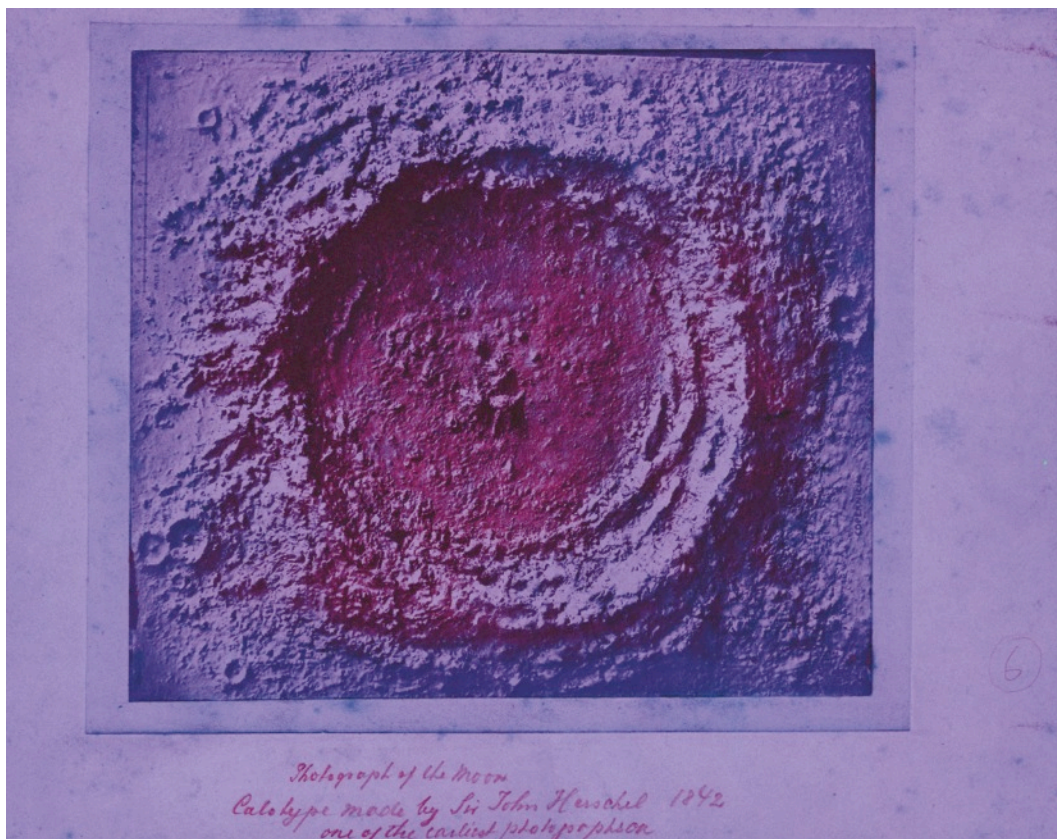




Lotte Wieringa - Digital Craft - Tools Of The Trade

O U R T I N Y P O C K E T

“Most of the time we live in a tiny pocket of normality we wrap around us like a security blanket. We turn our backs on the mysterious universe that waits outside. From time to time we may sneak a peak with our imagination, or venture out through fantasy or expanded awareness. The Moon is the light of this realm - the world of shadow and night - easy to lose our way in. In the right circumstances, the Moon inspires and enchants. It holds out the promise that all you imagine can be yours. The Moon guides you to the unknown so you can allow the unusual into your life.”



The illusional show in the sky -----

Even though it is grey, dusty and desolate deserted, the moon is a fairly mystical celestial planet that makes many wonder and dazzle. It dances a crazy dance together with our planet earth and the sun to create an optical illusion we are able to watch, mostly at night. It's appearance and spot in the sky changes every time you take a look at it, even when looked only a minute away. Amazingly, awful and floating, if not drowning in theories and ideas about its manifestation of creation. The most common idea teaches us the moon took shape after a heavenly body hit the earth in its early days. Our still steamy hot liquate earth merged with this planet and the detritus launched into space cluttered together by gravity to form our moon. This is the story most of us are familiar with but there are a lot of coincidences about the moon to take note of different tales about its formation. For example, the distance between the Moon and Earth happen to be just right for the creation of the perfect circumstances for the development and inhabitant for complex life on Earth. If its position were closer by the tides would be crazily high, if it stood further away the earth would start spinning. And think about solar eclipses, they are actually a near miracle, they don't happen anywhere else in the solar system. This preformed dance by the Moon, Sun and Earth is an elegant but most unlikely one. It is simply a consequence of the Moon's orbit and positioning and yet as a random chance event it seems virtually miraculous. And there is more, the time the moon needs to circle around it's own axis is almost the exact same as it takes to gyrate around the earth. This causes the moon always showing her front side (near-side) to us, which occupies 59% of its surface. The other 41% is never shown to us. And there are more rarities; its size and mass (the moon is way to light) are odd for being a natural satellite, there are some clues to assume the moon even may be hollow. And the relative shallow creators, comparing woofs width and depth, are fairly eyebrow raising. By some people insights all this only can be declared if the moon has some sort of metal shield and is put there in place precisely by other beings to watch us closely, underneath accommodate a group of aliens. This should also be the reason why we never returned to the moon again and why men like Neil Armstrong never talk openly about their adventurous moon experience. There simply would be too much to tell, they don't want us to know. On top of this all there are some good indicates to assume the moon is not grey or white, but has this green-blue-orange surface, depending on what minerals are in the soil. Other people persuade the moon is just a hologram, only there to fool and entertain us.

Reality of the images you think you know -----

Which the above theories do you consider as true? It seems logical to put faith in the most obvious one. It could be true but it is just as possible as all the other stories because we simply don't know. None of the above is proven; none of us have seen its creation with our own eyes, no definite conclusions can be made. It is still something speculable. It is easy to believe the trueness of the story's you're taught in school, or what you have seen on the news and history books. But think, take a volcanic eruption and imagine it, how does it look? I vision a mushroom shaped explosion that reaches up miles in the sky, whereof descend toxic gasses return in a rain of ashes to earth again. I think of the swirling lava rivers that devastate everything on its path. In history, some of these eruptions where so big they

whipped out almost the entire populations living on the planet. Like probably happened to dinosaurs. This knowledge didn't come to me by standing next to an erupting volcano. Such as most of us I know this from the images I've seen on television, photos, the Internet, school, etc. I presume it's true and think my idea of its representation lies quite close to reality. But is that the case? The same question can be asked about the moon. Our knowing of the world is no longer based on our own experiences; instead it is mostly created by visual culture. French philosopher Jean Baudrillard discusses in one of his theories, the simulacrum theory (in Dutch: *schijnbeelden* theorie) the reality from the images we know and presume to be true. Hereby he mostly means our ever-growing world of digital culture and media and the spot it claims within our society and everyday life. You think you know something because you saw something on television, the Internet or a different kind of source outside yourself. We lost the affiliation to the real world.

Please note; it is not this black and white, as it now appears to be. The simulacrum theory divides images in four different categories. These four categories represent each a phase in the evolution of the image.

1. The image is a representation of a fundamental reality.
2. The image masks and prevents a fundamental reality.
3. The image masks the absence of a fundamental reality.
4. The image has no relation with any kind of reality;
it's a pure simulacrum on its own.

Baudrillard connects the first two phases to a notion of good and bad. He says: 'in the first case the image is a good appearance, the representation is of the sacramental order. In the second, it's an evil appearance; it is the order of the maleficence'. He says an image is good when it represents the reality as close as possible, like the visions I have from an erupting volcano. This follows in the second; an image is bad when it doesn't. The third phase is characterized with a transition to the world of manifestation and simulacra. A judgment about the veracity is in this phase no longer possible. The reality, and there by our ability to judge about this reality misses. The multiple possibilities of the moon fall within my consideration under this third stage in the evolution of the image. We know what they are talking about is there. But what it really looks like and how it took shape are just speculations based on what others tell us about it. The fourth, and last phase of the image is it's own simulacrum. This one is the most important for Baudrillard's theory. This last phase of the image is also known as hyperreality. In this phase the simulacrum became an illustration outside the normal order of appearances. The simulacrum no longer has a reality it refers to. The image is only a manifestation of its own, a pure simulacrum. 'It is no longer part of the order of appearance, but of simulation'. Meanwhile it is impossible to distinguish the simulacrum of reality because reality (so seems from the third phase) no longer exists. Hyperreality is an inability of consciousness to distinguish reality from a simulation of reality. Hyperreality is seen as a condition in which what is real and what is fiction are seamlessly blended together so that there is no clear distinction between where one ends and the other begins. This last state of simulacrum, the real hyperreality is an effective deformation of reality.

Leaving us with an unsettling question: what exactly *is* that reality? The truth is: we don't know. May be almost anything, really. A dream, even. There's no way of knowing if there's someone or something pushing the buttons. There's no way of

knowing if there *isn't*, either. And then, there's this other thing most theorists agree on: our reality could suddenly *end*. The dimensions we live in could be wrapped up. The very fabric of our physical world could be disrupted by some unprecedented, weird physical event. From one second to the other, our reality would no longer be there. There is no such thing as one true reality. There is only 'your' version of it, which is essentially your perception. We rely on the tools we have been given to interpret this world. Remember that what you believe to be true is only as true as your worldly experience and it doesn't go any further than that. Even many scientific theories are just that; they are theories! All that I see, hear, taste, touch, smell and feel has been created from the data fed to me by my sensory organs. All I ever know of the world around are the images produced in the mind. I think I am seeing the tree or moon "out there", in the world around me. But all that I am actually experiencing is the image created in the mind. It's the paradox of reality. Conversely, it would be wrong to relegate our experience to the world of illusion. It is very real, the only reality we know. If I kick a boulder my foot hurts. The solidness of the stone is real in my experience; so is the pain. The illusion comes when we confuse the image in our mind with the thing-in-itself. The philosophers of ancient India spoke of this as "maya". Often translated as "illusion", the word is better understood as "delusion". We assume that the "thing in itself" must be equally solid. For two thousand years it was believed that atoms were tiny solid balls. Then, as physicists discovered that atoms were composed of more elementary, subatomic particles (electrons, protons, neutrons, and suchlike) the model shifted to one of a central nucleus surrounded by orbiting electrons – again, a model based on experience. An atom may be small, a mere billionth of an inch across, but subatomic particles are a hundred thousand times smaller still. Imagine the nucleus of an atom magnified to the size of a golf ball. The whole atom would then be the size of a football stadium, and the electrons would be like peas flying round the stands. As the early twentieth-century British physicist Sir Arthur Eddington put it, "Matter is mostly ghostly empty space." To be more precise, it is 99.9999999% empty space. Which makes you realize reality is based on an almost emptiness, the closer we look, the littler there actually is. Logically, this makes you understand why a representation of reality in images, is since the time we're able to make representations, a discussion. Take for example photography. Something which is/was first seen as a pure representation of reality, the given image is taken out of the 'real' world. But nothing can be more unreal, especially now when editing is available for everyone. Even NASA is editing their images from space to make it look more interesting. Some of these are even just '*artists impressions*'; images that have no reference to any reality at all. It's just a visualization of what it might or could look like, while considered by most as true. Only few wonder, ask questions by its realness. Why would you question the realness of the images send into the world by a company like NASA who investigates our universe? They're the most like ones to know. In this way the lie of the image becomes so absolute it creates a 'homicide on reality' as how Baudrillard used to explain it. By taking what is happening onscreen and making it a part of your real life by for example watching television, you are doing your job of supporting the matrix' desire to confuse us about the nature of reality. Proving that something doesn't have to happen to feel real to people.

New pair of eyes -----

This made me realize how little is needed to make something feel 'real' to people. Our perception tools do it all for us. I can easily create a simulacrum my own, who other might believe. Compound by merged facts, myths, religion and conspiracy theories to give people a sense of feeling some recognition, from where I can carpenter at my new moon myth. This given element is the inspiration for the tool I'll create jointly with my biggest stumbling block as a teacher: lack of imagination. Everyone is born curious, you want to know, learn and experience. However, I've learned from my internships this fades away pretty quick. Children and students stop wondering, stop asking questions and take everything they're told and the images they see as truth. What's in the schoolbooks, it truth, what's told at the news and other media, is also truth. When they are asked to draw or make something themselves they can't come up with any ideas. When you show them an example there is a big chance they just copy it, virtually without any personal input. Where did this happen?

In the 60's George Land conducted an experiment where he gave a creativity test (we leave doubts about measuring creativity to the side) to a bunch of 5 year olds and 92% scored highly creative. He then gave the same test to the same kids 5 years later and only 32% scored highly creative. He then again gave the same test to the same kids 5 years later and now only 12% scored highly creative. You can say the 1960's are a long time ago but since our school system hasn't really changed the results are comparable now a days. He concluded that we don't loose our creativity but rather *learn to be uncreative*. Actually, these problems begin in a very specific time frame: the years covering third, fourth, and fifth grade, when a child is 8-10 years old. It's during this period that many kids "conclude that they are not creative", and this is in large part because they start to realize that that their drawing is not quite as pretty as they would like, that they can put the brush in the wrong place, that their short stories don't live up to their expectations so they become self-conscious and self-aware. Together with the way of teaching as we do now: grooming kids to think in a very particular way, which assumes that the right way to be thinking is to be attentive, to stare straight ahead, coping samples and repeat told knowledge, they shut themselves down. Only wanting to know 'the right answer'. A lot of schooling is learning to tolerate boredom, or being motivated by pleasing the teacher. There is only little room for own interpretations. As Pablo Picasso said spot on: "Every child is born an artist, the problem is how to remain an artist once he grows up." We teach kids in school to function in a specific way, so later days they fit within society. Actually, the statement made with the digital craft minor ends up being reliable on everything, our whole society. You only learn what and how the system wants you to learn. With so much pressure to produce quick results, there is little time to no time allocated towards real thinking and brainstorming, or even experimentation without judgment. The schooling system most public schools still use nowadays is made up in the time of the industrial revolution. Thinking about the plain repeatable work that needed to be done in the factories during those days makes it a logical way of schooling and teaching children. Obviously this isn't how our society functions anymore. We expect people to be autonomous beings who can think for them selves but this doesn't reflect in the way they are taught.

When we consider the importance of creativity we are apt to think of it only in the context of art. This is also how most schools think about creativity. Though important, art is only a small part of creativity. We use creativity in every aspect of our lives, everyday. Without creativity there would be no innovation. We would continue to be caveman. Creativity is what pushes passion and helps us moving forward. Historically, creativity has been seen as a tortured and mystical process, the province of geniuses, artists and eccentrics. Today, we are less in awe of the creative process. Now, creativity is recognised as a practical skill, one which can be taught and which everyone can achieve. It is a way of thinking in which we look at familiar things with a fresh eye, examine a problem with an open mind about how it might be solved, and use our imagination rather than our knowledge to explore new possibilities rather than established approaches. We live in a world that is constantly becoming innovated with new concepts, ideas and technology. Having the creativity to help innovate something that has never been created before – anything from a product to a piece of art- is all based on where your mind wants to take you. But so many never even allow their mind to journey out of their tiny pocket.

I see this tool as a first try out for my graduation project. I want to create something what makes people (not only kids and students) to ask questions again and make them wonder. Tickle their imagination, let them step out of their tiny pocket in order to keep hold on creativity and let them think for themselves; take things in consideration. The implications of this question-raising-tool are, especially in the beginning, small. But the importance of creativity may be clear, creativity improves the self-esteem, motivation and achievement of learners. Pupils who are encouraged to think creatively:

- become more interested in discovering things for themselves;
- are more open to new ideas and challenges;
- are more able to solve problems;
- can work well with others;
- become more effective learners;
- have greater ownership over their learning.

I want to give the viewer a new pair of eyes, help them see the world from a different point of view. Is what you think you see, really what you see? It is a call for consciousness. The way i'm using the 'tool' as my craft and practice matches nicely with my field of study, teacher in arts. Able to affiliate in many shapes and forms; I'll use the moon and his phases for visualization. It's a perfectly suiting metaphor for all the above told, as it already is illusional from itself. Besides, fully integrated in cultures, religions, astrology and other beliefs. Something we all know and have seen but at the same time almost no one of us people ever experienced it for real. We know all kind of stuff about it out of books and other sources outside ourselves. But almost no one ever came closer to this celestial body then the widely 400000 km it stands away from us. We generally see this little white dot lightened up in our sky at night-time. We are able to watch it by telescopes but the number of people who actually went there are countable on three hands: only twelve people walked on the moon. As far as the data go back the moon has been given certain property's that can be related to its illusional visions. Many Neopagan authors (series of religious beliefs in nature) say that there was an original Great Goddess in prehistoric cultures, which was linked to the moon and formed the basis of later religions. The Great Goddess figure is highly speculative and not a proven concept but quite

interesting and again something specutable. I took this information as a starting point from where I build up my new moon myth – the creation of La Luna Lila. Joseph Campbell defines the function of myth by referring to a line from *Homo Ludens*: "In all the wild imaginings of mythology a fanciful spirit is playing on the border-line between jest and earnest." Campbell's researches have led him to view myth as the basis of a people's meaning. But the basis for the meaning-function of myth, Campbell argues is play. The "logic" of myth, like the "logic" of play, is the "logic" of "as if." The realm of a man's myth is described as "the world of gods and demons, the carnival of their masks and the curious game of 'as if' in which the festival of the lived myth abrogates all the laws of time, letting the dead swim back to life, and the 'once upon a time' becomes the very present." Campbell suggests that "such a highly played game of 'as if' frees our mind and spirit." Myth suits questioning known images (hyperreality) and my craving to imagination and creativity as a glove.

La Luna Luna, a new myth. A reveling story about, not only the moons color but also its place and function within our (religion based) society. Printed on paper, presented together with a physical form. One you can touch and experience, in order to make my moon myth feel 'real' to people. Even though it seems crazily impossible, it could be true. In this way I created a mythical hyperreality for my own. This should leave the viewer, wondered, a bit more open minded for crazy ideas, endless possibilities and imagination. Even only for a minute, as a starting point for more to come.

'You end up looking at something familiar, and at the same time it's not.'

Quote out of my 'vague' thousand words essay



"She is full of play and joy, this world is Her Lila. She completely deludes most people and is a magician, a trickster, and hides behind a show of magic and pretence, sometimes adopting the form of other deities."



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