sfpc spring two thousand fourteen

interviews by oscar schwartz

Diana Sanchez

background

I am from Bogota, Colombia. I am a designer, and I'm interested in communication, music and materials. I basically discovered SFPC because I follow Zach Lieberman on Twitter. I've been searching for something like this school for a long time because I'm really looking for the intersection between art and science, or the technological and the poetic.

questions

The question I came here with was: How can we make the invisible orchestras that surround us visible? I think the time in school helped me to understand the tools I could use to make them visible.

inspiration

It might be weird that I choose this, but I found the circuit classes with Taeyoon really inspiring. I also found it inspiring to share a space with people from such different backgrounds, and to listen how they think. I've listened to other people's questions, and they have been so different to the way that I think. It's really interesting to know other people's thought structures. That's the most interesting thing for me.

challenges

I am still having problems with writing code. The relationship between the text I'm writing, and how it corresponds to a tangible thing is overwhelming but also motivates me to learn more and more and more.

projects

I am working in a music machine that sonifies the DNA structure of different organisms, using the music as a way for them to talk to each other. It doesn't matter if you're bacteria, elephant or human, you can talk to each other through your DNA structure. I'm also working on a Haiku generator for song titles. And the other idea I have is to somehow make music out of rain. The recurring questions in my mind is how I can keep exploring the idea of sound, and how I can I want to keep exploring human perception, looking at things that are there but not visible.

poetic computation

To use tools that are built to be practical, and fill it with metaphorical meaning. In science there is a lot of metaphorical content already. We approach technology not just functionally, but in a more meaningful way.

Alexander Porter

background

I live in Brooklyn. My background is in photography. I'm interested in the way that cameras work, how we're using them, and how much that has changed. My work for about the last two years has been computational photography techniques, open sourcing all of our stuff, then teaching people how to use our tools.

questions

A lot of my questions have to do with the function of imagery. There is a lot of theory and information about this, but my main way of thinking is to divide images into four categories: images taken by people for people; images taken by people for machines; images taken by machines for people; and images taken by machines for machines. I am trying to make sense of the fact that majority of images now are taken by machines, like security footage, CCTV etc. I'm really interested in figuring out a vocabulary with which we can talk about this.

I also had an unanswerable question: When do you stop in skill development and learning? I used to have an adorable, traditional approach to photography when all I had to know was mixing chemicals. Now I've gone really deep and I'm wondering where the floor is.

challenges

I've found everything challenging. It has been strangely challenging, this whole experience. The first thing was just making time for it. It feels like a big expenditure to put aside two weeks for this, and that might be a problem, and it might mean that my life is out of balance.

And then, just the fact that I'm encountering a whole area that I don't know that much about. In my work and in my social sphere I hang out largely with programmer/artists, and people who are really accomplished in the field. I have a symbolic understanding of how all these algorithms work and how they interrelate. But my dirty secret has always been that I don't have a practical understanding of a lot of it. My time here has made me realise that I don't have to have an expert understanding in all of these things. But a basic understanding will help me in the other things that I have a deeper understanding of.

project

Three projects that I'm working on: First, I wanted to make a camera that presents you with the top Google image results when you take an image.

Then I want make sense of computational photography with the intention of then teaching it. Finally I wanted to think about volumetric ways of presenting the mass of photographs that are taken every day, and then think about whether this would help people understand the massive proliferation of images.

poetic computation

Programming is sort of abstracted from communication. It's the language we use to give instructions to a machine. It's like the intermediary between us and the machines. The poetic aspect of it, I think, is to find ways of describing how this works to people who aren't writing the code, to interface between human beings, human concerns and machines. The poetic aspect is using the tools that we're making into a humanist context, I guess.

Tharit Firm Read Tothong

background

I graduated from Parsons with an MFA in design and technology last year. I had classes with Zach. I really like the way he teaches and thinks about technology. I'm interested in being part of this school and community because I really like how it lets you know your artistic practice better. My background is in interior architecture. I didn't enjoy it, especially in Thailand. You basically work for someone with money. It wasn't satisfying. And after that, coming here and getting to learn all of this code, it's like magic.

questions

I want to know how I can have a practice which I can sustain myself with, but which I also enjoy doing. I'm not going to be able to answer that at the end of these two weeks, but finding ways of exploring it is what I want to do.

inspiration

The people who have come to talk to us in the past two weeks have been very inspirational. Their message has always been: just keep doing it until you make it work. Keep doing what you love. I have lots of friends who have given up on their dreams to make a living. I don't want to do that.

I've also been inspired by the fact that this community exists. Each person has interesting ideas. The fact that we all gather here makes it special. Sometimes you meet someone that really inspires you, but you're not sure if you can become something like them. Having everyone here, I've realised that other people have their own struggles because they don't fit into a stereotype. Getting to know that I wasn't alone in this was inspirational.

challenges

It has been so short. I wish I just had more time. I really I think the way to learn is not just to get new ideas, but also be able to play around and modify and personalise, to make the technology something that is part of yourself. Two weeks is too short to synthesise all this knowledge.

project

Right now I'm basically putting small things together into one thing. I'm not completely sure about it but I'm making a circuit that makes sound and I want to visualise it.

poetic computation

I feel like the meaning of this is not well defined yet. I have two directions to go here: In one sense, it is something that works as the title of this school because this is the school for exploration. I feel like in my life my best teachers have been those who I have felt like are learning with me, who are still exploring. I feel like with these teachers the passion is passed on to the students, because you want to keep learning, because they are still learning. It feels like this is what Zach and Taeyoon have that quality. They are still exploring. That is this school's special aspect.

If I had to talk about poetic computation as an idea, I feel like it is saying that computers can be something that are not really personalised. They feel cold; the logic is defined. People see one side of it but don't understand another side. But these two words create a good balance to technology. The poetic is really human. Computers are logic. But you can use logic to define something that isn't logical. Something that you can't explain. Trying to do the impossible. That's why its beautiful. It's a beautiful struggle between the computer and the machine. This kind of paradox we can explore and it will never end. It is an essence we can learn forever. But that's a good way to live. You stop expanding if you stop learning.

Hiroaki Yamane

background

I'm from Kyoto but I'm living in Portland for work. I make web things beautiful and fun to play around with. I think that's my job.

I heard about SFPC on Twitter. I have a list of people on Twitter of Open Frameworks people and physical computing people, and one of them retweeted something about SFPC, and when I saw it I instantly got ready for my application.

questions

When I arrived at SFPC I wanted to ask: "How can I make a copy of my shadow?" Your shadow always follow you, and never does anything on its own. I thought it was a good idea to have a sequence of shadows, so it could record things I did seconds ago. My initial question was about how I could delay shadows, and how that would be a delay of myself.

inspiration

I am inspired to continue with this physical computing stuff, because while the web is really interesting, I feel that it goes away too fast. In a year everything could change and my pages could be gone. I want something tangible. When I was a kid I wanted to be an architect, because I thought about growing up and showing a building to my kids and being like, "Hey, I built this thing!" But with the web I cannot do that. In 10 years everything will change. Architecture changes too, but it is a little more gradual than the web or digital world.

challenges

I think the most difficult and challenging thing is that I have learnt a lot of stuff that I didn't know, and to keep up with this while trying to make something for the end of the two weeks, I found really difficult. I wanted to make something with physical computers, but I'm not used to it, so it takes time, and I want to do it properly.

projects

I'm still looking for ideas. I've tried things, but they haven't worked well. I tried this Twitter thing. I used Twitter API to ask Twitter for tweets with gifs. I got a lot of gifs and thought I could make something cool out of it, like a TV zapping thing, or something. But what I found was that 20-30% of the gifs were NSFW-type-of-gifs. I was a little bit surprised, but I guess that's real life, especially in the digital world. So then instead of gifs I asked Twitter for tweets with emojis. I received a lot of emojis but what I found was that it was difficult to find

meaning or information out of that randomness.

Now I'm looking at this thing that makes the connection between browser and user super quick, and I'm using it to let my phone and laptop communicate. I don't know exactly what I'm going to do with it, but I want to connect hardware, software and web in an interesting way. I've got to figure some more stuff out.

poetic computation

I don't interact with poetry in my daily life, but when I came here we explored poetry while at the same time learning about high-level software. It's not something people do very often. By doing this, I think one thing I've learnt is that while content in itself is always quite important, the way it is formatted and presented is also important. The way the form surrounds the content is an interesting thing to explore.

It's changed the way I look at the foundations of computation through a meta view. We use technology in most aspects of our lives but we don't know how it works. That's what we're learning here. I will continue at looking at all these small things that I never used to look at. From the smallest start point you can expand to a bigger world. From this idea I want to make something broader and relevant in the world.

Ida Benedetto

background

I live New York. The thing I'm putting most of my energy into at the moment is called Wanderlust. It's a place making collaboration. We create experiences in places that you're not supposed to be. I'm here because in my work I'm involved with a lot of creative technologists. Some of them know about the school and recommend it highly, so I decided to come.

I also do really well in intensive working environments. I did an intensive programming course in undergrad, and I got a lot out of it. I wanted to get back into it and get inspired about it again. In my other endeavours I'm usually coming up with ideas or organising people. When you're organising people there's almost never time to build things.

questions

I had some questions about data sets and how to work with databases, but we haven't really covered much about that.

inspiration

When Zach taught the first couple of days I realised that he was trying to help us understand memory as this finite thing with a particular location. I found that idea really compelling and inspiring. There is a nice analogy there with what I do with transgressive place making. I look at places that nobody else looks, and I try to uncover what was there. So of all the ideas I've been presented with, that was the most compelling for me.

challenges

I've been really inspired by things, so getting enough sleep has been difficult. Also coming away from each lesson and knowing what I want to do next has been difficult. Focus has been a challenge. I feel that I've sometimes understood something just enough, and then bounced right to something else. Basically, I've been getting excited because I installed something correctly. But I'm just trying to organise all the resources I've learnt about so I can come back to them in the future.

project

I like the idea of having physical devices that will light up and point towards whichever neighborhood that has the most Department of Buildings violations, which is a good way to find neglected stuff. I'd like to figure out what to do with that data, but somehow make it physical. I'm excited by these ideas. I've gotten started with all the small pieces of this idea, but there's no way I'll finish

it while I’m here.

poetic computation

My understanding of poetic computation is that the rules we learn to use these tools, even if they conform to the laws of science and mathematics, are still created by people, so they are embedded with all of our aspirations and dreams and needs. To use them and embrace them in that way can realise their potential in beautiful and poetic ways. The aim is to not look at these pieces of technology as cold or mechanical or simply for utility, but something that feeds us, moves us forwards and brings us together.

Scott Leinweber

background

I'm from Phoenix, AZ, and I went to school in California to study architecture. I had a very physical background, working on construction and going to an architecture school that focused on models and building things physically. But now with this digital technology I have a new focus on digital models and digital fabrication, and how to make things using computers. I got really into procedural modeling and what's called parametric design in the architecture world. It uses algorithms for everything from increasing efficiency, exploring bio-mimetic things, to exploring new material possibilities.

questions

I've always wanted to depart from using these digital tools just as tools. I'm interested in how to use digital tools for people's sake. I'm interested in how people experience space, as well as human/computer interaction, and interaction design. At SFPC I wanted to look into digital spaces, and the spatial experience of sitting in front of a laptop in a room full of other people also sitting in front of their own screens. This can be kind of reduced to two questions: How do we map physical spaces digitally, and how do we explore digital spaces physically?

inspiration

What I've found most inspiring is definitely meeting other people that have different backgrounds, different points of view and skill sets. It was amazingly inspiring to meet designers, scientists and writers who are approaching similar issues and question from radically different approaches and technologies.

challenges

It has challenged my sense of identity. I've been left with questions like: where does this fascination, these intellectual questions that I have, where does it all fit into architecture, or my job of doing digital modeling freelance?

project

I've been looking at digital reality and augmenting reality. I've been exploring that with Alexander, who is a photographer, and who has been mapping spaces and physical experiences through photography from a 3D modeling perspective, using new techniques. Meeting Alexander, someone from a different field but asking similar questions, that has been really helpful.

poetic computation

I guess for me the poetic part of our inquiry has been connecting back to the human condition. That was one thing I was lacking in architecture, the physical experience and the emotional experience that we all share interacting with technology and interacting with each other. Studying these emergent technologies, but always rooted back to the human experience.

Hyojung Seo

background

I'm form Korea, Seoul. I already know about Taeyoon and Zach. I read about the school. I'm a teacher at a design school in Korea. We have kind of strict rules and a hard atmosphere. I wanted to come here to learn how we could learn co-develop our method and our ability, and stimulate each other.

My main job is teaching. I also work as a media artist. Sometimes I collaborate with a choreographer. And sometimes my work is bought as commercial work so I do work as a designer.

question

My question was: how can I collaborate with other people? Korean culture is not familiar with this type of thing. When we are students the teacher says something, and you just have to remember what they say, and you are tested about how much you can remember. We don't have a free question atmosphere. Every time we ask something we worry if it's a good question or not. So we prefer to ask our questions individually after the lesson. The big question for me was whether I could change myself. Even though I'm a free person in Korea, I'm still a little bit closed here. So I tried to change myself.

challenges

The biggest challenge was the language. I use English in Korea and I thought it wouldn't be a problem. But on the first day when we spoke about ourselves, and did our first assignment, I wondered if I was in the wrong place. The language was a big factor to now allow me to collaborate that much. So another question is: what can we do to make a more collaborative atmosphere between people with different languages.

inspiration

Everything has really inspired me. The project I'm working on is about visual poem writing I was inspired by different people's presentations. Also, when Zach told us about how white space can have meaning in programming.

I was surprised that yesterday Ida wanted to study Python. I felt that there was no room for a new language. The members of this group have a lot of energy, and if they feel like they want to, they just do it. They don't feel the pressure of the final project I feel that I'm the only one who feels the pressure of the final product. Other people are happy to learn and then have a starting point at the end of the school. I'm still focused at the product at the end of two weeks. To meet different types of people has been really inspiring for me.

project

With the experience in this school, I had a problem with communication. So I thought about how I could communicate with only images. I took a picture of chewing gum that has been made into something new on the ground. When I see those things I can figure out something about them even though they're not in language. I took a picture of them. I'd like to make some tools for making a visual poem, to be used as a starting point. The dots can change no the paper. It can be a smiley face, or a rainy day. Without words I want to make a poem with images. Even though we don't understand specific languages, we understand images.

poetic computation

When I came to this school I only thought about technological things, in relation to gesture and movement. But last weekend I walked around Chelsea and Brooklyn and saw beautiful scenery, and they talked to me.

When Zach does programming he does his best to make a beautiful layout, without seeing the result. The type on the screen, what the code looks like, that is one aspect of poetic computation. When we see just from the result of the code, that is like creative computation. But when you see the code, the beginning step of the making, then it is poetic.

Ryota (Yoyo) Okawa

background

I'm form Japan, near Tokyo. I am studying product design and a little bit of programming. I came to SFPC because I am doing an internship and I met a guy called Motoi who offered me to come here.

questions

I am still trying to learn Open Frameworks, especially the shader language. A shader language is the language for pixels. You can control each pixel using GPU not CPU. You can do more complicated stuff with a shader language. That's what I'm still trying to figure out.

I want to know how to visualise things you can't be aware of, like UV. How to recognise things you can't see. This is my question.

inspiration

Most of the people here are trying to convert one thing into another thing. From image to text; or from language to sound. I'm inspired by that.

challeneges

I found learning new things very difficult. I was programming before I came here, but it is still difficult to learn a new language, even if you know another one. And I also found it difficult to learn another language in English! I am still struggling to learn stuff in English.

project

I'm trying to visualise sound. I'm trying to make Google street sound. You can walk NYC by listening to how it sounds. I thought that the sound in NYC is very characteristic. I want to visualise what NYC sounds like. I don't have enough time for all of this.

poetic computation

I think it is to understand what a computer is. When you use a computer you can only see the user interface. You can't see what's happening in the computer, like the binary that's changing.

Alex Zandi

background

At school I studied literature and design. My father is an engineer, so I've always been interested in technical things. So I started to learn programming and shape my design career to head more towards interactive design. The more I've learn about technology the more I've learnt that they can influence the use of the tool to make art. I hear about SFPC and thought it would be a good place to learn more of this stuff.

questions

My initial questions were about how to integrate hardware and software. I want to know how, with a hardware device, I could get feedback with motion and sound. It hasn't changed that much. But it's interesting that I've probed more at these questions, I've refined them into questions like: How can I make a video that plays only when the viewer is in motion?

inspiration

The dedication of the people here, and how they all work really hard on different projects. It brings a really nice energy. And it made all of these different processes involved with technology seem less frightening, more in reach. Even if we don't get there this week, at least we have conceptual framework to approach these things.

challenges

I'd say that there is so much information at one time. It's hard to digest it all and synthesise it. I t feels like random tidbits, in a way.

project

I'm making a video piece that is not for this class, with a friend, about surveillance in society, about the enclosure that comes with that. We are trying to reframe that into a space for theatrics. In this class I've extended this idea by looking into having an interactive environment that makes the viewer part of the theatrics. Maybe the hardware can be activated only when the viewer is present.

poetic computation

I don't know. What I think right now, using technical skill sets as a tool not only for rational problem solving but for creative endeavour. That's where I'm at right now with it.

Lee Tusman

background

I'm form Philadelphia. I'm an artist and a curator. I've loved art my whole life. I always knew that I was going to do things with art. Even as a child I loved modern and contemporary art. I've always been interested in pushing it to new areas. I am curious and get bored easily so I like to try new things. 15 years ago I was interested in graffiti and street art. I've also done socially based art projects, and video games and art. I've always been a nerd but I became particularly interested in physical computing and other kind of arts involving technology more recently. I've always enjoyed learning new things. So around 1 year ago I decided to start pursuing that a bit more, consuming books about programming, teaching myself and working through it in that way. When I heard about SFPC I decided to apply.

questions

It's funny. I had difficulty formulating questions for SFPC, even though I like the idea of questions. I'm a very project based person. So I found that type of focus difficult to translate into a general question. My questions were more practical, like, how do I learn this skill or that skill? That's a reflection on how my brain works. My questions weren't so philosophical.

inspiration

I like travelling and meeting new people. I think one of the products of me moving around a lot and living in a bunch of places is it makes me feel like I'm part of a global community, or an Internet community, but not necessarily part of a community that I see on a daily basis. I don't think I've been an environment quite so intense as this before, in terms of time spent together. I've really enjoyed it.

challenges

I think my technical skills are on the lower end of the spectrum. I am able to think through concepts and ideas but I lack the muscle memory of programming, or the paths that you take to do certain projects or ideas.

Also, although I spend a lot of time in front of the computer in Philly, I'm realising that coding can really involve sitting down and staring at a screen. I really feel it. My arm hurts from programming. And my head hurts from staring at a screen. I go to bed and I have code flash before my eyes while I'm dreaming. It's weird. I'm realising that I'll have to keep that in mind while I explore. It tells me that I can't spend all my time coding. I like human interaction. Coding could be part of what I do, but it couldn't be what I spend most of my time doing.

project

I'm building a Photo Booth selfie machine that takes a picture of whoever's sitting in front of the computer. You type your name in, and using the text generated from your name via a Google search, you get a portrait built out of ASCII. So you get a portrait of yourself made out of text found about you on Google. I moved towards this because I'm interested in emulating early digital filters, like the Gameboy Camera or pixel vision cameras, that kind of thing. Wouldn't it be interesting if you generated a poem about yourself but it came out in the form of a selfies. Because I'm limited in my programming knowledge, it has been a great project because it's really stretched me. I've learnt a lot. It's not easy. Every solution opens up a new can of worms.

poetic computation

I think it alludes to the idea of code as a form of art or composition in its own right, and it can be enjoyed that way, whether it runs or not.

Daniel Wilson

background

When I've been in school in general it has been multidisciplinary. I did my bachelor's it was in science and art, and I did my Master's in art and technology. It felt like this was combining those two things once again. Also it's been a number of years since I've been studying in a pedagogical environment, and I miss that, so it seemed like a good opportunity to have that experience again.

questions

My main question was about how much time and effort I wanted to spend learning technology. I like technology best as a means to do other things, and I was wondering if there was a curve of diminishing returns. I'm spending all of my time trying to absorb everything. But my question after tis finishes is: how do I divide my time. There is limited time and so you have to make choices about how your apportion it. And part of that is deciding what portion of your time goes towards learning new skills, which will open up new doors. But they also close certain doors in terms of what you could do with that time otherwise.

On one hand you can use these tools just as a means of making connections, without actually knowing the details at a granular level. But there is also something beautiful about knowing the very basic elements of how things work. I feel torn. On one hand the first model allows you to make forward progress, but on the other side it could be a richer experience if you really understand what you're doing.

inspiration

I think the conversations we've had in the morning have been really good. We start off with a book or a question, and then it just becomes this group discussion. I've also felt that the speakers who have come in have been really great. It risks having the Ted Talk syndrome, where everyone seems like this unattainable superstar when they come in. But then I've realised that this is years and years and years of work condensed down. I thought learning about what tool safe available and how people are using them was really eye opening.

challenges

I think it's challenging to figure out what this two weeks is. Is this a time to try and make something? Is this just a firehouse where you have to let everything soak over you and then afterwards try to sift through it and see what about this was relevant. There's just so much stimulation in such a short time, that I think the challenge is, again, a time division challenge. How much time do I

want to spend learning and how much time do I want to spend doing.

project

One thing that's a basic project that I'm using as a tool to get familiar again with programming involves the Oculus Rift, and programming an application that does stereo vision split scan. It's frustrating because I know that if someone like Zach was doing this he could do it in probably 15 minutes. No joke. And it's taken me hours and hours. So much frustration. I feel like I'm learning, but I also question whether it is more effective learning than having someone show you how to do it. I'm not sure.

The other thing: I want to make this thing called America Says Hello. I actually bought that domain name last night. It's going to be this phone database that calls everyone in the States one by one and has them saying hello till they hang up, then calls the next person.

poetic computation

We tend to make divisions between fine art materials and technical materials. Approaching technical materials in a poetic way allows me to forget about these divisions and just think about what makes something interesting, and how tools can be used as tools, and not as means to ends.

Nathan Koch

background

I have been coding for maybe six years. I have a background in timeline arts/music/video for ten years. I've been trying to bring these things together a little more. Things like Processing and OF are really exciting, and SFPC seemed like a good way to bring it all together.

questions

One of my questions was: how do I achieve the sort of production values I see in the artists and designers that influence me in my work? About three or four days in I completely threw that out and decided to do something incredibly lo fi with an Arduino instead.

inspiration

Electronics and physical computing. I've never touched that before. It's the one that that's been entirely new to me. There's something so satisfying about even just flicking a switch and seeing a light turn on. I've been really seduced by it.

challenges

For me, as someone who comes to this type of work intuitively, and without any type of fine arts background, it is sort of the critical theory around these pieces, and being able to articulate some sort of vision and plan around what I'm doing that I find difficult. I'm kind of just a - "I make cool shit" - person.

project

I'm making a hardware video synth that is digital. It is an Arduino, a Wii controller, an LCD screen and video display. The idea is that you can manipulate the design on the screen in interesting ways with the Wii controller. Ultimately I want it to be a stand-alone instrument that is accessible and lo fi video instrument where you could alter the type of program in place via an LCD, and it would never have to be plugged into a computer again.

poetic computation

Making things that are beautiful or challenging with code in a way that reflects back to the medium we're working in.

Shobun Baile

background

I'm from Michigan. I came out to New York originally to work in a biology lab at Colombia University. I still do that but in a different lab to where I started out. I've also been doing some film making alongside that. I was largely interested in narrative film making, but then as time went on it became more of a fine art interest. I became more interested in experimental work, rather than the type of things I was getting pushed into to try and 'make a name for myself' in the film industry. And then I started working with sculpture, and started working with a friend who does some New Media and interaction design stuff. We've been working together for a year. I did the physical stuff and he was at the computer doing all these things that were making everything happen. I was always curious as to what was going on. The more he explained it to me the more I got into it. I find it really compelling that you can have so many powerful tools right in front of you. Through that I heard about SFPC and became interested in a lot of these ideas.

questions

My original question was so big. How can I make things that are not part of human perception part of human experience? How to build a language for those things that we can't see or experience?

inspiration

Seeing how everyone (even Zach) still makes mistakes, and everyone has to Google themselves out of these programming issues. Being able to interact with these really accomplished people and being able to see how they, both conceptually and practically, approach their ideas about creating anything. What I also love about this New Media world is that they're very open in a way that other creative areas aren't. This open source attitude infuses everything.

challenges

Time. Realising that I'm coming at all these new technologies, through my interest in sculpture and cinema, and not realising that I need to learn these on their own, and find out their own intricacies, rather than shoving them into a box that I came here with.

project

I am trying to come up with a framework for a series of structures that will be based off data collecting that will translate the language about materials and artwork that is everywhere online that references these things that we're not

accessing in any way. It is like an impetus for me to think about things in the world.

poetic computation

Computation feels ephemeral. You feel like you're just clicking buttons and these magical things are happening. But then there's this idea of a material presence, with things forgotten there. It makes me feel like the computer has its own way of living.

Zak Greene

background

I'm from Detroit originally. I went to college in Providence, and I moved to New York in 2010. Since then I've been working as a designer and front end developer. I wanted to take some time to design the art side of things, which I got to do in college a little bit. I took an Arduino class in college, and a degree project that was a little artistic. So I wanted to carve out a little bit of time to pursue that again, because most of the work that occupies my times for a client, and based on some type of business constraint. I wanted to do something without those constrains.

questions

I actually feel like I haven't delved into my question so much. The main thing was how to optimise for intimacy rather than performrativeness in an online social space. Questions relating to what spaces are more performative and why. If that's a bad thing. What is the affect of the performative spaces?

inspiration

It's really the people. Everybody is invested in what they're doing and come from such different backgrounds. The most inspiring thing is just that I feel like the discussion we had about how to make a career out of this reminded me that everybody is interested in a bunch of different things, and nobody defines themselves in a single way. That's always how I felt about myself too. It's comforting to know that it's possible to find a way to explore interests that most people would think are opposed to one another, but don't have to be.

challenges

The logic gate stuff, for sure. That was challenging, but good. I appreciate knowing that. I have no idea what I'm going to do with it, and I'll probably lose it. But learning about circuits… it's one thing to just hook up an Arduino (like I did in college) but I liked how we really learnt what a chip is doing. That's something I didn't expect and is going to change my approach. Maybe not in the next three days, but some time in the future I want to do something that goes back to the basics of computers. Low level computing.

project

I've been building this website called shouldileavemywindowsopen.com. I didn't think I'd do that. It was an idea I had a year ago. It just seemed like an easy way to build something that wouldn't take so long. It kind of connects to the low lever computing in the sense that what I like most about the project is that its frivolous and that it's just purely for pleasure. Doing something like that

represents a huge change for me. It's like low level computing. There's no practical or business reason. It doesn't economically make any sense. There's no reason we have to, but we still do.

poetic computation

When you do something and you don't necessarily have a goal in mind. Or you don't even know what this is going to accomplish in the end. It's just a pure expression. Like building a low level computer. I found that really pleasurable, but couldn't exactly explain why. So yeah, I think something is poetic when you have a hard time saying why you like something or appreciate it, but you just know you do.