

VIDEO ESSAY SCRIPT

1. This is Charles Jencks.
2. In 1972, along with Nathan Silver, he wrote a manifesto titled Adhocism, which changed the way people thought about design.
3. Adhocism is about improvisation.
4. And it is about evolution.
5. Adhocism sees the world around us as a system and the objects in it as subsystems.
6. To begin with, everything is an ad hoc combination of parts that already exist in something else.
7. A bicycle is a set of wheels. A seat. Handle bars. Pedals. It evolved in different forms, some more successful than others, and then stabilized into the bicycle we know today.
8. In its stabilized form, the bicycle is totalistic. It is no longer ad hoc.
9. Some things don't stabilize though. They can't exist because for something ad hoc to really work, it needs to have parts in common.
10. A man, for example, cannot also be half beast.
11. Or can he?
12. Chimeras have been a source of fascination since Ancient Greece.
13. Throughout history they have been depicted as monsters, allegories, and lessons.
14. Jencks and Silver believe modernity has brought us closer to the existence of real chimeras.
15. With modern science giving humans the ability to defy the natural order.
16. So, what does this have to do with Unit 2?
17. Good question.
18. For this project, I decided to use adhocism and chimeras as a lens to view the Codex Borbonicus.
19. The Aztecs meticulously documented their lives in codices like this one.

20. In them they illustrated their beliefs, their mythologies, their history, their world order.
21. The Codex represents the totality of Aztec artistic expression.
22. Which can be dissected into parts.
23. Black lines.
24. Bright colors.
25. Flattened perspective.
26. Exaggerated proportions.
27. No background.
28. No shadows.
29. No overlaps.
30. To reconfigure the parts with a contemporary feel, I looked to artists like Steven Harrington, whose work felt similar in its use of form and metaphorical intention.
31. I started with fish.
32. I copied the Aztec drawing.
33. I reconfigured the parts.
34. And then I reconfigured them again.
35. The goal of the process was to find a new form, but still based on the original archetype.
36. And then I tried my hand at illustrating an Aztec god.
37. And realized that they are themselves chimeras.
38. Huitzilopochtli, half man, half hummingbird.
39. I took this idea to illustrate the half men, half beasts of modernity.
40. And began with Bernie Madoff. Half man, half vulture.
41. And then I changed up the form and drew Ted Cruz, half man, half bat.
42. And Mitch McConnell, half man, half frog.

43. And then he evolved into the ultimate chimera.
44. Donald Trump. Half man, half clown.
45. And his wife, Melania. Half woman, half vulture.
46. And his son, Don Jr. Half man, half lizard.
47. All snakes.
48. I used the form of playing cards thinking the inherent duality of their imagery worked well.
49. It didn't.
50. So I went back and took inspiration from the narrative scenes of the codices.
51. And thought, if I had to illustrate modernity, if I had to leave a Codex behind about the Trump years, what would be in it?
52. It's still a work in progress.