Craig Langworthy

Making&Meaning

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Final Essay: Gothic Catapult

-Documentation to be included upon completion of actual project

Process

* Tasked with making a 3d model that needs to be created via 3d printer.
* Consider limitations of 3D printing, primarily undercuts and how fast it can print.
* Idea to make an opposable mechanical object
* Decide on catapult.
* Take ideas from the architecture of an era with catapults.
* Decide to create a “Gothic Catapult”
* Begin creating 3d model.
* Finish and print with Makerbot.

Contemporary Analysis

This piece is a commentary on modernity and antiquity, and function vs. form. 3D printing is not the newest technology, having been around since the 1980’s, but has only recently become popular among the general public. 3D printers have also just entered the realm of “personal” technology, having been primarily an industrial, corporate technology used to manufacture plastic parts for various machines and vehicles, rather than the knick-knacks the average person might use it for, or the revolutionary medical purposes (artificial organs, to name the most ground breaking) that health care professionals are now attempting to use them for.

Catapults, as well as gothic architecture, are a thing of antiquity. Catapults which were revolutionary, war machines designed only to cause as much destruction as possible are now an outdated technology that only exists in this day and age as an art spectacle. Gothic architecture is most recognizable on cathedrals, places that hold similarly old ideas and are no longer built, but exist still as things of beauty and as testaments to the diligence of older humans.

When this modern 3D printing technology paving the way for future technological advancement is used to create not only a technology not relevant since its use in antiquity, but a piece adorned with the artifices of similarly old architecture it evokes these connotations. The plastic used to create it further enforces the dissonance present in this piece. The viewer is presented with this object in turmoil with itself, evoking thoughts about the evolving nature of technology and what might come next.

Because this piece is based on a functional piece of technology, I decided to make it a functional model, and it is able to launch small objects. This is in direct contrast with the included sculptural, purely aesthetic, gothic architecture designs. These presented a dilemma in making the catapult functional without impediment from superficial details. By having it remain functional it invites user interaction, but should still present enough of a sculptural quality to induce a hesitation to touch it. Thus, it brings into question if this should be used as a functional object at all, or remain a purely visual piece.