

WORKING TITLES

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Issue No. 02/2023:

COMPROMISED VISIONS:

“Lately, she’s been seeing
things differently”

Working Titles is an online journal for practice-based and led research initiated by students enrolled in the Ph.D. program for art and design at the Bauhaus-Universität Weimar. By “working titles” we hint at the journal’s main objectives: To serve as a platform for the presentation of research carried out through any practice – from oil painting to anarchist urban plumbing – and to facilitate the self-publishing of practice-based working papers. Contributors submit their contributions to a non-blind peer review by those they deem suitable, regardless of their academic affiliation, and based on friendship and trust.

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After 32

Brynn Higgins-Stirrup

Abstract

This visual essay is both a record of artistic process and an experimental visual history of optics between the 11th century, the beginnings of the study of optics, and today. It combines artwork, reference images, and poetic text to trace these two progressions, one intimate and creative, one historical and expansive, across time and space.

The essay follows the visual progress of a series of drawings created from hundreds of images culled from online searches to create a loose visual taxonomy of the history of sight. These reference images range from diagrams found in René Descartes's 1637 optics treatise *Dioptrics* to contemporary scientific visualizations of macaques' brains responding to visual stimuli.

Together these visual, referential, and textual elements become a constellation of pathways that create connection, clarity, and confusion in equal measure. Poetic text created by the artist intersperses the essay, plotting a course between the titles of culled reference images and their newly reimagined counterparts.

The purpose of this work is to play and reckon with the space between visual perception and representation. In this ambiguity there is a subversive progress, as the history of seeing is worked through and reimagined into a less linear, more expansive narrative.

1.

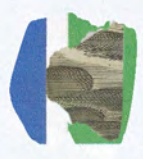


2. Juggler, Figure, and Ghost.
A Figure Figure. Fifteen. Perception. 116.

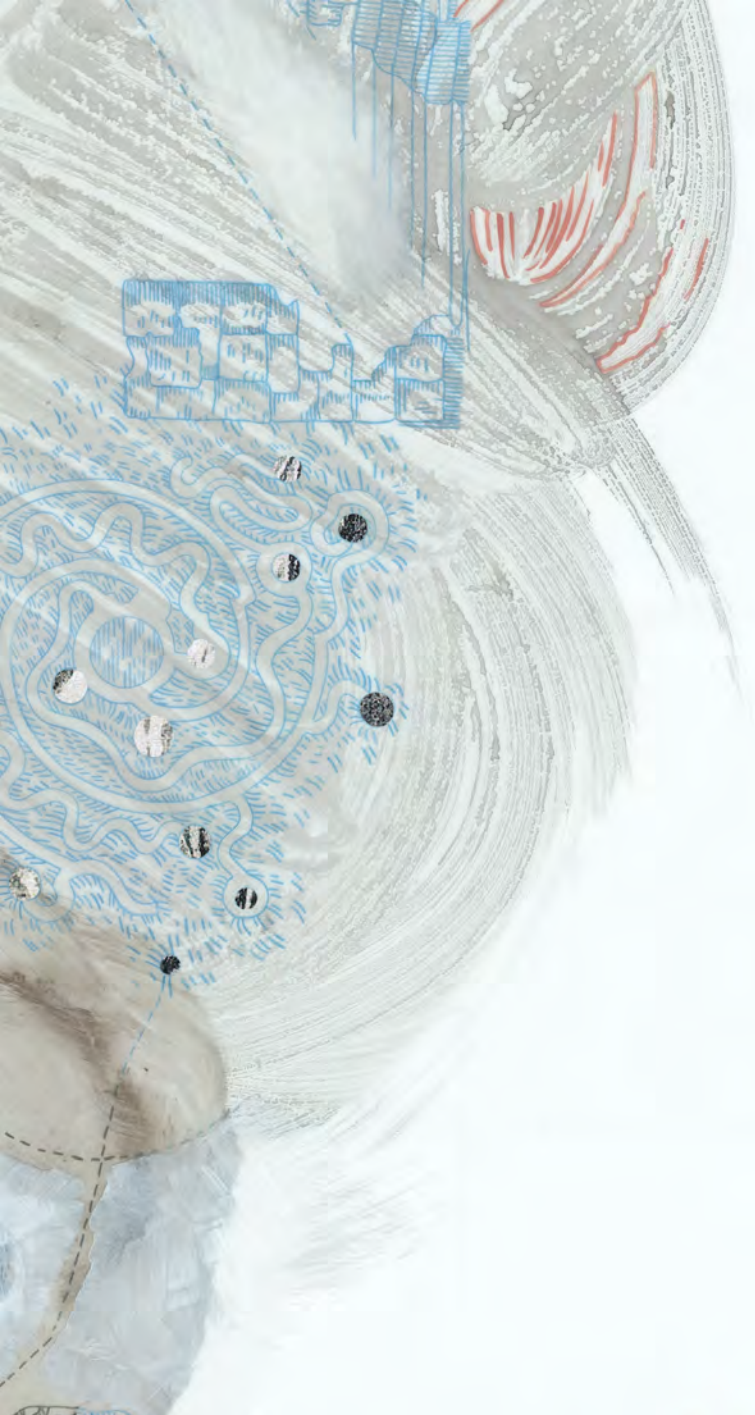
Over a Mapping Portfolio.
Under Sky Atlas. Lump Figure.

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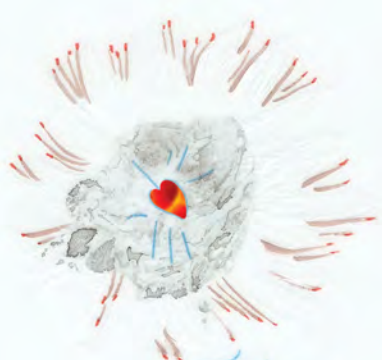
Figure Falling.
Neuroanatomy of Juggler.



Lobe



3.

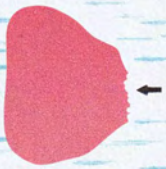


A



4.





5. 32. A Ghost. The Physical Weeping of Saint Visual Figure.
The Flowers of Surface. Second Image. Perception of Macaque.
Image and Study Book. Over Image of Early Sea.

Profile Study with Figure, Figure, and Head. Perception. Perception.
32.

His Early Portfolio.
Optical Structure, of, of...



6.

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ial field



7.



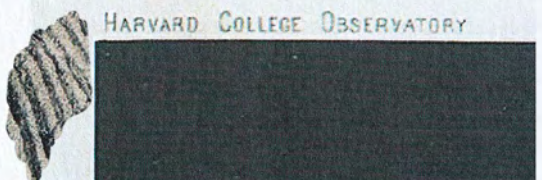
8.



Head Group. The Study.
Hanging Profile of Angel Hands.
Page Studies of Perfect Sky.
Night Figure Passing.



Veiled Visual.
Group Study of Weeping. A Head.



10.



End Notes

1. This essay was created between September 30th, 2022 and February 22nd, 2023. The earliest image referenced in the essay was created circa 1230 while the latest was produced in 2018. 788 years of time span between these two images, unknown miles span the space between them.
2. Juggler, Figure, and Ghost are three reference images that repeat across the essay. The Juggler was born around 1440 and lives in a herbal codex made from parchment in the British Library in London. The Figure was born in 1685 in Würzburg, Germany and lives in various locations. The Ghost was born in 1908 and currently lives in Bern, Switzerland.
3. A representation of the general size and shape of a macaque's brain.
4. After creating the drawing for this page I went back to try to find the reference image for the 39 below the 3. I never found it. A question mark remains around where this particular 39 came from.
5. The number 32 that repeats across the text comes from *Plate 32 of Urania's Mirror*, a hand-colored etching on paper from a set of celestial cards accompanied by a treatise on astronomy. The work was made in 1825 in the United Kingdom by Sidney Hall. Sidney died in 1831, six years after this plate was made. We now live in the time after his death.
6. Each page of this essay was created by drawing by hand, scanning the drawings, and digitally combining the drawings with layers of reference images and text. Layers of digital drawings were added and built up layers of reference images and text were erased to reveal the content below them. Each finished image was saved as a TIFF file and inserted into this document.
7. This particular page is made up of one drawing, 15 layered reference images, and one layer of text.
8. The drawings which serve as the foundation of this essay were created in 2019, in a studio filled with hot sun and dazzling light. They were made with a blue wax pencil, graphite, watercolor, and blackout ink. They were made standing up and sitting down.
9. One of the layers of this page is page 2 of two blank pages with a cyan printer head that likely needs to be cleaned.
10. The earliest image referenced on this particular page was created in 1453 while the latest was produced in 2013. 560 years of time span between these two images, unknown miles span the space between them.

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Brynn Higgins-Stirrup is a visual artist working in drawing and sculpture. Brynn's work explores drawing as a process that precedes knowledge, focusing on the visual and material histories of drawing and seeing as a means of contemplating their complexity. By framing the world, drawing makes us aware of the frame itself.

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