Art History for Game Devs:

In Praise of Abstraction

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LOCAL NO.
12
UNION OF DESIGN & PLAY

LOCAL NO. 12

UNION O

Uncharted 2: Among Thieves

Raymund Anlocotan / Raydiant

DATE
2009

PLATFORM
PS3

DEVELOPER
Naughty Dog

PUBLISHER
Sony

GDC12-GM086/100

Which tells a better story?

GDC12-CM034/050

Ico

Adam S Doyle

DATE
2001

PLATFORM
PS2

DEVELOPER
Team Ico

PUBLISHER
Sony

GDC12-GM034/100

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12
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THE ART HISTORY OF GAMES

INDIECADE
International Festival of Independent Games

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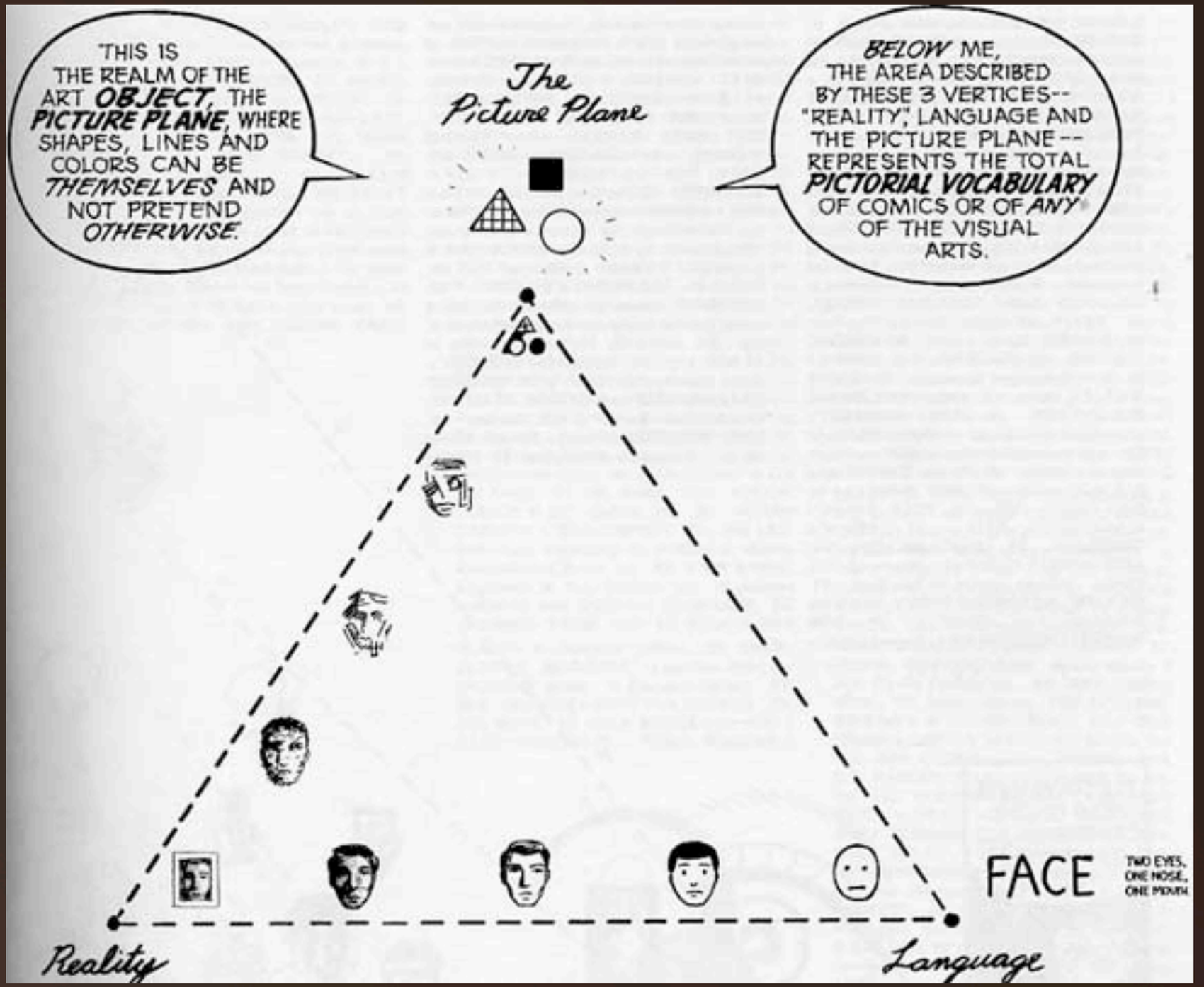
International Festival of Independent Games

TONIGHT!
'HAPPY'
LAFFS AND
GOOD TIMES
FRIENDS!
AND.
HEY!
NEW
'HAPPY'!
FEELIN' GOOD!
NOW


THIS IS THE REALM OF THE ART OBJECT, THE PICTURE PLANE, WHERE SHAPES, LINES AND COLORS CAN BE THEMSELVES AND NOT PRETEND OTHERWISE.
The Picture Plane
BELOW ME, THE AREA DESCRIBED BY THESE 3 VERTICES-- "REALITY", LANGUAGE AND THE PICTURE PLANE-- REPRESENTS THE TOTAL PICTORIAL VOCABULARY OF COMICS OR OF ANY OF THE VISUAL ARTS.
FACE
TWO EYES, ONE NOSE, ONE MOUTH
Reality
Language

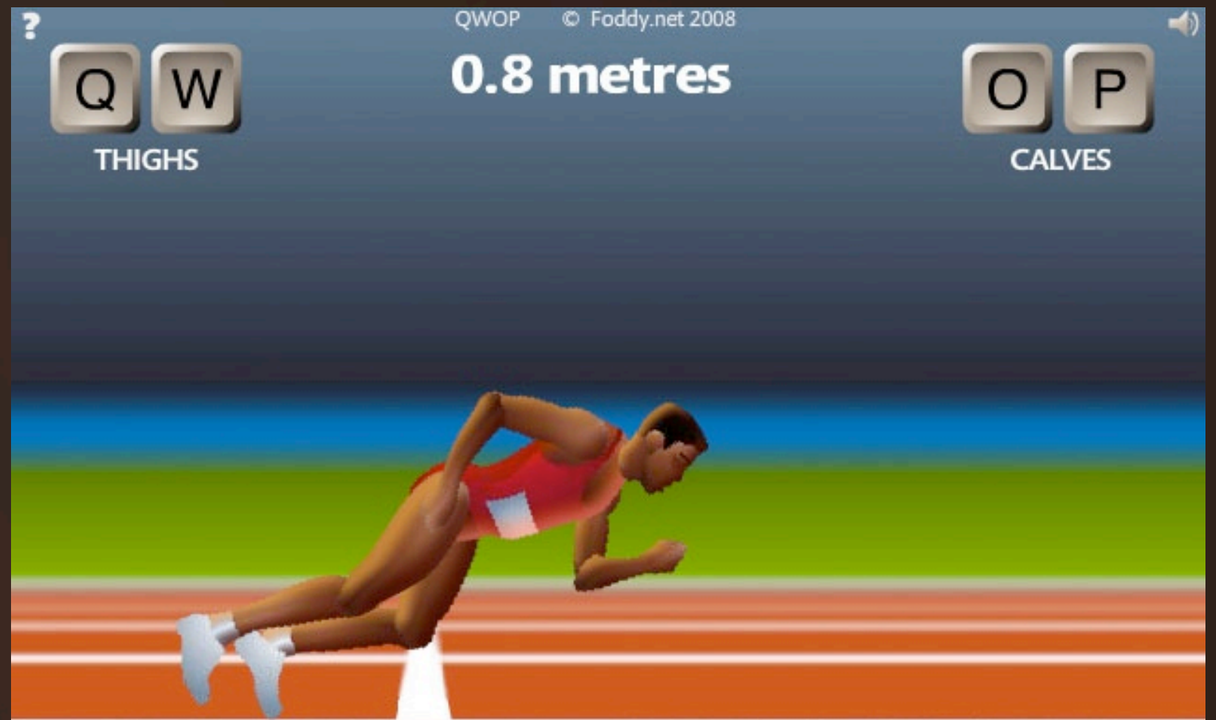
THUS, WHEN YOU LOOK AT A PHOTO OR REALISTIC DRAWING OF A FACE--

--YOU SEE IT AS THE FACE OF *ANOTHER.*

BUT WHEN YOU ENTER THE WORLD OF THE *CARTOON*--

--YOU SEE *YOURSELF.*

100 METER DASH
40
2UP 0723CM/SEC
40


?
QWOP © Foddy.net 2008
Q W
THIGHS
0.8 metres
O P
CALVES

TONIGHT!
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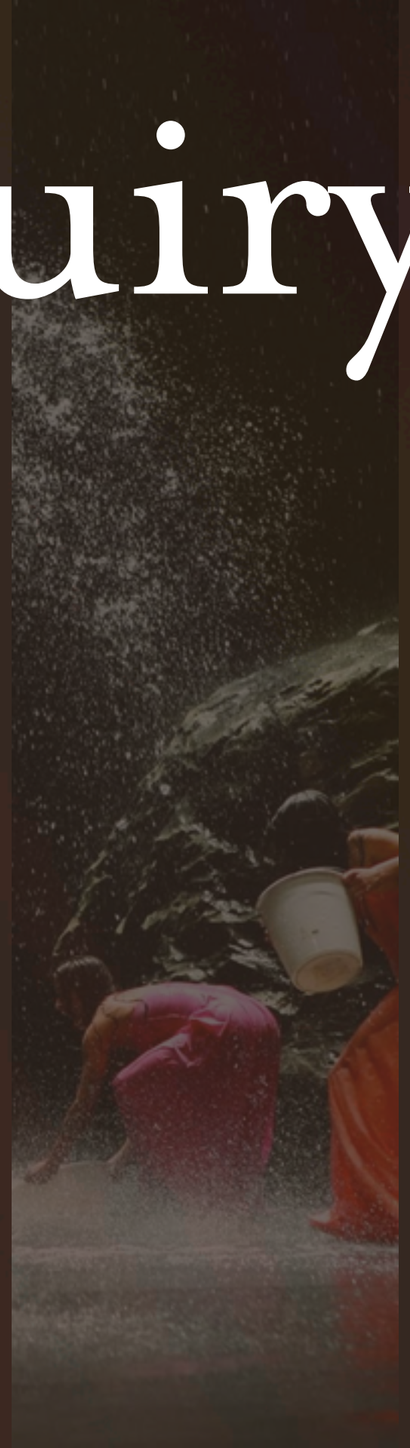
Inquiry



Representation

TONIGHT!
'HAPPY'
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FRIENDS.'
AND.
HEY!
NEW
'HAPPY'!

Expression

Structure

TONIGHT!
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AND.
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FEELIN' GOOD!
NOW

TONIGHT!
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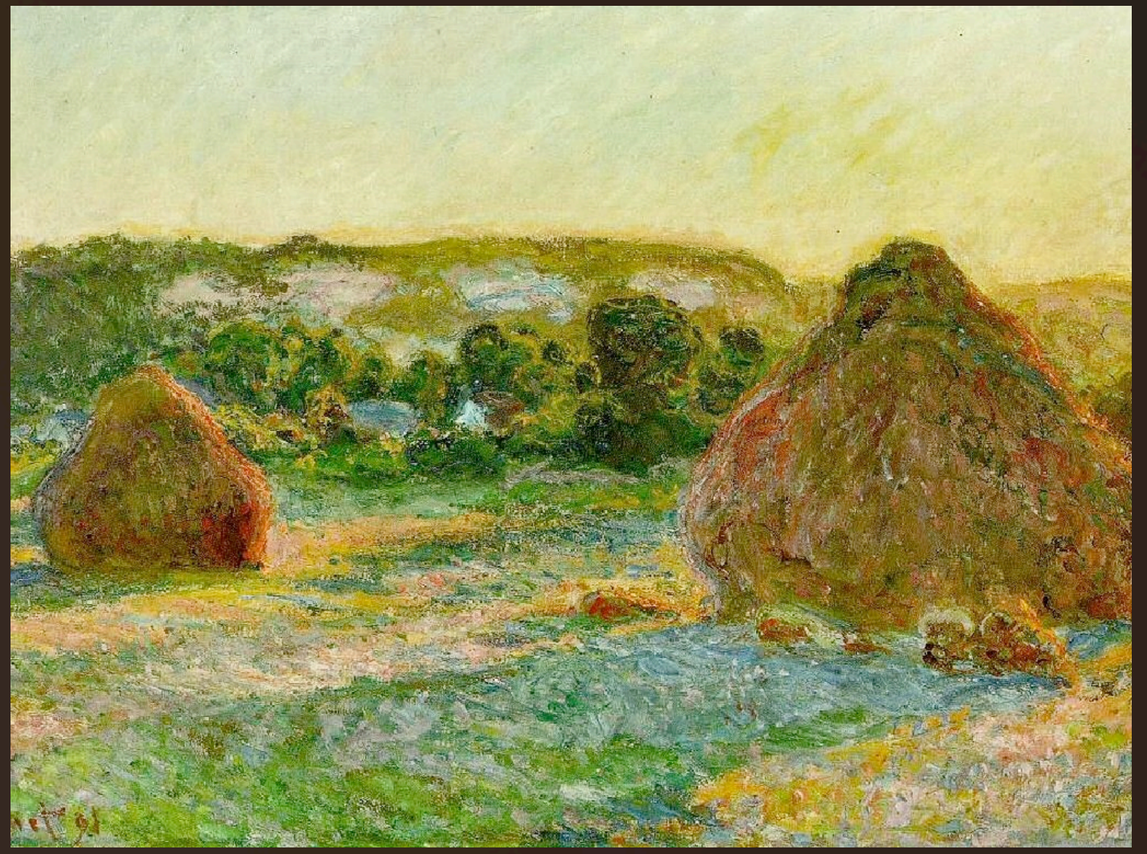
LAFFS AND
GOOD TIMES
WITH ALL YOUR
FRIENDS.'
AND.
HEY!
TRY THE NEW
'HAPPY'!
FEELIN' GOOD!
NOW

Freedom

Caveat Auditor

I. Abstraction as Inquiry



II. Abstraction as Structure

THUS, WHEN YOU LOOK AT A PHOTO OR REALISTIC DRAWING OF A FACE--

--YOU SEE IT AS THE FACE OF *ANOTHER.*

BUT WHEN YOU ENTER THE WORLD OF THE *CARTOON*--

--YOU SEE *YOURSELF.*

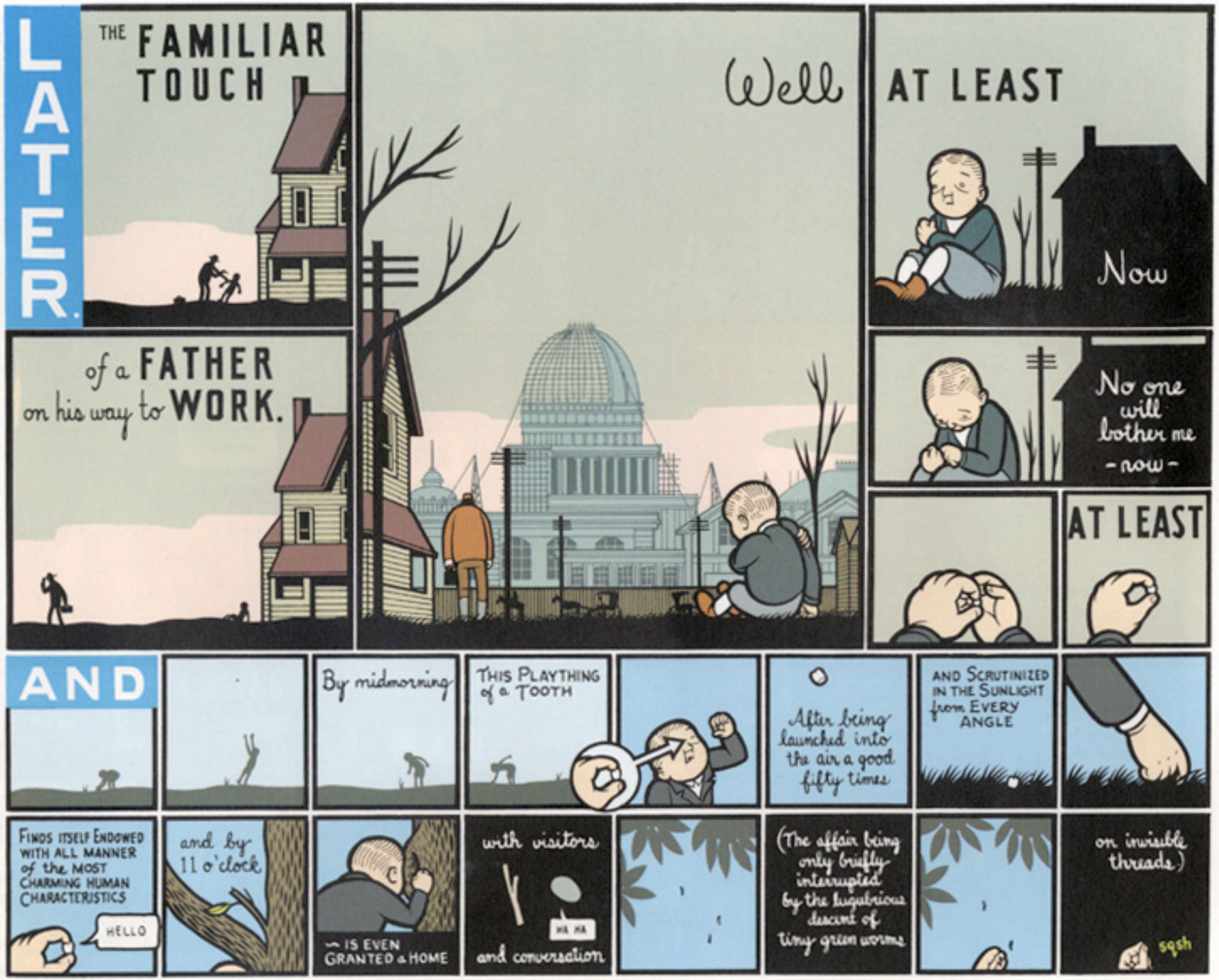
THUS, WHEN YOU LOOK AT A PHOTO OR REALISTIC DRAWING OF A FACE--

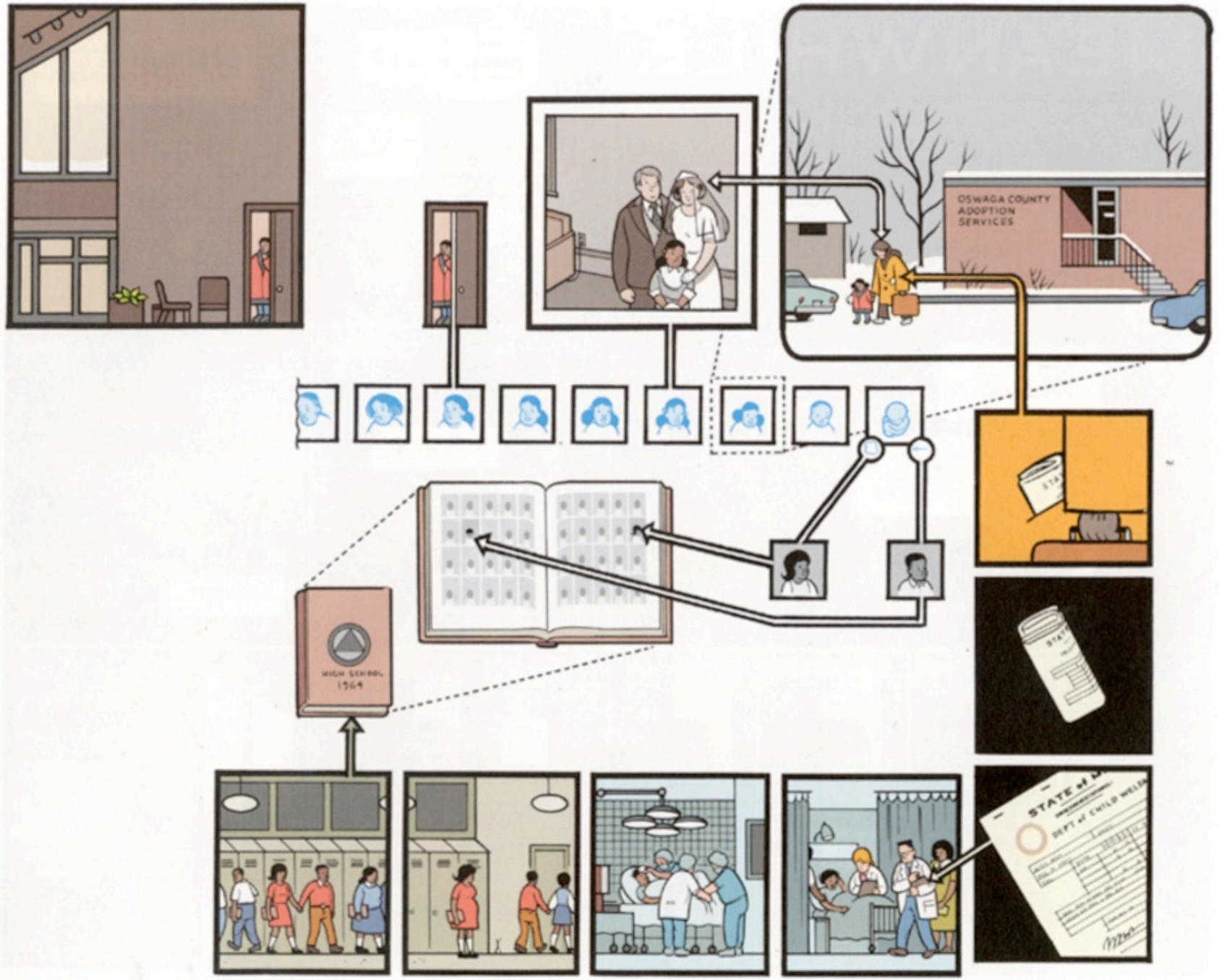
--YOU SEE IT AS THE FACE OF *ANOTHER.*

BUT WHEN YOU ENTER THE WORLD OF THE *CARTOON*--

--YOU SEE *YOURSELF.*

IT IS THE LATEST IN A LONG LINE OF TRIPS UPSTATE TO THE PENITENTIARY-- OR SO LUTHOR THINKS UNTIL HE NOTICES...
HEY! WE'RE GOING SOUTH, NOT NORTH!
WHERE ARE YOU TAKING ME--?
I FIGURED SOMETHING OUT TODAY...
...THAT TODAY'S SIGNIFICANCE IS THAT ON THIS DATE IN 1879 ALBERT EINSTEIN WAS BORN--
GO TO THE HEAD OF THE CLASS, DUMBO! I STILL DON'T KNOW WHERE WE'RE--
--OH... MY... GOSH...
IT IS A PLACE LUTHOR HAS NEVER BEEN AND HAD NEVER HOPED TO BE BECAUSE IT IS A PLACE THAT IS EXTREMELY PUBLIC...
...WHERE AN EASILY RECOGNIZED LIFETIME PUBLIC ENEMY WOULD NEVER GO IF HE HOPES TO REMAIN AT LARGE--
THE SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION IN WASHINGTON--
--AND THE HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY STATUE OF... HIM... OF PROFESSOR ALBERT EINSTEIN!
HAPPY BIRTHDAY... SIR!
15


LATER.
THE FAMILIAR TOUCH
of a FATHER on his way to WORK.
Well
AT LEAST
Now
No one will bother me - now -
AT LEAST
AND
By midmorning
THIS PLAYTHING of a TOOTH
After being launched into the air a good fifty times
AND SCRUTINIZED IN THE SUNLIGHT from EVERY ANGLE
FINDS ITSELF ENDOWED WITH ALL MANNER of the MOST CHARMING HUMAN CHARACTERISTICS
HELLO
and by 11 o'clock
— IS EVEN GRANTED a HOME
with visitors
HA HA
and conversation
(The affair being only briefly interrupted by the lugubrious descent of tiny green worms
on invisible threads.)
sqsh


OSWAGA COUNTY
ADOPTION
SERVICES
HIGH SCHOOL
1964
STATE of
DEPT of CHILD WELL

VVVVVV
Doing Things The Hard Way

Rascasse

PRESTIGE PROPERTIES
SALES INCENTIVE PROMOTION
Cadillac Eldorado

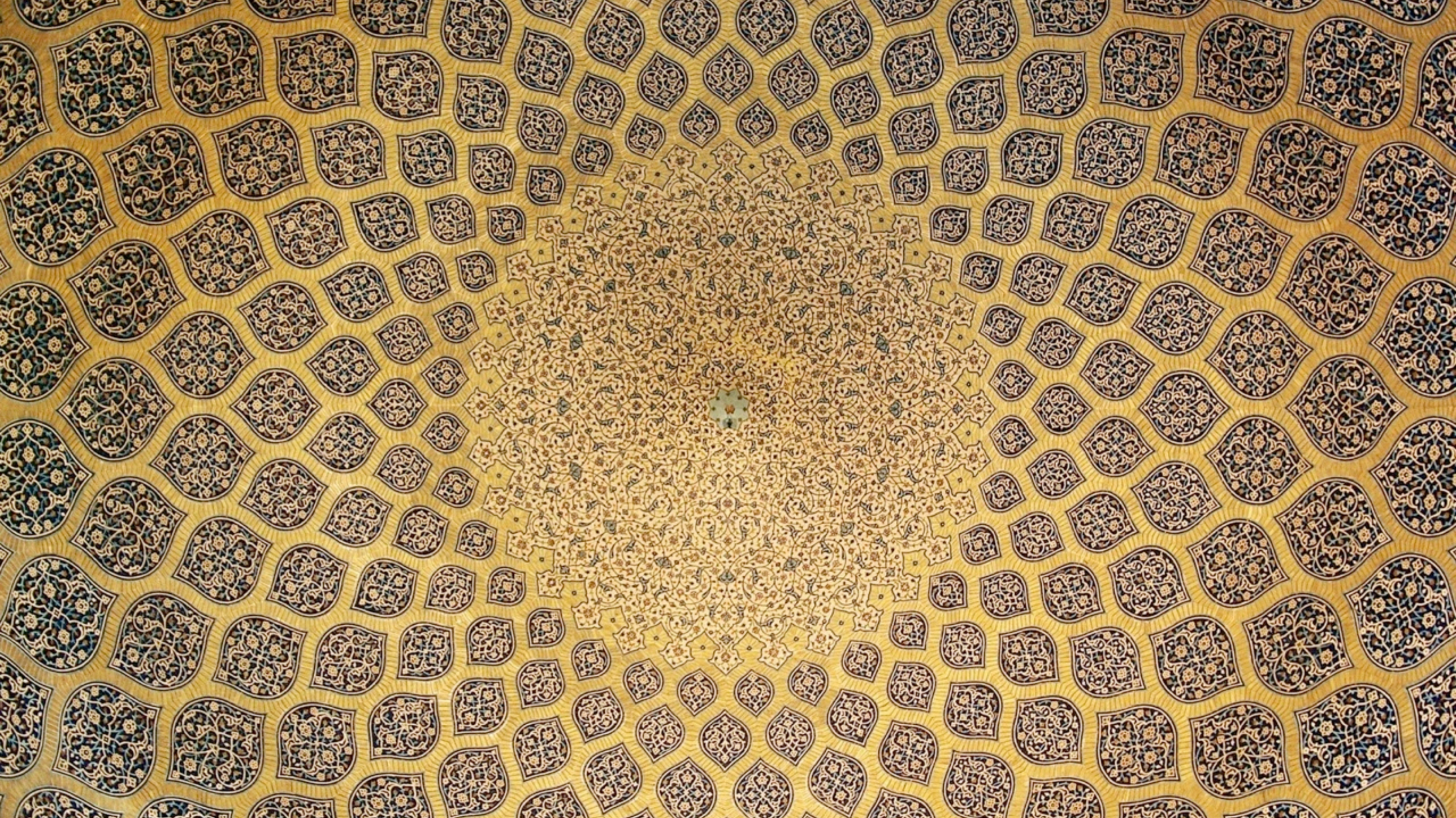
SONY PICTURES CLASSICS

Train
Train
Train
Train
Train
Train

III. Abstraction & Representation

20
16

GIBBS
28
LFC
STEWARD



IV. Abstraction as Expression

“A poem should be equal to
Not true.

For all the history of grief
An empty doorway and a maple leaf.

For love
The leaning grasses and two lights above
the sea --

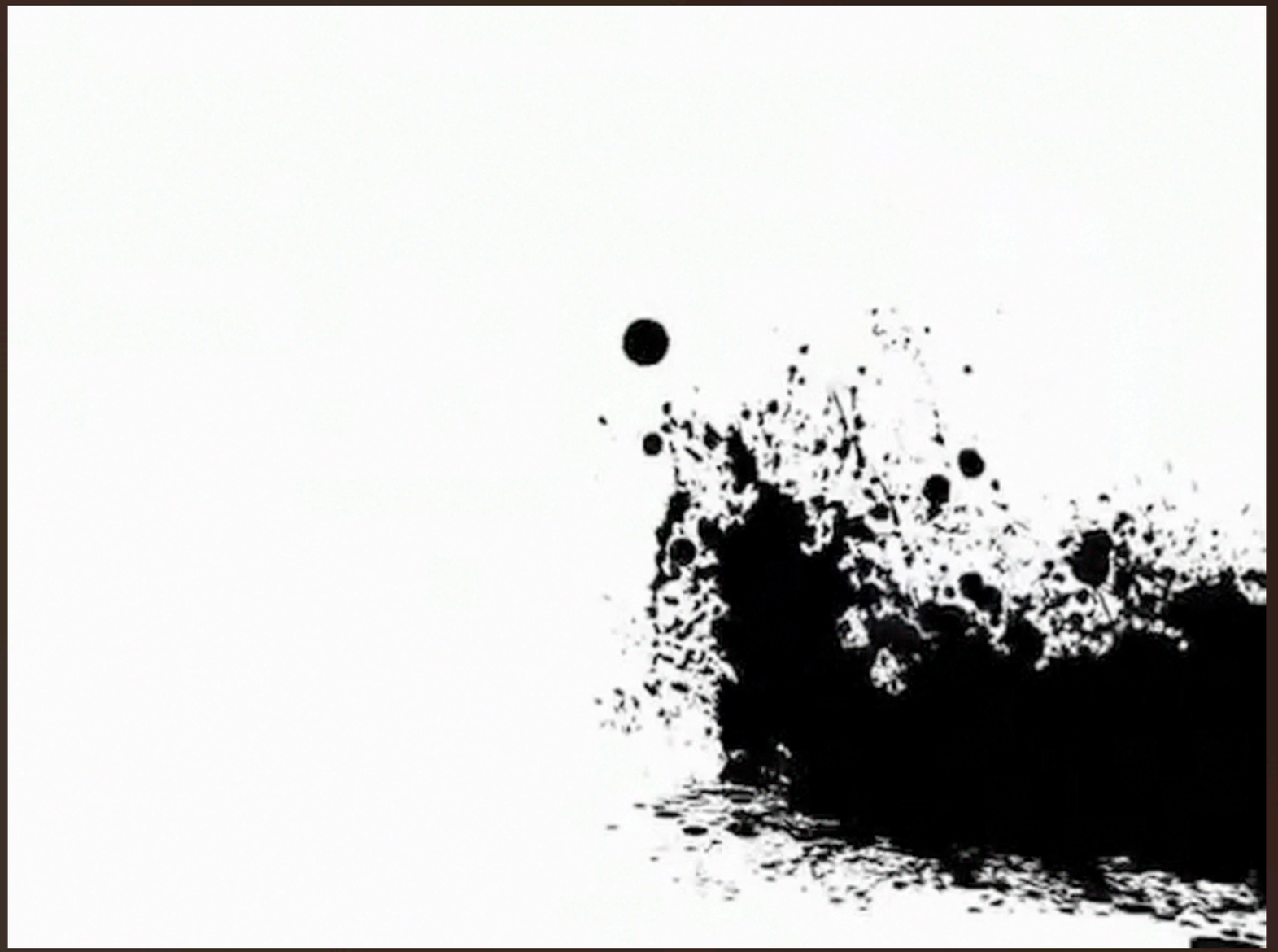
A poem should not mean
But be.”

“A poem should
not mean
But be.”

“A poem should
be equal to
Not true.”

WALTZING.

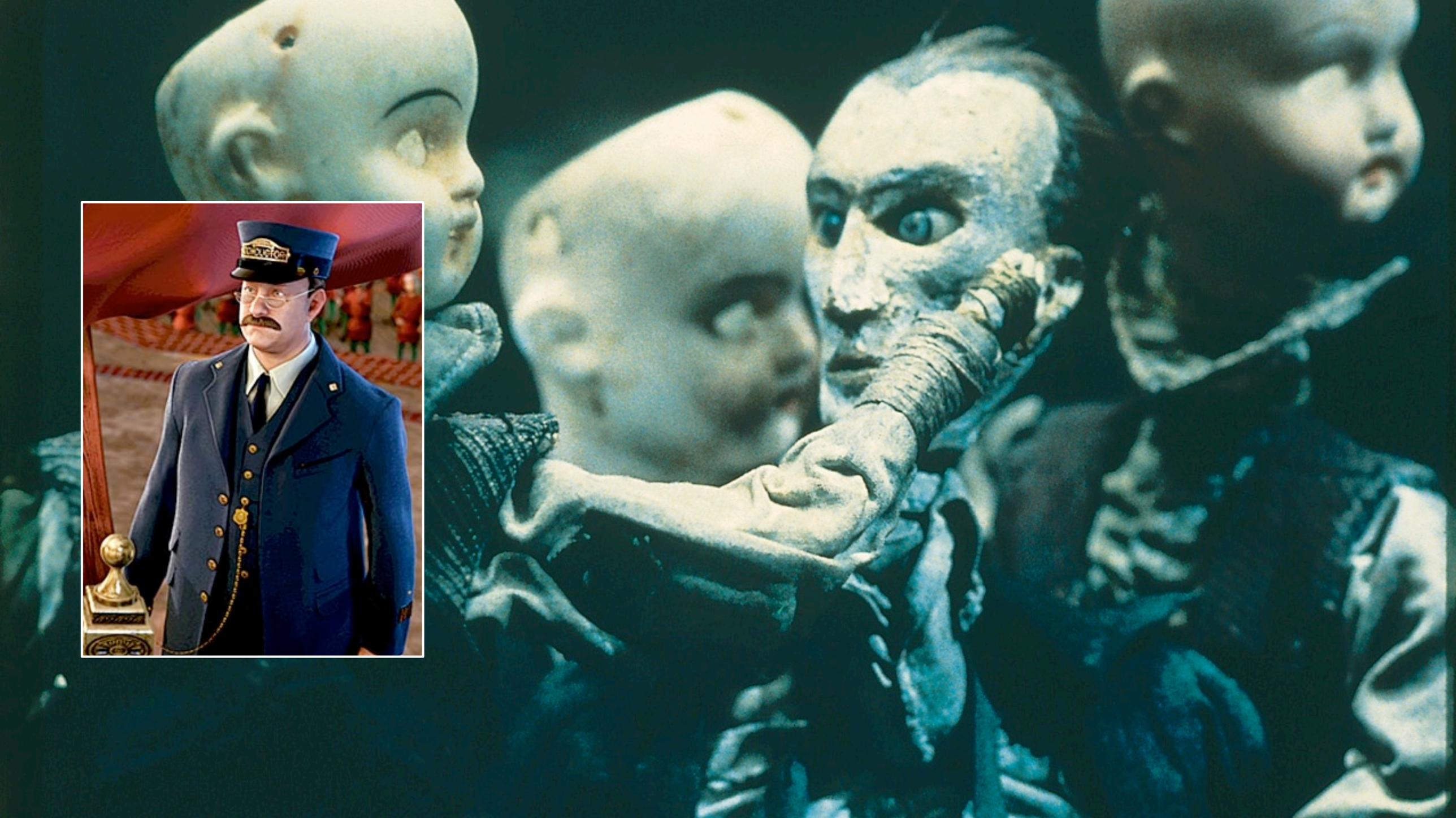
is it
DANCE

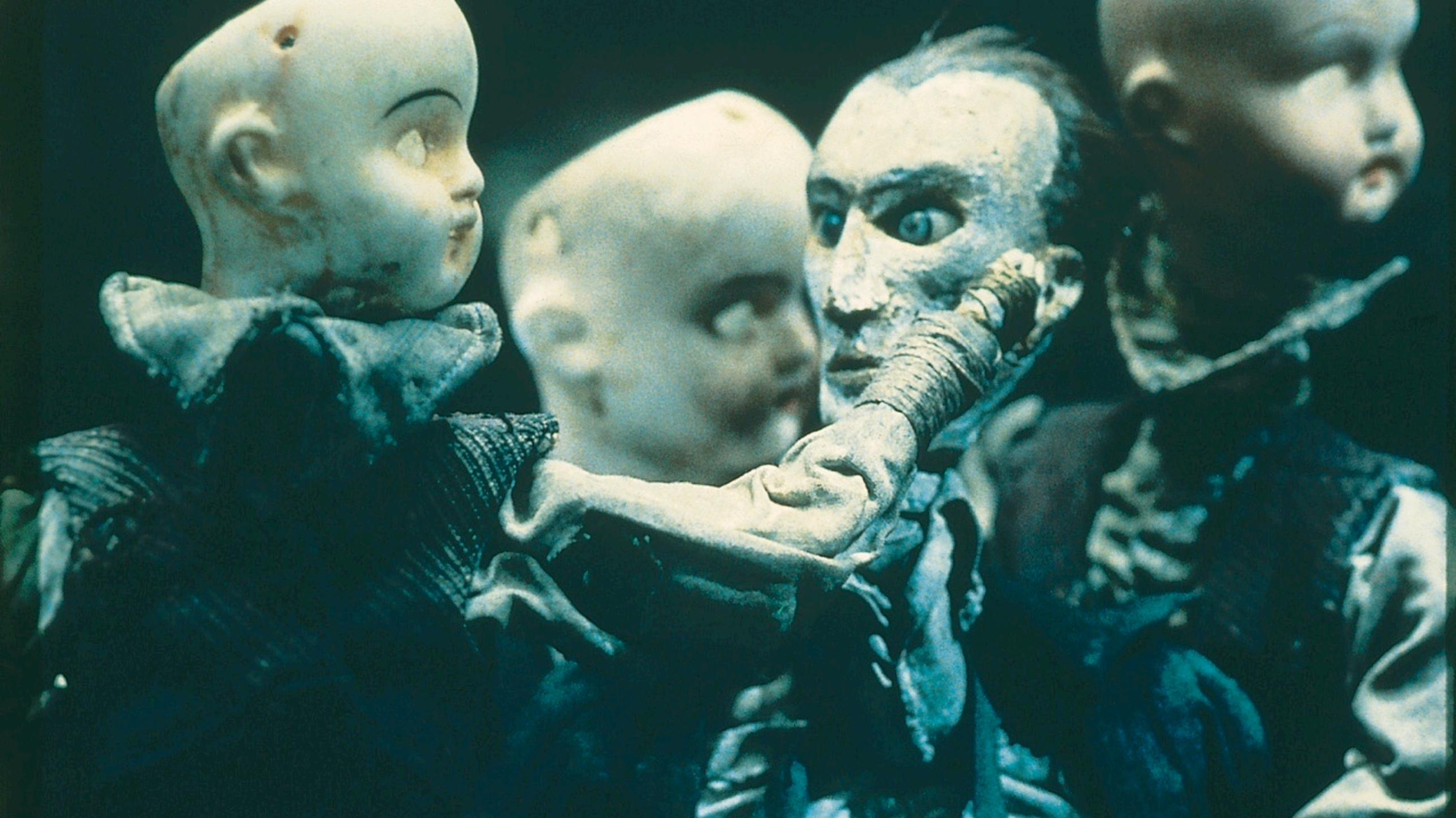


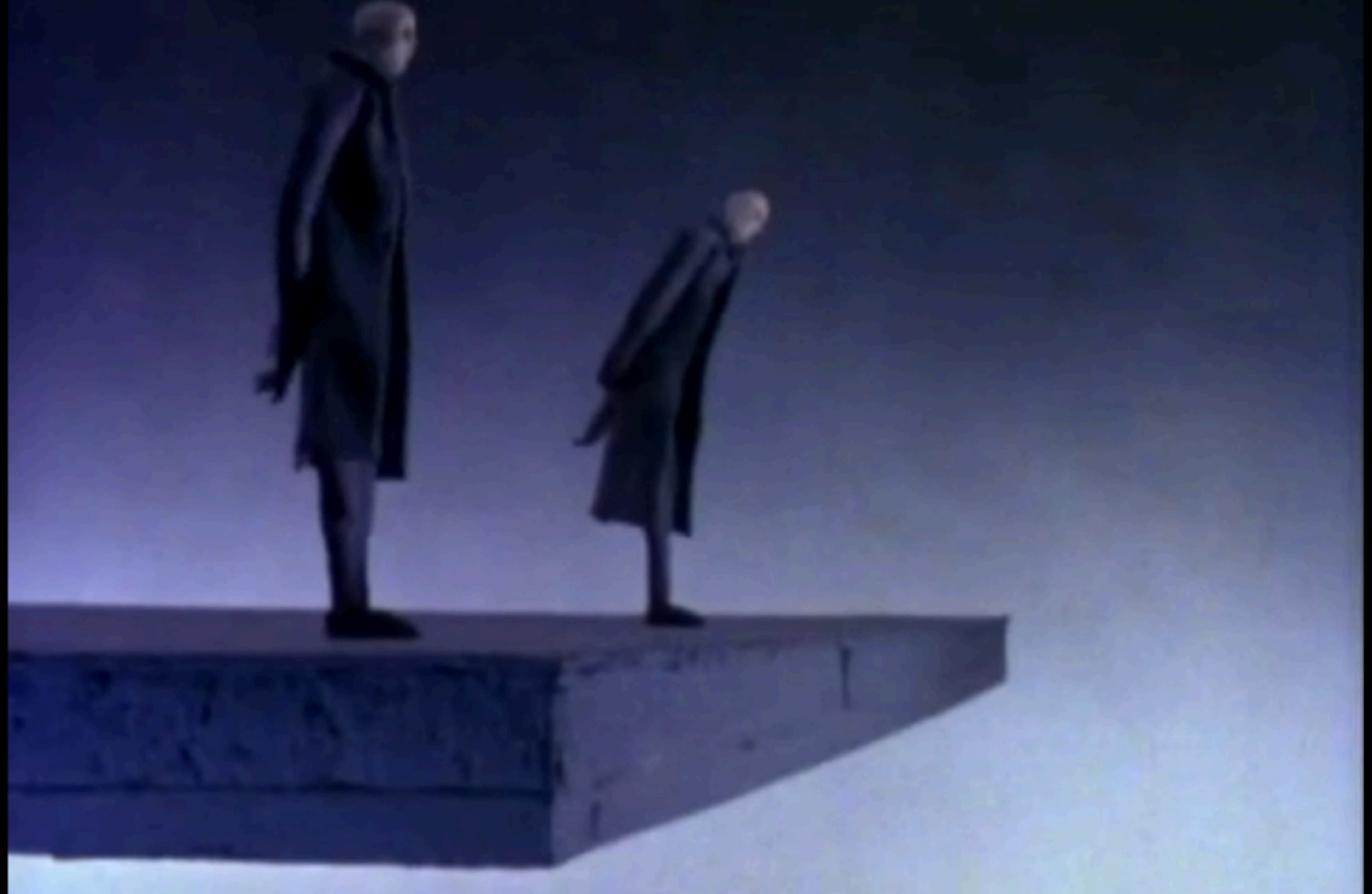
V. Abstraction as Freedom

“Animation is
to poetry as
film is to prose.”

— M.T. Maloney







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VVVVVV
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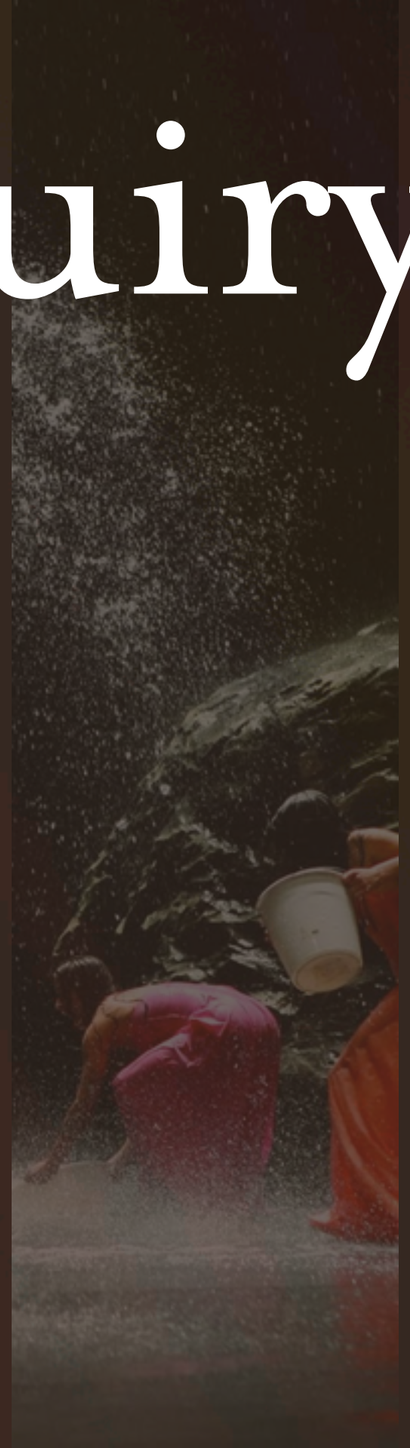

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