

**2019/2020 Semester B
SM2105 – Final Project**

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Video:

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=18sq3R3qHJlyrrSCz21ErbVuRiT3IL8CT>

Artist Statement: This work is called '(Un)catharsis'. It explores the accumulation of tension using sound effects and the 'Jenga' game. It also seeks to show that the falling of all the pieces don't necessarily mean that the tension built up has been resolved, rather only to seem like it has been.

Short Essay:

Idea

The idea for this work came from a connection between people and the state of their physical home. On a daily basis, my home is messy. It is said that a person's environment shapes who they are, and I believe the state of our house does represent our familial relationship, specifically in how we deal with problems with one another. We leave items and belongings wherever they are, and let them pile up. It is only when it's a big enough mess that we all get frustrated and angry. But these frustrations are never discussed, only dealt with alone in silence and with time. Only looking to seem put together for the sake of image and 'peace.' It's a cycle.

For this reason, I chose to create a generative video exploring parametric narration to further delve into this idea.

Concepts used

A generative element in this work is the game itself, *Jenga*. It gives the player simple rules to play. The repeated iterations are the choices the player makes in what wooden block to choose to pull out and stack on top in order to win the game. Overall, this creates a complex but (supposedly) stable structure to the whole stack of blocks.

In *The Hand* by Jiri Trnka, which uses a parametric narrative, I was drawn to how the

hands in the animation acted as the 'seed' from where the events catalyse from. In this work, the 'seed' are the wooden blocks. As they are pulled out and stacked upon another, the structure slowly becomes more unstable, which is where the tension from unpredictability is generated.

Automatism was also a concept used in this work which will be explained in the next paragraph.

Creation process

Initially, I envisioned the video to be one continuous take to follow the concept of building up of tension over a period of time. However, I decided to take advantage of how some games, Jenga, in particular, follows the rule-based actions of the player. The end result all depends on the players' choices. Therefore, I wanted to emphasize that through automatism by shooting only one take of the entire gameplay.

This resulted in unexpected hurdles. The recorded gameplay was too long that instead of building tension, it loses interest. I decided to cut the raw video from 19 minutes to around 6 minutes by building and highlighting moments of tension from the raw video.

The sound effects that were used were items commonly found in a house. They had to be sounds that did not release pressure, such as opening of cans or doors. I experimented in using a lot of annoying household sounds and even using sounds of human sighs and huffs over the course of the video, in order to show that both parties are starting to get annoyed with one another. However, upon doing this, I felt that it released more tension than it emitted, and lost focus on the gameplay as the source of tension. So I decided to stick to only using sound effects when the blocks were stacked on top of each other as a way to 'build' and 'set up' to the sound of the fallen structure. The increase in volume of the ambient room sound was done for this purpose as well.

The mix of warm and purple tones from the video filter was used to to accomplish a sense of reverie that this is not a normal game of *Jenga*, as well as give off an intimate mood as if both parties were speaking deeply to one another. This 'intimate mood' was also why a tungsten lamp, which emits a warmer colour, was used as lighting during filming.

A Wave effect was used when both parties build the stack back up slowly again. This is to enforce the disillusionment of resolve in tension. Moreover, there is no

sound emitted during this time so as to reflect the lack of dialogue between two parties to resolve their frustrations even when they have been shown. Thus, the ending shows that the game of stacking tension begins again.