



REACTIVATION – Fall 2021

What does inspiration and collaboration look like in a distanced setting?

What does a music piece reacting to a physical artwork sound like?

How can animation inspire creative writing?

REACTIVATION is back! After such an amazing reaction to the original works created by Humber students in our first iteration back in the Spring we've decided to turn this project into an annual call running twice a year with the Fall and Winter semesters.

“REACTIVATION” began with reactivating our Permanent Art Collection by activating student collaboration. Taking a handful of collection artworks, we tasked a small group of student creatives to create musical works in direct reaction to these artworks; Focusing in on their initial reaction and creating work based directly on that inspiration. From there these musical pieces were given to a second group of students to react in the same way, only this time in the form of Animation or Digital Artworks. This process then repeated for a final group of students that created works in Creative Writing fields.



ADINA VLASOV

Buoyant , 2021

Humber Galleries

Music

Inspired by: Frog Clan by Andrew Dixel

Artist Statement:

Inspired by Andrew Dixel's Frog Clan, Buoyant is a short musical work by Adina Vlasov embodying amphibians' dual lives: water and land. Underscored by pulsing drums - a tribute to Dixel's Indigenous Nlaka'pamux heritage - pentatonic harp, piano, and marimba patterns swell and interplay as tadpoles would in their early, water-loving days. Soft, jumpy dissonances give ways to moments of joyful release and resolution before reaching "land". This more grounded, middle section sees the frog in adulthood - bold, quartal piano voicings plodding over new turf - the strings. Naturally, the life cycle comes back around and we end once again as youngsters in a stream. The title, "Buoyant" references both the ability to float but also cheeriness and optimism, which can be heard both musically and seen visually in Dixel's colourful, spirited artwork.

[More info](#)



BEHZAD DANESH

Face No. 2 , 2021

Humber Galleries

Music

Inspired by: Untitled (Face No. 2) by Heather Graham

Artist Statement:

When I first saw Untitled (Face No. 2) by Heather Graham, all I wanted to do was to capture the girl's facial expression. Although the way she looks carries a sense of apathy and numbness, she looks uneasy and concerned, as if she is wondering about something unknown.

In my soundtrack, I address her insensibility at the beginning of the song through the melody and after transforming it into a hazy chorus that represents her contemplation.

Talking about the painting, it implies an aloofness from the viewer as it reveals the shape when we are standing at a distance. So, I suggest the keyboard and the guitar like they are being heard from a distance. Additionally, Graham's technique of removal and erasure inspired me to delete parts of my prerecorded sounds to make some unexpected silent moments in the music.

In the last section of the song, the bass and the drum disappear and the foggy sounds take place though they are far away from focus. Just like the final version of Graham's artwork that is pale, but still effective. About the title, I love the idea to stick with Graham's naming, a face that I couldn't easily define, but I will remember: Face No. 2

[More info](#)



JACOB SOUCY

Glowing in The Dark , 2021

Humber Galleries

Music

Inspired by: Fibre Optic/Radiant Light - 2 by Lizz Aston

Artist Statement:

Glowing In The Dark aims to capture the feeling of depth felt when looking at Fibre Optic/Radiant Light - 2 by Lizz Aston. The dark minor chords on piano and deep bass line allows for the percussion and synthesizer to stand out, shimmering on top of the track like the dichroic film reflects lights in the gallery. GITD is a hip-hop-inspired, synth-led, melodic minor-based piece created entirely with in-the-box sounds in Logic Pro, and a midi keyboard.

The piece begins with an electric piano which is highly compressed, and widened using a stereo spread plug-in. A one handed Cminor6/9 voicing repeats for three bars, followed by Dbminor6/9 for a bar. This sequence repeats. The slightly swung hi hat eighth notes entering on the third bar of the synth melody create a contrast between a quarter based boom bap drum feel changing to a classic Dilla feel. There is an eighth note stereo delay on the percussion layer that hits every beat four. The sub bass line is bouncy and leaves space for the other parts. It is later doubled with a left-panned synth bass. The lead synth has fast modulation and stereo tremolo. The melody was created through rhythmic-ly displacing groups of whole tones (all chord tones and extensions) that change with the chord progression. The slides between whole tones were achieved with the keyboard's pitch wheel.

A common theme is movement through the stereo spectrum. This is related to seeing the light reflecting off Aston's artwork at different angles as the eyes glance from left to right.

[More info](#)



LILA RAVELLE

Droplets , 2021

Humber Galleries

Music

Inspired by: 16 & 20 by Abbas Akhavan

Artist Statement:

I was inspired to create a musical representation of Abbas Akhavan's painting process - I imagined the descending sine-wave and vocal melodies to represent streams of ink slowly dripping down the canvas, growing in density over time, and eventually creating a deep grey pool near the bottom of the image. I enjoyed creating with a similar freedom described by Akhavan - I recorded some sounds, but ultimately let the instrument (synthesizer and effects pedals) decide where it wanted to go while gently guiding it along the way.

[More info](#)



EBRU KUR
Cycle , 2021

Humber Galleries
Animation

Inspired by: Buoyant by Adina Vlasov

Artist Statement:

Inspired by Adina Vlasov's Buoyant, I wanted to visualize the life cycle of frogs. While visualizing Vlasov's cheerful and peaceful music, I also wanted to refer to the source of inspiration of Vlasov's piece by using the colours in Andrew Dexel's Frog Clan.

A frog's life cycle develops in four stages: egg, embryo, tadpole and adult frog. However, not all eggs or tadpoles can survive. Some frogs' lives end on the road of metamorphosis. This cycle of life and death is like the ups and downs in music.

[More info](#)



GREIG SANDERS

Lunch Break , 2021

Humber Galleries

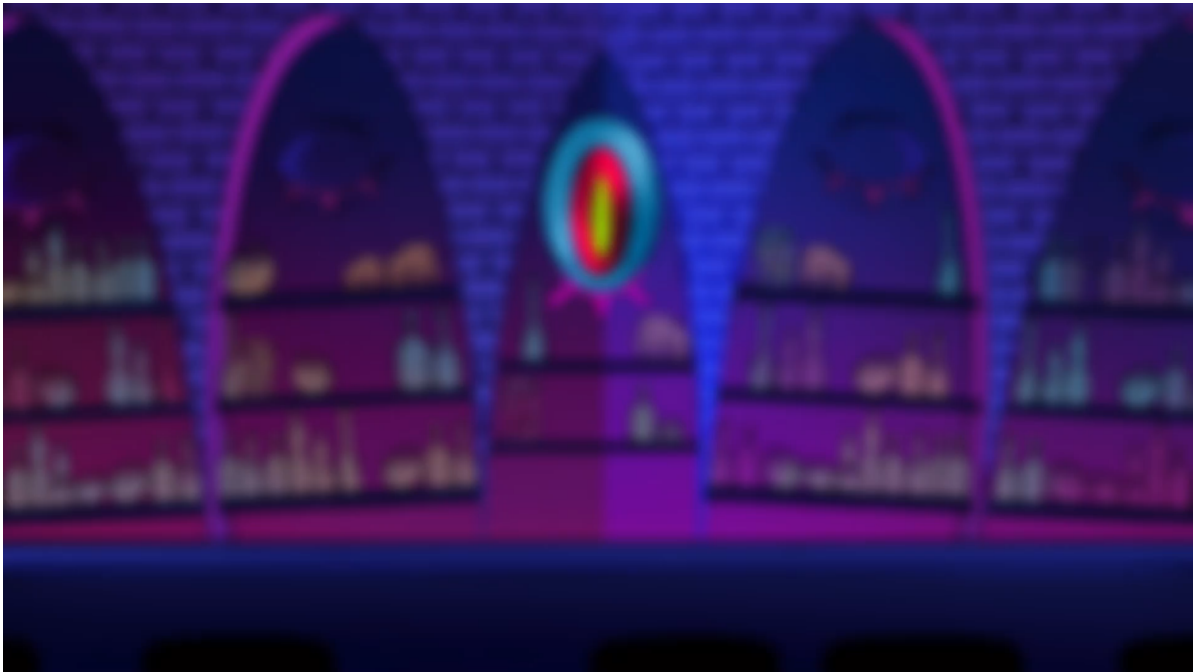
Digital Painting

Inspired by: Glowing in The Dark by Jacob Soucy

Artist Statement:

This piece was influenced by Jacob Souby's Glowing in The Dark. I listened to the piece several times in order to get a feel and idea for the music, and for what I wanted to create from it. The beat and synthesizers provided a semi-futuristic feeling and I decided to veer towards a sort of high-tech scene with some Ghibli influence. The piece consists of a landscape with the main focal point being a ramshackle delivery mech, upon which a girl and her cat sit, taking a break from a busy day of deliveries. I chose to paint this scene entirely in photoshop, using an array of vivid colors to attempt to bring the piece to life.

[More info](#)



LEXXIE SANTANA-MUNOZ (DUENDE)

Vannsk in the Glow , 2021

Humber Galleries

Animation

Inspired by: Glowing In The Dark by Jacob Soucy

Artist Statement:

Short video featuring fantasy characters interacting with a blue haired bartender. I was inspired by the sound of the Glowing in the Dark to think of lounge style music, taking inspiration from story style video games and other media. Using animatic style to mimic animation I tried to create a good video style.

[More info](#)



LIAN M (NIMBOS)

Deep Dive In Green , 2021

Humber Galleries

Digital Painting

Inspired by: Droplets by Lila Ravelle

Artist Statement:

When it comes to making pieces based on songs or sounds, I generally go with whatever my brain forms while I'm listening to it. While listening to the beautiful composition by Lila Ravelle, the first thing I pictured was a forest. There's this blissful calmness to it with a tinge of loneliness that creeps in as I listen to it. I tried my best to convey those feelings in this piece.

[More info](#)

You are there,
In the shadow of Strength,
Not quite visible
but your presence is still felt.

There, barely heard,
A quiet rustle
of unfolding wings
that ache from inactivity.

The Survivor stands, afraid,
weeping in the predawn.

This is the moment.

What will it be?

You hesitate for an instant,
Surprised by
profound joy and simple freedom.

Without knowing how
you've taken to the sky.

Strength wishes you
a safe journey.

The Survivor can finally rest.

PEG BILLINGSLEY

Power , 2021

Humber Galleries

Poetry

Inspired by: Cycle by Ebru Kur

Artist Statement:

The life cycle of the frog that Indina beautifully demonstrated in her work Cycle resonated with me. The theme of metamorphosis has been a significant one as I navigate the challenges of living with physical disability and mental illness. Many support services are structured in such a way that they inhibit individual growth, autonomy, and transformation. I think we make three choices in the face of such challenges: resign to defeat, lay dormant for a time to rest, or move forward and create change.

I was a bit surprised to find myself writing a poem because I normally write stories (fiction and nonfiction). I love poetry and while I write it occasionally, it's always remained deeply personally and private. But each time I sat down to write for this project, it always started as a poem. So in the spirit of transforming here is Power.

[More info](#)

A black cat sits at her side
The height is hardly a concern in their eye
This clanking cog-filled curiosity crones
This day's deliveries have ended too soon

But have no worry for further fun
The moon will dip and the sun will run
Above the mountains and light the sky
Where airships and girls on booms fly

Over fields of wildflowers
And desolate towns in the noon hours
From city streets to park meets
All this captured if you look and seek

Packages tied with string and filled with-sours?
Bready sweets or chocolate treats?
Magic wonders that keep hearts a-beat?

Mech feet
Rumble the ground
A gigantic creation once dreary now found
Its magic entwined in its forged nature
What lies within? Who can say for sure?
What purpose? What meaning?
What silent face and held in keening?

She doesn't know and never might
But a friend that stays is quite alright
Yes, some must go on their way
Back to the forest hills and places we can never say

Wish them well and don't look back
Try to memorize the sight you'll lack
It blurs and warps behind thick tears
The glowing automaton will still be here

Girls on brooms travel till the day is old
Finding ways to turn water to gold
Breaking curses with inner strength
Learning loss and lessons at length

ERICA THI

Girls on Brooms , 2021

Humber Galleries

Poetry

Inspired by: Lunch Break by Greig Sanders

Artist Statement:

This poem was inspired by Greig Sanders' Lunch Break, which features a blend of Ghibli influence, high-tech and futuristic mech and a picturesque scenery. This poem attempts to capture the wonder, unexpected adventure and tearful ending Lunch Break would surely evoke if it moved on the page.

[More info](#)

"Goodness, so many packages today. I can't fathom it." I whine as my cat purrs at the door. I smile at her, "yes, we will get out of this dungeon of a machine in a second hold on now, let me stop this."

I grab onto the handle, and hit the speaker button, "Here! Stop here!" I scream. The ramshackle comes to a halt, "door open Ms. Liddy?" The ramshackle speaks. I nod, "Yes please. Let me just grab my mask."

I throw my bottles of water around the ramshackle trying to find my mask. I sigh in defeat. I turn to face my cat who just tilts her head to look up at me. I chuckle, "you'd think I would wake up and realize after fifteen years to grab a mask huh Maislee." I shake my head, "I mean it's just the both of us, and you're a cat, I highly doubt there's any real danger here without a mask, what do you think Mais?"

She sneezes in response and I laugh, "You just want to go outside I know. Alright, open the door please!" I say to the ramshackle once again. The door then comes down and I take a deep breath looking outside. The year is 2035, and the world is completely different than when I was a child. Sometimes I wish to go back to when I was born back in 2015, and actually remember a time where everything was normal, and more people pleasing, instead of this. Barely any real human interaction, or any proper work for any human being.

[Click here to read the rest of "What Life Could've Been"](#)

ANNA-LISA BARRETT

What Life Could've Been , 2021

Humber Galleries

Short Story

What Life Could've Been

By: Anna-Lisa Barrett:

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being.

I sit down underneath the umbrella that pops up from the bottom of the ramshackle to protect Maislee and I from the beating sun. I look across at the mountain in front of me, seeing the lack of snow standing on the tip of it and sigh, "this used to be filled with snow y'know Maislee? That's what papa used to tell me."

She purrs in response and I look down and close my eyes. I try to imagine how the world used to look before I was born, or before the disease that took control of everyone in 2020 when I was only five years old. My papa told me everything, the trees were greener, everyone was faster, no one had a mask on, and everything just felt normal.

"Everyone had a place back then Maislee, that's what he told me." I say to her as I continue to stare at the mountain, "everyone had some sort of routine, whether it would be going to school or going to work, and now? You're even lucky to find some sort of work that wasn't taken over by machines."

I begin laughing as I look up at the ramshackle, "I mean hell, I can barely say I am working. I don't go and deliver the packages, I just sit in there, and let the ramshackle do all the hard work. I just move handles in order for the cranes to pick up the packages and drop them on their door steps. Jacques said very soon, they are making a new ramshackle model y'know? A model that can do everything on their own, no need for a human being to move the handles inside anymore. So, I'll be out of work within the next year. Add me to the statistic of 85 million people that lost their job between 2025 to now."

I take a deep breath, trying to hold back the tears as I think about my inevitable future. "Y'know what else Mais?" I say, "I should've listened to papa before he died." I think about my father a lot, especially within the last few years. He died when I was fifteen years old from cardiac arrest due to the stress instilled in him from both himself and my mother losing their jobs. I close my eyes once again, and begin thinking about the day he lost his job, the beginning of the diminishing of my family.

October 2030:

"Ray!" I heard my mother screaming at my father, "what happened? Why are you home so early?"

Ray! Answer me!"

"Not now! Stop yelling at me, woman." I heard him screaming back at her, "I need time for myself."

"Ray! Don't you walk away from me!" She screamed at him as she followed him into their bedroom.

I slowly tip-toed toward their bedroom door, and pressed my ear onto the door trying to hear their conversation, but by the sounds of their yells, it wasn't a good conversation.

"Ray! For the love of God talk to me! I am your wife!"

"Genevieve, please! Get out! Go check on Liddy, do something besides bother me right now!"

"Stop running away from me and what you're feeling! Tell me what is going on! Why are you home from the hospital so early? You only worked six hours when you usually work twelve!"

All of a sudden, I heard my father chuckle and his voice began to crack, "I lost it Genny.. I lost

everything..”

I heard my mother hesitate before she replied back to him, “W-what do you mean you lost everything Ray?”

“This world doesn’t need human surgeons anymore... Apparently robots are better at open-heart surgery than I am now. Go figure. One of the most important human jobs, the one no one thought would be lost in the world of technology, is now officially wiped out.”

“Oh Ray.. I am so sorry.”

“Sorry? I don’t need sorry Genny, I need a damn job, and now? There’s barely any human jobs anymore! No more physical labour, and whatever is left will be wiped out within the next five years. I have nothing, you have nothing anymore, we both have nothing!”

I heard my mother begin crying, “I-I am trying so hard to remain positive, but what can we do? I don’t think I can do this anymore Ray... My job as a hairdresser, I know wasn’t as important to your job saving people, but it was my life. Now some stupid robot in an apron is cutting hair.. We both lost our passions in life..”

“There’s no more positivity Genny. We just have to make due, at least for Liddy’s sake.”

“Oh my god Liddy, what about her future? Her post-secondary future! Will we have enough to get her by?”

My father began laughing, “What’s the point Genny. Sincerely. It’s not like when we were children back in the mid-90s. We were in classrooms, big smiles on our faces, learning with the entire class around us, and the teacher in front of us. Now tell me, when has Liddy ever had that experience? What? One year maybe? Back in 2019 when she was four, just starting kindergarten. She’s been in and out of either being in a classroom to online her whole childhood, to now having her high school experience online. Also, with no jobs? Why does she need post-secondary for? High hopes for something that will never come.”

I closed my eyes as tears began spilling down my cheeks, my father was right. What was there to be hopeful for? At that time, my mother was the most positive and hopeful person I knew, but once my father lost his job, my mother lost the sparkle in her eye.

December 2030:

“Reuvert, Ray, Room 220.” I heard the robot speak as they led us to my father’s hospital room. “Liddy...” My mother whispered. I looked up to her, “yes mama?” “Your father must be fuming at this.” she said giggling.

I smiled, I haven’t heard her giggle in almost two months. I knew what she meant, my father being taken care of by the machines that took away his job to begin with.

“Reuvert Ray, Reuvert Genevieve, and Reuvert Liddy are here to visit you.” The robot said.

“Shush you, let them in!” I heard my father mumble.

The robot moved out of the way to allow my mother and I into his hospital room. He turned his head over at us, trying to smile at us. Mother and I tried smiling at him through our masks, but all he saw were our eyes crinkling.

“How are you feeling papa?” I asked him as I went to sit beside him.

“Ah... Not the best Liddy. Not the best..”

He looked up at my mother, and looked at me once again, "Liddy my sweet, can you go outside for one minute? I would like to talk to your mother alone."

I nodded, "yes papa." I got up from my seat and walked out of the hospital room. However, instead of leaving, I put my ear up to the door once again.

"So, how did the surgery go, Ray..? How many stints?" My mother asked.

"I'm dying Genny..." I heard my father say.

My eyes widened and I tried to gulp the big lump forming in my throat.

"D-dying? None of the robots said anything about you dying! Ray, is this some sick joke of yours?"

"Genevieve, why would I lie about death? Out of all things death. Of course those stupid robots wouldn't say anything. They only say what they are programmed to say. Besides, would you want to hear your husband is dying from a tinned machine with no emotions, or from him yourself, in his most vulnerable state."

"Liddy needs to know! Why would you send her out of the room?"

"Genny... Let her believe I died peacefully in my sleep please. I don't need her to see me like this knowing I will die."

I opened the door and stared at them with tears going down my cheeks, "you don't need to hide this anymore. I heard everything."

"Liddy..." My father spoke, his voice was hoarse. Was it dehydration, or was it him slowly deteriorating to his own death, I have no idea. All I knew was my father was dying in front of me, and there was nothing they could do to stop him from dying, or nothing my mother and I could do.

I walked over to his bed and kneeled down beside him, "papa.. I thought robots could do everything right.."

He chuckled, "apparently, one malfunctioned during my surgery... Like I always said, we humans might malfunction, but we can still get the work done."

I began crying even more than before. My mother kneeled down beside me and pulled me into her arms while she cried.

"Liddy... Look at me please." My father said. I let go of my mother's shirt and looked into his eyes.

His greyish blue eyes looked cloudier than usual, "yes papa..."

He slowly put his arm out, and placed his hand underneath my chin, "I am going to tell you one thing, and one thing only, and I want you to remember this for the rest of your life, do you understand?"

I gulped and nodded at him. He sighed, "I do not know what the future truly holds for you, despite my assumptions of what I believe it does, but promise me one thing."

"Of course papa, what is it?"

"No matter how much control technology has in this world, or this society, never let it consume you, and who you are as a person.. Fight back against it, and always be you. Do you think you can do that? Can you promise me that?"

I smiled weakly, "yes papa, I will never let technology consume me..."

"Good.. I've seen too many good people turn into zombies or technologically obsessed in the last two decades, and I refuse to see my daughter on this beautiful earth do the same. Enjoy what was

given to you, not what you wish you had.”

“I promise papa, I promise.”

I open my eyes and tears flow down my cheeks, “Oh Maislee... I feel like I’ve failed him.” I cry harder and grab my knees up to my face. My father never wanted me to lose my character, like many others have due to the rise of social media, and the rise of manufacturing and service companies becoming technologically dependent. There is no more one on one people interaction, barely anyways unless you lived in the same household. Even so, people just message their family members.

Maislee scratches at my legs. I let my legs loose and she crawls into my lap and cuddles into me.

“How life could’ve been Maislee. Without them, papa would still be here, mama and papa would be working, and I would be in post-secondary.”

She purrs into my chest and I take a deep breath.

“Break is over Ms. Liddy. Your shift ends in t-minus two hours.”

I look up at the ramshackle and I nod, “of course..”

I push Maislee gently off of me and get up onto the platform. I look over at the city, and the mountain and sigh, “what life could’ve been.” I turn around and enter into the ramshackle. I sit back down into my chair, place Maislee onto the seat handle, and put my seatbelt on.

“Door close ramshackle.” I say.

“Yes Ms.Liddy, the door is now closing.”

The door slides closed as I continue to look over at the mountain, wishing there was more snow on it.

“Address Ms. Liddy.”

“347 Hazelnut Crescent.” I mumble.

“GPS activated, 347 Hazelnut Crescent.”

The ramshackle starts moving, and I sigh, knowing that in a year, I will no longer have this job, and this life anymore. My life is becoming what my papa didn’t want, technologically dependent.

“I wish nothing ever changed..” I whisper as we move to 347 Hazelnut Crescent.

The End

[Read the full story here](#)

SOUTH

an area i never knew
an area
a dream i imagined
a dream
a place

connecting to the land
surrounding waves
languages unknown
to my tongue
land of foreigners
and ancients
resiliency and violence
bathed in blood
i speak english
y castellano
little birds
whisper in my ear
omens

is it you Jaguar?
asking how do i know?
will the winds sway us?
will they be warm?
will i remain lost?

EAST

the sun rises
days are endless
looking at my Jaguar
the world in their eyes
repeating: it will be okay
it will be alright

thinking of the poison
you are not what they did to you

riled

tristeza

early mornings are heavy
theoretical dawns
i rarely see you
it gets dark in here
my window is enormous
y muy caliente
bedazzled by the rays
i know i am going to be okay

NORTH

pitch black thoughts
of getting lost in them
i love the trees
without leaves
cycling through
come back season
rebirth
every time
every single time
down there
freezing
cold
snow
yearning for the spring

i was born on the mountains
in a northern snowstorm
blue spruces everywhere
wondering
what am i doing here?

WEST

budding joy in my heart
trespassing abundant flora
fiery concrete sunsets

home is
whatever you want it to be

my community
my emergence
into whom i need to be

the best side with
trauma, grief, growth
alegría
amor
blossoming butterfly
imagining the warmth

SOUTH

concurrent absence
neither here nor there
ni de aquí ni de allá
purposely placed
in this realm
directionless

i believe i know
holding you close
en mi corazón
with you Jaguar

it all happens
when it needs to happen
and it is happening now.

ASHLEY MEZA-WONG

Compass , 2021

Humber Galleries

Poetry

Inspired by: Deep Dive In Green by Lian M

Artist Statement:

Inspired by the verdant environment in Nimbos' (LianM) Deep Dive In Green, I explore the emergence of numerous worlds in my periphery. A homage to my Andean ancestry through the separation of unknown lands and histories, I delve into emotive depths with transformative imagery. Part autobiographical, part mystical, I blend spiritual and ecological landscapes into hopeful prayers.

[More info](#)