INTERCEPT

EDUCATION RESOURCE

2017

RANDOM BLENDS
References:
Edward Casey, The Fate of Place: A Philosophical History (California, University of California 1996)

**About this Education Resource**
This education resource, in conjunction with the Interceptions catalogue, is designed to provide background and context for exploring the exhibition.

The **Discuss and Create** sections provide a starting point for idea generation, and suggest classroom activities to be used before, during and after exploring the Interceptions exhibition. This education resource is primarily for primary and secondary school children.

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**EDUCATION RESOURCE**

**Foreword**

by the Head of Random Blends, Dr. Marcia Nancy Mauro-Flude

Welcome to the 2017 Random Blends event – the annual Department of Communications and New Media (CNM), National University Singapore showcase. This year the theme, **Interceptions**, is a creative forum for radical thinking about the dynamic role new media and communication play in the world today, where digital art and culture fuses with community networks. Designed by the works of students, alumni and faculty members from CNM, the showcase examines the ingenious ways practice-based interceions have social impact. Interceptions arises from an understanding of how provocative questions, communicated by the critical use of networks, can be raised by play and novel modes of social engagement. Featuring poetry, critical game art, augmented reality performance, data as an artistic medium, sequencing of bacteria, biologically inspired salon simulations, site specific transmissions, networked art forms, and social media activism.

This event is also practiced based creative arts research for our CNM students, whom at the end of their undergraduate phase are able to galvanise the importance of collaboration and learning how to work together to compose something that is greater than what their individual efforts produce. As a study module, it is formally titled "Interactive Media Design Capstone Project", which examines the nexus between art, design and technological innovation. The focus on curation and cultural leadership also gives reference to historical examples of artists and critics who were engaged with new technologies and social change in earlier times. Art distract and art is received in distraction, but we must perform ‘new tasks of apperception’ wrote Walter Benjamin (1936–9: p. 269) these undertakings demonstrate in the showcase. It should be noted that the term apperception is used within this discourse to refer to the self-awareness of the perceiving subject, in distinction from the object-orientated process of perception. Meanwhile the convergence of materials and mediums - the training ground of distracted reception has migrated from painting to cinema to television and again to the multitudinous sites and social functions of computational media. The Internet carries in its wake, an ambient networked transglobal awareness simultaneously present in our embodied locale. Consequently, the showcase produces a renewed and new historical interest in refreshing parleys of apperception held up for reappraisal. Great works of communication, in the broadest sense are artworks that demonstrate the power of a message to build thoughtful dialogue in ways that are inviting of cultural difference often even when implied rules and protocols proliferate. The CNM Head of Department, Professor Mohan Dutta made mention that the world of communication is messy, complex, full of uncertainties. That we showcase Random Blends is a testimony, illuminating the soul and value of collective and sociocentric thinking, not only within the CNM, but also in collaboration with our external mentors, Tracey Hamilton, Dr Alexander König, Nick Smithies and the curation team at NUS Museum who have all generously and steadfastly given guidance and professional advice. And last but not least, especially the staff at ArtScience Museum whom have placed trust in our emergent chaotic processes towards the realisation of the showcase. On behalf of CNM I would also like to thank them.

Dr Marcia Nancy Mauro-Flude
THE FIRST STEPS OF A PROGRAMMER

Description:
‘The First Steps of a Programmer’ showcases the game creation process from the point-of-view of a novice programmer, detailing the evolution of an idea to the final playable prototype of a classic Shoot ‘Em Up game. It invites viewers to have a peek into the thought processes of a budding programmer as he explores his creative boundaries and challenges his personal capabilities. Through this showcase, the artist hopes to inspire others who have been apprehensive at trying out programming, viewing it as something complicated that only the stereotypical computer nerd or geek could be proficient at. The artwork serves as proof that programming is in fact something that anyone can pick up in a matter of weeks, and with it, the possibilities of creation are endless.

Background:
Brandon is a Year 3 NUS student pursuing a double degree in Communications and New Media (CNM) and Business Administration. Since young, he has always been interested in gaming, but the thought of becoming a game designer barely crossed his mind as he once had the impression that programming was tough and hence developing a game of his own seemed out of reach. It was not until he took up the module Computational Media Literacy that he was given the opportunity to try his hand at programming, which in the process, removed his previous stereotype and rekindled his passion for games. Having finally decided on his career path, Brandon recently made the leap of faith to change his home faculty from Business to FASS in order to better pursue his interest in game and interaction design under the Interactive Media Design branch in CNM.

Discuss:

Ages 6-12
How did you feel while playing the game?
If you could ask the artist a question about any part of this game, what would it be?

Ages 13-16
How did you feel moving through the 4 stages of development?
Compare and contrast the 4 stages of development in the game, considering subject matter, art elements, and style.
Pick partners and discuss what the artist had to do to create this work. What challenges do you think the artist encountered while creating it?
How do you think seeing things from another perspective is important in the way you perceive social issues in Singapore?

Create:
Experiment with coding or Snap https://snap.berkeley.edu/ Design your own game based on your imagination.
Description:
Nager syndrome, profound deafness, and other physical challenges are only a fraction of the many difficulties faced by Isabelle in her daily life. This short documentary surrounds the life of Isabelle and the special needs community in Singapore. What is wonderful about Isabelle is that she does not let her disabilities stop her from living life fully. In fact, she shows us that beyond their labels, people with physical disabilities are abled people with talent, and their capabilities should never be limited by prejudice.

Background:
This inspiring documentary video is created by Leong Jia Yu, Lee Ken Kiat, Janeen Loh, Janell Tan, and Christine anne de Silva. They created the video with the aim of challenging societal stereotypes and prejudice against people with special needs. Isabelle inspired them to have a new worldview and they hope that the community would likewise be able to see the resoluteness in Isabelle’s endearing yet resilient personality.

Discuss:

Ages 6-12
What is the mood of this video?
Are there people in Singapore who are often overlooked? Who are some of them?
How can we be inclusive to everyone in Singapore?
Share and discuss some activities that you enjoy with your family and friends in your community.

Ages 13-16
How has this video changed your attitude about other communities in society?
How can you help to improve communication and understanding among the communities you interact with?
What did you learn from Isabelle? Share your thoughts with a friend.

Create:
What is the Singapore you want to see in the future? Have you ever thought of how your ideal Singapore will look like? Draw an image of your ideal world.
Description:
In this game, players take the role of explorers in the uncultivated lands of the flat Earth, who race against time to uncover the most valuable artifacts around the world. There are two characters to choose from - Hong Dayu, a farmer who stumbles upon this map of the flat Earth and embarks on a journey of uncovering artifacts in hopes of breaking out of the cycle of poverty, and Amelia, an aristocrat who is on a mission to discover fame and fortune. Both players have the same goal: to uncover the most valuable artifacts in the middle of the flat earth. Pick your battles wisely and good luck!

Background:
Created by a team of current and alumni Communications and New Media (CNM) majors, Keith Chia (Game Designer), Leonard Chow (Producer), Samuel Cho (Art direction), and Sharmaine Sie (Game tester), the gameplay of Campester integrates both thematic and narrative concepts. The final boardgame was done after multiple mockups and extensive iterations to obtain a high-fidelity game prototype. Keith ensured that the gameplay implementation introduced elements of player symmetry, risk and chance, and gameplay balance through several rounds of experimentation, playtesting and prototyping. Leonard worked on the project documentation and the map art, valiantly trying to make it as pretty as the art on the game’s cards. Samuel Cho was in charge of the overall design direction and quality of each component of the game from print to assembly. Sharmaine Sie worked on producing playtesting reports and generating insights to shape Campester into the board game that one sees today.

Discuss:
Ages 6-12
How would you describe these characters? Can you relate to them?
Describe what you see. What do you notice first? Now, think about what you don’t see. What are they?

Ages 13-16
Which character did you choose to be in this game? How does it feel to chase after gold as a farmer (Hong Dayu) versus an aristocrat (Amelia)?
Take 30 seconds to observe the boardgame. How do various elements of the design you observed add meaning to the game?
How can you contribute in helping Singapore citizens who are stuck in poverty?

Create:
Play the game Exquisite Corpse and let your imagination flow.
How to play:
Sit in a circle. On a piece of paper, take turns to draw a character in this game.
1. Begin the drawing by having one person draw the head and neck of the character.
2. Fold the paper down to hide your drawing, revealing only the ends of the neck. Pass it to the next person.
3. The next person continues the drawing from the neck, by sketching another body part of the character.
4. This goes on until everyone has contributed to the drawing. At the end, unfold the entire sheet of paper to reveal your masterpiece!
**Description:**

It is the age 225 BC in Ancient China. China then was in a state of unrest where the Zhou government was arrogant and corrupt. The citizens under the Zhou government suffered under their rule. Angry and disappointed, a small group of rebels rose to power. Their goal: to push back government control and take back their country. After a series of clashes, the entire country lay in unrest. Now, it is time for the Government and the Rebels to compete for influence and control over their country.

**Background:**

Christine, WeiHeng, Valerie and Yee Ching are Year 4 Communications and New Media (CNM) students with an interest in game design and game creation. This game was created as part of a Playable Art module, which provided the team with great insights into the entire process of game creation, from the idea conceptualization all the way to design and technical coding. It was an indescribable experience for them to see the fruits of their labor after completing the games and intrinsically rewarding to see players deeply captivated by what the team has created.

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**Discuss:**

**Ages 6-12**

Spend some time observing this game. Describe all the things you see. What stands out the most?

How would you describe these characters? How do they make you feel?

If you were the artist, what other characters would you include in the game? Why?

**Ages 13-16**

What story do you think the artists were trying to tell?

What symbolism could be associated with the objects in this game? How do they add meaning to the work?

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**Create:**

Identify characters, setting, and plot. Then, imagine and create a dialogue inspired by characters in this boardgame. Share it with your friends and family.

If you could step into this landscape, what would you hear or feel?
Millbank Escape emphasises the need for togetherness in the face of dynamic societal changes. After being tasked to transform an old map into a game, the creators became intrigued with the layout plans of Millbank prison, which was based on the concept of Panopticon by Jeremy Bentham. Eventually, the team discovered that the unique geometrical nature of the map allowed it to be rotated, which inspired a game where players work toward similar goals under ever-changing circumstances.

Background:
Adella, Celia, Yee Hueh, and Wei Kang are a group of friends who love to have fun and enjoy game design! The game was initially planned for players to have different game objectives (guard and inmate), and the team spent weeks experimenting with different game rules. Due to the multiple alterations in the game rules, the team had to collaborate closely to make sure the game could be completed within the limited time. The team went through repeated cycles of prototyping and playtesting to arrive at the final game design.

Discuss:
Ages 6-12
Do you like or dislike this board game? Why?
Discuss the importance of teamwork in any situation of your daily life. What can you do to work better with others?

Ages 13-16
How would you describe this board game?
What do you think would happen if any element of the boardgame is modified?
Analyse the artist’s design of the game. How does it further develop your understanding of the work?
Why do you think the artist chose this subject matter?
What was the artist’s intention? Is the artist successful?

Create:
Talk to your friends and recall a situation where you had different goals, yet managed to work together and come to a consensus. Sketch and colour a picture depicting your feelings both before and after resolution. Depict the expressions of your friends as well.
Description:

Age of Slavery is a boardgame based on a U.S. historical map that addresses the concept of slavery in the past. This game enables the player to understand what the runaway slaves went through and the difficulties they experienced, while learning about this dark period in American History. The Underground Railway was a system of secret routes and safe houses (aka “Station”) established by abolitionists (people who advocated or supported the abolition of slavery in the U.S.) in the 19th century to help slaves escape to Canada, the “Promised Land” where they would gain their freedom.

Background:

The members Hafiiz Karim, Natalie Kok, Pamela Koh, and Yeo Qiao Yin in this group are interested in social change and emotions, particularly in emotions dealing with isolation and lost. They sought to convey these through an interactive game. Through the game, they hoped to cultivate empathy in players so as to highlight the importance of reaching out to those experiencing emotional turmoil.

Discuss:

Ages 6-12

How do you think the slaves felt when they were undergoing difficulties?

How do you think the slaves felt when they escaped to freedom?

Describe all the things you can see from small to large detail. Which stands out more?

Ages 13-16

What role did the slaves play in American history?

How did the intervention of other people affect the outcome for the slaves in the game?

What do you think the artists were trying to convey to their audience? Use visual evidence in the work of art to support your argument.

Were the artists successful in conveying their message? Why, or why not?

Think of people around you who might be experiencing a difficult time but often go overlooked. What can you do to help them?

Create:

Write a note in this book towards anyone you think might need a word of encouragement.

Discuss the lives of heroes and slaves in this game and the effects of their deeds. How does this relate to the social context of Singapore?
“Trigger is an interactive visual artwork consisting of eight elements symbolizing the various stages of the human mind.”

Description:
The artwork explores various ways of combining aesthetic and technical aspects of new media to portray feelings. In particular, the artist focused on the feeling of ‘agitation’. From the array of colours, clockwork movements, to an outright rebel of yes and no, the daily pains of one is reflected, as experienced in the everyday reality of life. The user’s mouse-move exposes the complexities beneath a seemingly dull and unassuming surface.

Background:
Trigger is the brainchild of Yvonne Wong, a 4th year Statistics major from the NUS Faculty of Science. The piece was conceived as her final project for NM2207 Computational Media Literacy, where she was given the freedom to explore and create meaning from digital art. While game creation proved to be a popular choice among her peers, Yvonne wanted to create a relaxing piece that viewers could interact with at their own time, as opposed to experiencing stress or excitement upon contact. When she is not working on her final year thesis, Yvonne enjoys short stories, goodreads and Chinese New Year snacks all year round.

Discuss

Ages 6-12
What do you feel after looking at this artwork? How is your mood affected? Draw what you feel.

Which aspects of the artwork made you feel this way?
Do you like this artwork? Why?

Ages 13-16
Why do you think the artist presented a human’s state of mind in this way?
Share and compare your ideas. What do other people think?
Speak to the artist to find out more about her work. How do you feel about the artwork now that you’ve learnt more about it? Did your opinion change? Why or why not?

Create

Design your own representation of the human mind. Include imagery and scenes to illustrate a particular feeling. Form a collage installation.
Compare and contrast your drawing with your friends. Can you see any connections?
Document your experience by taking photos with the installation. Post it on your social media to share with your social network.
CREATIVE WRITING

Choose your favourite artwork and write a short story imagining you are in this artwork.

Imagine: How did you get there? What is happening in the artwork? How are you feeling?

ARTWORK ANALYSIS

Draw a quick sketch of an artwork.

Title: 
Artist: 

RESPONSE

What do you feel and think about this artwork?

Why do you respond to this artwork the way you do?
DESCRIPTION

What can you see?

What is the medium of work? What materials and tools have been used to create this artwork?

What is the size and scale of the artwork in relation to other artworks?

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

What is the focal point?

What are the most important art elements and principles in the artwork?
(Art elements: Line, Color, Shape, Form, Value, Space, Texture. Art principles: Balance, Proportion, Emphasis, Variety, Movement, Rhythm, Harmony.)

What is the meaning and purpose of the artwork?

What was the intent of the artist? What messages, feelings, attitudes was he/she trying to communicate? Provide specific evidence (visual clues and information) supporting your statements.

Express what you think the artwork is about in one sentence. What evidence inside or outside the artwork supports this interpretation?

EVALUATION AND JUDGEMENT

Do you think the artwork is successful in conveying the message? Why/Why not?

Are there aspects of the work that might be improved or changed?

What does this object/image reflect or tell us about the society/culture that produced it?

What is its significance in relationship to "the larger picture"? 