

Quandre Brown

Artist Statement

Quandre Brown is a multi-disciplinary artist residing in Portland, Oregon. Using mediums such as drawing, painting, animation, among others, he explores different ways to bring his characters to life.

Quandre makes art to express himself creatively, emotionally, and philosophically, along with his strong desire to connect with other artists and creatives. Part of his practice is taking influence from the world around him (such as nature, fashion, music, interactions, etc) and incorporating it into his work, as well as taking inspiration from within. It is his goal to compile all of his interests into a cohesive aesthetic. Quandre uses art not only to express himself but also as a form of self reflection. Each project allows an opportunity to explore the conscious and the subconscious brain, and to evaluate what might have gone into the piece.

He often mindlessly draws in a sketchbook in order to generate ideas, then imagines how it can be presented in other mediums: print, illustrated, animated etc. what will suit it best? Can it exist in more form than one? The answer is usually yes.

Thesis Proposal

Introduction

The closer I get to understanding myself, the closer I get to unlocking my potential in my artistic endeavors. I view this goal of self discovery as a journey, and right now my path is blocked by depersonalization, impersonality, and existentialism. Acquiring insight on and understanding these obstacles are steps I will take to overcome them. Art then becomes a lens through which I view the world, so while exploring this topic of self-discovery, art will be the greatest tool on my journey.

Line of Inquiry

What are the constituents of identity? How can I use art, and the environment around me to identify and understand who I am? How do I present my most authentic self? These are the questions I will use to guide my research and direct the content of my project. I believe there is a lot of value extracted from introspection. Understanding yourself makes it easier to interpret the world around you and determine your relationship to it. Understanding yourself allows growth from your deficits and being comfortable with who you are makes you less susceptible to being influenced by society's perception. This is what I hope to gain, or at least get closer to in this project.

Context

In my art I explore the concepts of authenticity and inner substance. To me inner substance is the visual representation of what makes each individual unique and it manifests in

different ways. This inherently relates the concept of identity to my art because each character I depict showing this inner substance, is revealing their true self. Years ago, I watched this youtube video called *Vemödalen: The Fear That Everything Has Already Been Done*, uploaded by Dictionary of Obscure Sorrows. It describes the phenomenon of countless amounts of people enacting a unique idea, but when compared to others, the execution is nearly identical. The end result being that nothing is truly original. The idea of “*Vemödalen*” sent me down a spiral of existentialism which is how I became obsessed with the concept of presenting an original, authentic, inner-self. While it might seem conflicting to impose an animated character of myself in the context of promoting authenticity, I look at it as revealing content from within. What we wear reflects who we are, how we perceive ourselves and how we want others to. I don't imagine myself being a lizard, dog, thing on the inside, but I do imagine that within, there is something unconventional, and unimaginable. This is just my way of portraying it.

The idea of finding one's identity has always been a topic that stood out to me.

“(Who are you?)
I don't know yet.
(Who are you?)
I don't know yet.”
-Odie, *Bliss city*

This is a quote from a song that I think of and sing often because of how relevant it is to my state of mind. The movie *Rango* is something else that I often come back to because the story follows a character who is thrown into a new world and given the opportunity to construct his own identity then, it becomes more about Rango realizing who he truly is. I will use works like *Rango* and *Bliss City* as creative influence to inform my journey and throughout this project. I have some examples of what I consider “fake” influences such as the band *Gorillaz* and the film *Who Framed Roger Rabbit*. I consider these influences “fake” because they are prominent examples of hybrid animation, but in the spirit of originality, I don't want to derive creative influence from them. Instead I would like to take influence on how to create an odd, surreal

atmosphere, so I will be looking to sources such as Donald Glover's *Atlanta*, and Aaron McGruder's *Boondocks* for insight on how to create an unfamiliar vibe.

Materials/Process/Techniques

The project will be composed of a mixture between live-action video and 2D animation. I will capture video footage and images in the real world to provide an environmental setting and tone. For the setting, I am drawn to places covered in street art, places that look run down and lawless. I will incorporate footage of myself and friends of mine as stand-ins for my character, and I would also like my reference material to include candid moments and interactions. I will use software such as Adobe Premiere Pro, After Effects and Photoshop to edit the video pictures. I will also be using software such as Tv Paint and/or Adobe Animate to animate on top of the video. Sources such as *Creating Identity* by Concilium and *Existentialism: A Reconstruction* by David E. Cooper will be in rotation to inform me of topics relevant to my project. I will spend time sketching/doodling my character in order to connect with him more and understand how to depict him. I will also use my sketchbook as a journal to explore my own thoughts on identity through stream of consciousness and free association.

Project Description

In the video, I will depict a character traversing a world in which he is entirely lost, both physically and existentially. The character himself will be a hybrid between video of an actual person and animated features (head, hands, tail) imposed onto the person, this emphasizes the concept of feeling lost and trapped between two worlds. Although this character is hopelessly lost, he is a powerful being of creation, and his power will be demonstrated through 2D animation techniques. I expect the video to be somewhere between 2-3 minutes long which I realize is a daunting task, but I expect the live action video to do a lot of the heavy lifting, while the animation will be used to embellish and liven things up. I will be outsourcing music from some friends: Toby Schay, Señor Emze , Jake

Caulfield, Joe Letterman, and Sam Patt-Devlin. The music will be lofi and ambient to provide the vibe of feeling lost. Depending on time, I plan to write and record lyrics, but the project won't suffer if I don't get to it. I expect to debut the video on a large screen (i.e the mediatheque), but afterwards I want it to be accessible on internet platforms such as youtube, vimeo, instagram, etc. With an initial screening, I can optimize the experience with sound and visuals that might hit the audience at a deeper level. By making it accessible online, viewers have the option to watch in a more personal setting, and it would also be easier to pass around. My target audience are people that may be experiencing the same sort of identity crisis, so age range 15-30. That's the age range I expect to identify with the subject matter the most, but I am also aware that impersonality isn't bound by age. Outside of age, I would also like to target other artists and creatives. I want my voice to resonate within the art community so that we could eventually come together and talk about deeper topics such as identity and passion and technique and cultivate an environment where we flow off of each others' creative energy.

Through this project I will explore the concepts of impersonality/ depersonalization and identity. I will use a combination of live action video, 2D animation, and music to depict Quomni on a journey of self-discovery. Quomni and I will use the lens of art and the technique of introspection as a tool on this journey and hopefully realize who we truly are.

Thesis Defense

Welcome.

I truly appreciate you all for being here

Let's jump into it. I'm Quandre. I'm a multifaceted artist, but here at PNCA i'm majoring in the animated arts. My interests include drawing, painting, street art/ muralism, printing, music, video production, among other things: some of which will be implemented in what I'm gonna show you today.

I'm going to show you my project here shortly, but first let me provide a little context. This project is a composition of live action video, 2D animation, and music. It follows a character, played by myself, as he navigates a strange world in which he feels completely lost and disoriented. As he wanders, we see him become more comfortable with his environment and learn to manipulate his new found abilities. The video is set to a song I wrote which guides, and sets the tone for the narrative. Be advised, there is some explicit language used in the song.

With that said, here is Lost In Introspection.

Video

To break it down, let's start with the character. In this universe that I've created, My character is an omnipotent, omnipresent, and omniscient being who's abilities knows no bounds, but to me he's more than that. To me, He is the personification of my art and everything else that I create. In a way I am him and vice versa because I created him, but I also recognize him as his own entity. This character transcends just my drawings. He exists within every aspect of my practice: he's present in the characters I make, the lyrics I write, my artistic experimentation, and the combination of my different interests, that's why it made sense for him to be the focus of this video. If you're confused that's okay it's an abstract concept and I still don't even have a full grasp of it yet. To put it simply, He is a god of creation that exists in both the world I've created and the reality I live in.

The video is reflective of my own journey as a person and as an artist. I've been drawing since the second grade, so I always knew art would be a part of my life in some way. Back then my main goal was to become a comic book artist and from there my aspirations have evolved and expanded. I started my college career at Oregon State University as a zoology major, and as you can see, that did not last. I realized that I wouldn't be satisfied as a zoologist if I didn't get the specific job I wanted, whereas if I went the art route, I'd be happy as long as I was making art. After this decision I began to feel lost and existential. Where will I end up? What am I leaving behind? Am I missing out on an opportunity to be informed on things outside of art? The only thing that got me through this was understanding that the only certainty is uncertainty, and that we are all using our best guess to get by. Along with that I decided that art didn't have to be the end decision that I was stuck with, but instead the lens through which I can view the world, and a tool I can use to learn other things. With this new outlook I became excited about what I could accomplish when I dedicate myself to my craft.

A primary part of my practice is taking the different things that interest me that may be outside of my usual realm of creation, and figuring out how I can incorporate it, which is

demonstrated in this multimedia piece that I've shown you today. One of those different things that I stumbled upon was abstract art (credit youtuber @peterdraws). If I were to classify myself as an artist I would say I am primarily a character designer. Characters are what inspired me as a kid, and were the first things I started drawing, and the thing that feels most natural to me now. When I started experimenting with abstract art, my first thought was, "how can I incorporate this into my character creation and my world." That's when I came up with this concept of inner substance. Inner substance is the visual representation of what flows through us and how we express ourselves. Whether it's our emotions, our creativity, our thoughts, inner substance is the essence within us that makes us unique and helps us to express ourselves when words can't. In the real world this idea is equivalent to art and all its forms: cooking, singing, sculpting, etc. In my world, it manifests itself as an abstract substance.

I'm sure you can begin to see the parallels between all this information and the video I've shown you, but for clarity's sake I'll break it down. This character's discombobulated state is reminiscent of how I felt when I committed to art as my career, lost, uneasy, unsure. As he wanders he spits up this substance almost aggressively, which matches my compulsive need to create. He then begins to understand his substance, what he is able to accomplish. He learns he can create life and manipulate the world around him. This is representative of how an artist can reinterpret the world and create new worlds, create new lives, new experiences.

Constructing a little version of himself shows how artists put a piece of themselves in the things they create. When He marches with these new characters, it shows how what I create sort of becomes companions along for the journey. The ending with the giant portrays the awe in understanding the vastness of the world and what art has to offer. That there is always something much bigger than what we realize, awaiting us around the corner. I'd also like to note the presence of street art throughout the video which serves a few purposes. First being to establish the setting of the world this character lives in. It's a rundown, lawless world in which art plays a huge role, so it is present everywhere. The second reason being to express my

appreciation and interest in street art. It is another avenue I intend to pursue because of my desire to see my art in more ways than just on paper or on a screen. Thirdly it expresses my appreciation for other artists in general and the community that is cultivated when creators get together and just start flowing and building off each other. Community and collaboration between artists is something that I value highly and played a huge role in the production of this project.

Speaking of which I'd like to take the time to acknowledge those who helped me to create this project.

Toby Schay: Talented musician and the person I credit to introducing me to the world of making music. He produced the beat, engineered the recording session and mastered the song. Check him out on pretty much all music streaming platforms @toby schay and instagram by the @tobyschay.

Freedom Lennon: One of the people behind the camera offering her skills from her background in film and photography. She offered help in camera angles, movements, shots, etc.

Acme McConnell: A talented and unique artist/ animator. He provided his drone for some cool shots, acted as the character that got transformed, and provided some of his own animations for the video. Find him on instagram @acme.draws

Shayna Stauber: A passionate, aspiring filmmaker who also did work behind the camera. She also stood in for a character on camera.

Lori Damiano: Great animator, great professor, great mentor. She was so helpful, accommodating, and understanding, guiding me through this entire process, and making sure I was on track to get the most out of the project. She offered her own expertise, information, resources, and affirmations. Truly went above and beyond as a mentor

Honorable mention Hunter: Another talented musician. While he didn't help with the project directly he definitely played a factor. The music that we made played a role in

re-familiarizing myself with songwriting. He was also present to offer a helping hand whenever he was needed. Find him on ig @mhb.wav

To say I appreciate these people is an understatement. Their willingness to help without question to the extent of their ability just for the sake of helping out will not be disregarded or forgotten. Thank you all.

Next I want to talk about the lyrics. My biggest goal with music aside from just getting better, is making sure what I say is authentic and is saying what I'm trying to say. I knew I wanted to talk about being uncomfortable in a strange world and how I was coping with that which is present in the opening line "Lemme get my bearings!". With lines like "no progressing with a closed mind" and "ain't no point in acting like I know what's gonna happen because I ain't got the foresight," I wanted to convey a bit of improvement and understanding that matched the vibe of the video. I don't want to explain it too much because a lot of it speaks for itself and the rest I want you to interpret in your own way.

So why did I choose this project? Why did I go about creating it in the way that I did? The answer is simple, I thought it would be cool. As I mentioned before, I wanted to create something that combined a few of my interests and this approach just made sense. I have taken a few video production classes and always had fun, shooting and playing with effects. Animation, being my major, was the first thing that came to mind for a project and offers a way to bring my characters to life. The combination of the two made for a more manageable workload when considering how much time goes into animation. I also have a passion for music and lyrics which I practice often, but rarely release. All of which come together to show my skills in each field, and sets a bar for what's to come once I graduate from here.

My process began with simple walks around Portland. I would wander around Mt. Tabor in order to let my mind flow freely. I would use my little sketchbook to jot down notes and sketch out ideas, which is how I made my makeshift storyboard. The sketchbook was crucial all throughout the process, so I kept it on me wherever I went. While I was wandering, I would

scope out spots that had the vibe I was going for: run down and heavily graffitied. During this phase I would also reach out to friends who could potentially help me execute this project. Then there was shooting footage which was pretty straight forward. I contacted whoever was available, based on their skills and resources, and we would just match up each shot with whatever location made the most sense. At this stage I was talking with Toby and figuring out how the music would match up with my idea, what vibe I was going for. Props to him because I wasn't the best at articulating what I was looking for, he still came up with something great. We talked about beat/ vibe changes to match the shift in the video. Once I got a rough sample of what the song was going to be I started writing lyrics. Next was compiling the footage in order to convey a narrative. The initial video was three minutes long, but I had to cut it down to two, due to time constraints. This was the stage when I got the most feedback: redo this shot, take this shot out, hold this longer, etc. after I had a good grasp on the video, I began animating. This stage definitely took the most time and effort, but once I got into the flow of things, it was smooth sailing. All the steps of this process were subject to change at any time. I work in a nonlinear, controlled chaos approach when I'm creating. It feels the most natural, I can be more expressive that way. Shout out to Lori again for helping me manage my time and workload. This is probably the most organized I have ever been.

I see my work being appreciated by a few different groups. Your everyday person who's attracted to pretty colors and cool art. The general art community, the people I can relate to for our shared passion of creating. The street art community, who I've mentioned before, I'm interested in for a few reasons. The animation community and those who need animators. I've put time into learning animation and it makes sense to get the most out of it. Finally the music community. As I mentioned, I haven't released a lot of music despite practicing for a while, so not many people know I even make music. It would be nice to be associated with my lyrical abilities as well as my visual abilities. All of these communities are groups I'd like to be

established in, especially locally. Once I clear up somethings, I'll make this video available on vimeo and youtube, and I'll post the song on different music platforms.

I learned some valuable things in the making of this project. First being the importance of community as I mentioned before. This project wouldn't be nearly as good without the people that contributed. Another is what I am capable of. This was definitely the biggest project I've tackled and I am proud that it was seen all the way through. Due to time constraints there were definitely corners that were cut, and things that could have been done better, but there were also things that were just not within my ability to execute. That was apparent to me before but this project also fueled my drive to improve. I got really comfortable with the animating software tpaint, to the point I was showing others how to use it, although there is plenty I can learn there as well. I learned to be practical with my time and to manage priorities, because not many will value your time or understand all the work you're trying to accomplish. Which also in turn helped me to be more considerate of other peoples' time and obligations. I learned that I have a hard time adhering to the traditional way of doing things implemented by institutions. By that I mean there are multiple approaches to going about creation and research and all the other things that go into someone's practice, and I believe that what is required for those things should be more fluid because its hard to be motivated to create when you feel restricted. And its hard for me personally to feel excited to create something when I'm expected to put all this work in before I've even started with the project which I realize to an extent is necessary, but a lot of the joy and understanding for me, happens during the process of creating and after. Not before.

Now that this project is done, and soon I'll be out of school, ideally I'd like to join some art collectives and really get involved in the local art community. I think at some point I'll pursue some industry job and I'll be potentially open to some if I am offered the opportunity, but first I want to really dive into my work. I feel as though I've been held back both creatively and in my obligations, and I have yet to tap into my full potential. Aside from working, I will have more time dedicated to getting better and building my portfolio. Aside from getting better, I want to explore

and experiment with art and see what else I can add to my practice. I will also work on commodifying my art through screen prints, t-shirts, paintings, stickers, etc. which I'm in the process of creating now, so keep a look out for that, I'll be posting updates.

Before I close out and open the panel for questions, I will show you the video one more time.

video

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Vemödalen

 [Vemödalen: The Fear That Everything Has Already Been Done](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8ftDjebw8aA)

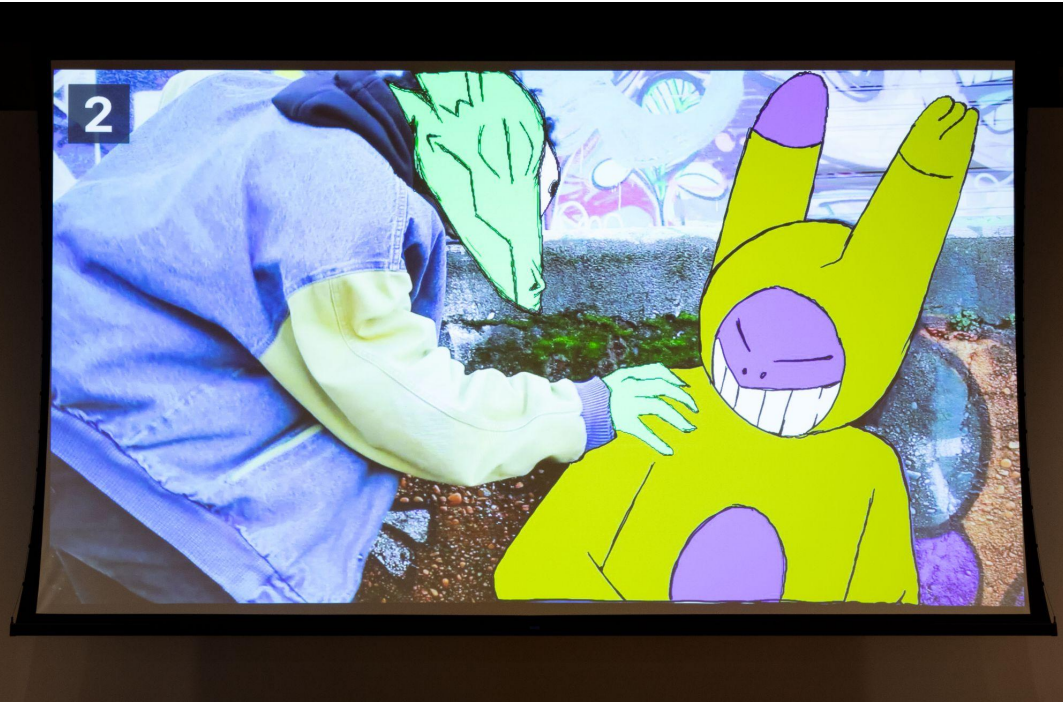
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Documentation







Preliminary Work

