

Diana Edvi

CART 263: Creative Computation II

### Project 1 Artists Statement

Since I am heading into my final year in Computer Science and have much on my plate, I decided to do something on the simpler side that still showcased what we talked about in class. My project involves a simple display of cards that, upon completing each of their tasks, fade away and eventually reveal a nice image on the screen. The pink tile requires color matching, the green is Ceasar Cypher deciphering, the blue is image rotating, and the orange is grid matching.

I struggled a bit with my initial idea as I have trouble inserting creativity into my work when doing assignments. When I read that I needed to manipulate the DOM, I thought about that in the most literal way possible; create simple elements and manipulate them. So, that is what I did. My initial plan included creating Mahjong solitaire, but with individual requirements for each tile. I realized about halfway through that it was going to be hard to layer the elements the way that I wanted, so I decided to pivot. I chose instead to lay out my tiles in a line and focus on randomizing what is on the tiles.

In terms of what went well, I believe that I achieved the technical requirements for the assignment easily. I think my project looks clean and polished, even though it is on the simpler side. I also enjoy the color scheme I chose and I'm a big fan of the duck background I found online. I like that I was able to showcase different HTML elements and that I got a bit of practice with animations, which is something that I tend to forget about in my JavaScript projects.

The part I had the most trouble with was creativity. Coding at this level is pretty easy to me, so getting the technical parts done caused me almost no trouble. However, I tend to think in very concrete ways and have a hard time with coming up with cool ideas before hyper-focusing on the requirements of an assignment. I got halfway through this project before I sat down and realized that I should have probably thought of something that had a little more juice to it than simply meeting the requirements listed. Funnily enough, I succumbed to the same fate during the creation of the first assignment in CART 253. I did more fun projects for the following assignments of that course, so I suppose I just need a second project to learn my lesson and find inspiration.

I read 'Why we love generative art' from the reading list, and it highlighted exactly what my project is missing: allowing myself to let go of some control and to create beauty from spontaneity rather than just executing a rigid set of instructions (Bailey, 2018). I like the idea of creating art with controlled randomness, though it is obviously hard for me because I find it more fun to think about the *how* verses the *why*. For the final project, I am determined to create something I am more excited about and that has a greater "coolness factor" to it. In future works, I'll try to take inspiration from previous projects and game jams to stir my imagination and include elements that excite me. Another problem that I have is a lack of time. I would very much like to invest lots of time into these projects, as I did when I was in CART 253, but unfortunately, I often find myself only having time to work on tasks and projects during class time or when I am commuting. So, time is also a big barrier for me because I feel like my best work is borne when I sink 20+ hours into a project from sheer excitement. To overcome this obstacle, I will work on my time management skills and set objectives for myself within the time blocks I allocate for the next project.

I would like to pivot and talk about the Explorables! Jam for a bit, as it relates to what I would like to accomplish in my work. I grew up being an active member of the Hungarian scout community, and teaching through play was our primary motto. I spent the entirety of my teenage years thinking of ways to teach our scout curriculum in interesting and fun ways. The games shown in the Explorables! Jam perfectly showcase this concept (Explorables, n.d.). I played the “How to make a puzzle game” entry, and I enjoyed how simply it demonstrated how a puzzle’s difficulty is just as much dependent on the visuals as the puzzle design. I eventually want to be a game developer, and scouts has instilled a love of teaching through game-making that I want to hone and get better at. I incorporated a little crumb of what I learned in scouts in this project, Ceasar Cypher. It is the green tile, and originally, I had a hint at the bottom that said “Ceasar drank X beers” (x being a randomized number), which in the scouts community, is enough to get the kids to understand what to do. However, I was surprised to see that when I showed my project to my friends, a lot of them didn’t even know what to do when looking at the green card. This ties in nicely with the message the puzzle game taught. I should have expected that not everyone has my background on secret codes. I have since then edited my project to include a more direct hint, so that the people who interact with my project won’t get stuck. I’ll use this lesson to think about who my target audience is for the following project and to be more selective about my design choices.

Since I have decided I want to focus on player experience for the next project, I did some research on finding a target audience. The Solsten article “How to Identify Your Game’s Ideal Target Audience” explains that creators tend to over-rely on surface-level assumptions about users rather than considering their psychological traits, motivations, and prior experiences. It emphasizes that identifying a target audience requires understanding what players value and what knowledge they bring with them, over their age or gender. I would like to give a shot at this when I work on the final project, and hope that I will be able to create something that is engaging and fun for the people of the class. (Solsten, “How to Identify Your Game’s Ideal Target Audience,” citing Elaris.)

Working on this project has clarified what I want to improve in future work: creativity, intentionality, and player experience. For the final project, I hope to use my technical skills as a medium for creativity rather than a tool to check box off tasks. I am currently brainstorming a somewhat technically challenging, but still (hopefully) entertaining project in Three.js which I am excited to begin. Overall, I hope to create something that feels less like an assignment completed and more like an experience designed.

## References

- Bailey, J. (2018, August 8). Why we love generative art. Artnome.  
<https://www.artnome.com/news/2018/8/8/why-love-generative-art>
- Explorables. (n.d.). #ExplorablesJam!. <https://explorabl.es/jam/>
- Solsten. (n.d.). How to Identify Your Game's Ideal Target Audience. <https://solsten.io/blog/identify-your-target-audience>

Project: [https://github.com/DianaEdvi/CART-263/tree/main/projects/project\\_1](https://github.com/DianaEdvi/CART-263/tree/main/projects/project_1)