

***STORYLINES:
COMIC ART IN ALBERTA***

EXHIBITION GUIDE

JADE NASOGALUAK CARPENTER

ROB HICKEY

JACKIE HUSKISSON

CAYLAH LYONS

SHO UEHARA



**ART GALLERY OF GRANDE PRAIRIE
TRAVELLING EXHIBITION PROGRAM**



STORYLINES: COMIC ART IN ALBERTA

PRESS RELEASE

Storylines features a collection of work by Comic Artists from Alberta who use illustration as a form of narrative and storytelling. This collection of work demonstrates the diverse ways that comics are used to reflect on socio-cultural themes that are present in our everyday lives.

The artists in this exhibit explore innovative applications for Comic Art. Artists Jade Nasoguluak Carpenter and Sho Uehara each employ Comic Art as a tool for language. Jade humourously explores everyday emotions and gestures of empathy through a series of doodles and captions, while Sho experiments with graphic storyboards, which use silent images to create a narrative. Meanwhile Rob Hickey and Caylah Lyons focus on character development and use comics as a mechanism for expressing loss and coping. Finally, Jackie Huskisson uses printmaking techniques to create patterned images that show texture and depth through the use of colour and two-dimensional surface.

Comic Art as a medium is extremely accessible and relatable, which is part of its appeal. However, as simple as the work may seem, these artists expertly craft contexts, actions and emotions into every illustration. Each drawing begins with a line. Line by line, a story develops.

Curated by Jihane Theocharides



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MEET THE ARTISTS

JADE NASOGALUAK CARPENTER is an Inuvialuk artist and curator based in Calgary/Banff and currently holds the Indigenous Curatorial Research Practicum at Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity. Jade uses art and humour as a coping mechanism to address cultural displacement and mental illness; the lighthearted nature of their practice extends gestures of empathy and solidarity.

ROB HICKEY is an illustrator currently based in Alberta, born and raised in Fort McMurray. Rob received an Art & Design diploma at the Keyano College in 2011, and a Sequential Arts diploma at the MtM College of Animation, Art & Design in Toronto. Back at Keyano College, he taught a course on graphic novel design and layout. He worked as a teacher and camp counsellor for young students creating comics, as well as publishing work bimonthly in a local magazine. He has also worked on numerous projects with the local municipality, ranging from educational illustrations to characters for a bus wrap.

JACQUELINE HUSKISSON was born and raised in Calgary and received a Bachelor of Fine Arts in 2011 from the Alberta College of Art and Design. Looking for a challenge she migrated to the Emerald Isles, Ireland and in 2017, earned a Master of Fine Arts from the Belfast School of Art. Huskisson dabbles in drawing, comics and digital media. She recently exhibited a body of work in *Absurd Walls* at Alberta Printmakers, Calgary, and was awarded the Scott Leroux for Media Arts Exploration from Video Pool in Winnipeg. Currently she works in Calgary, awaiting her next adventure.

CAYLAH CJ LYONS is an artist living in Northern Alberta who travels a long way to various anime and video game conventions to be a big nerd and sell their art. After running an anime club in high school, they went on to Grande Prairie Regional College to obtain a Diploma in Interactive Digital Design. While there, they began developing their original characters for comics and stories in an Independent Study class. These original characters, including Alex and May, are featured in a few published works, including a comic book (manga), and illustrated children's books. Caylah self-publishes under the moniker CJ Prophet, and *Magical Girl May* is available on Amazon.

SHO UEHARA is a comic artist and illustrator based in Calgary. While taking on occasional commissions and working a full time job, his main passion lies in comics, picture books, and making personal projects become a full reality each day. Miyuki is a comic short about the beauty, and mystery of winter. The quiet, soothing isolation away from an otherwise tumultuous world, and in that quiet, getting a glimpse of a magical world born from the imagination. Miyuki is a Japanese name that holds several meanings. One interpretation is "deep snow" or "beautiful snow."



IMAGE INVENTORY - JADE NASOGALUAK CARPENTER



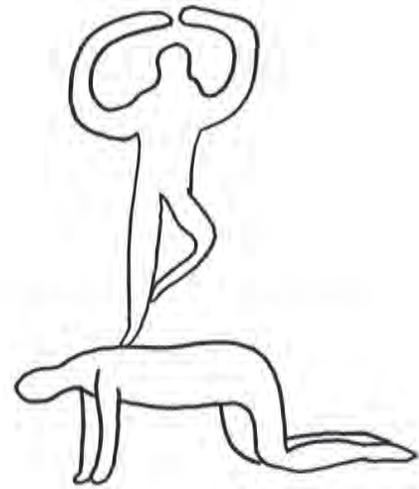
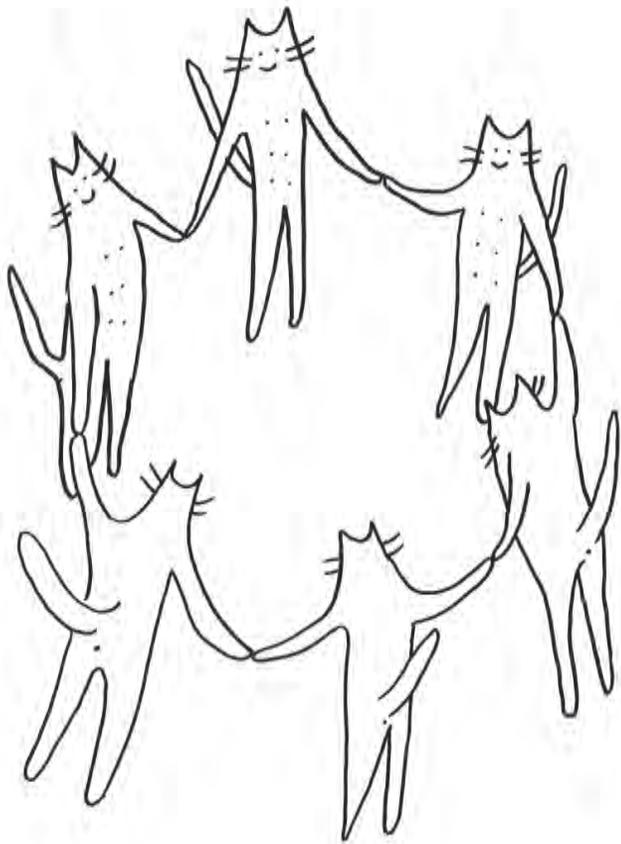
Please laugh at
my jokes.

18. *Untitled Doodle (pity party)*,
2018. Sharpie on paper.

19. *Untitled Doodle (pity laugh)*,
2018. Sharpie on paper.



IMAGE INVENTORY - JADE NASOGALUAK CARPENTER



It's okay to
not be okay.

17. *Untitled Doodle (gather)*, 2018.
Sharpie on paper.

16. *Untitled Doodle (it's okay)*,
2018. Sharpie on paper.



IMAGE INVENTORY - JADE NASOGALUAK CARPENTER



Nobody liked my selfie.

15. *Untitled Doodle (selfie slump)*, 2018. Sharpie on paper.



I wish this lump in my throat was food.

14. *Untitled Doodle (lump)*, 2018. Sharpie on paper.



IMAGE INVENTORY - JADE NASOGALUAK CARPENTER



13. *Map print*, 2016. Digital Print on Paper.



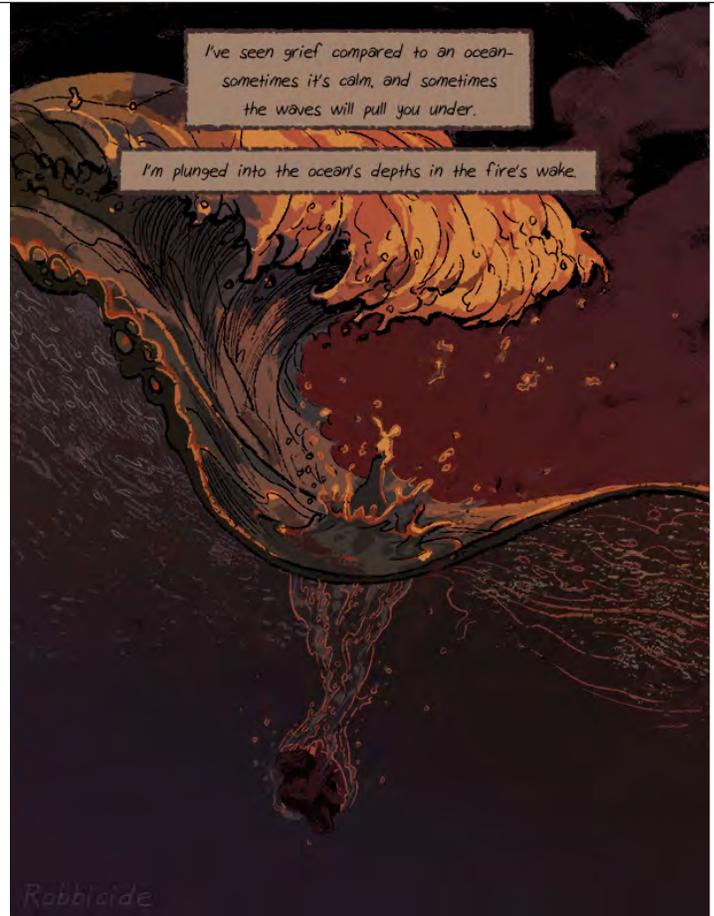
10. *Life is Okay Sometimes*, 2018. Paper banner.



IMAGE INVENTORY - ROB HICKEY



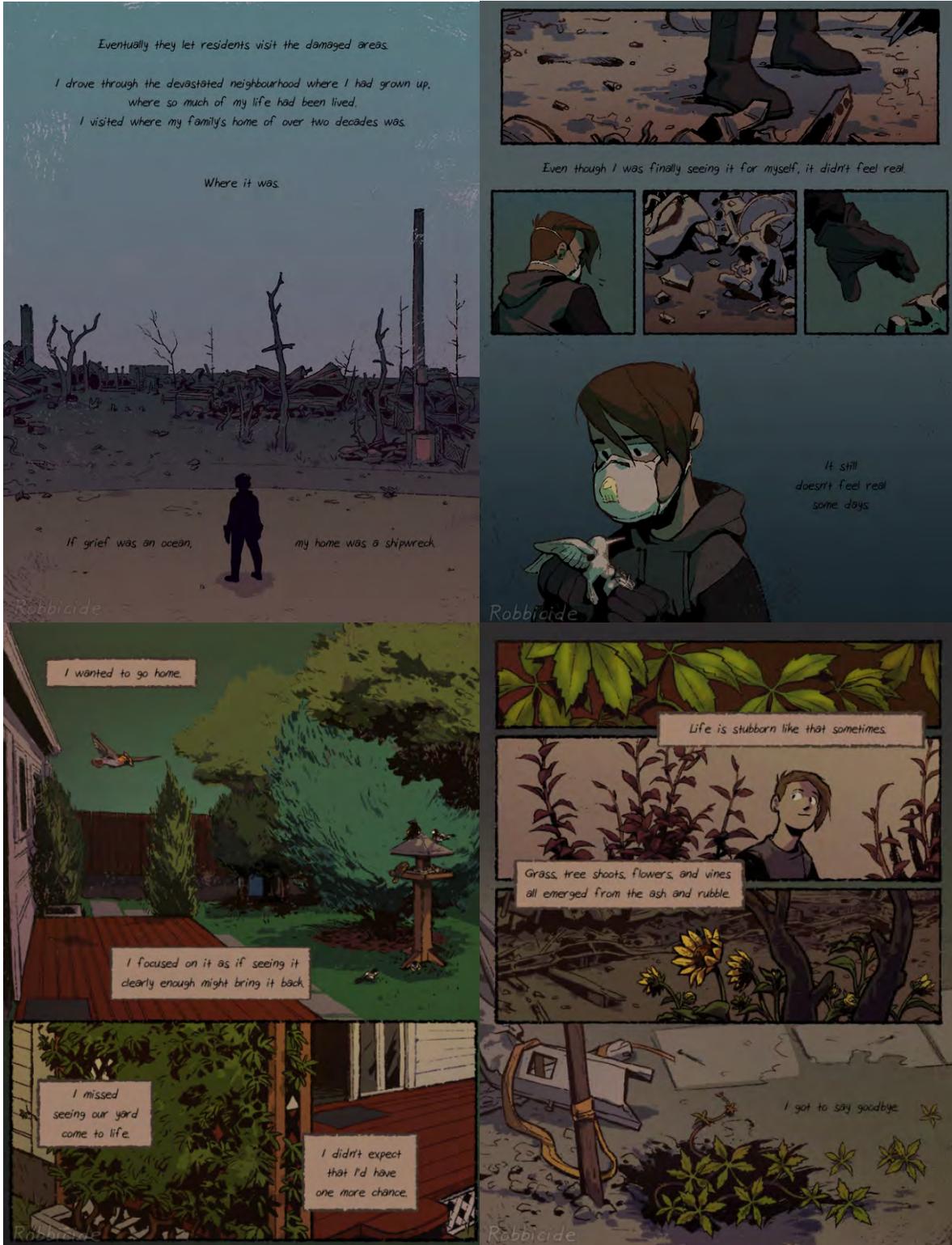
7. "Where the Heart Is" published 2017. Digital print. Page 4.



9. "Where the Heart Is" published 2017. Digital print. Page 5.



IMAGE INVENTORY - ROB HICKEY



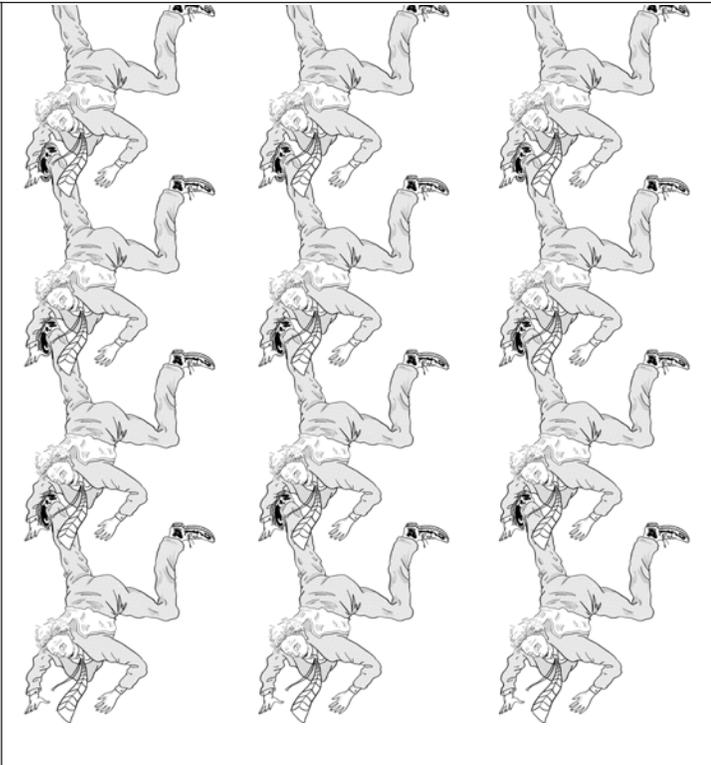
19. "Where the Heart Is" published 2017. Digital prints. Page 7-8 (top), 11-12 (bottom)



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IMAGE INVENTORY - JACQUILINE HUSKISSON



8. *It's Raining Men (Hallelujah)*, 2018
Silkscreen on mulberry paper.



6. *Hit The Ground*, 2018. Silkscreen on paper.



5. *Run Run Run*, 2018. Silkscreen on paper.



IMAGE INVENTORY - CAYLAH LYONS



1. 3 original comic pages of *Magical Girl May*, 2015.



2. *Magical Girl May*, 2015. Digital print.



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IMAGE INVENTORY - CAYLAH CJ LYONS



12. Alex and May - Perfect End, 2018. Digital print.



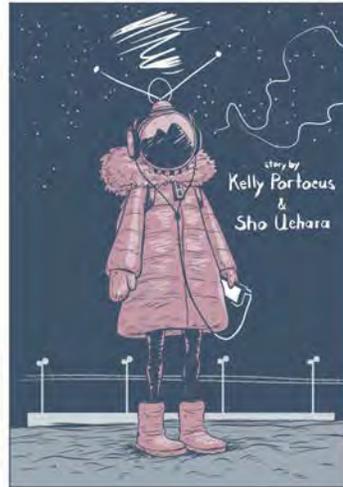
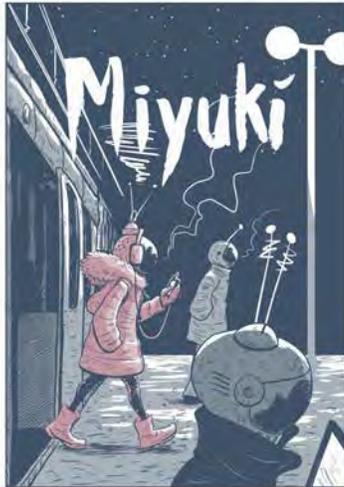
11. Alex and May - Character Sketch, 2015. Copic marker illustration.



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IMAGE INVENTORY - SHO UEHARA



3. from the original pages of *Miyuki*, 2017. Digital print.



CRATE INVENTORY

Crate #1

- 01 Caylah Lyons, 3 original comic pages of *Magical Girl May*
- 02 Caylah Lyons, *Magical Girl May*
- 03 Sho Uehara - from the original pages of *Miyuki*
- 04 Rob Hickey, "*Where the Heart Is*" Page 7-8 (top) page 11-12 (bottom).
- 05 Jacquelyn Huskisson, *Run Run Run*
- 06 Jacquelyn Huskisson, *Hit The Ground*
- 07 Rob Hickey, "*Where the Heart Is*" Page 4.
- 08 Jacquelyn Huskisson, *It's Raining Men (Hallelujah)*
- 09 Rob Hickey, "*Where the Heart Is*" Page 5.

Crate #2

- 10 Jade Nasogaluak Carpenter, *Life is okay sometimes*
- 11 Caylah Lyons, *Alex and May - Character Sketch*
- 12 Caylah Lyons, *Alex and May - Perfect End*
- 13 Jade Nasogaluak Carpenter, *Map print*
- 14 Jade Nasogaluak Carpenter, *Untitled Doodle (lump)*
- 15 Jade Nasogaluak Carpenter, *Untitled Doodle (selfie slump)*
- 16 Jade Nasogaluak Carpenter, *Untitled Doodle (it's okay)*
- 17 Jade Nasogaluak Carpenter, *Untitled Doodle (gather)*
- 18 Jade Nasogaluak Carpenter, *Untitled Doodle (pity party)*
- 19 Jade Nasogaluak Carpenter, *Untitled Doodle (pity laugh)*

- FRAGILE WORKS: Carefully review how the works are packed.
- Please refer to the numbering system for each work in the Image Inventory to return each work to the crates.
- Where possible place framed works back-to-back or front-to-front. Avoid placing the wire hanging systems facing the front of artworks to avoid scratches.
- Only remove foam packing that is marked remove/replace.
- Keep all packing with the crate.
- Repacking: Line up the numbers.

Concerns Contact:

Art Gallery of Grande Prairie
Danielle Ribar- Associate Curator,
780.357.7483
Region 1, AFA Travelling Exhibitions



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How to Look at Art

The Feldman Method of Art Criticism is a useful process for examining art, which encourages the viewer to look at art critically and draw thoughtful conclusions about the work. Edward Burke Feldman describes “criticism” as a performance which is systematically broken down into four parts: Description, Formal Analysis, Interpretation and Evaluation (Feldman, 1973)

These steps proceed in sequence from the easiest to the most difficult mode of observation, from specific to general which allows the viewer to gain an understanding of the visual facts before deciding on their value or meaning. (Feldman, 1973)

Description:

This is the action of gathering a visual inventory, by developing an understanding of what we see. The goal is to describe what we see objectively. Using nouns, make a list of what you see. For example, in a realistic painting there may be objects in nature, such as trees, clouds, or flowers. There may also be figures, such as people or animals, or objects such as chairs or tables.

When presented with an abstract work, this becomes more difficult, so it helps to break it down into shapes, colours and directions and describe their composition. Are there repetitions? How many are there? Do they tend to go in one particular direction or many directions? Are there any particular spatial qualities to the objects?

What are the characteristics of execution? Are there layers of transparency? Is the paint thick? Are there particular textures?

Formal Analysis:

This step examines the relationship between the objects described in the first step. How do you *perceive* the forms that you see?

How are the colours interacting? Do they blend together? Contrast? Are objects realistic or are they exaggerated? Do they stand out or interact with each other? Are they static or do they appear to move? Are some objects emphasized? Are there primary, secondary and tertiary objects or are they all equally prominent? Do they seem close or far away? Does the image appear flat or is there depth?

Interpretation:

This step is the most challenging but also the most important in critiquing art. In this step we attempt to discover the meanings behind the work and how the work relates to life and society in general. Interpretation deals with the emotional and formal properties of the work by determining their *impact* on the viewer. You are creating a hypothesis of the work by connecting



your inventory and analysis to each other in a meaningful way. Many different hypotheses can be arrived at, and therefore multiple interpretations of the same work. The point of this step is to be able to support your interpretation using the information collected from steps one and two.

What ideas or themes are present in the work? What does it make you think of? Do these themes relate to current conditions or do they feel more historical? Does the work speak to specific life experiences, or is it more a general statement? Does the work evoke a specific mood or feeling? How does the artist create this mood?

Try to connect the descriptive and analytical information collected in the first to steps to your interpretation. How do they support your interpretation of the work? Do your peers have different interpretations? Compare what information they used to draw their conclusions to the information you used.

Judgement/Evaluation:

This step may not be necessary, especially if you feel the interpretation has been satisfactory. Judgement involves ranking the work in relation to other work. In general, judgement is important for when determining authenticity or determining the worth or value of work. This may be important in the work of an art historian or an art dealer.

When making a judgement, it is important to evaluate relative to a wide range of comparable work. This involves understanding the object across a range of space and time. Does the work relate to other examples of similar theme or style or does it differ? What qualities make it similar or different? Does it tell you something new or does it reinforce old ideas?

Technique and craftsmanship is another aspect of judgment. How important is proper technique and craftsmanship to the success of the work? Sometimes artist forego technique in order to make work more expressive. Do you find the piece interesting? Can you attribute that to technique or to something more evocative?



An Introduction to Comic Art

The Comic, or Comic Art, is often associated with childhood past times or niche collectibles, however, it is a medium rich in history that has had a profound influence both as a reflection of the society and culture we live in. Comics possess the complexity and layers to rival many of the well-known art movements of the past century. The educational guide that follows will provide teachers and students with a brief introduction to some of the many elements that inform comic art and how we “read” them.

What Is a Comic?

Famed comic artist, Will Eisner, describes The Comic as “sequential art,” meaning that pictures existing individually are just pictures, while placing them strategically in sequence is the art of the Comic.

The Comic is a diverse art form, incorporating writers and artists, operating across various trends, genres and styles while also addressing a variety of subject matter and themes. All of this information exists within frames, each occupying a different space and organized in relation to each other. Comics do not necessarily have to combine words with images, but the images contained within each frame should tell a story as if they were words. (McCloud, 1993)

Elementary Level Discussion

- Do your students read comics? Do they enjoy reading comics? Why or why not?
- What kind of stories can comic books tell? Do your students prefer looking at the pictures in comics or reading the text?
- How is storytelling with pictures different than storytelling with words?

Secondary Level Discussion

- What is the difference between an individual image (a cartoon) and a comic?
- What are the differences between comics and animation? What are the similarities?
- How does the experience of looking at an image differ from reading a comic? How does the experience of watching an animation differ from reading a comic?

The Comic Structure

As with written storytelling, sequential art requires structure to successfully tell a story with imagery. The structure consists of visual iconography (the vocabulary), gutters (the grammar) and closure (reader participation). These elements are discussed in more detail below.

An important aspect of the comic is the process of “Cartooning” where an artist produces an image that differs from real life to varying degrees. Some may choose to remain fairly



realistic while others prefer to highly abstract or simplify their images. When cartooning, the artist must

choose the most important details to focus on, distilling an image down to an essential meaning. Simplifying an image through cartooning creates more universal stories, allowing a wider population to connect to its meaning. The act of cartooning is used to develop a **Visual Iconography**, which describes universally accepted visual symbols that are used to convey objects and ideas. Visual Iconography forms the vocabulary of comics. (McCloud, 1993) Examples of commonly used visual icons are shown below in figure 1.

The Happy Face
Lines

The House

The Tree

Stink



Fig.1

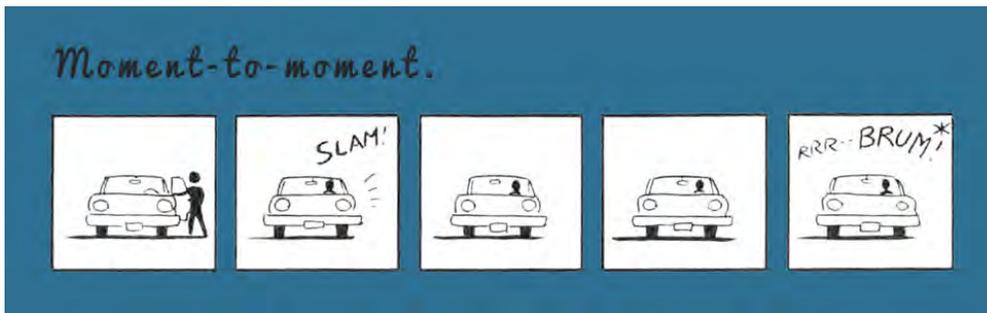
Visual Iconography develops over time and is continuously being developed. It also differs across cultures. For example, Manga, a comic style developed in Japan, employs a whole set of Visual Iconography, or vocabulary, which may not be familiar to North American readers.

The physical space between panels or frames is referred to as the gutter. **The Gutter** is the grammar of the comic and brings separate images together to form a single idea. The way grammar transforms words into a sentence and sentences into a story. The Gutter allows our minds to perform the act of closure.

Closure is an important element of comics and requires the willingness of the reader to participate in the story using their imagination. It is the act of mentally completing the absence of images in the gutter space, or mentally completing the image between panels. Our minds draw on experience and comprehension to perform closure and allow us to absorb many parts of story

and perceive them as a whole. Closure is how we perceive change, time and motion in comics. There are six main types of transitions represented by the gutter. (McCloud, 1993) They are the following (Figure 2):

1. Moment to moment: Very little information is left out between images. This requires hardly any closure.



2. Action to action progressions show a subject performing a series of actions



3. Subject to subject shows the dynamic between subjects within the same moment. This transition can sometimes require a higher degree of closure.



4. Scene to scene transitions occurs across distance and time. This requires deductive reasoning and therefore a high degree of closure.



5. Aspect to Aspect is time irrelevant and shows different aspects of a place, idea or mood



6. Non-sequitur may seem illogical as there is no relationship between the panels at all but can be useful for setting a tone.





Elementary Level Discussion:

- Can your students think of any common symbols which represent everyday objects?
- Besides comics and cartoons, where might we see some of these symbols?
- Can your students think of times when it is more useful to use symbols and icons than it is to use words?
- Do you enjoy stories that are very detailed or do you enjoy imagining some of the details?

- Why is it important to use your imagination when you read or listen to a story?
- Do you use your imagination when you look at art? How does using your imagination to interpret art make you feel about the art?

Secondary Level Discussion:

- What are some of their favourite cartoons? Do the cartoons look realistic or simplified?
- When might it be more advantageous to use a simplified image versus a realistic image and vice versa?
- Visual icons or symbols are to comics as vocabulary is to language. Why is this important for the act of visual storytelling and how does it relate to reading comics and images?
- How does the Gutter, or the space between panels act as a grammatical tool for storytelling?
- Do you feel that leaving the reader to interpret the space between panels is a useful tool for storytelling? How does it affect your experience of the story?

Describing Time and Motion

Comic artists use panel frames to set the pace and tone of a story. Panel frames are the elements which are separated by gutters. The panel tells the reader that there is a progression or division of time and/or space. The panels contain contents that inform readers about the duration of time passing or qualities of the space in which the story exists.

Artists can effect the reader's experience by experimenting with the spacing and shapes of the panels. For example, omitting the border around the panel, allowing the image to bleed across the whole page can convey the idea of timelessness. Tall, skinny panels may evoke the feeling of being compressed, restricted or claustrophobic. Action comics may use quadrilateral panels during a particular brawl scene to emphasize speed, commotion and disorientation. (See fig. 3) These are examples of representing motion *panel to panel*.

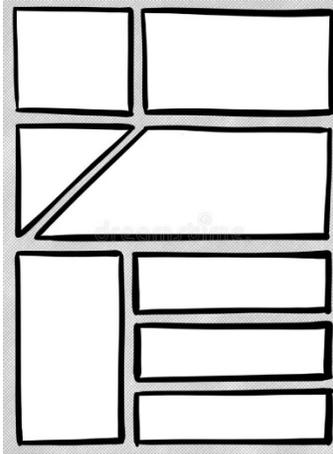


Figure. 3a

Artists may also demonstrate the passage of time *within* the panel by illustrating movement. Some common devices for depicting movement are:

1. Motion Lines – Lines which demonstrate the path of movement



Figure. 3b

2. Streaking effects - Using multiple images of the same figure to communicate speed



Figure. 3c

3. The Polyptych - When a moving figure(s) is shown on top of a continuous background.



Figure. 3d

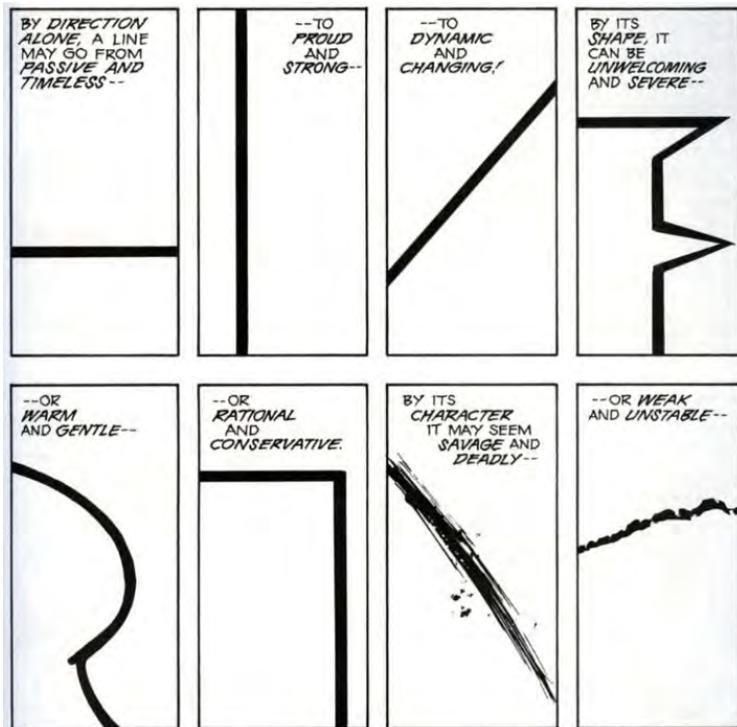
Elementary Level Discussion:

- Can you identify the differences between the panel shapes in the pieces by Rob Hickey? What shapes are present? Can you describe them? (ie. Are they long? Tall? Rectangular? Square? Borderless?)
- Pick a panel from the exhibit and describe the image contained in it. Does the panel shape affect the content of the panel?
- How do you experience time throughout the day? What sorts of clues let you know that time has passed?
- How might you visually demonstrate these clues either through drawing or colouring?
- Can you identify any depictions of time passing in the pieces from the exhibit?

Secondary Level Discussion:

- How do the panel shapes in the exhibit affect your interpretation of their stories? What kind of information can you gather, based on the shapes of their panels?
- How do you feel about the pieces in the exhibit that do not have panels? Does it still feel like a comic? Why or why not? Why do you think the artist chose not to utilize panels?
- Can you think of other ways to depict motion in a single panel?
- How might one depict slow passage of time or slow movement?
- Are there examples in the exhibit that demonstrate the passage of time or movement?

Representing Emotions and Senses



A comic is most successful if it produces an emotional response from the viewer, whether it is excitement, fear, anticipation, attachment to a character etc. Illustrations are powerful due to the expressive potential of the simple line. Lines have the potential to evoke emotions and moods such as anxiety or calmness, just by the nature of their appearance, as Scott McCloud demonstrates in the figure to the left. This brings us back to the idea of visual iconography and the creation of symbols. As line types and styles become common enough, they become recognizable symbols, becoming incorporated into the visual language. As a visual metaphor, lines can represent the invisible senses such as smell, emotions and sound. (McCloud, 1993)

The most common representation of sound is the word bubble, which uses visuals to evoke the quality or tone of the dialogue. See Figure. 4a for examples of commonly used word bubble styles.

Another way to visually evoke sound is playing with font style and sound effects to describe background noises and surrounding sounds. See Figure. 4b for examples.



Figure. 4a



Figure. 4b

Combining Words and Pictures

Although comic art does not require that images be accompanied by words, most comics pair words with images to enhance the act of storytelling. Comics certainly can tell a story without the use of text, in fact there are times when it may be more advantageous to do so, however it does leave the story up to a certain level of interpretation. With words, comic art develops a level of specificity and complexity because the combinations of words with images is near limitless. The following is an exploration of just a few examples of word-image combinations. (McCloud, 1993)

- Word Specific – Word specific combinations are text dominant, relying on detailed descriptions. The picture does not have significant value. It is a visual imitation of the words.
- Picture Specific – The image is the dominant form of communication. Any words are simply a soundtrack to the imagery.
- Duo Specific – These panels have words and images which share the same level of detail and essentially tell the reader the same information. The words and images are equal in nature.
- Additive – In these panels, the words and pictures elaborate on one another. Each component provides context and relays information.



- Parallel – When words and images appear in parallel combinations, they appear mismatched. Each component seems to address different subjects.
- Montage – In this combination, words and images are integral.
- Interdependent – In the most popular combination, words and images work together to communicate information that neither could communicate on their own.

Colour

Similar to the components of comics discussed above, the decision to use colour and how to use it provides the reader with additional layers of information. Historically, the decision to use colour was based primarily on economics. Black and white was simply the cheapest and quickest method of production. Over time, basic colours were introduced, again sticking to an economical model. However, as comic art began taking advantage of digital tools, colour became easier to apply and experiment with. Colour has become an effective way to differentiate between scenes and characters and sets an emotional tone for the reader by giving them visual cues about mood, setting and time period, the passage of time and depth of field. (Brothers, 2010)

Colour is also a good tool for drawing the audience's attention to a particular subject, object or action or for adding more detail to an image without relying too heavily on words or line work. This can be particularly useful when visually describing the environment without the use of too much detail. For example, colour can imply textures, materials, lighting etc. But overall, the purpose of colour in comic art is to support the story or narrative. (McCaig, 2018)



Educator's Guided Tour

Comic art is the result of an evolution of illustration and cartooning over time. Cartoons gained popularity in England and North America newspapers and publications in the early 1800s. They were, and still are, an effective tool used by publications and newspapers to comment on social and political culture. Over time, publications began reprinting cartoons as compilations until the eventually started producing original cartoon books called Pulps. They often featured characters, known as action or “pulp heroes,” who experienced adventures in new places. An example of a well-known pulp hero is Popeye, created by Elzie Segar in 1929. This paved the way for the comic book which gained full popularity with the creation of the Superhero in 1938.

The world was introduced to the Superhero with the release of Superman in Action Comics #1, created by Canadian artist Joe Shuster, which marked the beginning of the Golden Age of Comic Books. Between 1938 and 1940, many of the Superheroes we know today were created such as Batman, Catwoman, The Flash, Captain America and Wonder Woman. This was also the period in which comic books were at their most popular. Following World War II, sales of comic books fell significantly and comic publishers began branching out to new themes, such as horror, Westerns and romance throughout the 1950's. By 1970, a new generation of comic artists began creating content with more realistic storylines and began addressing issues of social injustice such as racism and pollution. This was also the period when characters were becoming more racially diverse. As a result, throughout the 80's and 90's many comics had darker themes with many beloved superheroes facing tragedies such as death and critical injury. It was during this era when Art Spiegelman's graphic novel Maus was released, recounting the author's experiences as a Young Jewish man in Poland during the height of Nazi rule in Germany. Today, comic artists continue to push the evolution of comic art to explore new themes and experiment with new applications of the medium across the spectrum of artistic representation, from classic comic books and strips to contemporary art and installation, comic art has become an invaluable method for artists to develop narratives and connect with viewers.

The artists included in *Storylines: Comic Art in Alberta* represent the flourishing comic art community in Alberta. They demonstrate a wide variety of ways comic artists are working within the medium and pushing the medium forward. The following is a discussion of a few of the works from this exhibit.

References:

“Comics: Comic Books.” *Illustration History*, National Endowment for the Arts, <https://www.illustrationhistory.org/genres/comics-comic-books>.

“Creating the Superhero.” *The Comic Books*, <http://www.thecomicbooks.com/old/Hist1.html>

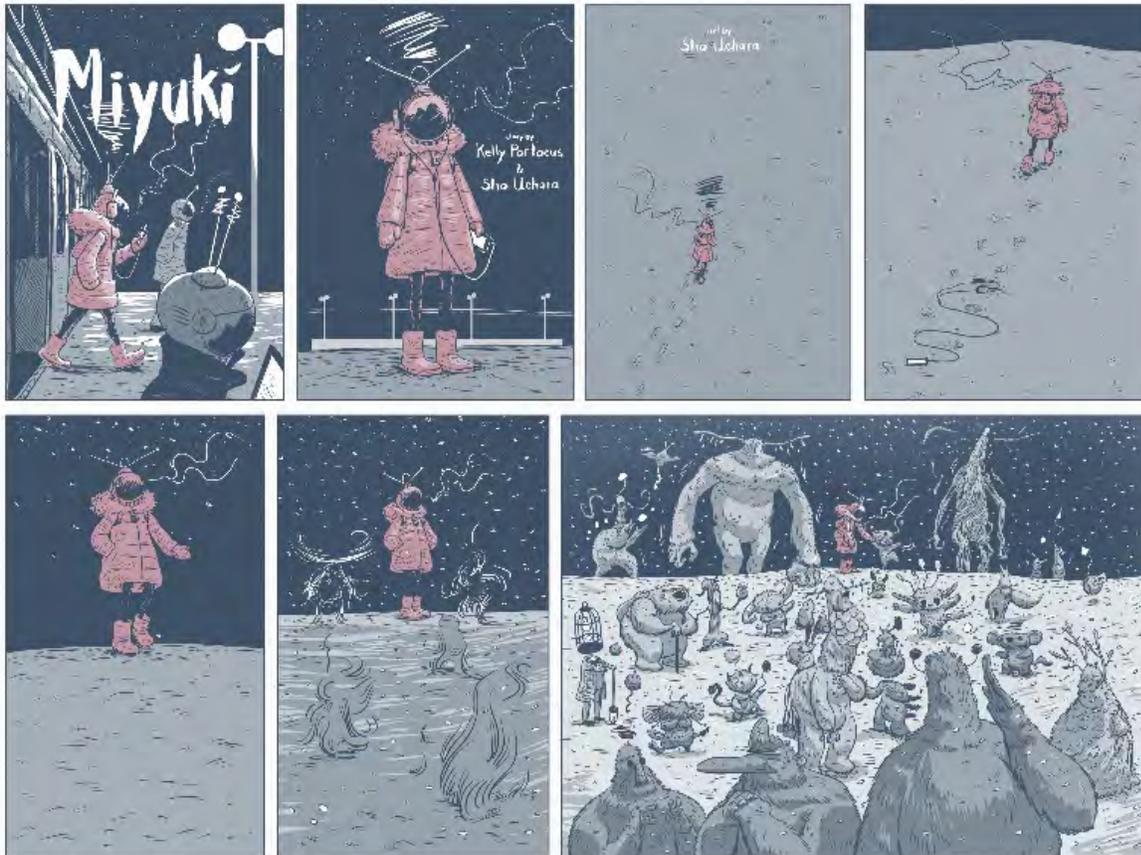
Caylah Lyons



The work shown by Caylah Lyons are examples of panels as well as character studies from her graphic novel *Magical Girl May*, completed under her pen name CJ Prophet. Her illustrations are influenced by manga, a style, developed and popularized by Japanese comic artists. *Magical Girl May* covers themes such as family relationships, death and grieving, adolescence and intergenerational friendships. Her work with these particular characters focuses on emotional connection and introspection. Looking through her pieces, you will notice a variety of tools to reinforce these ideas. For example, in the character study shown to the left you will notice that the scene lacks any distinguishing characteristics. This draws the viewers attention to the dynamic between the characters and establishes their relationship as the defining idea. Additionally, the prevalence of pink implies a

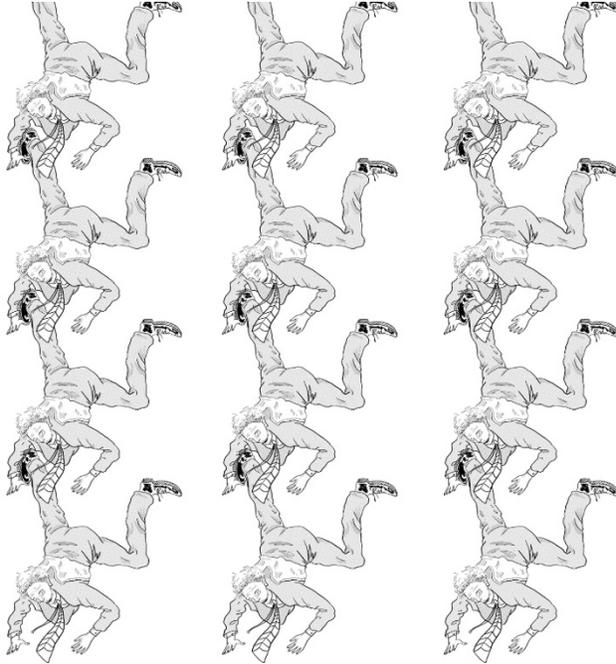
youthfulness and dream like quality, emphasizing the affection the characters have for one another. The works exhibited by Caylah Lyons are excellent examples of subject based narrative, particularly when looking at her sequence of panel frames. Observing the subject to subject transitions between panels, it is evident how focussing the reader's attention to the character's hand movements, face and eyes as she reacts in the scene, heightens ones awareness of her emotional state. This is an effective method for eliciting an emotional response from the viewer as well, by allowing the viewer to empathize with the character.

Sho Uehara



Miyuki by Sho Uehara is a short silent story which illustrates the power of comics to tell a story through visual representation. The artist uses illustrative devices to represent progression in the story. For example, you will notice that while wearing headphones there are distinctive lines emanating above the character, however when the earphones are off, these lines disappear. This could perhaps speak to the way the character perceives the world around him/her with the earphones versus without the earphones. These subtle cues provide information to the viewer so that they may experience a more imaginative story with the character, rather than a narrative that is set in stone the text. It is a mode of discovery, which is a unique aspect of comic art, where reader participation is as important as the artist’s work. You will also notice that the panels alternate between close ups of the character and drawn out views of the landscape. This also provides a clue that the story is about the character and its surroundings. It also demonstrates the importance of panel transitions and how they drive a story forward.

Jackie Huskisson

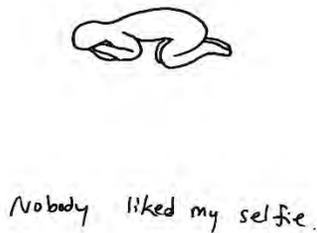


The work of Jackie Huskisson may not be what typically comes to mind when one thinks of comic art, however the work from her exhibition entitled *Absurd Walls* bridges the gap between comic art, illustration and installation. This collection explores the human condition and the absurdity of the culture of power. Huskisson's illustrative style and line work would be right at home in a comic book or graphic novel, however she appropriates architectural space, installing her illustrations on walls like panel frames on a page. In this sense, she immerses the viewer in the very act of panel organization. Although comics and sequential art generally rely on a logical

sequence of panels to tell a story, Huskisson breaks from this mold, allowing the repetition of individual illustrations to be rearranged upon installation. Although sequence may not be essential to the narrative of this particular collection, it is clear that the idea of pattern, texture and repetition in her print work, arguably a form of sequence, creating a sense of frenetic energy to accompany the themes she seeks to explore.



Jade Nasoguluak Carpenter



Jade Nasoguluak Carpenter’s uses art to confront issues of mental health and cultural displacement, often in humorous and playful ways. Included in this exhibit are a selection of works from the series titled, LIFE IS OKAY SOMETIMES, which seeks to eliminate barriers between society and mental health. Like Jackie Huskisson, Carpenter’s work exists somewhere in the realm of the comic and the everyday. Her illustrations are an example of the way visual iconography can distill meaning down to a simple image or symbol. In this example, it helps to distill the very complex feeling of insecurity into a simple concept which can be perceived through a doodle. This demonstrates how artists use the tools and methods of comic art to universalize themes for a wider audience.

Rob Hickey



Included in this exhibit are a selection of panels from Rob Hickey’s digital graphic novel, Where the Heart Is. This autobiographical comic depicts the artist’s experience following the devastating aftermath of the Fort McMurray wildfires of 2016. Throughout the panels, there is strong use of colour and panel organization conveys not only the environmental devastation but also the toll that the event took emotionally on Hickey. In the page shown here, notice the decision to layer panels over a full bleed image. Although the full bleed image lacks detail, the deep gray-blue background emphasizes the artist’s experience of being engulfed in smoke. There is an inescapable quality to the image, as it seeps into and around the other panels. The artist relies on colour and imagery to describe the experience and its affects. While there is some use of text throughout, they tend

to be minimal and reinforce the sense of shock. In some ways, the image relies on a limited vocabulary to accurately describe being at a loss for words to articulate ones feelings of loss. As one follows the story, the use of colour becomes more hopeful, transitioning to strong primary colours and the prevalent use of green, indicates a sense of optimism and renewal.



Art Activity for Kindergarten to Grade 3

Purpose:

To introduce students to the act of visually representing a story and the idea of the comic panel

Objectives:

- Learn how an image can reinforce an idea
- Understand that each component of an image contributes to the story
- Learn how to compose a comic panel thoughtfully

Materials:

- Construction Paper
- Old magazines with a lot of images
- Scissors
- Glue

Discussion/Motivation:

This project introduces students to the idea of the comic panel and asks them to consider the content of the comic panel and how it contributes to the story. For students k-1, stick to one panel. Using a couple examples demonstrate to the class how some panels introduce settings, some are character driven while others demonstrate actions or emotions. Discuss how each of these are important components of storytelling. See if they can identify which panels in the exhibit belong to these categories and what clues help them determine the category.

For Student gr 2-3 discuss how a sequence of panels work together to tell a story. Explain the difference between panel transitions and the importance of the space between panels. Have them consider what kind of sequences they see in the works. Do they follow the storyline through *time*, through *movement/action* or through *character development*?

*** Suggestion: When working on character development focus on cutting out mouths, eyes and hands to show the emotion/reactions of different characters

Project:

1. Allow students to go through magazines (National Geographic or other photo heavy magazines provide the best content) and choose various objects to cut out. (For younger students, you may choose to cut objects out for them in advance)
2. Provide students with a piece of construction paper. For students Gr 2-3, provide them with 3 pieces of construction paper. They will be creating a sequence of collaged images.
3. Have students compose cut outs on the construction paper in a manner that either sets a scene or focuses on a subject's emotions or a subject in action. For students working in sequence, have them decide what kind of transition they want to focus on (time, movement, action, character development) and arrange the objects in each of their panels accordingly.
4. When satisfied, students will glue cut-outs to the construction paper.

If desired, instructors can have students present their work and describe the story they are trying to tell

Examples of collaged images, the first showing a movement/action panel, the second showing character development that focuses on emotion/reaction.





Art Activity for Kindergarten to Grade 3

Purpose:

This exercise will familiarize students with the idea of character development and simple drawing exercises. It will demonstrate how simple sketches can convey a lot of information.

Objectives:

- Introduce the idea of the “icon” and how to represent complex ideas through simple line drawings
- Differentiate between different human emotions
- Begin Developing comic “vocabulary” ie. Representational techniques

Materials:

- Handout included with this exercise
- Pencils/Pens
- Coloured Pencils (Optional)

Discussion/Motivation:

This exercise will introduce students to the process of “cartooning” whereby illustrators simplify objects in order to extract and emphasize an idea. Using examples from the works in this show see if students can identify different emotions and ask them to identify why they recognize those facial expressions. For young groups (k-1), focus on the work by Caylah Lyons and Rob Hickey. Discuss different ways of representing facial features. How many different ways can you draw eyes, noses and mouths using simple shapes and straight or curved lines?

For students in gr 2-3, expand on the previous ideas and discuss how other devices can be used to represent more complex emotions (for example, drops of sweat for nervousness, spiral eyes for confused, heart eyes for love and admiration) and how these devices can be culturally specific. Are there any devices unique to their cultures that they can share? Have a look at Miyuki and notice how despite not having facial expressions, the artist conveys something with additional lines around the character. What do the students think they mean?

Similarly, Jade Nasoguluak Carpenter and Jackie Huskisson communicate emotions without facial expressions. They instead use body language and coded colours to express feelings. Can the students identify some emotions among their work? What clues help them determine the emotions they identify? Are these examples of body language culturally relative or are they universal?



Project:

1. For students in k-1, provide each student with a photocopy of the handout and have them complete the activity by drawing the corresponding expressions. After they have completed the activity, have them compare their drawings with the examples provided on handout 2.
2. For students in 2-3, discuss the examples in handout 2 first and point out important facial features which help viewers identify the expressions. Discuss with students how emotions are represented (see educators guide for a more detailed discussion), then have students complete handout 3 by drawing the corresponding expressions. You may choose to have them complete handout 1 as well for practice, and to familiarize them with the basic fundamental expressions.



HAPPY	SAD
SURPRISED	ANGRY
SCARED	DISGUSTED



ANGER



DISGUST



FEAR



JOY



SADNESS



SURPRISE

Handout 2. Image from McCloud, Scott. Making Comics: Storytelling Secrets of Comics, Manga and Graphic Novels. New York, NY: Harper, 2006.



DISGUST + JOY = GROSSED OUT	DISGUST + SURPRISED = SHOCKED
JOY + SURPRISED = AMAZEMENT	ANGER + JOY = CRUELTY
SADNESS + ANGER = BETRAYAL	FEAR + SURPRISED = SPOOKED

Art Activity for Grade 3 - 6

Purpose:

To introduce students to colour theory and how it can be used strategically in storytelling

Objectives:

Introduce warm and cool colours and primary and secondary colours as well as colour theory and how it affects the tone of an image and can represent different moods or feelings.

Materials:

- Handout
- Coloured Pencils

Discussion:

Colour is used to differentiate between scenes, characters and emphasize the mood or tone. They also evoke an emotional response in the viewer which connects the viewer to the story. Warmer colours tend to be more energetic while cooler colours are calmer.

Using the colour chart below ask students to identify which emotions the colours make them think of.



Figure. 6a

Which of these colours belong to the warm category and which belong to cool?

Warm: Red, yellow and orange. Ask students why they think these are warm

Cool: Blue, violet and green. Ask students why they are cool

Discuss the difference between primary, secondary and tertiary colours:

Primary: Red, Yellow and Blue. These are the colours which, when mixed, are the source of all other colours. They cannot be created by mixing other colours.

Secondary: Orange, Violet and Green. These are the colours that result from mixing two primary colours

Tertiary: These are created by combining a primary colour with a secondary colour. They are yellow-orange, red-orange, red-purple, blue-purple, blue-green, and yellow-green.

Colours Directly across from each other are the colour wheel are complementary to each other.

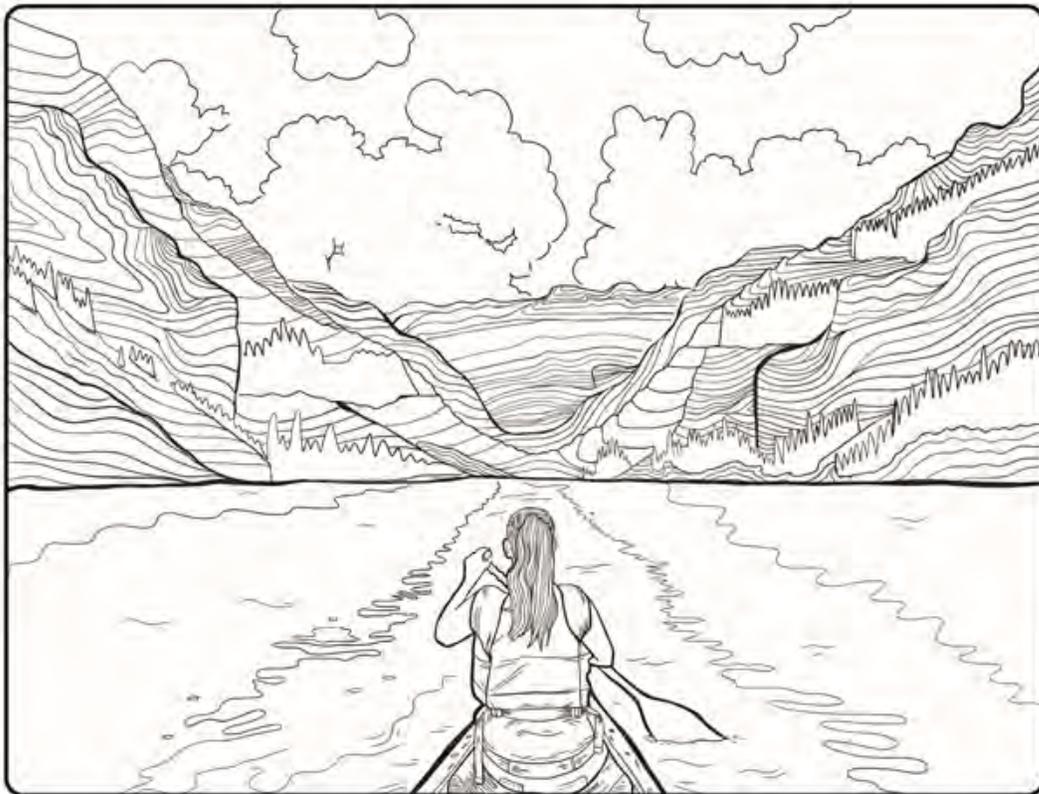
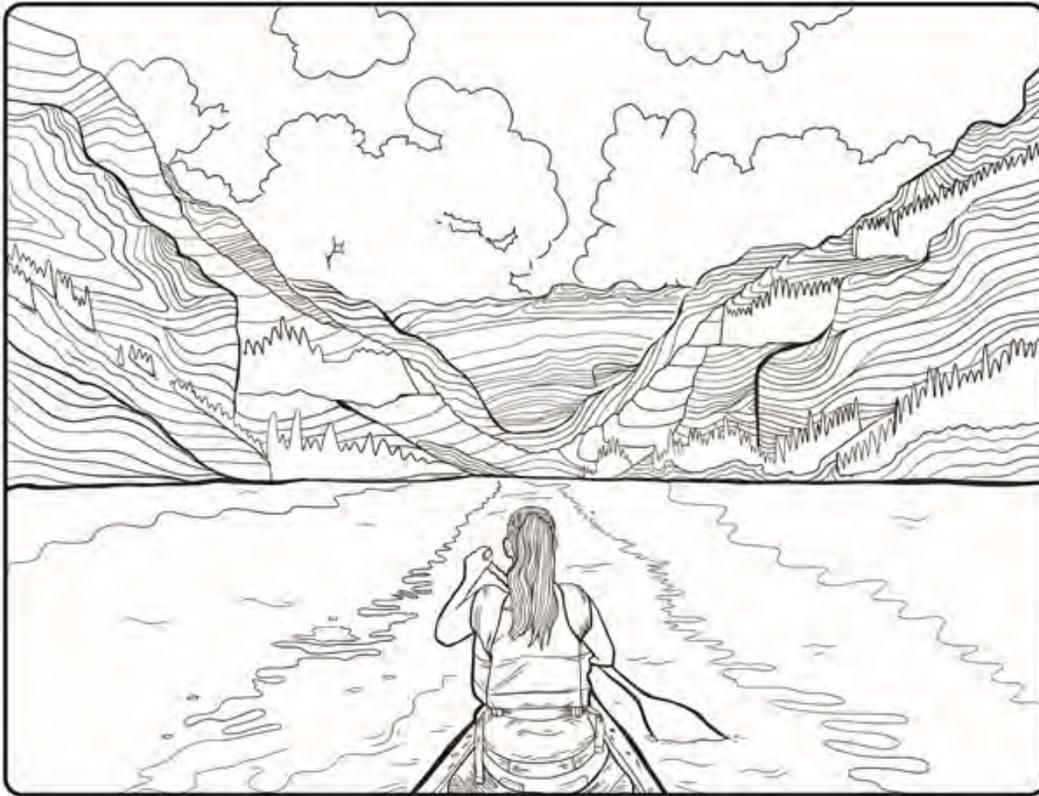


Figure. 6b

Project:

1. Using the following handout, colour the same image 2 different ways
2. Describe how your colour choices in each one affect the scene and how it changes the story told by the image.
3. With a partner, swap sheets and describe what you think the subsequent panel might be about for each of the 2 variations.

*Handout image from <http://www.crayola.ca/free-coloring-pages/canada/>





Art Activity Grade 3-6

Purpose:

To explore how layout and panel composition effects and enhances sequential story telling

Objectives:

- Explore the concept of “closure” and “gutters”
- Experiment with panel composition
- Experiment with panel content

Materials:

- Poster board
- Old Magazines
- Scissors
- Glue

Discussion:

This exercise introduces students to the idea of “closure” in comic art. It encourages students to expand key aspects of stories they want to tell. Since panels only tell a part of the story, the viewer must imagine what happens outside the panel frame. This is called “closure”. Observe a set of back to back panels from one of the exhibit pieces. Discuss what the students believe is occurring between the two images. What components from the panels inform the viewer, so that they may imagine the happenings between them?

Panel composition is an important component of the overall sequence of drawings. Their shape and configuration provide information to the reader which adds visual depth to the story. Discuss examples from the exhibit. How do the shapes support and enhance the content of the panels? How would the feel of the story change if the panel shapes were different?

Project:

1. Using images from magazines, identify images or portions of images which you can use to construct a simple story
2. Cut out the portions of the image in the shape of a panel, considering how the panel will interact with the subsequent panels and what information the shape of the panel is giving to the reader
3. Glue the panels to the poster board provided, making a sequence of panels tell your story





Art Activity for Grade 7- 12

Purpose:

To develop the relationship between descriptive storytelling and expressive imagery

Objectives:

- To develop a vocabulary using imagery
- To identify how to choose key details in order to convey a particular idea, theme or story

Materials:

- Handout
- Drawing tools (pencil, markers, coloured pencils)

Discussion/Motivation:

This activity is meant to get students thinking about developing a story visually and how they can use drawing strategically to convey the most important details in a logical way. Illustrations in comics are meant to provide the reader with the same information we would convey verbally or through description and written storytelling, but using visual clues to supports the story without the use of words. Illustrations can be descriptive in many different ways:

- They convey emotions: Are the characters happy? Sad? Scared? Nervous? Excited?
- Describe settings: Are you in an urban or residential environment? Is the setting serene? Spooky? Dark? Bright? Busy? Familiar?
- Provide historical information: Is the story in the past, present or future? Clues include clothing styles, the type of objects that are shown, such as old cars, or phone booths, or flying cars and time traveling phone booths. For example, if you look at Miyuki, what elements are present that demonstrate that it is in the future. Sometimes work may be meant to be timeless and convey universal messages with a general context such as Jade Nasogulauk Carpenter. This work focuses on emotions, which exist across all time periods. In this example it is useful to omit any indicators of a certain time period.

Notice that some artists use different styles, some illustrations are full of visual detail (Rob Hickey, Sho Uehara) while others are not (Jackie Huskisson, Caylah Lyons). In each case, how does the detail or lack of detail help the viewer interpret the story? For example, Caylah's work focuses on the relationship between two characters. Does her lack of details about the setting help or hinder one's attention to their friendship? If there was more visual clutter would you be distracted from the main focus, the emotional connection between the two characters?



Works without text, such as those by Jackie, Sho and Jade are good examples for a discussion about imagery and interpretation. These pieces provide visual cues which hint at a storyline but may be interpreted differently by readers. Discuss with students what they think the images may be trying to portray and why they think that.

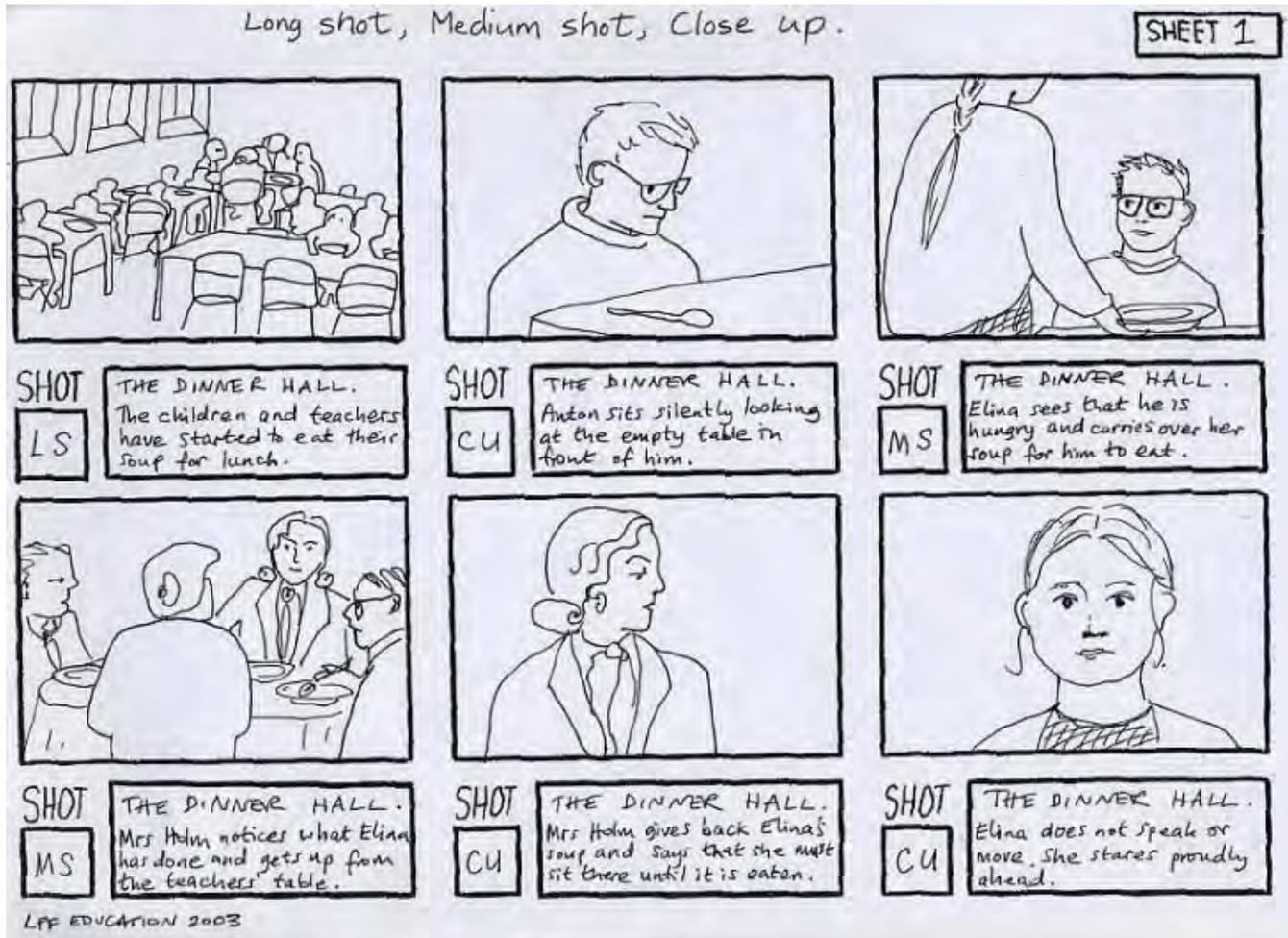
Project:

This project is to be done in pairs

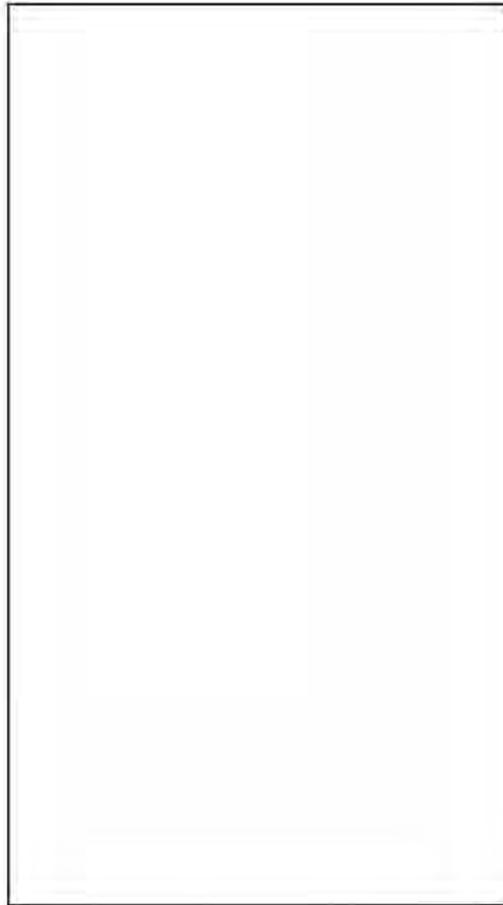
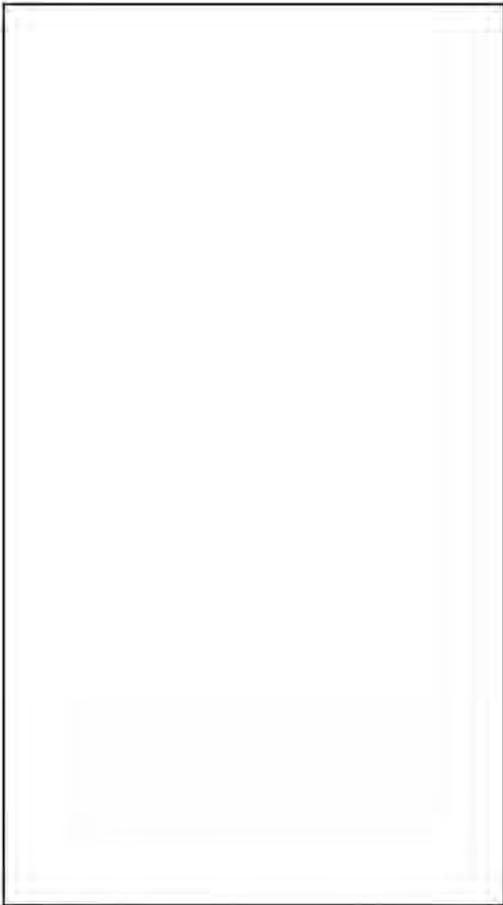
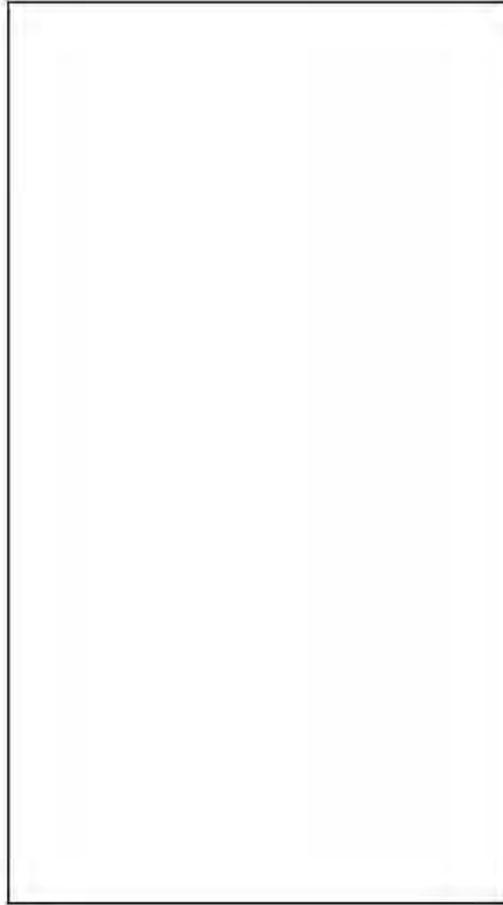
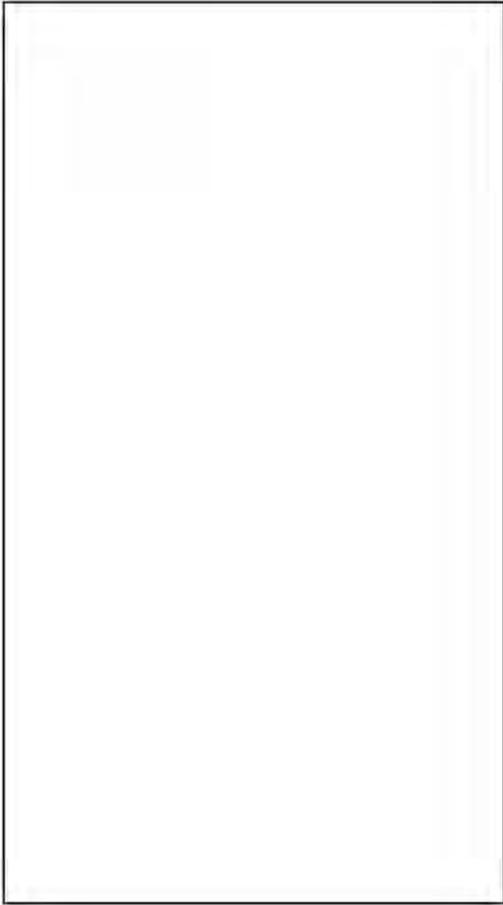
1. Each student will be using the handout included on the following page and creating a short comic. In pairs, each student will write a description beneath each panel of their handout. Note: Print the handout in Landscape format or on 11 x 17 legal sized paper when possible
2. This description should correspond with the story they have created and provide enough detail so that their partner can visually interpret their story
3. Following this, they will swap handouts and fill in the panels with images which convey the details of the descriptions their partners have written

The end result will resemble a storyboard, like the one below. Drawings can be rough outlines as this is a planning tool to help students learn how to decide which information is most relevant to their story and how to lay this information out legibly.

Figure. 7



Art Gallery of Grande Prairie





Art activity for Grade 7-12

Purpose:

To begin experimenting with basic comic drawing techniques by working with different line styles

Objectives:

- To compare the effectiveness of different line strokes and hatching techniques
- To begin thinking about how lines can be used in a variety of ways to create mood and emotion
- To experience how to simplify an image versus how to add more detail to an image

Materials:

- Trace Paper
- Old Magazines
- Pencils or Pens

Discussion/Motivation:

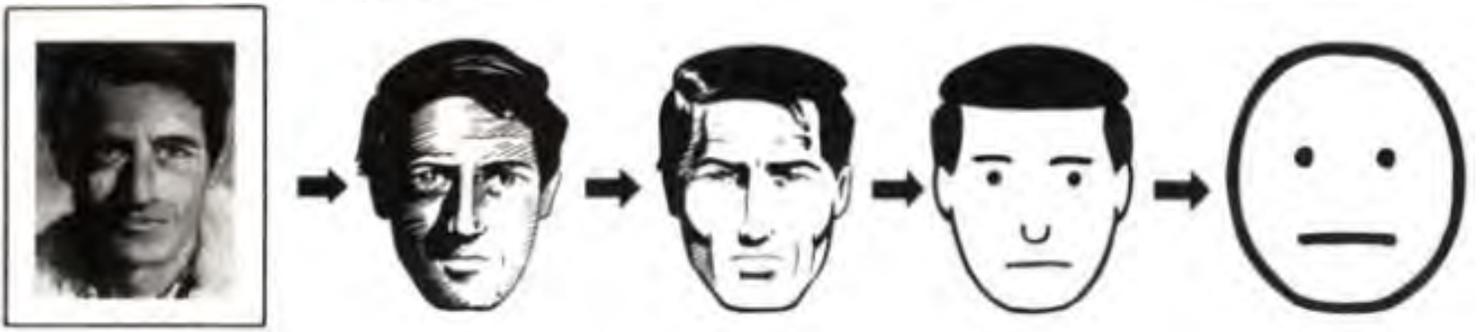
The goal of this exercise is to get students thinking about simplicity and detail. Students should make thoughtful decisions around what they choose to trace and how. Will they trace just the outlines? Will they include shadows and texture? Will they emphasize some lines over others or some objects over others? Why have they made those choices and how do their decisions effect the narrative of the image? While they make these decisions, they should consider the diversity of line types and hatches (included in the following handouts) and how to employ them strategically in order to most effectively illustrate emotion and mood. After they have traced their images, are the additional lines and symbols that they could add to their image to enhance or change the tone the narrative?

Discuss the difference between examples in the exhibit. For instance, Rob Hickey's subjects lean more towards the cartoon category, using simple linework while Jackie Huskisson includes more detail in her facial expressions, resulting in a slightly more realistic rendering of her subjects. Meanwhile, Sho Uehara and Jade Nasoguluak Carpenter eliminate facial expressions all together using strategic line shapes and qualities to imply internal states of mind, such as Jade's unsteady line strokes, or the "squiggles" which you see following Sho's main character, Miyuki.



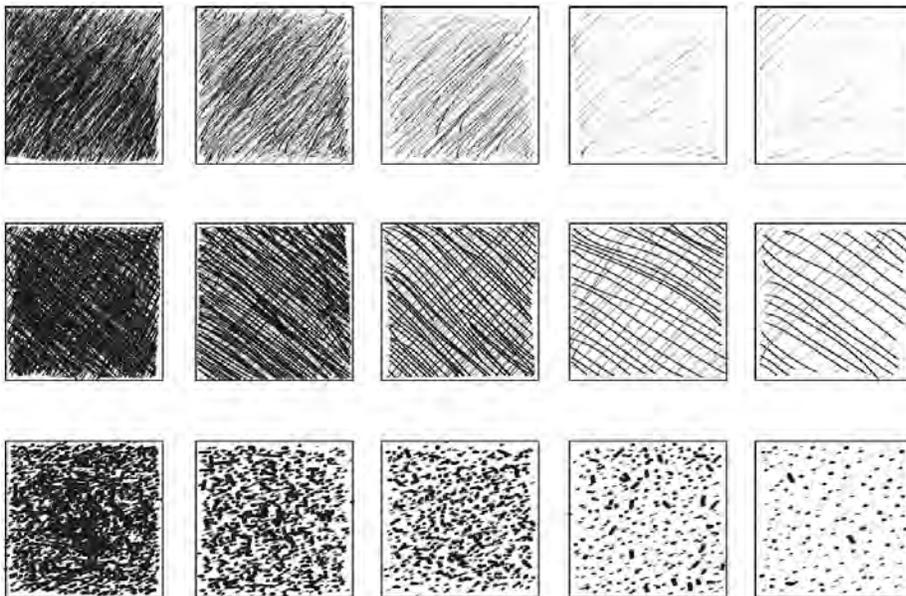
Project:

1. Students will choose an image from a magazine
2. Provide students with the following reference handout
3. Students will trace the image
4. Add or omit detail to the image to thoughtfully enhance the narrative the student wants to tell.



In the above example from Scott McCloud's book, *Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art*, he demonstrates the range of complexity available to comic artists. Drawings can be realistic or simple icons, with many options in between.

Below are a few examples of different shading styles and techniques. These can be used to give drawings more dimension and imply things such as lighting, time of day or the mood of a scene.



<http://a0309310.blogspot.com/2012/09/exercise1a.html>



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"Creating the Superhero." *The Comic Books*, <http://www.thecomicbooks.com/old/Hist1.html>

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Image List

Fig. 1

Happy Face

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/vblibrary/8673547142>

House

<https://www.vectorstock.com/royalty-free-vector/house-sketch-vector-1075440>

Tree

<http://rockdraw.com/how-to-draw-a-simple-tree-step-by-step-with-pencil-easy-for-beginners-kids/>

Stink Lines

<https://appadvice.com/app/stink-lines/1158721073>

Figure 2

<https://jolenequek.wordpress.com/tag/panels/>



Figure 3a

<https://www.dreamstime.com/stock-illustration-comic-strip-box-panel-template-cartoon-illustration-unique-hand-drawn-triangle-square-rectangle-shapes-half-tone-image89564502>

Figure 3b

<https://clipartxtras.com/categories/view/e9423784ce096546efe229118aaf8a45445777b3/blank-comic-strip-clipart.html>

Figure 3c

<http://comicbook.com/2015/12/04/5-comics-to-read-over-the-holiday-break/>

Figure 3d

<http://www.comicscube.com/2012/05/comic-book-glossary-polyptych.html>

Figure 4a

<https://design.tutsplus.com/tutorials/how-to-create-speech-bubbles-and-comic-effects-in-adobe-illustrator--cms-24764>

Figure 4b

<http://www.clipartsuggest.com/comic-book-sound-words-lots-of-comic-books-use-words-to-describe-what-wOwAiF-clipart/>

Figure 5

McCloud, Scott. Making Comics: Storytelling Secrets of Comics, Manga and Graphic Novels. New York, NY: Harper, 2006.

Figure 6a

comicsalliance.com/superhero-color-theory-primary-heroes/

Figure 6b

<http://comicbookcolor.net/colortheory/>

Figure 7

<https://sites.google.com/site/digitalmedia11atcalc/assignments/unit-6-movie-maker/storyboard-examples>