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CREATIVE COMPUTING INSTITUTE DIPLOMA

Creative Coding and Creative Computing Frameworks Contextual framing of my submission

For my creative coding and creative computing frameworks submission, I have created an interactive 'virtual diary' tool, which allows the user to input a short diary entry against the background of an organically moving animation, which references the shape I imagine emotional activity would take when expressing. My tool also then allows the user to download their entry, allowing them to keep it on their device to look at later. I created my outcome in p5.js and used tools including conditional statements, gui's, (in the form of buttons), and events, (in the form of mouse clicks), to create my submission.

^ 'Emotion Flow', Simon Slater
https://www.saatchiart.com/art/Painting-Emotion-Flow/87716/2213480/view

Inspiration/Research:

My initial inspiration for this project came from a deep dive into the TikTok trend of "core-core', which is a genre which takes multiple videos or images with a common theme in order to prompt an emotional response. The particular videos I looked at were highlighting the overwhelming, overstimulating effect that videos promoting working on yourself, have created. These videos would particularly reference how young people on TikTok are constantly pushed to create/learn/achieve/profit from everything and anything they can, in a way that has created the feeling that taking a break and doing nothing or not doing enough is considered lazy and something to feel guilty about, making it hard to focus and difficult to remain emotionally stable. This prompted me to want to create a project that gave a space for young people to record a small snippet of their thoughts and reconnect with the importance of taking time for yourself and store thoughts externally in order to really assess and confront how they are feeling, separate from social media. A quote I had recently come across in an article on the Authenticity Associates website, speaking on emotions from the neuroscience standpoint, really supported what I wanted to create and stuck out to me: "understanding that emotions are energy implies that they are fluid, moving resources meant to be felt and released vs suppressed and ignored." This quote alongside how the article explains stress affects the brain and body, stating, "…this is experienced as sensations of contraction", led me to wanting to add an animation aspect which visually represented this idea of emotions and brain activity taking on a fluid, contracting shape. Art work that helped to find the correct emotional, visual representation came from artists such as Simon Slater, as well as the 'Flow of emotion' series highlighted on the Atignas Art website. Additionally, colour interaction inspiration was drawn from those seen in self portraits, created by Dr.Greg Dunn and Dr.Brian Edwards, demonstrating their brain activity, which were hand drawn and later digitised.
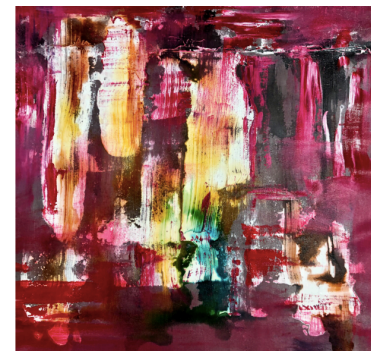
^ Flow of emotion series, 'Moonlight Passion'
https://www.atignasart.com/en/artwork/moonlight-passion/15602059?collectionId=2036123

^ The entire Self Reflected micro-etching under violet and white light, Greg Dunn and Will Drinker
https://mymodernmet.com/self-reflected-brain-scientific-art/

Process:

My process began with some rough sketches of what I visualised my outcome looking like. This is where I first decided that I wanted to challenge myself and incorporate a function that would allow the user of my 'virtual diary', to navigate two separate pages. My research began here and I followed tutorials on how to create a button that would trigger a page change. Once I had applied this, I wrote out the text on my greeting page. My next focus became inserting an input box that would allow the user to apply text they had written in the input box, to the sketch. Next, I focused on the aesthetics of the second page and experimented with using a slider to allow the user to change the background colour of the sketch. Following applying the input box and slider function, I applied the hide() and show () functions in order to ensure they were only seen when on the second page, not the first. It was after this that I decided it would be beneficial to include a button that would allow the user to save their entry. When I got to this point, I decided that the slider background feature was not aligned with how I envisioned the outcome as the colours looked to childish and unfinished. This is where I decided to open a second sketch and focus on the second page animation. I wanted its shape and movement to resemble the brain and emotional brain activity, and appear behind the users input text. I found a tutorial that fit my vision well and followed accordingly. Next, I opened a third and final sketch and tried to work out how best to combine my previous two sketches to create my outcome. After removing the slider and adjusting certain elements, I had a working sketch. My last steps included changing the input text box I had initially applied, as it only allowed one line of user input which I felt was not enough. Instead, I adapted the 'text area' function to become an input point which gave the desired effect and allowed for paragraph writing. Finally, I adapted the colour scheme to colours humans find the most relaxing/calming in order to fit with the idea that writing down your thoughts should be healing and bring relief. These colours mainly included blue hues, purples and pinks.

^ Example of first stages of project

Reflections:

Upon reflection, I thoroughly enjoyed this project and found it to be a good personal challenge of the skills and knowledge I have picked up during the course so far. I was particularly proud of myself for figuring out how to incorporate two separate screens/pages, linked by a button, as this is something I had not done before and took me some time to figure out. Additionally, although a small part of the outcome, I was very proud of my ability to turn the text box insert into an input feature the user could use. This is because, again, this is something I did not know how to do before, it was one of the biggest challenges I faced in this project and it was something I managed to figure out with no guidance. Another challenge I overcame was figuring out how to show and hide certain elements of the sketch in certain areas, without breaking the code. One challenge I was unable to overcome was hiding the textbook. Unfortunately I did not manage to work out how to do this in time and each time I attempted, the code would break. For this reason, I edited my screen recording in my submission to show what it would look like if I had managed to hide the text box. This is one of the main things I would change if I were to progress this project further. Other ideas I brainstormed for the future of this project included possible incorporating the slider function I had initially, and have it work alongside the animation, and allow the user to change the background colour of the sketch in accordance with the mood of their entry. I also played with the idea of wanting the user to be able to control the shape of the animation, again, in accordance with their emotions and entry, however, I decided I would rather the animation remain organic and random as I feel like this represents emotions well.