

Introduction

Example 1:

Clovis Paleoindian Tradition and Western Stemmed Tradition are types of lithic technologies which are classified by stone tools found in the Western United States (Andrefsky, 1994). A collection of Western Stemmed Tradition (WST) tools was found in a pit feature at the Cooper's Ferry archaeological site. Carbon material found in the pit along with WST tools was radiocarbon dated to be 11,410-11,370 radiocarbon years, making these tools older than previous estimates of the age of WST tools (Davis et al, 2014). If these dates are correct, the perception that Clovis Paleoindian Tradition (Clovis) tools are older than WST would change.

Questions about the ages of the WST tools found at Cooper's have arisen because of possible disturbances and sources of the dates in the site. Creating a realistic chronology of events of an archaeological site can have issues when dealing with rodents that bury carbon dated material that is younger than the artifacts the material is associated with in the site (Dincauze, 2000). Rodent burrows have been found in the area where the collection of WST tools was found which makes the dates of the site questionable (Davis et al, 2014). To clarify the dates found at the site, a different type of dating technique will be used. Optically Stimulated Luminescence (OSL) dating is the technique that enables measurement of the age of the sediment that surrounds the WST tools and the layers of sediment located next to the pit feature. OSL measures the amount of burial time of sediment after being exposed to light at the surface. By measuring the sediment instead of carbon material that could have a variety of sources, the age dates will be more reliable and will provide an independent age to help determine the chronology of the site.

Example 2:

Imagine that you and a friend are visiting an art gallery, and inside you find a chessboard table set between two chairs. The pieces clearly describe their roles within the game, but each piece has portions pushed and pulled out of alignment. The board appears simple, without any extraneous decoration. You sit down in the left chair, taking the lighter pieces as your side and your friend takes the right. After surveying the board, you choose a knight's pawn for your first move. When you set the pawn down one square forward, a voice sounds from the pillar: "Due in part to intentionally targeted strikes on water supplies, approximately 5 million people near Aleppo, Syria have little to no access to water; 2013." (3). Likewise, when your friend moves their rook's pawn forward two squares, the voice sounds from the pillar again. With each move, a voice declares a headline pertaining to a conflict currently happening in the world. Your past moves, lost pieces, and future plans are suddenly very costly choices. You and your friend stand up from the unfinished game, the last audio clip still echoing in the gallery, and you realize that each headline shouted from the pillar was due to your actions; each death total or surge of forces was because of your choices. Before leaving, you have to decide: will you reset the board, or leave the wake of your match for the next person to witness?

This describes a possible reaction to my proposed project; I want to build a custom chessboard that responds to player actions with recorded/appropriated audio files from media headlines about current wars and conflicts in the world. Specifically, I want this work to be a kind of figurative battleground on which the two players can engage in a discussion, through the act of play, of their own perceptions and thoughts on modern wars. While many people have a general awareness of current conflicts in the world, this awareness is filtered through various news outlets, social media forums, and casual hear-say. These media tend to lack a truly objective view that is needed to fully discuss or engage this kind of issue. While my chessboard is not designed to create solutions for modern wars (though that would be a worthy goal), it is about using the checkered space, atmosphere, and structure created by the rules of chess as an active instance to coerce the two opponents to consider their relationship with modern conflicts. My hope is that

the immersive action of playing the game will enhance the player's personal reflection on the topic, as it relates to them and others.

This work is partially based on previous works done by artist John Cage and a collaborative piece by the SkRRR group and the Norwegian Center for Technology in Music and the Arts (NOTAM) (1). In 1968, Cage and fellow artist Marcel Duchamp engaged each other in a chess match, using a special board designed by Lowell Cross (2). The goal of this piece, titled Reunion, was to mirror the inherent complexity and constant action of a chess match using sound, which was mixed and edited live by Cross's board (2). Fast forward to 2012, at the Ultima Oslo Contemporary Music Festival, where a modernized version of Cage and Duchamp's performance was performed (1). In Reunion2012, SkRRR and NOTAM sought to recreate and improve Cage's work, largely through means of modern technologies (1). While these previous pieces both emphasize the audio element as it relates to player actions (or inaction), my piece will take a more comprehensive approach in its design, taking into account how the aesthetics, audio, setting, and social issue all effect the player's/viewer's understanding of the piece. Like Cage's Reunion and the collaborative Reunion2012 modern recreation, my chessboard seeks to alter the player's unconscious mind through play and sound, in order to create an opportunity for them to talk about their personal relationships with and thoughts about modern conflicts.