# TEXT ON PRACTICE

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Reading and Writing Seminar

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## WHAT I HAVE BEEN MAKING

In my current study, I have been interested in expanding my horizons, regarding different styles and software of animation and other types of moving-image. The latest project that I have finished working on is a short mixed-media animation for the Eye film museum. The cartoon encapsulates feelings of rage and anxiety that one experiences before reaching their breaking point and "snapping" out of anger. Many seem to be preaching mental health awareness and embracing that virtually everyone deals with some kind of emotional issue. However, in my eyes, rage remains to be viewed as a destructive, negative emotion, and a taboo topic. This type of outlook on the emotion becomes harmful itself, as rage, when bottled up, cultivates and turns inward, becoming uncontrollable, and detrimental. All this abhorrence and inequity felt inside evolve into self-loathing.

## WHY I HAVE BEEN MAKING IT

At the start of the assignment, I had an entirely different idea of what I wanted to make. I felt as though I was not as well versed in politics and literature, as my fellow students were, and wanted to create something with similar depth and intellectualism to parallel their work. The plan was to either make a video work about deforestation and the lack of 'natural' nature within the Netherlands and the relationship between man and earth or the positive sides of the Covid pandemic through the eyes of an introvert. However, these topics still did not feel thorough or sophisticated enough, and put me in a state of stagnation, in which the feelings of stress and pressure became more powerful than the desire to create. Seminars and group conversations became a debilitating misery, a never-ending loop of dismay and disappointment. Wrath began building up, exacerbating the desire to burst into a million pieces to get rid of the feeling. The sensation became such a big part of everyday life, it prompted an inclination to start analyzing it. This resulted in me scrapping the original ideas and deciding to work on expressing this irritating feeling through animation. The characterized and animated rage could do what I could not – tear itself apart into non-existence, smash and bounce off every edge and surface, explode, and deform.

## HOW I MADE IT

The animation was first and mainly made by using a clay-like modelling compound called 'Play-Doh', a technique I had not yet tried before. Clay appeared to be a very expressive material, reminiscent of a stress ball, which you can squeeze, gnaw at and manipulate. I started by sketching out some characters by hand and constructed a storyboard to set rough guidelines for each animation frame. Following these guidelines, I recreated the characters digitally using simple geometric shapes in Photoshop and animated them. Finally, the characters were recreated in clay and moving their bodies inch by inch, I took pictures, which were then, again, imported to and cut out in Photoshop. Finally, arranging each picture one after another, frame-by-frame, a stop-motion animation was created. The result was further edited in AfterEffects to make it more stylized and smooth.
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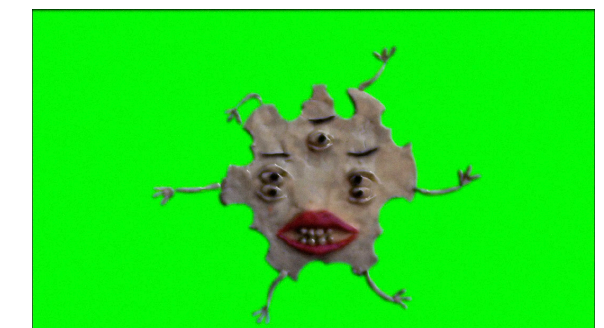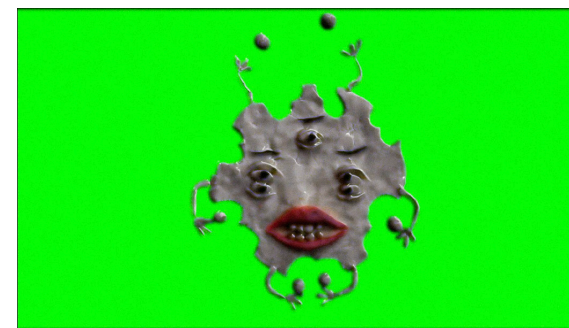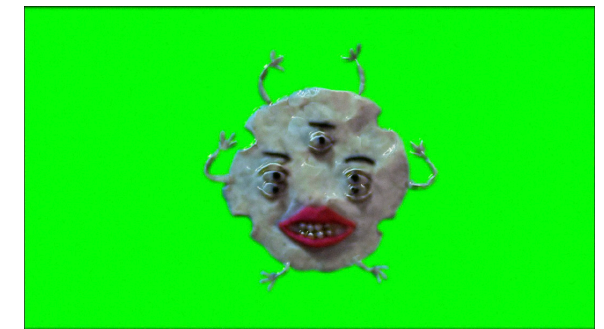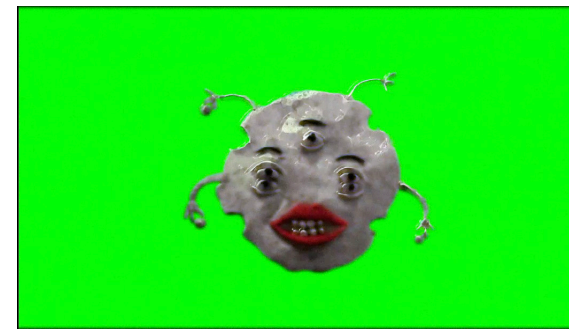
As far as the background was concerned, I used another animated, vibrant visual that was made for a seminar regarding power and violence. This visual was created using archived video footage, which was then blurred, saturated, and distorted in AfterEffects, producing an abstract piece. As the theme of the topic was quite violent, I felt it fit my current work and, consequentially, looked visually cohesive.
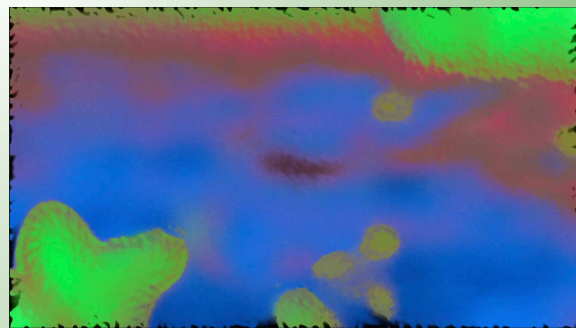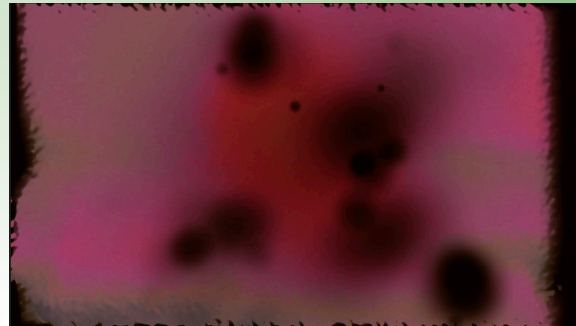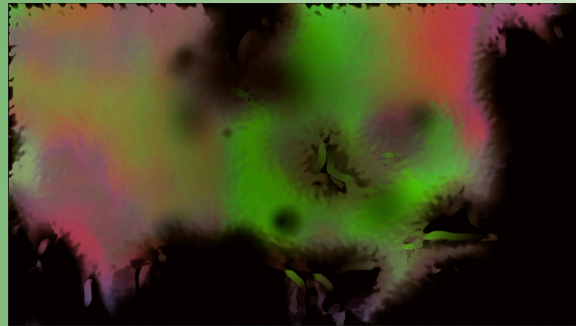




Merging these two animations consisted of placing them atop one another in iMovie and layering them with a green-screen type of effect.
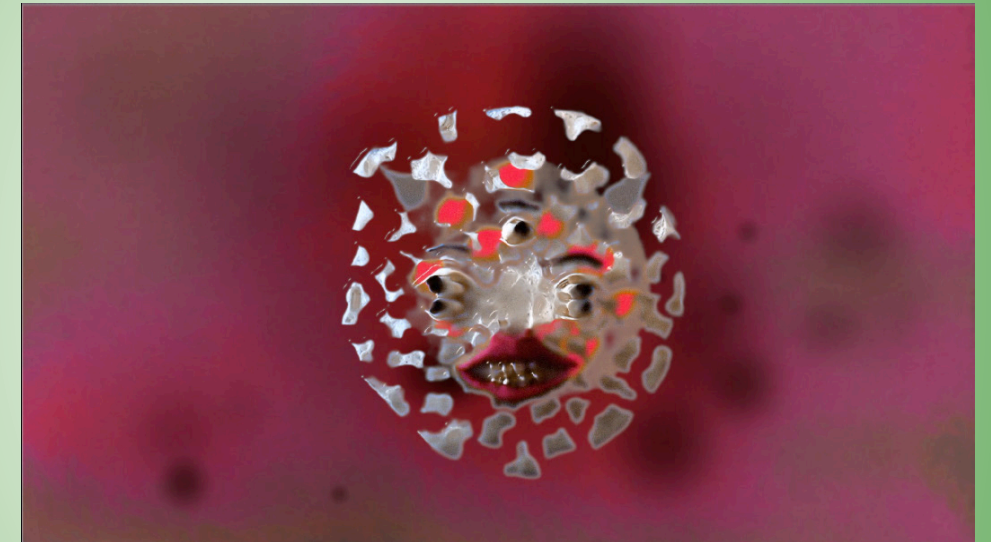
And finally, the last component was implementing the soundtrack, for which I collaborated with a music composer, Wybe Wiersma – one I had worked with for previous projects. I initially showed him the first ideas and drafts of the video, for him to understand the themes and atmospheres. I later shared the types of music I found inspiring, and the types of emotions I would like the sountrack to evoke. The collaboration was not always smooth-sailing, the composer made several versions for the sound, however, the one I liked most was the very first one. His opinion did not match mine, and we ended up com-promising on the version by me paying him.

SEE VIDEO HERE

## PARADOX IN CREATION

I believe this artwork relates to my previous creations in various ways. Many of my latest projects have come out of some sort of inner turmoil. The feel-ings and frictions that arise once I feel unsure of what to do next, are what end up becoming the main topics of my work. The work serves as a tool for escap-ism from current stressors, while, oxymoronically, helping complete the assignment.

"Internal Time" was a piece that I did, when faced with an assignment about the complexities of time and its' comprehension. The difficulties of this topic, which were challenging to grasp, led to a surfeit of overthinking, which prompted the realization of how inner worries intertwine inside one's head in a timeless loop with seemingly no beginning or end. Whilst, time, when happy, seemed to naturally ebb and flow, later remaining a pleasant memory in passing. Thus, the project ended up being about how one perceives time when in differing emotional states.

SEE VIDEO HERE

Furthermore, another example of such a working inspiration was my graduation project "Lucid". Having the freedom to create a topic of my choosing, the possibilities seemed endless, and feelings of being lost surfaced. In addition, as a designer, I had not yet figured out which path to take once finishing my Bachelor, what my capabilities were and what the future held. Therefore, I ended up creating an animation about dreaming, in which the character travels through different realms of his subconscious, not realizing his whereabouts when for a moment, he grasps his current reality and becomes lucid.

Even though these projects are prompted by the same motivations, they, of course, relate in technique and medium as well. The making of "Internal Time" mirrored the creation of the main character of "Snap" in the sense that it was also a stop-motion animation mainly created on Photoshop. Meanwhile, "Lucid" involved two types of animations, where one was made on Photoshop, and one made into VFX on Aftereffects.

SEE VIDEO HERE

# SURREALIST IDEAS

As an individual and an artist, I feel the desire to escape reality and create something that comes from the subconscious. I believe this resonates with some of the ideas in the Surrealist movement. The Surrealism manifesto, which holds many of the ideologies of the movement was heavily inspired by Sigmund Freud and delved into the intricacies of the subconscious mind and its' importance in creation (Surrealism). It redefined surrealism and showcased it in a new light, not only as a style of art but as a movement with its' own challenges and agendas. A new position within the art world. (Martinique, E.) It spoke about how people tend to neglect or ignore the alternate reality that they encounter every night, favoring rationalism and logical procedures. However, Breton strived to find a better and superior reality: "I believe in the future resolution of these two states -- outwardly so contradictory -- which are dream and reality into a sort of absolute reality, a surreality, so to speak<...>" (Breton, A.). According to him Surrealism was: "Psychic automatism in its pure state, by which one proposes to express...the actual functioning of thought...in the absence of any control exercised by reason, exempt from any aesthetic or moral concern."(Surrealism)

## INSPIRATIONS

I mostly get inspired and excited by certain musicians. I am most influenced by Nicolas Jaar, whose music tends to be more avant-garde sound design, including foley, rather than simply being a melodic tune. His pieces are layered with a variety of sounds, containing textures reminiscent of ASMR. His use of sound is poetic, sensitive, emotional, and expressive, almost like a stream of consciousness, taking the listener through a journey or narrative without involving any spoken word. This leaves a lot of room for the imagination to run free, to give shape to these sounds, feel the grain of the static atmosphere, the edges and light of shattering glass, and the liquidity and spirality in the vibration of the low tones. Another musician that inspires me is Jacques Auberger. I not only admire the result of his work, but the way he creates his music, capturing mundane sounds, layering, and looping them. His belief that any sound can turn into music once put into a musical context mirrors my attitude towards textures found in everyday gadgets and how I believe they can be created into a moving visual for any context. Furthermore, I also integrate a lot of repetition and layering within my works, as I find it captivating, how the same visual can become something completely different, once tweaked, zoomed in, or put in a different context.

# CONCLUSION!

Yet, even though the relationship between sound and image has long fascinated me, and a class in Touch Designer, that informed me of the scientific relationship between the two sparked my curiosity even further, I feel my next project should integrate a more research-based foundation. There is no concise idea in mind, at least for now. I am often inclined to create works based on my personal experiences and feelings or just tend to be a hands-on type of creator. Exploring, experimenting, and observing are a crucial part of my practice, I feel I do not get as much inspired by the people around me, as I do by my surroundings. I feel inspired by the feeling cultivated through trial and error and by the excitement from a "happy accident" that turns beautiful.

**A        D        D        I        T        I        O        N**

Having written this last part, I had a discussion in a tutorial with Barend, where I was advised, once more, to do the opposite of what I had initially intended to. Therefore, the future is yet to be known, yet nonetheless, I will try to continue working in a way that works for me, by exploring and learning through trial and error, finding a deeper meaning afterward.

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