

The Placement Diaries: Week 35 - Genre Defying Music, Editorial Illustrations, and Creating the Final Drafts

13th May 2022

One thing I've realised over the recent past is that I can only somehow create illustrations whilst I'm listening to music. I'm not sure how it helps, or why I do it, but I always seem to gravitate towards doing that. Maybe it's so that I can drown out the noise of the insanely loud fans my laptop makes whenever I open Adobe Illustrator, but maybe it's because it helps me get into the zone, mainly to have some sort of stimulation as I work, to perhaps make the overall act of creating an illustration less tedious than it actually is. Maybe, because I usually listen to music as I create illustrations, it makes things a lot more exciting, and is probably the core reason why I decided to become an illustrator at the age of 17, based on the fact that I'd be able to listen to whatever I wanted whilst also being productive at the same time.

It still holds true, but whenever I write, it's the opposite. I need total silence in order to get my thoughts down effectively, because I know that listening to music as I write will distract me, unless the music in question happens to be classical music, or anything remotely intellectual, but then again, I realise that this ends up being a distraction, so silence is all I need when it comes to writing. Maybe it's because creating an illustration is more of a physical process than writing, since you don't really have to think about creating something visual because you can see it right in front of you. Writing, on the other hand, is a lot more abstract and conceptual. Sure, I can create a conceptual illustration, but an illustration is an illustration, through and through. It will always be visual, no matter what. Writing forces you to use your own imagination for once.

On that note, if someone asked me who my favourite musician/band was, I'd have no idea. That changes all the time, and I mainly listen to whatever I'm in the mood for, with no preference. Just anything that sounds good, no matter what the genre is, and stuff that hasn't been overplayed on any radio at all, because that just does my head in since it ends up being overly predictable. At the moment, I actually buy music. Nothing physical, just digital albums (technically a form of an NFT without all the bullshit, if you want to go that far), but in my opinion, it beats streaming the music since you actually get to own the music instead of being at the mercy of some streaming platform. What if that platform goes down? What if your account gets deleted, and there's no way to get it back? What then? I learned this the hard way when I couldn't get into my Spotify account, and realised that it had been deleted, though the reasons behind that were unclear. In short, I want to be self-sufficient, where I don't have to rely on certain things, being at the mercy of some company who couldn't care less about me, where I'm just

some statistic on a database, instead, I'd like to own things which I know are mine, things which I know I can do as I please, within reason. I guess that's one thing which these companies took away from us, all in the name of convenience.

I've also realised that this time next month, all of this will be over, inevitably turning into a weird dream which I've actually experienced in real life, and not in the dream universe which I always end up travelling to at night. On one hand, I'll be glad that it's over, just so that I never have to pitch again, or even write a business plan, because I've done those things all year to the point where it's just put me off from ever doing them again, since it feels like I've just spent all year doing those two things. Business plans are too stifling. Pitches are just fake and shallow, designed for people to be really compelled with what you do, and what you offer. A glorified advertisement, if you will. Maybe it's because of these things that I struggle to enjoy being self-employed. I also realise that I do not want a personal brand, since it feels egotistical, limiting, and dissociative, nor do I want to work from home, since it seems too isolating for me, not to mention that there is literally no boundary between work and life at that point.

However, on the other hand, I'll be upset that it's over, since I met some really interesting people, who I'd like to still keep in contact with, and also because I don't want to have to throw away everything that I've built up on. I'll probably inevitably deal with a summer of uncertainty, perhaps getting another job if I'm lucky enough, and then going back to university in September in order to complete my final year. I sometimes wonder how different everything would have been if I skipped this placement year altogether. Would I have got any further? Would I have had better opportunities? Would I have regretted not taking this opportunity up? I'll never know, but I know that it will be hard to get back into an academic mindset again, now that I've been out of academia for a year now, and that in the world of business, you have to be concise, so I don't know where that leaves me. Would I have to try going back to a previous version of myself in order to do well academically? To unlearn and undo everything that I've done this year just to be able to get my degree?

Sometimes, I think "what was the point of all this?", maybe because it seems too unusual, but overall, it's been a decent learning experience, essentially being thrown into the deep end, being in a sink or swim situation. I want to swim, but I don't know how to, and I think this lack of knowledge is causing me to sink, no matter how hard I try.

So, that's been my week, and now I'm just finishing up on everything, essentially submitting things as they are, and as best as I can do them. I've still got a few weeks left, but whatever I've done will have to do for now.