Project Descriptions

Final project proposal: Your proposal should describe something that you might consider submitting to a competition for art commissions or as a grant proposal. You will not be required to submit this paper to a competition, but this assignment is defined as an elaboration of the requirements for submissions to Ars Electronica's competition for [the next idea] art and technology grant: http://www.aec.at/prix/en/kategorien/the-next-idea/

Although you are not required to, if you do produce a good proposal we encourage you to enter the Ars Electronica competition. Official entry rules can be found here. Note that entries for Ars Electronica will be accepted until March 2015. The website contains a short description of that competition and what you stand to win if you choose to enter the competition (approximately $9,000 and an artist residency in Linz, Austria):

Whether or not you enter the competition, I would like you to fulfill the Ars Electronica's checklist of items for your final project proposal:

1. a description of the concept and its realization in detail (production plan including hardware and software requirements)
2. video documentation (ca. 3 minutes), images, documents, drawings via upload
3. materials on a website: correct URL and details for viewing
4. A portrait photo and biography of the artist(s)

In what follows I will elaborate on the Ars Electronica checklist.

A description of the concept: Write this last, after you have written the rest of the proposal. Try to articulate, in one sentence, the main, interesting idea of your proposal. It's only one sentence, but it's a difficult one to write!

A longer description of the concept and its realization in detail (production plan including hardware and software requirements): This is the major portion of the proposal and, strictly speaking, is not just one item from the checklist but rather comprises a number of things which I will detail separately.

The concept of your proposal should map out some new territory in the digital art world but, at the same time, be in dialogue with issues and ideas that are being explored by artists and critics today. To find a good concept you need to master the categories current artworks are being assigned. Look at the various other award categories at Ars Electronica, http://www.aec.at/prix/en/kategorien/ Or, consider the categories used on Rhizome. Or, look at, for example, Rachel Greene's book, *Internet Art*. How are you mapping out the world of digital media art and where do you fit in? Any of the sites or books listed in the resources.pdf file might be mined for categories. Picking your concept and describing its relation to other existing artworks and/or other social, political or aesthetic issues of digital media is the most crucial and challenging part of writing a proposal. Devote the bulk of your proposal to explaining and elaborating your concept. Elaborate on the description of your concept in the following ways: Contemporary art and art history: explain how your work is similar to and differs from existing artwork or artworks of the past.

Usage or interaction scenarios: Describe what it will be like to interact with or use your artwork. Narrate a short (one or two paragraph) story of a specific person who might interact with your artwork and what they do with the work when the encounter it.

Visual mock-ups: Using photos, drawings, a graphics program or even some simple programming mock up what your artwork will look like. In the proposal provide one or two images of the mock-ups. If your proposed work is for the Internet these mock-ups are likely to be sketches of what the interface will look like. If not, then these visual mock-ups might indicate what the work would look like projected in a gallery, hung from a wall, installed on the street, or worn.

Flow diagrams: If your proposed work is a detailed instruction or procedure, or if it incorporates a set of constraints or step-by-step directions (recall Sol LeWitt's works), then you should write out the procedure in detail and/or diagram its steps and illustrate the order in which they will be executed. This is called a flow diagram.

The production plan (including hardware and software requirements) needs to outline the necessary equipment, space, personnel, and other resources crucial for the project. How many computers will you need? What operating system(s) will they be running? Do you require certain programming languages? Do you need a printer, a projector, speakers, or some other more

exotic peripheral device? Is your work to be something visitors see in a gallery (in which case you need gallery space)? Or, will they interact with it online (in which case you might want a domain name devoted to the project and webserver space). Will your project involve other people as participants or performers or as artists commissioned to use your work to make other works? How do all of these people and things come together to form your artwork?

A list of tasks including notation specifying which tasks are to be completed by the grant recipient and which require support: To create the artwork you propose what tasks need to be achieved and in which order? This portion of the proposal might be most easily conceptualized as a timeline or work schedule for the project: what has to get accomplished by when and by whom? You can annotate this schedule with the names or positions of people who will be assigned the various tasks. If you can't perform all of the tasks yourself, indicate who will, hopefully, be doing the task for you. Here you might want to reference the personnel you specify in the production plan. I suggest that you write a schedule that plans out the project week-by-week.

A portrait of the artist: I leave this to you. Perhaps this is a sketch or a photo or an abstract diagram? Include an image that you feel portrays you.

Final Project: Implement some part of your proposal that best represents the most important point(s) of your proposal.

One: Find two or more projects on the Scratch website; combine them into a game of your own design.

Two: Connect Three Points. The full description of the project is posted on the Whitney Museum's website here: http://artport.whitney.org/commissions/codedoc/index.shtml
You might want to address this project by considering how art projects can be something other than representations. Instead, they could be imagined as translations or interpretations. To approach the project as one of the above, think about how you might write code by assembling together pieces you find already done by others (just as Scratch project was an assembly of found pieces). Have a look in the "Examples" menu of the Processing programming environment for possible "found code" you can use to modify or extend. Or, look at the code of the artists commissioned by Christiane Paul of the Whitney Museum. Or, look on the processing.org website for more code. Do the project by writing some code in the Processing programming language.

Three: Execute one of LeWitt's wall drawings in Processing. Pick one from those shown on this site: http://www.massmoca.org/lewitt/grid.php Try not to pay too much attention to the way the chosen drawing was done at MassMOCA. Just look at LeWitt's directions and elaborate a procedure in Processing for yourself.

Four: Play with machine vision: Vilém Flusser gives us a way to talk about images we see on the screen of a computer. They are, in Flusser's vocabulary, "technical images." Such images are not straightforward representations of the world. They depend, instead, on a specific set of texts that are programs. This project is intended to stretch your thinking about technical images. What is the image on the screen was looking back at you using some sort of "machine vision"? What does it mean for a moving picture to be tracking you? I will give you some Processing code (in the file project4.tar) that implements a Pong-like game that you play against the computer. The camera on the computer keeps track of your position. You have a "paddle" that is positioned at the top of your head. Try to use the paddle to bounce the ball falling from the top of the screen. Note however, that the image you see is not a mirror image. If you move left, your image moves right; and, vice versa. Your assignment is to modify this game.

Five: Write a piece of dynamic, concrete poetry

Six: Write a new script for ELIZA (http://www.masswerk.at/elizabot/elizadata.js).

Seven: In the file initial.js, there are six “stories” defined with combinations of initial facts and initial tasks (http://danm.ucsc.edu/~wsack/SoftwareArts/Code/Narrative/Spinner/initial.js). Define a new story for Spinner. Consult the exercises at the end of Meehan’s “Chapter 10: Micro Tale-Spin” for some suggestions about what you might do.