

PAPER-CUT LIGHT BOXES – AN EXPLORATION PROCESS

HARI AND DEEPTI

Hari & Deepti, “husband wife art duo” (Hari & Deepti, 2017), exposed me to the infinite possibilities of paper light boxes. Their technical skills, along with their vivid imagination, translated into extraordinary story-telling light boxes. At the time, I was exploring the theme of ‘connections’, and so I found that this medium fits very well with the theme. Likewise, after having done my comparative study, I was fascinated by how depth is created within this medium.



Source: https://www.facebook.com/pg/harianddeepti/photos/?ref=page_internal

THE INITIAL HURDLES

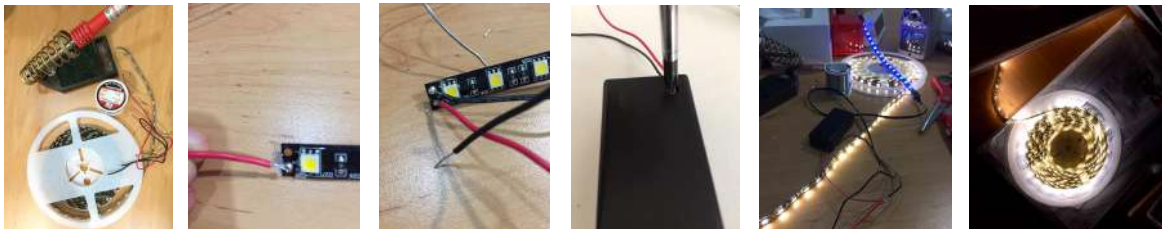
By watching a couple of Youtube tutorials on how to make paper-cut light boxes, I got down the fundamental of making a paper-cut light box. However, I still faced some hurdles along the way. The first hurdle I had to jump over was gathering the materials such as LED strips, soldering iron, other electronic components, foamcore boards, and plastic sheets to create the reflection. Finally, I managed to get a hold of all the materials and tools needed after a trip back to Taiwan. The second hurdle I had to jump over was soldering the LED strips to the battery wires. The ‘jelly’ protection on top of the LED strip made it hard for the solder to stick on. It is by scraping off the ‘jelly’ completely, was I then able to resume to the ‘joy’ of soldering!

HOW DEPTH IS CREATED WITH PAPER-CUT LIGHT BOXES

Occlusion, the overlapping of objects of the layers, helps create visual depth. “Objects that are nearer occlude (cover up) objects that are further away” (Bradley, 2012). **Physical distance** between each layer also helps create visual depth for paper-cut light boxes. This is because of the varying **degrees of contrast**. The degree of contrast is highest for the layer furthest away from the light source (i.e. the first layer), and the lowest for the layer closest to the light source, thus this is why the layers further back seems to recede into the background. What I found most fascinating is that the most effective way to create visual depth is by applying the **contrast of value**, as in this case, the warm light still causes the nearest layers to recede...

ARTISTIC INFLUENCES AND CRITICAL INVESTIGATION

THE SOLDERING PROCESS



As you can see in the second image from the left, one of the challenges that I faced was that the solder would not stick onto the LED strip. This was because there is a ‘jelly’ protection on top of the LED strip to enable it to be waterproof. To solve that problem, I had to carefully scrap off the jelly completely for the part I would be soldering on. As you can see in the third image, the wire was soldered on successfully. In the fourth photo to the right, I was experimenting with connecting two LED strips with one power source. It worked!

A MINI-PROJECT THAT INVESTIGATES THE EFFECTS OF DIFFERENT LIGHTING



Initial design

Experimenting with different colors of LED lights.

Final invitation card design

For my mini project, I decided to create the background of my birthday invitation card. The images on the left depict the process from initial design to my final invitation card design.



Influenced by Hari and Deepti's “Magician's Hat” light box 16x20”

PAPER-CUT LIGHT BOXES – AN EXPLORATION PROCESS

MY SECOND PRACTICE LIGHT BOX – INDIANA JONES

Matthew Reynolds, „Indiana Jones vs. The Ninjas“, 800 x 1352, USA

IMAGE REFERENCE

For more practice with this medium, I decided to use "Indiana Jones vs. Ninja", a vector illustration by Matthew Reynolds, as a reference image. I chose Reynolds' illustration because his illustrations of Indiana Jones seemed quite fun to turn into a paper light box, and the silhouettes already embody contrast of values, so it was definitely easier to picture the positioning of each layer, and perhaps the effects. It was really interesting to how the contrast of values for the light box can be so similar to the contrast of values for a 2D illustration.



TWO UNEXPECTED HURDLES

Although most of the hurdles of making a light box were jumped over during the mini-project process (e.g. gathering the materials, learning how to solder the wire to the LED strip), an additional challenge that I faced when making this light box was actually when I had to make a frame to accommodate the composition. It was difficult to get the composition to fit inside the box, as layers were not glued in perfect alignments on all sides. To solve the problem, I trimmed down some of the edges for a couple of layers to fit all the layers perfectly into the box. Similarly, I also made an error along the way of forgetting to cut out the reflection for Indiana Jones and his surroundings. Making note of this mistake, I corrected it for my third light box creation: *Connections*.

At about this time, I was also met with a decision regarding which layer I should attach the plastic sheet (the effect of water) to. The other question I was met with was where the light should emanate from (lights installed at different areas of the composition may change the feeling the viewers get whilst looking at this paper-cut light box. At last, I decided to install the light from around the scene, as it brightens and elevates the entire scene with soft lighting.



FINAL PHOTOGRAPH OF LIGHT BOX

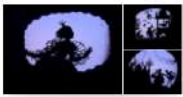
ARTIST STUDY – LOTTE REINIGER

[Google screenshot](#)

Lotte Reiniger was a German silhouette animator and a film director in the 1900s. I believe that her fairy-tales silhouette animations really influenced my body of work and my final theme of childhood.



Prince Ahmed



Cinderella



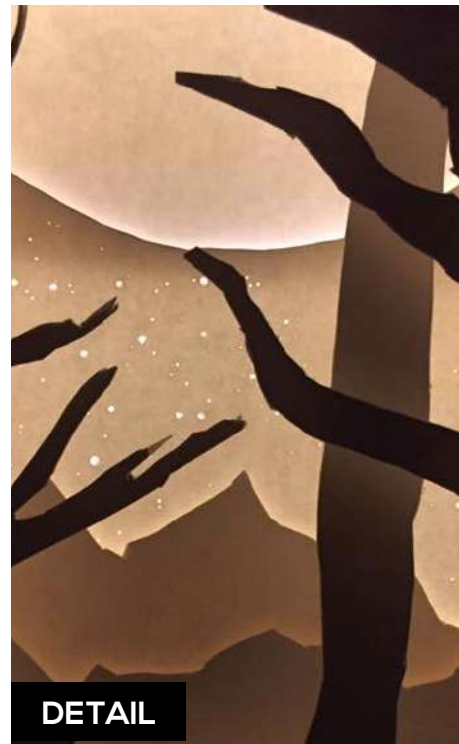
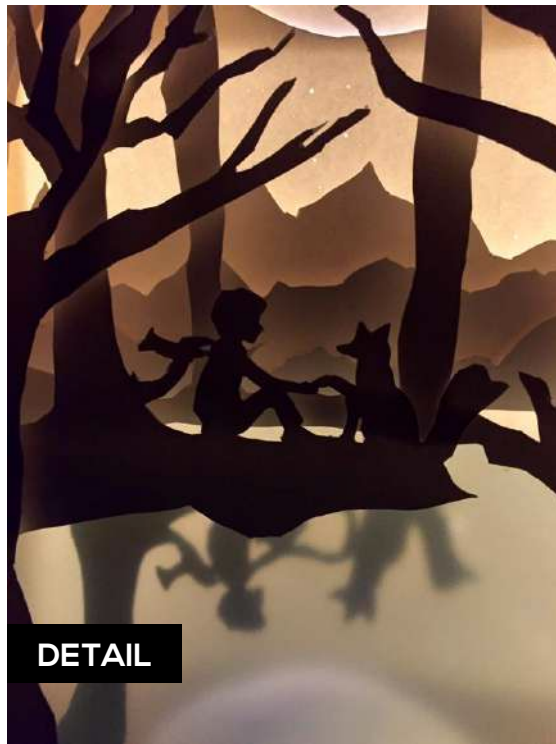
Hansel and Gretel



Sleeping Beauty

CONNECTIONS – A PAPER-CUT LIGHT BOX

ARTISTIC INFLUENCES AND CRITICAL INVESTIGATION



CONNECTIONS. FEBRUARY 2017 28 X 38 X 9 CM PAPER-CUT LIGHT BOX.

Connections, influenced by the 2015 movie *The Little Prince*, aims to remind the viewers that in order to see the most beautiful things in life, they must expose themselves to the environment and open their hearts to focus on the experience of their surroundings. The fantasy-like composition was influenced by the artist couple Hari & Deepti's paper light boxes.

The completed work demonstrates the sense of visual depth I wanted to achieve. Composition-wise, I believe I have also succeeded, as eyes of the viewers are automatically drawn towards the center, where the Little Prince and the Fox are (i.e. the focal point). Likewise, I think my goal to create a fantasy-like landscape and atmosphere was also achieved. This composition emanates a sense of peacefulness and perhaps loneliness. The exaggerated moon, starry sky and the distant landscape of the mountain ranges creates a world of infinite possibilities and thus hope.

WORK IN PROGRESS



WORK IN DAY LIGHT



CLEAR VS TINTED PLASTIC SHEET

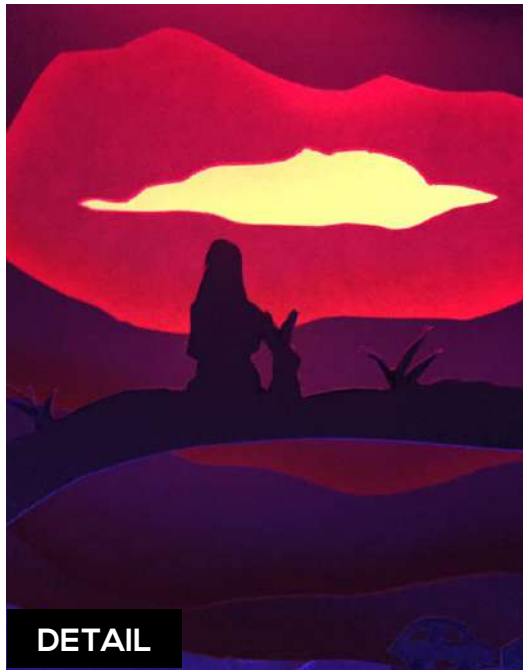


INFLUENCES



"Magician's Hat": Paper-cut light box – 16 x20 inches

Although the illustration of *The Little Prince* was influenced by the 2015 movie, the fantasy-like composition of *Connections* was influenced by Hari and Deepti's "The Magician's Hat". The reason why I chose to use this piece as inspiration again is because I believe the composition is really very effective in creating a fascinating atmosphere.



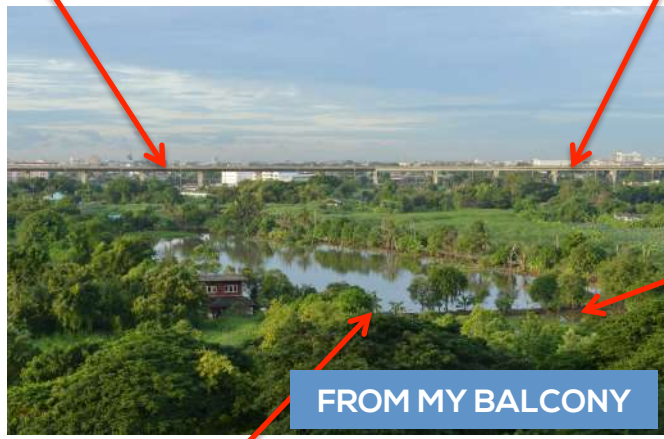
HOME 80 X 28 X 13 CM PAPER-CUT LIGHT BOX. MARCH 2017.

Inspired by the community/environment around me, *Home* explores the contrast between the cultural and the industrial background of the city I was born and grew up in. The left side of the composition consists of the cultural side of the country I have lived in (temples, monks, etc.), whilst the right hand side of the composition depicts more of a city-like, technologically advanced, or industrial world. The center of the image depicts a portrayal of me and my pet rabbit watching the burning sunset (the industrial pollution of Bangkok has often created bright and saturated sunsets.)

INFLUENCES ALL PHOTOGRAPHS TAKEN BY ME

THE COMMUNITY AROUND ME

There is one temple on the horizon that I can spot from my balcony (see zoomed in photo below)



A dock where local children play on.



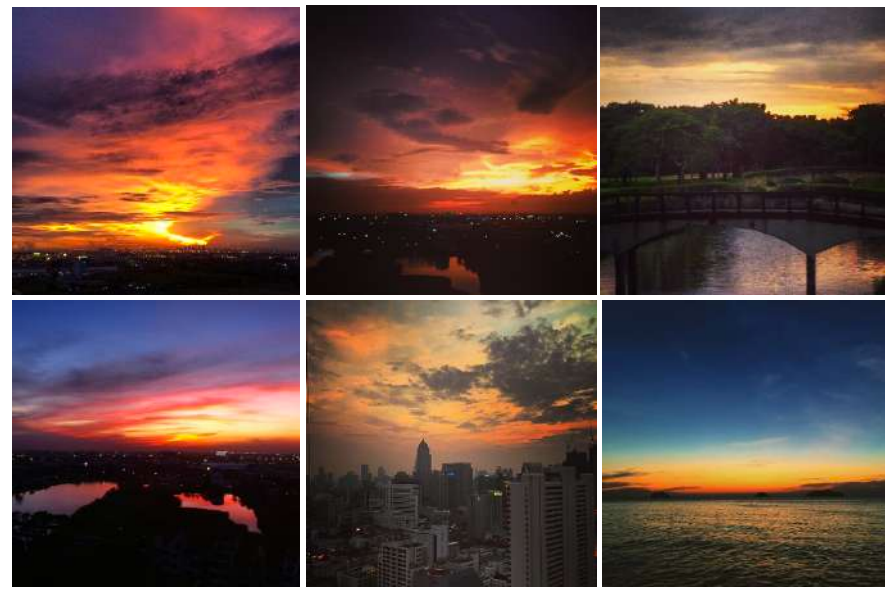
Occasionally, there would be locals who fish here.



The temple I can see from my balcony.

MY OBSESSION WITH SUNSETS

FINAL PAPER-CUT LIGHT BOX



Perhaps one of the things I would miss most about Bangkok when I depart is its beautiful sunsets. Although most of the time, the sunsets are heavily saturated because of the industrial pollutants dumped into the air, I can't help but be mesmerized and dumbstruck by their presence.

MY NEIGHBORHOOD

