Annie Huang

VIS 160A

One of the inspirations for my work is Myron Krueger's Videoplace. Krueger's work emphasizes human computer interaction, often exploring the concept of interactivity as a medium for his works rather than producing artworks that happened to have interactive elements. He states that " the computer's most unique feature [is] its ability to respond in real-time. It could be argued that computer art which ignores responsiveness is using the computer only for visual design automation, rather than as the basis for a new medium"(Krueger 145 https://muse.jhu.edu/article/601392/pdf). Although I don't think that this statement necessarily applies to modern computer art, I am still fascinated by works that require real-time viewer participation in order to function.

With my project, I wanted to create a work that would serve more as an experience that the viewer is able to participate in, rather than a work that the viewer observes from afar. My original idea for the project was somewhat similar to Videoplace by Krueger, with an emphasis on communication between people, but through the medium of a computer. My idea has since changed, and does not resemble Videoplace as closely, but I still value his overall insights on the significance of interactivity in computer arts. As someone who has mostly worked with traditional fine arts media such as drawing and painting, I love computer art pieces that involve interactivity and works that change in response to viewer participation. I would like to lean into this aspect of

computer art, and take advantage of the medium I am working with rather than trying to work against it.

I think that studying Myron Krueger's works will be very valuable for me, as he had a similar approach and thought process behind his works, which may give me some guidance on the most effective ways to communicate and work with the computer arts medium. However, at the same time, I want to remember that although Krueger is a major figure in computer art history who has made many significant works, some of his ideas are outdated and no longer apply to the current state of computer arts. There have been many developments in artificial intelligence and computer science that have greatly expanded the scope of computer art since Videoplace was first made. The role of computers in art is no longer so restricted, and there are many more possibilities for different implementations of computer art, which may or may not include interaction. I want to keep this in mind whilst studying Krueger's work so that I am still open to other directions for my work which may not align perfectly with Krueger's values, but may help me convey my intended message more effectively.

Behnaz Farahi is another artist that I find inspiring, and I am especially drawn to the works Can the Subaltern Speak? and Caress of the Gaze. I like how both works are intersections of computer arts and fashion, which allows the pieces to be worn. I feel this gives the wearer an extra sense of intimacy and connection with the piece itself, and makes the message behind the pieces stronger. I wanted my piece to have a similar sense of connection between the participant and my work, so I feel that analyzing aspects of Farahi's work that I am drawn to will help strengthen my own work.

Can the Subaltern Speak? is similar to my project in many ways, so I think studying the work in more depth will definitely be beneficial to the final execution of my project.

When I originally learned about this work, I loved the concept of utilizing a secret language as a way to empower those without voices. I think that using morse code and AI generated computer language as the inspiration for this piece works well, and the incorporation of eyes blinking as symbolism adds to the overall message. I was most interested in the AI generated morse code that the computers used to 'speak' to each other, which was incomprehensible to humans. The original concept for my project, which was two people communicating through visuals on a computer screen, was very similar to this piece. I did not originally have Farahi's work in mind while outlining my project, but I think that Farahi's work and the emphasis she places on there being power in what we cannot understand is a valuable source of guidance for the direction of my project.

I was unsure about the initial design of my project, as I didn't think that the visual language generated through my project would be powerful or complex enough for people to actually understand each other or converse through it. However, Farahi's work has inspired me to think about whether my project actually needs to be fully comprehensible, or if there is a certain appeal or even advantage to having participants not being able to fully understand the language being used to communicate within the project.

Another artist that has worked with AI generated languages before is Weidi Zhang. She often explores topics related to the role of computers in society, such as the relationship between humans and computers. In the work Cangjie's Poetry, Zhang

explores what would happen if computers were able to develop their own language and communicate with humans. In this work, a trained neural network generates original Chinese characters based on images that the computer sees. The computer also generates descriptions of its surroundings that give meaning to the generated characters. Zhang's work is very much focused on human computer interaction through the perspective of the computer, and is a valuable speculation on one way that computers may interpret the world around us. I am fascinated by this topic, and want to attempt to explore this topic in my own work as well.

One of the major considerations I have for my project is the way humans can interpret and understand computer generated images, and how different ideas and emotions can either be communicated effectively to the viewer or be lost in translation. Although I don't think that my work will require a direct translation between computer and human in order for my work to be effective, I think that considering how people may interpret human-computer interactions or different perspectives on AI communication will still be valuable for me.

Because we are currently experiencing very rapid improvements in AI technology and capabilities, especially regarding the concept of AI generated artwork, I am somewhat worried about how a project involving AI and emotions will be received. Zhang's work in human-computer interaction and generative language is very thought provoking for me, and I believe that studying not only the artwork itself, but the critical reception of the work, will be beneficial to my own practice as well. Cangjie's Poetry was described as "not only a conceptual response to the tension and fragility in the coexistence of humans and machines but also an artistic expression of a future

language that reflects on ancient truths, a way to evoke enchantment in this era of artificial intelligence"(Zhang 198 https://dl.acm.org/doi/pdf/10.1145/3465619). I would like to lean into this concept with my work, experimenting with different ways that AI can be utilized and molded into something that is able to coexist with and benefit humans, rather than something that is perceived as a threat. The place of AI in society is currently uncertain, but I personally do not think that the use of AI technology will diminish anytime soon. I want to learn to incorporate AI technology into my own practice, working with it to create artworks instead of against it (I still believe that AI technology needs to be regulated much more strictly, especially regarding creative property and using copyrighted works to train AI etc).

Articles referenced:

Myron Krueger

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Behnaz Farahi

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