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Artist Statement and Research

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Another One

Alice in Wonderland by Lewis Carroll is a renowned fantasy adventure in which the impossible becomes possible and logic does not always apply. It is also the initial primary influence for *Another One*. Similar to *Alice in Wonderland*, *Another One* is a fantastical journey in which the world bends the confines of logic and reason to accommodate the curious protagonist's wishes. Originally, *Another One* was intended to be a written piece which heavily relied on the influence of *Alice in Wonderland*. However, presently, the work is an on-going graphic novel which drastically pulls away from its inspiration.

Another One, in general terms, is a fantasy adventure with a sense of horror aimed at a target audience range of high school to college students. The focus of the piece is to create a successful combination of narrative, color theory, composition, and symbolism which results in an engaging work. The plot is mapped out from start to finish, including variations of decisions the reader makes and an epilogue. The piece is presented both digitally and physically, as it is regularly uploaded online and pages are printed to be viewed together in an exhibition or book format, although the graphic novel is rendered entirely through digital means. This is performed at nearly any location, very often my room or studio space, with use of a large Wacom Tablet and the art program Paint Tool SAI. The tablet allows for an experience and versatility similar to tradition paper and pencil drawing and the program supplies many beneficial tools and settings exclusively for digital production.

The process of creating pages begins with a rather rough storyboard in which the composition, actions of characters, and text are decided on and mapped out with a sketch in light blue tones. The use of light colors allows for any additional edits or features to be clearly seen when applying a darker shade. Often, when deciding on the storyboard, I create multiple sketches of the same page, alternating between various panels, camera angles, and character positions. For comparison, I also pull up previously completed pages, thus allowing for a look into the sequence of panels and actions. For accuracy of the human figure, I often ask friends or peers to pose for me, allowing for in-depth observation of movement and form. Once a storyboard is deemed satisfactory, I lower the opacity of the sketch, thus making it transparent. This allows for me to still see my storyboard while also being able to see my drawing on top of it.

After this, the next step I take is to outline the panels in bold black strokes. To create clean panels I utilize a tool that keeps lines straight and the same width throughout the stroke. Thus, it is a simple matter of being certain that the lines connect neatly to form a shape. Next is the process of outlining the backgrounds and characters. To assist with consistency, I pull up full-body references of my characters which depict the forms from multiple angles and scales. I use a tool for outlines that is designed to replicate the effect and texture of an ink pen. With this, I set the size of the brush to a predetermined scale and begin to outline in chronological order. I start with the character's expression, moving from eyes to brows to nose to mouth and finally the face that surrounds such. I then transition to hair, keeping care to stick to the character's design without impeding on the facial expression. The next part I outline is the neck and torso and then the limbs. Folds for clothing or marks for texture are then added for slight detail. Once the character's outline is complete, I move on to the next panel and complete the process for all

necessary panels on the page. Once the character's outline is finished throughout the page, I then transition into creating a speech bubble for text.

By creating and placing the character on the page first, I am then able to place text in relation to the character's actions and position. I create speech bubbles by switching to a large brush tool and swiftly drawing an oval or circle in one stroke. This often requires consistent erasing or undoing my action until I create a shape in which text can comfortably be placed and read. To indicate that the character is speaking or thinking the associated text, I erase a slight portion of the bubble and draw a small triangle with the tip pointed towards the mouth of the character. This is a very common technique among sequential artists and is especially beneficial in distinguishing who is speaking what when multiple characters are conversing. I then create a layer underneath the speech bubble and fill in the space with a dark color, thus allowing me to clearly view the shape against the stark white background and any intersecting lines. Once the bubble is filled, I highlight the layer and use a color editing filter to change the dark color to a white, reminiscent of common speech bubbles found in sequential art. Finally, on a layer overtop the bubble layers, I slowly write the text in my own handwriting, attempting to make it legible to outside eyes, as my handwriting is rather messy and unfamiliar to those that are not me. Despite my efforts, I often have to rewrite or adjust the spacing, placement, or size of the text. Once all narrative or dialogue text is finished and encapsulated by speech bubbles, I move on to coloring.

I often begin with backgrounds first, once again starting with the first panel and moving to the next in chronological order. Backgrounds are often left without an outline, thus allowing for the outlined figures to stand out more prominently. As chapters are comprised of pre-determined color palettes, I pull up the palette required for the page, and, using the eyedropper tool which allows for one to grab a specific color from any image it touches, and choose a color

from the palette. The palettes are often one color, such as blue or pink, with varying shades of such to draw from. The protagonist's clothes and right eye are consistently designed to utilize the middle shade of any palette used, no matter the color scheme. Thus, to create even more contrast between background and figure, I primarily employ the darkest or lightest shades of the palette for the backgrounds. Once a color is chosen, I begin by filling in the panel entirely, underneath the outline layers, with a large ink brush tool. Once that is complete, I create a layer above what I just painted and click the clipping group option, which allows for me to interact solely with the layer underneath. Thus, I am able to draw on top of the background colors without interacting with the rest of the page. From there, I often use an airbrush tool and lightly shade the corners of the background with a darker color, thus creating a slight touch of depth to the piece. I repeat this as often as I feel necessary, alternating between applying light and shadows to the backgrounds. Another technique that I use is to present small, swift strokes of a bright color, often in doubles, over the space where the background is at its lightest. This creates a tiny touch of texture and a sense of lighting to the backgrounds. Once backgrounds for all necessary panels are finished, I create a layer above the background layers and move to coloring the characters and objects.

To begin coloring a character I start with the skin, similar to how I establish the outlines by starting with the facial features first. All characters' skin are filled with a stark white, causing the figures to contrast the colorful background and allowing the reader to infer whatever skin tone they wish upon the characters. Once the skin and facial features are complete, I once again move on to hair, filling in the outlines with the appropriate color. Once finished, I create a layer overtop the hair layer and switch to a chalk-like brush that is intended to replicate the texture of charcoal. I switch to a bright color, often the middle or second lightest shade in the palette, and create fast, thick strokes around the perimeter of the head where light would naturally shine in

one's hair, such as around the roots or crown. I then lower the opacity of the strokes, causing them to blend in more with the hair and not create too stark a contrast. This technique adds a slight amount of depth to what is normally a flat space of color. Once skin and hair are finished, I move on to coloring the clothes, once again filling in the required spaces with the necessary colors from the palette. However, unlike previous coloring, clothes are slightly more detailed as they fold, crease, and reflect. Thus, when coloring clothing, I often add details such as darker lines for shading, or utilizing the small strokes of white for emphasizing the areas light hit. When coloring the protagonist's outfit in particular, I begin with the waist coat before adding in details such as the collar or buttons. I then transition into the sleeves and pattern on the arms before finishing off with the pants and shoes. Finally, for further detail, I once again create a clipping group layer in which I can apply a slight touch of light or shadow onto the clothes. Thus, a page is entirely colored and completed.

Color, and essentially the theory of such, is a significant aspect of the graphic novel. As mentioned earlier, color palettes are pre-determined for each chapter, such as the pink hues found in Chapter 1 or the dark shades of red which will be presented in Chapter 3. As the story progresses, so does the shift in color schemes. This is demonstrated by the transition of pink to purple to blue as Chapter 1 ended and began moving towards Chapter 2. This manipulation of color not only serves to separate *Another One* from other sequential work, but also rouses interest and further illustrates the bizarre setting of the plot. This is especially prominent in the Prologue, in which the reality of Earth is depicted in a dull greyscale which greatly contrasts the vibrant schemes found in the separate world. However, the use of color is not restricted to solely shifts in palettes. Color is also utilized to highlight the significance of certain situations, objects, or pieces of dialogue in relevance to the storyline, such as the subtle, slow dulling of color when

the protagonist loses consciousness. However, the significant objects or situations in which color is being manipulated are not the only matter of importance, but also the color that is chosen to encompass such things. The choice in color for such highlights can manipulate the interpretation of events. This is demonstrated in the Prologue in which the illusion of the protagonist's mother is introduced. Although subtle and possibly overshadowed, there are markings along her neck reminiscent of a noose's grasp. What emphasizes the dark tone of this feature is the fact that the markings are rendered in a vibrant red, creating a heavy contrast against the greyscale setting. This is later utilized once more when the protagonist is injured and the bright red of their wounds spills out against an otherwise purple palette, once again accentuating the severity of their damage.

Another aspect that is crucial to *Another One* and the engagement of the reader is the ability of control given to the reader. As mentioned previously, due to the absence of skin color assigned to characters, the reader is encouraged to project whatever skin tone they wish onto the cast. This is not the only factor the reader is offered to adjust to their desires, as the protagonist, Wish, is presented in a way that allows for numerous differing interpretations as well. Their age, name, personality, and actions are the only things dictated by the narrative. Otherwise, factors such as gender, sexuality, and race are encouraged to be interpreted however the reader wishes. This is emphasized by a distinct lack of gendered pronouns and preferences in regards to Wish. Besides this manipulation of the protagonist, the reader is also offered opportunities to directly influence the outcome of the plot. Similar to a Choose Your Own Adventure novel, at certain plot points the reader is prompted to make a decision for the protagonist, such as whether Wish should run from or confront a threatening individual. Depending on the reader's choice, they are guided to a specific page number or link in which the outcome of the path plays out. These split

paths, depending on the choice, either continue the storyline or lead to a bad end in which the protagonist is killed or otherwise rendered unable to continue. These features are intended to provide a sense of engagement and consequence for the reader, thus allowing for involvement with the protagonist and their narrative.

Although the previously mentioned aspects are intended to separate *Another One* from other sequential pieces, there is still a significant connection to the medium and artists involved with such. Though the original concept of *Another One* was a written novel rather than a graphic one, through research I have come to see that, in the words of Scott McCloud, “The potential of comics is limitless and exciting!”(McCloud, 3). Though I am confident in my skills in capturing the events of *Another One* through solely written means, I believe switching to sequential art has only further developed my skills in art and writing, as well as the rendition of *Another One*'s narrative. Sequential art, by definition, combines imagery and information in sequence to convey a story. Though the graphic novel could, by all means, be presented in another visual format, such as animation, I believe no other medium provides as many tools for *Another One* to be a successful, engaging work. Sequential art allows for one to experiment with factors such as composition, perspective shift, text and placement of such, and the framing of panels to create a solid narrative. The orchestration of such aspects is significantly demonstrated by the artists I have studied this semester. The artists Will Eisner, Ben Katchor, and Winsor McCay are all renowned for their work with the medium and all differ in their approach to sequential art.

Eisner, author of *The Contract with God Trilogy*, captures heavy topics in his works and displays such in a masterful combination of expert composition, perspective, and paneling. This is demonstrated specifically in page 29 of *The Contract with God* which depicts the protagonist, an aged man by the name of Hersh, bowed in mourning, expression cast in shadow and body

slumped in defeat. The image is presented through the frame of a rain-covered window, offering an outside and silent view of the protagonist's suffering. This perspective creates substantial distance between the reader and Hersh's tragedy, reinforcing the detachment he holds in his grief from not only the other characters but also the reader, who is only left to observe his mourning. The panel singularly spans the entire page thus emphasizing the significance and perhaps the shocking nature of the events depicted. Rain is a symbol commonly associated closely with feelings of loss and sadness. Thus, not only illustrating the rain outside Hersh's window, but also depicting it drenching and slightly obscuring the events past the window serves to reinforce the protagonist's feelings of loss. The narrative text explaining the turn of events rests upon the window, causing the eyes to be guided along the rain's downpour towards the view inside of the window. Hersh is placed towards the center of the composition and is the only figure to be directly cast in the window's light, thus further highlighting the significance of events in relation to him. In my own work, I attempt to follow in Eisner's footsteps and create a sense of tone through the paneling and perspective of a scene. This is demonstrated in Page 60 of *Another One* in which the protagonist is surprised by their supposed father popping up behind them. The perspective is set behind the protagonist, allowing a view of their back as they turn in shock. This angle places the reader alongside the father figure as he looks down at Wish and emphasizes the abruptness of the entrance as well as the possible vulnerability of the protagonist. A singular panel surrounds the protagonist and the background accompanying them while the father is placed in the foreground, similar to one standing in front of a framed painting. This separation between the two emphasizes the size and imposing form of the father as though he is bigger than the confines of the panel itself.

Katchor is a contemporary American cartoonist known for his comic strips, especially *Julius Knipl: Real Estate Photographer*. Katchor utilizes a chaotic, almost rough art style combined with abrupt shifts in perspective to compose a unique and striking approach to narrative. This is demonstrated in a 2016 Julius Knipl strip housed in the collection *Cheap Novelties*. The strip follows a business man by the name of Maurice de Poissy and an unnamed concerned man who questions de Poissy's dangerous idling over a bridge. The perspective shifts drastically throughout the strip, moving from a swift introduction to de Poissy to hanging over the unnamed man's shoulder. The camera shifts from a distant view over the man's shoulder to steadily getting closer to de Poissy until they are close enough to interact. The flipping between perspectives reflects the unnamed man's erratic and increasing concerns regarding de Poissy until he is finally relieved upon a closer look. While Katchor rapidly shifts perspective to reflect a character's rapid thoughts, I attempt in page 62 of *Another One* to reinforce the tension of the protagonist through strategic shifts in perspective. This page depicts a confrontation between Wish and their father as they attempt to confess the reasoning behind their hesitance. The perspective moves from focusing on the father's confusion to the protagonist's rigid body language, increasingly zooming in on their taut shoulders and fisted hands. This focus on their body language and shift away from the usual focus on their face further reinforces the impact and significance of the scene.

Winsor McCay was an American cartoonist and master of sequential art. He is renowned for his long-standing comic, *Little Nemo in Slumberland*, in which he presents his mastery of panel manipulation and use of color. One of his comic strips from 1908 features the protagonist, Nemo, as he travels through town in a moving bed which is held up by impossibly high and rubber-like legs. The panels surrounding this scenario stretch vertically and are comparably thin

so as to allow the reader to view the entirety and strangeness of the personified bed. If not for the height of these panels, the incredulous vastness of the bed's legs may have been lost or not as effective to the eyes, as smaller or more traditional frames would limit the presentation of the oddity. This manipulation allows for a heightened sense of the bizarre actions depicted and I attempt to portray a similar emphasis on action in page 10 of *Another One*. This page depicts Wish as they plummet down a gaping hole. To reinforce the impact and rush of the descent, I stretched the panel downwards in a circular shape; creating a comet-like impression and forming a contrast between the flexible panel overtop the stagnant lower one. McCay not only exaggerated the manipulation of his panels, he did so with his colors as well. Typically, his palette relied heavily on dull, earthy tones, so as to draw the eye when a highly saturated color is introduced. This strategy is heavily utilized in *Little Nemo in Slumberland* to further reinforce the bizarre and unnatural qualities of Nemo's dreams. This is demonstrated in particular in the strip from October 22nd, 1905 in which Nemo is confronted with a forest of towering mushrooms. The mushrooms as well as the clown-like resident of the dream, Pokoko, are bathed in bright reds and yellows which stand out well against the dulled browns and blues which make up the distant background of the forest. Much of my own work also relies on creating a contrast between colors and this is especially true for page 13 of *Another One* in which the protagonist lands safely on a net of ropes only to find that they are beginning to catch fire. The background is rendered in a dull gradient of dark purple while the figure and ropes are only comprised of black and white. This causes the multi-colored flames to contrast vividly against the rest of the piece, reinforcing the bizarre and abrupt turn of events.

In conclusion, throughout this past year I have researched and worked towards creating a narrative work that successfully engages the reader and immerses them in the bizarre events of

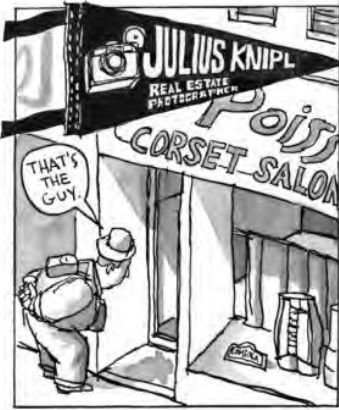
the plot. Through my induction into the SURF program and continued practice, I am aiming towards improving further on my sequential art and finishing *Another One* itself at an estimate of 500 pages.

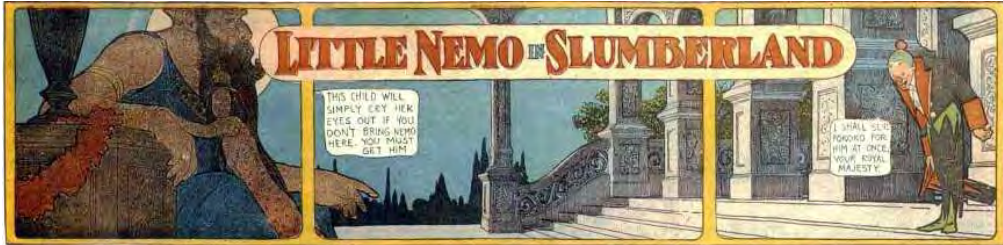
Images referenced:

All during the days of mourning that followed the funeral, the rain fell without pause.

Friends came—each offering Hersh the usual words of comfort which he accepted in stony silence.







LITTLE NEMO IN SLUMBERLAND

THIS CHILD WILL SIMPLY EYE HER EYES OUT IF YOU DON'T BRING NEMO HERE. YOU MUST GET HIM!

I SHALL SEND FORWARD FOR HIM AT ONCE, YOUR MAJESTY.



THERE'S SOMETHING THE MATTER WITH THOSE EYES SHAKING!



ON THE BED IS SINKING THROUGH THE FLOOR. THAT IS queer!



SOME THING IS GOING TO HAPPEN! DON'T WANT THAT A PRETTY SURE! WANT'S THAT PUNNY WORDS WHAT TWICE!

LITTLE NEMO HAD JUST BEGUN TO UNDOLE WHEN HE FELT THE OLD TRENT TUMBLE SLIGHTLY WHICH CAUSED HIM TO IMMEDIATELY INVESTIGATE.

HE DISCOVERED THAT WHILE THE FLOOR WAS IN PLACE, HE AND THE BED WERE NOT AND THAT THE USUAL ARRANGEMENT WAS RAPIDLY BECOMING DISARRANGED. HOWEVER HE DECIDED TO REMAIN CALM SO THAT HE MIGHT BE PREPARED FOR ANY EVENT THAT HE FELT SURE WAS COMING.

HE MIGHT BE PREPARED FOR ANY EVENT THAT HE FELT SURE WAS COMING.



WHEN SHE CAME TO ASK HOW TO GO TO SLUMBERLAND THE PRINCESS IS BORN FOR TO GO!

WHEN SHE WANTS TO SEE HIS HOW WILL I GO?

JUST TAKE THIS PATH AND FOLLOW IT UNTIL YOU COME TO THE PALACE. DON'T TOUCH ANY OF THE MUSHROOMS FOR THEY ARE TOO HARD TO EAT!

THE THEN MET THE PRINCESS WHO DIRECTED HIM TO PROCEED TO THE PALACE WHICH ALL YEAR LEFT HIM AT ONCE!



ONE WHAT SHALL I DO WHERE AM I?

ON PAPA WANT TO GO HOME IN PAPA, OH!

IT'S SEVEN HUNDRED AND SEVENTY SEVEN MILES. DON'T TOUCH ANY OF THE FOREST!

JUST FOLLOW THIS PATH AND YOU WILL GET TO THE PALACE AS DIRECTED BY PRINCESS!

AS HIS FIRST THOUGHT WAS TO FLY FROM THE SCENE HE FELL TO THE GROUND AND REMAINED THERE UNTIL THE PRINCESS ARRIVED.

MUSHROOMS IN BUMPED AGAINST THEM AND WHEN THEY WERE DOWN THEY REMAINED THERE UNTIL THE PRINCESS ARRIVED.

HE WAS FALLING THERE WAS ONLY ONE THING TO DO AND THAT WAS TO YELL, WHICH HE DID AND AWOKE HIM.

HE DID WITH ALL HIS STRENGTH UNTIL HIS PAPA CAME AND AWOKE HIM.

HE WAS FALLING THERE WAS ONLY ONE THING TO DO AND THAT WAS TO YELL, WHICH HE DID AND AWOKE HIM.

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