Amuse Bouche: 8 Illustrations

An Honors Creative Project (HONRS 499)

by

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Abstract

As a graphic design major and a magazine journalism major I have great opportunities to combine both fields of study. The majority of creative projects that combine both areas are rooted in editorial design. The goal of this project is to further develop and challenge my skills that are applicable to both magazine journalism and graphic design.

This portfolio of eight original illustrations will be used to acquire freelance illustration positions. The illustrations will be based on Indianapolis poet Terry Kirts’ short poems, Amuse Bouche. The poems are reflective of the French term Amuse Bouche in that they are short and amusing and always food-related.
Acknowledgments

Many thanks are due to Terry Kirts for the use of his poems. It is valuable to have talented friends. Additionally, I thank Sam Minor for his comments and input into this endeavor.
Welcome back, anchovies, fished up from that old fable of disdain. (fig. 1)
The ideas of fishing and freshness are depicted here primarily through the use of patterned color. By limiting the palette to shades of blue and black, the illustration easily incorporates the ideas of fresh-caught fish and saltwater. Additionally, the use of newspaper in the background re-enforces the fresh-fish concept.

As soon as the cherries turned pink, we beat the birds to the tree, squawking our harvest songs. (fig. 2)
Within this illustration, I used a variety of tools of representation. In some instances, like the birds or the birds-eye-view of the town, actual images were used. In other instances, I used elements such as color and texture to represent ideas expressed in the poem. This is primarily evident in the tree and its trunk/bark.

A pinch, and then the saffron vanished, an entire day of Turkish labor, gilding our humble rice. (fig. 3)
This illustration is perhaps the most abstract of the eight. The rice is depicted as separate grains in an attempt to illustrate the labor involved with saffron harvesting. Saffron, the most expensive spice in the world, is made from the stamen of the crocus flower. The stamen must be hand-picked and 14,000 stamens are necessary to constitute one ounce of the spice. Here, I have captured the origin of the saffron in the rows of crocuses at the base of the illustration. The ‘gilding’ saffron has been abstracted to depict the power of the saffron color and flavor and its affect on the dish in which it is prepared.

At the four-star bistro, he asked for ketchup, and the date was over, at least for me. (fig. 4)
I attempted to capture the essence of a three-dimensional space within this illustration. By using images of the things expressed in the poem (ketchup, bistro table and chairs, a date, disgust),
the audience is directly exposed to the meaning of the short poem. It is precise and to-the-point. The colors – wood grains, maroons, forest greens, and rich reds and yellows – help in representing a restaurant worthy of four stars. This is an established bistro – not a trendy cafe or fly-by-night sushi bar.

**All night in a dream, I sliced peaches, so long I had lived without cobblers.**
(fig. 5)
Here, I depicted two separate ideas into the illustration. The idea of a dream-world of peaches is very separate from the reality of a bedroom at night. By limiting the dream’s palette to only colors associated with peaches – oranges, yellows, reds, corals – it is evident to the audience that the voice is obsessed with peachiness. In ‘reality’, the cartoonish depiction of the bedroom is developed with contrasting colors and a grainy photograph – reminiscent of a dreamlike state.

"**Be sure to let it breathe," she said, ringing up my three-dollar cabernet.**
(fig. 6)
By capturing the familiar sight of the grocery conveyor belt, the audience is instantly accepting of the sarcasm of the poem. The objects waiting to be scanned are made up of a combination of shapes, colors and actual products one would find in a supermarket. By combining real and abstract ideas of food, the illustration remains in the audience’s own perception of a cashier’s advice.

**What a glad sacrifice, these weekly tuna casseroles of Lent.**
(fig. 7)
The boxiness of the familiar casserole is expressed through an abstract cube of noodles and jumping fish. The calendar-based backdrop helps to incorporate the idea of time and regularly-scheduled meals.
Under the vegan's sneer, I slathered my sandwich with mayonnaise, glad to be gauche. (fig. 8)

The most comedic of my efforts, this illustration is depicted by a combination of colors and images. The mayonnaise – a greenish marbled paper – and the bread – a photo of brown corduroy – establish recognizable shapes in the audience’s eyes. The sneering vegan, depicted by a rough photocopy of a Mexican folklore skeleton captures the wise-ass tone the poem is written in. ‘Glad to be gauche’ in the eyes of the vegan, the cows were added to the sandwich to heighten the sandwichmaker’s bravado.
Welcome back, anchovies, fished up from that old fable of disdain.
As soon as the cherries turned pink, we beat the birds to the tree, squawking our harvest songs.
A pinch, and then the saffron vanished, an entire day of Turkish labor, gilding our humble rice.
At the four-star bistro, he asked for ketchup, and the date was over, at least for me.
All night in a dream, I sliced peaches, so long I had lived without cobblers.
"Be sure to let it breathe," she said, ringing up my three-dollar cabernet.
What a glad sacrifice, these weekly tuna casseroles of Lent.
Under the vegan's sneer, I slathered my sandwich with mayonnaise, glad to be gauche.