CART 411 – Ref Writeup Steve Berthiaume

For my historical reference, I chose the work of Richard Serra – specifically, The Matter of Time. The Matter of Time is an installation work in which an audience member travels through the metal sculptures built by Serra, experiencing a sort of distortion of space as they do so. The important aspect of the work for my purposes is how Serra brought in prior work experience from shipbuilding and steel mills – utilizing metalworking for his creative practice. This translation of work into creation is fascinating to me and is very reminiscent of how I wish to approach the creation of my own retail game project, drawing inspiration from my experiences and using them as a palette to craft something new.

In terms of my contemporary reference, the game Papers Please is another interesting example of work and art. Where The Matter of Time uses work to create art, Papers Please is art which satirizes a form of work – riffing on border patrol agents’ situation by framing their work in a dystopian context. Papers Please presents the player with increasingly difficult fringe cases, pushing them to follow or break the rules of their job, and suffering the consequences of their choices. While this is a far more intense and serious view of a different kind of work, I find the immediate sympathy garnered in the gameplay for real agents given unreasonable tasks extremely powerful. In the context of my own game, I seek to bring in a similar feeling of oversight on occasion, in order to pursue a similar effect to that of Papers Please.