

3D Spatial Narrative - "The Island of Misfit Toys"

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1 Delivery Mechanism and Interaction

3D Spatial Narrative combines 'bullet-time' technology and a unique interactive display mechanism to tell an original story in six 'frozen moments'.

Monitors mounted on vertical poles are mapped to a virtual environment with an arc of 180 perspectives on each interior scene. By physically moving the screen around the vertical axis laterally, the user explores each frozen moment looking for visual cues to the next scene.

Interacting with the piece can best be described as an 'opposite periscope' effect. With a periscope, one looks out from one vantage point. 3D Spatial Narrative moves around the frozen moment to create a looking glass window on an interior world. The only way to get this feeling is to experience it firsthand.

All three screens work together to create a narrative through a series of visual cues. The user explores each moment looking for clues. For example, in the first scene the child sits at the table and across the room the mother stands with her back to the user.

By moving around the room we come to face the mother. She wears an expression of concern and is gesturing toward something past the user. This is the visual cue to turn around and interact with the second scene. She is actually pointing at the second scene which is on the second screen just behind the user. By moving through the story, we discover that each frozen moment visually, spatially and chronologically relates to each other. The entire story takes place in one split second, within a radius of approximately 60 feet; in two buildings across the street from each other in Manhattan.

2 Narrative

"The Island of Misfit Toys" follows the hypothetical advancement of intensely creative individuals from youth to adulthood. Each vignette depicts the struggle of the "misfit" striving to find a personal mode of expression and social acceptance. New York City provides a simultaneously welcoming and visceral setting for this tale of development.

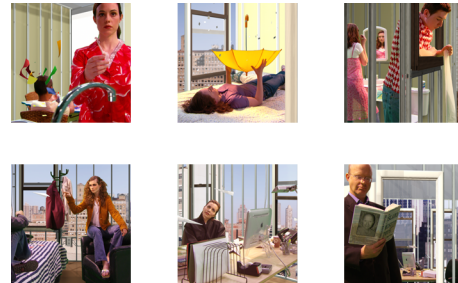
The visual language draws from Viola, Crewdson, and fashion photography. Most scenes are based on Fluxus events and paper is used throughout the narrative as a metaphor for creativity.

The young child is purely creative and has no idea what being 'different' means. Attending grade school, he or she comprehends the difference through interactions with other children and finds out how difficult being a misfit can be. In high school, friends are made within the misfit culture. This is primarily an outward display of identity.

In college, the young creative begins to express himself, but the work is based not on personal expression but popular culture. The effort is derivative and fails. Once the creative researches the

history of their chosen medium, that a community is available to draw upon, and finally begins to develop his or her personal voice, then success may flow.

Finally, true success is determined by finding expressive vision and helping younger misfits on similar paths.



Scene stills. 180° per scene, two per axis.

3 Inspiration

Bullet-time technology was popularized by the film 'The Matrix' (Andy and Larry Wachowski, 1999). The technique utilizes multiple still image cameras in an array surrounding the subject and/or scene. In its simplest form, 180 cameras simultaneously shot, yield 180 still images of the same subject from different vantage points. By showing the images in succession, one gets the impression that the camera is moving while the subject is frozen in space.

In the 1978 French film, *L'Hypothèse du tableau volé* (The Hypothesis of The Stolen Painting) by director Raúl Ruiz, the 'collector' has hired a detective to postulate on the disappearance of the seventh painting in a collection. The detective reasons that if he were able to see the remaining paintings in a series of tableaux vivants (paintings in life), he might be able to walk through and around them to find the connections and propose a theory on the missing piece.

All of the remaining paintings are seemingly unrelated in style and content, yet they are all linked through a mysterious narrative and visual vehicles which act as transitions and clues to the story. For example, a crescent shaped mirror is echoed from one painting/scene to the next. In the second, the mirror reflects a man gesturing towards a mask, a link to the next painting/scene. The content of both paintings suggest power and ritual through history; themes become more important as the narrative progresses. In this movie, tableaux vivant is the re-creation of two-dimensional paintings in 3D space. Actors wear the costumes and assume the statuesque poses of the characters in the paintings. The environment is reproduced down to every artifact and lighting detail. This allows the detective to follow threads in the form of gestures, beams of light, and reflections.

'3D Narrative' mirrors the narrative structure of "Hypothesis" and enlists the spatial illusion of bullet-time technology to create an interactive story.