

Nat Nina

CART 253

Professor Pippin Barr

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## **Pre-reflection**

### **Introduction**

I have long associated programming with very technical and logic-based practices, but I have been interested in its potential as a creative outlet for a few years. While I have limited programming experience, I appreciate how it functions as both a tool and a language that facilitates new creations. Whether it is for digital art, video game design, or art installations, coding is becoming the backbone of an increasing number of practices. This essay will reflect on my coding ability, showcase a few examples of programming that I find inspiring, and explore a dream project I'd like to bring to life using code.

### **My Programming Experience and Perception**

I have close to no experience for programming, as the only time I've seriously engaged with it was for a portfolio project using p5.js. This project was made using a grid system to generate works that resembled Mark Rothko paintings. Although I didn't do a very extensive amount of coding, this project showed me how creative coding can be.

Regardless of my lack of knowledge, I recognize how artistic programming can be. Programming exists in different languages, and just as writers utilize words to craft stories, programmers use code to build good works. The medium is creative insofar as the programmer, who can solve the same problems in different ways, just like a writer can tell a story in many ways. Thus, there are many creative practices in which programming is necessary. These include UX/UI or web design, video games, interactive

artworks, and several more. In that case, it isn't just about writing the code, but also about finding an innovative way to express an idea or design something.

## Three examples of creative programming

In this paragraph, we will explore three programming-based projects that I find inspiring.

Gentle.earth

GENTLE.EARTH

vixen · june 30, 2024  
i want to kick and scream for you to hear me. i want you to be as pathetic for me as i am for you

shark · june 30, 2024  
i just want someone i can't hurt

anonymous · june 30, 2024  
please just take me in

anonymous · june 30, 2024  
i get scared even being at work alone without music now

rabbit · june 29, 2024  
i want to be kinder, gentler... i want to be better.

black cat · june 29, 2024  
im scared of the world.

anonymous · june 28, 2024  
i just want to see you again. To say i love you again. My heart still hurts so much. i keep hoping that you'll call again. One day maybe.

cb · june 28, 2024  
i look for you everywhere; i'm so sick of finding you in everything.

Viscerae · june 28, 2024  
i'm hurt so deeply it's become part of me

Gentle.earth is a collaborative digital art piece created by musician Mitch Welling and anyone that wishes to contribute. Starting in 2013 and still going strong, this piece is essentially an anonymous writing outlet. The interesting part about the project is how it seems to mirror the emotional tones of Welling's music, probably because the main contributors to the website are fans of his. The anonymous nature of the project introduces a very open community atmosphere.

On the programming side, I would guess that the page is created with a mix of CSS and HTML. There are no sign-in options, everything is anonymous, and the layout of the page is simple. The website instead focuses strongly on the contributors' input, making the project ever evolving. This project demonstrates how a web platform can be expressive and intimate. The simplicity of the code also

juxtaposes the content well, which can be heavy. This is inspiring because it shows how even basic programming can emphasize artistic impact.

## Disco Elysium



Disco Elysium is one of the most interesting gaming experiences I've had. It almost feels like an interactive novel because of how long and immersive the dialogue is.

An interview of the writers done by Articy gave me a glimpse into their coding process. They used Articy software to manage their gameplay and narrative system. Every in-game task and dialogue option were documented, and they utilized programming to track any variant path options. Without a tool like Articy, creating such a long game would be impossible. This is an example of how much work is really needed for some of today's games. Not only is the game very code-heavy, but the tools used to manage it also require a lot of programming. Finally, the reason the game was well executed is mainly because of the programming, which ensured that players had an enjoyable experience while exploring this story.

Sun Yuan & Peng Yu Old People's Home, 2007



This installation has been one of the most impressive artworks I have ever seen in person. It is a somewhat interactive piece that features models of elderly powerful figures seated in electric wheelchairs. These are highly realistic figures of army officials, bishops, scientists, and more. The interactivity of the work is attributed to the wheelchairs, which are programmed with sensors to roll around the room, bump into one another, and roll away.

The programming for this installation is subtle yet essential. The clumsy back-and-forth movement of the figures created a surreal atmosphere, in which these powerful men were reduced to clueless robots. They had sensors around them to detect collisions and would back up after impact. This added a layer of interactivity, not only between the art and the people, but between the art components

themselves. This installation inspires me because it shows how programming can create dynamic, meta-interactive experiences that are more engaging and meaningful.

### **A Dream Project**

One creative project I would love to pursue includes e-textiles, specifically for a jacket or backpack that is embedded with programmable lights to improve cyclist safety. This product could have different programmable configurations, such as a flashing light or steady light for visibility. The lights could also be programmed to function as a turn signal by the cyclist, using simple buttons that are easy to reach.

Programming would be necessary for this project to manage the different configurations and button responses. Although the project wouldn't require very difficult code, the programming would need to be reliable, responsive and easy to use, because it is used for a safety device. This project is interesting to me because it blends technical apparel design with programming to improve on-road safety.

### **Conclusion**

Reflecting on my relationship with programming, I am inspired by its potential and future as a creative medium. May it be through digital art, video games, or interactive art, coding allows artists to push their creativity into more engaging experiences. In the future, I hope to expand my skills and understanding of programming to contribute to the art world.