

Project Reports

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Mater Stage MOD000233 TRI1 F02CAM

- Main Project: There was a Tree

This project has been through many obstacles and has been changed hugely by near the end of the module. The project was initially created to use tree roots as a metaphor to convey human's uncover feelings. The text was written before the storyboard and artworks, however, I found it difficult to visualize the poetic atmosphere in the text. The context of 'tree roots growing and grabbing the soil underneath the girl's feet'(figure1) was hard for me to show it clearly through sequences. Also, the character I drew was either too cartoony or too lifeless (figure2-1, 2-2), I could not find the balance.



figure1



figure2-1



figure2-2

The second major problem was that the plot was not understandable to some people (including tutors). I have tried different ways to try to solve it. I researched the framing ways of the book *Small in the City* by Sydney Smith (figure3), analyzing how the it and tried to apply the method to my story. I redrew the whole story through different character's perspective. I tried to use different composition to draw the two protagonists. But eventually the situation was not improved. I started to realize that maybe the problem was in the story itself.

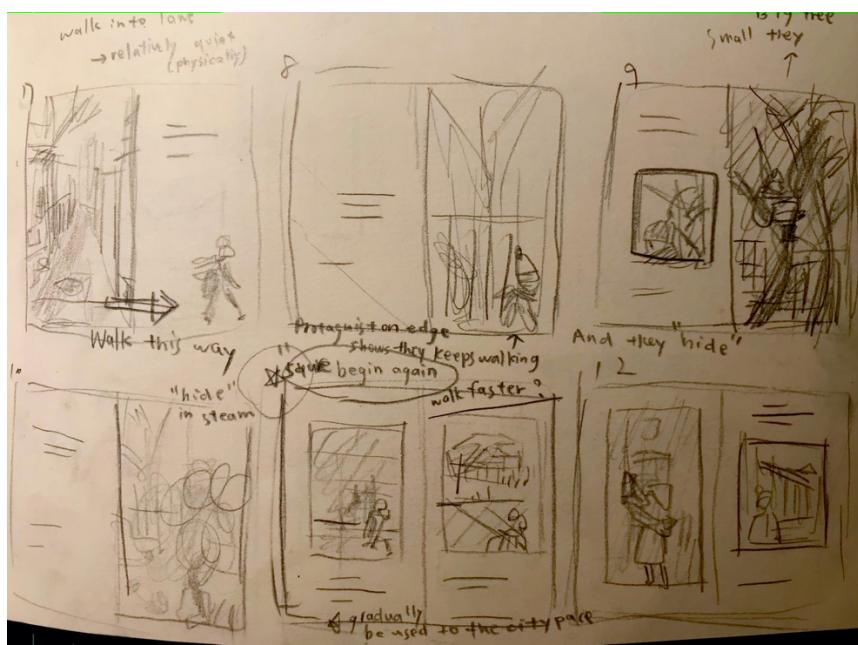


figure3

About the metaphor, it was more a conceptual than a visual idea in my mind. For literature, it might be a good enough device to use, but when it comes to children's book, it needed to be clarified through images. Also, the tutor Matin had noticed I had too many conceptual art works which may not be the best way to create art in this form. I should use more visual language to express the meanings instead of explaining them by words.

Besides, the setting itself was too vague to make the emotion of characters convincing. For example, I had not thought about where the tree was, why the girl came or left, or why they loved each other. Initially I thought skipping all the details

could make the story poetic. However, it did not work. The too simple settings may be poetic as a poem, but would be repetitive and confusing as illustrations in a book. I could not find a better way to keep my original story setting and improve it at the same time. After the tutorial with the tutor Pam in week 10, I decided to change the whole direction (which was a huge step and took me a lot of courage). As I was willing to create a story about people come and go and their relationship with tree, I started with the tree I felt most related to myself: the one in front of my home in Taiwan. I drew several images of the things happening around the tree (figure4), most of them was from my childhood memories. Then I picked some of them, rearranged them and added the text.

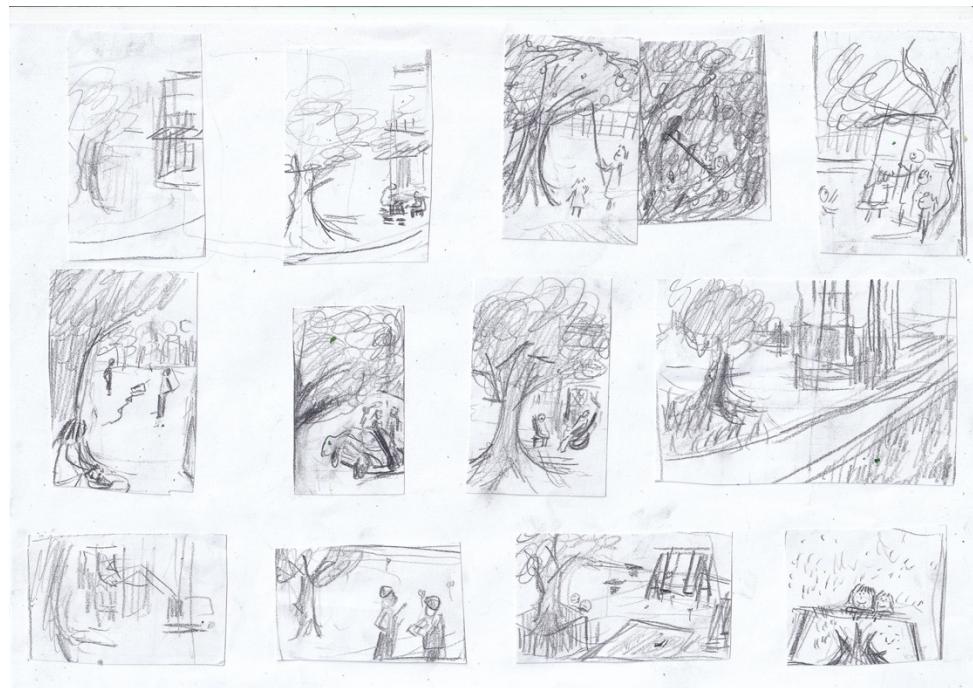


figure4

In the new version of the story, the characters were no longer just a tree and a girl, but a tree and a whole family, and everything was based on reality. The setting of more characters gave me inspiration to draw various composition, and my familiarity with the story background made the details no longer vague. In week 11 group tutorial, I received positive feedbacks and was encouraged to keep moving forward in this direction.

- Side Project: Who's that over there

I have always interested in metafiction picture books and wanted to make one myself as well.

As Suzy Lee (2018) mentioned, ‘The page of the book is a space with a depth where anything can happen. At the same time, it is just a thin piece of paper.’ I wanted to play with the ideas of ‘The protagonist in the sequences/pages finding her/himself’. That is, the protagonist in the pages realized (consciously or unconsciously) that the page is a physical space to her/him, and then will try to catch up with the protagonist in other physical spaces(pages) that she/he can see, whether they are her/himself or not. There are two existed limitation: First, once the protagonist realizes the physical nature of sequences, each page will become separate squares and they will be not able to move between pages as “one character”. Second, because of the physical format of a book, the time will still be moving forward as page turning, so the protagonist appearing first will not know what the next him/her will do and react in advance.

To express this complex idea efficiently, I used very simple composition of a girl moving back and forth with a horizon (figure5). But again, my sequences seemed to be repetitive because of the settings. I had got feedbacks about improving it through difference metafictive devices, but every time I tried to apply them into my dummy, the whole meaning seemed changed. Similar to the situation in my main project, I was stuck by the settings. After the end module review, I collected some of other metafictive devices I had thought of and made a new story (figure6). However, it was still a shame that I could not find the best way to present the original idea as well as show people the new story in tutorials.



figure5

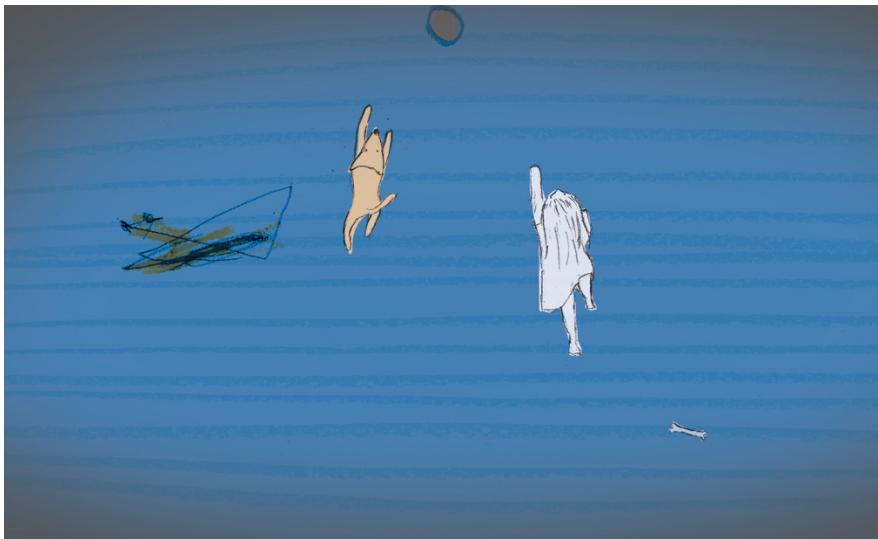


figure6

- Conclusion

Besides the two projects above, I also made a relatively incomplete project which is a collection of GIFs, as the editorial illustration of a poem I wrote. It was all made instinctively and I was having a lot of fun.

I really have learned a lot in this semester, and I believe that all the struggles worth it. Like Embury, Gary and Minichiello, Mario said, ‘experimenting with media and materials and taking risks help develop a personal way of working through trial and error.’(2018, p.43), and also the sentence tutor Martin(2021) shared in his speech according to Barbara Jones’ words: “In the end, the only way to learn to paint is to paint, and then to think and paint again.” To me, the process of creating things and improving is usually painful, but it is undoubtedly fun and full of excitement at the same time. I am thankful for being a person who is able to create, draw and learn, and I truly wish I could keep making story after the course and forever!

- Bibliography

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