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LR21s8

## First Flash Project Proposal

### Idea

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I want to do a project emphasizing the artistic, visual side of electronic writing, more than the nonlinear pure-textual side we've been looking at so far. The basic inspiration for the project is a night I spent in Japan at a town near Mount Fuji, in the beginning of July last summer. We were staying in a *ryōkan*, a traditional Japanese-style inn, and we had the unexpected pleasure of seeing a fireworks display over the lake between us and the view of Mount Fuji. It was a spectacular moment, and produced some of the most extraordinary photographs I took all trip:



I had the idea that I'd like to start with some text, perhaps descriptive about the scene, perhaps just abstract but fitting words like "explosion," and essentially convert them into fireworks and then draw new words out of the explosions. I don't see it being a very long piece, mainly due to the amount of time that will be needed to learn flash well enough to put together visuals on that scale, but my hope is to have a word appear on the screen, get drawn inward to a point then explode outward in color before having other letters forming other words appear from the trailing tails of the explosion.

### Process

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I believe I can do all the imaging I need with shape-tweening, although I will have to key each letter separately and carefully shepherd each tween through the proper steps for it to look like I hope it will. I expect to use a fairly muted color palette, with a dark brown, grey and/or black background with the main focus being on the fireworks. One of

the first things I will need to do is determine exactly the text I'm going to use, as it will be very important to have that laid out before I begin trying to transform it... I am unused to creative writing and am having trouble getting my ideas flowing properly, but I may simply resort to some sort of descriptive writing about the scene, possibly with elements of Japanese poetry. As for the visual component, I've given that the most thought, and I've now played around fairly extensively with shape tweening, but I will probably scale back and adapt my mental idea as I go in order to complete the project to a satisfying level by the time it's due.

### *Interface*

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The piece will not be interactive, although I have a definite hope that either later in this class or in a future independent study or something I will be able to learn enough action scripting to have the mouse position dynamically influence the fireworks display. (It just occurred to me that doing my first Macromedia-based project on "fireworks" has the possibility to be a fun joke... not relevant to the proposal, but oh well ^\_^) I'd like to eventually manage to make it an interactive piece, although in the meantime it will play like a movie (I may include a replay button, it seems a better thing to do than having it just stop, and is CERTAINLY better than looping). Basic flow of the piece, as I imagine it:

1. *Titles* – I would like to start with the time and place of the actual fireworks, probably in Japanese script down the right side of the stage, mostly to set the mood... fireworks are pretty international here, but I think the Japanese framework is important for my memories of the event, and I'd like to transfer that to the viewer if possible.
2. *Opening Word* – I'm using the word "explosion" here in my design, but that will almost certainly change. Regardless, the word will eventually contract in towards the center of the screen, before exploding in the first
3. *Firework* – which will expand and drift down the screen, different trails of fire slowly or quickly morphing into letters and forming words that will fade out with the remainder of the firework. I think subsequent fireworks will be initiated by the traditional "get launched off the ground" method, rather than having them form from those words.
4. *Ending* – as with all good fireworks displays, I'd like to end with several going off at once, delivering one final whole line of text (or perhaps a full poem hanging in midair)

Another brief note on scene and style: I'd like to have the very outline of Mount Fuji appear in the background, faintly, every time a firework explodes. It's an iconic mountain, it ought to help anchor the scene. (Would it be wise to include some sort of more recognizable Japanese style [architecture, etc] around the periphery for this, or will my listed ideas be enough?)

On the question of Sound, I haven't thought it out well enough yet. If I include it (and I think that if I have time to do it right, it would add a lot), probably either ambient noise, carefully timed and balanced, or actual firework effects. Nothing really loud regardless, and this is an area I have not given as much thought.

### References

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The main references I will use are my memories, my photographs (and the more artistic photographs taken by my friend Imogen on the same night, with longer exposures) and perhaps a little of the aesthetic of Japanese poetry. I may also refer to *renga* or *haiku* for the text, although I believe my capabilities as a poet to be roughly comparable to my skill at molecular biology and surfing. I expect the piece to be fairly minimalist visually, with the focus being on the fireworks, not any surrounding environment. Once I master action script properly I would like to incorporate reflections, as with my pictures, but I do not know any easy way to do that without spending vastly too much time on the project.

### Expected Difficulties

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I know this project has the potential to be somewhat overwhelming, but I really want to learn Flash as rapidly and intuitively as possible, so in good CS125 tradition I've flung myself in over my head (although not NEARLY as far as in that class... I can definitely make this a smaller piece to compensate for lack of time, which was not as true for Dan's complicated Knight storyline). If worst comes to worst I can export particle generators in Maya as *.swf* files and tween them within Flash to speed up the workflow, but I expect I can do all of the graphical work within the program itself. That being said, the biggest difficulty will be rapidly developing my text as a starting point, and then learning by doing as quickly as possible while actually working on the project.