Mashups – Project 2

* A description of the project and intended experience

This project is called “Spearfishing Tales”. The idea behind the project is to give the user a glimpse of my favourite spearfishing experiences over the years. There is a diver’s icon to the left, which moves according to the position of the mouse. Next to it, there is a depth scale in metres. The background is a fade of tones of blue: the deeper the diver goes (as the user scrolls down the page), the darker the blue gets, just as it happens in reality. Every 5 metres, there is an icon of a marine animal. More specifically, a fish, an octopus, a shark, and a lobster, in that order. Every time the user clicks on an icon, a photo pops up, and next to it a relevant story about the experience. Dive into this journey!

* Your motivation and process for creating it

Spearfishing is deeply rooted in my family’s traditions. Although most people would consider this a hobby or an extreme sport, I think of it as a lifestyle and an opportunity to show my respect to the marine environment. I was introduced to spearfishing by my father when I was really young, and over the years I have formed a special bond with the sea and the wonderful creatures that inhabit it. Spearfishing is the most respectable and sustainable way of sourcing seafood. First, you depend entirely on your physical and mental capabilities to get your food. Second, you are always aware of where the food is coming from. Third, the choice of shooting a specific species of fish, of the correct sex, of the appropriate size, at the correct time of the year is what differentiates spearfishing from other fishing practices: you just take from the sea what is enough for you to eat. With this philosophy in mind, I decided to create this immersive website where other people unfamiliar to spearfishing could get a taste of what it involves.

* Explanation of the design decisions

Starting with the background, I chose to make a linear fade of blue as to create the illusion that the deeper the diver goes, the darker the sea gets – which is something that happens in reality. I decided to include the depth scale and the adjacent diver for two reasons: 1) give the user an idea of how deep I can go when I spearfish, and 2) emphasize the depth at which each story/photo occurred. Moreover, the text next to the diver changes as the depth changes, and it separates the canvas into three sections: “The shallows”, “Intermittent Zone”, and “Deeper Waters”. Though subtle, I believe this detail gives users a frame of reference. Given that the diver icon is black, I decided to keep consistency and use black icons for the marine species as well. The reason why I chose to use a variety of species rather than just fish is because I want to highlight that when a diver is in the water, it has to respect and interact with all sorts of incredible creatures. With regards to the photos; since they all have a shade of blue in them, I decided to use a white margin to aid intelligibility. Finally, the last touch I gave to the webpage is the flowing bubbles, as to create an “underwater” illusion and give more dynamism and motion to the experience which would be otherwise too static.

* Major challenges you faced

I was completely new to the p5 library, so the whole project was a great learning experience. However, I would say that the major challenge I faced when using this library is to understand how objects and functions are linked to each other. It took a while for me to understand, for example, how to create an array of photos that would appear whenever an icon was clicked.

* Possible next steps

There are many things that could be done to significantly improve design aesthetics and overall user experience of my webpage. First of all, instead of having an intro page that directs you to the actual webpage, I would love to have everything on the same canvas. However, the reason why I did not do it is because I ran into complications when trying to adjust the depth scale, diver functionality, and linear gradient background to fit a description on top of the actual spearfishing experience. Another thing that could be done is to fade in the image once the icon is clicked and simultaneously darken the background; something like a pop-up function. Moreover, I could create a function to enable the icons to “wiggle” as to prompt the user to click on them. Another design improvement that could be made is to peg the diver icon to the scrolling down of the page rather than to the mouse, as to create a smoother dive. Last but not least, I would love to show videos rather than photos in an attempt to make the experience more lively and interactive.