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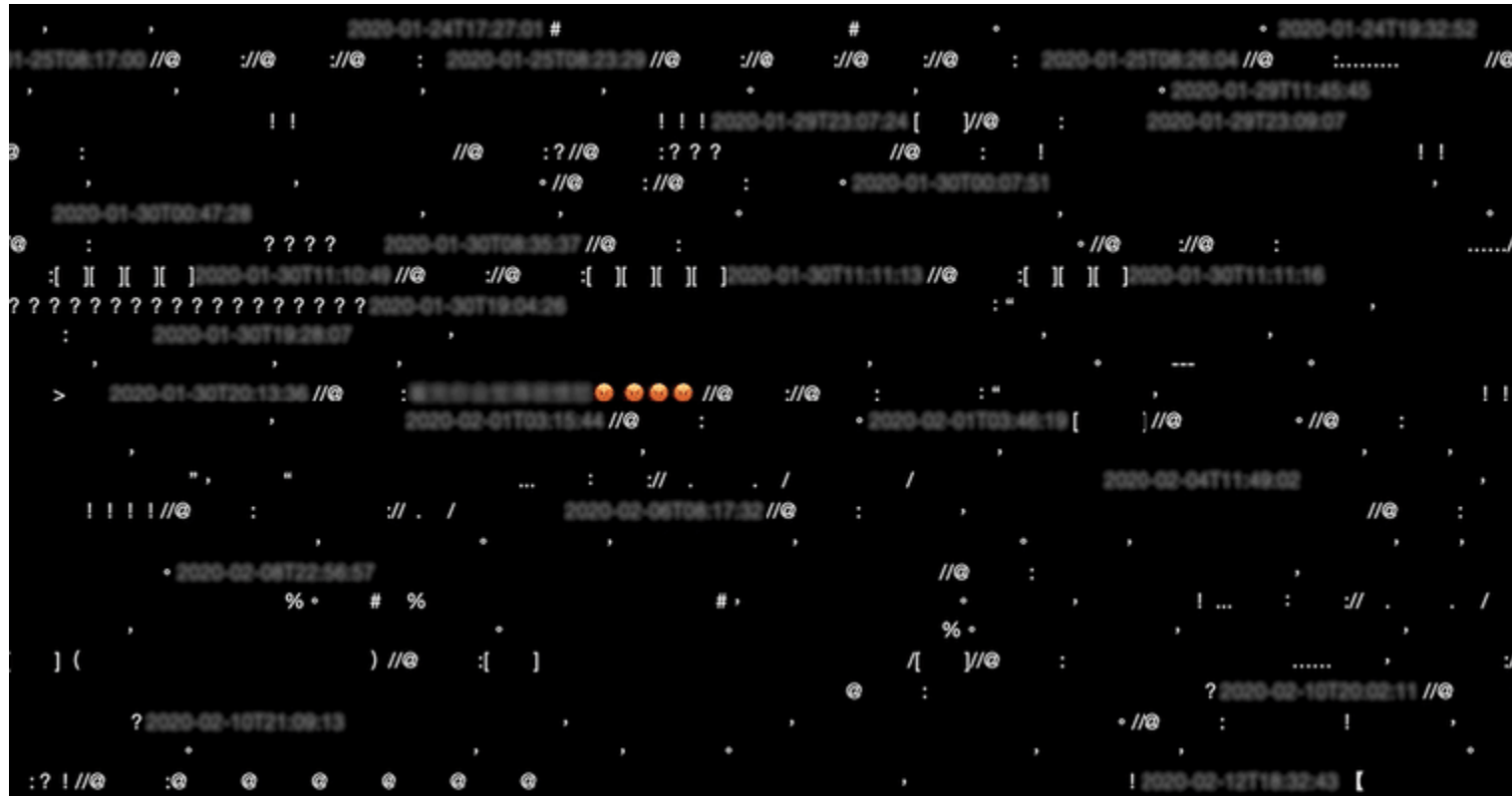
15 WEEK HOMEWORK

" Unerasable Characters III "

By Winnie Soon

INTRODUCTION

- The unerasable series explores the politics of erasure and the temporality of voices within the context of digital authoritarianism. It presents the sheer scale of unheard voices by technically examining and culturally reflecting the endlessness, and its wider consequences, of censorship that is implemented through technological platforms and infrastructure.

- The series collects unheard voices in the form of censored/erased (permission denied) data, including emojis, symbols, textual characters, which is based on one of the biggest social media platforms in China – Weibo via the system called "[Weibo scope](#)", a data collection and visualization project developed by Dr. Fu King-wa from The University of Hong Kong, in which the system has been regularly sampling timelines of a set of selected Chinese microbloggers who have more than 1,000 followers or whose posts are frequently censored.

- Unerasable Characters III utilizes data between 1 December 2019 and 27 February 2020, the time when the COVID-19 outbreak was started in China. According to King-wa Fu & Yuner Zhu, there were 11,362,502 posts during the period, among which 1,230, 353 contain at least an outbreak-related keyword and 2,104 (1.7 per 1,000) posts had been censored.

- The artwork displays all the erased archives in the format of a web presentation, where each tweet is unreadable. The content has either been obscured or blacked out, except the punctuation, emojis and special characters. However, what remain are the pauses and blurry timestamps, depicting the affective and expressive, as well as temporal and spatial dimensions of unheard voices. Users can interact with the web by pointing to those pauses, contemplating the poetics of silence and erasure, and further questioning how the culture is being normalized via systematic processes and political infrastructure.

QUESTION

1. How is this computational, according to you?

A: I think he is probably using python to make this works. She use HTML+CSS to display in the web page.

2.What topic is the piece/artist exploring, according to you?

For her view, I supports that she's topic open my horizon and I think this artist is exploring the restricted Internet environment in the context of Chinese politics.

3.What other pieces of art are exploring a similar topic, and how are these pieces of art exploring the topic differently?

"Tank Man Tango" by Ai Weiwei: This is a video artwork by the Chinese artist Ai Weiwei. It features a group of people dancing in front of a line of tanks, referencing the iconic image of the "Tank Man" who stood in front of a line of tanks during the 1989 Tiananmen Square protests.

4. Which parts/aspects/elements of this piece of art do you enjoy the most?

She uses many of the symbols which used in the "microblogging" perspective media, and uses metaphors that people can associate with it, a kind of implicit message replacement. Maybe because my social background is similar to this artist's, I can feel the meaning and emotion she expresses.

5.Which parts (if any) could have been developed further, according to you?

I think by showing it from a different device it might make his themes and ideas stand out more. For example， on a public art sculpture or on a large electronic screen in a public area.

6.Which skills does the artist have that distinguish them from other artists?

For me, the most remarkable thing about this artist is that she has the courage to satirise politics, and secondly, every element in her artwork is carefully thought out, all of them have meaning, and although her coding may be very simple, all the elements in her work serve her subject matter, which I think is a skill that a mature artist must have.

7.Does this piece inspire you? If so, how?

I was really inspired, but I was not equipped to produce this kind of artwork, which made me very anxious and aware of the skills and ideas I lacked. I found the artwork on political themes very interesting， I was inspired by the art form and the subject matter.

QUESTION

8.What can you take away from this piece of art? How has studying this piece (potentially) changed your creative practice?

As in the answer to my last question…..

9.Give context about the Prize and include information from the interviews with the artist that can be found on the website.

"Unerasable Characters III" is a digital art installation created by artist Winnie Soon in 2017. The artwork consists of a web-based interface that generates Chinese text characters in real-time, which slowly fill up the entire screen. As the characters are generated, they also begin to overlap and interact with each other, creating new visual patterns and forms.

The concept behind "Unerasable Characters III" explores the relationship between human beings and technology, and the way that digital technology is changing the way we communicate and express ourselves. Specifically, the artwork draws inspiration from the history of Chinese calligraphy, which has traditionally been seen as a highly expressive and personal form of communication.

Through the use of computer-generated characters, Soon challenges traditional notions of calligraphy as a human-centered art form and raises questions about the relationship between technology and cultural identity. The title of the artwork, "Unerasable Characters," also speaks to the idea that digital information is often seen as permanent and difficult to erase, which raises concerns about privacy and security in our increasingly digital world.

Overall, "Unerasable Characters III" is a thought-provoking and visually stunning artwork that invites viewers to reflect on the changing nature of communication and identity in the digital age.

……………………….. In a final search for information on that artist, I found out that she was our teacher!!