

Andrew Hlynsky

# Introduction

Developing ways to present myself has always been a difficult task. Although my skillset is broad and tool kit is sharp, I'm often told that it's difficult to pin down exactly what I do. It was the goal of my CE to figure out how to talk about who I am as an artist. I spent the first half of the year researching "personal branding" and experiment by writing different biographies about myself. I noticed that there were two very distinct styles, one extremely dry and professional, the other more experimental and abstract. I developed these two identities into the AH! brand to represent the mad scientist, and Odd Object Studios to represent my more professional work. In addition I decided to release music under a new musical moniker "Oddman." For each of these projects I developed a visual style that will be used in my websites, business cards, and letterhead.

# The Work

## "Junk Orchestra"

### **Description:**

The Junk Orchestra is a mechanical instrument I created using found junk, a guitar, some solenoids and keys from a children's xylophone. I also incorporated "holding magnets" that work similar to an E-Bow, vibrating strings on the guitar the same way an electromagnet would vibrate a speaker diaphragm.

### **Innovations:**

The goal for this piece was to make it as easy and stable to set up as possible. Instead of using an often cumbersome and flakey Arduino, I found a prefab board called the MIDI Widget. The MIDI Widget allows me to plug and play using a USB cable. I also decided to try to use electromagnets to excite the strings on the guitar, similar to the way an electromagnet excites a speaker cone. Notes can be played through the electromagnets, and the strings with sympathetically resonate with the electromechanical vibrations. This technique works, although it's a little bit tricky to find the correct amplification.

## “LED Costume”

### **Description:**

Building LED Costumes have been a dream of mine for years. This semester I designed a system to network, address, and power an array of LEDs wirelessly. The LEDs are controlled using MIDI and can be linked together so a number of costumes can be controlled all at once. I attempted to built four costumes that utilized a variety of different techniques.

### **Innovations:**

This year I began sewing LEDs into “tentacles” to add diffusion. The LED strips are wrapped in a “stuffing” material, and then sewn into a tube of fabric. This technique worked really well for creating durable, flexible LED strips, but was too bulky to actually sew into a costume.

I experimented with putting grommets into fabric and poking an LED through the other side. This technique works well, but creates a bulky underside where all of the wires are.

## “Projection Mapping”

### **Innovations:**

I developed a quick technique for building and generating content for projection mapping. You first begin with a flat plane in Sketchup, then draw your design in 2D, then extrude it into the third dimension. This technique avoids having “overhangs” or places where the light from the projector can’t reach. I then bring the 3D model into 123D Make and “unfold it” into 2D origami like plans. The plans are projected and traced on a piece of cardboard, coroplast, or foam core. The 2D plans are then folded into the shape. The 3D model is then brought into After Effects, and animated utilizing a plugin called Element 3D.

## “Andrew Hlynsky Brand”

### **Description:**

The “Andrew Hlynsky” brand represents my artistic identity. It is what I use to document my tinkering, sculptures, and explorations. I will use this brand to apply to hackathons, experimental shows and art gallery exhibitions.

## **Andrew Hlynsky Visual Style:**

I settled on “Industry” as a personal font. It is a very bold and clean font that screams industriousness. The font also has quite a number of different boldness and a variety of creative layers for making more complicated and visually pleasing multi colored headlines. I settled on an AH! for a logo..

## “OddMan”

### **Description:**

*Oddman is an act geared towards dance events and creative festivals. Oddman provides a hypnotic techno landscape, pushing and pulling at the audience's attention while slowly building and releasing tension on the dancefloor.*

### **Innovations:**

I developed an innovative approach to composing this music by utilizing the immense variety of sounds achievable on the iPad. All of the sounds come from an iPad and are tracked in Ableton Live through the USB Lightning cable. The majority of the sounds were performed, recorded into Ableton Live, and then chopped and edited. Because the process is performance based, there is a very organic feeling to the music. I would also like to point out the entire rig runs on batteries and can fit in my backpack without an audio interface or a table full of gear.

The process of composing revolves around a predictable set of steps using the iPad as a sound source. I use a TB-303 style bass line to establish the key center of the track. I generally only use a single note and add variety using a combination of slides, accents, and octave shifts. While the filter is open on the 303 there is an open, more legato, arpeggiated kind of sound. This releases tension. As the filter closes, the accented notes become more forceful creating a staccato driving bassline.

iPad synths have the unique quality of polyphonic aftertouch. This makes the melodic and harmonic parts of the music expressive and provides creative options unavailable using VSTs and traditional hardware synths. The iPad also has a unique feature; being able to restrict the keyboard to a specific set of keys. My process involves limiting the keyboard to a specific key as dictated by the bass note.

This innovative process has allowed me to be much more expressive and streamlined in my compositions. I believe i have achieved a consistent sound and workflow for this body of work.

### **Visual Style:**

The logo is an horizontal OM. The O looks like a head and the M looks like a set of hands. In the future I would like to create a costume that mimics this logo. I also use a “Z Depth” map to create other sorts of video and graphics for the ODDMAN Brand. I was also able to complete four tracks as dictated in my initial CE proposal.

## “ODD OBJECT STUDIO”

### **Description:**

*“Creates engaging interactive objects and environments for creative performances”*

Odd object studios is going to be the professional entity that I do my professional work under. This includes any VJ content, objects, projection mapped sculptures, architectural lighting and LED art. The Odd Object Studio style is much more refined and directed than the Andrew Hlynsky identity. It is meant to represent a set of repeatable services I can provide.

### **Innovations in Visual Style**

I developed a visual technique utilizing pixel displacement and 3D objects to create a repeatable style I'm very happy with. Basically it renders a 3D object as a black and white image, darkness being farther in the back and brightness being up close. A layer then displaces another image gradient layer based on that. The result is a very interesting subtle coloring that I find extremely unique, dynamic and repeatable. For anything commercial related like my website, this style will be used.

For cleaner designs I started using thin lines, outlined 3D objects and a blur technique. This style will be used on any sort of black and white text documents, posters, application submissions and my business card. The black and white lines combined with outlined 3D objects creates an interesting depth that I'm very excited about.

## Challenges

The biggest challenge for me was to figure out how to reconcile and present my eclectic skill set. I decided on two artistic identities. One is the “Andrew Hlynsky” identity, it represents the experimental, artistic mad scientist side of my work. The AH! is meant to be eye catching and in your face. I am who I am, and it's a wildcard. The “Odd Object Studio” represents a refined and professional set of services that can be provided. By using clean lines and a direct message I hope to convey the services I provide in a direct way. I also hope that by breaking from a personal identity I'll be able to move into a position where I'm managing and hiring others.

Another challenge has been learning exactly, in dollars, what I should charge for the work that I do. I developed a set of spreadsheets for budgeting future projects, hiring others, figuring out a “day rate,” and figuring the cost of complicated projects. Looking at these numbers has really helped me figure out what to charge other people for my projects.

Additionally the failure of my mixer, a central part of my musical workflow forced me to innovate. I had to figure out a new technique for composing music without all of my gear. I designed a system inside the iPad to emulate a lot of the controls and workflows that I used with hardware. I'm able to stream the audio directly through the lightning cable resulting in an extremely simplified music making rig. I still have performative controls without all of the hardware. I used this system to write seven tracks.

The last big challenge was integrating LEDs and dancers. Because of time constraints we had to choreograph the dance, write the music, and figure out the lighting all at once. I was able to write music fast enough to outline the choreography as we were figuring it out. I also created a MAX patch that made lighting everything quite a lot easier. Knowing that it's possible to write music, lighting and choreography all at once was a real eye opener.

## Future

Artistically I want to make instruments. In looking at the bulk of my work over the past 12 years, this is what I have done the most of, and what i enjoy doing. Beyond developing more interesting instrument, I would like to represent myself as a designer of objects for performances. With the tools and new attitude developed this year, I hope to propel myself into more interesting artistic adventures. I want to begin pushing my own projects instead of work for other people. The big dream is to have a dance performance utilizing the LED costumes that can be performed on the streets. I also would like to develop and perform under the "ODDMAN" monochrome.

## Conclusion

This year presented me an opportunity to really dig into and refine my craft. I was able to redefine and practice building many of the objects I was dreaming about for years. Figuring out a way to represent myself has been a huge challenge, but ultimately a success. Presenting myself in a concise way has had a huge impact on the way I will approach both my own personal projects, and projects for others. This year represents a paradigm shift in my personal, professional and artistic growth.