

Final Project: Metaphoric Convergence

Due 12/3/08

In our discussions of visual creativity, we've explored certain elements that seem to be present in the way successful visual artists view the world:

- They notice patterns of form, line, color, volume, visual rhythm, material, and other visual elements in their materials that have not been obvious to others
- They make visual analogies among things that may have no "logical" connection; and by discovering these visual connections, they force us to apply our logic in new ways
- They re-present these discoveries to us in a form that doesn't just inform us of the discovery but makes us share in the perceptual and emotional drama of the experience; sometimes that means moving outside of traditional art forms into new genres, mixed media, collaborative production, and so forth.
- They are "problem finders," not problem solvers: as Sawyer puts it, problem finding is when the problem is not known in advance, but emerges from the process of the work itself. They are always open to serendipity, randomness, and "happy accidents" and function in an improvisational way to move from the known to the unknown.
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In our final project, you are going to have an opportunity to stretch these elements of your visual creativity through a project involving what the writer and critic Lawrence Weschler calls "convergences." Most of Weschler's convergences are found visual similarities between visual artworks and images made in a different register: documentary photography, electron microscopy, film stills, advertisements, and so on. They are, he says, "uncanny moments...bizarre associations, eerie rhymes, whispered recollections—sometimes in the weirdest places...some were fanciful, others polemical; some merely silly, others almost transcendental."

In class we will look at some examples of how this process can work, and you can find others at the following address:

<http://mcsweeneys.net/books/everythingthatrises.contest.html>

Your assignment is to use your visual creativity to seek out examples of such convergences in your world, select the best pair, then provide a 1-2 page written commentary on how these images converge (include such details as where you found them, whose images they are if you did not take them, along with what it was that made you see them as related to each other). One or both of the images can be visual artworks, but they don't have to be! The images may be found images, or images you take yourself.

By Dec. 2, please send me jpegs of your convergences and tell me how you would like the shown to the class (side by side, sequentially, etc.). I will get them ready for presentation in class. You will give a brief in-class presentation on how you found them and how the images converge.

Your work will be graded on the quality of your written and oral presentations and on the care, thought and creativity that goes into selecting the images.