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Artists Lab IV
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Task 2

Interactive Art 2

In Yunchul Kim's *Altitude*, a tumbling array of blue light text bubbles and pulsates upwards like a fountain, each character existing in place on a line as it would in a standard text editor. With time the characters take shape into what appears to be plant-like shapes, stemming upward and growing away from the ground. The structures formed grow upwards towards the roof of their canvas before eventually crumbling down in a fashion that to me mimics crashing waves. All while sporadic computational sounds play loudly in the background. The structures that are formed appear to be pre-determined based on the symmetry and order that they grow from, but for all I know, they could have been formed algorithmically. Presented one year later in 2004, Seiko Mikami's *Gravicells* work presents an early version of what would later become a common style of interactive art, which is to say shifting visual components that are directed by a sensor-laced floor. In *Gravicells* lines of lights and graphical shapes bend around viewers who interact with the floor, as the piece is programmed to shift light around the areas where bodies are present. I find that the individual is addressed in this performance in the sense that they're excluded or included in the forms and shapes produced by the lights. The visuals on the floor actively shape themselves to reflect the individual in a way that's meant to acknowledge them.

N-Chant by David Rokeby is probably one of the more disturbing interactive artworks I've seen. In this piece, a series of hanging computers are equipped with sensitive microphones and a code-based software that forms free-associating speech. As the computers attempt to synchronize with each other as a group, if they succeed they will each chant as a group, pause, and then continue to speak in unison. If the microphones detect an external noise they become interrupted and have to begin trying to sync up to each other again. This deeply eerie synchronized speech is a great

simile for the unified chanting in a church as witnessed by Rokeby while watching his father's church sermons. I find that the piece acknowledges the individual in its silence that it produces after hearing one's voice. A great metaphor for the interruption of unity by contrasting beliefs. I feel like the piece is meant to isolate the viewer to induce the feeling of being an outcast, as whatever thoughts or opinions the viewer expresses out loud cause the community of computers to silence themselves, evoking isolation.

Seiko Mikami's *Desire of Codes* is a deeply disturbing piece built from a large array of cameras affixed to white lights. What makes *Desire of Codes* so disturbing is how each camera stays perfectly trained on the user as they walk past it, perpetually shining a bright light in their face and never losing sight of them. This code-based mechanism seems relatively simple but makes me feel uneasy in its persistence to continuously follow. The individual is directly addressed while viewing the piece as it's meant to invoke a sense of provocation and discomfort. I believe it's a statement piece regarding the normalized surveillance of humans through the abundance of surveillance cameras that have been installed throughout large metropolitan cities in recent years. The bright light affixed to each camera also reminds me of the blinding light of a paparazzi camera flash, perhaps a further statement on the loss of privacy in recent years.

Al Hansen and Ben Rubin's *Listening Post* is a very endearing piece. "I am" is the start of the most self-defining sentences. The piece works by pulling text from sentences from unrestricted chatrooms that start with the phrase "I am" and play them in a robotic text to speech voice. While watching it in action I felt connected as the pieces' voice read "I am in Eastern Canada" and "I am in Ontario", as I was born in Ontario and grew up in Eastern Canada. *Listening Post* works to personify chat room users by speaking their words out loud, perhaps letting these sentences be heard in the way that they were meant to be heard, rather than being read. The piece samples a small subsection of society and projects its self-declarations, making individuals heard when they state who, what, where, and why they are. *Listening Post* makes me happy because its intentions feel wholesome.

I find that software influences my self-perception in a not so unique way. I find that my most common everyday interaction with software is in viewing what gets algorithmically fed to me through my Instagram feed. As the Instagram feed is meant to keep me engaged with itself, it spoon-feeds me visually-induced dopamine to spark my curiosity, excitement, and hunger. In theory, this would be all fine and healthy, but it's the ulterior motive behind the feed that eats away at me. Instagram wants me to consume. Instagram wants me to purchase certain foods and certain clothing's almost as if its algorithm is designed to present me images that will make me feel inferior. This is one of the many reasons that I aim to distance myself from algorithms like this and try to distinctly seek out content on the internet that I know is healthy for me instead.