Garde Magazine

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Garde Magazine

An independent magazine aimed at bringing the works of the young and talented to the whole world. Believing in ideas, thoughts and concepts, Garde Magazine follows the principle of simplicity and honesty.

FOUNDERS

Cleo Tse   cleo.tse@gardemagazine.com

Natasha Chan   natasha.chan@gardemagazine.com

CREATORS

Juan Hernaz   Ka Ying Wong

CONTRIBUTORS

David Madsen   david.madsen@gardemagazine.com

ALTERMODERNISTS

Kalle Östyård

ODKST

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JUAN HERNAZ

ILLUSTRATION

WITHOUT LIMITS OR BOUNDARIES

CERTAMEN DE CUENTOS 4º SOBRE MEDIO AMBIENTE · 2015

Since he was a child, Juan Hernaz has been drawing and painting. Although he always had strong ambition to contribute to the art world, he did not know it would be in the form of graphic design and illustration until his experience during his Fine Arts degree changed his expectations. "My passion for books completed the 'x' and the fruit of this equation was to become an illustrator," he said.

Juan intertwines all sorts of arts into his work, which highlights the extent of his imagination and creativity. "Nowadays I think all artistic disciplines are concomitant, they can (and truly do) influence each other," he said. "In my work, the integration of different disciplines is not unusual. This could be illustration on paper, animation, advertising, stage design, development of corporeal objects (near sculpting), etc - every creative discipline is attractive and I enjoy exploring my limits and trying new ones."

Speaking about the similarities and differences between graphic design and illustration, Juan said, "both seek to communicate through the visual language (if we understand the term 'design' as 'graphic design') and therefore they share many keys, but I think they have interesting points of differentiation in two levels which are the formal and semantic."

The formal level explained by Juan

"From the formal level, the design is based on the communication through various disciplines. We can say that graphic design handles a wider spectrum where the use of the image (either photography, illustration, computer graphics, etc) along with other messages (text, lettering and hand lettering, physical elements and their qualities —papers and other materials -) are combined in order to communicate a message specifically oriented to respond to a market target: either brand image, a website design or a magazine cover. Illustration is oriented to create images that could communicate exclusively through the image created and can do so without other formal elements and in whose objectives the 'market' and 'art' concepts have different specific weight. Its formal dimension is more limited than in graphic design and always requires specific artistic and technical skills."

The semantic level explained by Juan

"At the semantical level, the illustration is closer to the artistic discourse handled by, for example, painting, sculpture, music etc. Graphic design does not only respond to the artistic concept but commercial too (and mainly!) The illustration was created to 'illuminate ideas,' clarify them in a parallel and aesthetic language consistent and proper of each illustrator. Graphic design isn't necessarily looking for the beauty; the main objective here is that the composition created must be able to respond effectively to the market purpose

On the left: Juan Hernaz - '4th Story Contest about the environment' - poster for a tales contest

for which it is conceived."

His signature style

Juan said the style of his work should be fluid to be able to respond to the specific communication needs of every text, poster or theatre play. "As professionals, we must be able to handle it and not let ourselves be handled by worry or become its prisoners.

"I focus my work on creating atmospheres - little universes, where each detail has a full and logical sense in the illustration. However, if I find another object or idea more important in the text that requires more attention, I will modify my work in a more convenient way to convey the message."

More about his work...

Juan uses eclectic mediums in his work that require a range of techniques.
"I combine many techniques depending on each work's specific necessities. Such techniques include indian ink, watercolour, oil paint and collage, to name a few. However, there are two or three of them which are always present: graphite (especially in the first phases of each work and the pre-digital originals) and digital work for the use of colour and integration of scanned textures that I previously make by classic painting techniques or I take from old papers, metals, concrete etc," he said.

"In any case, for me, the technique is only the tool - the vehicle that helps me to reach the place where I'm focusing on. I think that each technique has its own expressive characteristics that transmit different sensations. We must select the most appropriate one for each single project," he added.

Speaking about his creative process, Juan broke it down for us: "First of all, I need to have all the characteristics of the project correctly defined. I must have clear who is my target, why and for what. Then I will sit and think. After that, I will start a documentation search that can be extended for as long as necessary: this is the most important phase - searching for all possible information that gives me the knowledge base needed to formulate a graphic idea that is interesting, different, aesthetically attractive, while leaving space for creativity and imagination," he said.
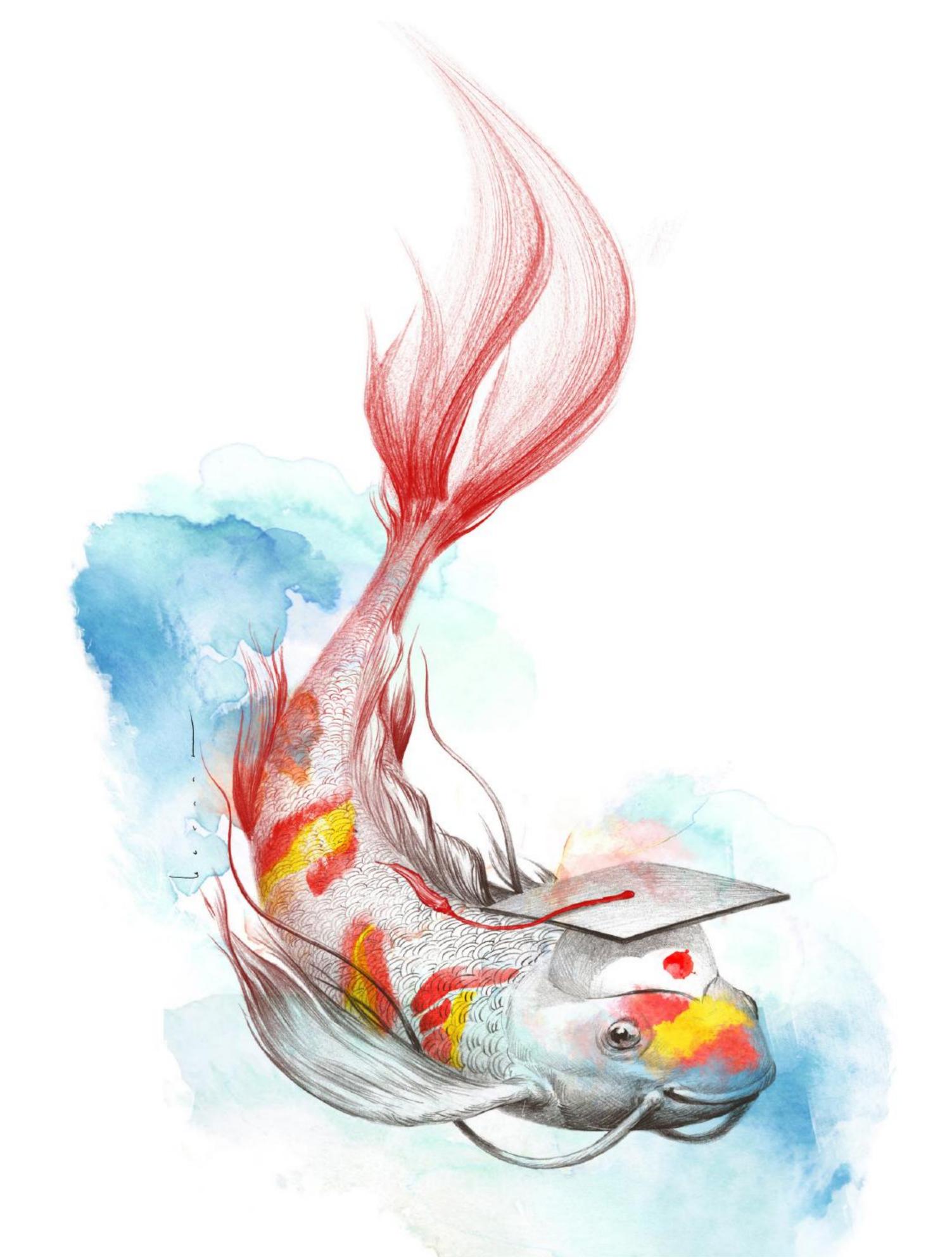
After all that, Juan said he uses a pencil and starts his first sketches, which are very simple and schematic in his notebook – he described this as "the whole economy of materials that will allow me to focus on the message without any distractions or dealing with techniques." Once the concept is defined, the next step is to choose and

On the right:
Juan Hernaz - Don Quixote
- 'Purga de Tarfe', Full Page
Illstration

Juan Hernaz - 'Faro Torres' - Childrens book about a phare (double page illustration)

Juan Hernaz - 'Faro Torres' - Childrens book about a phare (double page illustration)

decide the best technique to "solve the aesthetic aspect of the image," he said. "I need to see the illustration finished at all levels inside my head before starting the final work. I need to have clear about what direction my work is going in and only then will I be able to start walking."

Juan described each of his projects as "different," yet all bring him satisfaction of a work well achieved. "I have special affection to each developed project and this is not derived exclusively from the awards received or its media impact. I think that these kind of things are only passing circumstances that will be lost in the time," he said. "The most important satisfaction I get from each project is what I can learn during each phase of the process: documentation, sketches, essays, doubts, chaos, originals, techniques, dialogues, clients, friends etc. This is what really brings me the real satisfaction."

Juan doesn't like his journey to be easy and laid out for him. What motivates him is a challenge. "I need to find motivation beyond merely 'solving the work,'" he said. "The work must be exciting, an aesthetical challenge, a technical challenge and a conceptual challenge. I need to find the exciting face of each project." Admitting that he was obsessive concerning this area of his work, Juan said it was his way of finding sense in his work. "From this point of view, it is truly difficult for me to simply categorise one work as the most satisfactory because I love and hate parts of each one of them."

About his future...
Juan said it requires a tremendous amount of time and dedication for personal projects. Not only this, but there are weekly work assignments he has to respond to in order to receive his income. Thus, he said his dream would be to have a sabbatical where he could devote himself exclusively to the development of his projects.

As for his ultimate goal, Juan said, "to continue learning and facing new challenges that help me create new powerful images that have the ability to move something in the hearts and minds of people, as well as to continue communicating, evolving and building personal universes."

On the left:
Juan Hernaz - 'KOI' - book cover illustration
for a japanese language manual in Spain

Garde Magazine

FIRST ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

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