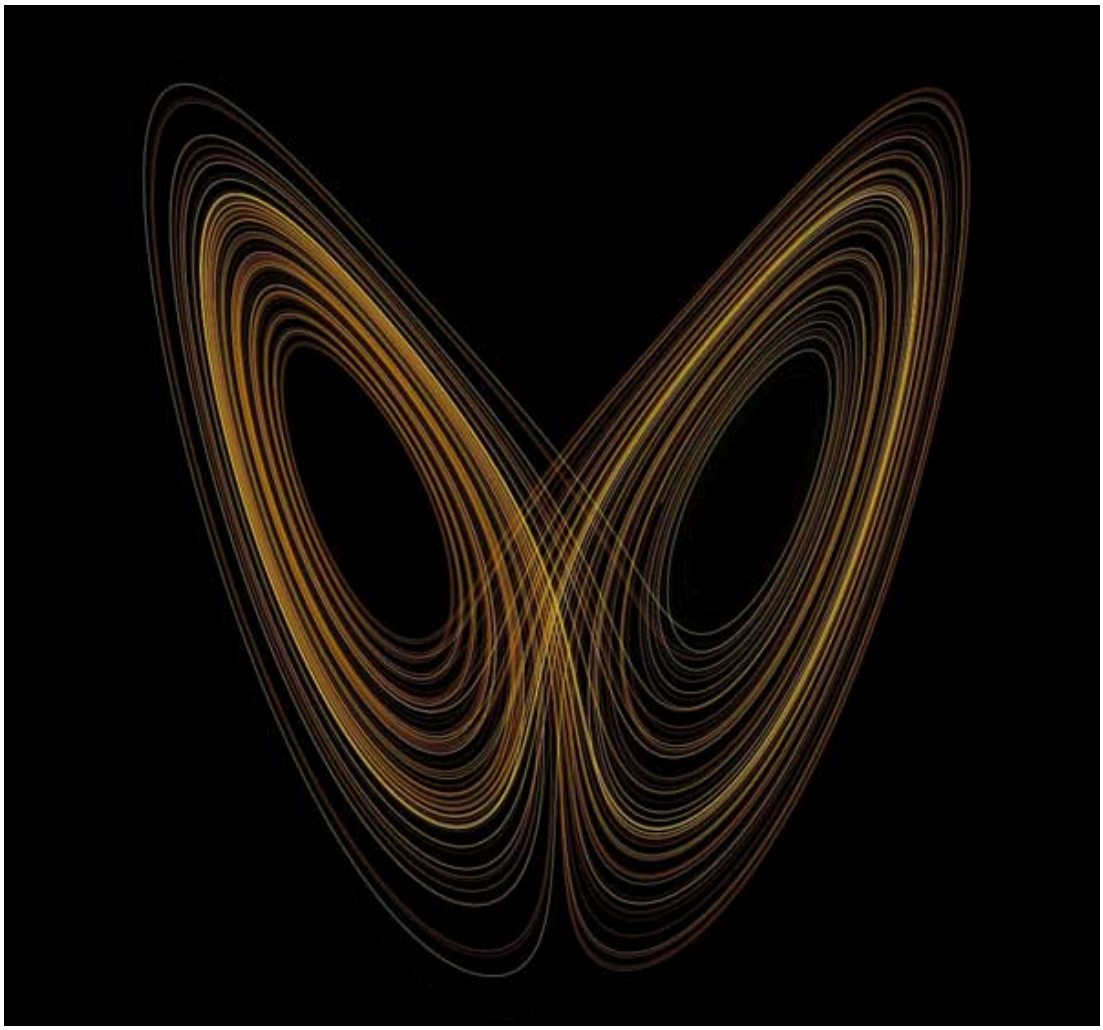
# The Butterfly Effect: Voting

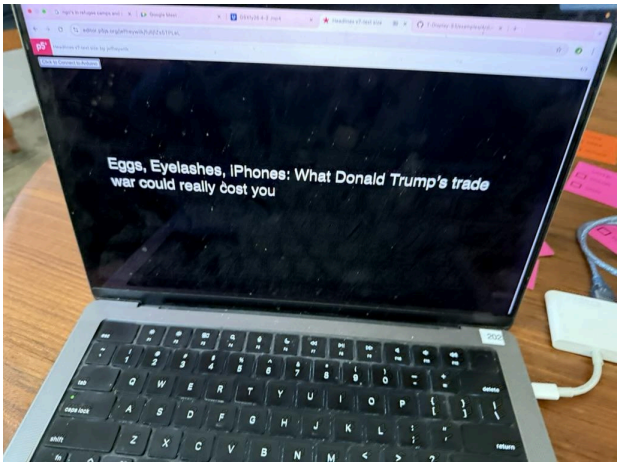
*By Jeffrey Wilk*

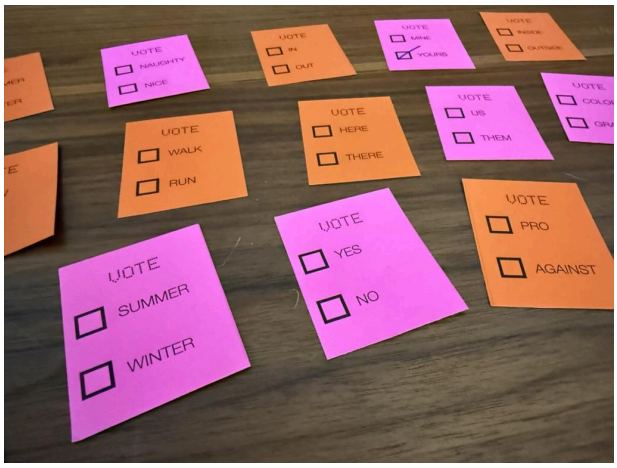


A vote is a gesture that tips the world. Small, sharp, unnoticed—until the storm hits. Call it chaos, call it choice.

_____*ChatGPT*

# Showcase / Description of Finished Piece



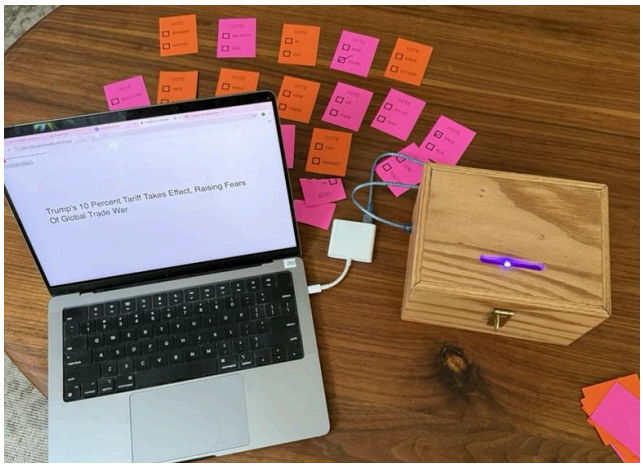



Voting can feel futile.

This piece is intended to directly connect the gesture of voting with the potential to influence events, even if your effort seems insignificant.

On screen, appearing in sequence, are real-time headlines from the news wires, filtered by keywords: Trump, Musk, Deportation, DOGE, Congress, tariffs: intended to show the worst of the consequences of an apathetic voter pool. Ballots are available that give simple choices: yes/no, us/them, shallow/deep, now/later. Take a ballot, slide it into the glowing slot of the ballot box, and the headline on screen shatters. The march of bad news continues, but for a moment, your views were noticed.

[Full Video: Link to Youtube Video]

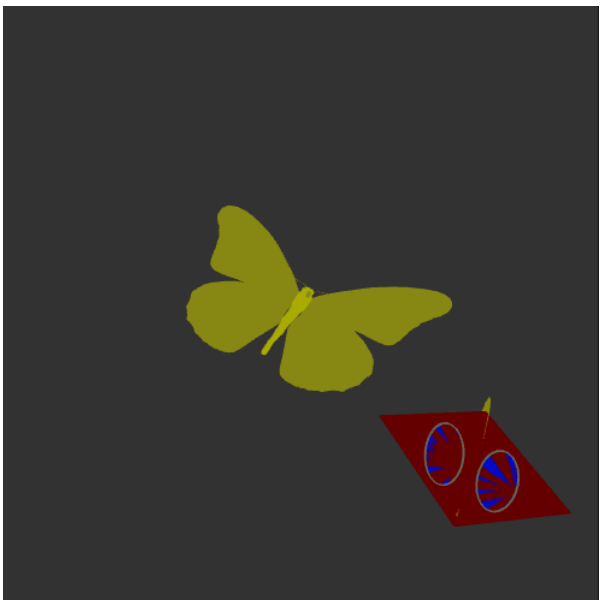


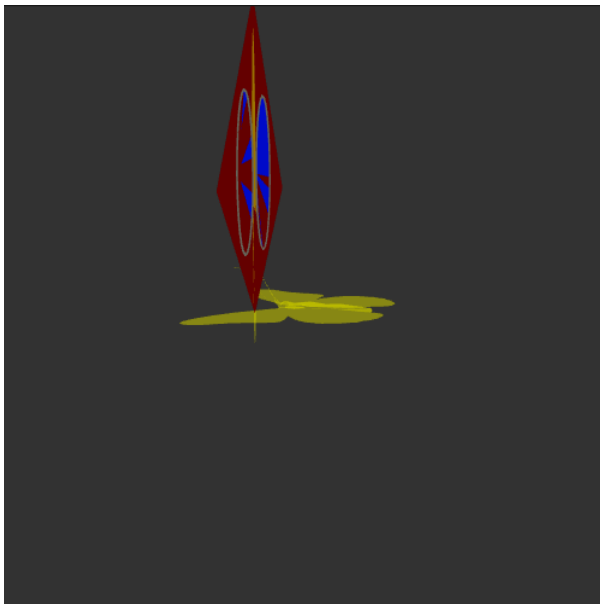
# Process





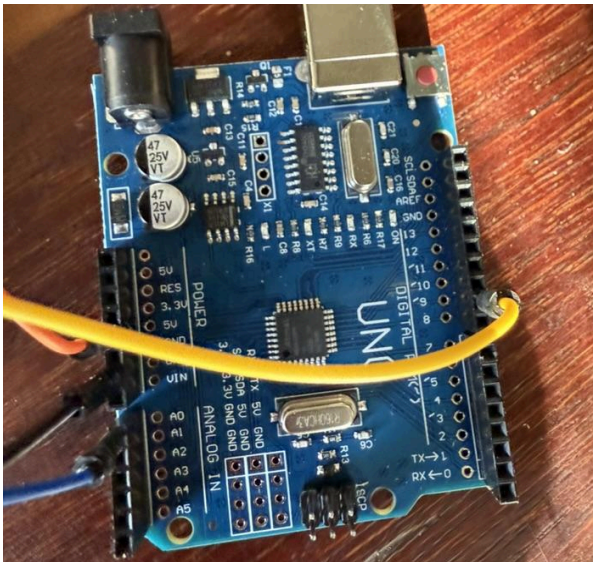
**Ideation/Design Process:**
I've been really hung up on butterflies recently. I originally was going to create a VR world of fluttering butterflies: as you swept your hand through the air, the wings would flutter. The idea was inspired by artist Dominic Harris. I researched p5.JS code for interactive code for programming an Oculus Quest. I spent a slightly nauseating afternoon with a Quest on my head.

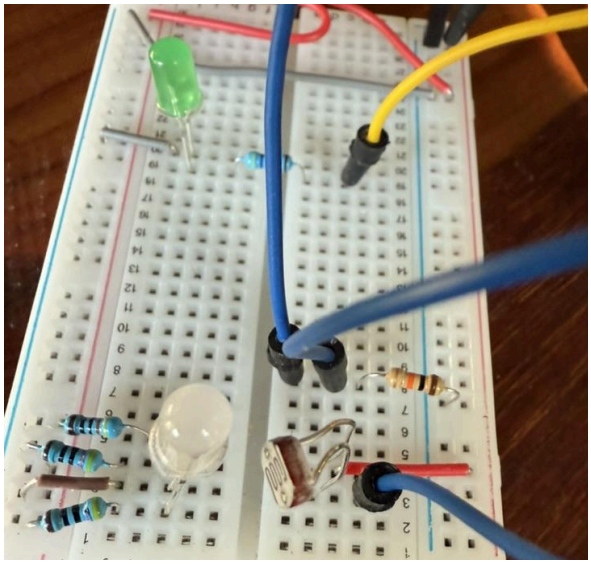


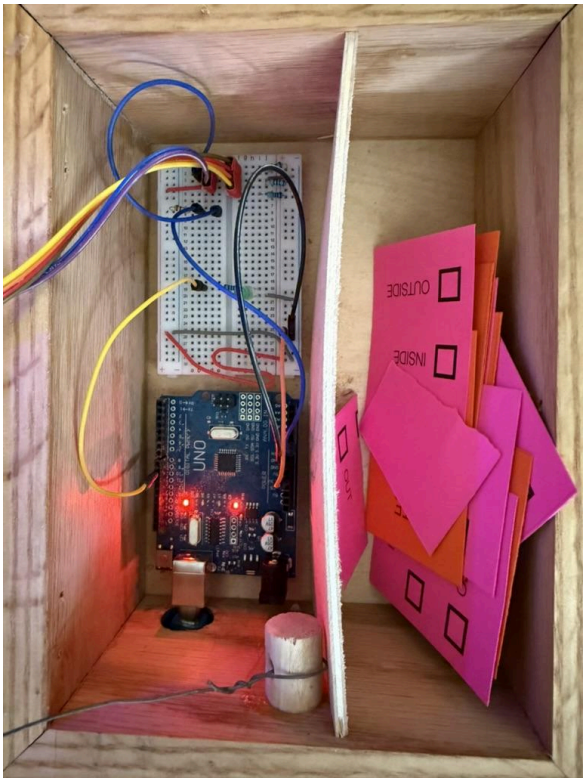


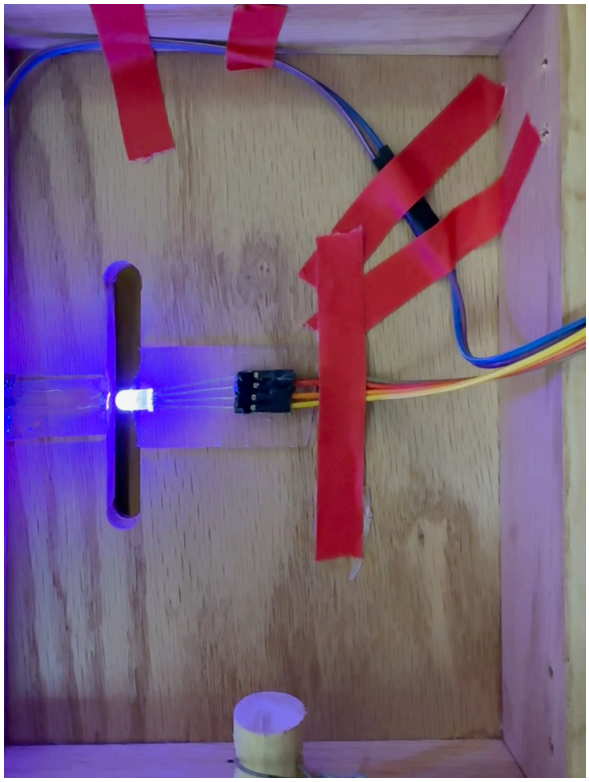
**Iterations:**
I found some preconstructed 3d butterfly objects and imported them into the p5 canvas, and built my own as well. Played around with the movement in simulated space, but discovered the learning curve was going to be too high to create anything meaningful, so….







**Redirection:**
I wanted more meaning, and connected with the idea of finding headlines and blowing them up. Too aggressive, but then the thought of butterflies came back, and I connected the story of the butterfly effect, voting, and today's political environment. The rest was design, editing, and building. I wanted the voting box to be the centerpiece, and resonate with a bit of gravitas. The ballots were intended to be non-confrontational, but reflective of choice.

## Conclusion / Reflection

Sometimes simpler is better.  This project went from grand VR worlds, to a simple gesture that actively engaged the viewer to make a choice and influence an event.  Did it change any minds, unlikely.  But maybe it planted a seed.

That's what the butterfly effect means to me.  Just do something, it might have an impact eventually.

# Links

| | |
|---|---|
| Code | https://drive.google.com/file/d/17LPs052Gu6Zq2S0h44LbVUB0lgA1XiIG/view?usp=drive_link |
| Final video | https://drive.google.com/file/d/1RBJX_myHoFnAs2YFGA7bn8o16fX9KrgD/view?usp=drive_link |

# Sources

| | |
|---|---|
| p5.js | https://editor.p5js.org/jeffreywilk/sketches/lZs5TPLeL |
| p5.js User Group: 3D reference | |