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CART 360

"THIS = THEN = THAT": Project Proposal

My Object: Planning the Experience

For my object, it will perform best if it is presented in any dark room, but for the best experience, I think you should be in your home, playing alone during night time, but where a light can be easily accessed, if you need to "reset" your game, which day time will do that, as the haunted object will only show its true "demon" colours at night, just like in horror movies. I want the person to be alone to increase tension and more immersion to the experience, so that what happens is only between you, and the mysterious object you do not know much about. It will be advertised with a warning like the "Annabelle" doll, warning viewers to not touch it, but for most people, that command will be ignored for the sake of curiosity and wonder. In fact, this object is designed for people who are curious and seek out answers. I want this project to interest people, young or old, who are not afraid to break free from rules and experiment with what's right and what's wrong in order to unveil the truth, and immerse themselves with the mystery. It is for people who are not afraid to involve themselves in the unknown, and possible confrontation. However, I also want this project to resonate with people who also might be **too** curious, going as far as not listening to others just because they want to do what they want, later finding out that there is a cost to doing so, which is often more disappointing than exciting, as their actions might be interpreted as selfish and irresponsible.

My project needs to destabilize the viewers and force them to reflect on themselves, as well as comment on society and the environment around us. Indeed, I want to use my "haunted" object as a way for the viewers to second guess what they see and what they believe, as often, everything is not what it seems. I want my project to be a message to society to open their eyes when it comes to facing mystery, and force them to learn from what they personally observe and question what is real and what is not, being faced with a supposed supernatural figure. I want the viewers to realize that going against the rules is the way to gain new knowledge and discover, study, and analyse their environment and conflicts, but it often means getting yourself in trouble, or at least getting judged and put down by others,

since going against the norms makes you an outsider in the eyes of society. This is a more positive realization that the viewers can have, but my project will also have a more negative take away, and depending on the way you personally act and respond with the object will define the way you view the experience. In fact, the second possible reflection the viewers can experience will be the impact of judging things from the exterior. Because the object will look so cute from the outside, messing with it and disobeying the rules will lead you to a more evil entity, which should make you question how important finding out the truth is to you when the consequences prove to be harmful? It will be a message to not judge something or someone so quick from the outside, assuming that you can do what you want if the object looks harmless, when in reality, you don't know enough about the situation to make assumptions. What lengths are you willing to go in order to discover and make sense of things?

I think my object really will challenge people about the way they view things since they will be forced to formulate conclusions about the experience and the exterior of the project without actually knowing the "true" intentions of the haunted subject. They will only have superficial characteristics to base themselves on when beginning the experiment, which will make the situation go 2 ways: either it will remain peaceful and untouched, or it will be disturbed and unleash its inner darkness. My entire project revolves around contrast, and proving to the viewer that appearances can be misleading, showcasing an innocent toy, and turning it into an evil being. Also, I want to challenge the audience to reconsider the way they view rules. Is it worth breaking them in order to do what you want? To what extent? What consequences are you willing to receive for being true to yourself? Speaking of truth, how far are you willing to go to get as close as possible? Is there such a thing as right or wrong? And when it comes to the supernatural or inexplicable occurrences, how could they be explained in a reasonable way? I want the viewers to immerse themselves with the toy, and then experience questioning what is shown to us every day: how do we know it's not an illusion, a trick to force us to follow rules? If I claim my object is haunted and proceed to make it react in a creepy way with the audience, how will they feel knowing it's not haunted (since it's obviously programmed and built by me) yet playing with the experience? Does knowing the truth about something that claims the opposite make it less authentic or fun? These are some of the questions I hope the audience will challenge themselves with, whether it's knowingly, or unconsciously.

Overall, I want the viewers to remember that appearances are often not what it seems, and you can't judge someone or something based only on shallow characteristics. This is a message I relate to, because I am really passionate about horror movies, more specifically psychological horror, and once during a film class, we had to do screening of our projects. I had obviously done a psychological horror short film, with fake blood and stressful music, and even snakes. After the viewing, I clearly remember everyone giggling and being like "**WHO** did this?", and they were all so surprised to see the shy and quiet girl in class, having created something so bold and different. Contrast is to me an experience, and a shock value that I want my viewers to experience, especially when it comes to appearances, showing the damages of misjudging something, in this instance the haunted toy that seemed so innocent. I want my project to give a message about rule-breaking, and that it's okay to break the rules sometimes, if knowledge and growth is important to you, and you want to remain true to yourself, but whatever you do, you have to be ready to take ownership, and assume the consequences of your actions. With my project, I am trying to tell my audience to be more mindful when making decisions, and sometimes, there is no good or bad decision, it just depends on the significance you give to it, and what your intentions are: are you willing to take ownership? Are you willing to question what you know, and the supposed truth?

Three Similar Projects

A project that is similar to mine would be "Emily Wants to Play", which is a horror video game. The game starts off with you, delivering a pizza to a house, as an innocent delivery person who is in the wrong place, at the wrong time. Upon your arrival, the house is empty, with boxes laying around and no one to be found, other than a note in the kitchen that says "we play at midnight". When the clock rings and announces the "start" of the game, you are challenged with the first doll of the night, and with every hour, is a new doll and challenge. The story revolves around a young girl, Emily, who seems to be haunted / possessed after moving to a new house, and being isolated by her parents until she goes crazy. What is similar about the game to my idea is that every new doll we are faced with, is a new challenge, a mini-game: the first doll requires you to keep her in your field of vision until she disappears. The second doll needs you to stay still and stare at him when you hear his low laugh, and not move until he laughs again. The last doll in the game will giggle once, then chase after you until you pass a door frame / change rooms. Your challenge is to survive the night, and in the morning, you can finally escape, if you've survived every doll you were

faced with. The game is played in first person view, and the story begins in the evening, and ends when it's finally morning.

Annabelle is a famous "real-life" paranormal case and movie franchise, part of The Conjuring universe by Blumhouse. To summarize the story, the real case of Annabelle begins in 1970, when a mother gave her as a present to her daughter, a nurse named Donna. However, when she started noticing strange behaviour with the doll, she had a medium come in, who told her a spirit had attached themselves to the doll, and it was supposedly a little girl. Donna felt bad for the young spirit and gave her permission to take over the doll, but not long after, "stranger things" started happening, such as moving around the rooms of her home, finding writings on the ground, and apparently the doll tried to strangle one of her friends. After a priest came in and deemed the doll dangerous, he brought it back to the infamous Warrens, where the doll now lives in a locked wooden and glass case. Simply staring at her has apparently caused people to get injured, and even die, one of the most famous accidents being a couple who mocked the doll and tapped on her container to tease her, who then later died that day in a motorcycle accident. The doll is a simple "Raggedy Ann" doll, who looks cute and innocent to the public. She looks like a normal toy for children, yet hides a dark secret for those who dare to interact with her. The movie series made her case very popular, and now everyone wants to know about her, and discover the secrets of the doll.

The last project that I find to be similar to mine would be the children's toy called "Feisty Pets". Indeed, this is the project that physically resembles my idea (more than the haunting story of Annabelle, and the digital jumpscare game). They are a line of cute animal plushies that range from adorable kittens and puppies, to rainbow coloured unicorns. They look cuddly and innocent on the outside, but are actually much more sinister than they look. In fact, if you gently press behind their ears, their eyes turn evil and angry, and menacing teeth appear. I quite like this toy given the fact that they have a secret side underneath their misleading initial state. On their website, the company William Mark Corporation advertises them as plushies with a "stuffed attitude", claiming they reach an audience young and old, with their captivating animated toy, even though from the outside, it definitely attracts more children than teenagers or adults, given their colourful and immature appearance. What I like about this project is how this item is observable in their real world, and the audience can physically interact with their soft fur and cushion-y characteristics. The contrast between their evil side and innocent demeanor makes them unique and easy to play with. On the company's website, they also have series of videos with the plushies, each having a

complex backstory and dramatic turn of events, once again turning something that seemed so simple and sweet, into tragic action sequences between the different evil characters. The use of contrast really adds to the overall experience of the toy.

Will my Project be Better?

I think my project will be more impactful than the 3 previous ones I've mentioned because it will be a combination of all three. Even though they are all unique and interesting on their own, they are missing an important factor of interaction, which requires you and the object to react to each other, and adapt to one another's behaviour, in feedback-loop fashion. Indeed, the "Feisty Pets" plush has the innocent exterior and the sinister secret, but the interaction is lacking, as there is no exchange of information between the viewer and the object, just a simple action and reaction with no depth. As for the Annabelle doll, the backstory is incredibly interesting, and the object carries so much weight with it, because of the haunting mystery and evil intentions associated to it, despite the sweet doll-like appearance. However, the doll has zero interactions possible, other than watching it on screen, or through the glass container at the Warrens, which creates such distance that makes the doll almost boring and look fake. Finally, "Emily Wants to Play" has interesting mini-games and overall interesting backstory, but its digital only interaction makes it not as interesting as a physical object, as once you turn off the game, "Emily" is not a threat anymore. Also, the mini-games timed with the hours is fun for the feeling of progression, but ruins the element of surprise, as you know exactly what you have to prepare for. By combining the physical closeness of the Feisty Pets, with the scary backstory of the Annabelle doll and the interactive mini-games, my object will be the ultimate combination of innocent from the outside, but evil on the inside. In addition to the mini-games my object will have, these will also occur under different circumstances to increase tension while playing, and its behaviour will also adapt depending on how you interact with it, making it a truly personal experience. You're in charge of the relationship with the project.

Storyboard

→ Interactions with the object