

AR Work of Art

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The project I developed is an interactive rhythm game that immerses the player in a full 360-degree experience. The game's objective is to allow players to hit square blocks that appear in front of or around them, aligned with their field of vision. As they hit each block, visual elements in the form of unique particle effects are triggered, while missing blocks causes those effects to fade. The experience is enhanced with three different audio tracks that adjust based on player performance one by one after each other. As the game progresses, the cubes appear more frequently and move faster, challenging the player to maintain rhythm. Missing a block not only dims the visual effects but also lowers the volume of the music, allowing the player to shape their auditory and visual experience.

In the realm of virtual art, particularly Augmented and Virtual Reality art, the inclusion of interactivity and gamification depends on the creator's intent and artistic vision. Some may prefer static, observational experiences, while others, like myself, aim to create immersive environments that engage viewers as active participants. For my project, I wanted to transcend the typical boundaries of art by allowing the audience not only to observe but to actively shape and build the artwork itself. This approach introduces a new dimension, where the viewer is no longer passive but is given the agency to participate in the creation process.

My inspiration for this idea came from a podcast interview with artist Nancy Baker Cahill, who discussed her work in New Orleans. She highlighted how artists are using contested spaces to display art in ways that challenge traditional modes of viewing. By placing art in these meaningful locations, they open up new ways for audiences to engage with the pieces, offering a deeper connection to the work. This conversation resonated with me, especially since I am from New Orleans. It made me appreciate how art, placed in significant locations, can transform the viewer's experience. I was interested in how these installations provided people with access to art in spaces that would otherwise be inaccessible. The idea of creating art that invites viewers into the experience, rather than merely presenting something to look at, became central to my project's design.

Nancy Baker Cahill's 4th Wall app serves as an excellent example of how virtual art can merge traditional creativity with modern technology. Cahill's work explores new forms of media, breaking down conventional barriers and offering viewers a way to engage with art beyond static observation. In creating the 4th Wall app, she enabled artists to transcend physical limitations, using augmented reality to present work in a digital format that can be accessed globally. The app allows artists to place digital art in locations such as the U.S.-Mexico border, where the context of the space deepens the meaning of the art itself. This fusion of technology and artistic expression empowers people to engage with cultural, political, and emotional ideas in innovative ways.

Cahill believes that for art to have an impact, it must invite interaction and discussion. Her work democratizes virtual art by making it accessible through widely available devices like

smartphones, something that everyone has access to daily. Currently, smartphones have limitations in their ability to fully interact with complex digital environments, I wanted to push this concept further by creating a Mixed Reality experience that gave users even more agency in shaping the art they encounter by using the Meta Quest 3 headset. This approach lets viewers become part of the artwork, creating a deeper, more personal engagement.

My passion for rhythm games heavily influenced the development of this project. Growing up, I loved games like Guitar Hero 3, Rock Band, and Rocksmith, and that passion continues today with games like Clone Hero. In recent years, VR rhythm games such as Beat Saber, Pistol Whip, and Synth Riders have pushed the boundaries of interactivity in rhythm-based gameplay, adding immersive elements that draw players deeper into the experience. These games played a significant role in shaping the structure of my project, particularly in the way they encourage players to become fully engaged, both physically and mentally. While my project didn't fully meet all my initial expectations, I am pleased with the outcome and feel it successfully conveys my personal connection to the genre.

In conclusion, the integration of interactivity and gamification in virtual art is a powerful tool that can transform the viewer's role from passive observer to active participant. Inspired by Nancy Baker Cahill's approach to blending technology with traditional artistic expression, I wanted to create an experience that not only allowed the audience to view art but also gave them the ability to interact with and shape it. By drawing on my passion for rhythm games and my interest in pushing the boundaries of AR and MR experiences, I aimed to create a project that engages users in a meaningful and immersive way, making them co-creators of the art itself.