Post all the fan arts!

By Claire Hackett

Fan

Nerd

Geek

Buff

Zealot

Fan

Nerd

Geek

Buff

Zealot
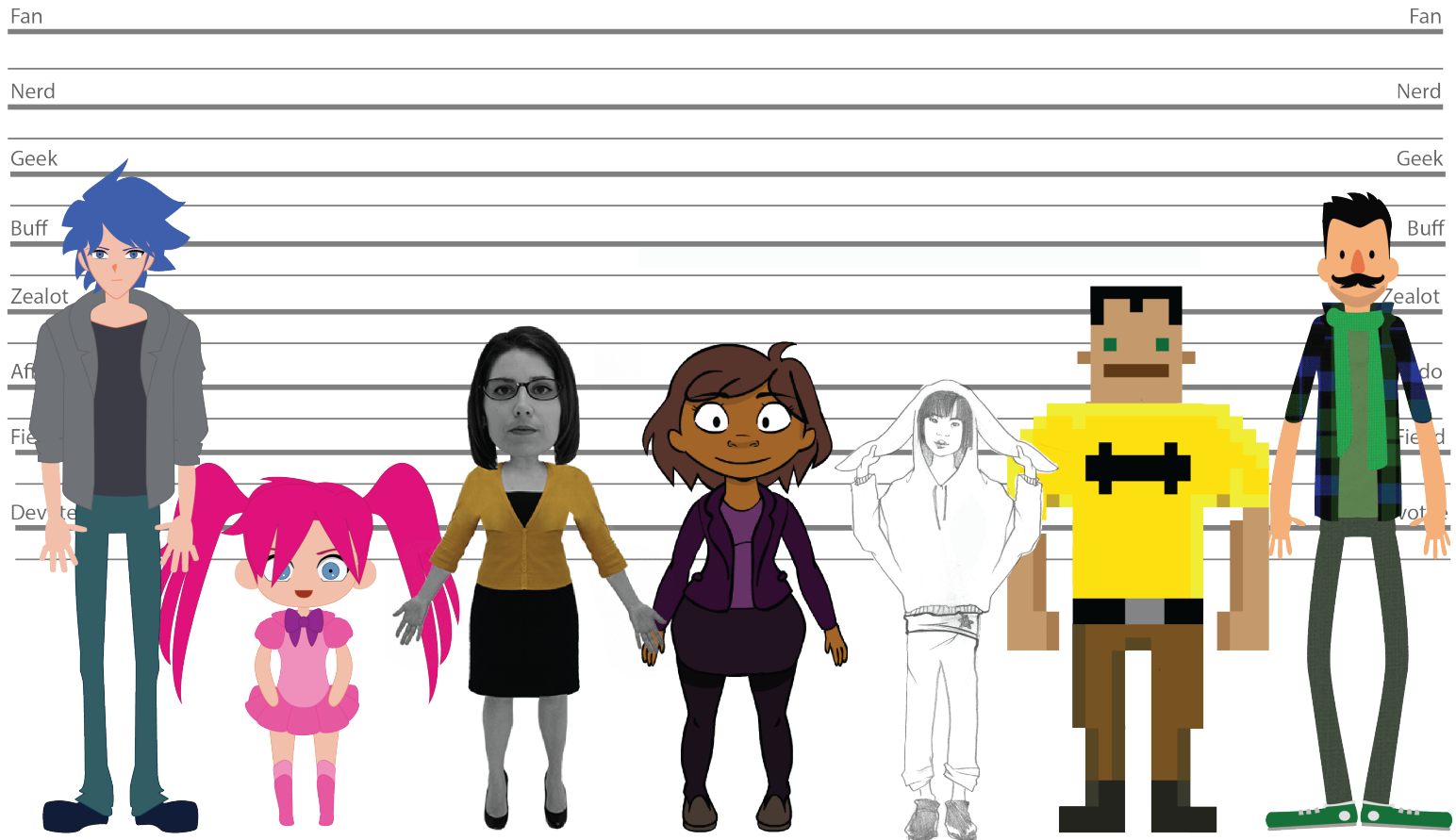
Post all the fan arts!

An animated discussion exploring participatory culture

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment

of the requirements for the degree

of Masters in Design at

Massey University,

Wellington,

New Zealand

Claire Hackett

2013 - 2014

Fig. 1 : An Example of fan art meta

Abstract

This animation focused project investigates fandom and, in particular, fan art. Through case study analysis of fan sites, the participant study of fans' creative practises, and animated argument, the project explores participatory culture from an insider's perspective.

Acknowledgements

Fig. 2 : An Example of cartoon-style fan art

Contents

Where fan meets theory

In 1992, Henry Jenkins, an undergraduate in communication studies and journalism, coined the term 'participatory culture' in an attempt to create a contrast between the spectator culture driven by mass media, and the ways that fans would assert their rights to participate within media culture using their own creative methods (Rose, 2013). With the success of *Poachers* (1992), and a number of other publications, Jenkins has become a figurehead in the study of new media culture, specifically fan culture. While his work contains a number of theories from audience studies and sociology, his ethnographic approach is from the perspective of an 'aca-fan' (Hills, 2002) a fan/academic hybrid, who can investigate fandom from an insider's perspective, rather than an academic "going native" (Jenkins, 2006, p. 4).

This thesis seeks to investigate and expand upon a small selection of theories that have influenced participatory culture, namely Henry Jenkins' paper *Confronting the challenges of participatory culture* (2005), John Fiske's 'Textual Productivity' (1992) and Michel de Certeau's chapter *Readers as Poachers* (1984), all of which focus on the relationship between official texts and the way in which readers actively consume them. Fans and fandoms are a key example of participatory culture as fans openly communicate their relationship and reaction to a particular text, while encouraging community involvement with other fans. Fan art is an example of this communication, and this study will focus on that practice. Consequently, this study focuses on fan communities found online, in order to address the dominant influence of the internet and its distinct effect on fan culture (Hellekson, Busse, 2006).

As a designer and animator, I have chosen to use animation to explore the links between participatory culture theory and fan art practice. Richard Mayer posits that the visual art of animation has often been used to assist the explanation of complicated processes (as cited in Sweller, 1999) and is thus suitable as a design strategy. The aim of this study is to create an animation that features fan art practice. The animation takes the form of a discussion, and the participants are each representative of prominent fan art styles. The animation will answer the following research question.

Key Question

How can animation explore the theoretical connections between participatory culture and fan art practice, and shed light on the world of fandom?
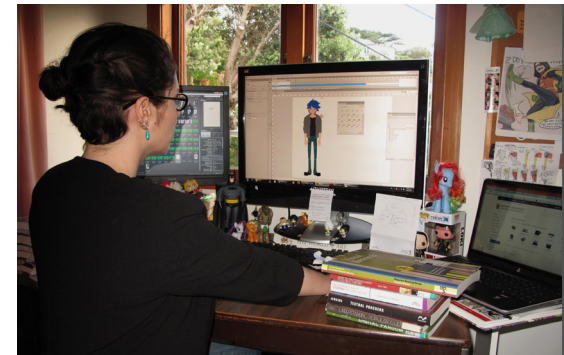

Fig. 3 : Getting underway

Project Aims

The aim of the thesis is to create a design that will explore participatory culture through the lens of fan art practice. This investigation is limited to include only case studies and observations found online. By doing so, the project addresses the impact that the internet has had on the productivity of fan communities online. Cheryl Harris (1998) states:

"Because computer-mediated communication has profound implications for future social and cultural development, ways in which individuals and social groups make use of this resource in developing identities deserves our serious attention." (p. 7)

Fan practices refer to a great number of creative outlets, more than this thesis can address, therefore the project focus is solely on fan art. Harris (1998) posits that whilst fan writings (fan fiction, newsletters, fanzines) have been broadly covered in scholarly

Fig. 4 : Example of a fanzine

publications, there are other means of fannish appropriation that should also be considered when developing theoretical discussions around fandom (p. 6).

By applying criteria drawn from Jenkins' participatory culture theory to a selection of key visual communication examples exploring fan art, I will create a set of design guidelines

that will support my animation. I will also employ findings from my observant participant research in three popular internet fan sites to ensure that the animation script retains authenticity in its use of fannish vernacular.

The project aims to:

- Link the practice of fan work creation with the academic theory of participatory culture.

- Acquaint non-fans with fandom practice in a visually entertaining format.

- Create a simulated fandom discussion that employs fan vernacular and terminology.
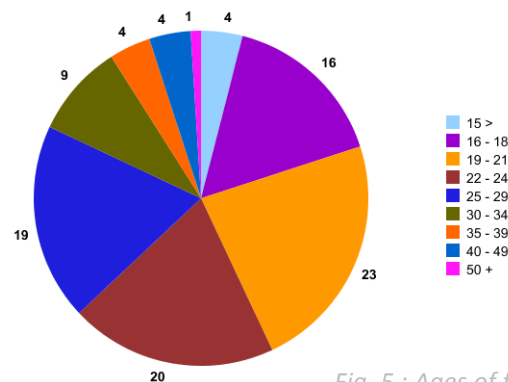
- The target audience for this study is general, but it is primarily aimed at 'non-fans' (Hills, 2013). Non-fans describe those who have had little to no experience with fandom or fannish participations. The demographic for this audience is between sixteen to forty years of age, as research shows a spike in interest joining fandoms between these ages.

- The findings of this research could also have the potential to be used as a resource for other researchers as it will visualise participatory culture theory in practice.

Fig. 5 : Ages of fans

Fig. 6 : An example of a fan documentary title

My name is Claire and I am a fan

In 1998, on my family's first Windows computer that I had begged my father to buy - and even helped to finance. I loaded the web browser Internet Explorer 4, opened a search engine and changed my life forever.

I am a fan. On reflection, I have *always* been a fan. Not only have I enjoyed a certain band, or book, or artist enough to openly assert my interest in them and follow their progress, but for some of my fandoms, I have attempted to expand their worlds; tinker with characters that already existed and, legally, belonged to their creator. I knew these creations were not mine, but my connection to them was. The more I transformed their worlds into my own – even doctoring existing partnerships between characters so that I could 'pair' another of my own choosing – the more I wanted to share what I was doing with others.

Fig. 7 : Armageddon 2012

As a child, this was simply a method of play. As a teenager, I began to grow a little curious: was this normal? Was I having trouble letting go of being a kid?

Or was this a rite of passage that not everyone in the rural town of Feilding, New Zealand enjoyed? I *couldn't* be the only one, though: someone else had to be doing the same thing, right?

Fig. 8: An example of cosplay

It turned out there *were* others, they were just harder to find than I thought. My first foray into a fan community was to spend my evenings driving 20km into 'town' to sit in a flat of questionable cleanliness with three others, re-watching *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (1997), *'Star Wars'* (1977) and *The Matrix* (1999). These screenings would often involve discussing intricate details about the productions at length and often until the early hours of the morning.

Traditional fandom, being social with my friends, talking about our favourite shows, watching them, reading comics together, was highly enjoyable. Attending the Armageddon convention in Wellington and seeing fandom *en masse,* was exciting. But finding groups of other people online, interacting in a way

that was completely anonymous yet entirely open was both liberating and enlightening. I had found my people. Even when I joined new fandoms, branching out into more anime series, cartoon series and movies, I still found more of my people. I opened a Deviantart account in 2003 to post my fan art and a Fanfiction.net profile to host my fanfictions. I had a Livejournal account for my fandom musings, fan-made avatars and banners, a Newgrounds account for fanimations, even several fictional journal accounts for role playing. Through these sites I made more friends, argued with critics and happily indulged my own fans, who were both fans of the series I would create for and fans of my own work as an artist.

These people, these other fans, are also my friends. We are bound by the single purpose of sharing our love of a particular text (or several) with great enthusiasm. Some of us are quiet fans, who prefer to sit and lurk as the drama unfolds. Some of us are outspoken and lead discussions and debates on fandom-related topics. Some of us create and post fan art, fiction, crafts, animations and other artistic creations.

Whether we shy away from the public spotlight or revel in it, fandom is an integral part of our lives, and as both scholarly investigation and general media attention turns more and more toward the phenomenon of participatory culture, our practices are being revealed.

Fig. 9 : A fannish pilgrimage to Lucasarts

Fig. 10 : San Diego Comic Con 2011

Fans and fandom

There have been varied approaches to defining the terms fans and fandom. Through my own fandom experience, I have observed that even those who are part of fan culture have not agreed on any particular definition. Zubernis and Larsen (2012) assert that fandom as a tern may be difficult to specify as it is often spoken of as a singular entity. For example, a fandom can define a very specific interest, such as fans of the movie-only universe (MCU) of Marvel's *The Avengers* (2012), or something as vast as an entire genre, as for example, sci-fi fandom. My own experience and research on the subject of definition revealed that there is, in fact, little distinction between the two. Thus, a 'fan' may simply be used as singular and a 'fandom' as a collection of many fans of the same thing.

Traditionally, media fans were stereotyped as socially inept with their interests and passions seen as atypical, pointless or even deviant

Fig. 12 : Armageddon cosplayers

Fig. 13 : Armageddon pop culture expo, NZ

in nature. In elaborating on this type of fan, Henry Jenkins (1992) asserts that fans were commonly stereotyped as "brainless consumer(s)… unable to separate fantasy from reality" (pg. 10). He offers various theories as to why there are such negative images surrounding fans, and argues that these stereotypical depictions are a projection of anxieties fostered by the "violation of dominant culture hierarchies" (p. 17).

From a more current perspective, Abigail de Kosnik comments that the recent "flow of audio, visual and textual material from fans into the realm of public consumption has not greatly altered some cultural critics' negative assortment of fandom" (as cited in Scholz, 2013, p. 98). Television shows such as *The Big Bang Theory* (2007) play on traditional fan stereotypes for comic value.

Subsequently, fandom is ever-present and is now becoming a complex part of audience culture. Matt Hills (2002) contends that "Everybody knows what a fan is" (p. ix, preface) and continues by describing a person who is obsessed with a particular text, person, or activity, who can produce vast quantities of information about their favoured object and who is not isolated by others, but becomes part of an active community. Jenkins (1992) posits that fans are "active producers" who appropriate and reinterpret texts in a "fashion that serves different interests" (p. 23). A fan might also use their appropriations to fashion their own "fannish texts", employing their creative talents to illustrate in order to show their appreciation, or concern for the official media. These fans are commonly prolific in the production of their fan works and they rarely engage in just a singular practice (Zubernis & Larsen, 2012, pp. 16-17).

It is important to note that this thesis uses the term 'media fans' to define the large body of fans who enjoy popular culture fandoms such as film, television, comics, Japanese animation and popular fiction (Jenkins, 1992). It is this group in particular that my research addresses. Another is the term 'text', which is often used by Jenkins, Hills, Fiske and Certeau et al in the context of fandom studies and which collectively describe the official media – television programs, films and comic book titles that are consumed by fans. Fans may also create their own "fan texts", sometimes called "fan work" or "fan labour", in response to these official texts (Booth, 2010, p. 40).

Hence, the media fans referred to in this thesis can be defined as a group of active readers who consume and engage with one or many texts, are part of one or a selection of fandoms, and who actively engage in fan practices such as blogging, fan art, fan fiction, vidding, and forum discussions.
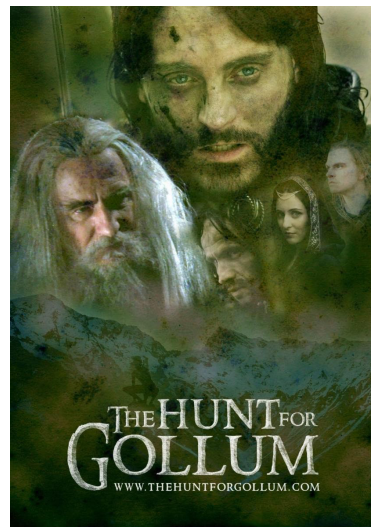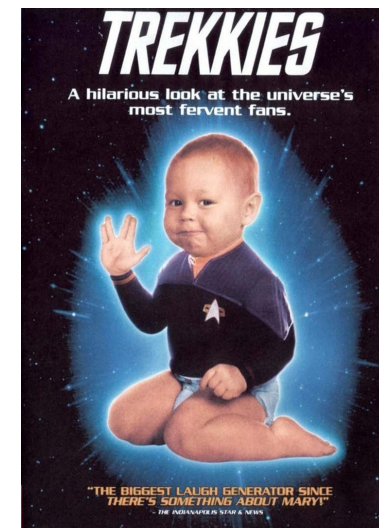

Fig. 14 : An example of a fan-made film

Fig. 15 : Trekkies, a fan-focused documentary

Significance of investigation

I was trying to set up a basic contrast between the ways that mass media had created a spectator culture and the ways that fandom was asserting a collective and individual right to participate within media culture, often through the production of new kinds of works. (Jenkins, as cited in Rose, 2013)

This research project investigates the practice of fan art. Through the application of scholarly investigation and criteria gathered from Jenkins' participatory culture theory, it aims to shed light on the world of fandom through animation. It is intended for an audience of non-fans, that is, an audience with little to no understanding of fannish practices.

As Jenkins (2006) observes, "Participatory culture is anything but fringe or underground today" and scholarly investigation on popular culture has increased in acceptance since the 1990s (p. 2). Jenkins (1992) applies this scholarly investigation to fans and fan practices, outlining their connections. His work and that of others, notably John Fiske, Michel de Certeau, Matt Hills and Kristina Busse, have built a large body of scholarly texts investigating fan culture from a number of different disciplines.

Fan culture has also become a common interest in public media (Jenkins, 2006). E.L. James gained much publicity for her erotic novel *Fifty Shades of Grey*, not only for the content of the novel, but also because her career began in the production of fan fiction (Luscombe, 2012). Alan Carr and Graham Norton have also addressed fandom on their respective chat shows, by showing their guests fan art of the characters they portray on screen. However, there are currently few visual examples that explain the nature of fan practices in a direct and uncomplicated manner. Initial studies on participatory culture are pre-internet; *Textual Poachers* (1992) is now over twenty years

Fig. 16 : Graham Norton shows explicit fan art to his guests

Fig. 17 : Alan Carr shows explicit fan art

old. Fans move with the new media of the times, evolving their methods of participation as "New Media" (digital, interactive media blogs, Wikis, social networking) encourages more opportunities and platforms by which to communicate (Booth, p. 2). Paul Booth (2010) argues that traditional studies of media fandom now seem "inadequately equipped" to describe the relationship between fans and their fannish objects (p. 2).

While investigations have proved inconclusive as to the efficiency of animation as a pedagogical tool, social media sites, havens for participatory culture, tell a different story. Electronic searches conducted on the first ten pages of Google's search engine revealed very few animations linked to participatory culture (see Fig. 18). The same searches conducted on the popular media site YouTube (see Fig. 19) revealed that visual presentations

Unfiltered Results

Keyword/phrase	Net results	Video results	Visual*	Vidding	Prezis	Animation	Fan challenges
Participatory culture	5,210,000	347,000	22/100				3
Participatory culture and fandom	340,000	2640	22/100	3	7		
Fandom study	4,040,000	3,480,000	76/100	26	4		31
Fan culture Study	195,000,000	17,700,000	19/100	1	1		
Henry Jenkins Participatory Culture	79,000	9680	21/100				
Henry Jenkins fans	681,000	55,300	16/100		4		
Participatory culture animation	3,750,000	32,000	32/100		2	8	

Filtered Results

Keyword/phrase	Net results	Video results	Visual*	Vidding	Prezis	Animation	Fan challenges
Participatory culture	347,000	26,000	35/100			4	
Participatory culture and fandom	9	1	0/001				
Fandom study	5,260	190	51/100	9			41
Fan culture Study	47,800	2	1/002	1			
Henry Jenkins Participatory Culture	38,400	8	2/008				
Henry Jenkins fans	45,000	3	0/003		4		
Participatory culture animation	10	6	3/006			1	

*Visual examples other than video interview or filmed presentation

Fig. 18 : Google search study

on a number of fandom and participatory culture-related keywords gained the least views the closer they were to scholarly-linked formats (lectures and scholarly interviews). Presentations using animation gained the most. Therefore, it can be argued that as fan communities move with the times, so too should the scholars researching them and perhaps modify the presentation of their findings to suit. Could scholarly investigation that employs the same methods that fans use to share their work possibly allow access for a wider audience, and perhaps build a closer link between the subject and the study itself? As a visual designer I feel it is important to consider animation as a form of delivery, with the final design object intended for sharing on YouTube. As Jenkins asserts "If it doesn't spread, it's dead." (as cited in Rose, 2013).

Youtube results	Lecture	Interview	Web news	fan news/media	Vlog	Animation	Vid	Fan Video	MG* or presentation	Music	Average views
Fan			10	4	1			2			407,135.70
Fandom				1	7	3	4	1		1	2	164988.5
Fandom Study	1	1		4			7				282.4
Participatory Culture	6	7		1		1			5		3147.2
Fan culture		1	2	6	2		2	1	1		160094.8
Fan Art				3		1		1	15		236,133.40
Fandom animation				3		3	11		1		63800.4
Fan animation						20					1,378,139.05

* Motion Graphic

Fig. 19 : Youtube search study

All together now

According to Jenkins (2005), participatory culture can be defined as:

A culture with relatively low barriers to artistic expression and civil engagement, strong support for creating and sharing ones creations and some type of informal mentorship whereby what is known to the most experienced is passed along to the novices. (p. 5)

Participatory culture focuses on understanding that media texts are evolving from production to "produsage" (Bruns, 2008, p. 2), and that the relationship of readers to texts has become an active one, contrasting the traditional "passive" audience (Dell, 1998, p. 95). Dell claims that there is a "critical distance" between the audience and the performer. Using Bordieus' notion of "taste" (as cited in Dell, 1998, p. 91), he suggests that "dominant" cultural performance forms (theatre, ballet)

are viewed with restraint and "appreciation valued over participation" (p. 92).

In contrast, participatory engagement for popular culture is observed as inviting "vocal and bodily audience involvement" (p. 92) and involving four central forms:

Affiliations refer to memberships and social groups formed in online communities. These groups may be formal or informal and can centre around a wide range of media. In a fandom context, these would be memberships to content hosting sites, such as Deviantart for art, Fanfiction.net for fan fiction and writing, Livejournal, Tumblr, Dreamwidth for comment, discussion and so on.

Expressions refer to the production of new creative forms. These can be indulging in practices such as fan art, fanfiction, vidding, creating fanzines, filking and fanimations.
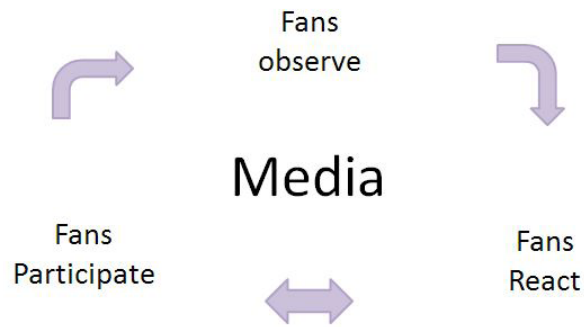
Fig. 20 : Fandom life cycle

Collaborative problem-solving describes the instinctive team work that participatory cultures encourage: sharing knowledge, forming debates, creating information pages such as those found on Wikipedia, as well as collaborating in fannish practices.

Circulations describe the shaping of the flow of media in the form of podcasts, blogging, Livestreaming, Tegaki-e or Paintchat.

The theory of participatory culture synthesizes a process that I came across intuitively. Jenkins (2005) posits that members of a participatory culture share a strong belief in the importance of their creations and their connections with each other (p. 3). Thus, when linked to fan culture, a participatory culture synthesizes a fan's instinct to seek out others and become part of a community.

Although this makes accord with my fannish experiences, I needed further clarification on where this instinct to participate had come from. What makes fans so eager to contribute? What happened to the act of reading; why are some of us such noisy audiences? In the next section, I review three pieces of literature that have influenced Jenkins' theory. These concepts explore how the reading or consuming of official texts has evolved from a passive activity to one where readers participate, becoming producers in their own right.

Noisy Audiences:
What happened to reading?

Michel de Certeau (1984) in his chapter *Reading as Poaching* posits that audiences are not passive readers but active interpreters of the media they consume. The term 'poaching' describes the internal guilt, or the "transgressive" pleasure, perhaps, felt by the reader when they begin to use a particular text as a basis for forming their own creations (p. 172). Certeau challenges the authority of the "informed" creators of official texts over reader, who may become creators themselves when poaching from their chosen media (pp. 165-186) and asserts that the success of production depends on its consumption. He explains that the act of consumption is itself a receptacle that helps to distinguish the privileged "producers" from the consumers, whose role it is to blindly devour texts, not to challenge nor question their authority upon them (p. 167).

By challenging consumption as it is conceived and (of course) confirmed by these authorial enterprises, we may be able to discover creative activity where it has been denied that any exists. (De Certeau, 1984, p. 167)

De Certeau contends that the 'reader consumer' be recast as an active audience member, an active reader, or as Alvin Toffler earlier coined 'prosumer' (Toffler, 1980. p. 266), and encourages them to 'poach' texts in order to develop their own ideas and creations. John Fiske elaborates on this idea further by creating his own model based on the prosumer nature of fans.

Fiske frames his argument around Bourdieu's metaphor that culture can be seen as an economy, and goes on to explain the difference between "official" culture, understood as the institutionalized arts of art galleries, museums, concert halls and so forth, and

popular culture (1992, p. 31). In his article *The Cultural Economy of Fandom* (Lewis, 1992), he emphasizes the distinction that 'investing' in official culture provides, as opposed to merely consuming it (Bourdieu, 1984).

Fiske describes popular culture as being "produced by the people out of the products of the cultural industries…" (1992, p. 37) and argues that its value should be understood in terms of audience productivity, rather than reception. In this sense, the more a fan becomes involved in participatory activities surrounding a particular text, the more culturally valuable the text becomes. In stating this, Fiske also challenges the traditional hierarchy over textual authority Certeau had observed and commented on.

Fiske, moreover, creates three modes of productivity, each of which relates to the participation of fandom with media texts.

The third, 'textual productivity', is the most pertinent to this thesis and, as Matt Hills observes, "has historically functioned to distinguish the sectors of fandom from non-fan audiences" (Hills, 2013, p. 133).

Textual productivity is defined as the fannish act of creating texts that are informed or inspired by official culture for enjoyment, and which are then circulated amongst fan groups with little need for recognition from the official producer and for little or no monetary recompense (Fiske, 1992). Jenkins, who Fiske had mentored, links Fiske's and Certeau's pre-internet theories to a later ilk of technology-empowered fans, thereby giving these theories a contemporary perspective.

By applying Certeau's theory of textual poaching to his study of fans and fandoms, Jenkins hoped to portray audiences as actively engaged in consuming media texts and using

those texts within the discourses of their specific groups (Jenkins, 1992).

Poachers (1992) address a point in history where fandom had not yet met the internet. Jenkins' later publications, namely *Fans, Bloggers and gamers: Exploring Participatory Culture* (2006), include more information covering the vast online branch of fan culture, though he often refers to the theories and examinations made in his earlier book. Many of the latter investigations are situated within audience studies and social science theories, including the titular 'textual poachers', a term poached from Certeau.

Jenkins speculates on the traditional understanding of fans, such as Julie Burchill's "the fan in the attic" (as cited in Jenkins, 1992, p. 14), and then goes on to examine the activities of fan groups as legitimate cultural gatherings, with discourses and collective support that invalidate the stereotypes he previously discussed in *Poachers*.

Jenkins' observations help shed light on both the nature of fan behaviour and the reasons why fans are stereotypically viewed as outcasts. Fiske and Certeau's theories helped to illustrate why audiences have evolved from their passive role as consumers to become active producers, which may help to explain how fan culture has developed. Their speculations inspired me to look back upon my own participation in fandom and reflect on how I might visualize my own understanding of participatory culture.

Agent of dialogue: Observant participant research

Many scholars and theorists who have written about fans vehemently argue that it is impossible to understand fandom from the "outside"; one must be a fan to enter into its ethos fully in order to reflect models that reflect the social realities of fans themselves. (Jenkins, as cited in Harris & Alexander, 1998, p. 46)

In his books, Jenkins openly reveals that he is a fan (Jenkins, 2006). Although he views fans and fandoms from a distinctly scholarly perspective, his confession was one that resonated with me. As a fan, I acknowledged his position as an informed observer; he understood how fans tick and his theories were inspired in part by his own experiences rather than reflections on someone else's. Although I was appreciative of his involvement in fandom, he makes it known that he suffered difficulties in justifying his position as a researcher.

Jenkins, who used a hybrid of ethnographic approaches when collecting data for Poachers (1992), comments on the problematic nature of ethnographic authority, and explains that he has "drawn inspiration" (2006, p. 12) from a number of traditional sociological methods:

"What follows grows not only from conventional forms of field research but also from my own active involvement as a fan within this subcultural community over the past decade and more." (2006, p. 12)

I found that the 'observant participant' method (hereafter referred to as OP), as coined by Kaminski, offers a compromise. The OP method of data collection allows the researcher to have pre-existing links to the subject being observed (Kaminski, 2010). The OP is known to be part of the observed community and registers observations through

personal experience and applies them to data-collecting techniques (Kaminski, 2010).

My design strategy is a vehicle of both exploration and extrapolation aimed at an audience of non-fans. The OP method allowed me to focus on my experiences in fandom and interpret them into a set of findings, which would then inform my design object (Kaminski, 2010). After several experiments, however, it became clear that more information was necessary to help focus my project, particularly a study on what types of animation were already present in my field. I determined that a case study analysis of these animations would provide a basis for drawing up a set of formal guidelines with which to create a more informed animation.

Henry Jenkins, Ph.D.
Comparative Media Studies, MIT

Fig. 21 : Henry Jenkins

Different visual formats of participatory culture exploration

In order to develop a stronger understanding of how my design object might best deliver my findings, I reviewed a selection of case studies against Jenkins' four criteria of participatory culture. This process enabled me to examine how thoroughly a dynamic visual medium might demonstrate his theories. Also, in critically reviewing this material, I hoped to develop a greater awareness of what already existed in the field. This method proved difficult, however, as searching for visual communication examples of fan culture delivered wide and varied results. Those most commonly appearing were either filmed lectures or pieces of fan 'meta' (Fanthropology, 2013); the former held no dynamism at all and the latter was often too navel-gazing to be of use to non-fans. Limiting my search to fan art in particular, provided even fewer helpful precedents. The only scholarly example I found that focused on participatory culture exclusively and was not a lecture was Jenkins' Summer Sandbox Participatory Culture, a presentation aimed at teachers of new media that used a puppet to narrate his findings. This was create but not particularly illustrative of the more popular fan practices he has observed previously.

Fig. 22 : Henry Jenkins' Participatory Culture

I therefore expanded my search criteria to include animations, films, motion graphics and 'webisodes', that presented information pertaining to fandom.

This information was to cover some form of fan art practice in order to remain within my project focus. *Us* (2007), *Fan art: An Explosion of Creativity* (2012), *Bronies* (2012) and *Fangirls* (2013) are all precedents that fit these criteria. My findings are thus discussed through Jenkins' (2005) four main forms of participatory culture:

Fig. 23: The Bronies show affiliations in class

Fig. 24: Mash ups as a new expression

Fig. 25: Digital fan art as an expression.

Affiliations

Jenkins describes affiliations as being "memberships, formal and informal, in online communities centred around various forms of media, such as Friendster, Facebook, message boards, metagaming, game clans, or MySpace)." (Jenkins et al, 2005, p. 3). This criteria was interpreted as the way by which the case studies need to involve or make links to the social aspect of participatory culture. *Fangirls* and *Bronies* both replicate realistic communities: a classroom setting and an official meeting. *Bronies* successfully uses characters from the official text *My little pony: Friendship is magic* (2010), as well as popular fan characters and personifications of fan activities as mascots to support the dialogue. *Fangirls* uses female characters who dress in clothes relating to their fandoms, and who stand behind related ephemera thus helping to place their character within the fandom.

Fan Art speaks at length of the fandom community, and contains interviews from members of different fan art circles, all of which have a part in producing or observing fan art. Accompanying the interviews are supportive images supplied by unnamed fan artists, further supporting the concept of community involvement and collaboration.

Us uses a layering technique, superimposing images into one seamless connection of media. This, according to Kristina Busse, "mirrors the way fans make media their own" and provides "… a metaphor for fandom as a whole." (Busse, 2008).

Expressions

Jenkins describes expressions as "producing new creative forms, such as digital sampling, skinning and modding, fan videomaking, fan fiction writing, zines, mash-ups." (2005, p. 3). *Bronies* uses fan made animation,

Fig. 26 : The fangirl spokeswoman
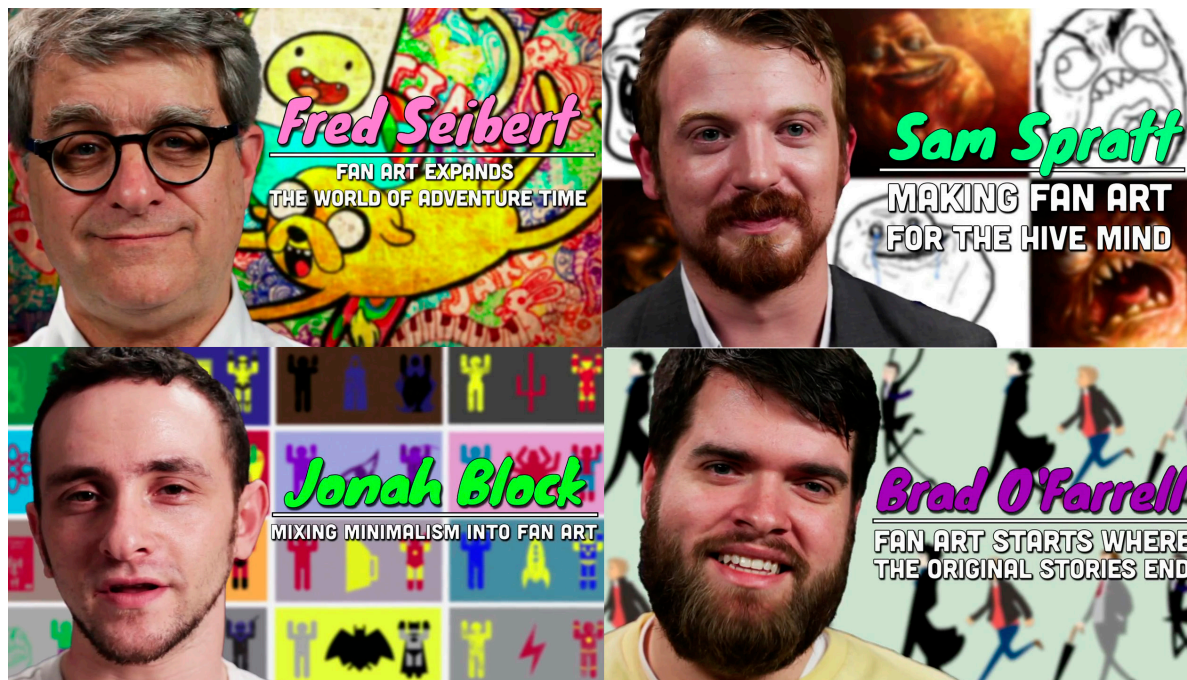
Fig. 27: Fan artists behind their creations

('fanimations') and a creative sing-a-long, which could be considered 'filking'. The aesthetic is similar to that of the official text it parodies, and it uses both familial characters and a similar flash animation style. The narration is delivered by a character who identifies visually with the official text and who delivers a speech which references a multitude of fan discourses (fan art, fanfiction, filking, generators and many more).

Fangirls is a fan-made animation (fanimation) that uses a group of fan characters as vehicles for information delivery. The script employs fannish vernacular as dialogue. The animation is computer generated 2D, puppet based and
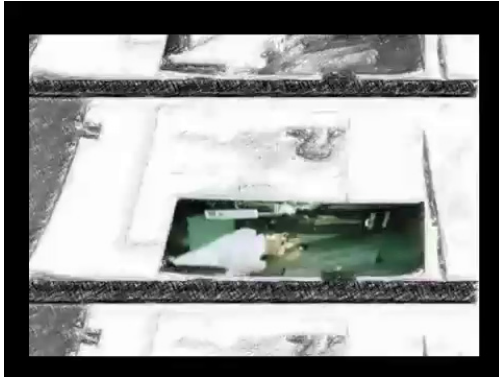
Fig. 28 : Lim's flickering screen and image overlays

voiced singularly by Lahav. The aesthetics of the style is Lahav's own, but all the characters 'cosplay' to make clear their representative fandoms. For example, the spokeswoman in the discussion is wearing a costume typical to of Matt Smith's portrayal of the Doctor from the television serial *Doctor Who* (2010) while posters behind her, parodies of fan made posters and memes, yield images that support her costume.

Fan Art employs a basic interview structure – backing up the dialogue with cut-always to visual examples of fan art pieces. Each subject in the interview discusses their own examples of fan art, or their observations of other fan art pieces.

Us relies on the lyrics of the same-titled song by Regina Specktor (2004) in order to guide the viewer through a variety of clips. The clips are collated from a number of popular fandom

programs, such as *Star Trek*, *The Matrix* and *The X files*. Lim subtly focusses on certain actions, scenes and character interrelations that fans of these series have typically been known to focus upon, inviting the viewer to "watch it fannishly" (Busse, 2008). The treatment of the vid emulates a chronological account of fandom technologies used in vidding, starting with a rather blurry, fuzzy VHS aesthetic through to the cleaner transitions of HD capable post-production software.

Collaborative Problem-solving

This particular criterion involves the act of working in teams to complete tasks and develop new knowledge (Jenkins, 2005). Of the case studies, only *Bronies* and *Fangirls* portrayed or alluded to any form of team involvement. *Bronies* speaks of 'critics' for fanfiction writers, while *Fangirls* gives a rousing speech on the importance of fandom

Fig. 29: The Bronies collaborate
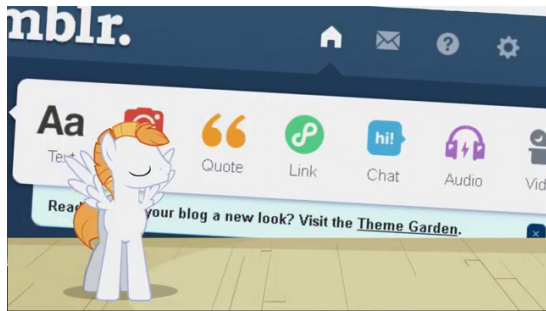
Fig. 30: Circulating knowledge on Tumblr

when one of their members tells them to think about getting a life, effectively parodying William Shatner's comment to *Star Trek* fans, as observed by Jenkins in *Textual Poachers* (1999).

Circulations

Circulations explore the way in which media is distributed, "shaping the flow of media (such as podcasting, blogging)." (Jenkins, 2005, p. 3). *Bronies* makes note of some methods of circulation, namely by "posting their arts on

Tumblr for all to see" (2012), and showing the Tumblr interface. In *Fangirls,* the spokeswoman notes several methods of fandom circulation when giving examples of the group's fandom practices. *Us* explores distribution as a subtle metaphor in its use of overlaying imagery and different examples of fandom texts (Busse, 2008). *Fan Art* covers a number of different sharing platforms the artist's use, particularly Threadless, where one artist has his work printed on T Shirts.

Fig. 31: The Fangirls cosplay

Fig. 32: The fangirls react to the bad news

Fig. 33: Fangirls

Case study findings

The case study analysis shows that a variety of different visual communication presentations contain elements of participatory culture theory. Although the aesthetics and approaches employed by each presentation differ greatly, it is clear that the use of a dynamic visual medium can deliver a broad set of ideas in one concise package. As evident in the electronic search study (fig. 1), there are few examples of animated visual presentations which pertain to participatory culture. A study on the popular media sharing website YouTube, however, revealed that an animated format encourages a great number of views (fig. 2).

The design research analysis also provided a set of criteria by which to develop my communication strategy. These criteria influenced the environment, the number of characters as well as the animation style and aesthetic.

Environment: Apart from *Us,* each case study presentation provided an environment that was either unobtrusive or seemed native to the characters. *Fan Art* used a plain dark blue background for the interviews and a colourful, fan art screen to introduce the participants. *Bronies* and *Fangirls* employed spaces that were relevant to the context of the animation, namely a classroom and a meeting hall. This approach was most effective as it also applied to Jenkins' criteria of affiliations.

Number of characters: The size of the cast varied greatly between each presentation; though it appeared in *Fangirls* and *Fan Art* that having different speaking parts helped distinguish different voices within the fan culture. This could be linked to the criteria of collaborative problem solving.

Style of animation: *Fan art* used only simple graphic forms on the interview title cards and transition screens as the dialogue plays. *Us* employs a number of different editing methods, but has no character interaction. *Bronies* and *Fangirls* use 2D motion tweens in Adobe Flash, which allows for a puppet style of animation, which is faster and easier to create than traditional frame-by-frame.

	Environment	Number of Characters	Style of animation
Bronies	Uses a classroom setting which is ideal to hold a number of characters and a presentation format Classroom implies learning and a student/mentor relationship Uses props and fandom related ephemera	Many characters of varied colour and sizes Different characters distinguish a variety of fan voices One character leading the discussion implies learning or student/mentor relationship	Flash animation
Fangirls	Uses a conference room setting where the spokeswoman is holding her bimonthly fangirl meeting. Uses props and fandom related ephemera	Many characters of varied colour and sizes All characters Use dress in clothes relating to their fandoms	The animation is computer generated 2D, puppet based and in flash
Fan Art	Uses a plain dark blue background for the interviews and a colourful, fan art screen to introduce the participants.	Focuses on five participants in separate interviews	No animation
Us	No environment suggested	No characters	No animation

Fig. 34: Case Study Results

Design development and refinement

The information gathered from my OP research provided the contextual content for the creation of the design strategy, as well as the characters and the script. From the case study analysis, I developed a set of guidelines that linked my findings to my research question and provided a basis for the animation structure.

Design concepts

My first design concepts attempted to express my early understanding of Jenkins' works and focused heavily on articulating the creation of fannish identity. This was not a successful route, however, as the project focus was far too broad in scope and had the potential of confusing the audience, a fear that was quickly verified in my second critique.

In my second concept, I limited the project scope to fan art in order to add clarity and focus to my research. My earlier concepts then became a template for a selection of characters, each representing a particular fan art style. The decision to include other characters was to help visualize the idea of participation. I also created a set of characters who became visual archetypes based on the online hosting platform Deviantart and its tiered system for submitting art work.
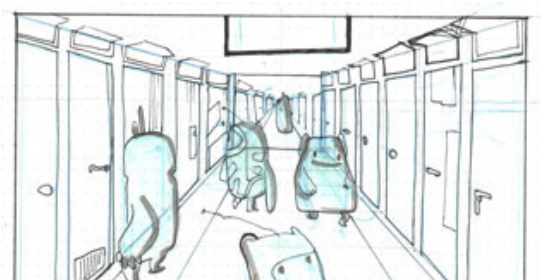
Fig. 35: Early concept exploring the many doors to fandom
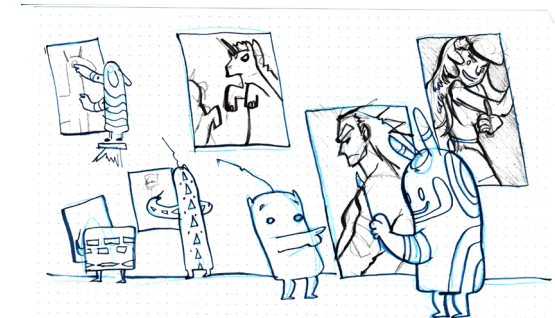
Fig. 36: Early concept exploring fan art practice

Fig. 38: Early character concept
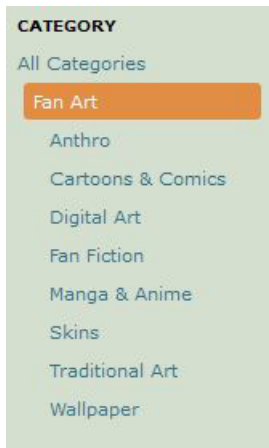
A popular site for fans, Deviantart offers a structured format that caters specifically to fan art and describes eight distinct categories: Anthro (anthropomorphic), Cartoons and Comics, Digital, Fanfiction, Manga and Anime, Skins, Traditional art and Wallpapers.

However, four out of the eight did not confirm my own experience as a fan artist for the following reasons. Fanfiction is a practice on its own. In contrast, Anthro describes the anthropomorphic articulation of existing characters, yet is often used as a category for animal characters, such as My Little Pony, while Skins and Wallpapers do not seem to constitute anything other than larger images of existing fan art.

Further, as Deviantart provides no explanation for the eight categories, I narrowed the cast to six individuals, each of which portray various well-known styles of fan art.

- Anime

- Cartoon

- Chibi

- Graphic

- Pixel

- Traditional

Using characters and a tighter focus to my research gave clarity to my ideas, yet the characters I had created were not easily recognizable in relation to the archetypes, and the design language for my animation had not yet developed to a stage where I was comfortable with it. A comment in my third critique suggested that I use a similar shape for the characters across their different archetypes, as this would help tie them together as a community.

For my third concept I drew inspiration from the way in which fans receive official texts,

Fig. 39: Transistor radio

Fig. 40: Chibi interview scenarios

analyse them and remix them before sharing the result within their fandom. This act of receiving, translating and transmitting echoes the way a transistor radio receives radio waves and reacts by transmitting them as music. I created designs that were based on a standard rectangular transistor, tailoring them to emulate each of the chosen fan art styles. This enabled a harmony within the design language, as every character still retained something of the form or feel of the group.

I was also inspired by Chris Landreth's animations *The End* (1995), Ryan (2004) and Aardman Studio's *Creature Comforts* (1989). Landreth employs animation as a tool to explain complex ideas and concepts, such as the role of an animator in the creative process, artist's block and, in Ryan, the destruction of one's self from internal turmoil. Aardman's animations focus on themed interviews where animated creatures discuss banal, everyday subject matter. It is the pairing of the interview subject's voice and reactions with the stop motion animation that makes for a humorous and interesting combination. These discoveries were very important in my research, due to animation being used to

Fig. 41: Character concepts based on transistor designs

Fig. 42: Livejournal

deliver either complex or trite information to a general audience.

I created a script that involved each of my characters being interviewed in their own, everyday situations, based off my own experiences in fandom. This seemed to be a much clearer way to present my research, but critical feedback suggested the interview concept did not address the idea of a participatory culture. The character design was confusing and the link between the function of the transistor and the function of a fan within fandom was weak and was suggestive of a different group of fans than those I had studied. Positioning the characters in their own separate spaces did not achieve a sense of togetherness that I was aiming for and the character design did not reflect the character's particular taxonomies as I had hoped. I needed to bring my characters together into one space, as well as making

their appearance more suitable to reflect the fan art practises they depicted. Although the question-and-answer format is argued as a suitable vehicle for dispensing information, the script needed revising. I returned to my OP research to gather facts that were observed as common to the discourse and questions posed by fan artists.

Script development

To create a script that was informed by fandom discourse, and distributed knowledge about participatory culture, I returned to researching the fandom websites in order to gather fans' opinion and dialogue for the script.

The data fields were limited to three particular websites, all of which are prevalent in fan circles and which frequently feature fan art, namely Deviantart, Tumblr and Livejournal.

Livejournal is one of the longest running blog sites, with established fandom communities and discussions.

Deviantart is a popular image hosting platform, where 'deviants' can share their artwork, animation, photography and prose with a wide audience of members.

Tumblr, the youngest of all three, was established in 2011. Tumblr operates in a unique fashion, where users 'reblog' other users' posts onto their own blog stream, creating a visual flow of comment and interest. Forum style commentary is also used, but not as frequently as reblogging.

By collecting responses to a number of questions posed in existing polls, interviews and chats and by observing each site's unique protocol, as each allowed a forum-style discussion from other members, a script was developed that aimed at answering a number of basic questions about fan art and which served as a component to explain participatory culture. The information gathered was not direct quotes, but was inspired by the commentary observed on the sites. Positive, critical and negative commentary was included to reflect the reaction some fan artists have toward others. In using this method I intended the script to operate as though the viewer had walked in on a legitimate fandom discussion and that the reactions felt genuine. This method was preferred to that of collating data from surveys where the responses might be subject to bias or forced opinion as the participants would be aware of the purpose of gathering the information.

- The questions, which helped the data gathering and filtering included:

- What is fan art?

deviantWATCH: A feature that allows you to follow updates from your friends and favorite artists. Users who watch you will receive notifications in their Message Center whenever you update your journal, posts new artwork, critiques, or news articles.

Fig. 45: Deviantart

- Why do fans create fan art?

- What are some of the positive and negative opinions common to fan art practice?

- Why types of fan art are there?

- How is fan art shared?

- What is the response of fan artists to the problem of legality surrounding fan works?

- How does one become part of a fan art community?

Of the three sites, Livejournal and Deviantart provided the most substantial content in the form of interviews, discussions and polls. Tumblr contributed tone, dialogue and vernacular, as arguments often tended to erupt, seemingly as a result of the reblogging system. Rather than keeping debates within one comment field, reblogging enabled users to effectively spread their arguments across the platform, inciting a rise in temper among their followers.

This method of exchange provided an insight into the spectrum of fannish vernacular, and the pacing of discussions.

Character development

From the participant research, seven different archetypes were developed. These archetypes would inform the attitudes of the characters themselves. I then applied each archetype to one of the selected fan categories based on their suitability, and thus developed a cast. After deciding how the characters should act, I then drew up common traits from each fan art practice that would influence how they looked and sounded. Each of the characters had to recognisably amplify the style they were representing, but still remain unified as a whole.

Fig. 46: An example of fan art

The archetypes developed were:

- The informed debater, a fan who knows all and happily shares their knowledge with anyone who asks

- The long-standing fan, a fan who has "been there since the beginning" and often comments on how the fandom has changed over the years

- The biased critic, an outspoken fan who believes their opinion is most current and significant. Tends not to listen to contrary opinion

- The Big Name Fan (BNF), a fan with many so many followers that they become almost as significant as the fannish object themselves. This fan tends to be prolific in both output and opinion and often remain neutral in arguments, though they can commonly be the cause of the debate themselves

- The tag-a-long, a fan who might be prolific and a long standing member of fandom, or even new to fandom, but is happy to remain out of the spotlight. This fan is more concerned with following their fandom favourites (see Big Name Fan). They will usually be quick to defend their fandom and fandom idols in arguments.

- The lurker, a fan who prefers to sit silently and watch the workings of their fandom. Lurkers may be new to their fandom, or members who simply prefer to remain a silent audience and keep their opinions private. Outspoken new members who become problematic are often told to 'lurk more'.

- The non-fan, a person who has had no experience in fandom communities and does not understand the culture. A non-fan may enjoy the same official texts as fans, but does not participate within fandom communities.

The final task involved creating a design language for the animation that would unite the characters in one space, but which remained sympathetic to their different aesthetic styles. Providing typical examples of the character's style enabled a stronger recognition for that character and the artistic method they represented. However, this approach proved challenging as each artistic method varied greatly. I chose the most common appearances for each style, based on the character archetype and typical observations surrounding them. Some, including the Cartoon, Graphic and Theorist character, were also reflections of my own style.

I also took note of common complaints and criticisms surrounding fan art works, notably those artists who would often use fan works to comment on the representation of women, gender and minorities in the source text. The cast was subsequently created to present a slightly larger proportion of women, as women are more commonly found in fandoms. The cast was also created to show a range of ethnicities, in acknowledgement of the global presence of fan culture.

Drawing from the taxonomies defined earlier in my tests, I developed seven different personalities:

Anime

Anime is the Japanese term for cinematic animation. It is borrowed from the English term animation. To Western audiences, "anime" describes any animation produced in Japan (Patten, 2004).

- Anime can be loosely categorized into four popular forms: Shoujo, Shonen, Seinen, Gegika. Each of these forms has a particular style :

- Anime style art often uses simplification, especially in human faces

- Character design is very specific in shape and colour:

- Large features, bright colours = protagonist or young, innocent character

- Sharp features, dull or dark colours = antagonist or 'cool' character

- Line work is usually thin and functional

- Colour work is typically simple fills, cel style, with shade detailing. Depending on the genre, the colour palette can range from bright and expressive to realistic

- Use of 'chibification', a type of caricature denoting certain situations (mortification, childishness - despite the complexity and stoicism of the character)

- The character's hair is often highly stylized (depending on genre) and this often helps to distinguish one character from another. Hair colour can be range from natural to any hue. Often these colours express significant elements of that person's character, based on colour symbolism in Japan (Patten, 2004)

Participant research revealed that the anime style was one of the most popular and recognizable in fan art on the three

Fig. 47: An example of a heroic anime character

Fig. 48: An example of a typical anime style

fan sites studied, and thus was very suitable for the Big Name Fan personality. My anime character is based on a shonen aesthetic, a prominent style intended for boys (though often enjoyed by female audiences as well). He is a 'cool-type' character, as represented by his height, lean features and narrower eyes. His colouring is blue to represent calmness, stability and dependability (Scott-Kemmis, 2009). He is dressed to reflect his archetype characteristics and I have observed in many anime that such casual attire is often used as a costume for college boys.

Fig. 49: Final Anime concept

Fig. 50: Earlier anime concepts

Cartoon

Cartoon is one of the hardest styles to define as the aesthetic can vary greatly depending on the artist's inspiration and influences. The cartoon style is popular for the depiction of characters from live-action fandoms, as it allows the artist more creative expression than drawing realistic portraits would. Many comic style artists are inspired by Disney animations and American or French comics:

Fig. 51: An example of French comic art

Fig. 52: Asterix, a popular French/Belgian comic

- Human characters often feature exaggerated face shapes, body height and hair forms

- Characters are often simplified in form and do not include a high level of detail. Cartoon style characters rarely try to simulate realism

- This style often employs strong, expressive line work.

- Colour work is typically simple fills

- Cartoon style artwork can be digital or traditional, yet digital is popular

The Cartoon character seemed appropriate for the Informed Debater archetype, being a well-rounded style informed by many influences. She is the leader of the discussion, and holds her small group meetings as a way of opening up the world of fandom to a wider audience.

She is dressed in purple to symbolise her higher social status in the group, and wears tidy, yet formal clothes that I have observed as typical of this style (Scott-Kemmis, 2009).

Fig. 53: Cartoon front and side final concepts

Fig. 54: Earlier cartoon character concept

Graphic

Research provided a number of examples of fan work that was simplistic in design, often far removed from the official text's original style, yet spoke exclusively of the character. These styles, most often digital, boasted strong graphic shapes and were often used as designs for clothing, banners and fan-made posters, offering unofficial variants of the originals. I felt that this style could be described as graphic as it seemed to be heavily influenced by contemporary and often modern graphic design.

Fig. 55: An example of graphic design fan art

Fig. 56: Graphic design pushes familiar characters into interesting new forms

- The graphic style is dependent on:

- Flat, strong colours

- Either thick, precise line work or no line work employed

- Art is often created by digital programs such as Adobe Illustrator

- The graphic style is often used for design work in print (for example, tee shirts, sweaters or satchel bags)

- The graphic style is also employed for highly stylized depictions or stencil-style portraits

- Sometimes teamed with textures for different effects, retro effects

- Can be popular among non-fan audiences

The graphic character, being relatively popular outside and inside fandom circles, suited the archetype of the Biased Critic. Opinionated, almost to the point of being obnoxious, he is unafraid of sharing his opinion with others, and is not particularly bothered if the group disagrees. He tends to butt heads with Anime, as his style can be viewed as less specific and more accessible to non-fans. He is coloured green for jealousy as well as freshness and regeneration (that is, re-contextualizing official texts in his fan work) (Scott-Kemmis, 2009). His outfit is based on the current hipster trends to make him appear fashion conscious and also reflects a little of the self-confidence that the hipster style is known for projecting.

Fig. 57: Graphic character final

Fig. 58: Earlier graphic character concepts

Chibi

The chibi style is related to the anime style. In official texts, it is often used as a sight-gag, or an aside ('omake'), but rarely as a style on its own. Chibi is derived from the Japanese word for small or small and cute. Fan artists have adopted the style readily as prominent chibi designs are based on a very simple body shape, making them easy to draw. The chibi style is often used to create cute versions of an artist's favourite characters:

Fig. 59: Chibi manga art

Fig. 60: Chibi anime art

- Chibi style often includes simple shapes and forms. It is generally easy to draw and personalise.

- The character's head and hair are often larger than their body.

- The eyes are always comically large, even if the character was originally drawn with small features.

- The hands and feet are usually diminutive and are sometimes simplified as stubs without fingers or toes in order for them to appear cuter, like a rag doll.

- This style puts great emphasis on cuteness and appeal.

As the chibi style was developed from anime and manga, the chibi character can be seen as the Tag-a-long archetype, subordinate to her anime friend. Chibi is dressed in a style mimicking a character of the same name from the anime series *Sailor Moon* (1992). Like the character, she is coloured pink to denote femininity, childishness and kindness (Scott-Kemmis, 2009). Her style is also typically used to depict moments when a character might vent their anger or frustration in a humorous manner, thus she is also shown to have an active temper.

Fig. 61: Chibi final character concept

Fig. 62: Earlier chibi concepts exploring line weight

Traditional
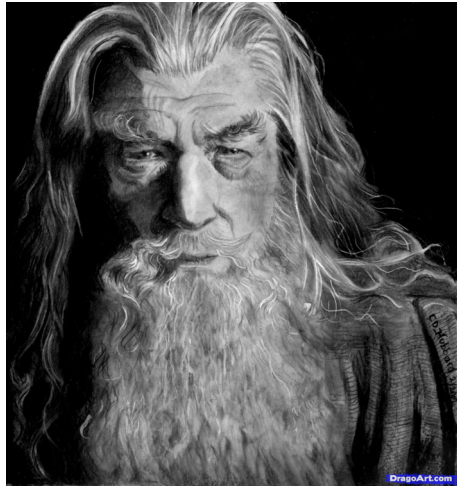
Fig. 63: Traditional fan art in graphite

Traditional refers to the method of production, yet I found that it is notable for its historical importance in the pre-digital production and circulation of fan art. Images created using traditional materials are still very popular on Deviantart. It is commonly argued that using traditional materials, the artist shows more skill. Many art styles (such as anime, chibi and cartoon) may be created digitally, though the aesthetic generally refers to artwork that has no digital rendering applied, despite the fact that the image is shared online.

Traditional art often pertains to artwork created in a non-digital medium:

- Most popular materials are pencil, markers (copic), ink work and watercolour.

- Some art pieces are limited to this style, for example, paper children, 3D dioramas, doll photography, clay, craft.

Fig. 64: Traditional fan art in ink and watercolour

The traditional character appeared to suit the Long-standing fan archetype. She was drawn in graphite pencil and animates in partial frame-by-frame to support her non-digital style. She is of an Asian nationality, as my research revealed that many manga artists still use traditional methods to colour their cover work. She is rendered in pencil, a popular traditional material used by fans, and her outfit is based on contemporary Japanese street wear to indicate her place in the current world of fan art.

Fig. 65: Traditional final character concept

Fig. 66: Early character concept for a pinned puppet

Fig. 67: Early traditional character concept

Pixel
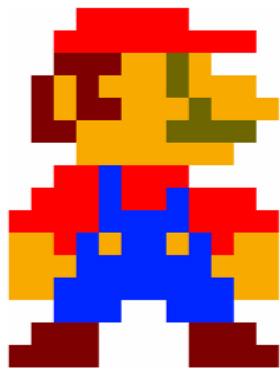
Pixel sprites are separate character images created for the purpose of animating in a larger scene. This is similar to the way puppets are created for puppet-style animation. Sprites are often used in games or on web pages as animated gifs. In terms of aesthetics, pixel sprites are created by arranging square format pixels (blocks of colour) into an image. Any art viewed on a screen display is shown in pixels, yet the aesthetic of pixel sprites in a fan art context is usually informed by a limited colour palette and the sprites constructed from simple, square shapes with little detail. The appeal of pixel art is in both the ability to create sprites in very simple graphics programs, such as MS Paint, and the nostalgia of creating art in a style that was popular in the 1980s and 1990s:

- This style is often inspired by 8-bit graphics, which makes it appear blocky.

- Character is based on a number of simplified shapes.

- The style employs very few details.

- It is often used for animations.

- Pixel sprites are commonly known for their 'retro' appeal.
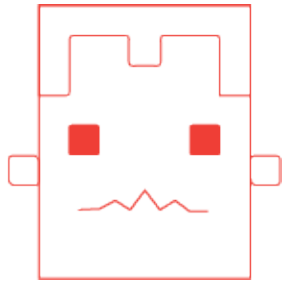
I observed that Pixel art was moderately popular in fan art communities. It was most often seen on Deviantart and much less on Tumblr or Livejournal. Traditionally, fan artists had used the medium to replicate their favourite game characters, thus there appeared to be a closer link to popular games than film and television. As a result, the Pixel character was paired with the Lurker archetype, to reference their smaller involvement in fan art communities.
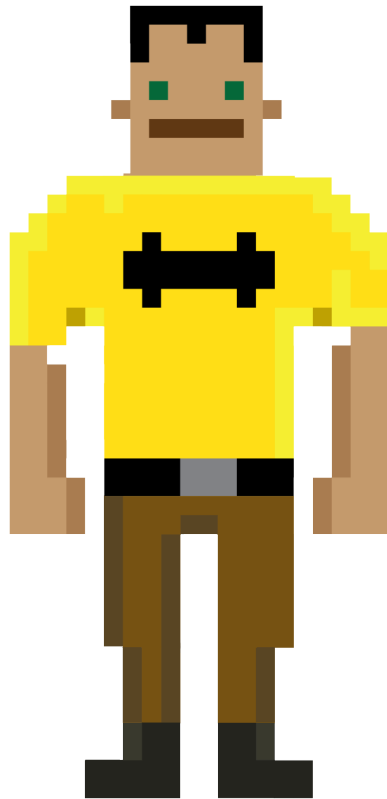
Fig. 70: Pixel final character concept
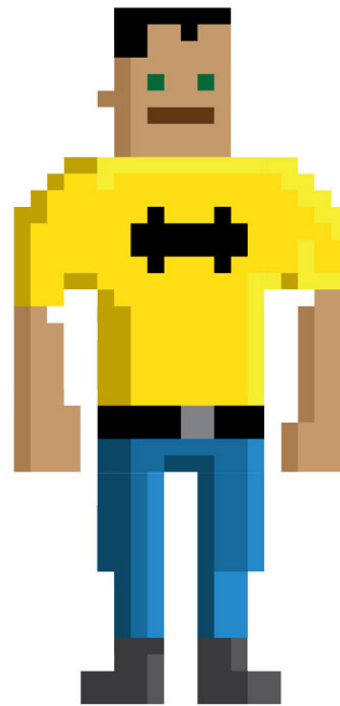
Fig. 71: Earlier Pixel concept
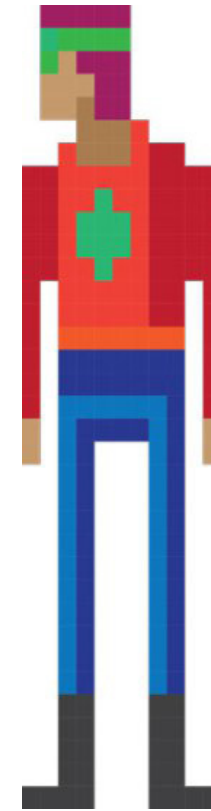
Fig. 72: Earlier Pixel concept

Theorist

The theorist character symbolizes the Non-fan. For the purposes of this animation, the Theorist was portrayed as a studious character, interested in learning about fan practices and participatory culture. The theorist character is created from photographs of myself, which ties in with the identity as a scholar. The character design depicts a puppet made from photographs that place her halfway between the real, non-fan, world and the created, fannish, world. The Theorist is given a black

Fig. 74: Inspiration for Theorist puppet

and white aesthetic to symbolise her lack of bias with any of the group.

Fig. 73: Final Theorist character concept

Fig. 75: An earlier character line up
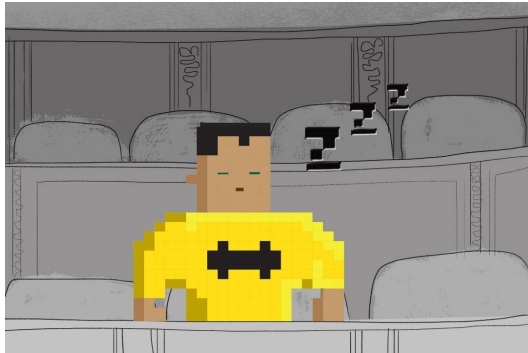
Fig. 76: The setting
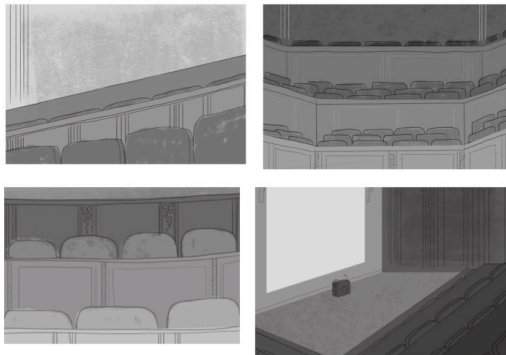
Fig. 77: The setting concepts

Setting

As I had concluded earlier, all the characters needed to be in one space to successfully simulate participatory culture in action. Jenkins (2005) has often proposed that the ideas and concepts synthesised in participatory culture might be useful as a pedagogical tool. In addition, he notes the phenomena of the master/student relationship within the culture (pg. 4). It consequently seemed appropriate that the design object be set within a scholastic environment, such as a student-run club. The small, private theatre, the setting, is designed to be minimalistic and unobtrusive in order to draw the focus onto the characters. The discussion was set in a lecture theatre, which links back to my involvement in the academic study of participatory culture.

Sound

The characters voices were designed to complement their aesthetics. Most of them have human voices, with the exception of Pixel, whose electronic blips and beeps compliment his digital aesthetic. Chibi has a high-pitched voice to suit her size and character. No background track was included as this would remove the realism of the setting.

Animation

The characters had to be built to animate in Adobe After Effects and Adobe Flash. The characters were built as puppets, and animated similarly, with the exception of Traditional, parts of whom would be animated frame by frame and imported into the scene.

Design Argument

The design strategy employed in this thesis uses animation to explore the links between Jenkins' participatory culture theory and fan art practice. Jenkins' theory, informed by the works of John Fiske and Michel de Certeau, posits that the relationship between producers and readers is evolving and that readers themselves have become active producers of material. The literature analysis showed that fans are commonly active producers in their fandoms, thus crediting the theory of participatory culture.

Informed by scholarly research, a set of concept design experiments were conducted to help generate ideas for the final piece. I then applied a set of criteria from Jenkins' theory in a case study analysis to four visual communication examples of participatory culture. This study helped inform the content for the design object. Observant participation within three fan community platforms also informed the creation of the script and character models. These three platforms were chosen for their longevity and popularity in fandoms as well that inform a design solution. Although the project investigates only the fan practice of fan art, I hope to expand the investigations into a series that further explores the phenomena of participatory culture in other fan practices.

Conclusion

This thesis is a synthesis of my experiences and observations as a fan, and my research findings as a scholar in making visible the links between participatory culture and fan art practice. The project successfully demonstrates my ability to observe and reflect critically on my participation within fandom and apply these findings to a set of criteria that inform a design solution. Through this project I learned that my world of fandom-related communication was not one that could be easily understood by non-fans and I was challenged to find a middle ground on which to maintain my fannish persona, yet remain clear when expressing my ideas to my supervisors and peers. Although the project investigates only the fan practice of fan art, I hope to expand the investigations into a series that further explores the phenomena of participatory culture in other fan practices.

Glossary

Canon : Source material or official material for a fandom, with established facts that the fandom acknowledges as a whole. A series may have several different canons, depending on the amount of different official stories. This may occur often in long running comic series, where a main storyline ceases to exist, or evolves with new media formats (for example, Marvel's Avengers branch into film encouraged the term MCU to be used when referring to the Marvel Cinematic Universe canon) (Fanthropology, 2013).

Cel: A celluloid sheet used for Traditional animation frames.

Chibi: A small, squat depiction of an anime/manga character. Usually used as a device to humour a tense moment (in comedies, or omake, which are side stories), a regular character may suddenly turn into their chibi form after experiencing great humiliation, joy or anger, and react accordingly. The other characters do not always change along with him/her. Sometimes the environment also switches to a completely unrelated picture or even a pattern to further remove the reaction scene from reality (Fanthropology, 2013).

Cosplay: The art of creating, wearing and performing in fan-made costumes to depict a character from a favourite media work (Lamerichs, 2013).

Desu: A Japanese copula, used in everyday speech. In fandoms the term is often derogatory term and is directed towards obsessive anime fans who appropriate a sparse amount of Japanese into everyday speech in order to sound cute or childish (Fanthropology, 2013).

Deviantart: An online community that serves as a platform for users to upload and display their own artwork. Members may upload work, comment on others and use the 'favourite' function to add others' works to a personal archive (Akdag Salah, & Salah, 2013).

Doujinshi: Fan comics of an original manga that are entirely fan created and produced. Doujinshi, or doujins, are usually sold cheaply at conventions or in specialist stores. Although the practice and sale of doujinshi breaks Japanese Copyright Law, most companies and creators see the comics as promotion and the community a talent pool for aspiring manga artists (Fanthropology, 2013).

Fangirl/Fanboy: Used to describe fans in a dismissive or derogatory way, as the Japanese use the term 'otaku'. Many fans embrace this and use it as self-referential humour (Jenkins, 2006).

Fanfiction: Fan made fiction focussing on characters from existing media (Fanthropology, 2013).

Fanimation: Fan made animation (Fanthropology, 2013).

Filking: Fan made music (Fanthropology, 2013).

Hentai: Japanese term to describe unusually perverse, erotic acts. Hentai has been adopted by the West as an umbrella term to describe the anime or manga pornography genre (Patten, 2004).

Livejournal: An online social network system often used as a blogging platform, as well as an online community hub and fandom space Fanthropology, 2013).

Lurker: A person who spends time on forum sites, watching conversations, but rarely commenting (Fanthropology, 2013).

MS Paint: A Microsoft program for painting and colouring. It is available with all Windows OS, and as a result, is often used by amateur artists. MS Paint is often mocked for its extremely basic tools and low-quality output (Fanthropology, 2013).

Modding: The act of changing a game by adding previously unavailable or non-existent features (Fanthropology, 2013).

Pixiv: A Japanese online community for artists. Similar to Deviantart, but with more emphasis on a tag-based system Fanthropology, 2013).

Pixel Sprites/Pixel art: Bitmap images of a low resolution "blocky" style often used in console games or early game graphics. Pixel art is used as a contemporary retro style in app games, fan art, or for small, simple icon animations (Fanthropology, 2013).

Omake: A side story or final note. Usually a parody (Patten, 2004).

Tumblr: An online blogging and social media community. Due to the nature of its 'reblog' function, it is often used for fast commentary and interaction (Fanthropology, 2013).

Ships: A shortening of the word relationships. The term refers to the partnering of two characters, regardless of canon. An example of fannish colloquial might be: "Lois Lane and Lana Lang. I ship them." The term may also be described as 'pairing' (Harris & Alexander, 1998).

Slash: Originating in fan fiction, slash - or slashing - is a fandom genre that focuses on the sexual coupling of two same sex characters. The term came from the use of the backslash to indicate the two characters in the partnership, eg: Kirk/Spock (Fanthropology, 2013).

Yaoi: A Japanese genre that focusses on the homoerotic relationships of gay men in fictional media. Yaoi is generally aimed at female or gay male audiences. The term, originating from the acronym of Yama nashi, ochi nashi, imi nashi, meaning "No peak, no fall, no meaning" almost always denotes a sexual relationship. It is often erroneously appropriated in English to criticize any same-sex coupling or same-sex romance/attraction/titillation (Patten, 2004).

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Fig. 66: Claire Hackett. Traditional concept

Fig. 67: Claire Hackett. Traditional concept

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Fig. 72: Claire Hackett. Pixel concept

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Fig. 75: Claire Hackett. Setting concept

Fig. 76: Claire Hackett. Setting concept

Appendix One:
Work Book: Stage One

The following appendices present a selection of design developments images from my project workbook.
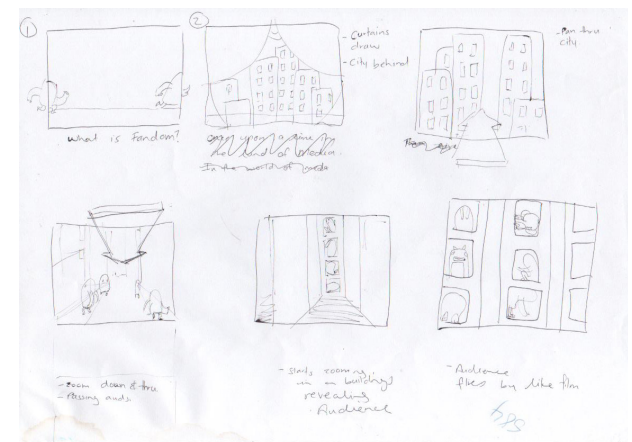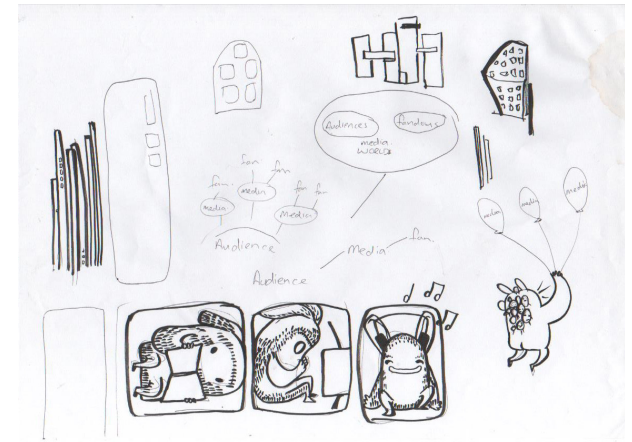
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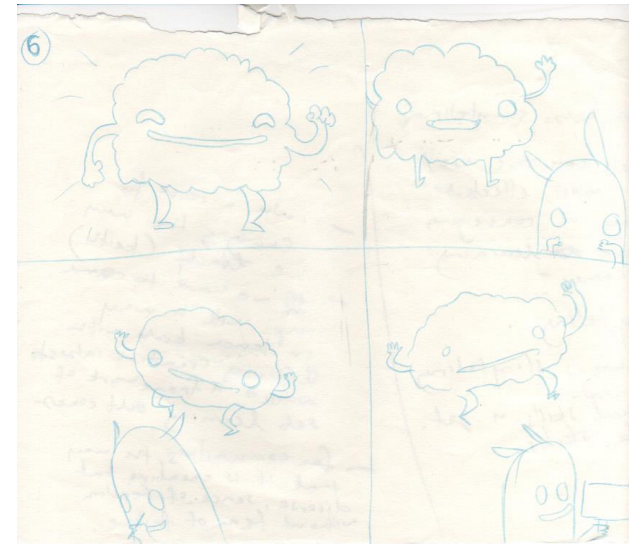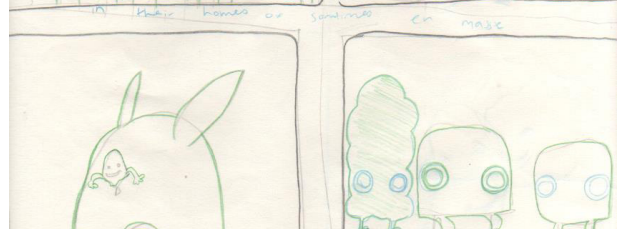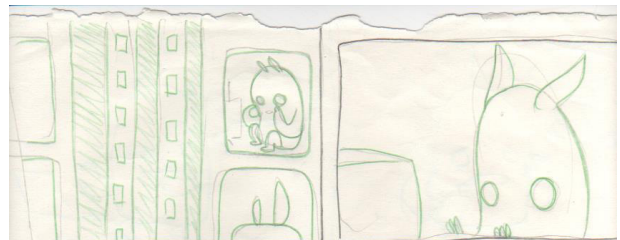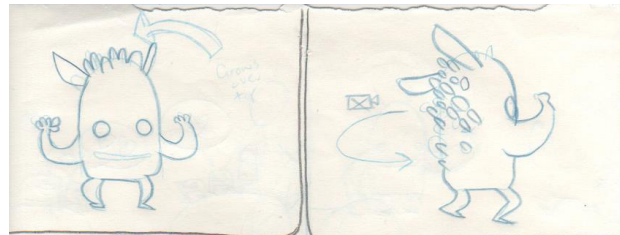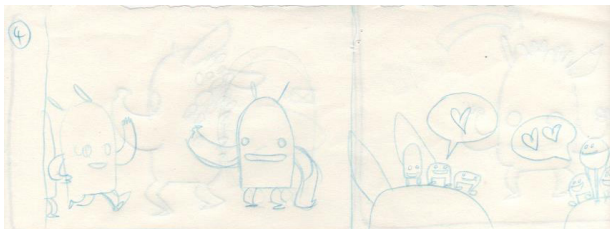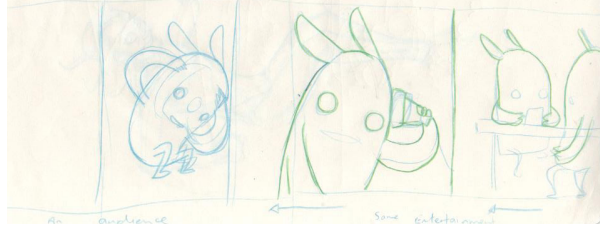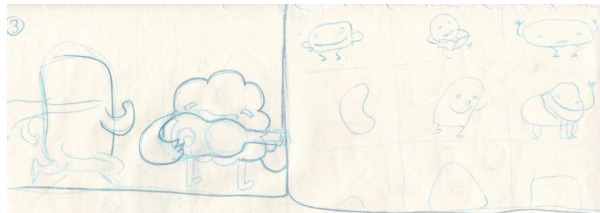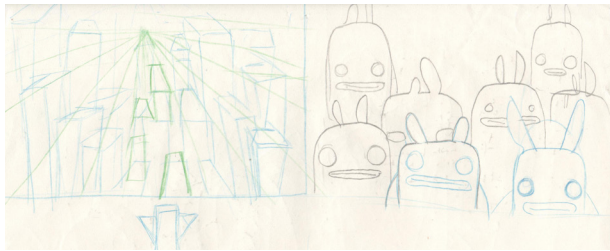
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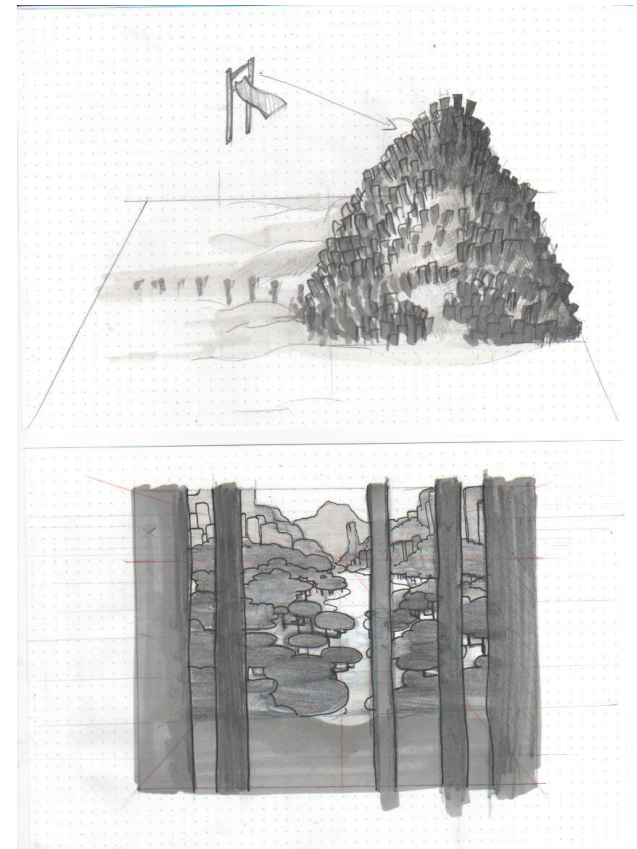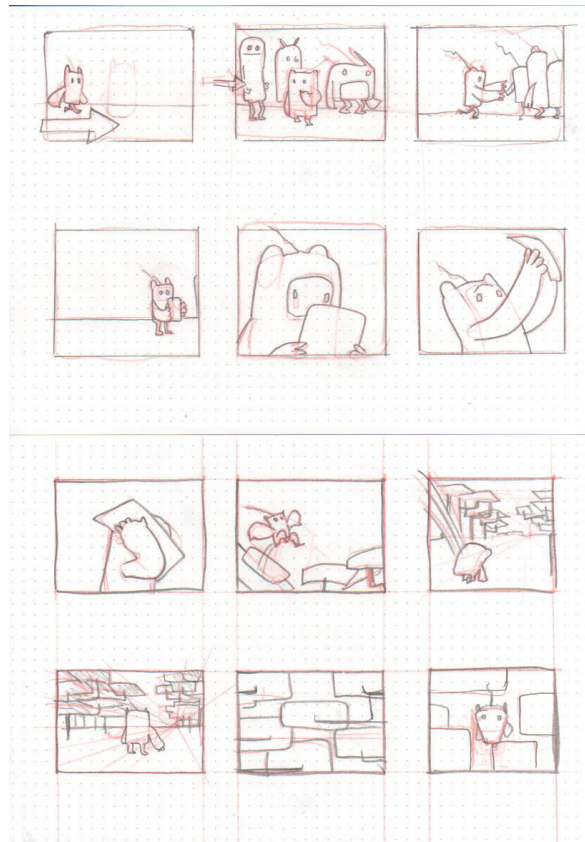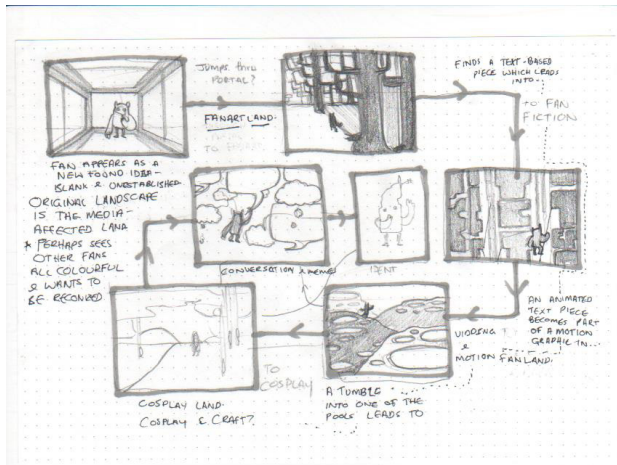
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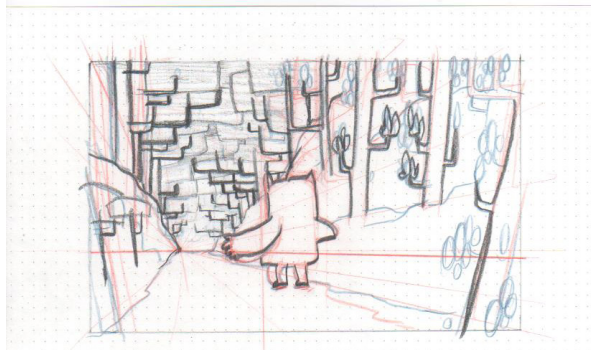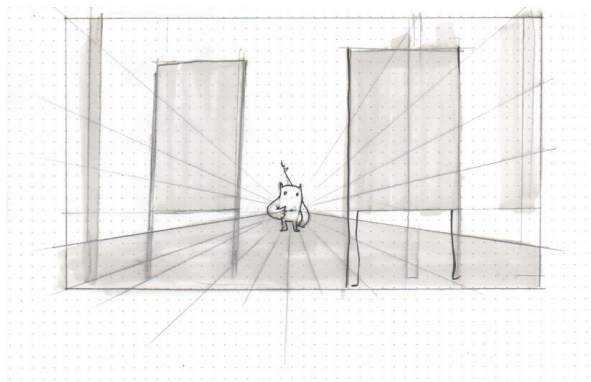
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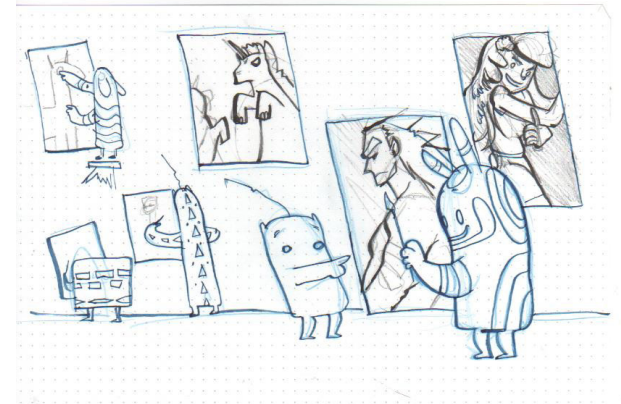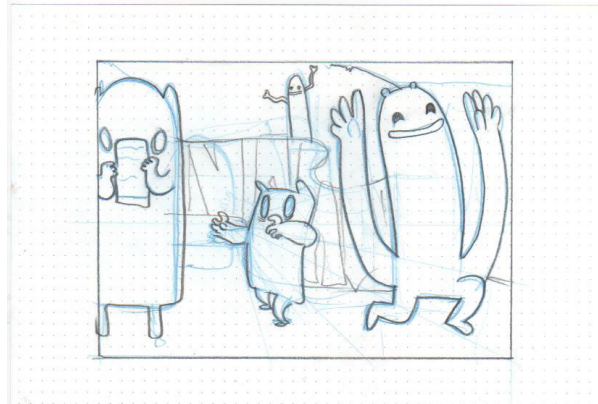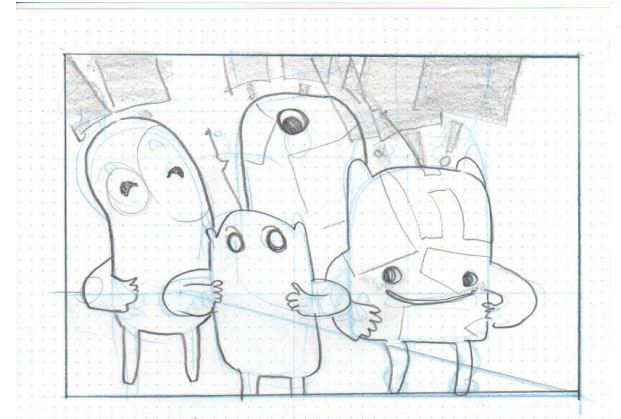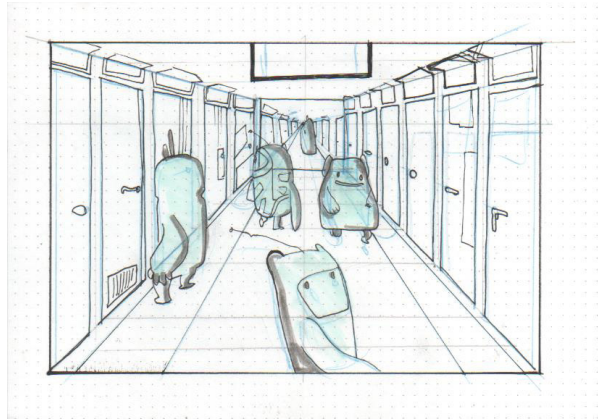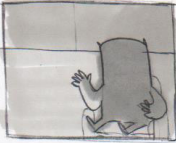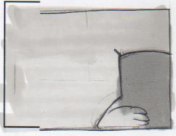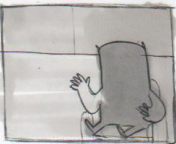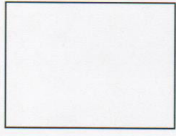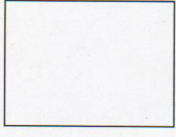
Second concepts exploring the depiction of Fan art creation
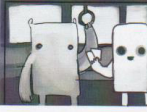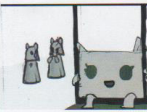
Work Book: Stage Three

Internet: intro

images / movement	sound
Fandom on the internet ::laughs:: It's like they sprout up out of nowhere and suddenly I've got this new cluster of activity going on, like a party starting up, and bam! They've gone from just talking about the same show or movie and now they're debating and making things - making art and stories and things - and getting all excited. It's like these waves of movement online that are always fluxing, always changing - no matter what size the fandoms are.	
You can never predict how they're going to react and what sets them off - sometimes it's a new season of a show, sometimes it's just the whiff of a new movie - like concept put up on a website. Sometimes even just the mention of a particular actor playing a character is enough to get their imaginations running.	
Fandom is a sum of many parts. It's a community, it's a discussion ground, it's an artistic creative outlet and it's all based around media properties that these fandoms watch, read and enjoy. Trying to look at fandom from the outside is difficult, because it's such a personal thing. If you wanted to talk about fandoms you really have to come on in and talk to them yourself.	

The two fighting characters zoom in to fight each other, ready to clash and.....

WHAT DO YOU GET FROM CREATING FANART?

What do we get out of this? Community. Friendship. Appreciation. Humor... An ability to share our love, and our dislikes of things that happen in our given media.

Spray paint

Yeah there's a sort of rewards system - a gift economy: We barter, sometimes we sell our art as commissions or prints. But really currency in fandom runs by comments toward work. Kudos. Likes. Reblogs if you're on tumblr. There's no expectation, I mean, people like to be acknowledged, but really, fandom drives itself. In the end, you're creating and you're sharing those creations and gaining knowledge while having fun with something you're passionate about.

Rewards system maybe just enters with a passing fan character.

Some fans even create fanart of other fanworks - other fan's depictions of characters, or fanfictions... fanons - where the fan representation gains it's own following which as seen as almost as important as canon... It's like "dude, I love your stuff, here's a thing to show how much I love your stuff". It's support.

You also get a mix of amateur and professional artists. And some people think that depends on the fandom a lot. But it doesn't - you get all levels of ability in all fandoms and usually those people get a LOT of kudos and a lot of attention. But it's also really good because they give the other people, other artists, someone to look up to. If you really like their work then you kind of want to produce your own work at that level.

Traditional finally turns their piece around and it's a strange crazy mess. Or a stick figure. Some kind of joke.

There are so many fan work practices to choose from that can play on any talent or interest a you might have. There are so many ways to express yourself. Even if you just look at fan art, I mean, there's whether you draw traditionally or digitally, whether your fan art is static or if it's animated. If it's an illustration, or a puppet, or a gif. Fan art is one of the best places to start in fandom, because it's where you get the widest range of expression from probably the widest range of fans.

Now that the evil guy has become a cute mashup, he's joined by another version of himself in a slightly different style looking just as confused

It's fun to draw and there are a lot of styles and genres that fit inside it, you know, whether you draw the characters super moe or sparkly shojou or super dymanic shonen... or even make them a mecha form or something like that.

Third concept exploring the interview style

WHAT FAN ART ISNT

The common misconception about fanart is that it's a poor man's substitute for the real thing. Or it's a badly photoshopped manipulation. Or it's all anime style or just cartoony and cute.

c/u of chibi so we don't see too much of b/g character. He might just be wondering about

... or it's all sex. That's the shock value one. When people see the sexy fanart. And we have to defend that and say "Context! C'mon, we put our work in the right places, we add the right Not Safe For Work tags!". Blame your search engine!

This could be another verbal cue, but once again, hard when Pixel is in a difficult shot for background action.

Could be the sound coming from the game is a bit sexy – like he's chosen a sexy fight character and they give a moan or soemthing.

There's a lot of stigma surrounding the idea of cutting up existing material and making... your own art with it. Telling your own story. There's still this idea of fan art being totally derivative, when it's transformative.

Fan art isn't just copying an image - it's not about tracing line for line. It's something that transforms the work that it is celebratory or critique. Or both. Some fans do use copying and tracing for certain styles, or for learning a style but it's not the dominant.

Clay

HOW ARE THE STYLES PRESENTED.?

Some fans create... mock posters or kind of... visual character guides, using a variety of techniques. It's like a type of fake advertisement or a re-imagining. Some fans make style sheets of characters and use graphics and elements to reveal information about that character in a stylistic way

④ Cartoon is talking - most of the car is empty train stops & shows an ad outside the window

What do we do with our work? Illustrations? Comics? Mashups - where two or more recognizable elements from different sources combine like the Star Wars cast drawn as the Peanuts gang. It's sort of like a little joke and if you get the references in one... that's great. If you get the references in both, then strengthens the work even more. It draws the audience in more to the world of the artist and gives them a little insight into their life.

in that one, the ent sexy gets turned into a small mashup of some sort - Hello Kitty clothes racker or something

page

images / movement
There are... so many different little things fans do that you almost can't... categorize, you know? It's an endless path of discovery, through shared content, through content that... many people recognize. It's a way of showing off what you can do or the ideas you come up with, and having an audience who is already pre-situated in that fandom space, you're more likely to reach more people with your work, whether it's making illustrations, prints for t-shirts, designing a font, turning characters into... jellybean versions of themselves and noting what flavor they'd be. It's like the ultimate marketing versus the ultimate communal expressive community.

sound
Crayon

Picspams are a way that fans can play with graphics and visual narrative without having to draw things. People make icons and banners for forums too.

Possible cut - not sure how I can make this clear.

Reasonably important to mention though...

There's a lot going on behind even some of the simplest works of fanart. Sometimes it's just a "oh... I wonder what this character would look like if they were the opposite sex" and you know, the artist draws that corresponding body and redesigns the outfit and we... get to see a visualization of their curiosity that we might not have any other way. But more than that, we see a comment on things that might be missing in a show. More female representation, minority representation. Why not challenge the norms we're given?

② Cartoon is on the train maybe one of the people sitting next to him is rule 72 cosplay

Anime/manga style! it's really dynamic, it's all about harmony of shapes and exaggeration.

The background characters "power up" and prepare to fight - the boy turning into a typical shonen-style protagonist and the female, a magical-girl genre heroine

I draw my favourite characters doing things they wouldn't normally do in the series. Sometimes I just wanted to be funny and put the characters in kind of joke situations, because they might be very serious characters and I wanted to lighten the mood a little bit.

Ink.

Ink splotches.

I just like to see things cute... I like... y'know, cute colours, cute styles... Nice... colour combinations, soft shapes. I like to make characters fun and cute - especially when they aren't fun and cute characters to begin with, they're like the bad guys or something. I think it makes more people like shows and things that they might not like otherwise.

③ Pls chibi talks maybe a more violent character walks into view instead then (something recognizable like freddie kreuger) WEREWOLF.
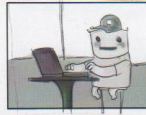
Graphic: Vector based, flat, strong images, usually made with a bit of flair for graphic design. Full on graphic minimalism. It challenges you to think about how characters can be represented using the least colours and elements, but leaves them 100% readable. It's a homage and it's a challenge.

Raster-based, sprite based style... Retro - that kind of lo-fi look that you get on handheld games or games from childhood, that sort of thing. Creating art in this style, it's like saying "This is something I like now, and it's referencing something close to me from my past, or something I think is graphically... awesome"

As there is little outside animation due to the close cut, perhaps there is some game light and animation flashing on Pixel's face from the screen.
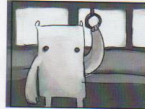
A cartoon style, for example, can draw on a number of inspirations, from animation to comic art - usually indie comics or cartoon-style comics. There is a lot of personal style and flexibility that goes into the cartoon style because it really follows your own visual conventions.

① Cartoon is on train.
② Cartoon is talking and people beside him have newspapers open, see into "fan art" and "funnies" open

Traditional art. Which has more of a collectible nature to it and references niche crafts like paper dioramas, knitting, painting.

Cutting out.

Scissor sounds.

The anime/manga style, based off the immensely popular manga comics and animations that were adopted by the West from Japan in the late eighties onwards. Basically, big, stylized eyes, small mouth, simplified face shape, highly sylized hair and dynamic poses.

.... are both squashed by a giant mecha foot.
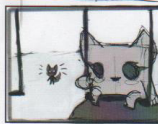
The chibi style kinda came out of the anime/manga style. It was like... a fun way of exaggeration situations where a character feels a certain way really strongly and that was made fun of in the show. Then it sorta became a style on it's own.

Zines were a collaboration of comment, art and literature that started off mainly in the sci-fi fandoms, and grew from there. But then the internet came along :laughs:and that was that. Why send to an audience you have to wait for, when you can have responses immediately on deviantart or tumblr.

Traditional is knitting... maybe a few balls of wool at their feet.

add knitting needle clicking sounds.

WHY CREATE FAN ART?

Cartoon

Cartoon is the more political one who often talks about the rights of minorities and the good that fanart can do for them. Straight talking, but not preachy.

images / movement	sound
It's mostly about... enjoyment. You know, enjoyment of the media, enjoyment of the... the world. Enjoyment of... making something yourself that speaks both to the show and through it.	Cartoon is on a train. Going to a convention possibly. Maybe there is advertising on the train. Thus many can them different ppl reacting evenly

images / movement	sound
There are so many fan work practices to choose from that can play on any talent or interest a you might have. There are so many ways to express yourself. Even if you just look at fan art, I mean, there's whether you draw traditionally or digitally, whether your fan art is static or if it's animated. If it's an illustration, or a puppet, or a gif. Fan art is one of the best places to start in fandom, because it's where you get the widest range of expression from probably the widest range of fans.	

Graphic

Straight up and serious. Graphic's answers are short and precise and almost have a business-like tone to them.

images / movement	sound
-Pixel: It's an interpretation... -Graphic: Yeah, it's our interpretation; It's our vision of that world. It's how we perceive the story and the characters based on 'canon'. -Graphic: And that's a very special, very unique thing, because people are always going to perceive a different way.	

-Pixel: It's an interpretation...

-Pixel: That's the legit story...

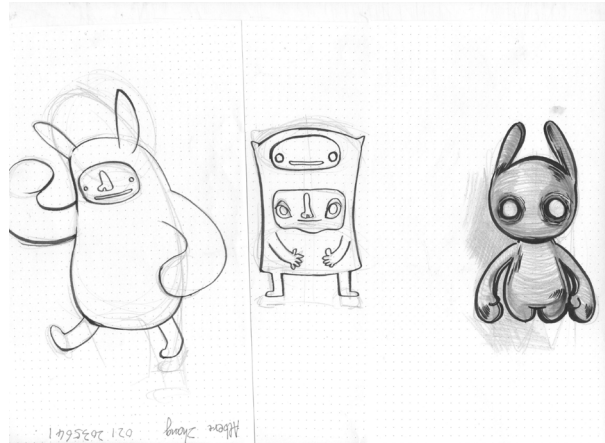Shot is two quick cuts intersecting with Graphic's speech.

Work Book: Stage Four
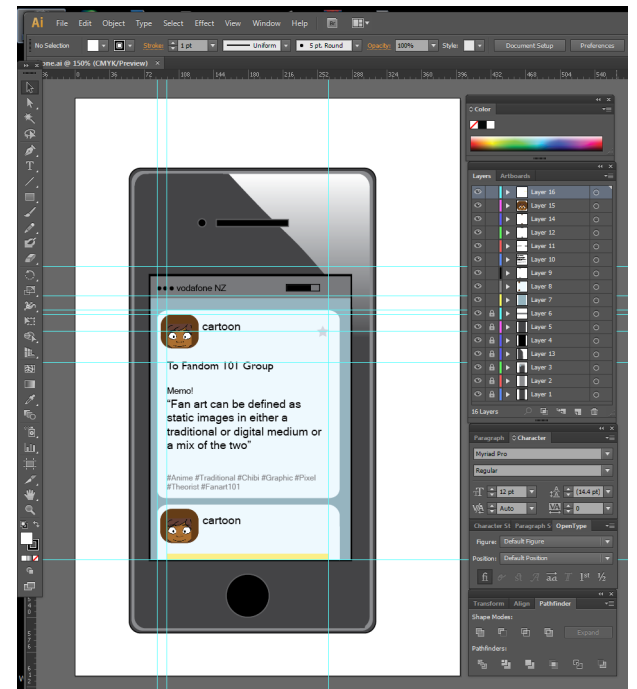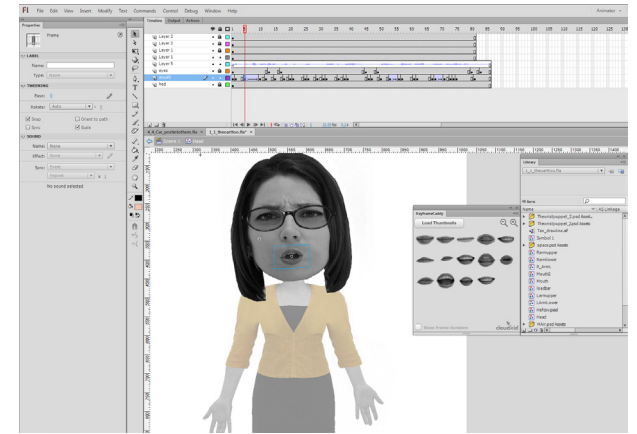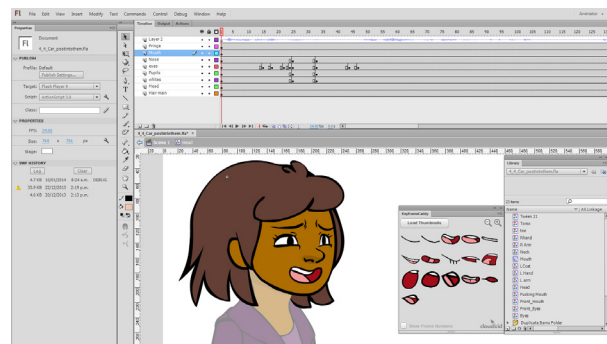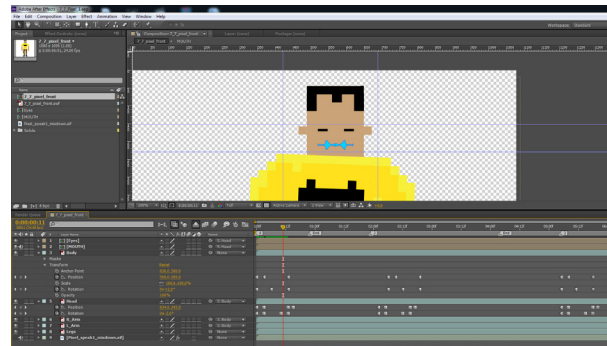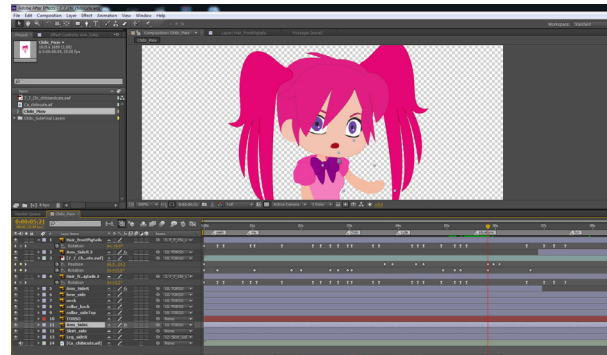
Final designs in the animation process
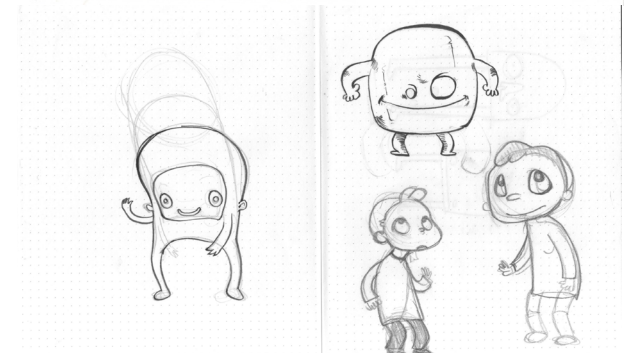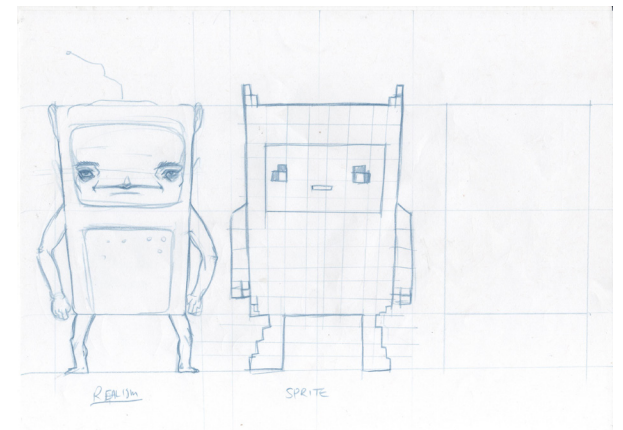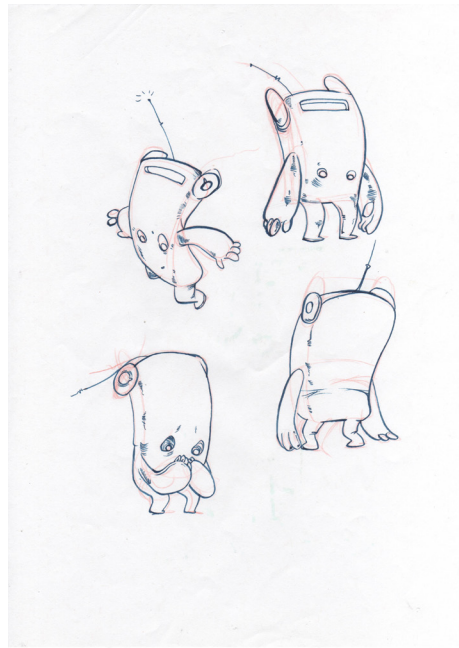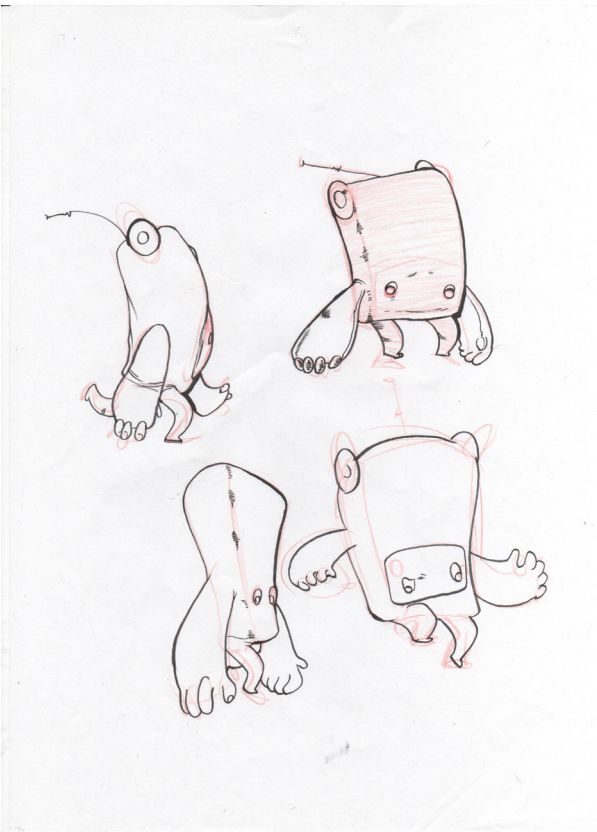
Character Design
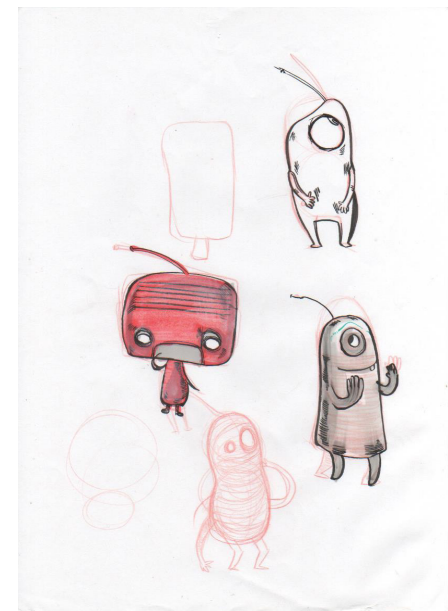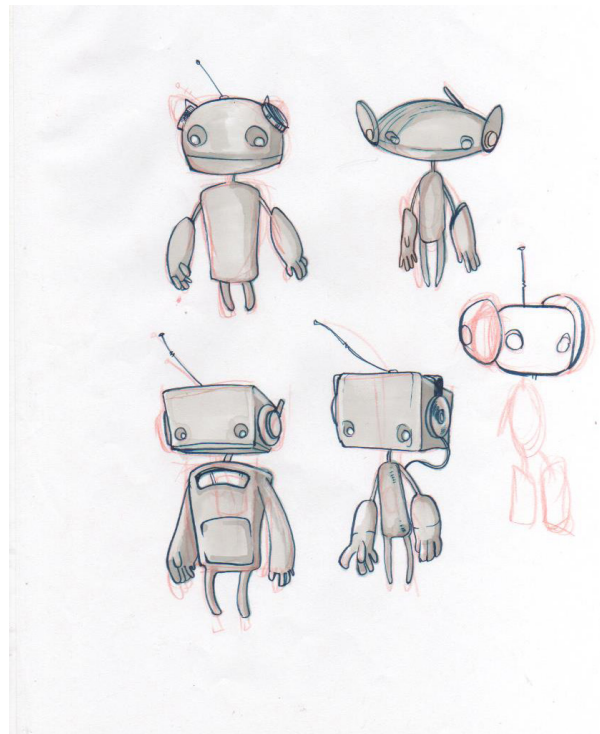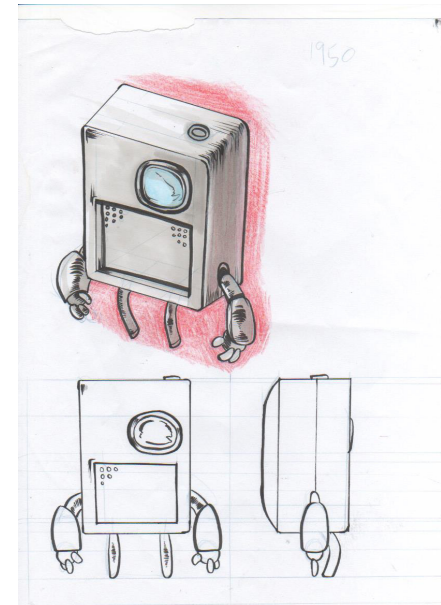
Text labels visible on sketches:

NORMAL
TRADITIONAL / VECTOR

CHIBI

ANIME

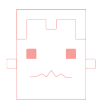REALISM

SPRITE
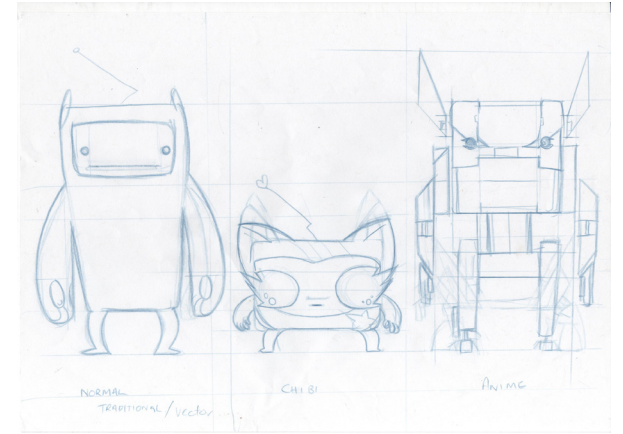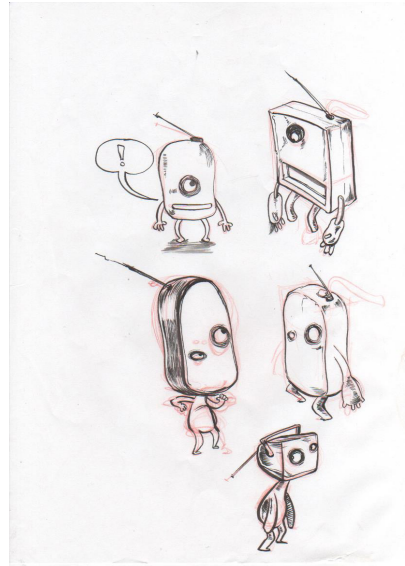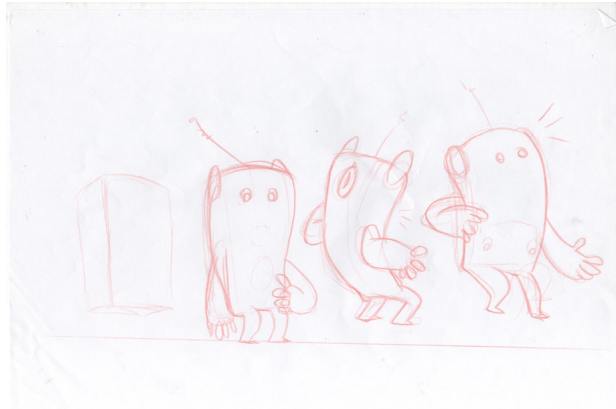
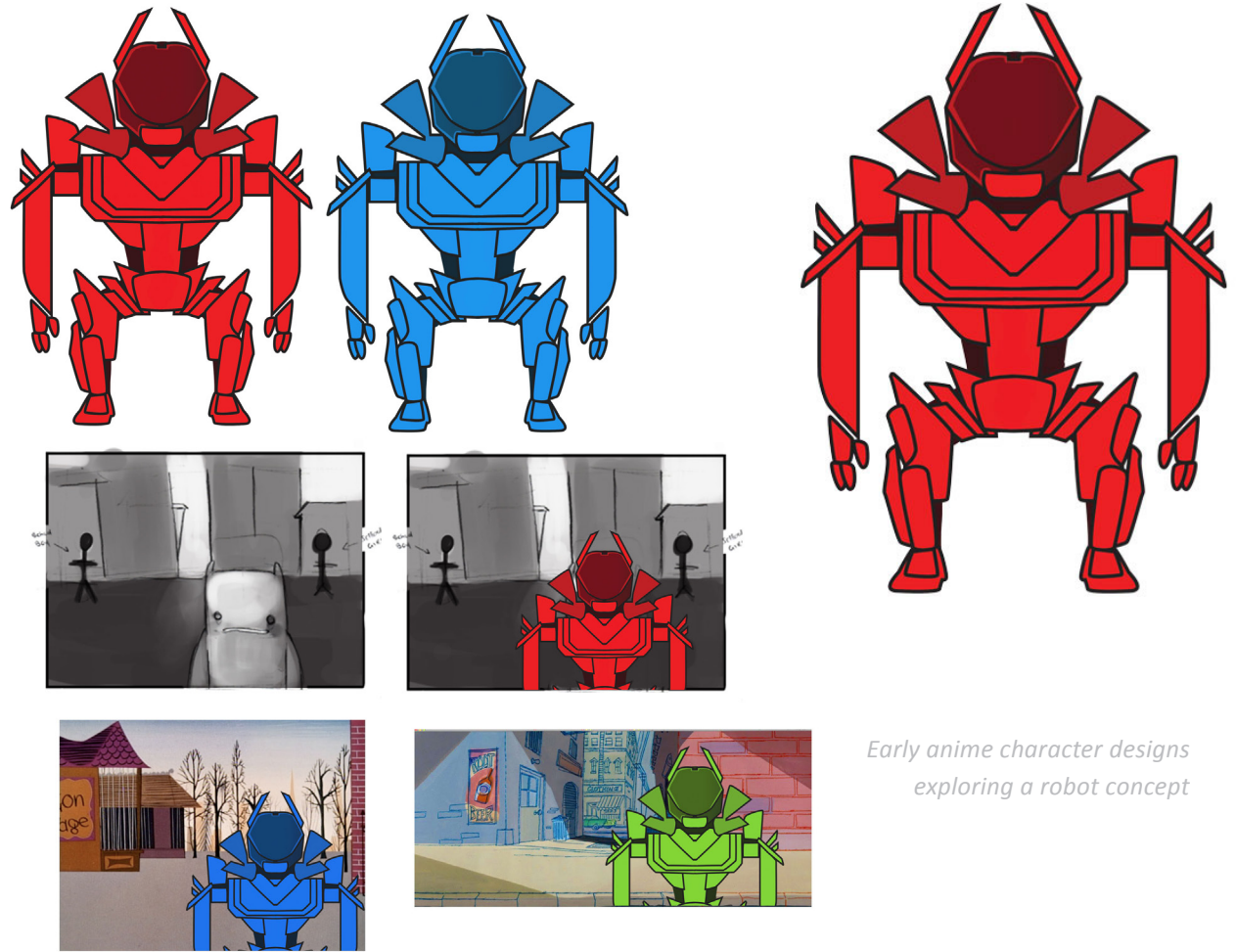*Early fan character designs exploring the transistor concept*
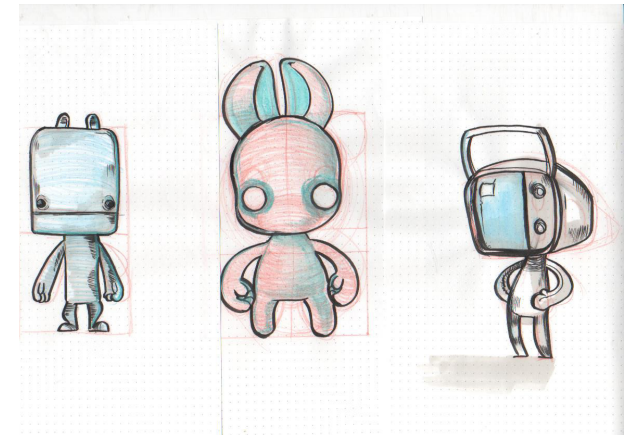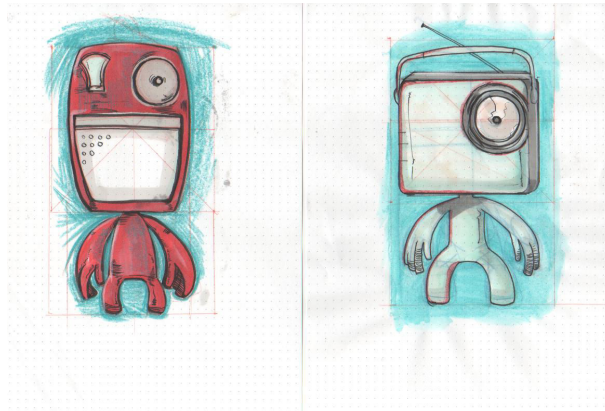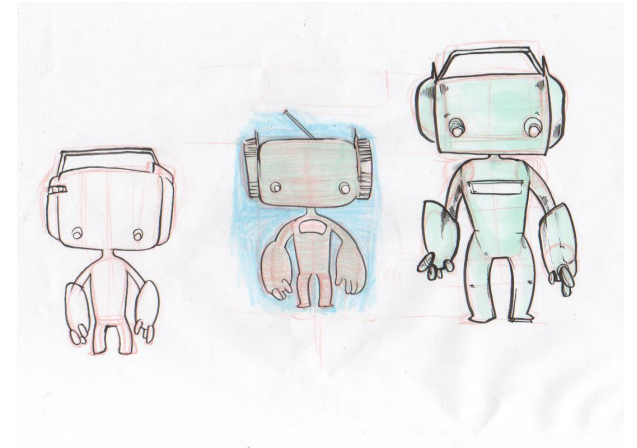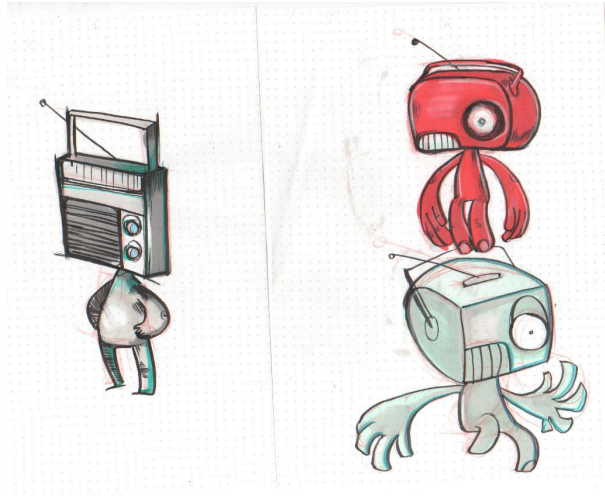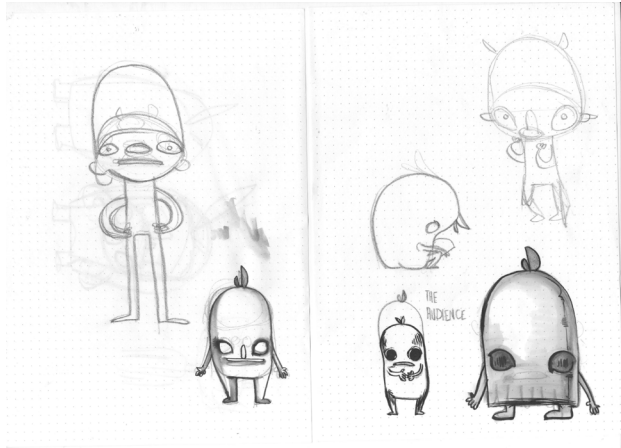
Early fan character designs exploring the transistor concept

Anime

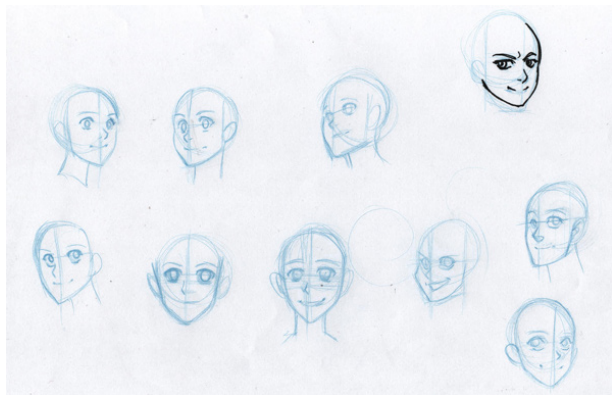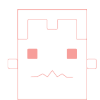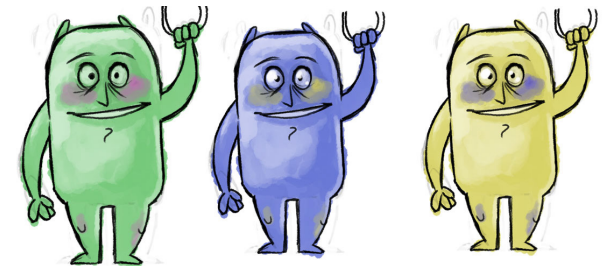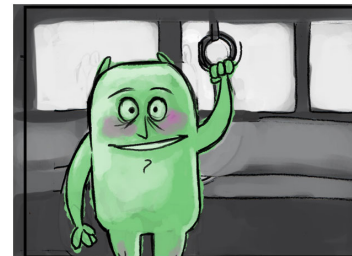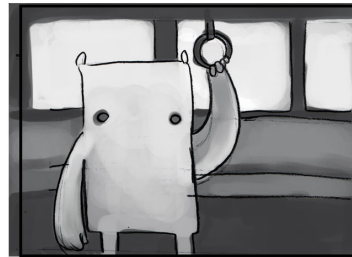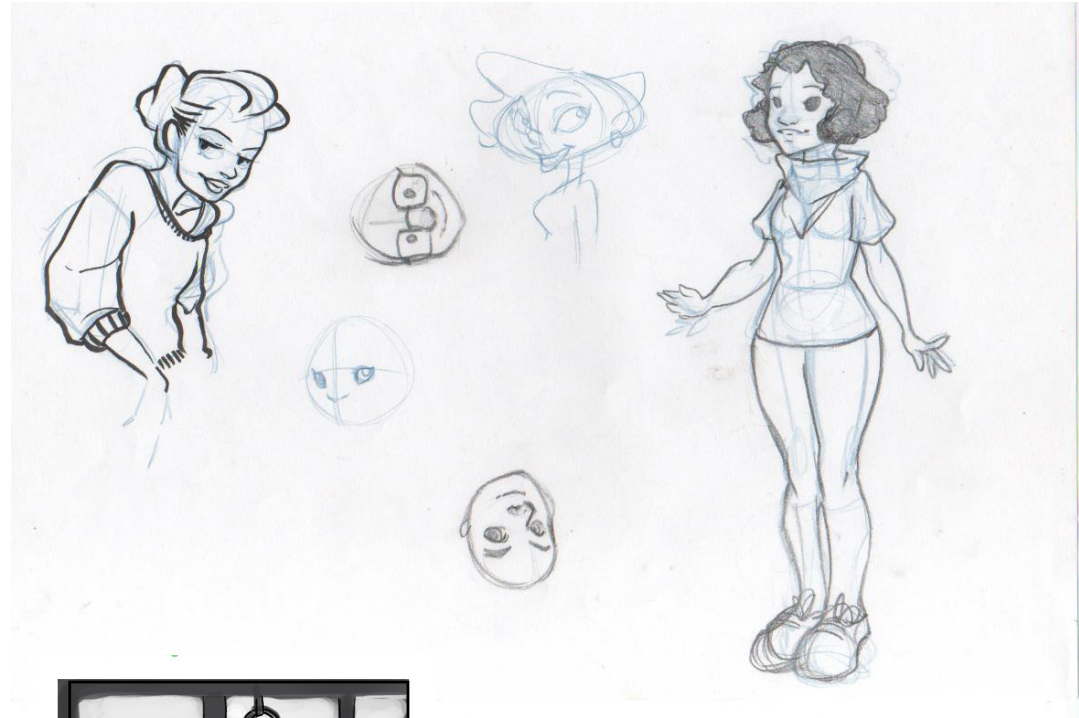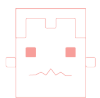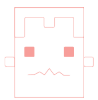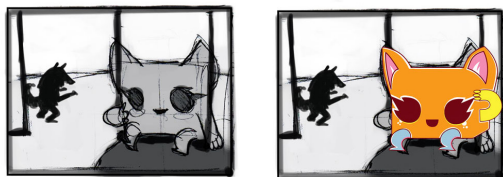*Early anime character designs exploring a robot concept*

Cartoon

Chibi

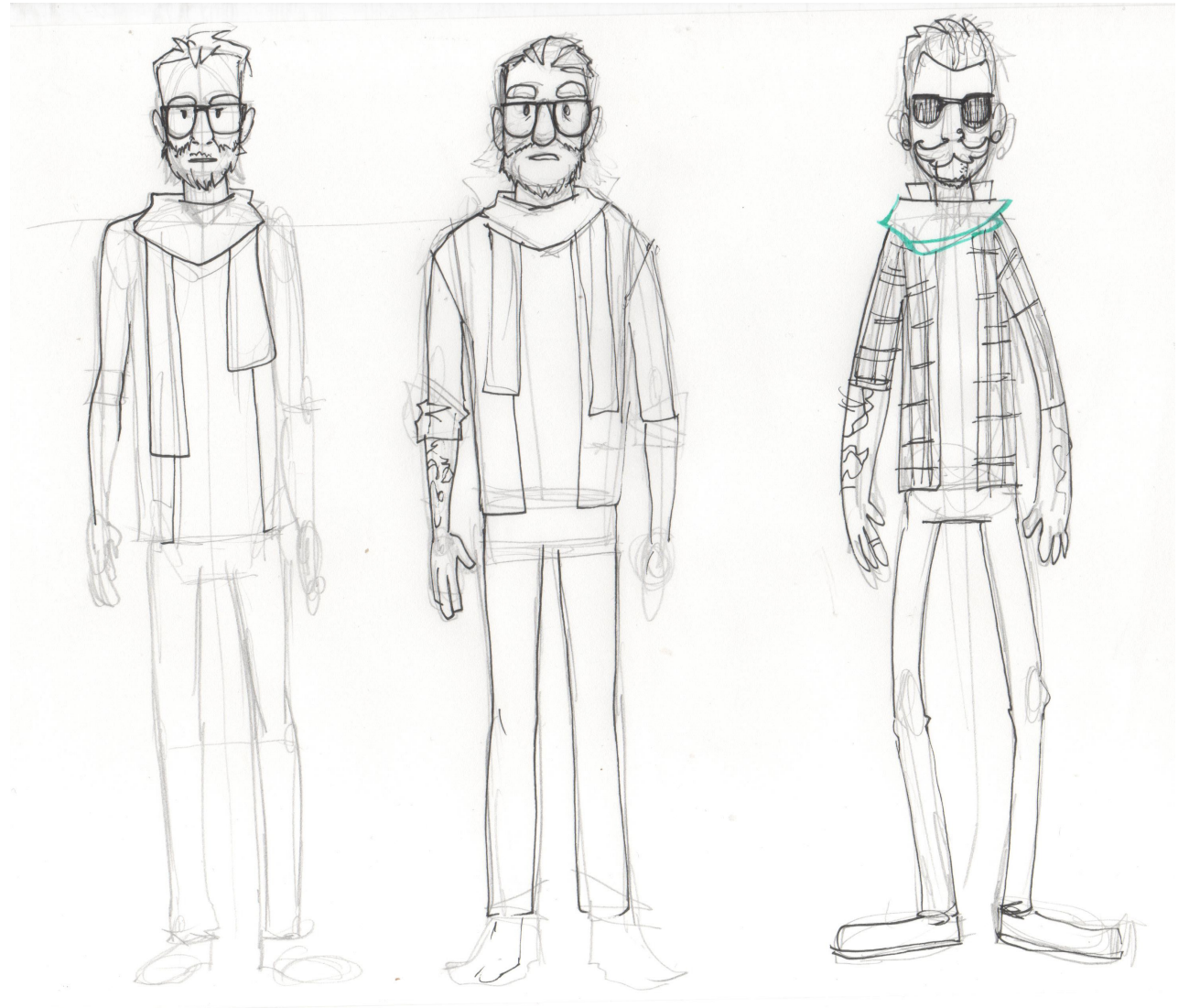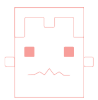*Early Chibi designs exploring the transistor concept*

HAIR TURNS INTO DAGGERS
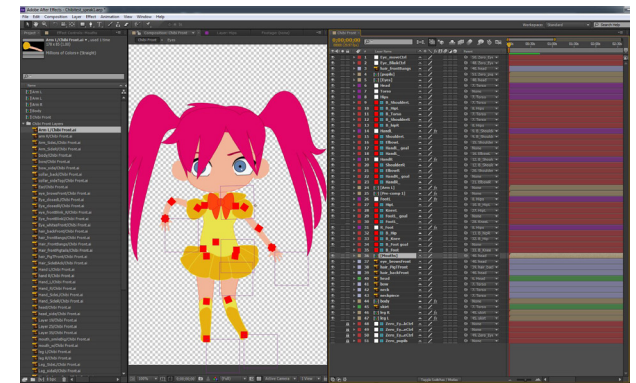
First animation puppet in After Effects

Graphic

Pixel
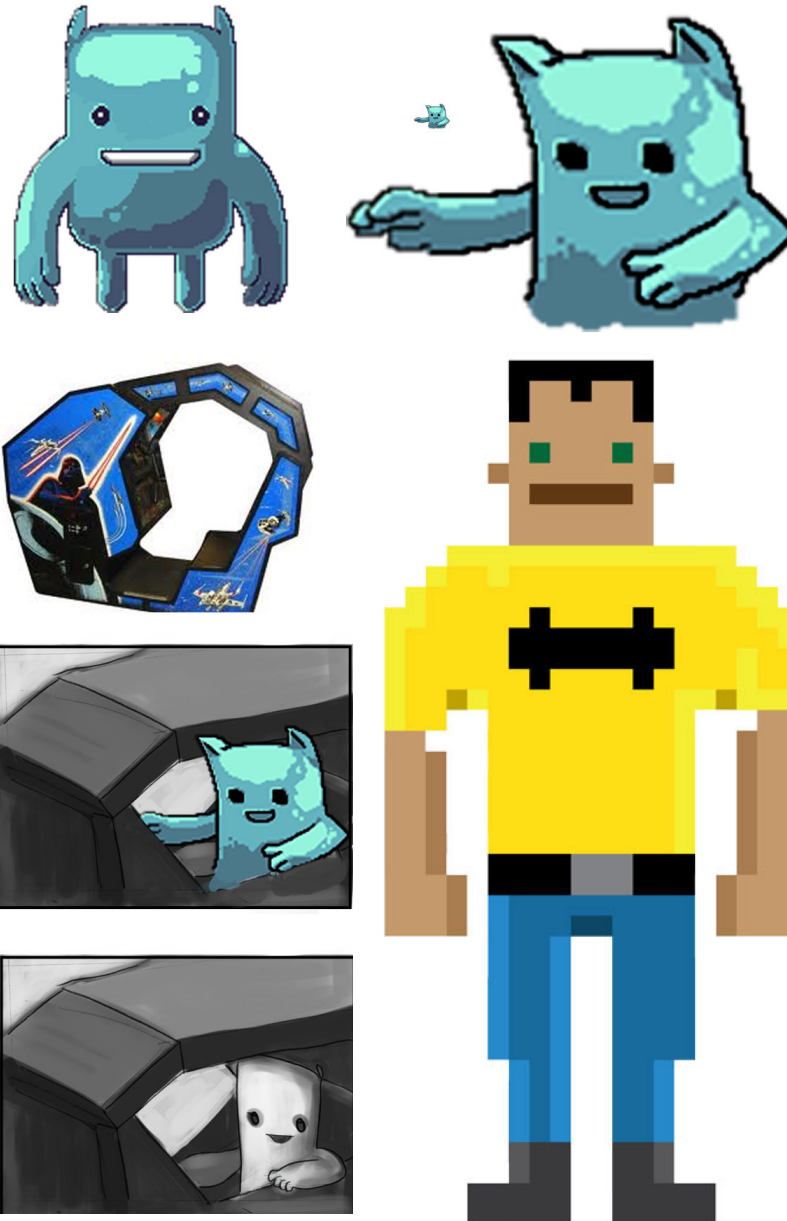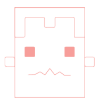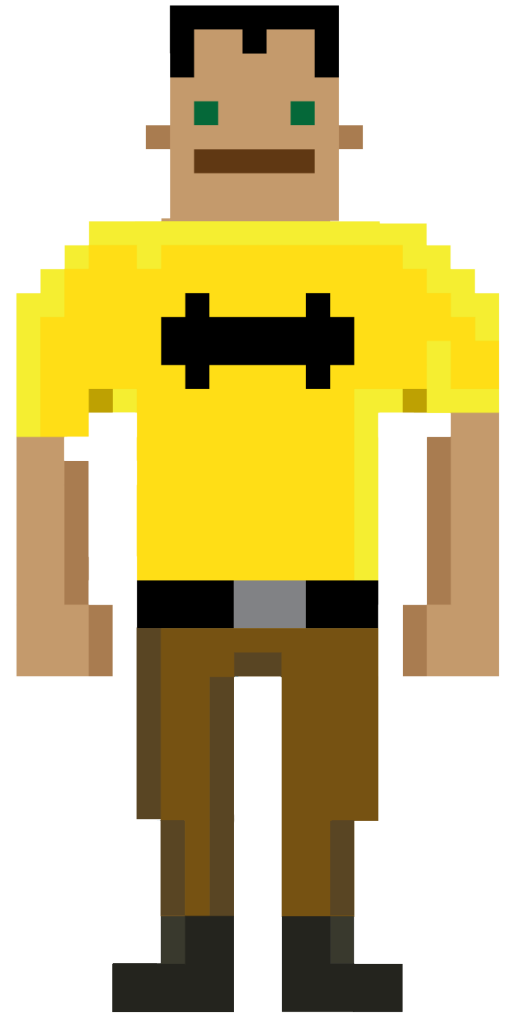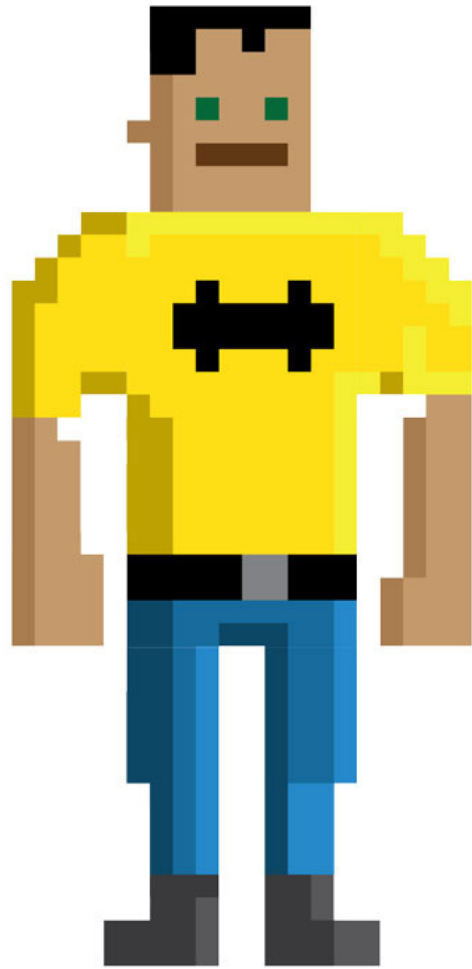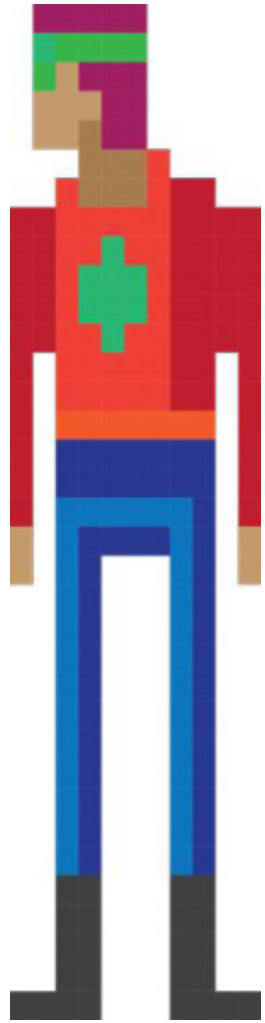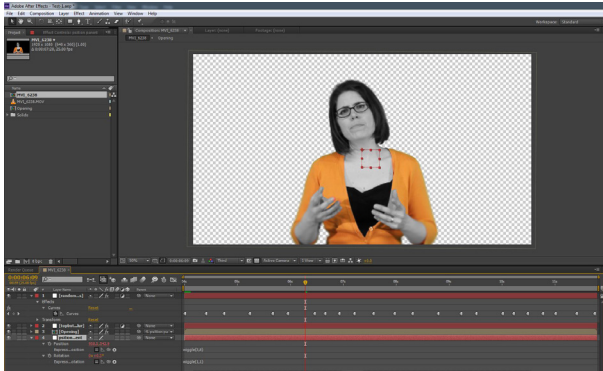
Theorist

Photo shoots for the Theorist character

First animation puppet in After Effects

Traditional
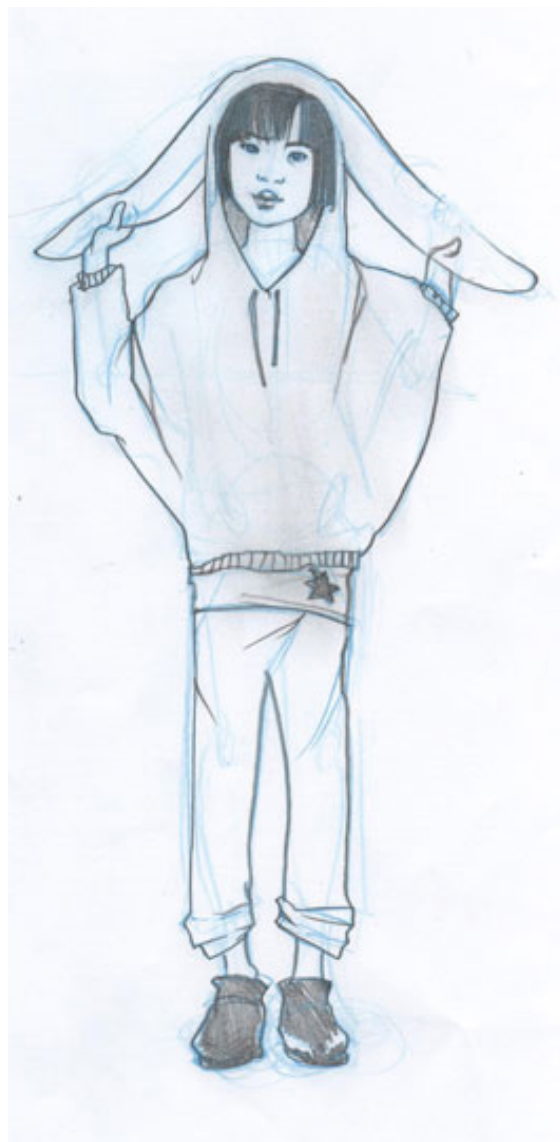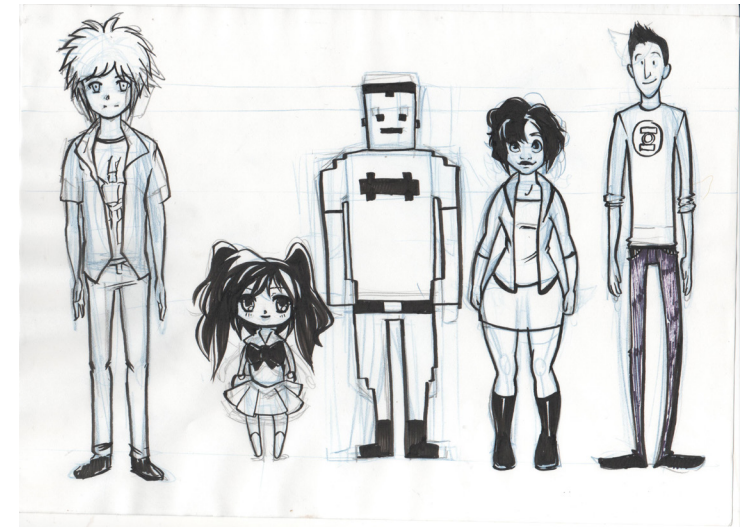
First cast line up

Environment

Appendix Two: The Script

Fan Art 101 Introduction

Action takes place in a small lecture theatre with a small data projector where Cartoon is taking their student forum "Fandom 101". Last week the group learned about the types of different fans and fandoms, this week they're learning about different fan activities. Today they are learning about Fan art.

While the group is supposed to be introductory, it has attracted a number of fans already participating in fandoms - Theorist being the only outsider. While Cartoon is supposed to lead the lecture, it tends to end up as more of a debate.

Cartoon: (F) The leader of the discussion, Cartoon appreciates fan art for its diversity, creativity and accessibility. Cartoon is more of an "everyone can get along" kind of person.

Traditional: (F) the know-it-all, slightly bitter one who resents all forms of digital fan art - especially anime manga - because she feels they have steam-rolled the fan art world and cheapened it with their copy-cat styles and annoying, juvenile fans. Reminisces of the past quite a lot.

Graphic: (M) The cool guy. He almost doesn't realize he's creating fan art because designing representations of his favourite characters in trendy, sophisticated ways is just second nature to him. While he supports fan art, he is frustrated with artists who choose to show *pairings*/*ships*, and ignore *canon* for their own fannish enjoyment.

Pixel: (M) Usually sleeping. He's interested in the course, but pays attention selectively. He speaks in computer tones with subtitles to help the audience understand him.

Chibi: (F) Small, squeaky and shy to begin with, she supports Anime because she also comes from that genre. When Traditional starts challenging Anime, she's the first to leap in and back him up.

Anime: (M) The popular one. He's well aware of her presence on the internet and is trying to be cool about it, though it's clear he's happy that he's quite a dominant presence on popular fan art gallery websites.

Theorist: (F) A Non-fan artist. Theorist is very interested in why fans get together and share that way and what they get out of it. She's an illustrator and an academic. She asks most of the intelligent questions as the others bicker. She has no bias to either side, nor does she favour original art to fan art.

Fanart 101.

Scene opens to Cartoon at the podium shuffling her notes. The theatre is in darkness.

The projector is on and blank.

Cartoon

Hi guys! Welcome back to fandom 101,

which I like to call... Fun - oh -one!

(pauses for effect. There is no reaction)

(clears throat)

Last week, we focused on the different types of fans and fandoms, finishing with fandoms on

the internet.

(behind her, the project shows the images of music fans, sports and pop culture fans)

Today, we'll be looking into "fan art".

(there are a few murmurings of interest. Theorist puts up her hand)

Theorist

Is fan art when people dress up like a character?

At those sci-fi conventions and things?

Anime

No, that's cosplay. Fan art is art.

Theorist

What? But costume is art too... Where do you draw the line?

Cartoon

How about I-

Graphic

She's right, you've got to make it clear 'cause you've got 2D art, 3D, Traditional, Digital...

Chibi

(Pops up, the background behind him turning into a random pattern)

Yeah! Then animations and stuff... that's all "art" too, right?

Cartoon

Yes! Yes... That's all very true. All right. So as I was saying, we're looking at a particular slice of fan art today, which is fan art on the internet.

(pulls up her first slide, a picture of some fan art - or a collage)

Now, fan art itself can generally be defined as-

Anime

(reading off a piece of paper)

"Static images in either a traditional, digital medium - or a mix of the two". Thanks. We got the memo.

Traditional

Pff, "digital". I remember back in the day when we had to design our own fanzines all by hand and actually send them out to our fandoms.

With stamps. And envelopes. I remember when we used to actually talk to peop-

Cartoon

(Talks over Traditional, ignoring her)

Now as we discussed last week, fans aren't always passive observers, some like to create responses to the media they view in order to share their opinions or passions.

(slides change to a small Venn diagram showing opinion and passion - something ridiculously vague)

Theorist

(raising a brow as she studies the diagram)

But why? Why do they feel the need to do this?

Anime

Why wouldn't you want to?

Let's say the latest episode of the show you're addicted to is really awesome - you wanna talk about it with other people who like it too, right?

Theorist

Well, yes. I suppose s-

Graphic

And if you're in that show's fandom, you're immediately checking your blogroll to see what other people say about it…

Chibi

(Jumping in to support anime)

You might start drawing a picture to comment on the episode-

Anime

-then you post that picture, or comic strip, or whatever… You post it online, tag it, and then other fans can view it and comment on it. Kinda join in the fun with you. That's fandom.

Traditional

(snickers)

What about the thousands of little fangirls and boys who post up complete shit and call it fanart? The ones who just trace over images so they get the best likeness, or just plain can't draw worth a damn? There should be rules against them.

Cartoon

Er, we're not talking so much about the skill-

Traditional

I remember when we used to do everything by hand. There was no Photoshop, no colorists or tracers.

Theorist

(To Traditional)

Does that mean making copies of existing art? Like, doing a pencil sketch of an official photo?

Graphic

(Loser-coughs "MS PAINT")

Cartoon

Some artists do choose that approach, and its still fanart, regardless. But many fans grow from that stage and adapt existing material to their own technique. My cartoon style for instance-

(cut to a picture on the projector)

- mixes a number of toon and comic influences, but it isn't from a style that has become a category on it's own, like anime and manga.

Pixel

(wakes up)

Or, like, pixel sprites and game art.

Cartoon

Generally, online communities create their own categories and people post into them.

Then it's kind of up to the majority rule.

Graphic

Too bad though. We do need less of that hentai crap.

(Characters are in silhouette against the screen, Mystery Science Theatre 3000 style)

Anime

'Scuse me? Don't talk about my subgenres like they're what my

style is all about! Damn elitist!

Graphic

Hey, I'm calling it as I see it. If it's not sex and tentacles, it's big-eyed, big-breasted schoolgirls

looking all stupid and "moe"-

Chibi

Shut up! It is not!

Graphic

Or stupid little squat things they call "chibi",

Like big bobble heads are cute.

Chibi

You're asking for it.

Graphic

Actually, some fan art just makes me hate the original series.

Drawing Tony Stark and Loki as a couple? What the hell!?

Cartoon

OK, OK, can we get back to the topic? That's an observation,

I'd like to discuss in point five.

(She motions to the projector again, where "Point Five: Fandom Slash in Fan art" depicts two

Stormtroopers from Star Wars making out.)

Graphic

If I was the canon creator and people slashed my characters in fan art, I would be so pissed off.

Anime

Really? Maybe your fans were annoyed that you don't include gay representation. Y'know, 'cos

there's so much out there supporting that community.

Graphic

(Dismissively)

Meh, all those yaoi-obsessed fangirls are freaky.

Traditional

Or those people who pair two characters who barely share a single shot in the film. Leia and Admiral Ackbar, anyone?

(The projector flicks over to show the couple or "pairing")

All

(Disgusted)

Eeeeew!!

(Scene pops back to reality)

Anime

(Deadpan)

Oh wow. Yep, good one guys. You totally hit the nail on the head there. So fan art is all crappy art, slashing characters and basically just raping canon.

Graphic

Whatever! It takes a lot of skill and fandom genius to make shit hot graphic design fan art! Fan posters and minimalist print designs are always used as examples of Geek Chic for non-fans, not like your crap...

(Anime, Chibi, Traditional and Graphic all continue arguing in the background)

Theorist

(Looks at cartoon, mystified and concerned)

A raping canon?!

Cartoon

Er, "Raping Canon"... Uh… Changing the legitimate story without any consideration to the original sequence of events or character relationships. It's one of the biggest complaints about fan works.

Theorist

Wait... So some people think the series creator would be insulted by fans responding artistically? Participating? Are these fans or non-fans saying this?

Cartoon

You get your "purists" who hate any changes to the canon story and characters. Then you get the non-fans who just don't understand fanworks at all.

Theorist

So many fans just want to see illustrations of the original work, not criticisms of, or reactions to it?

Cartoon

Exactly.

Anime

Which is dumb, cos, If you ask me, that's the point of fanart!

Chibi

Yeah! My fanart is drawing serious characters in funny situations - especially characters from live action fandoms.

Pixel

Yeah bro, fan art's got like this little "nudge nudge, wink wink" in-joke thing. A lotta the time, I find I like the show more because of this stuff.

Anime

It's like having an instant audience because if you draw fanart of a popular show or a popular character or couple, people are gonna look at it.

Graphic

Some people call that pandering.

Anime

Some people should shut up.

Theorist

Hmm, OK. So really, fans draw fan art because...

(lists off on her fingers)

One, It's fun, it gives a sense of artist community, there's a sort of learning experience,

practicing skills, exploring alternative plot lines.

And two, it's entertainment, comment, community and creativity-

Cartoon

Yes! Precisely!

Theorist

So if I wanted to become part of a fan art community, what would I do?

Traditional

Well, for starters, set yourself up a live journ-

Anime

(snorts)

Whatever! Go to deviantart!

Graphic

(says this as if he's suggesting a fine wine)

Ya-huh, direct her straight to the fandom toilet.

Good one. What you want, my friend, is a Tumblr

Chibi

Pixiv is good too!

Cartoon

Here, let me load it for you.

(tries to go to DA on the lectern computer)

Just give it a second…

Chibi

Go join, load some art, browse the popular tags and leave a few comments! You'll soon make a few friends!

Cartoon

It's just coming up now guys…

Chibi

Hey, you know this discussion's got me really fired up to do a big collab with all of our different styles. Anyone interested?

Anime

Sure, why not? Which fandom?

Pixel

How about Game of Thrones? That fandom needs some cheering up. *(they start to leave)*

Cartoon

Ok guys, almost there.

94%... 96%.... ok!

Guys?

(Theorist, sitting alone in the theatre, claps)

(Fade)

Massey University

Te Kunenga ki Pūrehuroa

**NOTIFICATION OF LOW RISK RESEARCH/EVALUATION
INVOLVING HUMAN PARTICIPANTS**

(All notifications are to be typed)
(Do not modify the content or formatting of this document in any way)

SECTION A:

1. **Project Title**   No Couch Potatoes: A Pop-Through Visualisation of Fan Practice

Projected start date   10/05/2013   25/02/2014
for data collection   **Projected end date**

(Low risk notifications will not be processed if recruitment and/or data collection has already begun.)

2. **Applicant Details** *(Select the appropriate box and complete details)*

ACADEMIC STAFF NOTIFICATION

Full Name of Staff Applicant/s

School/Department/Institute

Region *(mark one only)*   Albany   Palmerston North   Wellington
Telephone   Email Address

STUDENT NOTIFICATION

Full Name of Student Applicant   Claire Hackett
Postal Address   62 Totara Road, Miramar, Wellington
Telephone   027 626 6122   **Email Address**   chackettout@gmail.com
Employer (if applicable)
Full Name of Supervisor(s)   Caroline Campbell, Gray Hodgkinson
School/Department/Institute   Institute of Communication Design
Region *(mark one only)*   Albany   Palmerston North   Wellington   X
Telephone   04 801 5799   **Email Address**   contact@massey.ac.nz

GENERAL STAFF NOTIFICATION

Full Name of Applicant

Section

Region *(mark one only)*   Albany   Palmerston North   Wellington
Telephone   Email Address

Full Name of Line Manager

Section

Telephone   **Email Address**

3   **Type of Project** *(provide detail as appropriate)*

Staff Research/Evaluation:		Student Research:		If other, please specify:
Academic Staff		**Name of Qualification**	**197.800 Design Thesis**	
General Staff		**Credit Value of Research**	**120**	
Evaluation		**(e.g. 30, 60, 90, 120, 240, 360)**		

4.   **Describe the process that has been used to discuss and analyse the ethical issues present in this project.**
(Please refer to the Low Risk Guidelines on the Massey University Human Ethics Committee website)
I have spoken with my supervisors and have read the information present on the Massey University Human Ethics website.

5.   **Summary of Project**

   Please outline the following (in no more than 200 words):

      1.   **The purpose of the research, and**

      2.   **The methods you will use.**

The purpose of my research is to engage an audience outside of pop-culture fandoms, revealing the practices that fans undertake to create transformative works and enlighten non-fans of the creativeness found within these suubculture social networks.

I will be conducti ng an anonymous, web-based survey, targeting a particular fan-based audience of a Western Comics, Pop-culture, genre.
The survey will collect information regarding activities associated with the respondent's chosen fandoms, in the form of fanfiction, fan art, meta, role-playing, figure collecting and other specific, fan-based practices. No personal information that would identify the respondent, the respondent's work or online handle will be collected, the survey will be entirely anonymous.

Please submit this Low Risk Notification (<u>with the completed Screening Questionnaire</u>) to:

   The Ethics Administrator
   Research Ethics Office
   Courtyard Complex, PN221
   Massey University
   Private Bag 11 222

Palmerston North

ACADEMIC STAFF RESEARCH
Declaration for Academic Staff Applicant
I have read the Code of Ethical Conduct for Research, Teaching and Evaluations involving Human Participants. I understand my obligations and the rights of the participants. I agree to undertake the research as set out in the Code of Ethical Conduct for Research, Teaching and Evaluations involving Human Participants. My Head of Department/School/Institute knows that I am undertaking this research.   The information contained in this notification is to the very best of my knowledge accurate and not misleading.

Staff Applicant's Signature _____ Date: _____

STUDENT RESEARCH
Declaration for Student Applicant
I have read the Code of Ethical Conduct for Research, Teaching and Evaluations involving Human Participants and discussed the ethical analysis with my Supervisor. I understand my obligations and the rights of the participants. I agree to undertake the research as set out in the Code of Ethical Conduct for Research, Teaching and Evaluations involving Human Participants. The information contained in this notification is to the very best of my knowledge accurate and not misleading.

Student Applicant's Signature   Date: 25/04/2013
_____   _____

Declaration for Supervisor
I have assisted the student in the ethical analysis of this project.   As supervisor of this research I will ensure that the research is carried out according to the Code of Ethical Conduct for Research, Teaching and Evaluations involving Human Participants.

Supervisor's Signature   Date: 27/04/2013
_____   _____
Print Name   Gray Hodgkinson

GENERAL STAFF RESEARCH/EVALUATIONS
Declaration for General Staff Applicant
I have read the Code of Ethical Conduct for Research, Teaching and Evaluations involving Human Participants and discussed the ethical analysis with my Supervisor. I understand my obligations and the rights of the participants. I agree to undertake the research as set out in the Code of Ethical Conduct for Research, Teaching and Evaluations involving Human Participants. The information contained in this notification is to the very best of my knowledge accurate and not misleading.

General Staff Applicant's Signature _____ Date: _____

Declaration for Line Manager
I declare that to the best of my knowledge, this notification complies with the Code of Ethical Conduct for Research, Teaching and Evaluations involving Human Participants and that I have approved its content and agreed that it can be submitted.

Line Manager's Signature _____ Date: _____

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Print Name

_____

The End