Ouachita Baptist University

Scholarly Commons @ Ouachita

2018

Collaborative Storytelling With Different Artistic Mediums

Andrew Martin
Ouachita Baptist University

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarlycommons.obu.edu/honors_theses

Part of the Theatre and Performance Studies Commons

Recommended Citation

SENIOR THESIS APPROVAL

This Honors thesis entitled

"Collaborative Storytelling With Different Artistic Mediums"

written by

Andrew Martin

and submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for completion of
the Carl Goodson Honors Program
meets the criteria for acceptance
and has been approved by the undersigned readers.

Eric Phillips, thesis director

Drew Hampton, second reader

Dr. Doug Sonheim, third reader

Dr. Barbara Pemberton, Honors Program director

May 8, 2018

Introduction:

      I play a card game called Magic: The Gathering. The tasks of the art director of

the cards and the creative process they utilize is fascinating to me. Through researching

my favorite card game and through the creation and design of *Painting the Roses Red*,

a theatre production at Ouachita Baptist University that took place in February of 2018. I

have found several similarities between the art direction of Magic and the direction of

Painting the Roses Red. In the following, I will compare the two artistic mediums, and

describe my design process for the Cheshire Cat puppet for *Painting the Roses Red*.

Thesis Statement:

      I will examine and compare two artistic mediums while engaging in my own

creative process through a student-devised project.

Table of Contents

I.   A Brief History of Magic: The Gathering

Magic: The Gathering is a trading card game published by Wizards of the Coast (Wizards). The premise of the story of Magic is that countless possible worlds (planes) exist in the Multiverse, but only unique beings known as Planeswalkers are capable of traversing the Multiverse. This concept is what allows Wizards to continue moving to new planes and releasing new sets and cards, while having the ability to keep Planeswalkers interwoven throughout the history of the planes. When playing the game, players act as Planeswalkers.

While Magic revolves around a fantasy world, it has its roots in reality. In 1991, Wizards of the Coast was in the process of printing roleplaying games and operated out of Peter Adkison's basement. While Adkison was the owner and CEO of Wizards, he was approached by Dr. Richard Garfield, a doctoral candidate in combinatorial mathematics. Garfield had a board game design to submit to Wizards known as "RoboRally". Adkison liked RoboRally, but felt as though Wizards at the time didn't possess the resources or technical know-how to produce a board game. Instead, he asked Garfield to come up with a simple game that could be played in minutes. This resulted in Garfield creating the ever-expanding card game, Magic: The Gathering.

Magic debuted in 1993 at the Origins Game Fair in Dallas, TX. Magic reached its 25th anniversary in 2018, and is a game played widely around the world. People are attracted to the themes, mechanics, character, and story of Magic: the Gathering cards, and there is a singular visual element that connects all of the cards: *art*. And the art on the cards is only possible with the inclusion of illustrators working under an art director.

Magic has gone through several different printings and sets with thousands of small boxes of art on each card. Each set is commissioned by the art directors for a specific reason. Here is a *very* brief description of the elements of the game.

Magic has five colors; white, blue, black, red, and green. These colors are represented on the cards, and each color generally corresponds to the abilities that the card has. The name of the card is listed at the top left, with the mana cost (how much a card costs to play) at the top right. In the case of Figure 1, the card costs one green mana, and one mana of any color. Cards with the card type "Land" are the main source of mana. The card type is listed below the art, and it shows what type of card it is. Older cards like this one had "Summon *Creature*" for Creature types. The main card types are Creature, Enchantment, Instant, Sorcery, Artifact, and Land.

Figure 1

Flavor text and certain abilities are listed within the text box of the card. Flavor text is the text given to cards by the creative writers to either give a short synopsis of the character, or what the card does, or in some cases, quotes by people.

The card illustrator is listed on the bottom left while the creature's power and toughness are listed on the right. The first number is the power, which is the amount the creature deals in combat, while the second number, the toughness, is the amount of damage needed to destroy the creature. Players refer to their deck as a "library" and the discard pile as the "graveyard."

II.   Timeline of Storytelling in Magic

Magic *design* is the act of Wizards of the Coast creating a new expansion set for the game. This is completed by several teams within Wizards' Research and Development Department (R&D). The designers are the people at Wizards who create new cards, mechanics, and themes for Magic sets. While a great deal of effort goes into the research and development of cards, there is more that must occur for a card to reach the players. A large majority of the work falls onto what is known as an art director. Art directors are responsible for communicating ideas and mechanics of sets within each department at Wizards, commissioning artists, and sometimes conceptualizing cards themselves. But how do the art directors create stories? Where does their inspiration come from? To discover the techniques and narrative elements used by the art directors, we must look further into the history of Magic: The Gathering.

History of Magic, 1993-1994. Theme Driven Cards:

Brady Dommermuth, the creative director of Wizards of the Coast in 2003, responded to several questions on the storytelling of Magic in May of that year. The questions were: "How is the storyline for the Magic cards created? Do you invent the storyline, characters, and plots, and then make up cards for it? Or make up the cards and then a story for them? How exactly do these two things coincide?"

The first Magic: The Gathering core sets (called "core/base sets" because they included a variety of cards not tied to a specific plane) printed were Alpha, Beta, and Limited. In each of these sets with limited printings, there were no specific characters denoted on the cards, no story, and no unified setting. Cards were created using what is

known as "top-down design." In top-down design, the concept or theme of the set comes first. As a theatre arts major myself having delved into playwrighting, attempting to develop a theme with ideas of flavor and theme can only get you so far, before you run out of material to take inspiration from. It is important that when representing a fantasy world on theme-driven cards that Wizards identifies their goal for the theme.

The writers who created the early Magic sets had free reign to create a story however they could. The writers for the *Antiquities* set wrote small portions within the flavor text of the Brothers' War (a major war within Magic's storyline) that were incomplete. This was their intended goal, because Wizards wanted to give the player a chance to form their own stories based around the art on the cards. The *Legends* set (1994) had no story or setting overall, but its creators attempted to have each *Legends* card tell its own little story. On the other hand, *The Dark* set (1994) was artist driven. It had no story, no setting, and no characters. There was only a loose common theme, which could practically just be defined as...well, darkness *(See Figure 2 and Figure 3)*.

Figure 2

Figure 3

6

History of Magic, 1994-1997. Mechanic Driven Cards

Mechanics, in Magic terms, are what defines the function of cards. With more cards being created every year, Wizards realized that different types of mechanics needed to be present on cards in order to provide more interesting gameplay. With *Fallen Empires*, Wizards assigned the R&D Narrative team (also known as Creative) to create a richer background for sets; these attempts were "card-centric." The idea was to create only enough story to provide cool, evocative names and flavor text. This model was used for the *Ice Age (See Figure 4), Alliances, Mirage (See Figure 5)*, and *Visions* sets. Along with this model, Wizards also placed sets into their own categories, known as blocks. The goal of the blocks for Wizards was to give a framework for the mechanics of cards, to give more cards to the players, and to give the art director the opportunity to expand the art of a specific plane into two or three sets.

Figure 4

Figure 5

7

The *Homelands* set was the exception within this era. It was made with flavor in mind first, and was praised for that flavor, but its mechanics were severely lacking in comparison to the other sets made around the same time.

History of Magic, 1997-1998. Character Driven Cards:

One of the biggest steps in storytelling within Magic was the introduction of the Weatherlight crew, a fictional group within Magic's storyline. This was Wizards' first attempt to use specific characters in their story to grow the Magic game into something larger than just cards. The cards in this era specified the adventures of the Weatherlight crew *(See Figure 6 and Figure 7)*, when previous to them, we only had snapshots of characters that didn't seem to have any impact on the overall Multiverse in Magic.

Figure 6

Figure 7

During this time in Wizards' Magic: The Gathering history, there were several changes in leadership between the *Weatherlight* set and the *Urza's Saga* set. It was difficult to try telling a complex story within the gameplay. With how the gameplay works, there is no specific order that the cards are in; they are always shuffled into the player's library. Players couldn't figure out the order in which plot events were supposed to be happening, and many were uninterested in the Weatherlight crew. Nonetheless, it was an endeavor made in an attempt to tell a story. But how do you meld the gameplay with the story? How does the gameplay tell the same story that the cards do? If you were to set the cards from a specific set out on a table, you could certainly try to connect their flavor text together. But the gameplay cannot replicate those exact details. Although Wizards continued to experiment within incorporating story into the cards themselves, they realized that there needed to be more than just physical cards. This led to an era where Wizards told stories of the Magic Multiverse through novels.

History of Magic, 1999-2002. Story Driven Cards:

Around the time of the *Urza's Legacy* set, responsibility for creating a compelling story for the Magic brand was given to the R&D Narrative Team. An idea was presented to them, where one or more novelists would start with a novel they had written by themselves. R&D would then create Magic cards that would hint at story elements of the novel. This method was used for the remainder of the Urza block, as well as for *Masques*, *Invasion*, *Odyssey*, and *Onslaught* blocks. But, it soon became more apparent to R&D that the needs of telling a story with a novel were much different from those of the cards themselves. Novels focus on creating interesting characters and

more importantly, interesting interactions between characters. They require plot points that affect the characters within the story which often changes the character in some way. On the other hand, we have cards: they require characters that don't ever change. Cards are very much like stock characters within a play; being that a character has one set of values they abide by and is easily recognizable to audiences throughout multiple plays. Cards can't communicate plot as in depth as a novel, and they require mechanics for the gameplay to work. Here's an example: a Magic novel is set in a tropical jungle where its residents live primitively and hunt for their food. Having the novelist describe several different creatures that exist inside in a technologically advanced, suburban city would be completely pointless and damaging for the novel, but it's essential information for the corresponding card set, as the five colors in Magic should fulfill all the possibilities for the types of cards that are created.

History of Magic, 2003-present.

From 2003 onward, Magic has primarily started with a concept for a set that can come from R&D or from Creative. Once an idea is solidified and is given the "go", R&D starts designing cards, Creative develops a setting, and a world grows from the collaboration between both parties. These processes happen simultaneously, and it happens with a lot of communication. Once the world is developed to an adequate degree, novelists are brought in to write books that are set in that world, and the creative writers release articles on the Wizard of the Coast website. Because of these mediums, the cards don't have to try to tell that full story anymore, and instead they describe the world, its creatures, civilizations, landscapes, and its magic.

Below, you will see that Wizards in their time as a company have gone back and forth on their desired approach to their design process.

- *Weatherlight* (1997) thru *Apocalypse* (2001): Character-driven stories (Weatherlight Crew)

- *Mirrodin* (2003) thru *Alara Reborn* (2009): Thematic worlds

- *Lorwyn* (2007-2008): Introduction of Planeswalker cards *(See Figure 8)* that could travel to any plane to assist the overall storyline of the Multiverse

Figure 8

- *Zendikar* (2009): Thematic world, complemented by an overlying story

- *Mirrodin Besieged* (2011): Physical advertising, encouraging players to affiliate themselves with either the Mirran or Phyrexians faction; integrating the play experience, the storyline and on making mechanics and individual cards that represent pivotal points in the story

- *Battle for Zendikar* (2015): Character-Driven (from the perspective of a group of Planeswalkers known as the Gatewatch)

11

III. The Creativity and Artistic Direction of Magic: The Gathering

Art directors work under the section of the Wizards of the Coast company known as the R&D Narrative Team, or Creative. The Creative team includes the writers and art directors. Although the creative writers have a large involvement in the creation of Magic cards, I will specifically be focusing on the tasks of the art director, as their job shares the most similarities to my work load for *Painting the Roses Red*.

Before the concept of the cards is handed over to the art director, the design team first designs the card. The prototype cards have a placeholder name and a small amount of necessary information. The text and numbers that appear on the first prototypes are there to serve the *gameplay* of the set, not to represent an element of the creative setting. Through an analysis of the cards and through play testing them, the development team decides on the final state of the card's mechanics. In comes the creative team: working on the mechanics for the cards and what kind of creature it is, what kind of location should be represented, or what kind of object should be present in the setting. An art description is created, and the artistic director commissions artists to illustrate the card.

STEP ONE: Proposal/Initial Inspiration

Art directors begin with reviewing the concepts of the cards, given to them by the Creative writers. To find the best images that fit with a card's rules and descriptions, they collaborate with the creative team writers. Each image that is pictured in the small box of a Magic card is meant to tell the player something about what the card does. If

the card has the ability flying, the art may need wings or some kind of Steampunk contraption. Maybe it has flying, but it floats in the air by way of magical properties?

Mythology:

One of the greatest sources of inspiration for why cards look the way they do comes from mythology. Throughout Magic's history, art directors often look to one theme for an entire set; some visual element that ties the entire set together. Here are some examples of Magic art from the past 25 years:

- *Arabian Nights - One Thousand and One Nights (Figures 9, 10, and 11)*

- *Ice Age - Norse mythology (Figures 12, 13, and 14)*

- *Kamigawa* - Japanese culture *(Figures 15, 16, and 17)*

- *Innistrad* - Gothic horror *(Figures 18, 19, and 20)*

- *Theros* - Greek mythology *(Figures 21, 22, 23)*

14

- *Kaladesh* - Whimsical Steampunk *(Figures 24, 25, and 26)*

- *Amonkhet* - Egyptian *(Figures 27, 28, and 29)*

Flavor Text

The flavor text of a card can be a vital part in the decisions made by the art director. Most flavor text is generally written by the creative writers themselves, but just like the designers of Magic seek out mythology for inspiration, they will also take inspiration directly from real-world individuals.

Figure 30

Figure 31

One of the most prominent figures that has been quoted in several Magic: The Gathering cards is William Shakespeare. In these specific examples *(See Figure 30 Figure 31, Figure 32, and Figure 33)*, the flavor text is taken from lines in Shakespeare's plays. Without the art director, we could perhaps see a beggar woman in the art of "Moon Sprite" as the "merry wanderer of the night" instead of a fairy creature, like the character Puck is in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. It is important for the art director to create a relationship between the flavor text and the art.

Figure 32

Figure 33

16

STEP TWO: Choosing the Designers

Art directors are in charge of hand-selecting individuals from over 150 artists for each assignment. When choosing, they measure the artist's style, their problem solving strengths, their availability, and even conversations that have previously occurred between the art director and the artists.

Figure 34

Figure 36

Figure 37

17

Artists can completely vary in their style. Richard Kane Ferguson *(Figure 34 and Figure 35)* and Terese Nielson *(Figure 36 and Figure 37)* both have different styles, but both also use a variety of colors in a collage-type of design. Often times, artists who are commissioned once for a set are commissioned for a later set if the art directors believe their style will enrich the setting and the characters on the cards. Once the artists have been chosen, there is a continuous back-and-forth process between art director and artist. The art directors will review hundreds of sketches and final drafts continuously throughout the process of creating a set. That feedback process is the tool for making sure each illustration fits the need of the card, is well-executed, and stays consistent within the context of the setting.

STEP THREE: World-building

Currently, Magic releases two worlds, or "planes," per year. Every world has an art lead, and that role is traded back and forth between the art directors. After the vision is captured by the team, the Lead Art Director is responsible for the artistic direction of the world guide, or the style guide. The world guide is Wizards' giant tome of conceptual images, filled with hundreds of environment, character, creature and themed illustrations. It also includes text that could be beneficial for the artists to find motivation for their art. Cynthia Sheppard, a current art director at Wizards, describes the need for the world guide as "keeping visual and tonal consistency across a card set when a hundred different hands are touching the final product."

In addition to the in-house concept artists at Wizards, hundreds of other illustrators are brought in from around the world for three week events called "concept pushes" to help generate the concept art. The art lead kicks off the push by making and

18

giving a detailed presentation about the world vision. The most visible part of many art director jobs is scouting for talent at conventions and other events, and often these concept pushes. This is actually quite similar to how talent casting works in the professional theatre. For *Painting the Roses Red*, the closest comparison to this was working through the casting process of our actors, where we decided who would be best fit for each role in our show.

Art directors at Wizards collaborate with employees throughout the entire company. They are always asked questions about art and world-building from Design, Editing, Imaging, Brand, and executives. Sheppard describes this interaction as "a culture of collaboration." Instead of giving instruction to people and walking away, they sit down at a table and discuss everything necessary. Similar to this, for the Muse Project, weekly meetings were held with all of the designers and crew members enrolled in Theatre Practicum, a course within the Department of Theatre Arts that gives students the opportunity to have practical application during productions. These weekly meetings were beneficial to the flow of the production, as it was a time when everyone was in the same room and conversation could easily form.

IV. The Creativity and Artistic Direction of *Painting the Roses Red*

The Muse Project is a student devised production within the Department of Theatre Arts at Ouachita Baptist University that takes place during the first month of the Spring semester. The year before each project, students are encouraged to submit a proposal of a story they would like to put to stage. This past year, I had the privilege of creating *Painting the Roses Red* along with my classmates Jacob Hemsath and Libby Villegas.

Through this project, I was able to have a hands-on experience in exploring a theatrical narrative of storytelling. Like the planes of Kaladesh, or Innistrad, or Zendikar, I wanted to create my own world. But just as art directors at Wizards need assistance from the creative writers and their executives, I needed help from my peers and professors in the theatre department in order to help create the show.

I took on a very similar approach as an art director of a Magic: The Gathering set would do, with the following steps. You'll probably recognize a lot of similarities between our process and what an artistic director of Magic: The Gathering does based on what I've described.

STEP ONE: Proposal/Initial Inspiration

We began our initial proposal and inspiration by starting with a theme, similar to how the *The Dark* set was made. I combined several pictures and ideas together onto a singular Pinterest board. This early process was primarily to assist in realizing what my own vision for the show was, but it also served to assist our proposal.

In the creation of the story, we used a process that was much like top-down design for Magic: The Gathering sets, in that a concept of the world is conceived first. In our terms, this would be similar to starting with a blank script, yet ideas flowing in our mind. Our initial proposal was lacking in depth; we wanted a primitive feeling, but based in modern times. We had the words rugged, dark, melancholic, shadow, ethereal, and overgrown come to mind. Over the year before we began rehearsals with actors, we molded the story into something completely different from where we started. We decided to base the story in the world of Alice in Wonderland, in order to grasp the audience's attention with something familiar to them. The show's title came from this concept: *Painting the Roses Red*. Although we were creating a story that focused on a fantastical world, we realized that it needed to have its roots in reality, or else it may not be a successful production. We began the story with utilizing something most humans understand, whether they have one or not: family. And we dealt with issues that humans have; abuse, denial, love, and power. We wanted to explore what it means to be human. And being human means (amongst many other things of course) having the power to tell stories through communication with other humans. The most fascinating experience for *Painting the Roses Red* was that even though we were expressing our vision for this fantasy world to people, it has its roots somewhere in reality.

Mythology:

Although we had decided to base the story off of Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*, from both a desired design perceptive and from the themes we were planning on exploring in the story, we felt as though the "happy-go-lucky" feel of the

animated Disney film "Alice in Wonderland" was not to our liking. Before creating the

proposal, I had already had a sense for what I wanted the design to look like. This

atmosphere I wanted to create was difficult to describe at first, since it was only within

my mind. However, looking further into my initial inspirations for the project and

research of several different cultures, I learned that there were three cultures that would

play heavily into the design for the show. The designers and I therefore drew from

Norse, Icelandic, and Celtic mythology, as well as the landscapes of Iceland *(See*

Figure 38).

Figure 38

One of the first inspirations I found before
even starting the proposal for the Muse project was
an album by the Icelandic band Sigur Ros.
Specifically, the album *Takk… (See Figure 39)* was
appealing to me. Their music is atmospheric,
ethereal, and it captures a melancholic feeling that
we wanted to implement in our show.

Figure 39

STEP TWO: Choosing the Designers

In a theatrical production, designers are necessary for good theatre to be seen on the stage. I found a small design team within the theatre department to help me create the world of *Painting the Roses Red*. I worked primarily on puppetry design, but I also assisted Stephen Vaughn with scenic design and lighting design. And just as an art director at Wizards needs artists to create the art on cards, I needed a costume designer and a hair and makeup designer to cloth the actors. Since the costumes required an extensive amount of detail, both Allison Austin and Anna Darr would be the costume designers, and Lizzy Griffin would be the designer for hair and makeup.

STEP THREE: World-building

For the "style guide" that I created, I collaborated with my design team by use of a Pinterest board that captured the majority of my concepts for *Painting the Roses Red*. World-building within the theatre takes a lot of conversation amongst the designers and the crew members. I held several design meetings with the designers, bouncing ideas off of one another. As one of the directors, I had a large part in saying what I did or did not like. But just as individual illustrators for Magic bring their own art style to the game, I didn't want to limit my designer's artistic abilities. This is one reason why it is necessary to continue the "culture of collaboration," as it would soon be frustrating for them if I were instructing them instead of discussing ideas together. During *Painting the Roses Red*, I took my own narrative approach to world-building in creating a very specific puppet character: the Cheshire Cat. This was my medium that I diligently worked on to bring our world to life.

My Medium:

For the Muse project, the biggest task I endured during the "month of design" was the creation of the Cheshire Cat puppet. I didn't start this project in the first place without realizing that I needed experience in puppetry. For this reason, I prepared myself by attending a puppetry intensive the previous summer.

In the summer of 2017, I traveled to the Berkshires in Massachusetts to attend the New England Puppet Intensive. I specifically took this intensive in order to discover potential ways to create the Cheshire Cat puppet. I was pleased to have learned several different ways of constructing many types of puppets, but there was one type of design that stood out to me the most. That design utilized reed cane, bamboo and muslin paired with small lights in order to create lantern-esque puppets. In January of 2018, I looked into the same company that my instructor in New England used: Frank's Cane & Rush Supply, a small company based in California. I ordered round reeds because they would be easily flexible once soaked in water. I decided on two separate sizes in order to construct the cat puppet: RR06 (4.25mm in diameter) and RR12 (10mm in diameter). The RR06 package was 200 feet long, while the RR12 package was 35 feet long. I utilized the RR12 package for initial support of most of the pieces of the Cat, while the RR06 was reserved for detail work and extra support. Through actual construction, these initial thoughts varied, as the larger diameter reed sometimes looked better for detail work, and the smaller diameter reed sometimes worked just as well for support of the pieces. The main source of support and the handles for the performers were bamboo poles that I ordered from the same company. Just like the round reeds, I

ordered two separate sizes of bamboo poles in order to have enough variation for each of the Cat pieces.

Once I had my hands on the reed and the bamboo, I was ready to construct. As I stated previously, the reeds need to be soaked before they can be utilized. I poured water into a large trash can and set the reeds inside *(See Figure 40)*. They are ready to be taken out at a minimum of 15 minutes of soaking. Once they're soaked, they are malleable enough to bend them any way you please. The longer you soak the reeds, the more you are able to shape them to your liking.

Figure 40

I attempted to create a circular shape and attached it to the reed. The way the reed bent was not satisfying, so fortunately the larger round reed

fit perfectly into the hollow form of one of the bamboo poles *(See Figure 41)*. I planned for the Cheshire Cat to have four leg pieces, a tail piece, a body piece, and a head piece. I utilized the "hollow bamboo technique" for each of the four legs. I wanted the size of the Cat to be very large, so I knew that only one performer should be assigned to each leg. Throughout the entire process, I

constantly held the piece in my hands and walked around with the leg to make sure it would be comfortable for the performer.

I used metal wires to attach one piece of round reed to another *(See Figure 42 and Figure 43)*. If I needed to attach the reed to a bamboo pole, I would drill a hole in the bamboo, insert a larger gauge wire into the hole, and then wrap the wire around the bamboo and the reed. Later in the process, I realized that there were times when duct tape was necessary to provide extra support, as well as to protect actors from the sharp ends of the wires.

Figure 42

Figure 43

When it came to the creation of the head of the Cheshire Cat, I heavily debated which formation of the eyes *(See Figure 44)* would be best to help stabilize the head, but would also fit for our vision of the Cheshire Cat. How could I replicate the Cat's

curiosity, the calming demeanor, and the intrigue? The eyes are the windows to the

soul, and it was important for me to establish character but to also ensure functionality.
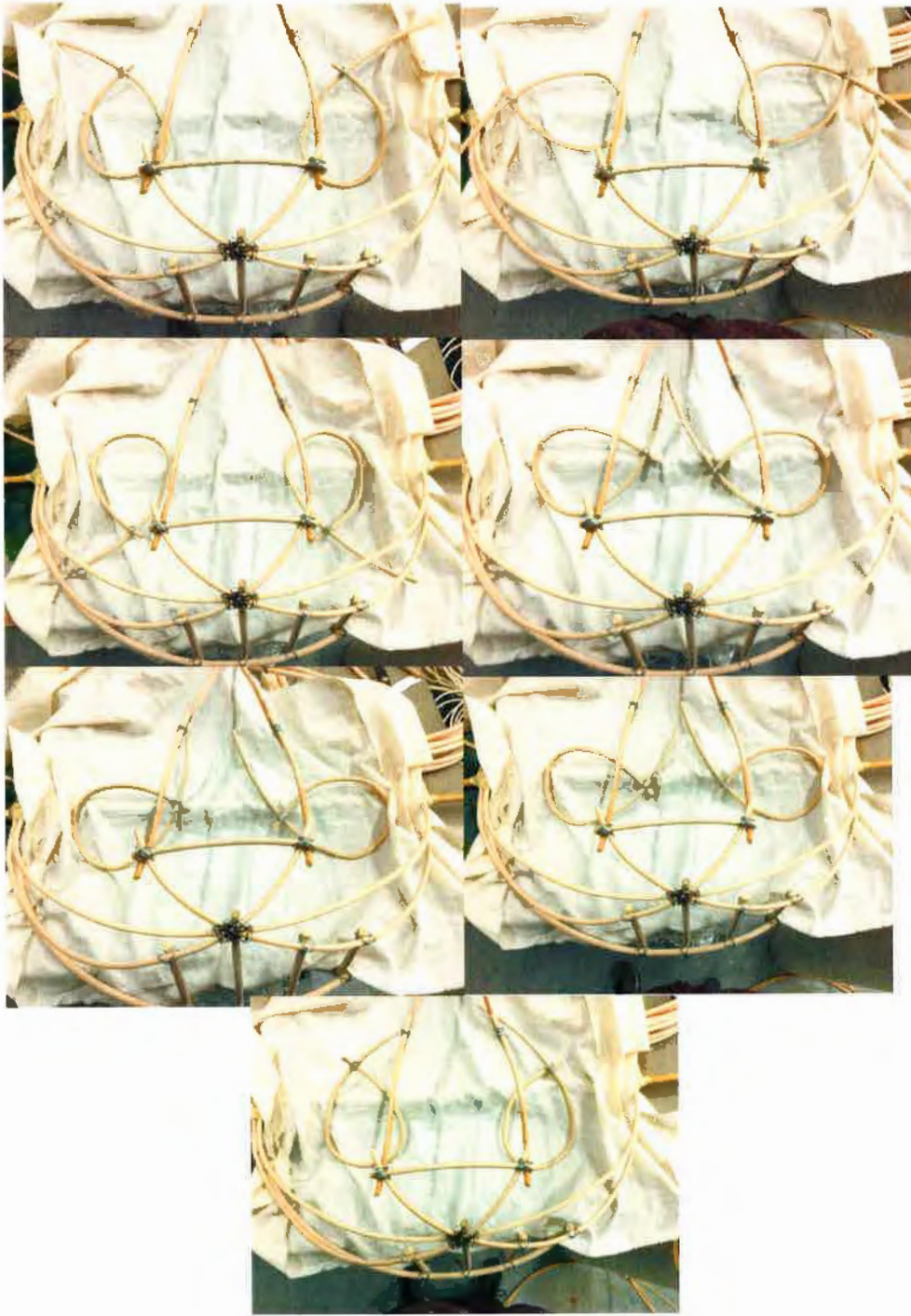

Figure 44

I decided that the edges of the eyes should be shaped upwards, as this brought the sense of intrigue and curiosity to the Cheshire Cat *(See Figure 45 and Figure 46).* Keeping the eye arrangement as the length being greater than the width helped the Cat to not look "wide-eyed-curious", and instead, more gentle. I wanted the most intriguing part of the cat to come from its smile, as a shoutout to the original Alice in Wonderland drawings by Sir John Tenniel. I also researched several different cats and based the face off of those cats, and *then* included the smile. Without the smile, the cat would look like a normal cat with its mouth closed.

Once the initial structure of each piece was completed, I added lights to the inside of each piece. It was important to put the battery pack in a place on the puppet that made it comfortable for the performer to switch on and off *(See Figure 47)*. The reason for this was for the moments in the play when the Cheshire Cat would "disappear and then reappear" *(See Figure 48 and Figure 49)*. After the lights were installed, it was time to add the fabric to the outside of the cat pieces to create the body of the Cat.

Figure 47

Figure 48

Figure 49

Figure 50

The fabric I used was a white cloth muslin, bought from Walmart. First, I cut out pieces for the muslin that fit within each "box" of the Cat. In order to apply the muslin to the cat, I applied wood glue with a brush or my fingers onto the reed, then placed the muslin on top and applied more wood glue. This double-applying process kept a consistent hold on both materials and would also stay in the same general/natural color of the muslin, reed, and bamboo if the wood glue were to spill outside the lines of the reed and bamboo *(See Figure 50 and Figure 51)*.

Figure 51

In total, I created seven pieces for the Cheshire Cat. The four legs, the tail, the body piece, and the head. I was most involved with creating the skeletal structure with the bamboo and reeds and then adding the lights so that way my crew could work on applying the muslin. Once all of the pieces had lights inside and were covered in muslin *(See Figure 52)*, they were ready for a quick design touch up to continue the Celtic inspiration for the show *(See Figure 53)*.

Figure 52

Figure 53

On the following pages, there are several images of the final product in action, with Raleigh Peterson performing as the Cheshire Cat *(See Figure 54, Figure 55, Figure 56, and Figure 57)*.
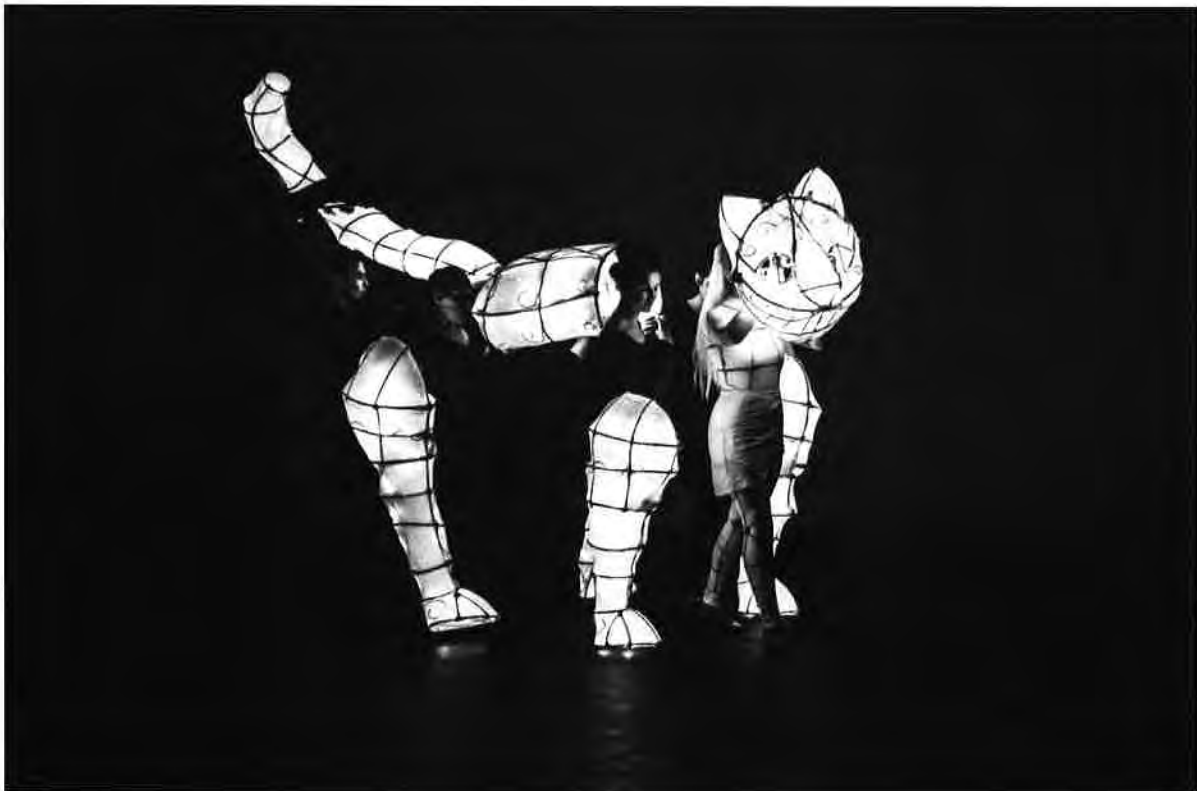
Figure 54

Figure 55

Figure 56

Figure 57

33

V. Collaborative Efforts During Muse:

If collaboration is the heart of the theatre, communication is the soul. Collaboration is the most important aspect of theatre, but it cannot happen, of course, without communication between individuals.

The first stages of this collaboration were between myself, Jacob & Libby. We proposed an idea for the Muse project. All three of us communicated with Dr. Scott Holsclaw as he supervised our process, and offered us suggestions and advice. There was much merriment when Jacob, Libby and I wrote the script, and when we pooled our thoughts together to talk about the music.

When we got down to the last month of the process and into rehearsals, we communicated with our actors our vision for *Painting the Roses Red.* I blocked out the scenes with the Cheshire Cat puppet and informed the performers strategies for moving their pieces of the Cheshire Cat.

I collaborated with Stephen to create the scenic design and the lighting design for the show. Both of us sought out help from Eric Phillips on how to design. I collaborated with Allison and Anna on costumes, and Christina Johnson communicated to them how to continue moving forward with the design process. I discussed strategies for hair and makeup with Lizzy, and she in turn gave her crew assignments once tech week hit, and how to operate during the performances.

I had two wonderful assistants for puppetry design; Rahlea Zinck and Ashton Spence. I was grateful to even have help from the cast and other people within the theatre who were willing to volunteer.

34

VI. Followup & Conclusion

Through my process of designing and directing *Painting the Roses Red*, I discovered several similarities between my endeavors and the endeavors of an art director for Magic: The Gathering. Directors discover their inspiration for the projects they're working on and propose their ideas to others. They choose designers and engage in world-building with other artists. The art directors of Magic create the story, and the players are tasked with continuing the telling of the story, just like the playwright, directors and designers of a theatrical production create a story and the players (actors) are tasked with continuing the telling of the story.

It has been eye-opening to draw similarities between two different artistic mediums. One medium is based in trading cards and mechanical gameplay, while the other is based on interactions between actors on stage. Both mediums establish a culture of collaboration amongst the people in order for the story to be told. I am interested to know how other artistic mediums compare to one another. Regardless of whether or not they do, I personally believe that when you find the middle line between story and theme, you can truly create *magic*.

VII.   References

Beyer, Doug. "Flavor Driven." *MAGIC: THE GATHERING*, Wizards of the Coast,
    17 June 2009,
    magic.wizards.com/en/articles/archive/savor-flavor/flavor-driven-2009-06-17.

Dommermuth, Brady. "The Story of the Story." *MAGIC: THE GATHERING*, Wizards of
    the Coast, 27 May 2003,
    magic.wizards.com/en/articles/archive/feature/story-story-2003-05-27.

Frank's Cane and Rush Supply, www.franksupply.com/index.html.

"Gatherer - Magic: The Gathering." *Gatherer Card Search*, Wizards of the Coast,
    gatherer.wizards.com/Pages/Default.aspx.

"MAGIC'S HISTORY." *MAGIC: THE GATHERING*, Wizards of the Coast,
    magic.wizards.com/en/content/history.

MTG Wiki. "R&D." *MTG Wiki*, Gamepedia, 3 Apr. 2018, mtg.gamepedia.com/R%26D.

Nielson, Terese. "Portfolio Favorites." *Tnielsen*, 2018,
    www.tnielsen.com/Portfolio_Favorites.php.

Sheppard, Cynthia. "What Does a Magic Art Director Do?" *Fantasy Illustration Blog by
    Cynthia Sheppard*, Wizards of the Coast, 13 May 2013,
    sheppard- arts.blogspot.com/2017/05/what-does-magic-art-director-do.html.