Project 2

A theme I’ve explored both in my tattoo practice and in my mixed digital media projects is the deformation of the body. I think we give a very big amount of importance to the way we look, and to the way people perceive us. There are multiple issues around our physical bodies that are talked about a lot. Fashion, tattoos, piercings, is something some people put a lot of money into. Eating healthy, being vegan, not smoking cigarettes, doing sport, is beneficial but if you have any kind of issues, whether it is physical or something else, it’s easy to point at those things and say you did not do enough. Then there’s this idea of beauty standards intertwined with fat-shame and discrimination based on their shape, color, ability, etc. I guess what I’m trying to say is that there’s a lot of contemporary issues linked to our bodies and it’s something I relate to in some ways, and it’s something other people will relate to in other ways. We all have bodies, and I think most of us have some problems with it. I personally found I could get some very beneficial effects when taking authority over my own body through body modification (tattoos, fitness, nutrition, etc.). At the same time, representing ‘imperfect’ and diverse bodies in media is probably a better inclusive way to take a jab at these issues since not everyone has the time, energy, money, and overall access to things like that.

I already have done some work and some thinking on the theme of body image and body modification. I’ve made some 3d models of deformed bodies. I’ve also started a generative 3d program using a database on the worldwide nicotine addiction (not finished, at all, woops). When I started making art, I went for oil paint for some reason, and my most successful painting was an extremely elongated nude self-portrait acting as a comment on how I viewed my own body, basically way too skinny. All these projects relate to the same theme of modification, deformation and taking authority over the physical representation of our bodies. It’s something I only recently been able to put into words but that has been in my personal life and in my creative work, maybe forever. I don’t know if this is clear enough but it’s a theme that I always go back to, one that is very personal, very close to me and I want to continue exploring that.

I’ve always been interested in generative art and data science. Before starting the semester, I sat down for an average of 2 hours per day to learn to code using Python. It’s a very useful language when it comes to data science, and we can also script in Blender3d with it (I’m comfortable using blender for modeling, animating, sculpting and post-compositing). I started using python scripts in Blender to make generative art out of random data and math, and then started importing data frames from the real world. I’ve made a mesh generator from the names of protein strands found in cat DNA. My journey with Python stopped there as the semester started. The idea of evolving generative art so it’s not just pretty visuals made with mathematics (still very nice and cool but feels a bit too disconnected from reality for me) is one that I had in mind for a while. I’d love to be able to give generative programs a nuanced and thoughtful voice, maybe by including data from biology or social science for example, but maybe with other concepts. The notion of interactivity is one that I think would be able to shift generators from being these thoughtless machines, and this is where I am going.

JavaScript is an incredible language when it comes to making interactive programs, but I don’t think it’s the best when it comes to handling a huge amount of external data like I’ve done with python (correct me if I’m wrong please, I’d love to learn about that specific subject).

All of this led me to project 2, I say this like this project has always been the end goal of my skill building journey (I really am excited about creative coding though). I want to make an interactive and generative program with the modification of a body (your own body?) as the main theme. You will be able to learn more about it in the next pages as I explain more in detail what I have planned. I’m still very open to experimentation and I am not set on very specific visual elements, but I do have a vague idea of what will happen!

*key elements*

**Interactivity:**

Multiple user inputs.   
User’s name has value (possible to have letters be the start if an algorithm?).

**Generativity:**

User input starts complex algorithms. I think experimenting with different algorithms will be time consuming, but mostly fun! Also, you can’t get the same exact result each time you start the program.

**Visual representation of the theme:**

A simple body outline in the center of the screen. \*insert img\*  
I think finding a way to create this body so I can easily modify it through algorithms will be a big challenge, as it will be one of the first thing to do and will affect the whole project.  
  
Low resolution game graphics inspiration. \*insert img\*  
Moody lighting.  
Progressive background animation (also directed by user input).

**Other representation of the theme:**

*Music/Sound:*   
What sound effects or music, or noises, makes you think of being human, relates to progressivity, change, organic, bodies, sense of self?

*Background story:*   
Ideas to incorporate into the story: questions around bodies (what is a body, why do I have this one, how does it relate to identity?), existential ideas (who am I? am I this body?), the separation of self into systems/ into groups/ into parts (body, mind, aura, look, health, name, connections).

*states / plan*

**a - intro**

a.1 - story

‘I’m here, I’m alive, and I’m not sure why. I don’t know why this is me, I’ve always felt like my flesh was a separate part of me. Also, I’m not entirely sure how many parts there are.

Maybe the goal is to feel whole? Maybe it’s to find how many parts there are, or what each one does…’

a.2 - typing animation

video game like, one letter/word at a time

a.3 - lil stars

a.4 - ambient sound, soft guitar?

**b – start menu**

b.1 - information on commands

‘press ‘x’ to… ???  
 ‘press ‘spacebar’ to …???

Tells you which keys, commands to use, but not what they do.

b.2 - name box

‘enter your name:’

When you press ‘enter’, gives you this message; ‘why does having a name even matter…? Oh, maybe this is the first piece.’ Then after few seconds, go to next state.

b.3 - background image

an outline of a body, simple, and looks like it has a normal shape.   
\*insert img here\*

b.4 - same sound as last state? heartbeat?

**c – game/simulation/program/main event**

c.1 - UI

Info on the player’s name, this can be modified with a specific action.  
Info on commands. Every time you do something, you ‘discover’ the actual info. Could look like this; “press ‘x’ to …???”. Then after you pressed x for the first time; “press ‘x’ to change name”. other ideas for function/commands [ to wobble, to dance, to shift, to grow, to shrink, to expand, to see … etc.].

c.2 - Body object

this is the same as the background image from last state, but it can be modified with multiple commands. Probably better to have it as a shape then as an image.

c.3 – algorithms

idea of algorithms:   
1- when the mouse is pressed near the face, creates 3 points at the eyes position, the points start to rotate and extend outwards, leaving a trail and stopping eventually (*break() of a while loop* ?). The color of the trail is the same as the eyes, so the trail blends now with the eyes.  
2- when ‘x’ is pressed, choose one of the feet and grow each toes of that foot using a sin wave.

c.4 - progressive background animation/effect

I want this to be lowkey, simple, but the more you play, the more it builds up (kind of like progressive techno music, starts simple and slowly gets more complex). Not the focus at first, but I want it to melt in the main body object at some point.

c.5 - ambient sound, soft guitar, heartbeat?

What sound effects or music, or noises, makes you think of being human, relates to progressivity, change? Organic things?

**d – end game screen**

d.1 - text

‘I think there’s still way more to discover’

d.2 - restart button

actual restart, reset every variable, clear arrays?

d.3 - soft music

*Resources*

**Algorithms:**

https://medium.com/siliconwat/algorithms-in-javascript-b0bed68f4038

<https://betterprogramming.pub/here-are-the-most-common-javascript-algorithms-and-data-structures-ec3729050169>

**Examples of generative and interactive programs:**

<http://weavesilk.com/>

<https://29a.ch/sandbox/2011/neonflames/>

<https://codepen.io/davidpanik/full/myMrLx/>