

n-*vis*-n:

suiting up with James Fish

3-2-1 Blast Off!



James Fish has been teaching *Handmade Design and Collage* with UCLA Extension since 2003. For the winter quarter, James developed *Make It. Move It.*, a course that combines handmade artwork and digital elements to create animated characters.

James has exhibited at Blum & Poe and ACME Galleries in Los Angeles, Threadwaxing Space Gallery in New York City, Culture Cache and 111 Minna in San Francisco, Williamson Gallery in Pasadena and at the Giant Robot "Post-It" Duex show.

Q: How did you get into art?

A: Like most boys, I loved drawing muscle cars, monsters, and superheroes. My parents were very supportive of my pursuing an education in art. So was my high school art teacher. She was eccentric compared to most teachers because she spoke from the heart and was very sincere about art-making. ▶

from the director

Boarding the Spaceship

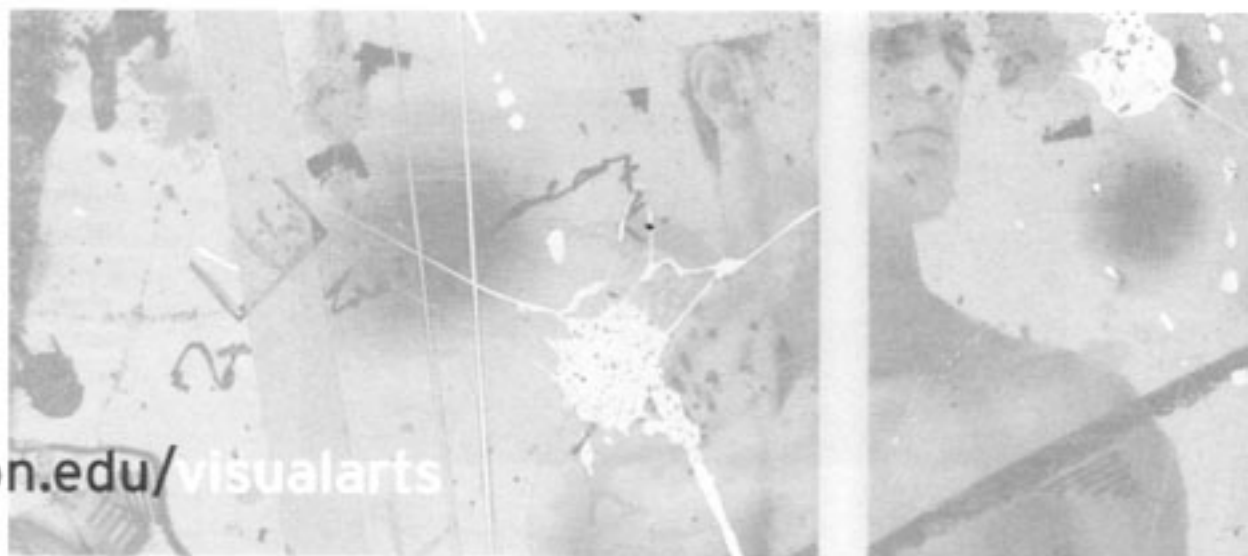
Exploring space can be daunting. But there are always new things to discover. Reaching for the stars is not just for millionaires who can charter a rocket, but for artists who wish to experiment with their thinking.

In this issue, encounter starry thoughts on art and design from our instructor James Fish, as well as practical tools for how to give your work the "wow factor" that will launch it into the stratosphere.

Winter quarter is underway and spring quarter is just a few fortnights away. There will be an extensive array of courses to choose from, ranging from an online CSS course to a six-month program on living with art. Get your gravity boots on!

Scott Hutchinson Program Director, Visual Arts

artist: Martin Rudolf



Q: What are your observations of art and design students?

A: A lot of the mature students are in class because they really want to be there and they want to get the most out of class. Younger students are taking more chances with experimentation and are tuned into current trends. I identify with all students who take chances with their work, embracing accidents and then pulling it off like some rehearsed magic trick.

Q: How do you encourage risktaking?

A: There is nothing to fear in the classroom, no bad clients asking you to make lame changes. I always say that the first time it's an accident and the next time it is a technique.

I also encourage students to work on two versions of each assignment. When we work digitally, we usually do "Save As" versions of a project. So, by working on two versions of a project side-by-side, we can relieve the stress factor of "what if I mess this up?"

We can depart from our safe or ideal version and allow the other version of the assignment be the one that we experiment with. I always work this way and very often I like the alternate version. My imagination cannot conceive what wonderful possibilities there are waiting to be discovered.

Also, in critique I say directly, "I think this can be improved upon" and I give some ideas of how and why. I might say that we are missing the "wow factor" and ask, "What can we do to make this dazzling?"

Q: What kind of ruts do you think are most common, and what are the cures?

A: The biggest problem is being content with mediocrity. Turn off the TV, turn on the stereo, do something fun, get out, drive, walk, ride your bike. Don't sit around thinking about solutions. The studio is for executing work, not for coming up with ideas. Get inspired! Creativity is a reactive activity, so you need to do something to get it going. Don't be a wallflower, be a dancer, and get your groove on.

Q: How do the other elements of your life—family, hobbies, and history—inform your work?

A: Living with children has given me the perspective of what it is like to discover drawing for the first time, along with the creativity and free associations that come along with it.

My first trip to France helped reinforce a greater sense of being connected to people, family, and friends. I have discovered how quality of life is reflected in how you eat and live. This has given me different perspective on my upbringing and where I am from.

On another note, I collect all sorts of wrappers, labels, and drawings that I like, and for the longest time I didn't know what to do with them. Putting these pieces into my art is a way of saving, or savoring, these experiences.

Q: What do you like about teaching at Extension?

A: I like the diversity of Extension students' age and background. There are young students with fresh perspectives, returning students with experience, and enthusiastic adults who seek to expand on their creative process.

Q: Your courses can be credited as "Advanced Design Electives" which meet a requirement for the DCA certificate. Can you speak to this?

A: I believe that the computer is a great tool that allows designers to design and layout with great ease and flexibility. This ease of use has streamlined the creative process. I mean streamlined in a negative way because it puts the designer in a comfortable place, choosing this font or that, this image or that, this effect or that. This is not creative; it is multiple choice. I want to empower designers to create their own illustrations, integrate their photography with illustration and make up their own type treatments. Our individual fingerprints should be reason enough to be designers.

artist: Maria La Roche





Left to right clockwise: Raimonda Tamosauskaite | Eliza Green | Alexandra Marakyan | Raimonda Tamosauskaite | Maria La Roche | Alys Donato

aiga student group

Houston, We Have No Problems

UCLA Extension's AIGA Student Group is programmed to propel skyward and beyond. Last year, under the stellar leadership of lead astronaut Christina Felix, a Yahoo Group was formed with nearly fifty members, a logo was created by Nadja Frist, a website was developed by Alan Takushi, and an active exchange was established with other design schools. They almost discovered a new planet in the process!

Recent events include presentations on copyright and intellectual property rights by Stuart Carroll and Greg Victoroff, search engine optimization techniques by Gary

Senser, and a guided tour of LACMA's exhibition galleries and design studios by Amy McFarland and Paul Wehby.

The new year was launched with a Portfolio Workshop with a team of reviewers, including Spencer Cross of Tokyo Farm, Rian Heim of Rian Design, Lea Ann Hutter of Hutter Design, Chad Sawyer of The Compound Design, and Keith Knueven.

Don't get lost in a black hole! Join our group by emailing AIGA UCLA Extension Student Group president Christina Felix at cfelixaiga@uclax@yahoo.com or visit aigax.org.

get seen gallery

You May Need UV Protection

In "Handmade Design and Collage" with James Fish, students create layered work that goes beyond earthly limitations. This issue is dedicated to showcasing the "wow-factor" that James describes in his interview.

Instructors and students are eligible to add their work to the Get Seen Gallery, where it may be used in public promotion. More information about the GSG is available in class. In the meantime, if you would like more information, contact Ana Sanchez at 310.825.6683 for image requirements and submission guidelines.