iteration^3 method method method method
method method method method method
method method method method method
method method method method method
method method method method method
method method method method method
method method method method method
method method method method method
method method method method method
method method method method method
method method method method method
method method method method method
method method method method method
method method method method method
method method method method method
method method method method method
method method method method method
method method method method method
method method method method method
method method method method method
method method method method method
method method method method method
method method method method method
method method method method method

methods of
iterating

written response

draft 1

For this brief I was asked to work with a tool I'm unfamiliar with, thus, I chose Blender, a digital 3D model creation software. Previously I have worked with similar technology, but never felt like I fully grew my skills in 3D model rendering tools. Moreover, I've recently focused on material processes, and wanted to challenge myself to learn Blender inside and out.

I selected a 3D modeled artwork by Khyati Trehan to recreate (fig. 1), because it's an imagined coral-like object constructed with complex shapes, and I felt it would allow me to learn more deeply about the software.

Fig. 1.
Chosen artwork to recreate: 'Ugly' by Khyati Trehan

Fig. 2.
My copy of the selected artwork, made in Blender

What was most interesting was that the tools within Blender don't appear to operate consistently or independently. There is a preferred sequence of operations, <u>requiring prior knowledge of the software,</u> in order to come to the expected outcome. For example, had I not spoken to the technicians at the Digital Media Lab, I wouldn't have known the which steps follow which to recreate my chosen artwork.

Defining iteration as 'process is the output' (Chrislip, 2020), it would be interesting to examine how varying the process can alter the outcome in the coming week. I also wanted to explore the definition of "process" thus have looked at the Conditional Design Manifesto, and responded to a segment, for me to refer to as I carry out this exploration into iterating.

The most important aspects of a process are time, relationship and change.

Time can be unimportant if utilised incorrectly.

The most important aspects of a process are purposeful time, relationship and change.

What is 'relationship' defined as?

The most important aspects of a process are purposeful time, one's own relationship with the matter at hand, and change.

Change for the sake of change is not important.

The most important aspects of a process are purposeful time, one's own relationship with the matter at hand, and meaningful change.

–My adaptation of the 'Conditional Design Manifesto' (Maurer, Paulus, Puckey, & Wouters, 2013, p. ii)

Further exploring 'Adhocism' (Jencks & Silver, 2013), the notion that nothing can be created out of nothing, I want to refer back to my chosen artwork to be able to compare the results.

draft 2

During my first foray into using Blender last week, I was surprised that specific order and toolkit were the most influential factors to my process, able to produce the most variation. I underwent 23 steps to recreate Khyati Trehan's coral-inspired artwork (fig. 1); as a beginner it was challenging to understand why the order was so specific, and the importance of each step/tool.

The critical enquiry I wanted to explore was "what happens if I reverse or play with the order of operations."

While last week I defined iteration as 'process = output', this week I wanted to subvert Matthew Chrislip's third definition of iteration (2020). Instead of working towards a desired result, I wanted to question what would happen if I came to the point of making something imperfectly, interrogating the natural order of rules of Blender while still producing an outcome.

Fig. 3. *All of the outcomes from my experiments (experiment1.blend – experiment11.blend) from top left to bottom right.*

The rules of each experiment acted as my constraints, which interestingly allowed me to progress and simulate play within the limitations. Thus my experiments, all developing from results in previous iterations, approached the point of breaking the understanding of what can be done in Blender. I wanted to break the order of Blender.

experiment_1.blend

reverse toolkit

experiment_4.blend

selective toolkit 3.0

Fig. 4. *Examples of the rules I wrote for myself in the iterative experiments*

I compared the outcome to the original artwork, to assess how successful it was. My appreciation of my outcomes evolved as I was going through the "hacking" process; initially, I deemed certain results more successful than others since I was comparing the output to the original coral. Later, while I continued to compare to the original coral artwork, I realised that success is subjective, and since all of my experiments produced a result, they are all successful. I had to assess my work through another lens, so I chose to look at my work through the following sections of the conditional design manifesto.

PROCESS

"The most important aspects of a process are time, relationship and change."

LOGIC

"Constraints sharpen the perspective on the process and simulate play within the limitations."

INPUT

"Input should come from our external and complex environment: nature, society, and its human interactions."

Conditional Design Manifesto
(Maurer, Paulus, Puckey, & Wouters, 2013, p. ii).

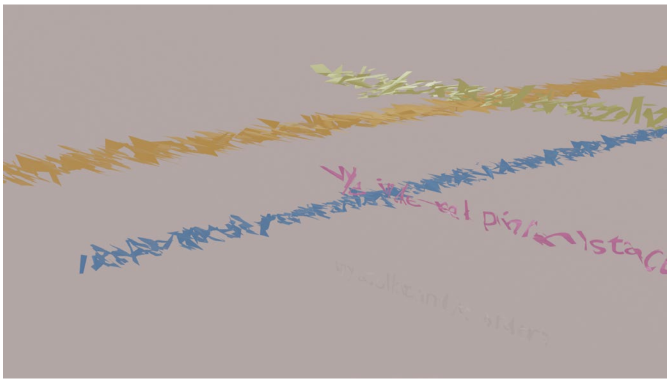
In experiment_0.blend, I also observed how relationships affect process; changing perspective highlighted that I was designing a representation of a 3-dimensional object through a 2-dimensional screen.

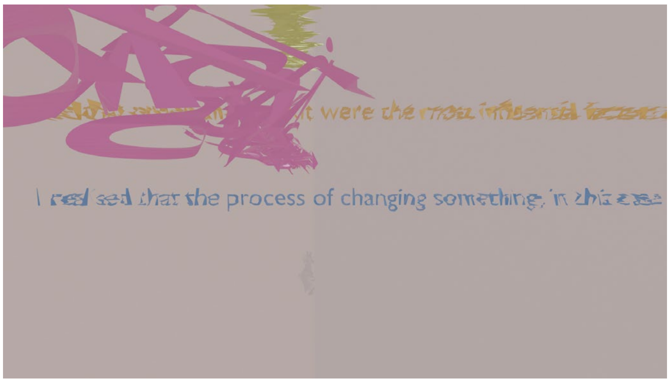
Inspired by a result from Kenya Hara's 'River' experiment in her 'Exformation' project series with her students (2015), in experiment_5.blend, I interrogated whether a 2D image of a coral superimposed on a 3D cube is still considered a representation of a coral. While in the week prior, my stance was that process is affected by meaningful change, this week I realised that the process of changing something, in this case my toolkit and its order, can produce equally insightful meaning.

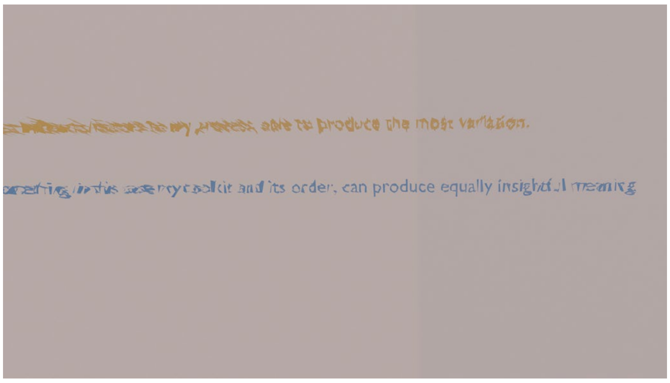
Being able to access certain tools or systems whilst being restricted to others made me question how both Blender and I navigated limitations. This process reflected my own positionality: as a queer Indian girl who is also a Third Culture Kid, I often have to 'hack the system' because I don't have access to all the 'tools' others might be.

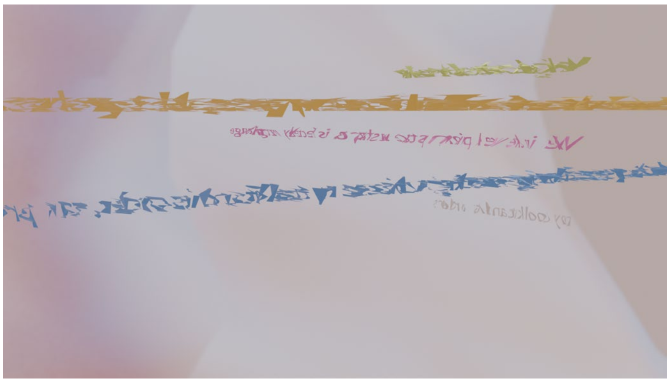
As Armstrong reflects in Digital Design Theory, a considerable amount of digital design logic is informed by the rules that were written by Western designers based on their understanding of the preceding tools (2016). Thus I explored the theory of digital design, and questioned Blender's origins. It was initially developed by a Dutch animation studio for their internal workflow. Being open-source, it is accessible to all, however, the language is full of jargon, and the interface is intimidating. With its complicated structure, I questioned if Blender is really accessible, and in week 3 I can explore this further.

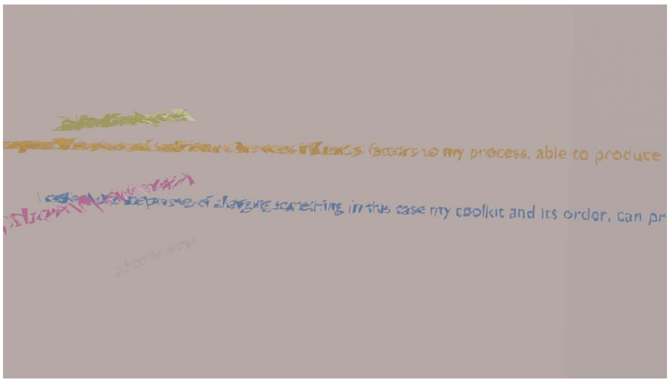
draft 3:











View my text in 3D through this link

bibliography

Armstrong, K. (2016). *Digital Design Theory: Readings from the field.* Princeton Architectural Press.

Charles Jencks and Nathan Silver, Adhocism: The Case for Improvisation, [1972] 2013

Chrislip, M. (2020). Iterate Lecture. Available at: https://ual.cloud.panopto.eu/Panopto/Pages/Viewer.aspx?id=7eba1c6c-20b1-4391-a37b-ad0200e7de78

Hara, K. (2015) *Exformation*. Lars Muller Publisher.

Maurer, L. (2013). *Conditional Design Workbook*. Valiz. pp. i–xiv