonder in the viewer, a sight so gorgeous you simply sit back and enjoy the small moment of respite before returning to the real world. The second scene one of the “Crimson Forest” I took some serious creative liberties with this design, making a pretty, yet generic boreal forest. I let my mind run wild and thought, what if I made everything crimson? And so it was, I changed all the foliage colors and painted an alien yet familiar image of a land not too dissimilar

from the world we live in. The rays of light peering through the crimson trees as the scarlet ferns and grasses grow across the ground. Finally, I developed a comforting image of a stary night in the woods. I felt almost nostalgic developing this scene, like a portal to the distant past where I would stay up late into the night entranced by a blanket of blue have amidst the light of distant stars.

### **Conclusion**

Overall, I have come a long way in my Graphic Design journey and have learned a lot over my many years of learning. I would say among the most valuable Interdisciplinary skills I have learned is to think again. This sound simple but think about it for a moment longer, when ever you create a piece of develop of project. Look at it again and think about how it could be improved, had I not spent so much time thinking about how I could improve I would have never grown as a designer, I would have never seen what more my work could truly be.