

# Exploring the Intersection Between Art, Music, and Technology

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Figure 1: Examples of student projects

## 1 Introduction

This talk will present the results of a collaborative learning experience between students from the visual arts and computing sciences exploring the intersection between art, music, and interactive technology. Our goal is to provide an experiential learning environment that models industry in an experimental setting; fostering innovation and advancing the students skills while exposing them to technologies from other disciplines. It is our goal that the experience will assist them in developing critical problem solving approaches to project management.

## 2 Course Mechanics

We chose to offer a pair of courses in different colleges, one in the College of Imaging Arts and Sciences and the other in the Golisano College of Computing and Information Sciences, to run simultaneously and in partnership. Drawing upon a rich music scene in our community we chose the music video as our course subject, a genre that is evolving with technology and becoming more interactive.

Together, both classes entered the course topics through the history of the music video genre, exploring the connection between the visual arts and music, and examining how interactive technology is changing the way we experience music. Breaking down the academic walls between disciplines, we found it necessary to expose the students to each others field of study. Grouped together by schools, the students are assigned to introduce themselves, their discipline, and present the work of professionals in their field. Before embarking on the final group project, we meet separately with the students from our respective colleges to study new technology from their discipline. We brought both classes back together and assigned small interdisciplinary teams to create a test project meant to help the students discover the organization and cooperative skills needed for the production of an interdisciplinary artwork. From the beginning of the course, musicians are recruited from the community and finally interdisciplinary teams are assigned with individual roles clearly defined for the interactive final course projects. Each team must meet with their chosen musicians, identify a song, and develop a concept for their project. In a cooperative classroom environment, each team presents their project ideas in a work-

in-progress critique to engage the entire class in developing their concept. Afterwards, each team creates a storyboard and sets a timetable with key deadlines through to post production and final presentation.

## 3 Results

The students gain expertise in their own area via application in a larger problem and are exposed to diverse disciplines and new technology. By reaching out to the music community, we expand the boundaries of the university and provide valuable experience for the students to work with professional musicians. The classroom atmosphere nurtures innovation in an experimental environment and stimulates self-discipline. The students sharpen their career building skills in collaboration, cooperation, compromise, and effective group dynamics. In a vigorous setting they produce a creative and innovative original work that blends aesthetics with technical functionality in a polished interactive artwork. Stills from the final course projects are illustrated in Figure 1.

## 4 Conclusion

The course provides a collaborative, cross-college and shared learning experience for students studying art and technology. The classes are structured to bring together different disciplines and prepare the students to work both independently and cooperatively in developing a concept and solving problems related to the application of technology and imaging. Placing the students on interdisciplinary teams, they are exposed to different ways of thinking, a variety of personalities, and diverse skills; all which foster communication, compromise, and shared responsibility. The students are exposed to new technology and learn how to apply conventional approaches to visual communication into new forms of interactive media. They embraced the potential of the latest technology and developed innovative approaches to achieve their desired outcomes. The final projects are made public via the Internet, exhibition, and/or through public performance. We hope the courses will serve as a model for future interdisciplinary curriculum collaborations.

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