

Creating Comics

In-class Exercises

- 1. Space, Sequence, and Perception.** Unflatten your life. Using Sousanis' theory of comics as a tool for reflecting the complexity of thought and experience, use *Comic Life 3* to create a short comic (1-2 pages) that gives visual expression to some facet of your intellectual, emotional, or daily life: a particular idea or problem that currently preoccupies you, something interesting you saw or did recently, or even a dream you had. In any case, you should take advantage of the potential for the comic, as an art form, to reconstitute and illuminate memory from a multiplicity of perspectives, "unbound, layered and overlapping, intersecting." At this early stage of practicing with *Comic Life 3*, try to reflect your experience using only images, those captured by you on your phone or those you harvest from the Internet. Don't incorporate textual elements (text boxes or speech bubbles), but focus instead of the "architecture" of frames and spaces on the page as an integral way of conveying meaning, analogous to the grammar of written language. Use a template appropriate to your purpose, or design an original layout.
- 2. Architectural Elements.** Revise or expand the short comic you created in the first class, adding textual elements. With reference to McCloud's discussion of icons, frames, gutters, text boxes, and speech bubbles, try to add additional layers of meaning to your comic. You should not simply add textual comments to the images that you have already incorporated. Rather, work toward a broader coherence and interdependence of page architecture, image, and text, so that subtracting one of these elements will render the other two less forceful or comprehensible. This process could involve modifying the images you used in the first version of your comic.
- 3. Comics across Disciplines.** Following the example of Jacobson and Colón, Doxiadis and Papadimitriou, or Vandermeer create a short comic (1-2) pages that renders a historical or contemporary event, explains a scientific idea, or interprets a literary work or cultural phenomenon. Adapt Sousanis' notion of "unflattening," which you applied earlier to your own life, to some aspect of the world beyond you, shifting from autobiography to nonfiction. You may draw material from a range of sources, including our class, another class, or an independent interest. Whatever your subject, your process of design and composition should aim for the coherence of the various architectural and stylistic elements discussed by McCloud, as in the last exercise. Consider the relation between form and content. What frame architecture and style is most consistent with your subject? Take some inspiration from the examples provided, and think of this exercise as a warm-up for next week's larger project.