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The Gamification of Modern Dating: A Feminist Analysis

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The Gamification of Modern Dating: A Feminist Analysis

by

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Submitted to Scripps College in Partial Fulfillment of the Degree of Bachelor of Arts

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December 13, 2019

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1 Introduction

Humans are socialized to conform to one of two identities within a gender binary.¹ Regardless of whether or not everyone self-identifies within this dichotomy, there is an overwhelming cultural climate that persists in attributing gender roles to various social characteristics, clothing items, careers, toys, and even colors. For example, mainstream video games often target exclusively male audiences.² Following a digital technology revolution, more men than women are encouraged to pursue careers in STEM and computer science due to their perceived superior spatial abilities,³ likely contributing to the bias that video games, like other new forms of technology, are for boys. By contrast, my digital art project attempts to subvert the patriarchal nature of the mainstream gaming world.

gg is a digitally rendered 360° animation of a tech-filled bedroom, accompanied by a joystick that can be used to navigate the 3D space, to visually compare multimedia games to modern dating culture. The bedroom scene incorporates animated conceptual “games” on 3D-modeled screens scattered throughout a whimsical tech dreamscape. *gg* draws parallels between the prioritization of male perspectives in fine art and digital media and the social prioritization of “masculine” qualities like logic over emotional vulnerability in the initialization of interpersonal relationships. My project investigates human motivations for playing games, both in the literal and idiomatic sense, using stereotypically feminized colors and symbols, to

¹ Timothy Moore, “Sex Roles,” Psychology Encyclopedia, JRank, 2010, <https://psychology.jrank.org/pages/575/Sex-Roles.html>.

² Tracey Lien, “No Girls Allowed,” Polygon, December 2, 2013, <https://www.polygon.com/features/2013/12/2/5143856/no-girls-allowed>.

³ Stephen Ornes, “The STEM Gender Gap,” CQ Researcher, CQ Press, September 7, 2018, <https://library.cqpress.com/cqresearcher/document.php?id=cqresrre2018090700>.

reclaim the world of gaming for individuals who don't identify with a hetero-masculine technological space.

2 A Sociological Reading of the Principles of Game Design

2.1 Background

Art, like games, is capable of transporting viewers to another world, often one that is very personal to the artist. My exploration of the themes of game design and relationship psychology relates to personal comparisons I noticed between relational games and video games, acquired through my experience livestreaming on Twitch, an online streaming platform in which communities form through the shared interest in specific video games. In addition to broadcasting my own gameplay, I occasionally find myself offering relationship and life advice to my streaming community. Many questions I receive reveal my fellow gamers' use of a strategic method of navigating interpersonal relationships that I recognize in my own actions and the behavior of those around me. Oftentimes a key component of this relational game-playing constitutes the construction of a "cool," carefree personality that projects an attitude of not wanting the other person as much as they want you.

2.2 Motivations for Gameplay

To understand the reasons individuals might choose to view interpersonal relationships as strategic games, it is important for me to investigate primary motivations for gameplay. Research by Quantic Foundry indicates that motivations for gaming vary between genders. The Gamer Motivation Profile surveyed over 250,000 gamers on their prioritization of twelve different motivations for playing games. Women and nonbinary people identified their primary

motivations as fantasy and design, while men prioritized competition and destruction.⁴ Fantasy and design are prominent elements in the overall aesthetic of my work, while competition and destruction are more conceptually relevant to the content of the animated “games” within the piece. Despite some gaming motivations that differ among genders, other motivations for gaming are universal. For example, constraint is a term used in game design, referring to limits on a player’s action.⁵ Various constraints in a game require players to be more creative, resulting in a more engaging gameplay experience. Similarly, in relationship psychology, there is evidence that “playing hard to get” can make someone more desirable to a potential romantic partner.⁶ When applied to relationships or games, constraints can make a goal appear more desirable and provide more satisfaction upon its acquisition. My decision to situate visual representations of destructive, competitive “games” within a distinctly feminine fantasy world relates to the observation of my, predominantly male, Twitch community’s instinctual desire to approach relationships strategically and competitively, coupled with my personal inability to eliminate underlying emotion from interpersonal action.

Most games have a balance of strategy and chance that is more deeply calculated than that of everyday human existence. Including pre-programmed chance occurrences, everything within a game’s world has been placed intentionally, reducing the degrees of variability compared to the real world. Choosing to view one’s relationships as a game that requires calculated strategic action may provide the illusion of control, but it can result in emotional

⁴ Nick Yee, “7 Things We Learned About Primary Gaming Motivations From Over 250,000 Gamers,” Quantic Foundry, December 15, 2016, <https://quanticfoundry.com/2016/12/15/primary-motivations>.

⁵ Colleen Macklin and John Sharp, *Games, Design and Play: A Detailed Approach to Iterative Game Design* (Boston: Addison-Wesley, 2016), 16.

⁶ Jeremy Nicholson, “How (and Why) to Play Hard to Get,” Psychology Today, June 29, 2016, <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/the-attraction-doctor/201606/how-and-why-play-hard-get>.

detachment and objectification of others. The desire that individuals may have to emotionally detach from relationships for fear of getting hurt may be a result of society's attribution of value to characteristics like reason and objectivity, traits primary associated with masculinity. Some modernist artists have held the perspective that the importance of an artwork's power and aggression matches the historic importance of a work's beauty.⁷ The "equating of expression with power, rather than with feeling or communication" exemplifies the patriarchal overvaluation of power and objectivity at the cost of artistic displays of the stereotypically "feminine" qualities of nurturance and vulnerability.⁸ As I've internalized my own emotionality as a liability that hinders productivity and gets in the way of relationships, I want my piece to capture the beauty and softness of allowing oneself to feel despite calculated attempts at the opposite.

3 Feminist Theory

3.1 Female Representation in Art History

My attempt to portray the beauty of emotional vulnerability despite social overvaluation of reason and logic is similar to some feminist artists' subversive depictions of femininity within the context of a male-dominated, overly objective modernist art world. The feminist art movement of the 1960's and 70's was born in an institution dominated by "the white Western male viewpoint."⁹ The great painters of art history, those deemed institutionally worthy of being taught in an academic setting, are European and American men, as history generally embodies the perspective of those in power.¹⁰ Furthermore, when women artists were taken seriously by

⁷ Anna C. Chave, "Minimalism and the Rhetoric of Power," *Arts Magazine* 64 (1990): 55.

⁸ Chave, "Minimalism and the Rhetoric of Power," 55.

⁹ Linda Nochlin, *Women, Art and Power and Other Essays* (Scranton: Harper Collins, 1988), 146.

¹⁰ Nochlin, *Women, Art and Power and Other Essays*, 176.

critics in an institutional framework, their work was only discussed in reference to the work of men. It was a compliment for a critic of the modernist period to tell a woman artist that her work was “so good you wouldn’t know it was painted by a woman.”¹¹ Prior to the feminist art movement, female artists were required to adopt the male artistic perspective if they wanted to achieve institutional success. Women artists were taught to deny their femininity in order to detach themselves from the negative stigma associated with being a female artist. Linda Nochlin argues that art created by women doesn’t necessarily conform to the stereotypes of delicacy and fragility critically defined as a “quintessentially feminine style.”¹² However, the historic preference toward culturally defined “masculine” qualities still predominates in social and artistic contexts.

3.2 Reclaiming the Feminine

In the 1960’s feminist artists defied institutional artistic demands and began addressing the subject of gender in their work, incorporating domestic or otherwise stereotypically feminine symbols and imagery. Rather than ignoring the topic of gender identity altogether, feminist artists allowed their femininity, which critics of the time considered to be a weakness, to dominate the content of their art. For example, Judy Chicago’s room-scale sculptural piece *The Dinner Party* empowers women who are frequently omitted from history, subverting the traditional domestic role associated with the dinner table. My piece, a digitally rendered bedroom rather than a physically sculpted dining room, is similar to Chicago’s work in its creation of a three-dimensional feminine space that disrupts the patriarchal conventions of gender roles. However, *The Dinner Party*’s use of vaginal symbolism falsely associates biology with gender

¹¹ Anne Wagner, “Lee Krasner as LK,” *Representations* 25 (1989): 42.

¹² Nochlin, *Women, Art and Power and Other Essays*, 149.

identity, an assumption I avoid in my own work. While Chicago uses elaborate dining ware and vulvar imagery as symbols of stereotypical female identity, my work incorporates beauty products, floral imagery, and an overtly feminine color palette.

A primary color in my work, pink elicits an emotional response for anyone brought up in a gender normative society. As it is perceived as characteristically feminine, biological males are taught to reject the color for fear it might corrode the precious commodity of masculinity. Pink is used by members of the early feminist art movement as a subversion of the hue's association with "girlish" innocence, cuteness, and frivolity.¹³ For example, the Guerrilla Girls reclaim pink in multiple campaigns, wielding the color in a way that is aggressive and assertive, rather than sweet and submissive. In her work "Pink," Sheila de Bretteville quilts together multiple women's responses exploring the relationship between gender and the color pink. The simultaneously toxic and empowering correlation is an instrument of feminism in my work.

3.3 Reclaiming the Femme Fatale

Similar to the color pink, the artistic use of the femme fatale character trope can be both problematic and empowering, depending on the context. The femme fatale is an archetypal character in literature and art who uses her powers of seduction to manipulate men. Many art historians consider Eve a femme fatale because she tempted Adam with the fruit of knowledge.¹⁴ Similarly, several ancient mythological goddesses including Aphrodite, Eris, and Persephone are considered to fit the description of the femme fatale.¹⁵ The female body is historically depicted in

¹³ Priya Elan, "Think Pink: How the Colour is Being Reclaimed," *The Guardian*, September 10, 2014, <https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2014/sep/10/think-pink-how-the-colour-is-being-reclaimed>.

¹⁴ Scott Meslow, "The Sexist, Empowering History of the Femme Fatale," *The Week*, March 4, 2016, <https://theweek.com/articles/609836/sexist-empowering-history-femme-fatale>.

¹⁵ Eric Galowitsch, "The 'Fatal Woman' in Feminism and Modernism," ES Thesis, Whitestone Publications, May 9, 2017, <http://esthesis.org/the-fatal-woman-in-feminism-and-modernism-eric-galowitsch>.

art to satisfy the male gaze,¹⁶ and for some artists the fatal woman trope is an extension of this fantasy. Edvard Munch, for example, was intrigued by powerful female forces. His painting *Death of Marat II* captures his fascination with a beautiful woman's ability to lure a man to his death.¹⁷ While the femme fatale in many modernist works, as a product of male fantasy, is depicted as a seductive villain, feminist artists reimagine the character as a feminist hero. For example, many of the iconic women Judy Chicago pays tribute to in *The Dinner Party*, like Theodora and Amazon, are known for their power over men and ability to secure their own interests, while changing the world for the better. Unlike most mainstream depictions of the femme fatale, in which a woman's attractiveness is a primary aspect of her character, Chicago's portrayal of dominant women in history focuses instead on their accomplishments, which often includes the achievement of social change.

Similar to the female subjects of Chicago's piece, the physical appearance of the implied character inhabiting the world I create in *gg* is irrelevant because they are represented only by their space (I have chosen they/them/their pronouns to describe this character because, despite stereotypically feminine themes in the work, I prefer not to conform their identity to the traditional gender binary). The digital games animated on the screens of my three-dimensional scene are visual metaphors for games played in interpersonal relationships. Thus, the implied character could be perceived as having some of the characteristics of a femme fatale due to their playing of self-serving emotional games. However, if their selfishness in love makes them a villain, then their biggest transgression is not being born a cisgender male. Within a socially constructed gender dichotomy, women are expected to be selfless, "domestic, warm, pretty,

¹⁶ Griselda Pollock, *What's Wrong with 'Images of Women'?* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1987), 27.

¹⁷ Galowitsch, "The 'Fatal Woman' in Feminism and Modernism."

emotional, dependent, physically weak and passive”,¹⁸ while men are acceptably competitive and self-governing. Therefore, I aim to challenge these gender normative expectations by allowing my feminine, but nonbinary, character to be the protagonist of my scene rather than the maneating villain of traditional femme fatale imagery.

Voyeuristic depictions of strong female characters by male artists are similar to overly sexual representations of women in video games in their marketing of the female body to promote consumer satisfaction. The commodification of the female body in painting and mass produced digital media implies “a position of ownership or possession offered to the spectator.”¹⁹ Art critic Lucy Lippard observes that “it is a subtle abyss that separates men’s use of women for sexual titillation from women’s use of women to expose that insult.”²⁰ It has been suggested to me that my project in some way contributes to the voyeuristic tendencies of a viewing audience by offering an intimate look into a feminine character’s personal bedroom. In response, I invoke Griselda Pollock’s argument that distinguishes sexual objectification from sexual empowerment on the basis of the former’s inherent motivation of “sale and commodity.”²¹

However, the use of the joystick, a phallic symbol, to navigate the scene serves as a sobering reminder that digital works still operate within a male-dominated technological world (Figure 1). Although the piece doesn’t fix viewers as participants in



Figure 1. Travis, Hannah
gg, 2019
360° animation with joystick
Scripps College

¹⁸ Moore, “Sex Roles.”

¹⁹ Pollock, *What’s Wrong with ‘Images of Women’?*, 29.

²⁰ Pollock, *What’s Wrong with ‘Images of Women’?*, 31.

²¹ Pollock, *What’s Wrong with ‘Images of Women’?*, 31.

the ownership of the female body as a for-sale commodity, it does require them to use an observational tool that effectively embodies the male gaze.

3.4 Female Representation in Gaming

The male gaze is a prominent driver of representation in video games, like in art historical contexts, as video games have historically targeted a male audience.²² There is a lack of female playable characters in many mainstream digital games and the few female characters that exist are heavily sexualized. The assumption that more boys than girls play video games may come from the idea that boys are more likely to have an interest in technology,²³ since tech is a male-dominated field. Women only earn 18% of the United States' computer science degrees,²⁴ and only 23% of game developers are women.²⁵ As a result, most digital games are designed to appeal to a male audience, with first-person shooters, action games, and sports games making up a majority of video game sales in North America.²⁶ Using technology originally created to design first-person shooter games, Claudia Hart creates 3D surreal environments that aim to demasculinize technological culture. Replacing the fast and violent subjects of shooter games with slow and sensual depictions of female forms, Hart uses software built within a male-dominated tech industry to subvert the expectation of masculinity in the digital world. The use of technology and gaming to call attention to issues of gender representation is similar to early feminist artists' decision to embrace gender expression in an

²² Lien, "No Girls Allowed."

²³ Lien, "No Girls Allowed."

²⁴ "Women in Computer Science: Getting Involved in STEM," ComputerScience.org, <https://www.computerscience.org/resources/women-in-computer-science>.

²⁵ Kellen Beck, "Diversity in Video Game Development is (Surprise) Not Good," Mashable, January 9, 2018, <https://mashable.com/2018/01/09/video-game-diversity>.

²⁶ Lien, "No Girls Allowed."

artistic climate that was unwelcoming to “feminine” perspectives: it is not only important, but crucial to the contemporary feminist movement.

Cultural critic Walter Benjamin argues that the mass production of art, made possible by technological and digital revolutions, devalues the aura of a work.²⁷ It follows that the elimination of the ritual aspect of art by mechanical reproduction allows works to be more political. Benjamin couldn’t have foreseen the influence that the internet and social media would have on the politicization of art. Art popularized through the internet circumvents the traditional gallery system of displaying works. Tied to movements and mediums like Dada, Fluxus, and video art,²⁸ net art is defined as art based, either in distribution or content, on internet cultures.²⁹ Due to its availability in ever-expanding internet-accessible communities and its potential for virality, net art is often used to spread a social or political message. More specifically, cyberfeminist art focuses on subverting the inherent masculinity associated with the technological sciences. Claudia Hart negotiates the merging of digital and natural spaces in her virtual reality animation *Alice XR*, which uses the structural environment of a first-person shooter game. Hart juxtaposes slow-moving elements of the physical world, trees and a ballet-dancing figure, with the rapid flickering of emojis and QR codes, providing a feminist disruption of violent, often pornographic, uses of technology. My project functions similarly, utilizing recognizable themes of violence and competition in digital games but situating them within a highly feminized fantasy space.

²⁷ Walter Benjamin, “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,” in *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt (New York: Schocken Books, 1969), 6.

²⁸ Annmarie Chandler and Norie Neumark, *At a Distance: Precursors to Art and Activism on the Internet* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2006).

²⁹ Josephine Bosma, *Nettitudes - Let’s Talk Net Art* (NAI Publishers, 2011).

4 Process

4.1 The 360° Video

Initially I liked the idea of creating playable games that viewers could interact with beyond the rotational navigation that is actualized through the creation of a 360° scene. However, my lack of coding and technical game design experience prohibited me from constructing such an ambitious project. Therefore, I decided to employ the more familiar mediums of computer animation and 3D modeling. The use of digital mediums is fitting given my work's conceptual framework, which is cyberfeminist in its subversion of inherently masculine technological spaces. The scene is full of 3D assets that I either modelled from scratch in Blender or adapted and retextured from online sources. I animated 2D videos in After Effects to play on six-second loops within several screens throughout the digital installation. In Blender, I animated falling rose petals, blinking lights, and flickering candles. Then, I rendered the scene as a series of panoramic stills, which I stitched together in After Effects, adding audio that resembles video game sounds and corresponds with the on-screen animations. Finally, I exported the panoramic video and ran it through a spatial media metadata injector to convert it to a format that would allow 360° camera rotation.

My implementation of a panoramic animated scene combines elements of room-scale installation with modes of navigation commonly found in 3D video games. Installation artworks often use a variety of mediums to transform a physical space. Similarly, individual objects I have created and curated are of mixed media but when presented together create an environment that cohesively blends realism and fantasy. Utilizing a digitally rendered 360° scene instead of a physical gallery setting allows the viewing of the installation to replicate the feeling of looking

around a video game world. The inclusion of a singular joystick for rotational navigation makes the viewing experience a solitary activity, conveying the social isolation that can result from the perceptual gamification of interpersonal relationships. Retrospectively, perhaps the intended impact would be further enhanced if the scene could be experienced in virtual reality, thus completely removing its viewers from their real-world surroundings.

I received feedback in an early critique that my proposed project granted its audience a voyeuristic perspective, which made me question my decision to depict a feminine bedroom as the subject of my piece. As I reflected on the correlation between the viewing context of my project and the context through which my Twitch community watches my livestreams, I realized that female personal spaces are prone to sexualization in a way that male spaces are not. I decided that the use of a joystick, a distinctly phallic gaming instrument, would allow viewers to question the role of the male gaze in interpreting digital content, even in the absence of a female body.

My inspiration for the environment housing the following four digital screens stems largely from my study of feminist art as a collaborative, inclusive movement.³⁰ Lippard cites collage as a “female medium.”³¹ As feminist artists of the 1970’s used mixed media found objects and images from popular culture, my piece incorporates adapted and retextured found 3D objects, books, and wall posters that pay tribute to past and contemporary female artists.

³⁰ Lucy R. Lippard, “Sweeping Exchanges: The Contribution of Feminism to the Art of the 1970s,” *Art Journal* 40 (1980): 364.

³¹ Lippard, “Sweeping Exchanges: The Contribution of Feminism to the Art of the 1970s,” 364.

4.2 The Conceptual Process of Designing Animated “Games”

Consumer internet use was popularized in the late 1990s and early 2000s, a time period that marked the rise of household gaming and handheld consoles.³² I chose to depict a bedroom scene with allusions to the early 2000s for the personal sense of childhood nostalgia associated with technology of this decade. Nowadays one screen functions as a music/video player, communication device, gaming console, and information source. Prior to the ubiquity of smartphones, most devices had a singular function. With only three buttons to control one’s handheld digital pet, the Tamagotchi was an extremely popular toy in the early 2000s. Within my 3D scene, the incorporation of these digital pets calls attention to issues of ownership and objectification in toxic romantic relationships (Figure 2).



Figure 2. Travis, Hannah
gg, 2019
360° animation, 6000 x 3000 pixels

Animated notifications emitted from the Tamagotchi devices portray the characters as needy pets left pleading for their owner to “LOVE ME” and “FEED ME,” conveying an imbalance in the amount of attention given and received. I chose to include three different versions of the 3D-modeled toy as a commentary on the insatiability and commitment-phobia that plague young adult relationships.



Figure 3. Travis, Hannah
gg, 2019
360° animation, 6000 x 3000 pixels

Hook-up culture’s socially constructed stigma against emotional attachment is further captured in the

³² Mark Finn, “Console Games in the Age of Convergence,” in *Proceedings of Computer Games and Digital Cultures Conference*, ed. Frans Mäyrä (Tampere: Tampere University Press, 2002), 45.

desktop game *Catching Feelings* (Figure 3), which depicts a cat with a shopping cart attempting to collect and dodge various falling emojis. The character gains points by catching eggplant and peach emojis, symbols of sexual gratification, and loses the game by “catching feelings,” represented by broken heart emojis. The phrase catching feelings often has negative associations as it denotes the accidental acquisition of undesirable emotions for a partner that is emotionally unavailable. Perhaps the fear of falling for someone prematurely stems from a competitive perspective on relationships in which the more emotionally invested partner is the loser, as they are more likely to get hurt.

Combining the modern concept of dating apps with gaming technology of the early 2000s, a handheld console resembling a Nintendo Gameboy lies neglected on the floor, quickly scrolling through online user profiles (Figure 4). In her article “What Swipe Culture Has Done to Dating”,³³ Deadwiler compares swiping on dating apps, an easy left for “no,” right for “yes,” to a video game, arguing that people often swipe out of boredom with no intention of actually meeting up. In fact, the language used in the first version of Tinder may have contributed to the perception of the app as a game, providing new matches the option to send a message or “Keep Playing.” Designed to generate maximum engagement, dating and hook-up apps train users to process people, causing players to lose track of their original intentions. The affirmation individuals receive from collecting matches, like points in a mobile game, makes dating apps even more addictive. The hosts of the Forbes Overworld podcast compare the creation of a user profile to designing a video game persona.³⁴ Conveying a similar notion, my animated Gameboy

³³ Acamea Deadwiler, “What Swipe Culture Has Done to Dating,” Medium, March 2, 2019, <https://medium.com/@acameald/what-swipe-culture-has-done-to-dating-e36bef12c902>.

³⁴ Satchell Drakes, Matt Perez, and Moira Weigel, “Is Tinder Just An Addictive Mobile Game?,” *Forbes Overworld*, podcast audio, January 30, 2018, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/mattperez/2018/01/30/is-tinder-just-an-addictive-mobile-game/#495bbeb834b3>.

screen swipes through the dating profiles of several Nintendo characters. This visual comparison between video games and dating apps calls attention to how users of these mobile applications are trained to make fast, superficial judgments on an endless assortment of options, an exercise in insatiability and self-validation.

Finally, the television screen is animated with a fighting scene between a self-inspired female character and a zombie-like figure in salmon-colored shorts and boating shoes, a villainous portrayal of its opponent's emotions (Figure 5). The naming of the zombie character is ironic because mainstream depictions of zombies are often devoid of real human empathy. In imagining this particular animation, I wanted the antagonist to the female character to be a personified version of the most destructive part of herself. I included this "game" in the scene to satirize the self-inflicted violence of denying one's true feelings.

4.3 Reflection

My chosen medium presented several unforeseeable challenges in digital rendering. The panoramic nature of the final animation required me to render the image in at least 4096 x 2048 pixels for it to be high definition; however, test renders proved that the resolution this produced would be insufficient. Thus, I settled on a 6000 x 3000 pixel count, using a denoiser post-rendering to smooth the pixels. Unfortunately, I still consider the final resolution to be



Figure 4. Travis, Hannah
gg, 2019
360° animation, 6000 x 3000 pixels



Figure 5. Travis, Hannah
gg, 2019
360° animation, 6000 x 3000 pixels

inadequate, but given the fact that it took my computer over an hour to render each of 180 frames due to the massive file size, I had to sacrifice resolution quality. Perhaps the most problematic result of this compromise is the difficulty of viewing many of the scene's important details. For example, the text on the Game Boy screen is completely illegible and the poor resolution of the cat in the *Catching Feelings* game causes the character to fade into the background. If I could change the video's viewing context, I would either display it in room-scale VR so individuals could walk up to these obscured elements to get a closer view or include a mouse-over function that provided closeups of specific animated assets.

5 Conclusion

My 3D digital art piece *gg* challenges the male-oriented culture surrounding digital games and questions whether the prioritization of masculine traits like reason and logic applies in the context of establishing relationships. My use of stereotypically feminine imagery allows me to personally reclaim the realm of digital gaming, which often excludes or sexualizes female perspectives. My piece examines my own failed attempts to strategize romantic relationships as much as it invites viewers to question their role in an increasingly gamified world of dating.

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