

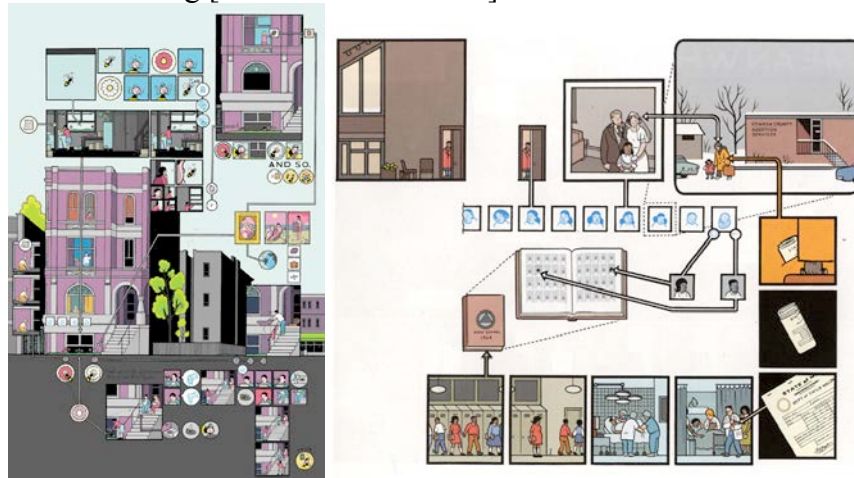
Class Notes from Day 6 (with Pictures)

- Share homework exercises – different takes on same story
- **Business** to take care of:
 - Upcoming readings – 2 categories, Choose ONE from each:
 - Relevant lit: Stitches, Fun Home, Blankets, ABC, Maus, Persepolis, A.D., Jim Ottaviani’s T-Minus?
 - Teaching with Comics: Katie Monnin, J Bucky Carter, Maureen Bakis, Michael Bitz, Bill Ayers “To Teach”
- Why I’ve been asking you/making you draw!

- **Fun!!**
- **John Dewey** says:
 - Art is not separate from Life
 - Instead of viewing art as something over there, see ourselves as artists and reunite split
 - **KEY: Experiential learning** – we learn by doing
- Let’s now, BACK INTO the Importance of Drawing – even if you don’t draw – 2 Primary Aspects:
- (Prelude to the Shape of our thoughts) We’ve been thinking of comics not only as sequential, but as a simultaneous, connected space – which makes parallel, intersecting narratives and other neat and unique narrative methods possible – unique to the comics medium.



- I find myself talking in Parentheticals and compare this to my Grandma’s storytelling – sidetracks, tangents, all rambling along to some not-so-linear destination (see <http://spinweaveandcut.blogspot.com/2011/01/shape-of-our-thoughts.html>)
 - My thoughts while running clear – stifled when I try to commit to LINED paper...
- Comics handle the nested, tangential, parenthetical, and all-over nature of our thinking [Chris Ware’s comics]



- We've been thinking about the **Organization of Space** and how Spatial relations (Composition) work together to create an experience
 - Consider then, organization of space as a form of thinking – we might relate this to museum wayfinding
 - Comics function a bit then as architecture – dollhouse cut through
 - <http://hoodedutilitarian.com/2010/09/strange-windows-draw-buildings-build-drawings-part-2/>
 - Let's OBSERVE how the geometry of the spaces we inhabit is orchestrated – this might include ceiling tiles, building windows, storm grates, etc.
 - See how they create a unique rhythm – can imagine them as being translated into music stanzas and performed aurally. In our case, we are considering them as organizing time VISUALLY – giving shape to our thinking...
 - We've seen how the abstract shapes of the panel and their relationships incorporate time into a narrative – think of Kristy's tight grid of small boxes, Tara and Megan's repetition of same-sized panels and other examples.



- An aside, **Charles McGee** – for whom I'm his biographer – talks about **encoding time in space** – using patterns to order the movement through a composition. He connects it to music, and uses the term "**Time Signatures**", please see:
 - <http://spinweaveandcut.blogspot.com/2009/02/conversation-with-charles.html>
 - <http://www2.metrotimes.com/editorial/story.asp?id=8694>
- **Consider** then chopping up space – to organize the **Rhythm** of your day – its time signature.

- One KEY to all this, is that meaning is being conveyed in the organization of the space – and we might also think of how gesture, dance, movement, music, convey meaning...
 - AND SO, (as my wife Leah remarked) It's an ILLUSION that communication is only verbal, we deceive ourselves that communication is only coming through one channel...
 - (Much more on this with Kress/multimodality next two weeks)
 - this leads to →
 - Rudolf **Arnheim's** project to **reconnect thinking and seeing** from "Visual Thinking"
 - From Arnheim's stance, Perception is not something separate – mere decoration – but **integral to our making of meaning**.
 - Susanne K. Langer's (1957) words echo this, "All thinking begins with *seeing*" (p. 266).
 - YET, there is an Historic PREJUDICE against perception as thought: Argument has BEEN – perception does not involve thought but ILLUSION
 - Presence of optical illusions – most famously, how a straw appears to "bend" in a glass of water, is used to disavow vision
 - This ties into Descartes – separation of mind/body and back to the Greeks and the idea that reality is on a plane of pure thought – beyond our senses...
 - This is reflected by the Educational emphasis on verbal/mathematical skills and assessment on such
 - (Yet Mathematics – study of patterns)
 - NYTimes article notes a major decline in the sale of children's Picture Books – citing as reason parents feeling pressure to get their kids reading Chapter Books earlier so as to prepare them for assessment tests around the corner. <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/10/08/us/08picture.html>
 - BUT thinking is **composed of relations**...
 - We make understanding via relations/associations
 - **Image Schema** – thinking composed of relations
 - Lakoff/Nunez ("Where Mathematics Comes From")– image schema – "*the book is on the table*" – consists of idea of concept of ABOVE, CONTACT, and SUPPORT
 - Conceptual metaphor central to thought
 - Perception compares (p. 66)
 - This is IN this, ON that, LARGER than those – TRY SOME!
 - Visual perception IS a cognitive activity (p. v)
 - Perception is thinking
 - TRY Concept drawings – marriage, the future, equality, relationships
 - Lakoff/Johnson ("Metaphors we live by")

- Spatialization Metaphors
 - Happy is UP
 - Because we experience gravity – upright is healthy, and thus “Happy is Up”
 - Understand how basic metaphors that make up our thinking our based on our embodied experience and perception.
 - To this end, let’s consider the embodiment of movement:

- Lynda Barry [“Picture This”]: “In motion you speak the language that language is based on” (p 35)

- My wife Leah’s paintings, abstract gestural expressive – capture something about her movement and her emotion in the way paint strikes surface. www.leahkeller.com
- Paintings are NOT *about* something – they are the thing. And so,



- Arnheim considered GESTURE the forerunner of line drawing (p. 117)
 - Gesture directs attention, conveys meaning (discussed this in the third Class, gesture precedes orality, as image precedes text...)
 - Think about how much we articulate our thoughts through gesture, expression, body language
 - There are things we seek to express that lie BEYOND the reach of the VERBAL

- Suzanne K. Langer claims that due to its linear form, language falls short in conveying feelings and emotions, and thus discursive forms are seen as intelligent, while everything else is relegated to the realm of the irrational (p. 143). For Langer (2009, 1962), images have an important function, for it is not that “*feeling and emotion are irrational; on the contrary, they seem irrational because language does not help make them conceivable, and most people cannot conceive anything without the logical scaffolding of words*” (p. 83).

- Consider then, how might we Draw emotion? (Bang, McCloud Ch 5)

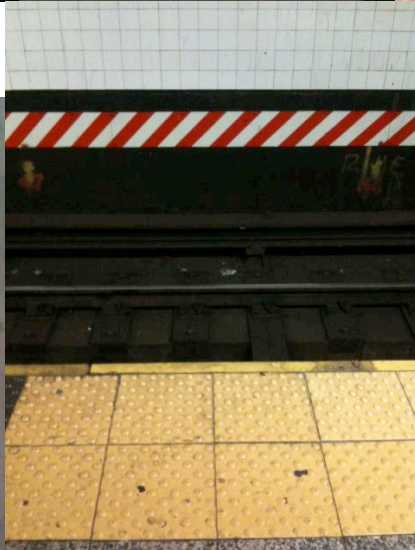
- Molly Bang “Picture This” – demonstrates how the relationship between shapes, colors, and the use of space creates meaning, emotion, narrative... Along the lines of Image Schemas...



- Further **ways of Drawing for Non-Drawers**
 - The Dot and the Line (Norton Juster)

- Stick Figure comics:
 - Cynicalman – Matt Feazell: <http://home.comcast.net/~mattfezell/>
 - XKCD: <http://xkcd.com/>
- The Magical Life of Long Tack Sam
<http://yareviews.wikispaces.com/The+Magical+Life+of+Long+Tack+Sam>
- Comic Life software: <http://comiclife.com/>
- Quilting??
- On **Sketching**: <http://spinweaveandcut.blogspot.com/2010/03/sketching.html>
 - KEY POINTS:
 - A good sketch is both DENSE and AMBIGUOUS – that is it gives us enough material to work with, in order to explore and make discoveries
 - Consider Sketching as a conversation with your ideas, with yourself – by putting things down, your visual system can work with it
 - A bit about My own creative process...
- Home Work:
 - Read McCloud Ch 6
 - Come up with 5 visual concept drawings – i.e. marriage, the future, ...
 - Making Exercise: **Grids and Gestures!**
 - Observe and make note of geometric patterns you come across in everyday life. Perhaps these will make their way into your piece.
 - The idea is to create spatial time signatures – break up the time in space (a key aspect of how comics make meaning) and then inhabit that geometric time with gestural lines – representing the presence of the human in action/expression (This can be about a dog too!). (Recommend McCloud Ch 5 for ideas about LINES)
 - Put another way – represent the experience of your day through a series of geometric forms, and convey your activity through the action of a line cutting through the space.
 - A note about how this was conceived – ruminating on the idea of grids and the shape of space but missing something. Literally running along the boardwalk on the East River noticing the tile patterns beneath my feet, and then came across a line of dripped-splashed paint traversing the regular pattern of the tiles. Space and movement...
 - Choose two books – one from each category...

Some sample GRIDS



Some Sample LINES

