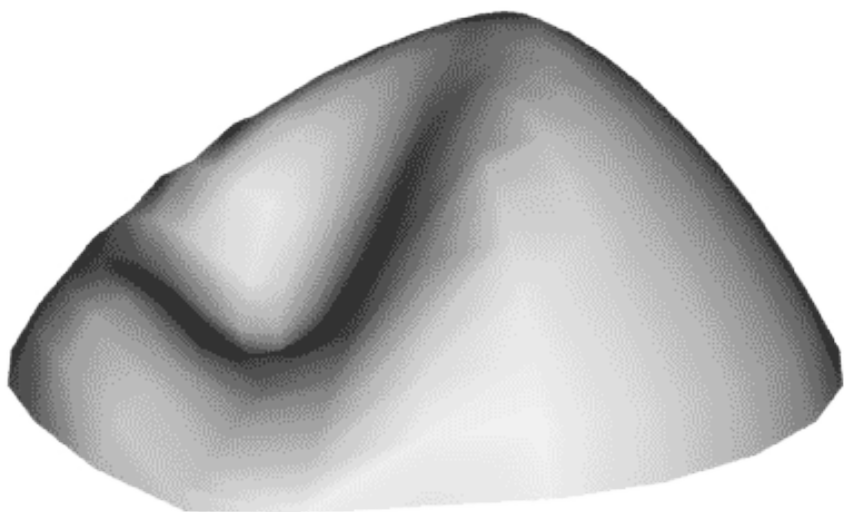
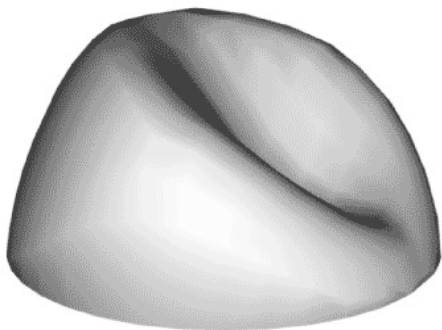
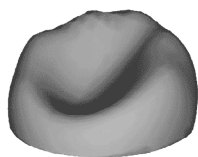
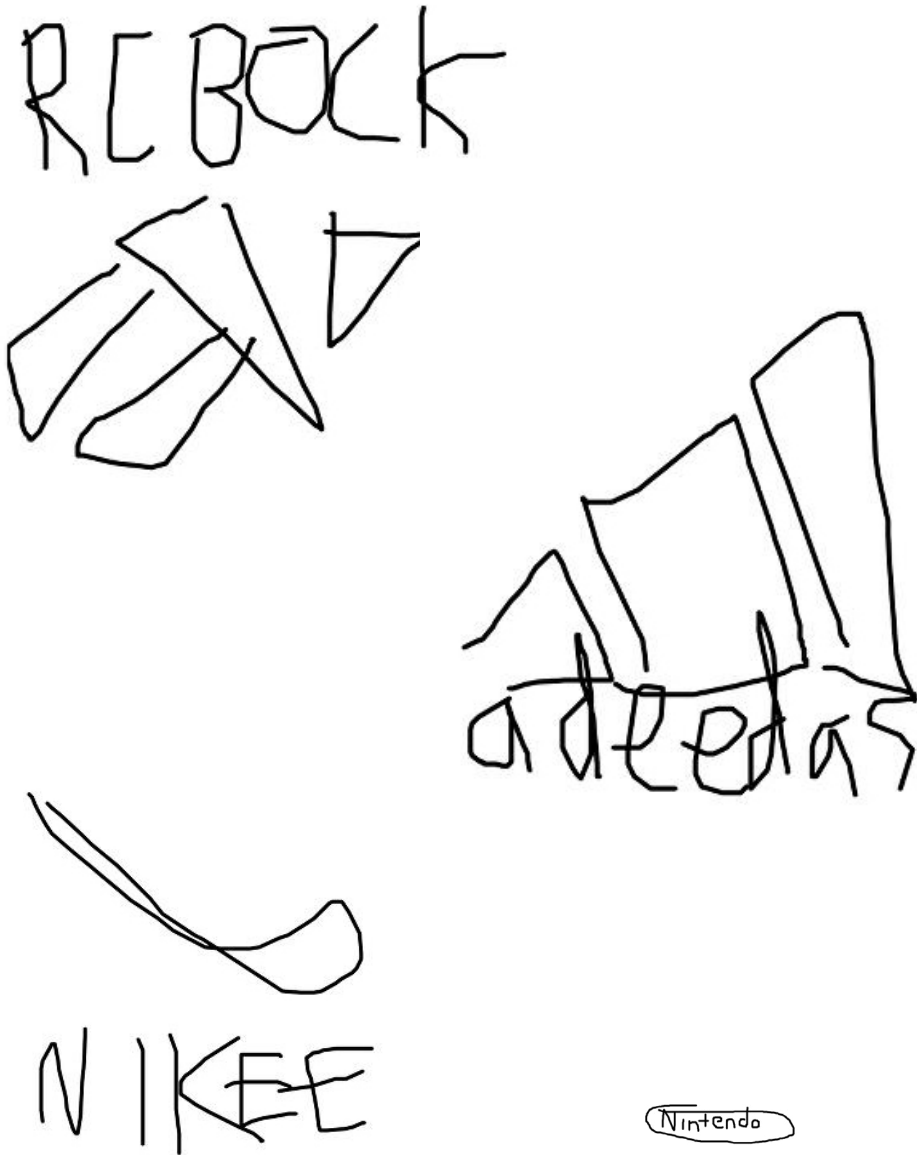


USER EXPERIENCE ARCHITEC- TURE





**IAM
CHRIS
COLLINS
.COM**

User Experience Architecture with Chris Collins

by Ria Roberts

RR

You started designing games pretty recently. What compelled you to do so? Can you talk a little about their lives—how they exist both within and outside of the art world?

CC

As I started becoming more and more interested in boredom, it seemed only natural that I start exploring the realm of games, because games are all about wasting time. There's also a lot of seriously exciting things going on within the independent games community. Thanks to new frameworks like unity and gamemaker, game programming is no longer restricted to people with computer science degrees. It's now easier than ever for a single person in their bedroom to make a game. And these new games are being built by people who were raised on the vernacular of games, digital natives who fluently speak the language

and are using it to create strange and new and interesting poetry. It's super exciting.

Here are some examples:

Sun Sets www.youtube.com/watch?v=2tZ_3lh0gIo

Tale of Scale youtu.be/ueDAVMbuDvw

Slave of God youtu.be/ADDy1bU32cg

My 'time wasting simulator' The Waiting Game was very well received within this online community (especially in Germany for some reason? I also had to update the game so it would accept non-U.S. keyboards). It was also probably one of the first times I've ever gotten any sort of constructive criticism and valuable feedback from strangers. People 'got it' and were talking to me about.

RR

You work for Sears in UX, in what ways does this affect your practice?

CC

I do front end dev, but I have a lot of contact with UX. Well, in terms of my art practice as a whole, I don't think it's a coincidence that I started becoming interested in the idea of 'boredom' the moment I started working at an old, overstuffed and bureaucratic company.

It's frustrating to me that the 'day job' is such a part of the working artist's life (in the US at least, but that's another discussion entirely) but is rarely acknowledged in the work they create.

But, my exposure to UX has been really eye opening. UX people prefer to call themselves 'User Experience Architects' (as opposed to 'UX designers') and at first I thought it sounded pretentious. But now I see that it's pretty appropriate. It's pretty silly that we still refer to them as 'webpages,' because not like 'pages' at all. When you shift your design thinking from a 'pages' paradigm to one where you are thinking holistically about how your audience is



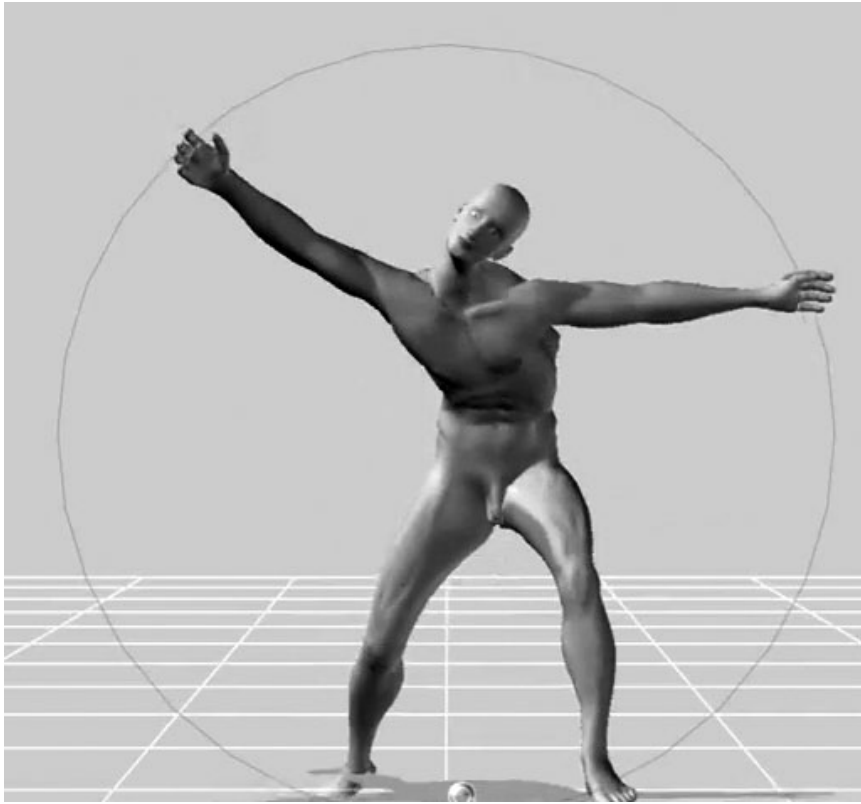
Still from Dust (All We Aare) Transcendental Karaoke (2008)



Three drawings from 50 Drawings of Bart Simpson
Meditative E-book (2012)



Still from The Waiting Game (2012)



Still from Pony (2010)

flowing through and interacting with your site, it really changes the way you design, think, and look at work. I was using a lot of this type of thinking on my recent redesign.

RR

What were your objectives in your website redesign?

CC

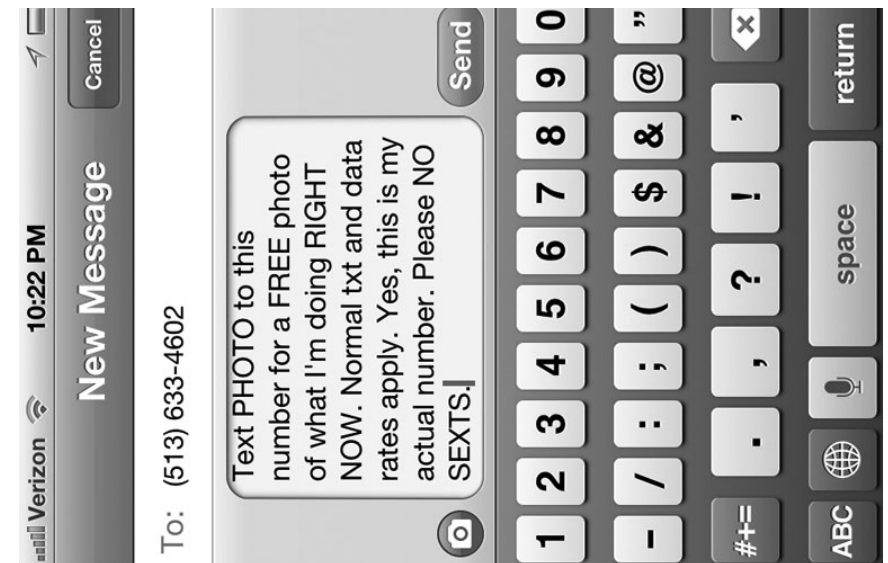
iamchriscollins.com/presentation/redesign.mov

Pretty much every artist I've talked to hates their website. For the most part, there are two basic types of websites, and neither of them are ideal.

The traditional, portfolio-based 'your-name.com' is a vestige of a time when a portfolio was a real-life, literal thing that you lugged around. You would obsess over

everything—inclusion of a piece, where and how it is displayed, and how it fits in to the greater narrative of you as an artist. You were making a mix tape, greatest hits, cliff notes version of your work. And that was necessary because you were working against the real world limitations of time, weight, and the amount of money you wanted to spend at Kinkos printing out 8 x 10 glossies. It was definitely not an 'archive,' and it definitely couldn't be changed very easily from situation to situation. You'd maybe update it a few times a year, if you were particularly studious. But you probably wouldn't. And then it would become this old thing that you'd have to show to people with disclaimers like 'yeah this is pretty old, I'm working on some new stuff that's pretty good.' A portfolio-based website is just a version of the leather bound one that you no longer have to print out. This seems particularly backwards in 2013 when you consider the way we consume information in every other place on the web. In a world of realtime updates, updating your portfolio once a year is an eternity.

So the other type of artist website is in the form of a blog, or works posted in reverse chronological order, newest at the top. This is better in some ways, worse in



Ad Campaign (2013)

others. Blogs make it easy to update your site on a daily basis, and give the viewers more a sense of a narrative that is unfolding, rather than one that is static, edited, and pre-determined. The best artist blogs begin to occupy a space in between a sketchbook and a studio visit. You see ideas arise, shift, and evolve. You see the false starts, and the times when the artist is just kind of fucking around and trying things out. The blog becomes an archive of the process, and this is almost always a richer experience than seeing the best 10 finished pieces you've ever made. But blogging platforms were not made for artists. I've never seen an art exhibition presented in reverse chronology. And if you work rapidly like I do, you quickly amass a TON of work, and then your best work will be hidden in the stream. Do I want this animated gif that I drunkenly made last night to be seen before the large, year-long project that I poured my heart and soul into that I released last week?

So my redesign was an attempt to answer the question: How do you best present an archive of work online? How do I make a huge amount of work approachable? How do I treat artwork like artwork and not 'blogposts?'

This was my initial stab at it. I don't think I answered the question completely, but I hope it's a step in the right direction.

RR

What do you think makes an interactive piece truly successful? Can you talk about some strategies you use?

CC

- If you have to tell people how to use it, it's a failure.
- If you have to force people to use it, it's a failure.
- If it asks too much from the person interacting with it, it's a failure.

An interactive piece is a collaborative dance, not a singular performance.

RR

What is your favorite interactive design ever?

CC

iPad 'paper' color mixer:

iamchriscollins.com/presentation/mixer.mov

'attached is' on gmail

iamchriscollins.com/presentation/attachedis.mov

fetch dog icon

iamchriscollins.com/presentation/fetchicon.mov

littlebigdetails.com

RR

Thanks Chris!

Interview conducted via email on January 30, 2013



Self Portrait of the artist (date unknown)

THE-WAITING-GA.ME
BORESCORE.ORG
BLINDSKETCH.COM