



# The Fall

Master of Art & Design

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# DECLARATION OF AUTHORSHIP

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person nor material which to a substantial extent has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning, except where due acknowledgement is made in the acknowledgements'.

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December 2011

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Grace Chai

# abstract

**The Fall: A spatio-temporal consideration of the biblical  
Apocalypse (12:7-9).**

*“et factum est proelium in caelo Michael et angeli eius proeliabantur  
cum dracone et draco pugnabat et angeli eius “*

(Revelation: 12:7 The Latin Vulgate).<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> “And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the  
dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels”  
(King James Version Revelation: 12:7).

This project explores ways in which biblical references to the War of the Rebel Angels (as described in the Revelation of St John, Chapter 12:7), might visually engage with notions of *The Fall*. Creatively exploiting relationships between photographic, filmic, and painterly approaches to the text, the project engages the notion of *The Fall* as both a verb and a noun. Drawing on ideas like physicality, enigma, and certain historical, painterly references (Durer, 1498; Bruegel, 1562; Reni, 1636; Le Brun, 1680; Blake, 1808; and Doré, 1832-1883), the project, as a practice-led inquiry draws into discourse certain animated approaches to the tableau vivant.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> The tableau vivant (or living picture) describes a theatrical composition of actors or artists' models carefully posed in a dramatic display. Although traditionally elements of the tableau did not move, in this project I am interested in the potentials of dramatization as a tableau performs in a spatio-temporal environment.

# Interdiction

Revelation: 12:7-9.

Now war arose in heaven, Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, but they were defeated and there was no longer any place for them in heaven. And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the Devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world - he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him. (The English Standard Version, 2001, p.21).

This is the most widely known narrative of *The Fall* of the Rebel Angels. It is a story that has been approached both literally and allegorically by a range of artists, writers and theologians.

In drawing on a diverse range of these considerations (including those in apocryphical texts)<sup>3</sup>, this exegesis discusses their influence on the development of the tableau vivant *The Fall*.

In contextualising this work, this document is divided into four chapters.

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<sup>3</sup> The term apocrypha means hidden, esoteric, or of questionable authenticity. The word often relates to books left out of the conventional Christian bible, or texts that are not canonical. Non-canonical texts are those deemed to be of uncertain authenticity, or writings where the work is seriously questioned. These include books similar to those in the New Testament but almost universally rejected by Catholics, Orthodox believers and Protestants. These texts include several gospels and lives of apostles. Artists have drawn upon the New Testament apocrypha for many details in their paintings because many of these writings employ allegory and esoteric symbolism. Apocryphical books include The Gospel of Thomas, The Gospel of Mary, The Gospel of Peter, The Gospel of Judas, I & II Clement and The Shepherd of Hermas. There is also considerable debate in certain theological circles that suggests that the Revelation might also be considered apocryphical.

The first offers a review of contextual knowledge impacting on both the design and context of the work. The chapter discusses *The Fall* as a theological phenomenon. It then considers certain artists and illustrators who have expressed aspects of this story in their work. The chapter concludes with an outline of discourse surrounding the tableau vivant and the structuring of space.

The second chapter outlines the research design developed for the thesis. As a practice-led inquiry that employs a high level of reflexivity, the research design may be understood as a mixed method inquiry. In explaining how this is activated, I discuss relationships between reviews of knowledge, immersion, reflection on action, and framing/ reframing emerging outcomes.

Chapter 3 offers a focused discussion of the critical framework that underpins the structure of the tableau and the theological context in which it positions itself. In this regard it considers significant theological discourse relating to its narrative of *The Fall of the Morning Star*.

The final chapter provides a brief commentary on the work. In this I discuss specific compositional devices and the symbolism appearing in the tableau vivant.

# Review of Critical Knowledge

In a consideration of this practice-led thesis certain texts have been useful in offering interpretations that influenced or contextualized the project. For the purpose of discussing these, I have divided the texts into three sections. The first deals with literature that contains narrations of *The Fall*. The second considers critical and analytical texts, and the third discusses creative works that have impacted on the design of my work.

### **The Fall as narrative**

Although the Book of Revelation provides a useful description of *The Fall*, a number of other texts offer alternative details and conflicting narrations.

The Book of Daniel, Chapter 10, contains rich imagery relating to the war between Michael (as the national angel of Israel) and the archangels of Persia and Greece. In this version of the story, Gabriel is not mentioned.

The Dead Sea Scrolls contain two useful entries relating to the war in heaven; Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice Song 5, discusses the mystical character of Melchizedek, and War of the Sons of Light Against the Sons of Darkness offers an alternative narrative that places Michael in Melchizedek's position as the "high priestly eschatological redeemer".<sup>4</sup>

In the Slavonic Book of Enoch 29:4 and 31:4, Satan-Sataniel is described as an archangel. Because he sought to, "make his throne higher than the clouds over the earth and resemble 'My power' on high, Satan-Sataniel was hurled down, with his angels, and since then he has been flying in the air continually above the abyss". (Auffarth & Stuckenbruck, 2004, p. 144).

John Milton's 17<sup>th</sup> century epic poem *Paradise Lost*

offers a distinctive narration of the fall of man, the temptation of Adam and Eve, and their expulsion from the Garden of Eden. However, it is the character of Lucifer who is the prominent driving force in this work. Although the poem begins after Lucifer and the other rebel angels have been defeated and banished to Hell, the poem retrospectively offers a graphic account of *The Fall* and the three day battle that preceded it. Milton names a number of angels who fell with Lucifer including Mammon, Beelzebub, Belial and Moloch. *Paradise Lost* is of significance to the project because it offers a number of distinctive descriptions and idiosyncratic interpretations of the story. It is also important because the poem served as inspiration for the illustrations of both Gustav Doré (c. 1866), and William Blake (c. 1808).

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<sup>4</sup> See Angel, J.L., Katherine, D., and Davies, G. (2010). etc

### **Critique and commentary**

*The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Beale, 1998) offers one of the most scholarly analyses of Chapter 12 available. The work engages with a wide range of commentaries, monographs and articles in several different languages and is useful because it offers more than one interpretation of imagery mentioned in the chapter.

Fekkes (1994) *Isaiah and prophetic traditions in the book of Revelation*, offers commentary on the interface between imagery in the Book of Revelation and imagery appearing in earlier biblical texts. His work is useful because it links certain allegorical references back to Jewish and early Christian texts.

Bindman's (1986) essay, *William Blake and Popular Religious Imagery*, is also significant to the realisation of the thesis because it discusses, with reference to other artists' works, the central iconography in Blake's work. Because Blake illustrated the Book of Revelation, Bindman's text offers links to a broader painterly consideration of iconography, and is useful in contextualising my own work in relation to other visual interpretations of themes and events in Chapter 12.

Finally both Auffarth and Stuckenbruck (2004), and Forsyth (1987), offer critique and discussion

on eschatological<sup>5</sup> notions of *The Fall* from a range of texts including the Book of Enoch, the Second Epistle of Peter and the Epistle of Jude, the Book of Daniel, the Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice Song 5, (the Dead Sea Scrolls), and John Milton's *Paradise Lost*.

### **Significant artists and illustrators**

Because my research project is concerned with notions of the theatricality of *The Fall*, I am interested in certain Baroque painters who have interpreted this concept. In their respective treatments of this subject, both Le Brun and Reni adopt a distinctive approach to dynamic movement, overt emotion, and apocalyptic rhetoric that is almost operatic in its realisation. These artists' works engage in visually rich ways with notions of glory, power and descent.

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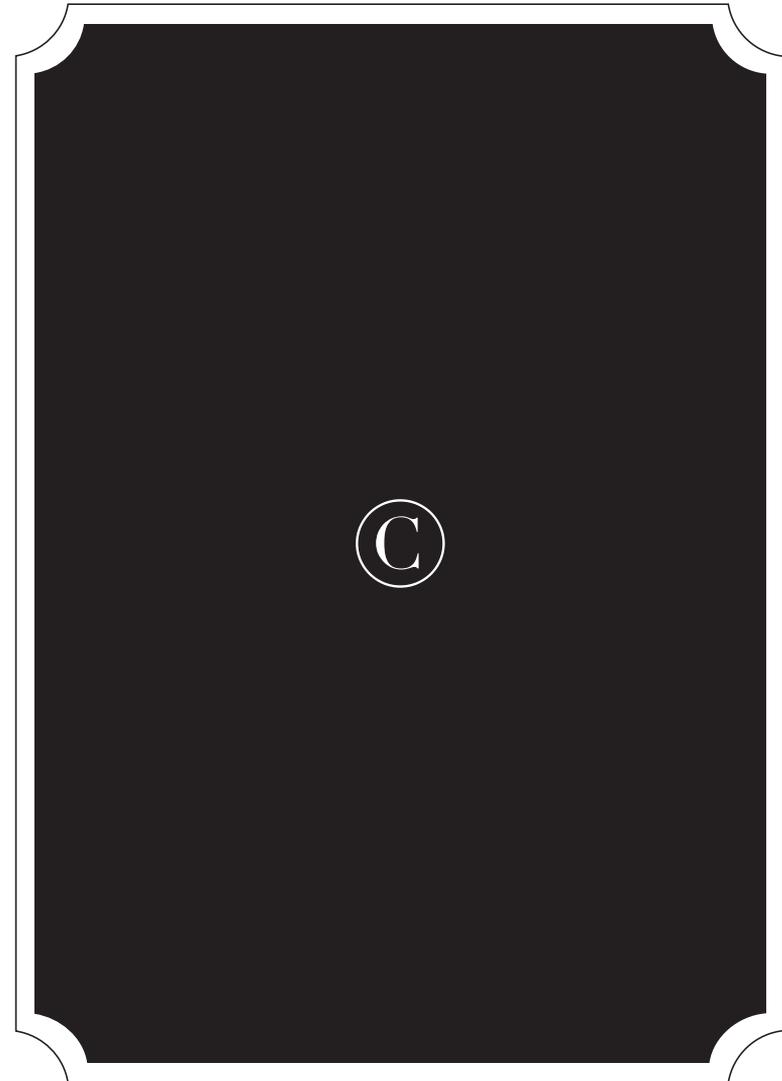
<sup>5</sup> Eschatology is a branch of theology concerned with the final events in the history of the world. The phrase may also refer metaphorically to the end of accepted reality and reunion with the Divine.

## Charles Le Brun

Le Brun's *Fall of the Rebel Angel* (c. 1685) is literal in its interpretation of the descent from grace. Punishment is seen as something physical, and suffering is a theatrical externalisation of inner torment. The composition is cataclysmic and dramatic. Spatially *The Fall* is marked out against a storm-like environment where the victorious angels are active and the descending angels writhe inside a darkened abyss.

Figure 1: Le Brun, C. *The Fall of the Rebel Angel*.  
[Oil on canvas]. (1685).

→ Retrieved from <http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/c/c1/Le-Brun-Chute-Dijon.jpg>

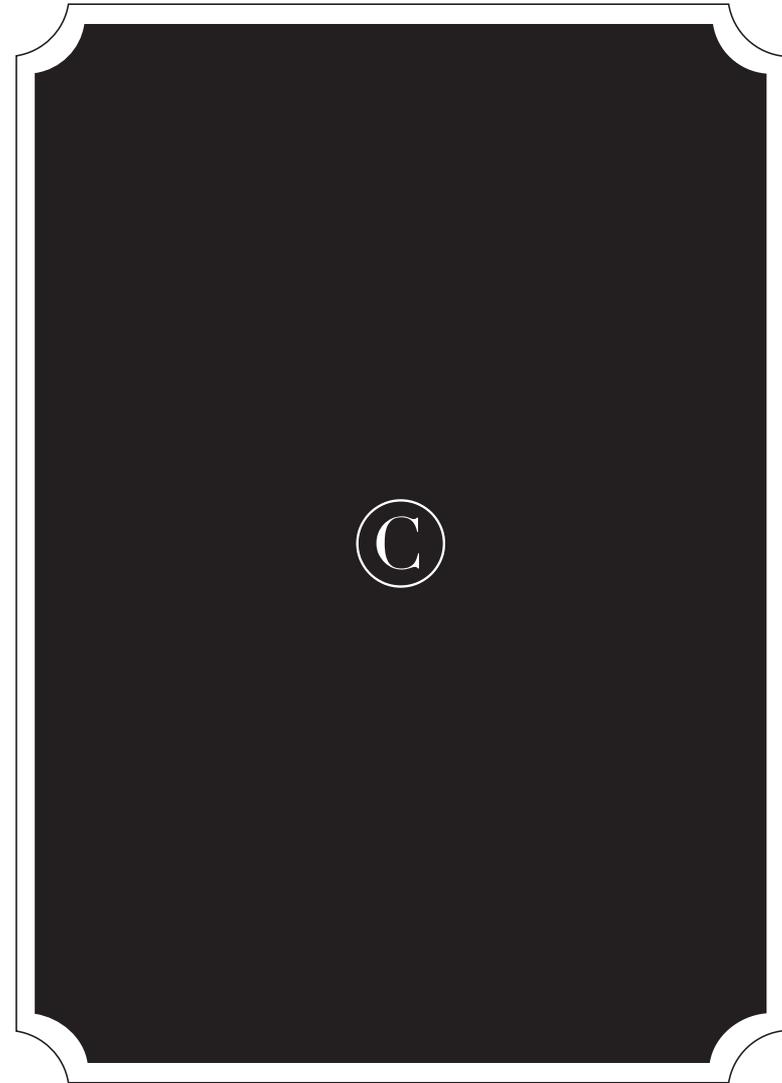


## Guido Reni

Reni's painting, *Archangel Michael Defeating Satan* (1683), shows related concerns with the externalisation of torment. His work, however, places more emphasis on facial expressions that polarise notions of grace and torment. Again the victorious angel is active and The Fallen is in a state of writhing defeat. What is significant is that both artists pay particular attention to 'unnatural' light that dramatizes the conflicted nature of *The Fall*. This is much clearer in Le Brun's work where the abyss is illuminated by a dramatic light source that does not emanate from the avenging angel. In Reni's painting this conflict is subtler. While there is one definable light source projected diagonally from the right of the painting, there is also a form of ethereal back lighting that is used to create a sense of unworldly dimension in the work.

Figure 2: Reni, G. *Archangel Michael Defeating Satan*. [Oil on canvas]. (1636).

→ Retrieved from [http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/6/68/Guido\\_Reni\\_031.jpg](http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/6/68/Guido_Reni_031.jpg)

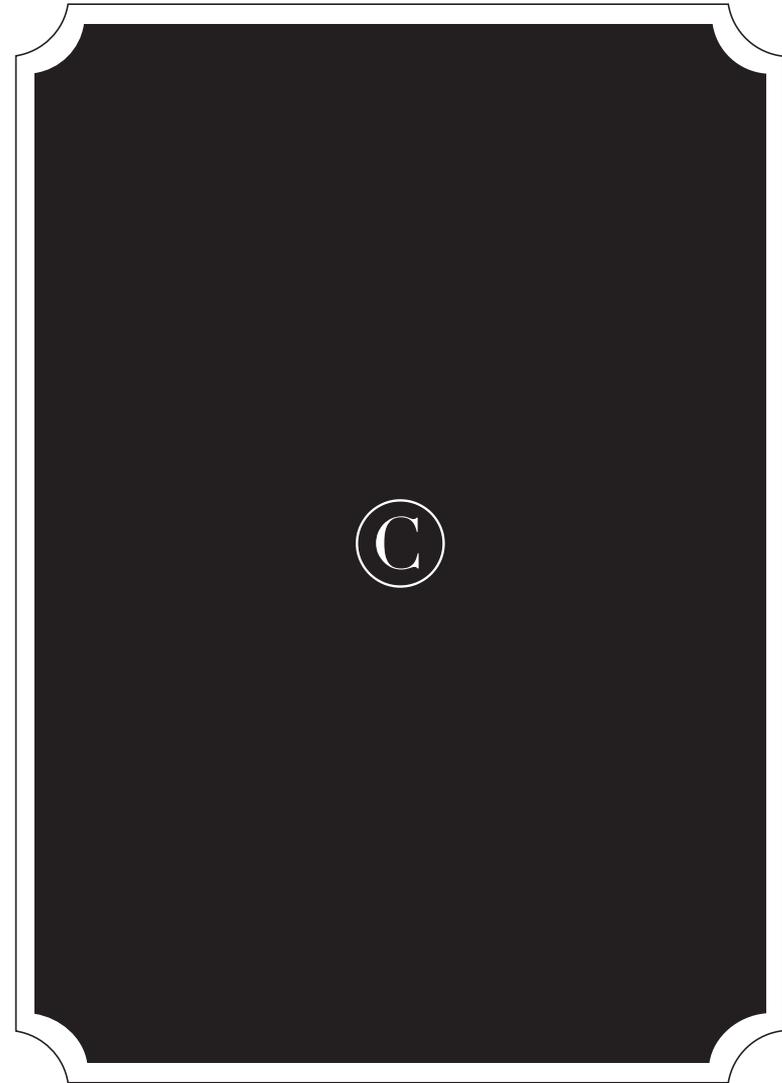


## William Blake

By contrast, William Blake's symbolic paintings, *The Vision of the Last Judgment* (1808) and *The Day of Judgment* (1805), contain references to both grace and *The Fall* but in a highly enigmatic manner. His wider, symbolically rich corpus of work deals imaginatively with physical/spiritual manifestations of angels, demons, and the metaphysical nature of human existence. These works contain a certain theatricality and are less literal than the works of the Baroque painters. In Blake's work, distortion and posture are integrated in an environment of forms that suggests a spiritual world divorced from known physical environments. His *Last Judgment* (1808) has a relatively shallow depth of field and references certain structures evident in the tableau vivant.

Figure 3: Blake, W. *The vision of the Last Judgment*. [Pencil and water color]. (1808).

→ Retrieved from Blake, W. (1808). *The vision of the Last Judgment*. In London, England: Tate Gallery.



## Gustav Doré

Gustav Doré's illustrations for *The Vision of Hell* (1892) and *Paradise Lost* (1866) deal with distinctive biblical and compositional elements. In his work, I am particularly interested in how idealised bodies are composed as expressions of agony. The emotional intensity of Doré's work is also of interest to my design. Although he does not use the tableau vivant as a structure, there is often a sense of simple relief or geometric construction in his engravings. It is against his uncomplicated, simplified contexts that the agony of his narratives plays out with such theatrical intensity.

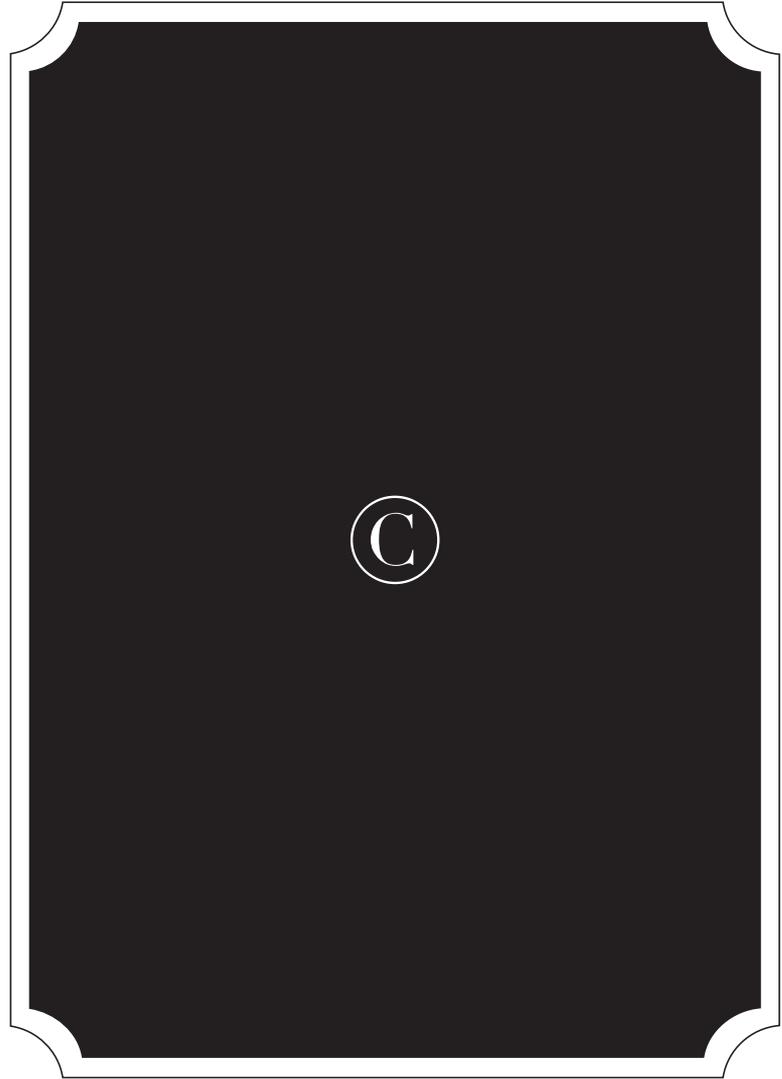
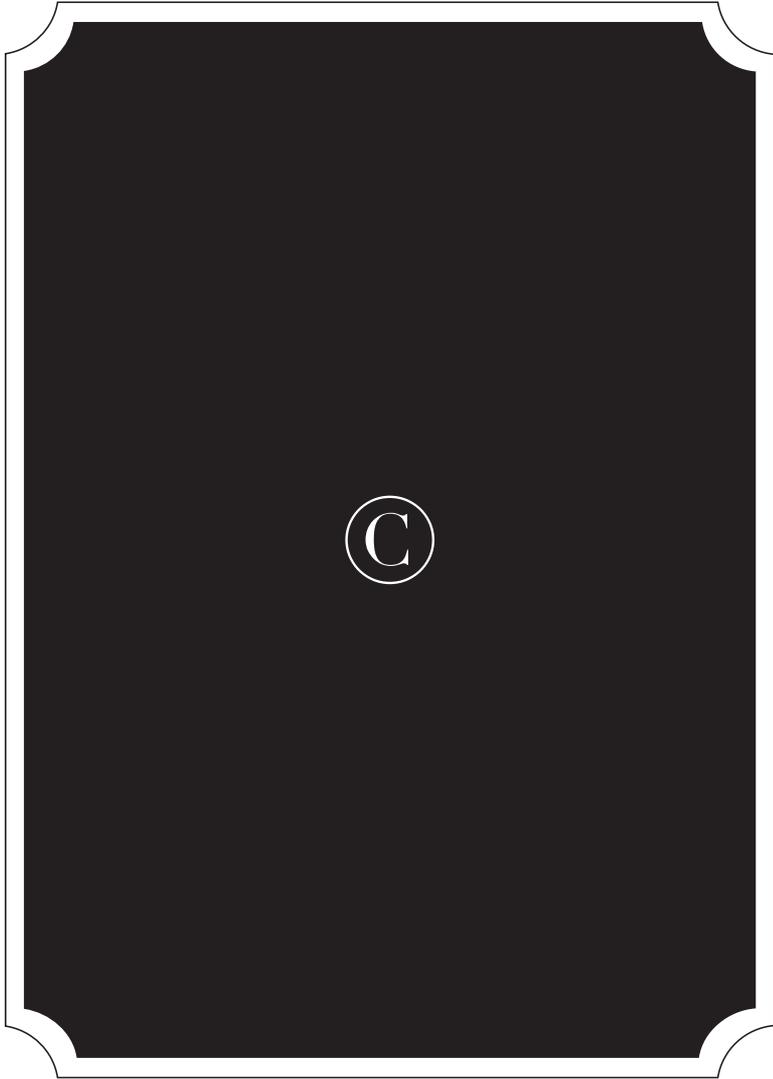
Of tangential influence to the project is the work of Bruegel, 1562; and Durer, 1498. The angels plunge in a fizzing swarm, like anti-moths, away from the disc of divine light. They spread out to fill the whole lower half of the picture in a dense and chaotic throng. At the bottom right corner they're being sucked down a fiery plughole to Hell.

(Left) Figure 4: Dore, G. *Destruction of Leviathan*. [Painting]. (1865).

→ Retrieved from Doré, G. (1865). *Destruction of Leviathan*. New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press.

(Right) Figure 5: Dore, G. *Paradise Lost: The Fall of Rebel Angels*. [Print]. (1870).

→ Retrieved from <http://www.listal.com/list/the-fall-of-rebels-in-art>



## Pieter Bruegel

In Bruegel's rendering, the violence is expressed this crawling, hideous multitude that invades the entire surface of the picture, in a remarkable unity of action which increases its impact. By borrowing elements from the plant, animal, mineral and human worlds, and combining them to form hybrid, deformed beings, Bruegel invents creatures that are the most repulsive, but also the most curious and fantastic imaginable. Mussel shells grafted onto a gigantic shrimp; a human head with butterfly wings attached to a shapeless, bloated body; a puffy gnome carrying a sundial and with a plumed helmet on his head; viscous fish with arms; lizard scales; and crustacean claws.

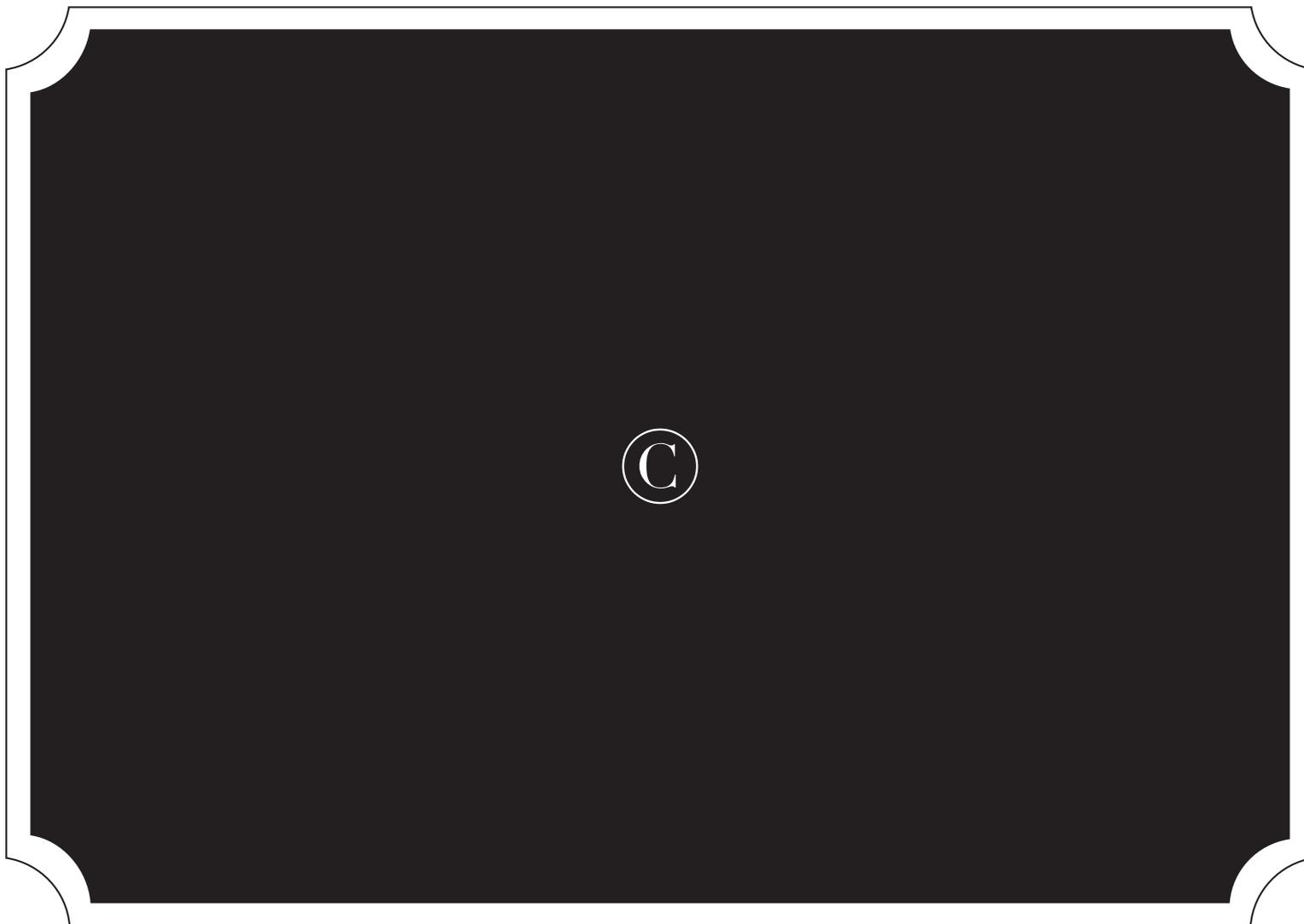
Within the battle the scrupulous rendering of the textures differentiates every element. With their long, refined silhouettes, St. Michael's allies, elegantly garbed in delicate, luminously coloured albs<sup>6</sup>, are automatically on the side of Good, in a state of grace that enables them to dominate effortlessly the monstrous hordes, moving around in a clear and azure sky which is in profound contrast with the darkness reserved for the rebels.

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<sup>6</sup> Albs: a white vestment worn by clergy and servers in some Christian Churches.

Figure 6: Bruegel, P. *Fall of the Rebel Angels*.  
[Oil on panel]. (1562).

→ Retrieved from [http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/e/ec/Pieter\\_Bruegel\\_the\\_Elder\\_-\\_The\\_Fall\\_of\\_the\\_Rebel\\_Angels.JPG](http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/e/ec/Pieter_Bruegel_the_Elder_-_The_Fall_of_the_Rebel_Angels.JPG)

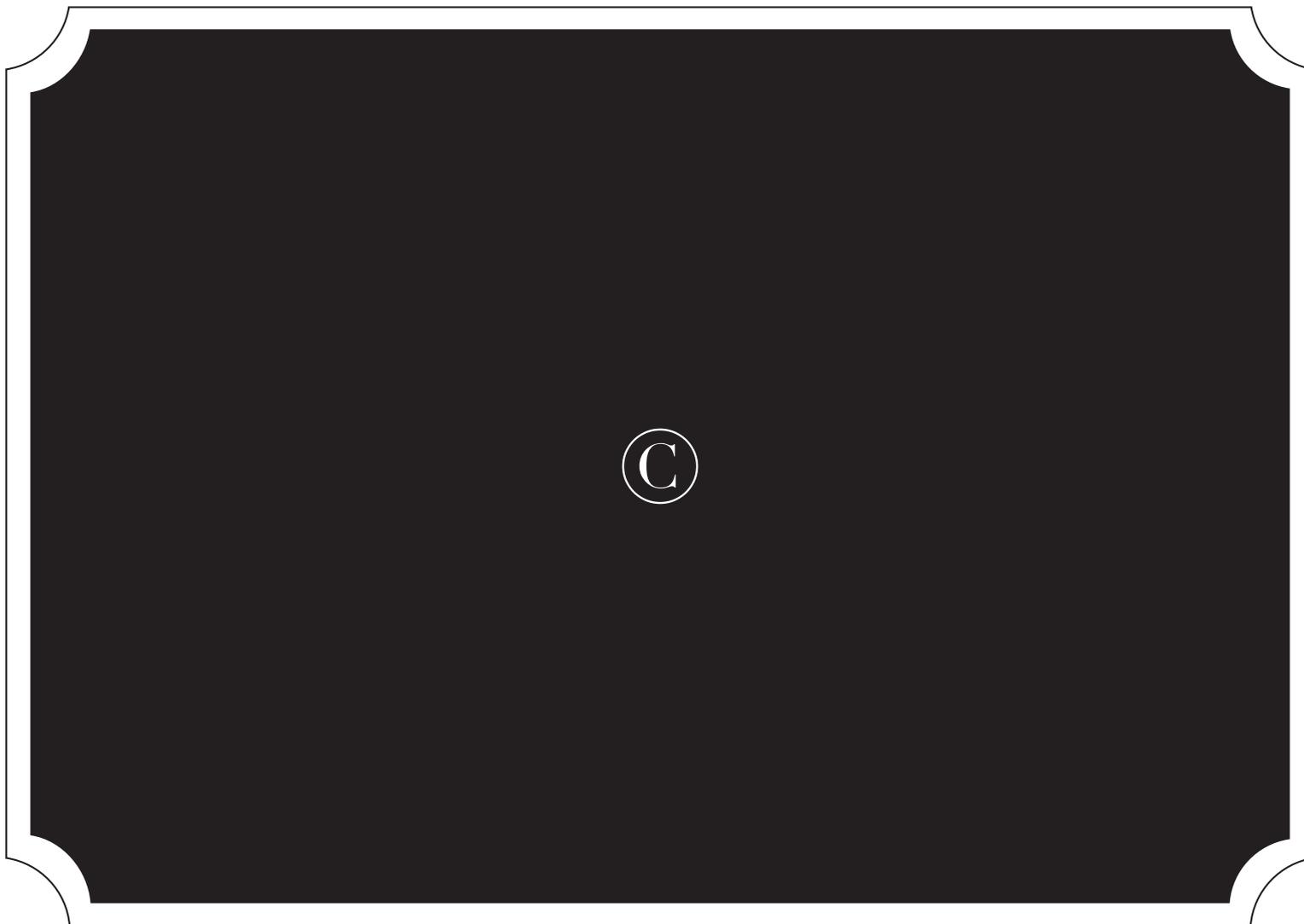


## Marco Brambilla

Throughout my project, the strongest inspiration for me has been the video clip *Power* (2010) from Marco Brambilla for Kanye West. As the treatment of this video clip is using the concept of the tableau vivant to create a scene of manpower domination, the beginning of *Power* (2010) initially starts with an extreme close up glaring eyes, it then slowly zooms out and reveals the rest of the characters to utilize the space as a whole. Using treatments from Brambilla's *Power*, I have exchanged the character at the start of the story with Lucifer, while slowly zooming out to reveal other objects and characters as it evolves with into a more larger and complex composition, as referenced to the tableau vivant.

Figure 7: Brambilla, M. *Power*. [Video still]. (2010).

→ Retrieved from [http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/en/e/e7/Power\\_Kanye\\_West\\_music\\_video.png](http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/en/e/e7/Power_Kanye_West_music_video.png)



# Methodology

## Action research as a methodology

This chapter discusses the methodology employed in explicating *The Fall*. The methodology engages with a process of reflective practice through a form of action research. Action research may be understood as “learning by doing”. In this process, one identifies a problem, does something to resolve it, considers the effectiveness of one’s efforts and, if not satisfied, tries again (O’Brien, 1998). Action research is a methodology that locates practice and reflection at its core. In its structure it also acknowledges the need for collaborators’ opinions and critiques, and the dynamic of failure leading to reflection and re-thinking.

O'Brien, (1998, para. 3) says, "Action research, aims to contribute... to the practical concerns of people in an immediate problematic situation". He suggests that, in this form of research, one must collaboratively work with others in developing a solution so one is able to move in "a desirable direction" (ibid.).

Hopkin's diagrammatic rendering of Action Research suggests a forward momentum containing internal cycles. His diagram suggests that progression through a practice-led research project may be a process of reoccurring planning, action, reflection, revision and further planning.

A number of theorists, such as Heron and Reason, 1971; Susman, 1983; Greenwood and Levin, 1998; O' Brien, 1998; Todhunter, 2001; Burns, 2007 follow the principles of Action Research. While the Action Research methodology has often been associated with Social Science research, it has also been applied broadly across a range of other disciplines, including Business Management, Education, Design and Visual Arts. That said, normally one can identify within the approach common principles, that include reflexive critique, dialectical critique, collaborative input, and transformation through an interdependent relationship between theory, practice and transformation.

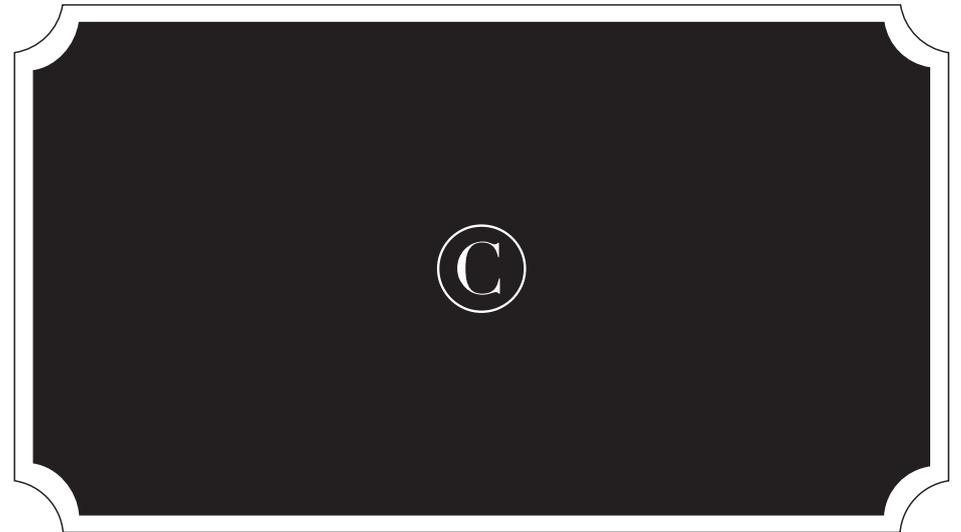


Figure .8: Hopkins, D. *Action Research Protocol after Kemmis*. [Diagram]. (1985).

→ Retrieved from <http://www.web.net/~robrien/papers/xx%20ar%20final.htm>.

### Practice and transformation

O'Brien (1998) suggests that within Action Research there exists an integrated relationship between theory and practice and, through this relationship, one achieves transformation in a project. This is significant when one considers practice-led theses are research undertakings where one's engagement with the *practice* of the problem is at the core of one's ability to understand and articulate its contexts. Thus, one does not illustrate theory with practice; instead practice defines, contextualises, and sometimes creates theory. In this thesis I began the research with a review of contextual knowledge. However the most significant proportion of theory emerged as I began to make design decisions and question how I might build richness and appropriateness into my designs. Thus my practice guided me back to theory but only in response to the needs of the emerging design. O'Brien (1998, para.14) notes this relationship when he says,

For action researchers, theory informs practice and practice refines theory, in a continuous transformation... The two are intertwined aspects of a single change process. It is up to the researcher to make explicit the theoretical justification for the actions, and to question the bases of those justifications. The ensuing practical applications that follow are subjected to

further analysis, in a transformative cycle that continuously alternates emphasis between theory and practice.

Action research was an appropriate methodology for this project because my design process is 'practice led'. I design by positioning myself inside the 'practice' of my problem. From this position I reflected both on what I was doing, and on the emerging outcomes. By doing, I learned from my mistakes and gained a deeper understanding of potential strategies that might move the project forward. In addition, in the process of 'doing', both my work and I (as the designer) were transformed.<sup>7</sup> Finally, action research allowed me to constantly revisit and reflect upon my practice. Because the project as a whole was made up of highly interrelated parts, each change affected all aspects of the design. Being cyclic and linear, the methodology allowed me certain flexibility as I moved forward, refined ideas and considered complementing the theory.

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<sup>7</sup> See Ings' (2009) discussion of *phrōnesis* and the potentially transformative nature of graphic design research. In his discussion he notes, in graphic design theses "sometimes the line between the researcher and the researched becomes permeable. Complex problems become as much a concern of the research as they are a concern of the self" (p.84). It is through this dynamic that he argues the designer is transformed.

### **Action research in relation to my research design**

Sometimes when one approaches research for the first time, one is tempted to adapt what one does to suit an existing methodology. Reason and Rowan noted this in the early 1980s when they said,

Thousands of researchers down the years have started projects they really believed in, and which embodied ideas they really cared about. But too often these projects got pared down and chopped about and falsified in the process of getting approval.... It doesn't have to be this way. Research doesn't have to be another brick in the wall. If we want to know about people, we have to encourage them to be who they are, and to resist all attempts to make them-or ourselves-into something we are not (1981, p. xxiii).

Douglass and Moustakas (1985), Mills (1959), Bullough and Pinnegar (2001), and Gibbs (2006), have all emphasised the need for research to locate methodologies, not the other way around. Bullough and Pinnegar (2001) say, "methods must not prescribe problems; rather problems must prescribe methods" (p. 14), and Gibbs (2006) suggests, "Methodological appropriateness is more important than whether the research methods selected can be classified within one paradigm or another" (p. 233).

Thus, this discussion of methodology is not an attempt to massage my research processes into an existing diagram. Instead I will attempt to explain my distinctive (and sometimes idiosyncratic process) in relation to the tenets of action research. By doing this I hope to indicate how the project is methodologically aligned to these tenets but also constructed as a unique system for meeting the individual needs and potentials of the inquiry.

Accordingly, this inquiry is constructed as three chronological phases.<sup>8</sup> These are; preproduction, production, and postproduction.

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<sup>8</sup> The inquiry is not seen as linear. For example, reviews of contextual knowledge may initiate the project but they continue throughout its development and refinement. A similar, integrated approach is taken with the use of the designer's journal and the employment of immersive and dialogic approaches to realizing imagery in the project.

### **Preproduction**

In designing a film there are certain logistical factors that mean it must be approached in a certain order. In preproduction I initiate ideas and develop a concept and resources for shooting. The two most significant elements of this phase of the research are an initial review of knowledge<sup>9</sup> and the development of storyboard<sup>10</sup> and character designs.

Because my review of the knowledge was not only concerned with written texts, I used my journal to gather and position inspirational material. This archiving was supported by a process of sketching that allowed me to develop certain aspects of character design and metaphors that became integral to the work as it developed.

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<sup>9</sup> Here I review a range of artistic work dealing with the subject and explore significant theological issues/interpretations related to the event. These impact upon how I conceive the film.

<sup>10</sup> Here I record research and initial ideas in a designer's journal that provides both an archive of thinking and a location for seeking possible synergies between ideas. Through draft sketches, I begin to draw into being the film's central narrative. From this, I prepare a shot list that I am able to take into a studio in the production phase of the project.

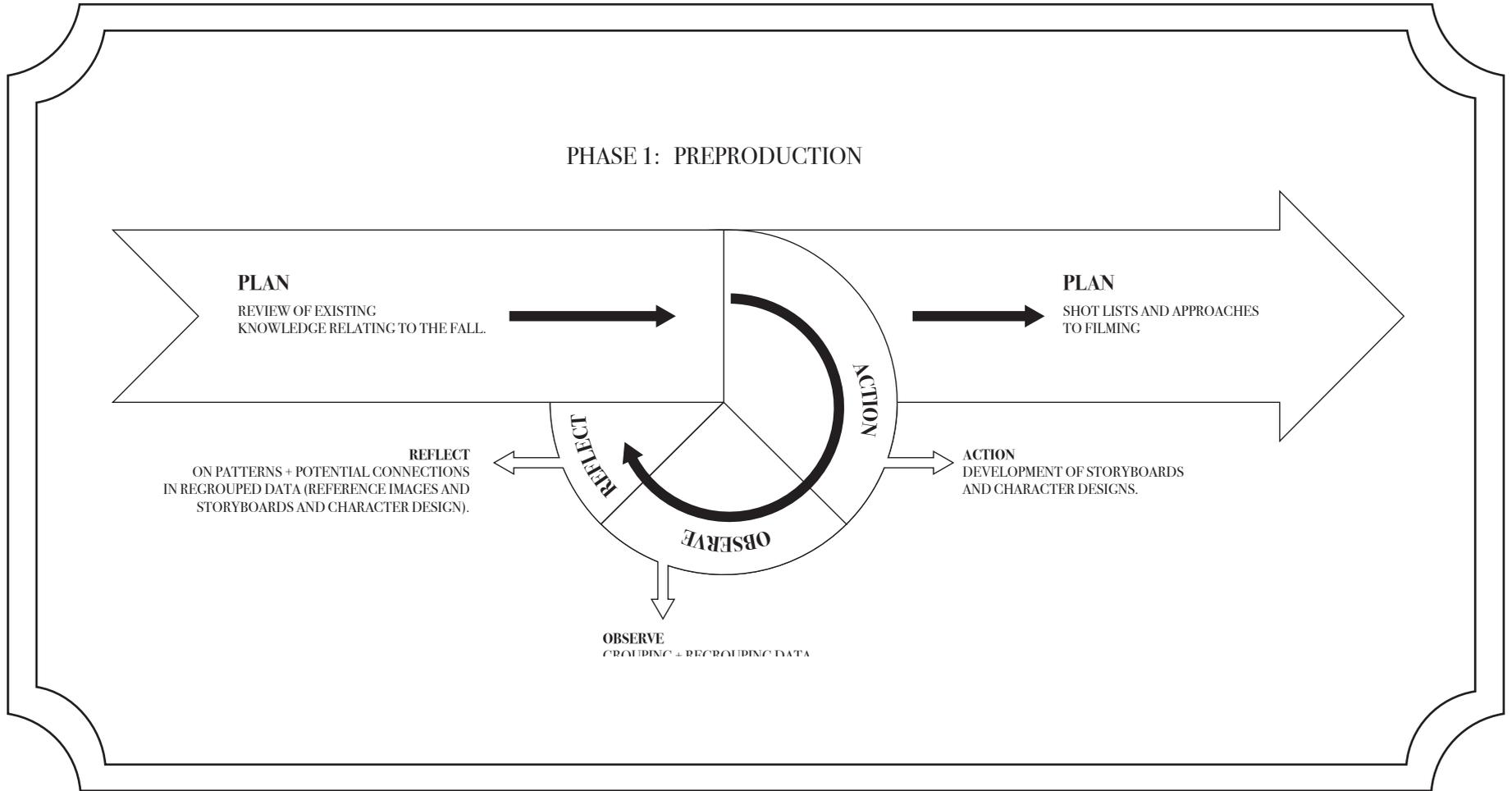
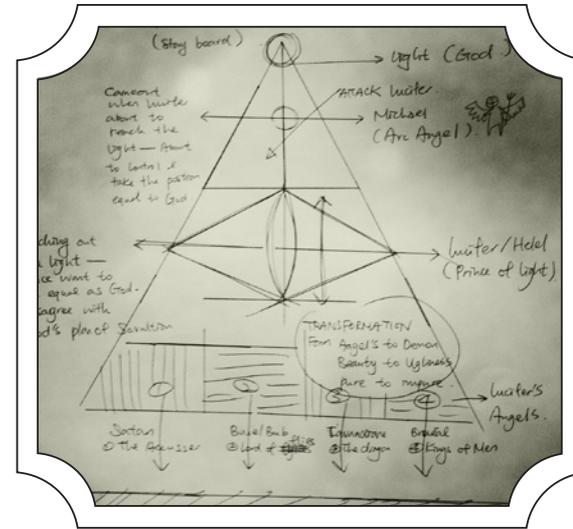


Figure 9: Chai, G. *Diagram illustrating action research principles in the preproduction phase of the film.* [Diagram]. (2011).

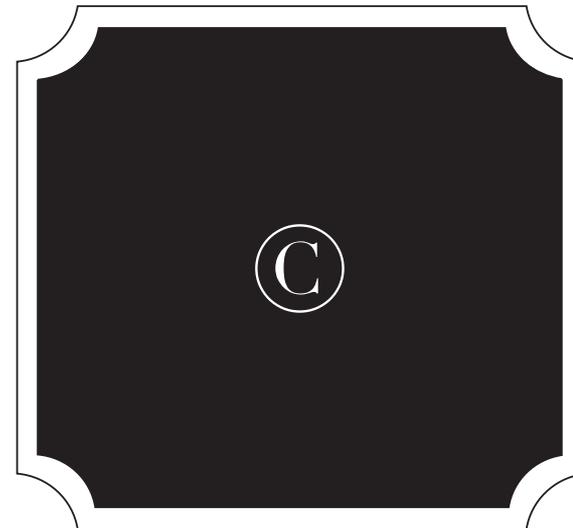
One of the most inspirational texts located in the initial review of knowledge was Blake's (1808) *The vision of the last judgment*. The composition and structure of this work, with its central focus spreading outwards to the base of the image, suggested a hierarchy around which thinking developed. As I began storyboarding ideas, I considered how this moving outwards and downwards might be translated in space and time, as a tableau was gradually revealed.



(Top) Figure 10: Chai, G. Draft composition of the film. [Pencil and ink]. (2011).

(Bottom) Figure 11: Blake, W. *The vision of the Last Judgment*. [Pencil and water colour] (1808).

→ Retrieved from Blake, W. (1808). *The vision of the Last Judgment*. London, England: Tate Gallery.



### The designer's journal

As I began to consider how characters might appear in *The Fall*, I used a designer's journal to note down my thoughts and visualisations. Newbury (2001, p.3) argues that the very act of keeping a research diary or journal, "can in itself sensitise the researcher to the visual", and it is by employing this approach to idea development that I sought to generate sites of reflection and reflexivity.

In my journal I also built, incrementally, the storyline for the film. This was a very condensed narrative that sought to take only a small number of episodes from the narrative and arrange them in a dramatic tableau that depicted the rise of pride, the conflict between Michael and Lucifer, and Lucifer's fall from heaven.

When I draw, even when I am storyboarding, I am thinking 'inside' the story. In this regard I am positioned as part of an unfolding episode that I sense all around me. I let ideas play out in my mind while I consider their relationships and creative potentials. This process may be likened to Moustakas' (1990) description of immersion, where "the researcher becomes on intimate terms with the research question, living with it and growing in understanding" (p. 28). This period of immersion and incubation allows for a time where "the inner workings of the tacit dimension and intuition . . . continue to clarify and extend understanding on levels outside the immediate awareness" (ibid, p. 29).

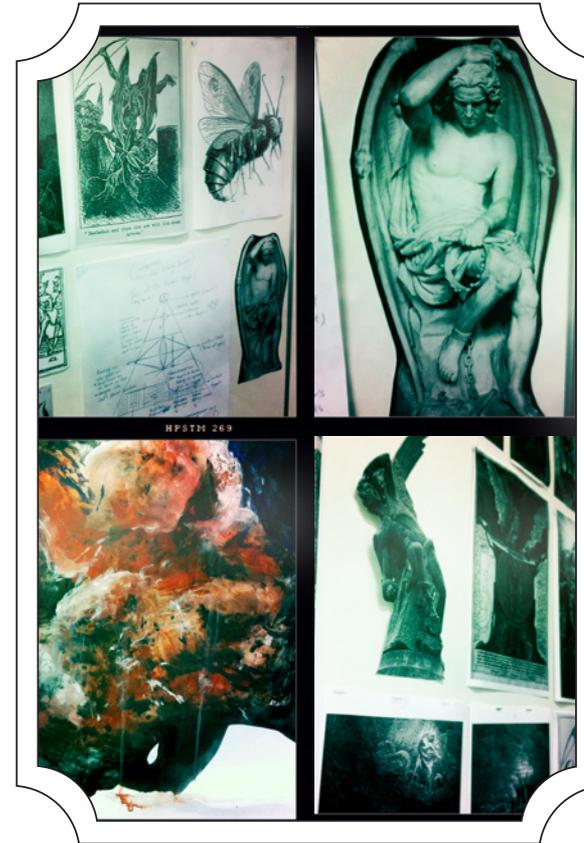


Figure 12: Chai, G. *Initial designs for Lucifer from my journal*. [Photograph]. (2011).

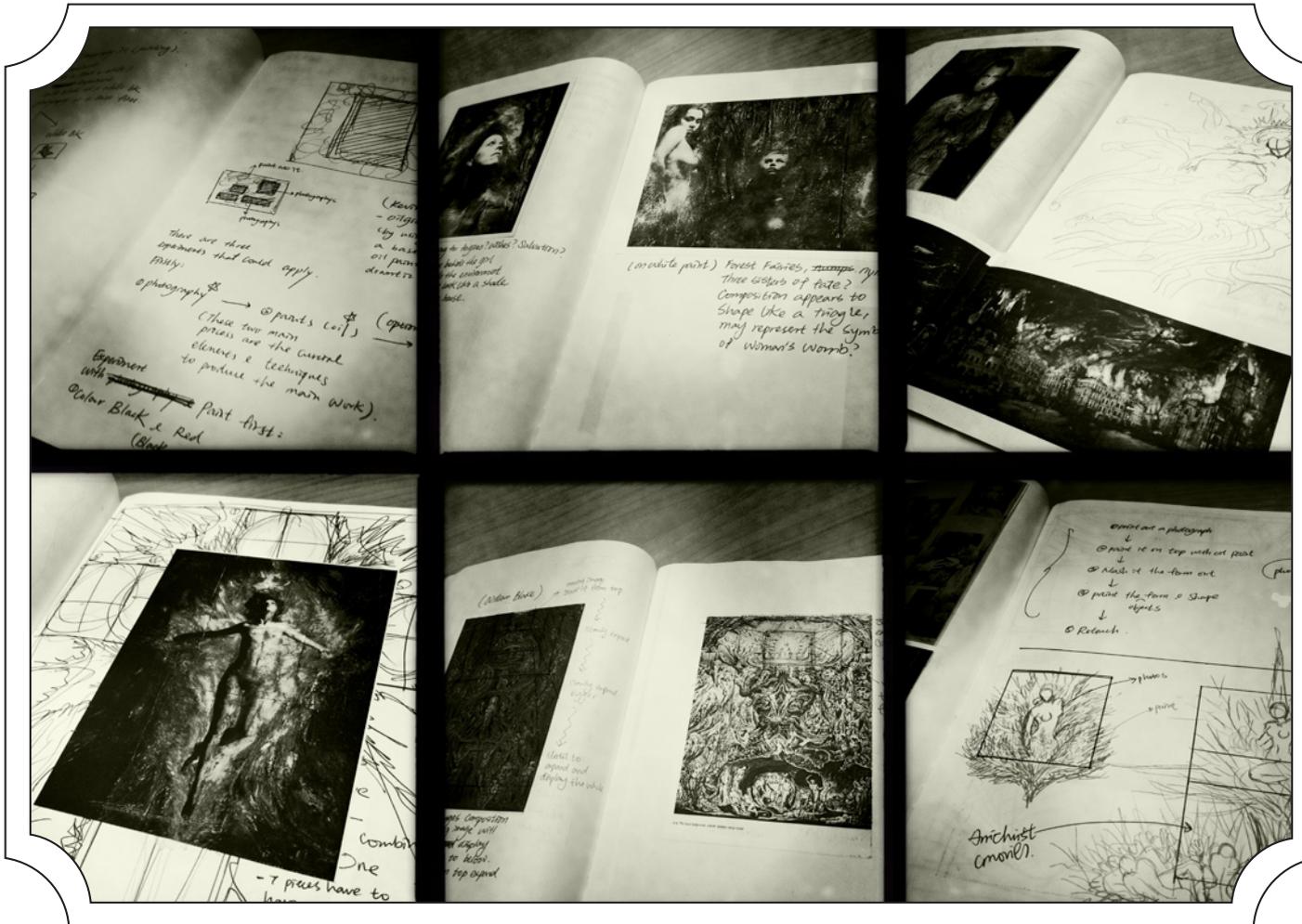


Figure 13: Chai, G. *Collated material in my designer's journal*. [Photograph]. (2011).

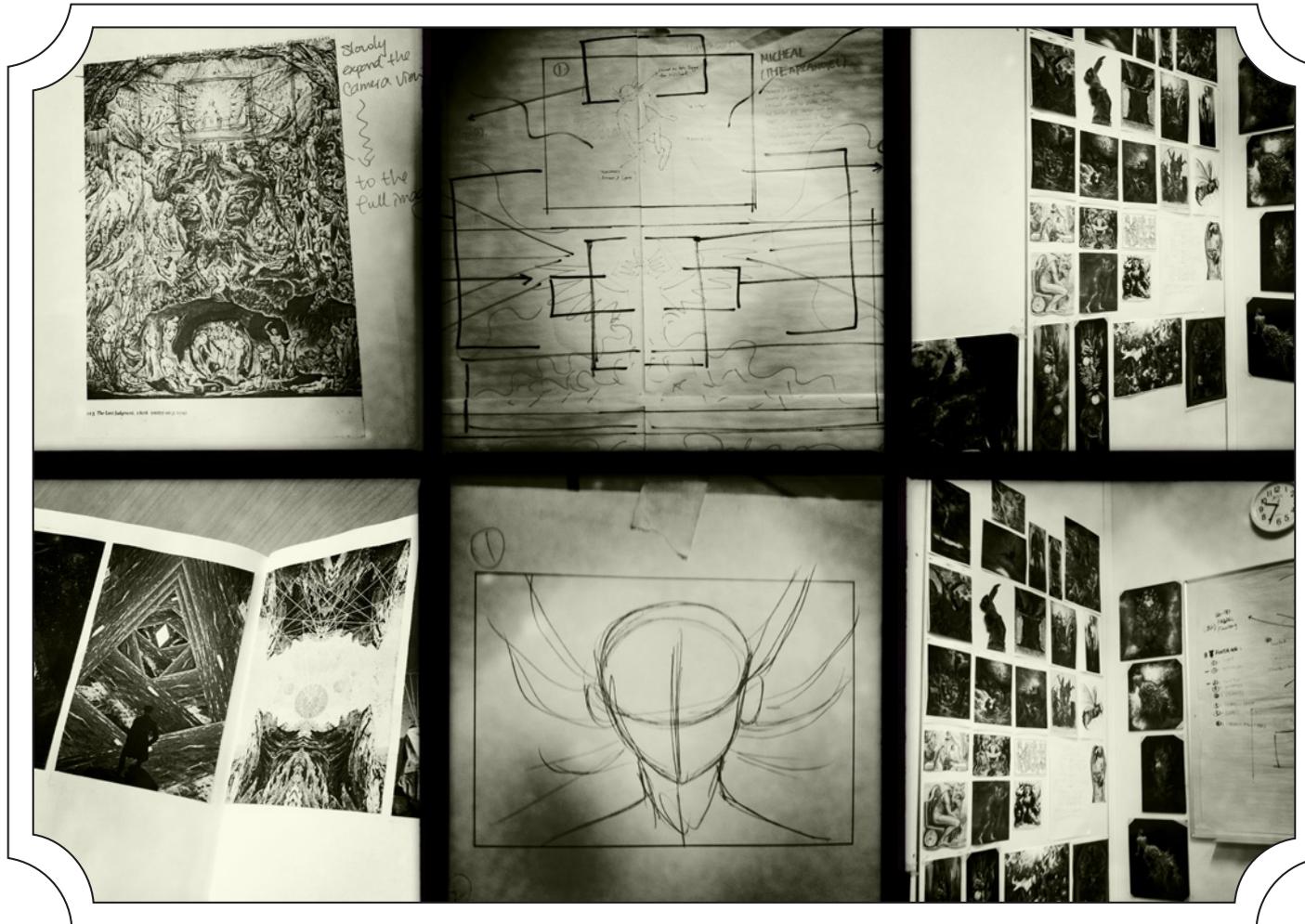


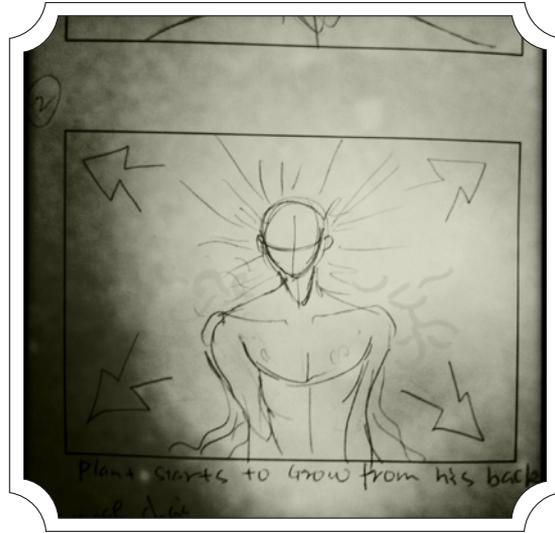
Figure 13-1: Chai, G. *Collated material in my designer's journal (on the wall)*. [Photograph]. (2011).

In sketch form the storyboard engages with both planning and action. Ideas are generated but also ‘fed’ by outside references, from my ongoing review of related knowledge. Through a series of experiments and refinements the film began to take form as nine chronological sequences.

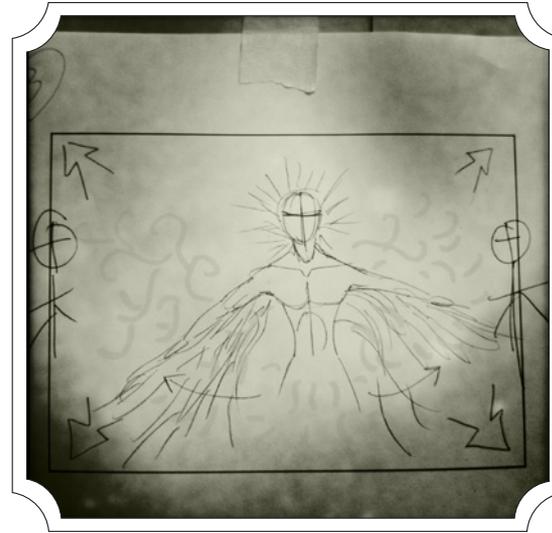


Figure 14: Chai, G. *Draft storyboard depicting episodes in the film, taken from my journal*. [Photograph]. (2011).

(Scene 1) The beginning: Identification of Lucifer's face, and a slow zoom to reveal his countenance and figure.



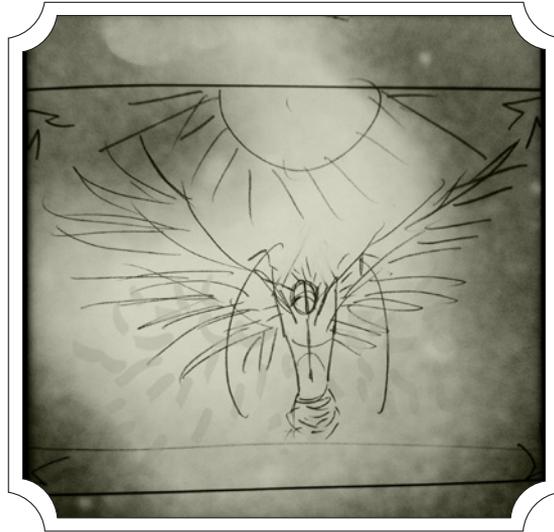
(Scene 2) As he is revealed, plants begin to grow as a form of adoration.



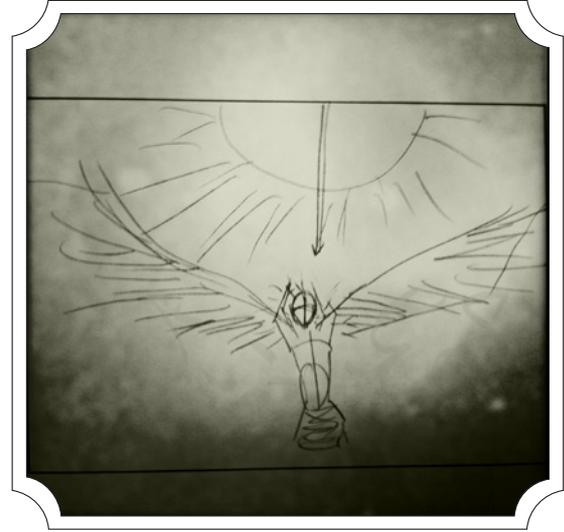
(Scene 3) Lucifer's worshippers become part of the adoration of nature.



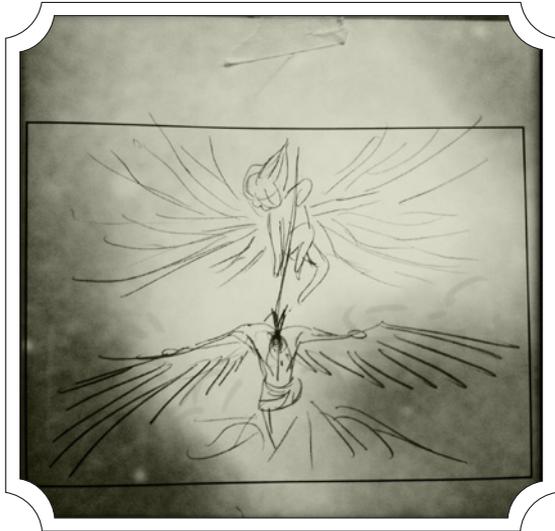
(Scene 4) Lucifer (as the Prince of Light) raises his arms and reaches towards the light.



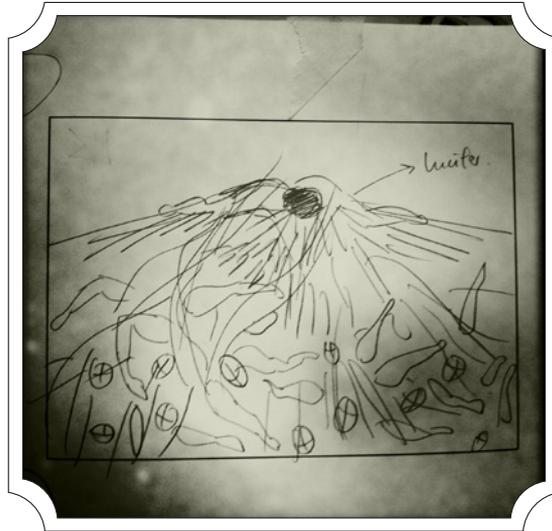
(Scene 5) Lucifer is haloed by the light.



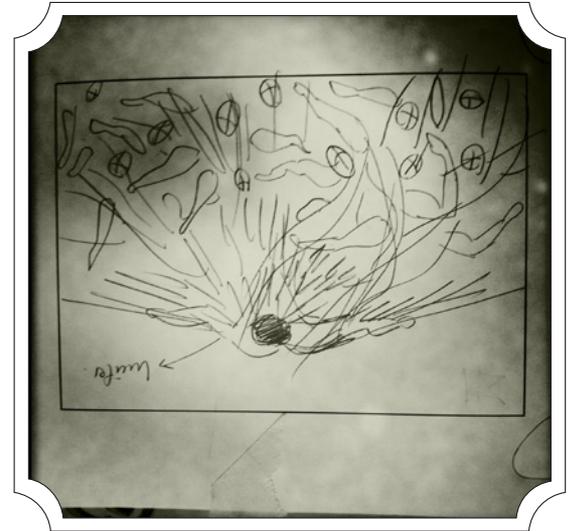
(Scene 6) A golden spear reaches downward from the light.



(Scene 7) Michael appears and Lucifer is struck down.



(Scene 8) Lucifer begins to fall. We shift into a reverse point of view and see foliage growing.



(Scene 9) As Lucifer falls he is surrounded by angels who accompany him into the darkness.

### **Production**

This phase of the research involved filming and character design. This differs from normal production design where costumes are normally prepared before the shoot. However, I needed to design costumes and make-up for Lucifer, his worshipping angels, and the Archangel Michael, based on experiments with light and composition with the models. Therefore decisions needed to be made inside the practice of choreography, lighting and body composition.

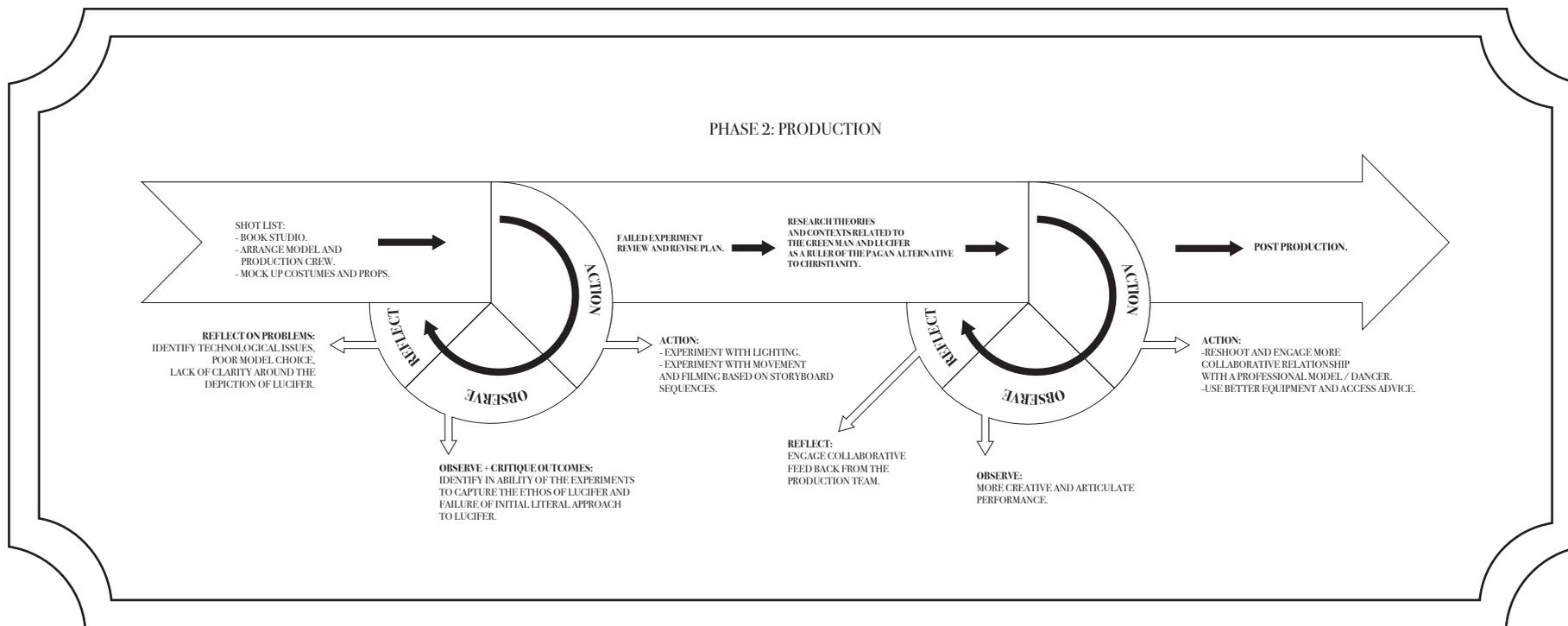


Figure 15: Chai, G. Diagram illustrating action research principles in relation to the production phase of the film.

### The filming process and character design of Lucifer

In considering approaches to the design of Lucifer, I imported into my cycles of action and reflection certain bodies of external knowledge, including the design work of artists like Gareth Pugh.

My initial experiments with symmetry and references to angels' wings proved too literal and, after seeking opinions from other designers and collaborators on the project, I undertook a reconceptualisation and redesign of his character.

Significantly, the realisation that Lucifer had to be redesigned was influenced by external and internal critique. In discussing the situation I found myself in what Schön (1983) describes as a distinctive form of conversation that occurs between the designer and the designed. As the designer reflects upon action Schön notes, “the situation talks back, and the practitioner listens ”(1983, p.132). Thus in this process I am in dialogue with my work. When actions do not work I review and re-approach the problem having gathered new possibilities and ideas.

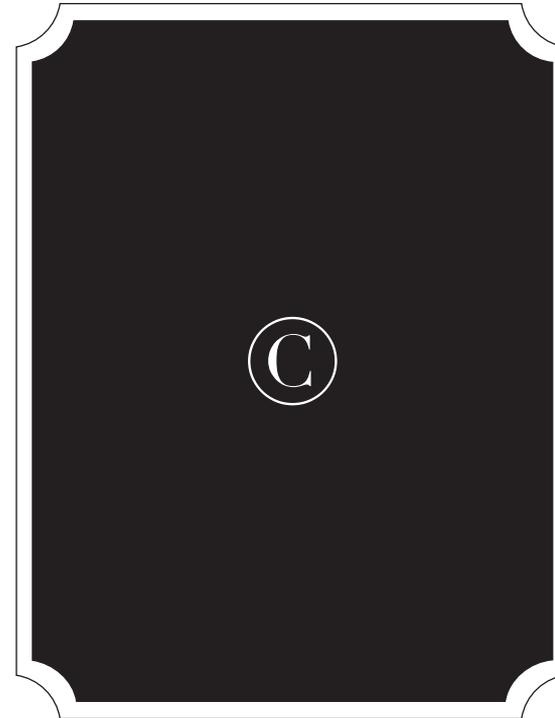


Figure 16: Pugh, G. *Galactic Goth*. [Photograph]. (2010).

↑ Retrieved from <http://smokenmirrorsblog.files.wordpress.com/2009/10/garethpughss1017.jpg>

The situation was exacerbated because this was my first time using film as a medium; my past practice had been in photography. I realised that the shoot lacked preparation and technical knowledge.<sup>11</sup> I also realised that using friends as models when one is working with complex ideas and the need for responsive choreographed movement was not a good idea. If one considers Hopkin's (1985) description of action research as a process of planning, action, observation and reflection, one can see that I had taken this experiment through a complete cycle that hadn't worked.

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<sup>11</sup> I had used an inferior camera, a Panasonic P2 Card, and the wrong settings. As a consequence the footage was of low quality and lacked the detailed definition I was seeking for a tableau that I had envisaged as theatrical and almost obsessive in its attention to detail.

Figure 17: Chai, G. *The design of Lucifer: First filming experiment*. [Photograph]. (2011).





Figure 17-1: Chai, G. *The design of Lucifer: First filming experiment*. [Photograph]. (2011).



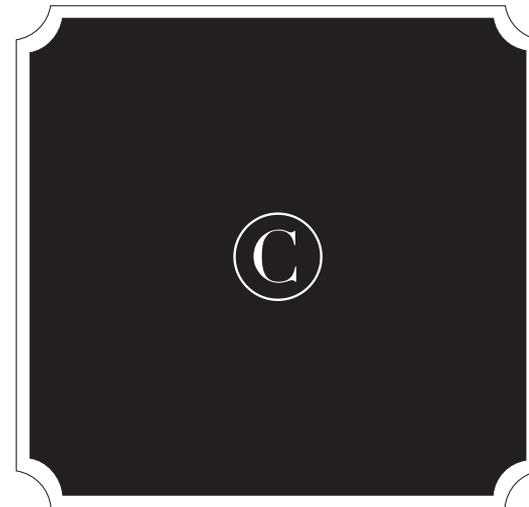
Figure 18: Chai, G. *Lucifer: First filming experiment*. [Screen captures]. (2011).

Accordingly, I identified a series of problems and returned to a new phase of planning. In the second approach to the design of Lucifer, I sought out theory relating to pagan iconography and, within this inquiry, located the phenomenon of the Green Man. While this feature of Christian iconography will be discussed more fully in the chapter dealing with *The Fall's* critical framework, I was interested in the potential of infusing depictions of Lucifer with the paganism that challenged representation in the early Christian church.

Rather than begin in the film studio however, I returned to sketching because this allowed me to test ideas quickly. Rogers (2000) notes that sketching “possesses the potential to act as both a facilitator and recorder of creative acts, presenting opportunities for improved evaluation and the restating of problems” (p. 452). By experimenting with the Green Man as a nature-based form of chaos (in relation to the order of Christian doctrine), I was able to develop an alternative treatment that was both more organic and more physical in its bodily nature.

Figure 19: Beham, H. *Three engraving: Ornament with a Mask*. [Print]. (1543).

→ Retrieved from [http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/5/58/Panel\\_with\\_Amascaron2.jpg](http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/5/58/Panel_with_Amascaron2.jpg)



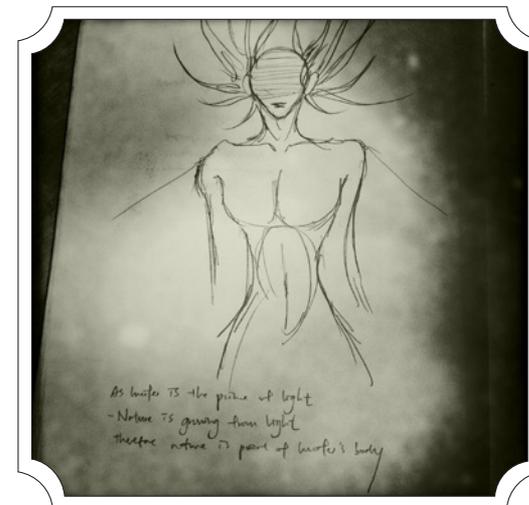
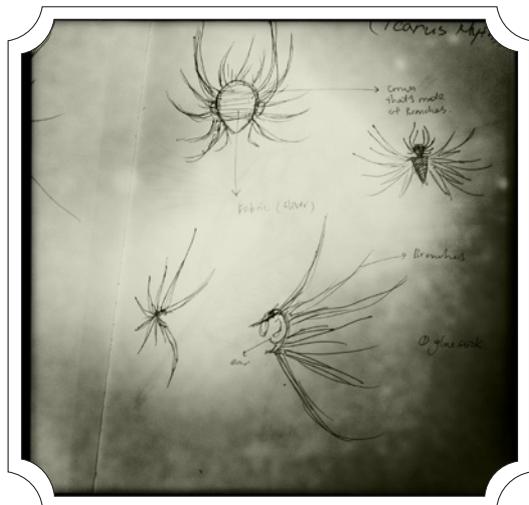


Figure 20: Chai, G. *Redesign of Lucifer*. [Sketch]. (2011).

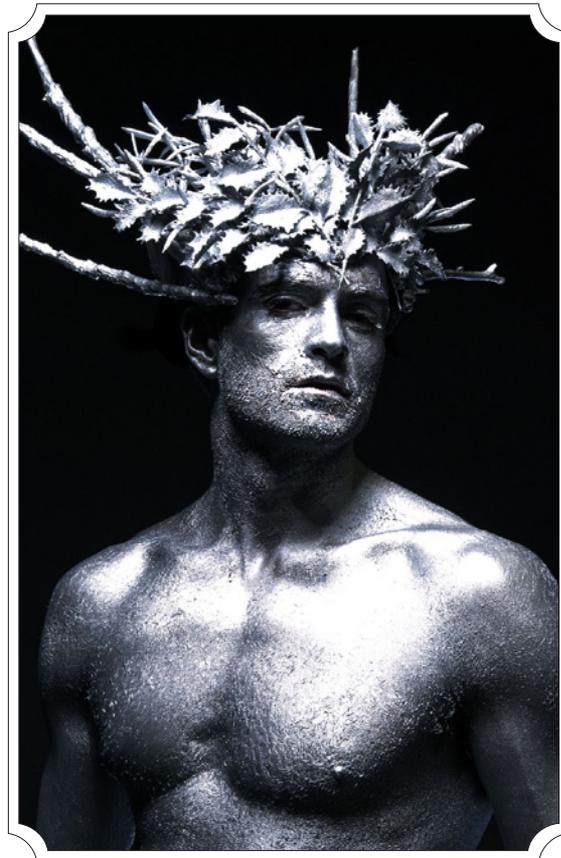
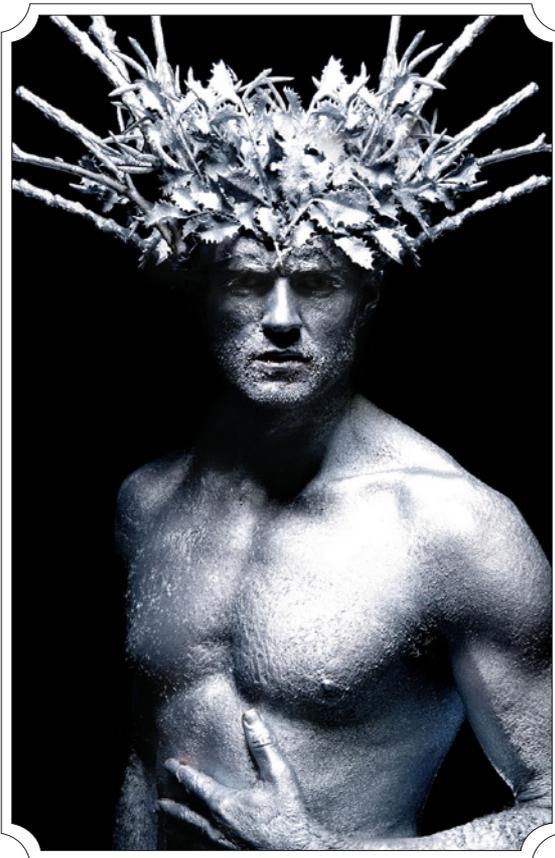


Figure 21: Chai, G. *Lucifer's helmet*. [Photograph]. (2011).

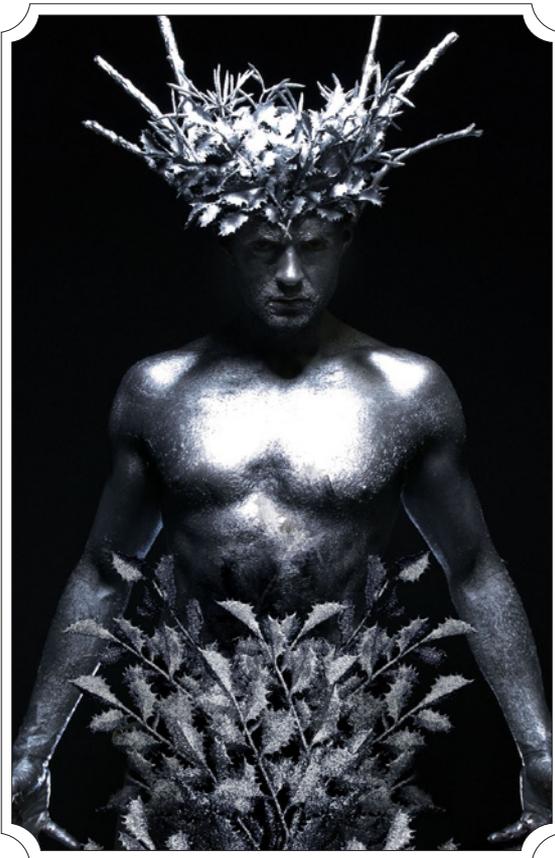
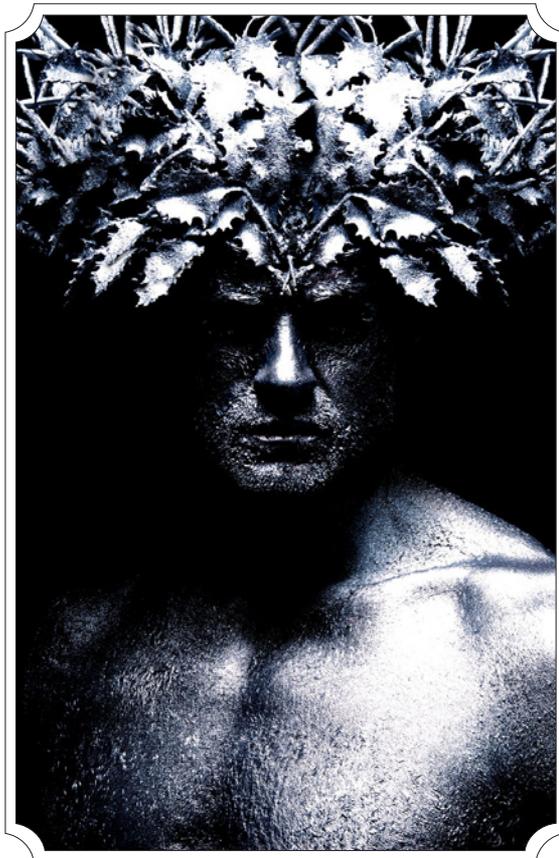


Figure 22: Chai, G. *Lucifer: Second filming experiment*. [Photograph]. (2011).



Figure 23: Chai, G. *Lucifer: Second filming experiment*. [Screen captures]. (2011).

As I developed the sketches I concurrently experimented with material, developing a series of new props, including Lucifer's helmet and hybrid plants. At this time I was also influenced by Osborne's (1986) discussion on symmetry where he suggested, "Symmetry was asserted to be the key to perfection in nature as in art" (p.1). This hypothesis, when examined through much religious art depicting *The Fall*, gave me the idea that I might create Lucifer's rise as a symmetrical flowering of foliage and allegiance. He might rise to the light in an orchestration of order then fall from it in disorder. When I returned to the studio, after trialing experiments on storyboards and in the physical building of costumes and props, I brought with me a professional model, technical collaborators<sup>12</sup> and a development of the single successful aspect of the first shoot; an approach to body paint that used metallic pigment.

The result of experiments with lighting and an HD camera with correct settings meant that the new manifestation of Lucifer was much closer to what I

had envisaged. In addition, because the professional model understood movement, he was able to respond to directions in rich and varied ways. This meant that the footage in front of the green screen was clean and more innovative.

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<sup>12</sup> The production team for the shoot included, Eason Lin and Jaiane Loo (filming assistants), Kay Yu (make-up), Lyna Ayr (styling and props), and the model William Brandon from the agency Red 11.

### The filming process and character design of the Archangel Michael and the Worshippers

Experiments for the development and design of the Archangel Michael and the worshipper's were less convoluted. Schön (1983) noted that in "seeing this situation as that one, one may also do in this situation as in that one" (p.139). By this he refers to a certain transferability of what has been learned, into more focused and targeted actions in new situations. Having come to terms with technical issues impacting on my filming, secured informed and insightful collaboration, and clarified my thinking around the depiction of angels for this work, I was able to make more strategic and complementary decisions in the development of other characters in the tableau.

#### The Archangel Michael

Michael's design was influenced by more established interpretations including those of Sanzio (Fig. 24), and certain Renaissance painters.<sup>13</sup> Close readings of existing depictions led to designs that sought synergies between tradition and the theatrical environment in which I had located Lucifer.

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<sup>13</sup> Renaissance painters: Guido Reni, 1636 and Charles Le Brun, 1680.

(Left) Figure 24: Sanzio, R. *Saint Michael Vanquishing Satan*. [Oil transferred from wood to canvas]. (1518).

→ Retrieved from [http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/f/f7/Le\\_Grand\\_Saint\\_Michel%2C\\_by\\_Raffaello\\_Sanzio%2C\\_from\\_C2RMF\\_retouched.jpg](http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/f/f7/Le_Grand_Saint_Michel%2C_by_Raffaello_Sanzio%2C_from_C2RMF_retouched.jpg)

(Right: upper) Figure 25: Chai, G. *Archangel Michael character design*. [Sketch]. (2011).

(Right: bottom) Figure 26: Chai, G. *Archangel Michael's helmet*. [Photograph]. (2011).

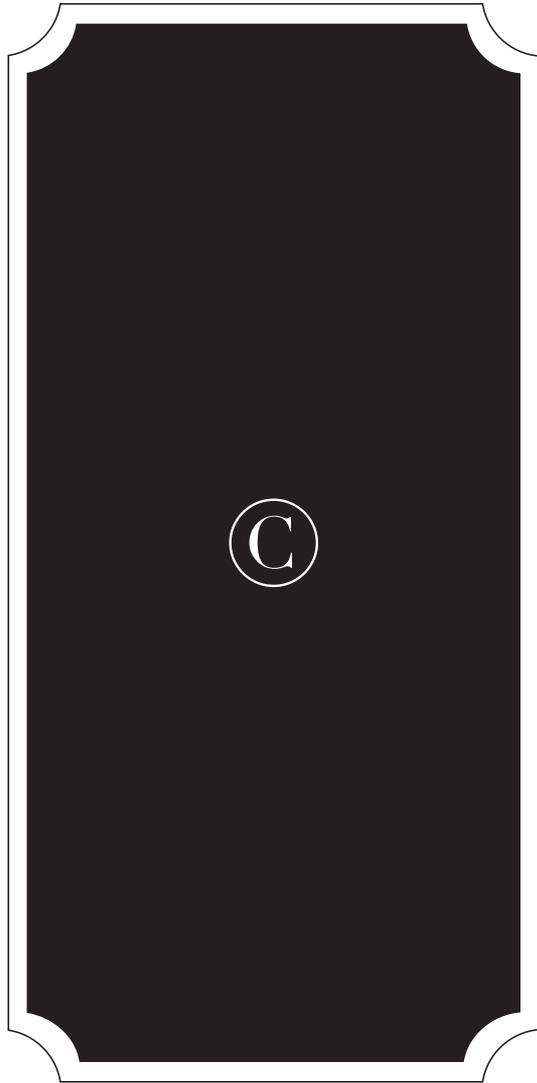




Figure 27: Chai, G. *Archangel Michael filming experiment*. [Photograph]. (2011).



Figure 28: Chai, G. *Archangel Michael filming experiment*. [Screen captures]. (2011).

## Worshippers

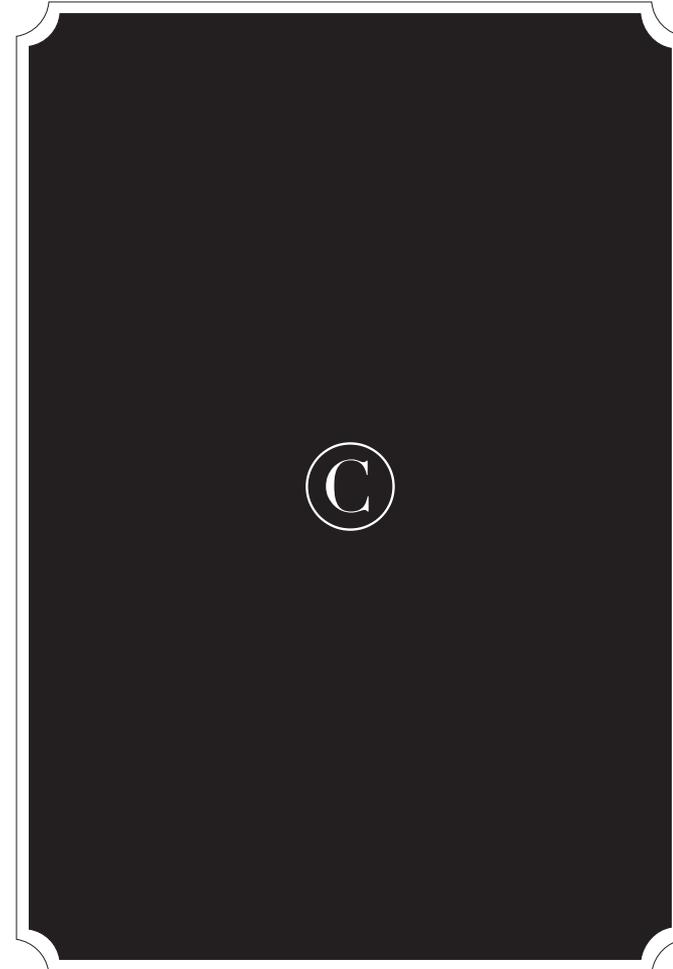
The worshippers (Lucifer's angels) drew references from Dore's illustration of the Divine Comedy (Fig. 29). His depiction of twisted bodies as a mass of agony without individual identity suggested useful approaches to *The Fall* as something representing the loss of a unique soul, the loss of choice, and the loss of a possibility of redemption.

I experimented with almost dismembered figures that became more of the fabric of condemned adoration than specific characters within it. Integral to this was the need for fluid and repetitious movement.

Thus in constructing the movements of the angels, I experimented with choreographing models so I was able to draw out a sense of twisted but cyclic (eternal) movement.

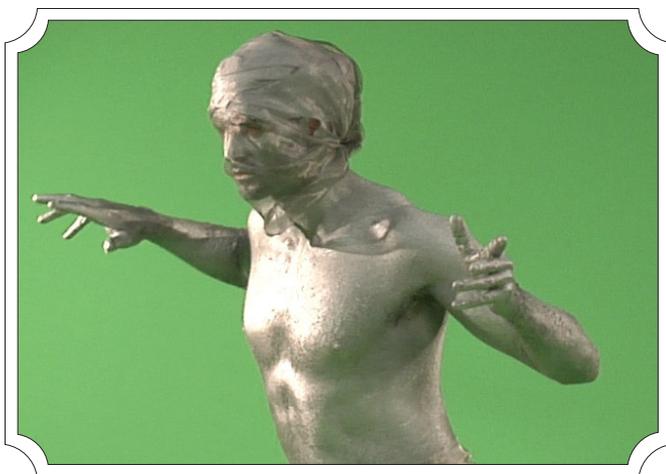
(Left) Figure 29: Dore, G. *The Embarkation of the Souls*. [Print]. (1892).

→ Retrieved from Doré, G. (1892). *The Embarkation of the Souls*. New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press.





(From Right to Bottom) Figure 30: Chai, G. *Worshipper* filming experiment. [Screen captures]. (2011).



### **Postproduction**

Although one might assume that postproduction is simply the editing of designed sequences into a linear text, in designing a tableau vivant it is at this point that some of the most refined and experimental work occurs, especially as it relates to composition.

If we return to the tenets of action research, we see in this phase of the research; planning, action, observation, collaborative feedback, reflexive critique, and transformation.

The tableau vivant may be seen as a form of hybrid text that calls upon design skills situated in both theatre and photography. However, when one explores the spatio-temporal potentials of the medium, new compositional considerations like time, rhythm, movement, direction, and sound become integral to its resolution.

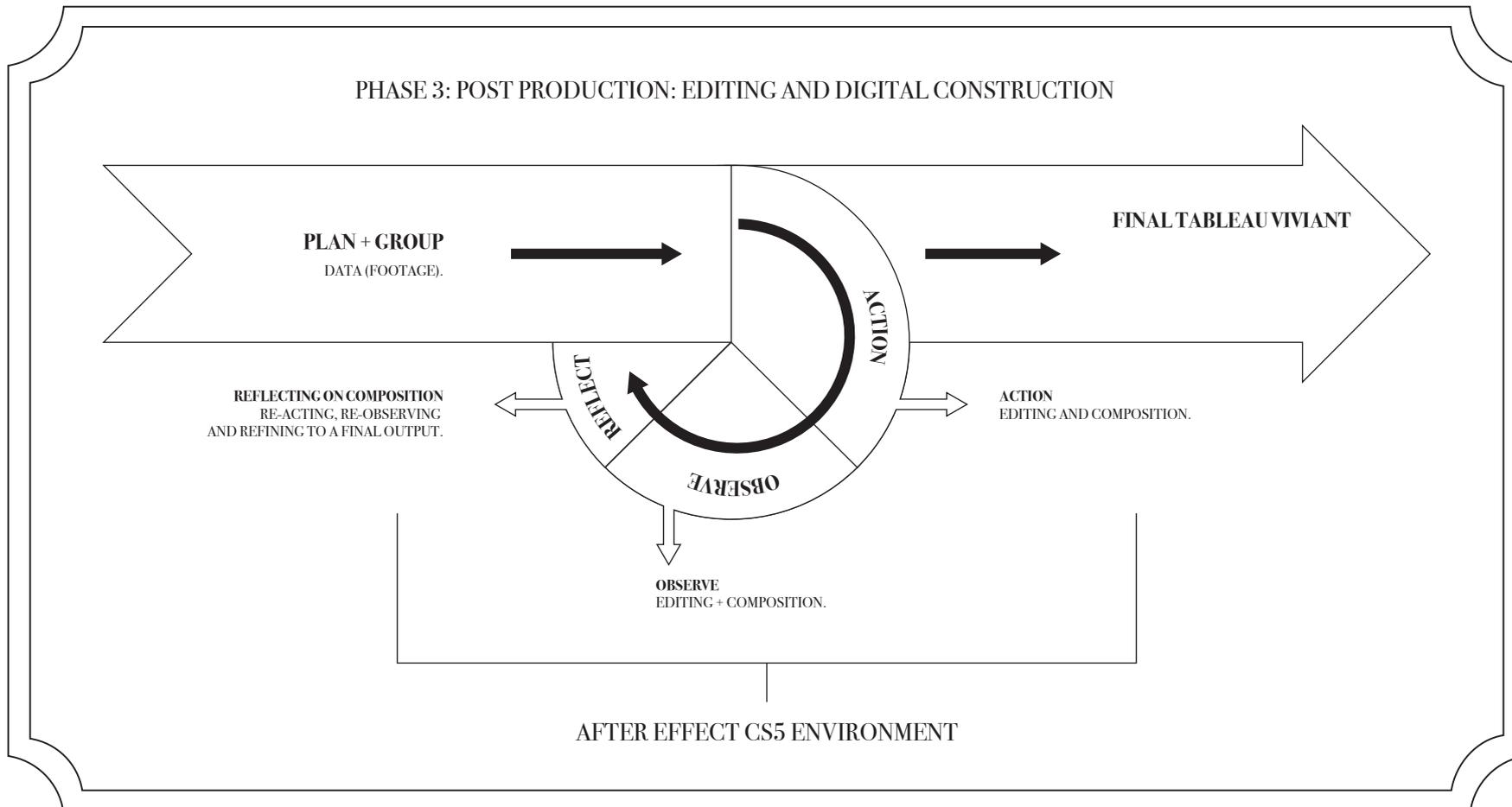


Figure 31: Chai, G. *Diagram illustrating action research principles in the post-production phase of the film.*

To do this I worked inside the digital environment of After Effects CS5. This allowed me to break apart elements and reconstruct them in complex combinations. In this process I altered transparency levels, overlapped images and masked individual elements so I could re-compose pre-shot sequences into a seamless, theatrical episode.



Figure 32: Chai, G. *Post Production* of early compositional experiments. [Screen captures]. (2011).

### Planning, action, reflection and transformation

In a cyclic manner, experiments undertaken in this phase continued the process of planning, action, reflection and transformation. The design of animated botanical elements in the work may be used to illustrate this. Initially I planned how these elements might look through a process of modeling. I constructed a number of plant forms that I painted and filmed in a variety of ways (see Fig. 33).



Figure 33: Chai, G. *Models of foliage experiments, painted silver in preparation for filming*. [Photograph]. (2011).

Filming these elements provided me with data with which to experiment in post-production.<sup>14</sup> In the After Effects environment, action involved a number of exploratory experiments.<sup>15</sup> Here, planning and action became a seamless dynamic; I planned, acted, and reflected upon what I created then, identifying opportunities for improvement, I re-planned. In this process, each branch in a selected photograph was individually masked and scaled. These components were then composed in symmetrical groupings so their movements suggested growth both upward towards the light, and outwards as a suggestion of wings or glorification. Because each minute element is individually treated, this took many weeks of work.

My approach to the design of botanical elements was not predetermined. I discovered potentials while inside the process of action, planning and reflection. This process was largely intuitive and I describe it as having a feel for what is right. Schön (1983) calls this knowing in action. He suggests, “There are actions, recognitions, and judgments which we know how

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<sup>14</sup> I had not actually designed how the foliage would work until I began digital composition work.

<sup>15</sup> This is a form of exploration Schön (1983) describes as “...a probing, playful activity by which we get a feel for things. It succeeds when it leads to the discovery of something else” (p.70).

to carry out spontaneously; we do not have to think about them prior to or during their performance” (p.2). It is this sensing based upon accumulated and critical practice that sits at the core of action research. This is why the methodology is so useful for designers.

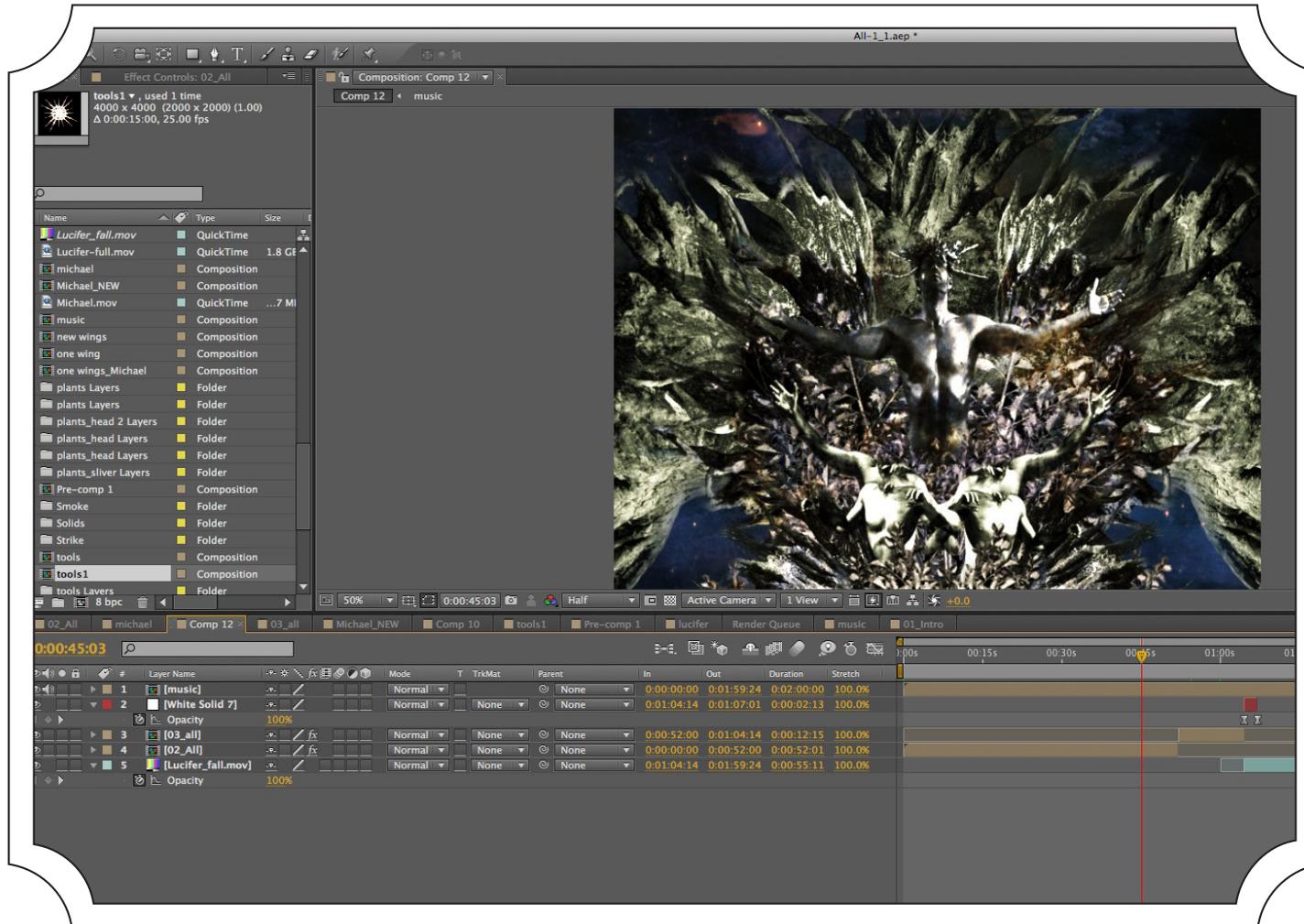


Figure 34: Chai, G. *Video montage experiment*. [Screen captures]. (2011).



Figure 35: Chai, G. *Composition of the film*. [Screen captures]. (2011).

## **Conclusion**

This research project, because it involved creative and reflective practice, required a methodological approach that was flexible and that might heighten the chances for discovery and responsive change in the work. As I was designing with a new medium, with which I was not familiar, the project's conceptual framework (theory) and practice journeyed in tandem, in a reciprocal dynamic.

Action research methodology allowed me to utilise and integrate a range of approaches that could connect and disconnect as required by the needs of the project. This was important because the research was not singular in nature. It had many phases and each required distinctive approaches to both data gathering and creative synthesis.

Useful in understanding and articulating action research has been Schön's (1983) writing on research conducted by practitioners. His observations about how designers explore, reflect in action, and frame and reframe research have been useful because they have helped me to examine processes of designing that I had not been able to fully articulate. However, it was not the expression of action research that drove the project forward; it was the conscious and deliberate examination of how I think, inside the process of designing, that enabled me to stand back

and look at both the emerging work and the nature of my practice.

This has been a huge project. Its journey has been intricate and exacting and its pathway forward has not been straight or predictable. But it was driven by an idea. Ideas are unstable things but as they grow they demand that a thinker should frame and reframe the way she works. The final work is a distinctive text. It resonates with detail and power. It is a contortion of elements brought into a cohesive expression of an idea.

# Critical Framework

This chapter offers a brief discussion of significant ideas that were instrumental in framing and developing the tableau vivant *The Fall*. It opens with a discussion of *The Fall* as a theological and literary phenomenon. It then considers the tableau vivant as an art form. The chapter concludes with a consideration of key theories and influences on the design of Lucifer and St Michael respectively.

### **The Fall of the Morning Star**

*The Fall* from heaven is a narrative found in both Hebrew and Christian writing. Biblically the story is most closely associated with Chapter 12 verses 7-9 in the Book of Revelation of the New Testament of the Christian Bible.<sup>16</sup> Milton (in *Paradise Lost*) also presents the story of the origin of Lucifer as an elevated angel who because of pride, rebelled against God before the creation of Man. In Milton's account one third of the angels were thrown from Heaven.<sup>17</sup>

Lucifer's fall sometimes is argued in contemporary theology, as a metaphor or allegory for conflicts of power and control within the church. Early Christian writing and indeed certain contemporary discourse, often positions alternative theological viewpoints as manifestations of evil. In this dynamic, dissent is aligned with Lucifer and established paradigms are aligned with spiritual integrity.

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<sup>16</sup> Although, in the Hebrew Book of Daniel, one also encounters significant apocalyptic imagery relating to the narrative.

<sup>17</sup> See *Paradise Lost*, Book VI.

Blocker (2008) demonstrates this framing of intellectual dissent to dominant Church doctrine when he states,

Satan has infiltrated the church with his agents. These people live a life unto themselves instead of taking up the cause of Christ. Their motives are only for selfish gain. These are the ones who only give intellectual acceptance to the word of God, but it takes no place in the heart. Their lives only serve to deter people from the faith. These are "vessels unto dishonour that are high-minded and resistant to the chastening of the Lord. They are deceived and they go about deceiving others: "Having a form of godliness, but denying its power (p. 76).<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> A similar framing may be seen in Carmichael's (2009) argument that

Satan is the archenemy of God and of Christ's Church. Among his many goals is to hinder the Church's ministry. To this end, he intends to spread division by inciting caricature, suspicion, lies, accusation, and hostility among God's people. After all, he is in the business of propagating himself in our attitudes and actions (p. 49).

This idea of dissent or challenge being the work of Lucifer or Satan (or his agents), suggests that the Lucifer of *The Fall* remains dynamic in an ongoing battle the church has with maintaining dominant doctrines.

In opposition to this living interpretation of *The Fall*, Johnson (1998) frames the story as mythological. He offers a more theatrical interpretation of the text and this has formed the substrate upon which the tableau vivant has been built.<sup>19</sup> Johnson suggests that the creation of angels and the subsequent rebellion and fall of Lucifer are allegorical myth but the narrative is “inextricably connected with the fall of man and the origin of sin” (para. 1.).

In relation to the story, Auffarth and Stuckenbruck (2004) state, “Satan belonged primordially to the first light creatures of God and was cast down from heaven because of his arrogant pride” (p. 63). They argue that Lucifer was God’s first creation, a prince of light whom he adored as his favorite. Like a number of writers they suggest that Lucifer’s pride was easily blinded by God’s love and in an effort to become equal to God, he raged a war against him

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<sup>19</sup> However, certain elements within it reference tensions between established church iconography and pagan forms.

and was cast down to hell.<sup>20</sup> In this process, Lucifer became one of the Nephilim.<sup>21</sup>

*The Fall* takes as its tableau vivant episode the origins of the Nephilim. It tells the story of the rise of the Prince of Light, or Morning Star, and frames him in a process of adoration. He unfurls like a flowering deity; his wings are foliage and he reaches up as a manifestation of pride and glory. In Milton’s version of the story, Lucifer argues that angels are “self-begot” and “self-raised” (5:860). This is why in the tableaux we see him emerging as a creation of his own. It is when he confronts Michael that this glorious unfurling is interrupted.

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<sup>20</sup> Thus Johnson (1998, para. 24) says,

Using his free will, being proud with contumacious arrogance, disdaining to serve the Creator of the universe, making himself equal to the Creator, Satan was cast down with his accomplices into the abyss in eternal flames... he is tormented with eternal suffering.

<sup>21</sup> The Hebrew word Nephilim (meaning *those who fell*, or *those who were cast down*) comes from the Semitic root *naphal*, meaning *to fall*. However, in the Greek *Septuagint* (a late translation of the Hebrew scriptures), Nephilim is also translated as *giants* (Gen. 6:4; Num. 13:33).

Lucifer and Michael, as the representative of God, are depicted as equals for a moment. Both are constructed from the same model and both suggest a level of perfection not manifest in humankind. Both are male, as all significant texts relating to the story, gender or name, the Archangels as males.

Lucifer's striking down follows both Milton's and Biblical renditions of the story but neither his fall nor his casting into hell is literal. Instead the episode is infused with references to paganism<sup>22</sup> and the earth. We see torment as something theatricised into movement that comes closer to choreographed, eternal, repetitive movement than painful torment.

There is an orchestration of divine beauty in *The Fall* because the characters are divine beings. Their mythological fall did not remove the divine aspect from their nature. In Milton's *Paradise Lost*, Lucifer argues that all the angels ought to rule as gods. He also speaks of this eternal divine status when he states "Here may we reign secure, and in my choice, to reign is worth ambition, though in Hell. Better to reign in hell than serve in heaven" (1:261).

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<sup>22</sup> This is not a new approach to the episode. Milton (1674) incorporates paganism, classical mythology, and Christianity into his version of the story.

### **The tableau vivant**

The term tableau vivant comes from the French for *living picture*. It is normally a frozen arrangement of costumes, sets and performers used to replicate scenes from religion, art, or literature. In a tableau vivant the inhabitants do not normally speak or move.

Flax (1985) suggests that historically, the tableau vivant dealt with subjects with significant moral or spiritual content and the contexts of the works were generally biblical, historical, or mythological. He argues that the art form became popular because “portrait, landscape, still life, or genre painting could not provide that instance of a significant human action in which the story of the play and the iconography motif could converge” (p. 52).

The tableau vivant has historically drawn upon and synergized art forms of the stage, painting and photography. Elbert (2002) argues that although the art form’s emblematic and allegorical characteristics referenced medieval drama, the tableau vivant, as we recognize it today, emerged in Europe in the eighteenth century. Although Chapman (1992) suggests the phrase and practice of tableaux vivant originated as medieval liturgical dramas when a mass ended in a short, dramatic series or tableaux (p.6).

She notes that historically, “tableaux vivant denoted figures posed, silent and immobile, for twenty or thirty seconds” (ibid.)<sup>23</sup>.

The development of the tableau vivant is also associated within a class structure that could not only afford time but also appreciation of the art form. Goethe believed that tableaux vivant were therefore only forms of entertainment. Conversely, Wertham (1953) argued, in *Seduction of the Innocent*, “To make a sharp distinction between entertainment and learning is poor pedagogy, and even worse psychology. A great deal of learning comes in the form of entertainment, and a great deal of entertainment painlessly teaches important things” (p. 63).

Therefore, it may be argued that the art form has (and does) offered potentially more than an entertaining distraction. Paz suggests, that the tableau vivant

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<sup>23</sup> In Renaissance theatre, the Encyclopedia Britanica (para. 1) notes that such displays with their “full pomp and heraldic dress” appeared as a consequence of the “gradual decline of church power and the revival of Classical ideas.” On journeys, these ‘living’ structures were sometimes positioned as “a series of stops ...at various intervals en route. “Tableaux vivant and mimes were performed in costumes similar to those worn in the mystery and morality plays” (ibid.).

should not be considered as an imitation of an existing text, but as a work in its own right. Its internal construction, although often referencing known artworks, is an expression of the moment, in a new moment.

As an art form that seeks to forge links to film, Paz (2011) also suggests we can compare the tableau vivant with Barthes' consideration of the film still. Both, she argues, offer an analysis of a 'pregnant moment'. Barthes argues that the film still has the capacity to extract the whole diegesis of a film. Citing Eisenstein's belief that such a still offers us an 'inside' fragment with its own "basic center of gravity," he suggests that this center of gravity is, "no longer the element 'between shots' but the accentuation within the fragment" (Barthes, *ibid.*).

In reference to traditional tableau vivant, *The Fall* uses as its subject a mythological/religious moral text. It is a singular staging that frames and orchestrates its episode in a theatrical and posed manner. However, as a living picture, I have pushed its conventions so the tableau unfolds in a spatio-temporal environment. Its slow, almost dreamlike movements narrate the same episode that a number of earlier illustrators and painters have interpreted. However, in pushing Barthes' and Eisenstein's

consideration of the film still, I have extended the work so it contains, not a 'frozen moment', but an 'inner fragment' that lives and moves. Thus, in this thesis, *vivant* (living) becomes a verb as well as an adjective.

### Lucifer: the visual depiction

The design of Lucifer in *The Fall* has been influenced by three significant ideas. These are light, the Green Man, and symmetry.

### Lucifer as light

Auffarth and Stuckenbruck (2004), in discussing the Nephilim, describe them in relation to light. They say, “Sons of light are hypocrites since, disguised as angels of lights, they are in fact angels of Satan” (p. 213). They note that a Hebrew name for Lucifer was *Hele*. This term has been variously translated as ‘shining one’, ‘son of dawn’, and stars of El (ibid.p. 63). In Latin, Lucifer (from the words *lucem ferre*) means ‘light-bearer’. This was also the name given to the planet Venus, the Morning Star;<sup>24</sup> which heralds daylight. However, the use of this term is unstable.<sup>25</sup> In the tableau, Lucifer’s light is treated as the cold luminosity of the morning star. It is the light that

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<sup>24</sup> The Vulgate (Latin) version of the Christian Bible uses the word ‘lucifer’ (with a lower-case initial) twice to refer to the Morning Star: once in 2 Peter 1:19 and once in Isaiah 14:12.

<sup>25</sup> In Peter 1:19, the Latin word *Lucifer* refers to the Morning Star, with no relation to the devil. As a further complication in Revelation 22:16, Jesus is called the Morning Star, but not ‘Lucifer’.

frames the night.<sup>26</sup> The association of Lucifer with light appears in a number of narrative versions of *The Fall* in the New Testament including recordings that Lucifer fell from heaven “as lightning” (Luke 10:18; Rev. 12:7–10). However, in my rendition of the episode, I interpret the concept of the ‘light bearer’ not as a holder of light but one who adores and rises in the light. Lucifer is accompanied by light. It is his rise in an environment of light that is surrounded by the verdant growth of foliage. This luxurious growth into light prefigures Lucifer’s fall and re-birth not as a manifestation of light but, antithetically, as the Prince of Darkness.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> This is why I use in the film’s title sequence, the unusual Latin translation of *The Fall* (*In tenebras cadere*). The phrase means more than ‘to fall’. It may be more precisely translated as ‘The Fall into darkness’. This is in reference to Lucifer’s association with both night and the morning star.

<sup>27</sup> The term is used in Milton’s *Paradise Lost*. It is an English translation of the Latin phrase *princeps tenebrarum*. This phrase describes Lucifer in the fourth century *Acts of Pilate*, and in Pietro Damiani’s 11<sup>th</sup> century hymn *Rhythmus de die mortis*.

### The Green Man

The design of Lucifer is also influenced by the pagan concept of the Green Man. The Green Man is normally a foliate head or mask that appears as a sculpture, drawing, or other architectural embellishment. Lister (1982) notes of these structures, “Sometimes, the leaves appear to grow out of the head itself; at other times the human head seems to be a chance result of the configuration of the leaves” (para.1).

The Green Man has been used as a naturalistic or decorative architectural ornament in churches and other buildings, both secular and ecclesiastical.<sup>28</sup> Lister notes that stonemasons working on churches often drew on pagan themes for their decorations. He says, “sometimes a Green Man carving was given a particular title; Silvanus (god of the forest) at the Abbey of Saint

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<sup>28</sup> Lister (1982) notes that early depictions of the Green Man may be located in the 6<sup>th</sup> century, but these renditions were “never found in churches but on memorial monuments to rich citizens in places like Trier” (para. 2). These monuments he says were not Christian tombs. He suggests,

It was not until the 6th that the Green Man found his way into a place of Christian worship. This was again in Trier, where Bishop Nicetius took some of these carvings from the ruin of a nearby Roman temple and built them into a new pair of pillars in his cathedral (ibid.).

Denis, France; or Oceanus (both god of the sea and a satyr) in Mundanya, Istanbul” (ibid.).

In *The Spirit Of The Green Man* edited by Mary Neasham, De Benzelle (2004) says, “The fact is that unofficial paganism existed side by side with the official religion.” This, she suggests, explains why in church architecture we might encounter “the presence of the Green Man in a church window with the Virgin beside him and below him the sun” (p. 56) She argues that the foliate men are “personifications of the dual force of nature. They embody the pattern of life, growth, death, decay and new life of the natural cycle” (p. 186).

This is an interesting phenomenon that Lister (1982) suggests is more complex than De Benzelle’s interpretation might suggest. Pagan representations have often had conflicting interpretations. He notes that 8<sup>th</sup> century theologians like Rabanus Maurus argued that Green Men “represented the sins of the flesh - lustful and wicked men doomed to eternal damnation” (para. 8). However, arguments that the Green Man was a representation of evil sit uneasily with the fact that these figures were in common use on non-Christian family tombstones six centuries before Maurus’s hypothesis.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Lister also notes that foliate men “continued to be used as tomb carvings long after the church masons stopped using them inside their buildings” (Lister, 1982, ibid).

The link of the Green Man to death and the natural cycle of life, especially a cycle that Lister suggests “continues, from decay back to the soil, to food from the soil, back into life” (ibid.), suggested to me an interpretation of Lucifer as an embodiment of eternity. References to the Green Man also drew into the tableaux a sense of the Pagan, and something with a distinctive earthly connection, in contrast to the divine and heavenly nature of the archangel Michael.

Considering conflicts between pagan iconography and sanctioned conventions of representation in the early church was also useful as a way of alluding to tensions between competing doctrines and interpretations, both within the myth and within the institution of the church.

### Symmetry

Finally, the design of Lucifer is one that draws heavily on notions of symmetry. Osborne (1986), in discussing symmetry as an aesthetic factor notes;

In classical antiquity symmetry meant commensurability and was believed to constitute a canon of beauty in nature as in art. This intellectualist conception of beauty persisted through the Middle Ages with the additional doctrine that the phenomenal

world manifests an imperfect replica of the ideal symmetry of divine Creation (p.1).

In *The Fall*, Lucifer’s initial perfection is referenced in the symmetry of his movement and the construction of foliage that surrounds him. Keyser (1998) notes, “The true meaning and diversity of symmetry and proportionality are combined in plants” (p. 138). However, although botanically this symmetry is radial (actinomorphic),<sup>30</sup> it is also approximate. It is only in its translation into art forms that this symmetry is refined and formalised.

In *The Fall*, the treatment of plant life draws upon symmetrical constructions of the Green Man in a number of European ecclesiastical establishments.

We see Lucifer as a glorification of balanced, botanical elements. These mirror each other in a form of symmetrical adoration. Stylistically they help to support the upward thrust of his movement, like the opening of wings. While he ascends in symmetry his fall disrupts this and we see greater levels of asymmetry appearing, as a disordering of harmony.

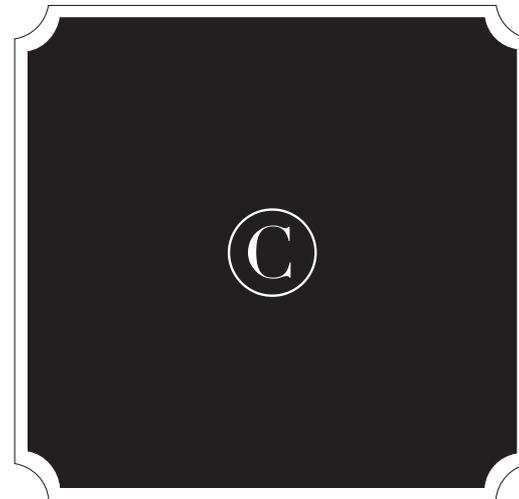
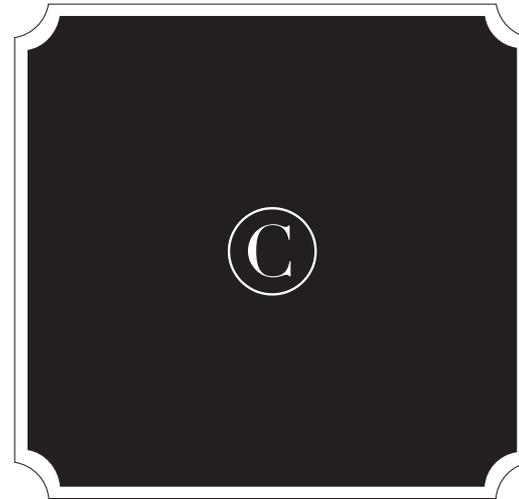
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<sup>30</sup> When cylindrical plant forms are transformed into helices, this is described as helical growth.

While symmetry is clearly seen in the way Lucifer's ascent has been constructed, subtly the use of symmetry references something more fundamental. In terms of narrative structure, the episode of *The Fall* is a symmetrical construction. It is a balanced story of quest, confrontation and loss. There are two parts to the story that climax in the middle with the striking down of Lucifer by the archangel Michael. Therefore both structurally and stylistically, symmetry is integral to the work.

Figures 36-37: Depictions of the Green Man demonstrating the use of symmetry in Winchester Cathedral (Upper: Fig. 36) and Canterbury Cathedral's Black Prince's Chantry (Bottom: Fig. 37) respectively. [Photograph].

→ Figures 36-37 both Retrieved from [http://www.vosper4coins.co.uk/stone/GreenMan\\_files/GreenMan.htm](http://www.vosper4coins.co.uk/stone/GreenMan_files/GreenMan.htm)



### **Archangel Michael: the visual depiction**

If symmetry, light, and pagan constructions are influential in the design of Lucifer, Michael is influenced by different considerations. The first is the concept of divine retribution, and the second is an antithetical contemplation on light as concurrently militaristic and divine.

### **Divine retribution**

In Jewish, Christian and Islamic traditions, Michael is an avenging archangel. He is sometimes considered the leader of the Army of God.<sup>31</sup> In this context he is mentioned by name in the Book of Daniel, the Book of Jude, the Book of Joshua, and the Book of Revelation.

In religious art Michael is often depicted as winged with an unsheathed sword. This sword functions as a symbol of avenging power. The avenging sword is encountered in a number of non-Judeo-Christian mythologies, including descriptions of Nemesis,

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<sup>31</sup> In the tableau I have constructed him wearing armour that belongs to no specific culture. This is in reference to his historical, militaristic association with war. This is demonstrated (among other things) by his association with the first chivalric order of France, and with the establishment of the military Order of Saint Michael.

the Greek spirit of divine retribution. Like Michael, the sword-carrying Nemesis punished those who showed arrogance before the gods.

Michael's sword, and his militaristic demeanor, are referred to in Joshua 5:13-15,

Where Joshua ... looked up and saw a man standing before him with a drawn sword in his hand. The warrior asked him, "Are you one of us, or one of our adversaries?" He replied, "Neither; but as commander of the army of the Lord I have now come."

However, Michael's avenging sword is not a fixed symbol in religious art. Huguet (1456), David (1483), Sanzio (1518) and Moroder-Lusenberg (1876), all depict Michael attacking Lucifer with a spear or lance. It is these references that I use in my design.

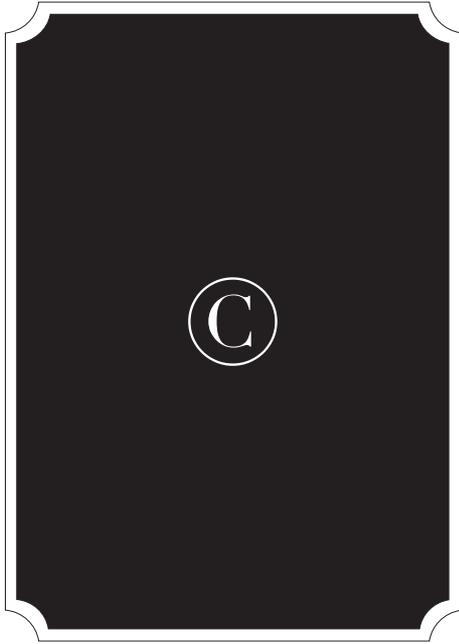


Figure 38: Hugueta, J. *Michael the Archangel*. [Tempera on panel]. (1456).

↑ Retrieved from <http://www.wga.hu/art/h/hugueta/smichael.jpg>

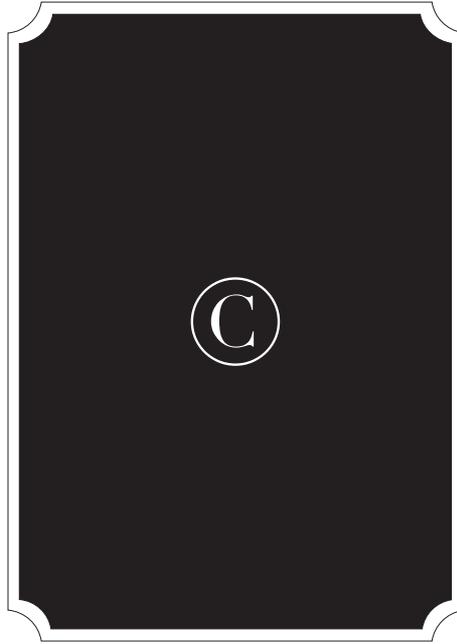


Figure 39: David, G. *Altarpiece of St Michael*. [Oil on canvas]. (1483).

↑ Retrieved from [http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/en/9/9d/Altarpiece\\_of\\_St\\_Michael\\_WGA.jpg](http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/en/9/9d/Altarpiece_of_St_Michael_WGA.jpg)

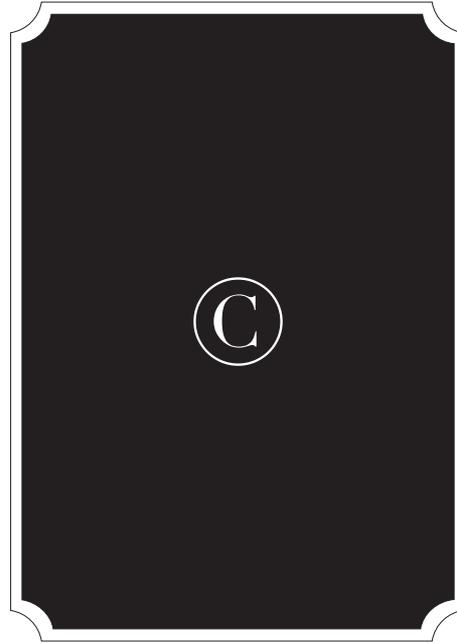


Figure 40: Sanzio, R. *Saint Michael Vanquishing Satan*. [Oil transferred from wood to canvas]. (1518).

↑ Retrieved from [http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/f/f7/Le\\_Grand\\_Saint\\_Michel%2C\\_by\\_Raffaello\\_Sanzio%2C\\_from\\_C2RMF\\_retouched.jpg](http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/f/f7/Le_Grand_Saint_Michel%2C_by_Raffaello_Sanzio%2C_from_C2RMF_retouched.jpg)

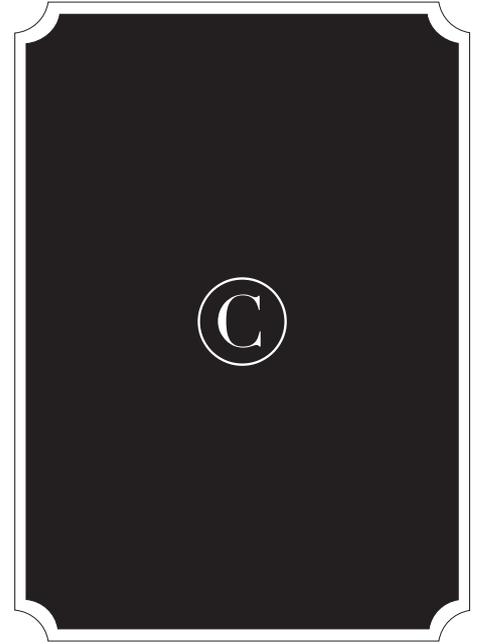


Figure 41: Moroder-Lusenberg, J. *Archangel Michael*. [Oil painting]. (1876).

↑ Retrieved from <https://lh5.googleusercontent.com/-QdZYL9t5g4c/TX21g1OA89I/AAAAAAAAAyI/hIE0kxob6Gs/s1600/Josef+Moroder-Lusenberg-Michael-1879.jpg>

### **Light as militaristic and divine**

The use of light in the construction of Michael may be contrasted with its use in the treatment of Lucifer. Where Lucifer's luminosity is related to the rise of the Morning Star, Michael's is indicative of glory, and God as the origin and nature of light.

In Hebrew, Michael's name is translated as 'Quis ut Deus?' (Who is like God?). In John 1:5 we read, "God is light; in him there is no darkness at all."<sup>32</sup>

As an extension of this, St. Gregory of Thessalonica says,

He who participates in the divine energy... becomes himself, in a sense, light; he is united to the light and with the light he sees in full consciousness all that remains hidden for those who have not this grace; he thus surpasses not only the corporeal sense, but also all that can be known (by the mind) ... for the pure of heart see God... who, being the light, abides in them and reveals himself to those who love him, to

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<sup>32</sup> This theme is also played out in John 1: 6-9 in a description of a witness of God. "The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. That was the True Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world."

his beloved ones... (Lossky, Erickson & Bird, 1974, p. 61).

The idea that God is light permeates a diverse range of mythological narratives.<sup>33</sup> However, light as a divine warrior is possibly best epitomised in the classical concept of Sol invictus or 'the Unconquered Sun'. Sol invictus is the name of a Roman sun god popular from the 3rd century.

Gil (2009) suggests Sol invictus was probably an import into Rome from the East. She notes that Aurelian was "particularly associated with Sol invictus because he, having attributed to Sol invictus his victory over the Palmyrenes, set up a temple... in the Campus Martius, established a priesthood for the god, and created games in his honor (ludi solis)" (para.3). In AD 274, she notes, "Aurelian tried to establish Sol invictus as supreme god of the Romans, particularly among the military" (ibid.).

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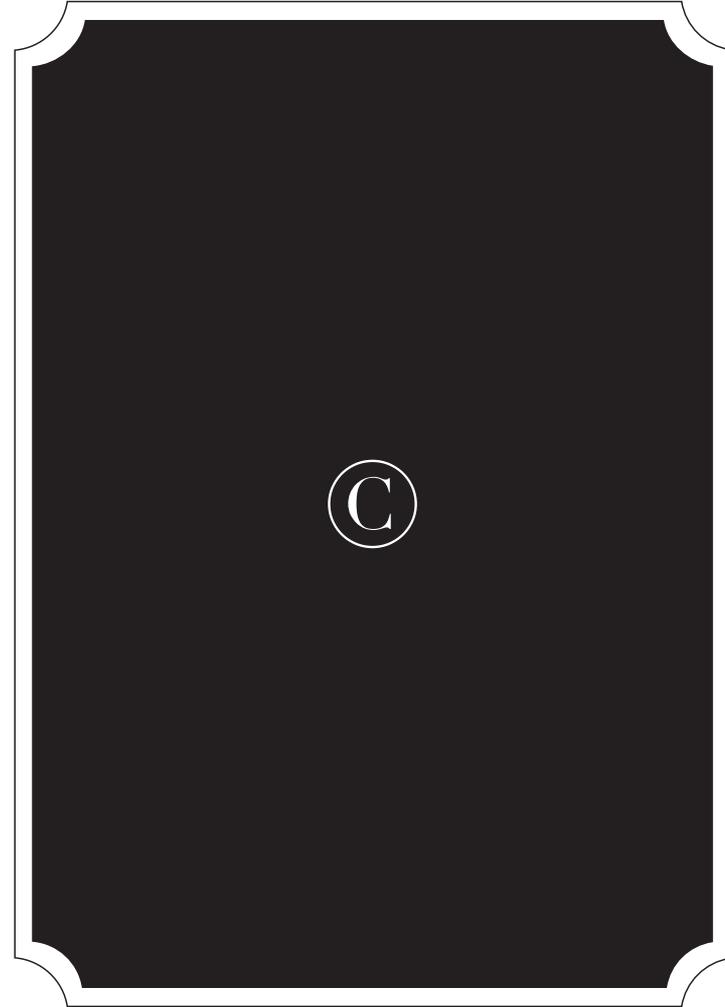
<sup>33</sup> For example, see Helios (Helius), Greece; Mithras, Persia; and Utu (Shamash), Mesopotamia.

The warrior sun, as light and battle, is fundamental to the design of Michael. His light is white and radiant. It surrounds him in shafts that emanate from a realm of cosmic gold. The downward-reaching radiance may be likened to the graphic construction of Blake's watercolor and etching *The Ancient of Days*, (see Fig.42), but the treatment is more ethereal and piercing.

Blake's *The Ancient of Days* is described in Chapter 7 of the Book of Daniel. 'Ancient of Days' is a name for God in Aramaic; Atik Yomin. The title denotes a creator's eternity combined with radiance and perfection.

Figure 42: Blake, W. *The Ancient of Days*. [Water color]. (1794).

→ Retrieved from [http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/a/ae/Blake\\_ancient\\_of\\_days.jpg](http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/a/ae/Blake_ancient_of_days.jpg)



## Conclusion

In a work as complex as *The Fall*, it is difficult (within the recommended word count of a thesis) to elucidate and account for all knowledge impacting on the design. That said, we might understand *The Fall* as a creative reflection upon a diverse range of knowledge that is woven together into the tableau vivant's final construction. This knowledge includes theological and literary versions of the myth, and considerations of key theories and influences impacting on the design of both Lucifer and St Michael. These ideas are 'housed' in the tableau vivant as a structural device. Having outlined significant critical ideas in the work, it is at this point useful to briefly discuss other information impacting on the distinctive look and feel of the film. In this regard the thesis now provides a brief summary, as a commentary, that speaks to additional aesthetic elements in the film.





#### **The title sequence**

In the introduction for *The Fall*, I have created an amorphous environment of smoke and cloud that is identifiable as neither; infernal (smoke) is fused with celestial (cloud) in a monochromatic background that houses the film's title in Latin and English (Fig. 43). Subserving to this text is the story's primary literary reference (Revelation 12: 7-9).

Because the myth occurs before time, the atmosphere is nebulous and ill defined. It represents the silence we might encounter before a cataclysmic storm.

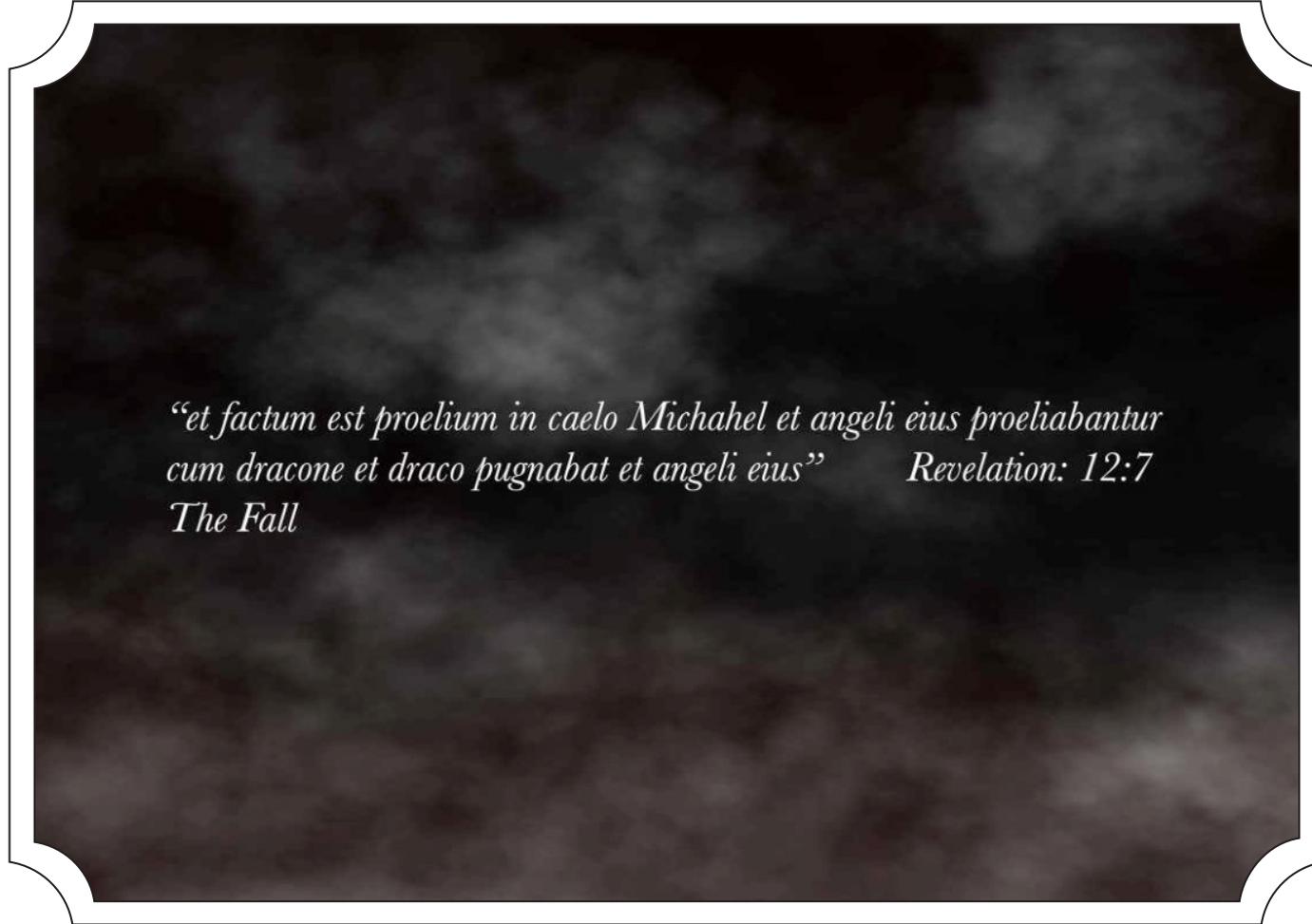


Figure 43: Chai, G. *Frame grab from the title sequence of The Fall*. [Screen capture]. (2011).

### **The representative use of colour in The Fall**

In this moving tableau vivant, colour is used to represent the two protagonists and the environments in which they exist. A cold, leaden palette of silver, teal, green, and dark brown represents Lucifer. These colours reference both his association with the dark Morning Star and with the earthiness of organic growth, (see Fig. 44).



Figure 44: Chai, G. *Frame grab from the Rise of Lucifer in The Fall*. [Screen captures]. (2011).

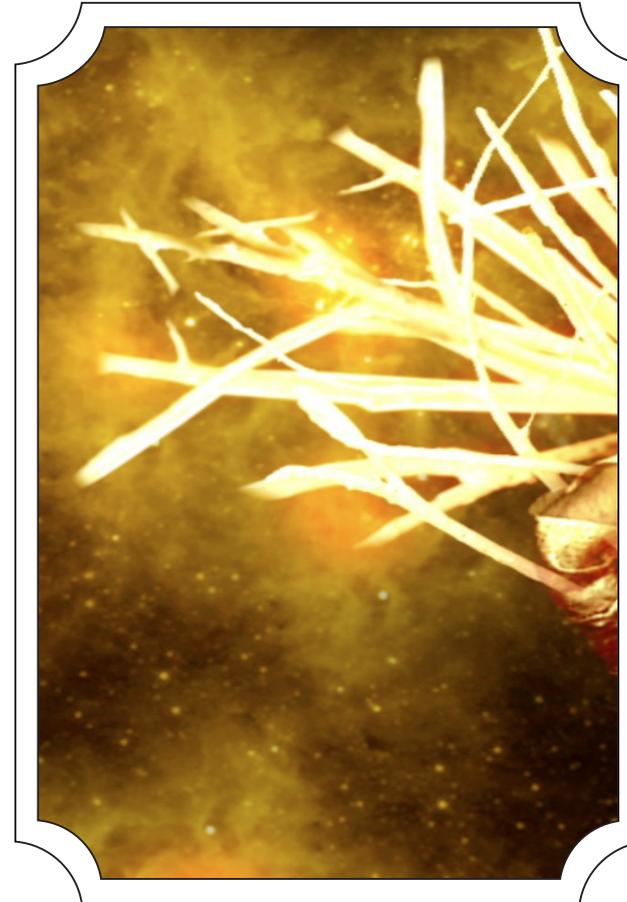
Conversely, the Archangel Michael, as a representative of the retributive God, moves in a world constructed from a palette of white and metallic golds<sup>34</sup> (see Fig. 45).

This golden palette is in opposition to Lucifer's glittering but leaden world. However, a sense of the cosmic connects both.

The cosmic background transitions from blue to red as we move through the film. Thus, the emotional arc of the film moves from brooding calm, through to pride and assent. This rise is counter-pointed by the golden descent of Michael and the climatic piercing of white light. The work then 'falls' through rich earth and lead tones to collapse into the corruption of darkness.

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<sup>34</sup> According to Janes (1998), "Gold was generally understood to refer to success. Gold, as a metaphor, could be used to describe and depict spiritual excellence in contrast to the copper or lead of the ordinary soul. Holy men were understood as those enjoying heavenly riches" (p. 10).



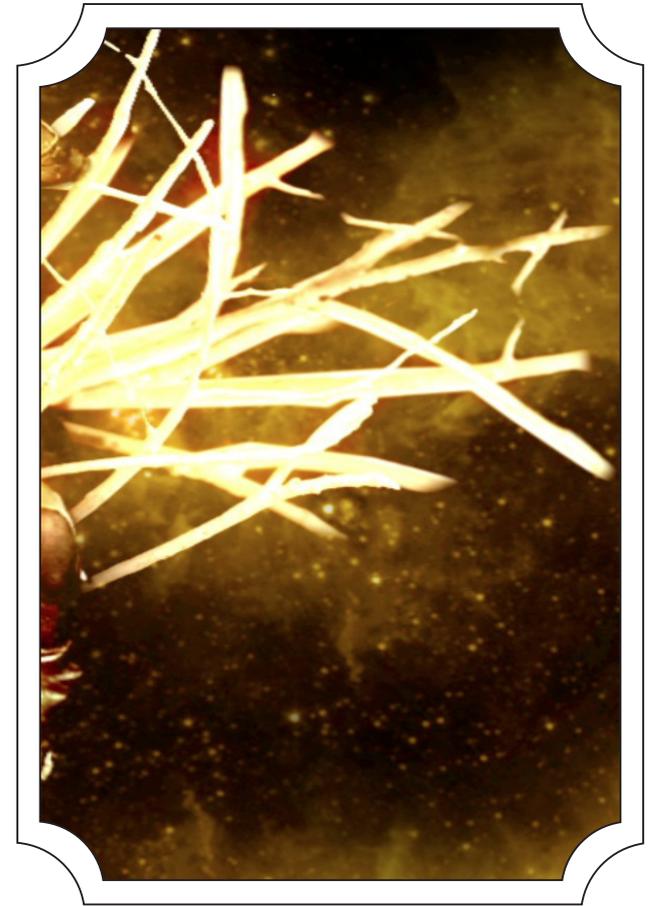


Figure. 45: Chai, G. *Frame grab from the Descent of the Archangel Michael in The Fall*. [Screen captures]. (2011).

### Music for The Fall

The music I have used in this work is sourced from Mozart's Requiem In D Minor. A Requiem is a Mass for the dead. Normally such a work is composed to 'plead' for the repose of the soul or souls of a deceased person or persons. However, Mozart's Requiem is fraught with conjecture and disagreement. The Requiem was not completed before his death and much controversy surrounds its final form. It was composed in Vienna in 1791 and 'finished' to some extent by the composer Süssmayr who it is suggested, depended on now lost 'scraps of paper' to complete the composition.

Like the myth of *The Fall*, the work has unstable elements. It deals with death but in its contextual narrative it also deals with the unresolved and mythical. There is no clear agreement on whose telling of the final version of the work, we can rely.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> It cannot be demonstrated to what extent Süssmayr depended on notes to complete the work. He claimed the Sanctus and Agnus were his own. The anonymous commissioner of the work Count Franz von Walsegg, some suggest, intended to pass the Requiem off as his own composition, as he had done with other works. However, this claim was frustrated by a public benefit performance for Mozart's widow Constanze. Popular conjecture surrounding the authorship of the Requiem was increased in 1979 in Peter Shaffer's play *Amadeus*, in which he suggested the masked Antonio Salieri intended to claim authorship for himself.

Musically, the work orchestrates very strong tensions that build as the Requiem progresses. It is dark and theatrical, full of brooding spectacle and dark glories. As a work surrounded by myth, and concerned with the repose of souls, it works both conceptually and stylishly, with the film's subject.



# Conclusion

The tableau vivant *The Fall* represents an episode with many interpretations, both theological and artistic. It is an unstable story but one rich in the grandeur of allegory. It concerns a time before man, when divine forces battled for power, but the battle was fed by the essentially human weaknesses of pride and retribution. The story forms the first narrative conflict in Jewish, Muslim and Christian religions and in some ways may be seen as depicting the death of harmony.

In this thesis I have sought to create a distinctive re-telling of the story. My work does not seek to position itself as a fashionable update, but instead draws on tensions and considerations of diverse references. It does this to create a deeply theatrical and intensely visual tableau vivant.

The work has taken many months. Its apparently seamless fusion of elements masks hundreds of hours of assembling and disassembling, of weeks spent shooting and re-shooting models and props, and days spent tracking down obscure theological and historical sources.

The film's application would be as a form of backdrop. In this regard I have designed it to function in discourse with other performances; be they orated or performed. Thus *The Fall* may be used as a visual context for a theological presentation/ debate. Alternatively it may form a backdrop to the performance of a choral or orchestral work.

The work is an expression of belief; a belief in God and a belief in the instability and richness of storytelling. Like a tableau vivant, the thesis presents a moment in time, both in my practice of art and in my practice as a scholar. I am a designer whose first language is images. My second language is Mandarin Chinese, and third language is English. This thesis is an expression of the richness of these things.

Grace Wanhsu Chai    December 2011

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