

Visual Essay Intro

Following a trend begun in [Mediascape's Spring 2008 issue](#), we are once again showcasing a selection of visual essays. As Eric Faden observed in "[A Manifesto for Critical Media](#)," while media continues to move forward, we as scholars need to follow suit and embrace the new technologies available to us for our scholarship. This means expanding the traditional tools utilized by media scholars such as primary archival research, textual analysis, literature review, the written word and the occasional still image, by using moving images to engage and critique themselves, to illustrate theory, or to reveal the labor of their own construction.

The following visual essays were created by Cinema and Media Studies students at UCLA under the guidance of Professor Janet Bergstrom, and are marked by a unique, creative approach to a variety of topics such as the filmic style and influence of HBO programming; an inter-twined production history and auteur study of Orson Welles and his film [F for Fake](#); an industrial-genre analysis of the Wii and its style of play; and, in the wake of Barack Obama's election to President, a look at representations of African-American presidents in film and television.

These projects exemplify how the traditional scholarly mode of the presentation and investigation of a thesis through the introduction and analysis of various kinds of evidence that is central to the format of a conventional written essay, is not only retained but enhanced by the transformation to a moving, visual text. Here, voiceover embodies the author's voice, and when laid over a clip of film, television, or other media, enables a more compelling and precise analysis to leap from the page to the screen.