APD FOLIO 1

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PLAY AND SELF

MAGI Link: http://magistudio.net/work/apd-play-and-self-play-for-one
Youtube Videos: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jYxWqTSjmDE
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KAcl7oqCoCI

CONTEXT

When exploring this week's theme I first thought about self in a solitary sense, being by yourself, and the kinds of ways we play when we're on our own. As I struggled to identify my own personal, solitary rituals of play I started to wonder how much of my motivation or inspiration to play comes from others, or indeed having an audience.

Following on from this, I thought I could collect mundane outtakes from previous video and audio recordings of myself to show a version of myself when I'm not "switched on" for an audience.

Reading Thomas S Henricks "Play as Self-Realization:Toward a General Theory of Play I was struck by this idea presented by Greta Fein that play is an important tool for children to assume new roles and distinguish self from each other. If there is no one to differentiate ourselves from, then would we ever feel inspired to play?

With this in mind, I tried to combine these two ideas. I wanted to build some kind of game that'd capture our solitary rituals of play (or lack thereof) while pushing us to play off or differentiate ourselves from earlier versions of ourselves. This makes me think of the game "You See" by Kalonica Quigley where the player is placed in an endless empty room. After every 10 seconds the player is reset and the room populates with previous versions of themselves wandering around as they had done. The movements become more exaggerated as new stimuli is added to the scene in the form of more and more versions of you.

METHOD

When the player opens the game,they'll be presented with the title "Play for One". Secretly, the game will begin recording the player. After 5 seconds, the footage recorded is played back to the player on a loop while a new video starts recording their reaction/response. This continues until a full grid of 9 videos are all playing back in unison showing the various versions of the player. From here you can observe the ways in which the player tried to differentiate themselves between each recording, often escalating and getting more chaotic by the 9th recording.

RESPONSE

Video Showcase: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jYxWqTSjmDE
Making of Video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KAcl7oqCoCI

I created a small video game in Unity that uses your webcam and microphone to capture a series of short recordings. I then played it several times and recorded my own responses, compiling them into a short video to showcase the game.

Additionally, I created a second video compiling a series of candid recordings that were saved in the process of building and bug fixing the game. This less polished and unedited video stands as a complimentary piece that showcases the outtakes of the playful process.

REFLECTION

I went through various ideas before landing on "Play for One" as I faced various technical limitations. Ironically, the first idea of capturing a portrait of myself through outtakes was preserved as I struggled to build a functioning recorder within Unity. Although I was making slow progress, every test meant inadvertently capturing candid footage of myself as I struggled to create something representing my playful portrait. I was pleased to see that there was some sense of my original idea within "Play for One". I had also planned to display the webcam feed while recording the videos and give the player a more guided experience offering prompts of actions to take. However, I felt capturing this candid footage was more interesting and provided a fun surprise every time a new recording shows up.

PLAY AND TIME

MAGI Link: http://magistudio.net/work/apd-play-and-time-small-recess
Youtube Video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oLwyRKVRuas

CONTEXT

When exploring this week's theme, I thought about how modern game design sensibility focuses heavily on helping players progress. This is often done by providing clear instructions of what to do next to avoid any down time. I feel that this kind of treadmill guidance actually prevents deeper engagement that might occur when a player is required to make their own fun.

I was inspired by The Longing by Studio Seufz (http://www.399d-23h-59m-59s.com/) which plays out in real time over 400 days regardless of the players actions. Grass Stains, a game by Nina Freeman, Aaron Freedman, Diego Garcia, and Amos Roddy(http://ninasays.so/grassstains/), is a take on playground soccer where the game does not denote sides, track score or set time limits. Both these games lack explicit objectives and demand deeper engagement from its players to find their own fun.

I thought about how I might make a similar work, that causes players to sit in a moment, and would be able to capture the new forms of play that might emerge. I was inspired by a previous APD work by Miles Colubriale that had participants navigate an exhibit as a piece of clay (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pAuvfnsQh8A). I felt the slow pace of movement really matched with what I was hoping for. I also felt it would be interesting to have players physically attached to the game, unable to remove their hand from this box till the timer ended.

The playground aesthetic with recess bell came last as a way to contextualise the experience. I knew I needed some kind of timer, and I felt it could be more interesting if it was obscured somewhat. This naturally led to the idea of the recess bell and the accompanying playground ambience.

METHOD

I created a small diorama of a playground using various craft supplies. I designed the space with various textures, shapes and novel objects to prompt various interactions. I then created a small soundscape with outdoor and playground noises to evoke the theme of a playground environment. The soundscape also includes a recess bell which indicates the start and end of a game.

Before the game starts, players are prompted to draw a small face on the back of their hand. When the first bell rings, that's the cue to the players to enter the small playground. Players must remain inside the playground, walking on their hand's index and pointer fingers, until the second bell rings indicating the game has ended. The game is designed to last a little longer than is comfortable in the hopes of capturing the new forms of play that might emerge.

RESPONSE

Video Showcase: https://youtu.be/oLwyRKVRuas
I created a video of Small Recess where I explain the rules and show footage of two people playing a full round of the game.

REFLECTION

I wanted to prove that play can be inspired when players are left sitting with nothing but time. I was hoping that instead of just standing around waiting for the experience to end, players would be driven to find new ways to keep themselves entertained. I feel the video captures this somewhat but it would have been better to have also captured footage of players interacting with the space with no timer, and to compare the difference in behaviour. I also worried that because the work had an emphasis on body and objects, the time element would be lost. That's when I added the soundscape which I felt tied everything together and brought the sense of time to the forefront.

PLAY AND OBJECTS

MAGI Link: http://magistudio.net/work/apd-play-and-objects-you-wear-what-you-eat
Youtube Video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s_rcx6MdLZU

CONTEXT

I was initially thinking about doing something in the vein of The Book Ritual with participants interacting with some kind of common object and creating new purpose and meaning. I spent a while brainstorming other objects that have this kind of significance and universality. I considered CDs, DVDs and clothing. Clothing fits quite nicely as it's easy to cut up and repurpose and has strong ties to how we express who we are. Two silly ideas came to mind, the first idea is just a simple roulette game where you roll dice to pair items of clothing with parts of the body. The second idea is You Wear What You Eat, where I'd hold onto any empty food packaging that I've produced during the course of a week then at the end of the week I'd fashion all the rubbish into a wearable garment. This plays on the idea that we often use our clothing as a way of expressing our identity. On the other hand, what could we learn about someone's personality based on the food they eat instead? So called Trashion is nothing new, gaining popularity around 2005 as a sub-genre of found object art (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lSRMtLfWYs8). However, instead of using trash purely for aesthetic value, I hope to spark conversation and discovery by wearing a part of your daily life.

METHOD

I saved and collected all the rubbish I produced from eating over the past week. At the end of the week I combined all the rubbish into a wearable garment. The hope is the garment might indicate certain things about my week or general lifestyle. I also took quick snippet videos of any

food I cooked or ate. This process in of itself made me more considerate of the waste I was producing and what food I ate said about me.

Footage of the food, rubbish and garment were then compiled into a video that showcases a new social game for conversation starters. The premise is that you and at least one other person agree on a time frame to collect your leftover food waste. When you reach the end of the time frame, you must each build a garment out of all your rubbish. You then meet for a social gathering and observe the different things you might learn about each other through your garments.

RESPONSE

Video Showcase: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s_rcx6MdLZU
This video showcases the rubbish I collected over the week and the resulting garment I created. I also explain the rules of You Wear What You Eat with a little montage of the kind of journey it might evoke.

REFLECTION

Although I did not love building a pile of rubbish in the corner of my room, I found this project quite lovely. I have found that a lot of people comment on the amount of rubbish but this has not been the sticking point for me personally. It has been so interesting to see how the various pieces of rubbish might come together to tell a story about my past week. The idea to turn the project into a social game came right at the end when I thought it'd be exciting to try to imagine someone's week through what they were wearing.

PLAY AND PLACE

MAGI Link: http://magistudio.net/work/apd-play-and-place-snap-discs
Youtube Video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yvuIj3DcFg8

CONTEXT

I have often used a city's architecture/layout as an analogy to describe the distinction between the formalised aesthetics of play versus the radical plasticity of real play. Cities will typically have formal play spaces such as skateparks, playgrounds, ovals etc. These formal play spaces, if left unchallenged, begin to define and indeed shrink our vocabulary of play to their formalised aesthetics. That is to say, we start to feel that the only ways to play are to; swing on swings, slide on slides, walk in parks, skate on ramps. Or how Margie Sanderson (2020) puts it *"the creation of these designated play spaces has inadvertently reduced tolerance for informal play outside these boundaries"*. This is ridiculous of course as there are quite literally infinite ways we can play, and in whatever spaces we like. It is difficult then to design spaces for play without your project falling into formalised aesthetics of play.

When I was playing Helen and Chad's Rainbow Paths in front of the State Library Victoria, one of the nodes instructed me to close my eyes and listen in on the city around me. One of the first

things I noticed was how many people there were on their skateboards, and that I was standing there with my eyes closed in their way. I thought it was interesting that this formalised, playful installation was intruding on these skaters' informal rituals of play. I wondered if it'd be possible to design an object like a skateboard, that could be used in an informal way around various parts of the city. How could I design something that encourages people to reinterpret their surroundings, but that's also more accessible (read: less dangerous) than a skateboard for most people.

I am inspired by Flip the City by Quentin Stevens and Reality Headset by Stefan Hunt and Ruby Mathers. These works use basic cut out objects as lenses to reinterpret and play with the environment around you. One idea I have is a monster capture game. Players are given a disc with a hole in the centre, and are tasked to capture certain objects in the disc. To capture something, the player must simply line up the object so they can see the full thing through the hole in the disc. The player must then clap their hands together to trigger the capture, meaning they must first throw the ring into the air to free their hands. I think this might work best as a competitive multiplayer game, with players racing to be the first to capture all the objects on a list. I think the competitive element might make players lose themselves in the experience and move through and observe the place around them in a new way.

METHOD

I created a new toy that is designed to be played in public spaces. The toy is created from a frisbee with a hole cut into the centre. There are also several stickers along the rims on both sides detailing how to use the ring. The game can be played solo, however, it is best played with 2 or more players competing for the best time.

Instructions:
- Note the list of things to find on the inside rim of the disc
- Search for these things, looking through the hole in the ring like a lens
- When you find a thing, you must "capture" it
- To capture a thing, first toss the ring into the air to free your hands
- With the thing still in sight through the ring, clap your hands to "capture" it
- Compete with friends or make up your own rules
- When you're done playing, throw the ring off in a random direction to be discovered by the next person (and in a new space).

This game is designed to be played in any public space, suddenly transforming a space into something that is played with. Tossing the ring when you are finished playing allows the game to organically perpetuate through various public spaces. The shape and colour make the toy discoverable and alluring.

RESPONSE

Introducing the Snap Disc, a new toy designed to be played in social spaces. Self-contained, alluring and spreadable. Snap Discs contain instructions for how to play along their edges.

1. How to play!
2. Look for the things
3. When you find one
4. Free your hands
5. Keep the thing in sight
6. CLAP and clap your hands to capture!
7. 1st to capture all objects wins! Now make your own rules
8. When your done playing... Yeet the disc into the sun

Something fluffy
Something in motion
Something down low
Something broken
A hidden face
Something up high
Something cute
Someone watching

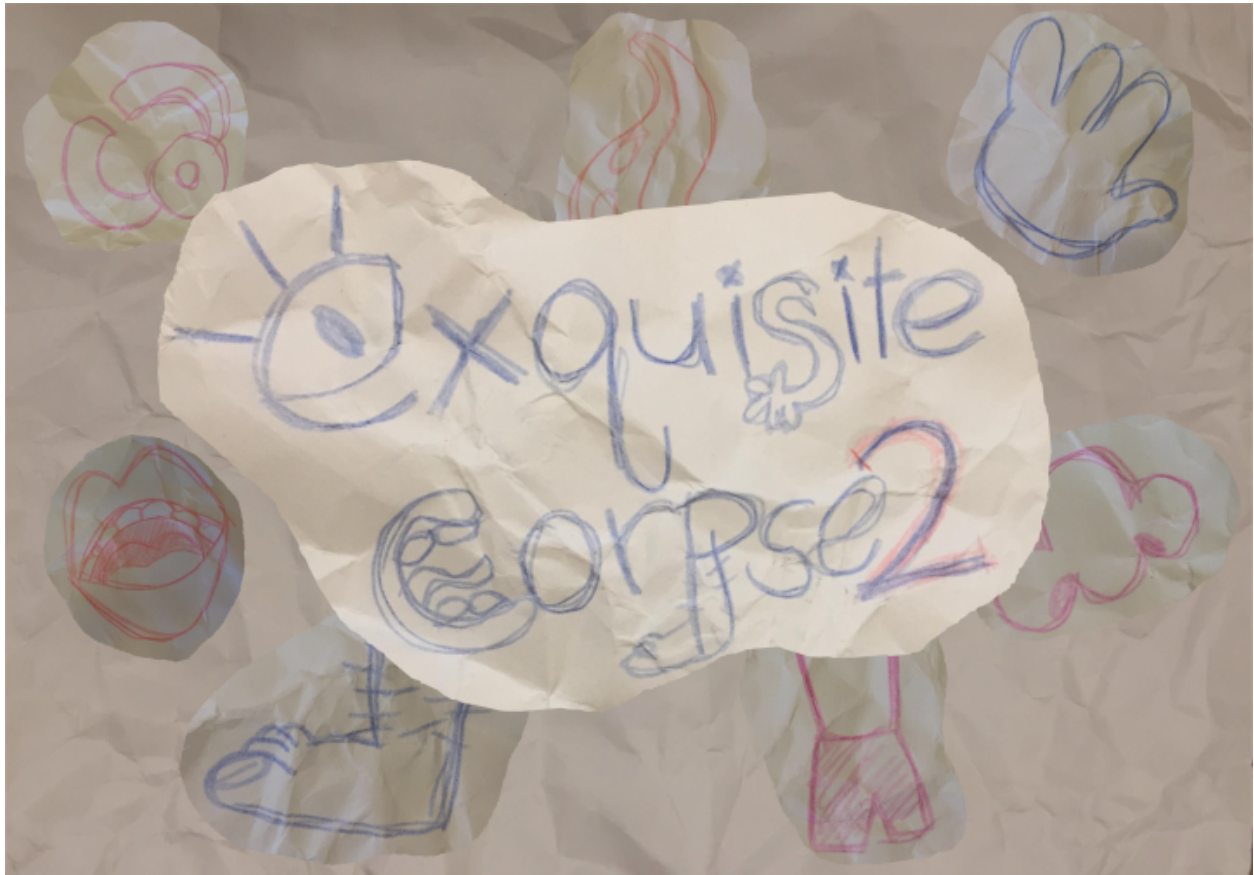*Video Showcase:* https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yvuIj3DcFg8

REFLECTION

With this project I set out to create Skateboard 2.0. Like a skateboard, I wanted to create an object or toy that was alluring and could be used to transform any space into a place of play. An object with wheels may be too dangerous, so I thought about how to capture the same transformative power into an object that was more approachable.

One thing that I feel isn't very strong with this work is the actual game played with the discs. The procedure you need to follow isn't very intuitive and there is little opportunity to imbue the instructions with narrative metaphors to help describe your actions. I can see this being a point of issue as the disc is otherwise a self-contained experience. On the plus side, the alluring colour and shape of the discs is a really strong element that improves their discoverability and helps encourage engagement. Additionally, the affordance of the discs to be thrown leads to a beautiful cycle of organic sharing and spreading across a city.

As of writing this I also haven't had the chance to play Snap Discs with other people and see how they respond to the instructions and games. One thing that I did notice with my own playing was that when focused on the task of "capturing" things, you are less likely to regulate the volume of your claps. I think this is a great element that pairs with these colourful objects being tossed into the air. You can imagine stumbling upon a group of people playing, first following the sound of irregular claps then seeing the colourful discs. I feel this is another element of discoverability and organic spreading Snap Discs affords. Even if people don't engage with the discs directly, witnessing others play and picturing the kind of game they might be playing is part of opening all spaces to play.

PLAY AND FORCES

MAGI Link: http://magistudio.net/work/apd-play-and-forces-exquisite-corpse-2
Youtube Video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ExlZ8n1ALP0

CONTEXT

This week I thought about the differences of affordances between digital games/interfaces and non-digital forms of play. I find it interesting that work will be given greater validity if it incorporates technology even if the ultimate outcome would be the same without it. As an example, think about singing or dancing games that track your voice and dance movements respectively. Ultimately, whether or not the game properly tracks the player shouldn't matter as it has had the desired result of getting them to sing or dance. However, seemingly if the technology was not present the game would lose all validity and people would be less enticed to engage. In a sense, this affordance we grant technology is a force that alters our engagement with a game. " *Despite the fact that the physical attributes of digital media are never quite digital and the possibilities for play are practically infinite, the desire for a definitive outcome, score, or measurement will structure the play"* (LeMiuex & Boluk 2017)

From here I wondered if you could create a game that transfers the validity of understood rules in a digital space into a fuzzier informal structure in a non-digital interaction. I hope by creating this close relationship between a digital and a non-digital interface that this affordance of validity

may be questioned. I am inspired by works in the interactive theatre space that use actors and improvisation as a sort of fuzzy logic within a game-like structure.

METHOD

Introducing the long awaited sequel… Exquisite Corpse 2. The main gimmick of this work is the relationship between the digital game and a live painter. The game is projected on a wall with three panels separating the head, body and legs of our soon to be creation. The first panel flicks on as a timer counts down. Two players control various body parts (eye, nose, mouth etc) as they jump around the panel collecting pellets and transforming into different body parts. While this is occurring, it is the painter's job to fill out the rest of the details by painting over the projection of the game. The painter will have to try to anticipate and incorporate the ever changing positions and shapes of the digital body parts. When the timer countdown reaches zero, the current panel will flick off and the next panel will flick on and the above process is repeated until all panels have been completed. When the game has ended, all the panels will flick on at once revealing your creature along with the body parts placed by the players in the digital game, now animated with winks and hand waves.

I drew all the art assets by hand on paper, then crumpled the images before taking photos and importing them into Unity. This was a primarily aesthetic decision, however, it fits the theme of transferring forces between the digital and non-digital.
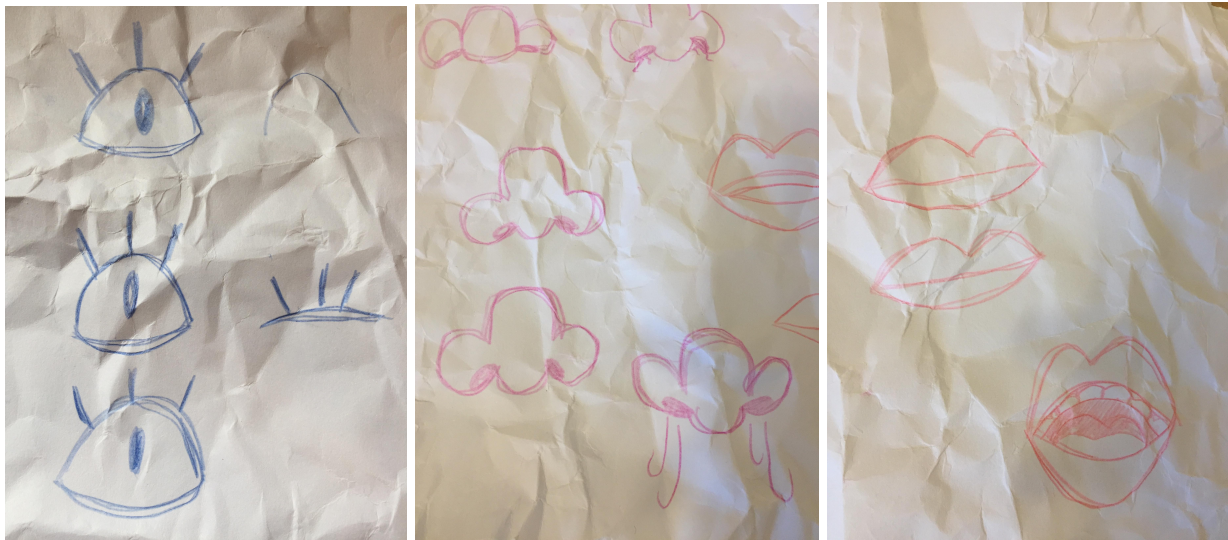
RESPONSE

Introducing the long awaited sequel to Exquisite Corpse, this is Exquisite Corpse 2. This game mixes digital elements with live painting to create animated murals through a collaboration between the artist and the players.
It took 97 years, but the sequel is finally here!
Video Showcase: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ExlZ8n1ALP0

REFLECTION

Interestingly, Exquisite Corpse 2 doesn't have a shared goal between the painter and players. The players are competing to collect more pellets than their opponent, seemingly indifferent to the struggles of the painter. The painter similarly has no reason to take interest in who has collected the most pellets. Despite this, there still seems to be some kind of relationship between the participants and shared ownership over the resulting creature.

In general, I am interested in exploring this area a bit more. Currently, the force transfers from the digital to the painter. I wonder if it were somehow possible, outside of technological means, to afford the painter some influence over the digital space.

Ideally this work would be played in public spaces, creating animated murals as a collaboration between the artist and the community.

OVERALL REFLECTION

I am going to open with a quote by MAGI illumni Helen Kwok who put it so succinctly.

"Advanced Play Design has been such a "gift" in my eyes. What other course will allow you to be this playful?"

No truer words have been spoken. I came into each week blind and really gave myself the time to reflect deeply on the theme. I found that I'd often have particular directions I was already interested in. Throw away thoughts that came rushing back as I sat with the theme for a while. This would lead to responses that were very satisfying to realise while being completely varied week to week. I am no stranger to play, it is why I first took interest in game design, but over the years it has become increasingly apparent how overarching and all encompassing play is.

"Knowing this, what should we do so that the radical plasticity of play does not simply align with the spirit of capitalism?"

what should we do with our games by Stephanie Boluk and Patrick LeMieux

I feel this quote helps situate my practice as a concerted effort to expand the definition of play. One that moves away from formalised notions of play and its associated technologies. This is an observable trend in my responses that use technology sparingly and always situates the play on the participant. I have also made a concerted effort to deliver my concepts in a tone befitting of the work. This should showcase to my peers that my practice in play is not limited to my response but also exists in the making, sharing, watching, thinking and talking surrounding the work. If ultimately my hope is to contribute to the cultivation of a more playful society, it is important to me that I lead by example. It is not enough to just make playful works, they need to be made in a manner that embodies play itself. To me that means creating work that is loving

and compassionate, looking for any and all opportunities to create moments of joy that can be shared with peers.

Having a background in game design/video games I have a strong connection to traditional games and video game technology. This is why I am so drawn to the theory of metagames, from Stephanie Boluk and Patrick LeMiuex, as they have the power to *"transform video games from a mass medium and cultural commodity into instruments, equipment, tools, and toys for playing, competing, spectating, cheating, trading, making, breaking, and ultimately intervening in the sensory and political economies of those technologies responsible for the privatisation of play".* Some artists may want to distance themselves from games and broadly define their work as interactivity or digital art. However, I feel this perpetuates the notion of boundaries around play. For my work, I hope to embrace the frivolousness of games and contend that they are simultaneously all encompassing and trifle. Rubrics to capture the importance of play can often fall to capitalistic instincts of maximising efficiency and performance. I take play very seriously but I also don't take it seriously at all.