Aaron Sherwood

All of the information I bundled together in this presentation was found on Aaron's personal website and his page on NYU Abu Dhabi's website.

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Who is Aaron Sherwood?

Aaron Sherwood is the program head of Interactive Media and an Assistant Arts Professor of Interactive Media at NYU Abu Dhabi!

His area of interest is in interactive media which explores cause and effect through sound and light.

He combines art, AI, cognitive science, computer science, electrical engineering, and music in order to seek patterns of emergence in chaotic systems through the use of large scale multi-sensory systems, sculptures, and performances, which often place people at the forefront of these installations.

This is Aaron.

Now let's explore a few of his works.

Firewall

Firewall is a super cool interactive media installation that Aaron Sherwood worked on with Mike Allison.
- Inspired by a performance piece he was developing called Mizalu. In one of the scenes, the performers press into spandex with the audience facing the other side, representing a plane that you can experience but never get past (the story is about death and experience of reality).
- Used Processing, Max/MSP, Arduino, and a Kinect. The Kinect was used to measure the depth of the spandex from the frame, Processing was used to create the visuals, Max/MSP was used to dynamically speed up or slow down the music and increase or decrease the volume based on depth, and the Arduino was used to capture the input.

Link: http://aaron-sherwood.com/works/firewall/

MANDALA 0.4.2

MANDALA is a series of works exploring chaotic yet emergent form.
- It was created with inspiration from the archetype of a circle, and how it's referenced all throughout history as a symbol for spirituality, infinity, wholeness, and the universe.
- MANDALA 0.4.2 is a physics system which creates the still images that were used in a faculty art show in November 2019. The still images were accompanied by animations of how the images were formed.
- I'm guessing he used Processing to create this art because he has a similar tutorial for rotating mandalas on his github account that can be found here: https://github.com/aaronsherwood/introduction_interactive_media/blob/master/processingExamples/drawing/rotateMandala/rotateMandala.pde

Link: http://aaron-sherwood.com/works/mandala/

Glockentar

Glockentar is a robotic glockenspiel that's triggered by plucking guitar strings, and every time a string is plucked a beam of light is projection mapped onto the string and flows up and down the string until the sound stops.

- He used an Arduino to turn the strings into switches! Each string acted as a ground, and electricity was sent to the pick that he was plucking the strings with. When the string was plucked, electricity ran through the string and the circuit closed, triggering the solenoids and light projections onto the string!
- Code can be found here: http://aaron-sherwood.com/blog/?p=381

Link: http://aaron-sherwood.com/works/glockentar/

Some takeaways

Creativity

It's easy to create things with functionality in mind, but it's a lot harder to create things that are abstract representations of ideas and concepts that are broad, complex, and fluid. Aaron does this with concepts like infinity, the universe, and the tension of humanity in his works I talked about earlier.

Function

But not every art piece has to be purely creative and only lend its ear to the abstract… function matters too! Aaron shows this with his Glockentar project. I know that I have a pretty defined mindset in functionality and solving problems over creativity and uniqueness, so that's something that I can work on with my final project.