PLEASE UNPLUG THIS ART PIECE WHEN NOT IN USE
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SHORT PROJECT DESCRIPTION

PLEASE UNPLUG THIS INSTALLATION WHEN NOT IN USE is an interactive projection mapping installation about balancing institutional and individual responsibility for the climate crisis. On a table is a museum made of Jenga bricks, with a video projector mounted above to render visuals on the faces of the Jenga tower. As with a typical game of Jenga, there are two players, but the piece may still be experienced as an individual playing both roles or a larger group taking turns.

In this Jenga variant, one player represents the Artist and the other represents the Institution. During the Artist's turn, an action item for the individual artist (for example, "purchase art materials locally") appears on the video projection, and the Artist must remove a brick. Next it is the Institution's turn, and an action item for the Institution (for example, "Convert your facilities to renewable energy") appears. The game continues until the tower falls, and then the Artist and the Institution are requested to unplug the projector and reset the Jenga tower for the next pair of players.

Conceptually, *PLEASE UNPLUG…* uses a balancing-act board game to represent the balance of individual and corporate action necessary to protect the Earth. *PLEASE UNPLUG…* addresses the misinformation on both sides of the climate struggle—the gas industry promoting the idea of an individual carbon footprint to cover up their own emissions, and climate doomerists claiming that individual action doesn't matter—while commenting on the energy consumption of electronic art with its title.

SIGNIFICANCE AND DISTINCTION

PLEASE UNPLUG… is inspired by recent conversations about the art industry's carbon footprint. Murat Cem Mengüç's curatorial project *Gestures of Disappearance* highlights the carbon footprint of the individual artist by exhibiting works alongside calculations of their CO_2 emissions. I am drawing from Mengüç's commentary on the materiality of art but also from instances of guerilla projection art and institutional critique, such as Heura's anti-meat consumption projection at COP26 and the Guerilla Girls' *Dear Art Collectors* projection at the 2015 Whitney Biennale. These installations make public statements about the complacence of industry without scapegoating individuals.

The idea of the individual carbon footprint was heavily promoted by the fossil fuel industry, which climate activists now realize and are pushing for industrial and legislative change to hold them accountable. Some people take this to mean that there is nothing we can do as individuals—that the only significant changes must come from governments and corporations. However, working with environmental educators and grades K-12 has shown me how dangerous this mindset is in justifying passivity. *PLEASE UNPLUG* takes the form of a beloved board game to make conversations about climate change more engaging and accessible.

APPROACH AND METHODS

I will generate the projected visuals using Processing for Raspberry Pi and use the Processing projection mapping library Keystone to map these visuals onto multiple faces of a Jenga tower. Motion sensors will be installed on the table and connected to the Raspberry Pi to detect when each player has had a turn, and when the tower eventually topples. After the toppling, the Python script will signal to the Processing (Java) code to end the game and display instructions to unplug and reset the Jenga experience.

AUDIENCE

PLEASE UNPLUG… requires the physical dexterity and hand-eye coordination to plug in and unplug electronic appliances to an outlet and play the Jenga game. However, I hope the title and physicality of the piece conveys my message conceptually regardless of whether the audience actually plays. *PLEASE UNPLUG…* is aimed for participants interested in climate action and comfortable with starting conversations. Players will have to sit down with potential strangers in order to play Jenga as a two-player game, and it is these people who I hope will carry my message with them to start necessary conversations in the future.

SUMMARY AND IMPACT

I've been reckoning with the role of art in the climate crisis, especially knowing the resource consumption of the art world. *PLEASE UNPLUG…* will push me to further reflect on how I can merge environmental education and art in the process of making it. As an Immersive Media Design major, I want to understand the environmental impact of my genre of work, but have struggled because so little information is available. I have tried to ask staff at ARTECHOUSE, for example, but couldn't get a clear response. I hope in creating *PLEASE UNPLUG…,* I can help draw attention to the resource consumption of electronic media and urge my peers within new media art to examine their environmental impact more thoroughly.

After completing this project, I will have a greater understanding of how to work with Raspberry Pi and electronic sensors, and gain some knowledge of projection mapping principles which I can apply when learning more industry-standard projection mapping softwares in the future.