Drawing Circle

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Abstract

Drawing Circle borrows the traditional structure and activities of a life drawing class to explore that structure's potential for digital media. It proposes using the familiar structure of a well-lit model or still life surrounded by easels, within the Studio at SIGGRAPH. We intend to explore a merger of this time-tested convention with 3D modeling in an attempt to provide a setting for the further development of participant's skills, and to promote the Studio as a place for active learning and group investigation.

Keywords: art, life drawing, mimesis, praxis, pedagogy

1   Introduction

Learning to draw the human form has long been a beneficial, and at times, absolutely necessary skill for a visual artist to develop. It is as important now as ever considering the huge amount of creative energy and the number of digital artists actively recreating the human world in video games, CG motion pictures, and other virtual realities. Practicing together on a common subject allows participants to learn from one another and fosters a forum for discussion about the work.

2   Activities

Two basic categories of activity are identified: two-dimensional drawing, and three-dimensional modeling:

1 Two-Dimensional drawing: participants interested in the examination of line, color, or shade and shadow may want to use drawing on paper, or digital processes analogous to drawing such as using a tablet in a 2D drawing package.

2 Three-Dimensional modeling: participants interested in the plastic exploration of space and form may want to physically model using plasticine clay or a 3D-modeling package. Participants choosing this activity may focus on the subject's scale and proportion, or on methods such as working from curves versus combining primitives.

By alternating physical media, 2D and 3D workstations all involved in a single activity, interplay between various areas of the Studio will be encouraged.

3   Intentions

As a proposal for a working method, Drawing Circle must address the particular requirements of its situation, that is, how to create a conducive environment for the hands-on practice of digital art within the context of the Studio at SIGGRAPH.

We consider here an incremental approach that examines new techniques next to conventional methods. This is not a specifically technical proposal, rather an idea about a social circumstance regarding technology. It is a framework that leaves room for improvisation regarding the technology's interaction with the creative process.

Drawing Circle aims to examine mimesis, wherein ideas are brought into being through a poetic or creative act. In this act, a dialogue occurs between the maker and the medium, through a process often understood as craft. Without examining mimesis within technology we are merely, *and only*, technologists not artists.

In the foreground is an outlook rather than a particular technology. We are suggesting that the most advanced techniques happen at the same time, in the same place, and on the same subject as the most basic, physical techniques. The specific choice of technology is a parallel but separate discussion, since drawing on paper, sculpting in clay, and squeezing a point cloud with a haptic glove are peer activities. It is our intent that any technology available at that moment be considered.

We consider the Studio at SIGGRAPH to be neither radical, nor exclusively about technology: it is about praxis, and in that, about integration. To learn about the new is not enough, nor is it alone useful. The new must be made a part of one's own acts of doing. Thus, the benefit of conventional activities set amid the fantastically new is to see where the two meet. Drawing Circle is a proposal about method, emphasizing a procedure or process for achieving an end. It arises from a desire to propose alternatives to a conventional "computer lab" atmosphere, drawing from what we know works well in a studio. The best possible outcome for the event would be a group of people engaged in an informed public discussion about a body of work produced in the Studio, left pinned-up for display. Topics could include method (selection of medium or technique), fundamentals (line, color, texture, shadow, surface, volume, composition), advanced topics (gesture, narrative, meaning, abstraction), or topics arising from participant's questions.

4   Conclusions

This proposal is a pedagogical inquiry of an experimental nature. It is an opportunity for the participants to choose their methods, work along side others, and have a time to share the results. In our experience, many of the Studio's participants end up spending a few hours working alone in a crowd. We propose a straightforward alternative, to be tested as a working session during the week.

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