

Concordia University

“Preflective” Essay

How can programming shape my creative expression?

Line On

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Creative Computation II  
Pippin Barr  
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As someone who internalizes myself as neither particularly talented nor exceptionally knowledgeable in programming, the exploration of coding as a form of creative expression has been a fascinating journey marked by both excitement and challenges (like a love-hate relationship), which instills my curiosity.

As mentioned during last semester's reflection and with all honesty, my confidence in my programming capacity ranges on the low-end, and I don't consider myself quite yet as a programmer. In my case, I believe it would take me more than a semester to not feel like an imposter or I might feel like an eternal imposter. The coding rationale and narrative are quite non-linear, to some extent, and with a logic that I still don't fully grasp (i.e., it is intimidating to navigate the code based on the different structures/classes and syntax/concepts to use to create an outcome). While I think I can have some capacity to ideate and conceptualize, translating those ideas into functional code is rather another topic.

Debugging is a laborious process, and the gap between my vision and the final product can be frustratingly challenging for my morale. I have a natural interest in planning (not saying I am particularly good), yet I find the execution part to be very excruciating for some parts. This struggle with execution is an ongoing battle, but it serves as a constant motivator for improvement (Practice Makes Perfect).

I still don't fully grasp what is necessary and for what purposes. For instance, let's say there is an idea of creating X, Y, Z scenes/visual/sound outcomes on a canvas; how can I work on knowing where and how to start it from a blank page? Another issue often encountered in the realm of programming is that the devils are in the details. Therefore, the goal for this next semester is to understand better what the next steps are in terms of programming whenever I face a blank page. Hopefully, it would come with more logical thinking on my part, and understanding the "why" will most likely help me.

In terms of creative codes/software/projects that inspire and intrigue me, the work of this Montréal based artists, [Lucas Paris](#), particularly appeals to me, bringing together visual composition, music production, and programming for light-based projects.

AI being a hot topic; In 2022, I had the chance to see in Japan a live performance from the artist, programmer, and researcher named [Sougwen Chun](#). The representation showcases the collaboration between human and non-human entities. In her piece "*Flora Rearing Agricultural Network*" you can see her interact with biomimetic robots. She programmed and built robots named D.O.U.G. (Drawing Operations Unit Generation\_X) using AI. Combining reflective concepts via the expression of coding, she mentioned it has helped "[embodied feedback loops and self-assembled data](#)" to become as much an artist as an engineer.

A common denominator may arise, as the interdisciplinary crossroads of technology and creative expression via visual, sound, and interaction highly interpellate me. Unfortunately, as much as I would like to express that the sky's the limit, I am aware of my limitation of executing an idea. Therefore, in an ideal world where there is no limit, what would I like to touch upon? Mhmm good question.

There is this idea of the tropes I have been surfing with for a while now (I also presented this project in the school application portfolio). If I ask you to close your eyes and I tell you: "*a bird*" the image that will come to your mind will certainly be the image of a cardinal bird or a sparrow (the little brown bird that can be found everywhere in Montreal). These pretty birds.

However, it is interesting to know that the first image that comes to mind will not be an owl or a chicken - also in the family of birds. Why is that so? Does the acquisition of concepts limit us to seeing only what is initially internalized and predisposed to us during our life? Do concepts limit us in the perception of reality?

Tropes allow us to get out of this reality and to see words and terms from a different angle. They allow us to internalize these words under another image and another sensation. It seeks to divert the meaning of an initial word by a completely different story. They are thus the "*fruit*" of mental associations resulting from changes in the initial meaning of the word.

In the example just above, in italics, the word "fruit" has been put in quotation marks, to be defined as an "*outcome*" and not to the "*fruit*" as foods. How could we introduce the different tropical expressions into visuals using our own language as data? This is the idea I have in mind. To have the possibility to put in visual a trope or the literal image of a word in a precise context.

In my case, I am aware that I have difficulty understanding a trope, and I am more inclined to visualize it literally instead of using its word in its figurative use. And if it were possible to literally visualize these tropes that surround us and get as close as possible to these expressions that we use nonchalantly? Thus, to help us metaphorize about the world around us.

By exploring the words of the language and the interaction of the users (i.e., using speech recognizer AKA Voice JAM could be applicable at a certain extent here?), I believe that it would be possible to get them to integrate and visualize the tropes (which can be literal or figurative). And if we heard: "You eat like a pig," it might be interesting to literally see a scene where one is in the form of a pig surrounded by pigs eating our meal (this is only an example, maybe the MI5 applying machine learning to images or video?). I wish to potentially explore this idea further and develop this as an interactive piece.

Another idea I had is the slow-moving beta fishes with their bright colors contrasting. Create the sentiment of steadiness and slow movement in pursuit of mimicking the paradox of individuals. In this era of bright, colorful & playful personality, I wanted to showcase the contrast as I perceive in the bright solitude of the Beta fish, drifting in the container while displaying a colorful shell. My vision is still blurry as of the interaction with the fish and what would be the outcome (the wheel is spinning in my brain).

Can't wait to hear from you, your advice and guidance on the above! Thank you ☺