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POST-REFLECTION

Starting this year with zero coding experience and now looking back at what I've created since then, I'm proud of what I've been able to accomplish this past semester. Individual projects aside, the most important concept I've learned would be how I approach/think about programming. Prior to this course, I had the most basic and lackluster understanding of coding from block-coding, which established in me some careless habits from its limited scope. When I started taking this course, I made it my goal to deconstruct this habit and start thinking about code in a more procedural and flexible way; how can I set up a foundational workflow in my projects using variables, conditionals, arrays, loops, etc. to make the program as efficient and adaptive as possible? Maintaining flexibility within this workflow is also vital to introducing playfulness into my work, an idea that will be touched upon in a later paragraph.

I've found that being able to start building this foundational workflow has not only improved my efficiency and learning of code, but my enjoyment of it as well. Previously, I had learned to take the same approach around my 3D art practice (as it also required a delicate technical touch), and observed the same benefits. This is what inspired me to take the same approach to coding. Within this coding workflow, it was also immensely useful to learn the more technical aspects of working with code; syntax, javascript libraries, data, etc.

As a result of my new knowledge, my relationship with creative practices has been reassessed. I feel a lot more confident in creating projects that combine multiple of my practices (illustration, graphic design, music etc.) together into a single piece of work. I'm now more comfortable with a technical workflow, as well as code syntax and logic. Using this new knowledge, I want to take further advantage of programming's strengths in creating multimedia projects.

The greatest asset programming has as a creative medium is interactivity, an element I wish to start taking more advantage of within my work. Not just through allowing users to simply interact with my projects, but to allow users to play with them. Introducing an aspect of playfulness into my work instead of imposing a static experience is what I see myself using creative coding for in the future; allowing users to interact with my programs in a non-linear manner for example, or creating non-traditional means of engaging with my projects. A prototype model of this is present within my most recent project, the variations jam, where you have to throw darts at different menu items to switch what game you were playing. Taking this approach and applying it on a larger scale is what I eventually want to see myself doing throughout my coding practice.

As an artist that codes, I've recently found my mind has been opened to new possibilities and perspectives by the element of interactivity exclusive to programming. I've found myself leaning more towards wanting to create more "anti-game" interactive experiences; games that make a point out of either being cyclical or impossible to "win" (my first art-jam project for this course, for example). Using programming, new avenues of expression have opened up to me through the dimension of interactivity. Interactivity is a new way of conveying meaning through art, instead of solely visually or auditorily; allowing people to interact with your art is like adding a whole new sense or dimension, which is incredibly powerful. The only caveat involving this new dimension is that it can often be overpowering. Artforms that communicate visually, a painting for example, have just enough information missing to leave room for the viewer's imagination and interpretation. Programming, as a mix of both technical science and art, requires a lot more finesse to create space for the viewer. This is exactly why I'm pursuing playfulness within my work; to incentivize the viewer to explore as they would visually, with a painting.

I've already touched upon why I want to use playfulness within interactivity, but where I want to apply those skills in the future is through user experience design. I want to introduce the approach of playfulness into the user experience for a variety of traditionally "mundane" projects, not just games. For example, while I was taking CART 211 concurrently with this course, I decided to apply some of this theory towards my [final portfolio website](#). I wanted to create a navigation system that would have a customizable and playful way of interacting with it through responsive pop-ups. This turned even the simple navigation of my website into something dynamic rather than static, incentivizing users to keep exploring my

portfolio. I feel as though recently, through practicing with coding and project management, it's become much easier to visualize how user experience is designed and what I want my role in it to be. Eventually, I want to be able to create playful user experiences and user interfaces professionally. I want to create a new approach to incentivize the user to interact with projects in a fun and meaningful way, in the same way they would engage with a piece of art.

To summarize, this course challenged my perspective on how we design digital experiences, and how we can enrich these experiences with creative computation. Through learning fundamental programming approaches like using variables, arrays, conditionals, data, etc. and building a foundation for flexible code, I'm able to further explore with playful design. In turn, I can apply this playful design philosophy to create multifaceted artwork with the added dimension of interactivity. From starting this course as an artist with nearly no coding knowledge, I'm eager to start applying more of the lessons and concepts I've learned recently into other facets of my creative practices.