Technology in search of the sublime

A musicomic manifesto!

Ge Wang

https://artful.design/
WHAT WE MAKE, MAKES US.
We are here, and the time is now... 

Hi there! I'm GE!* 

I am a Designer and a Computer Music Researcher. 

C'mon in! 

*pronounced "guh" 

We will use Computer Music Design as our lens, but the principles of Artful Design can be applied to any domain. 

This is a manifesto on the Artful Design of Technology... a meditation on the nature, purpose, and meaning of design.
I create tools, toys, instruments, and experiences. I work with technology to connect people and musical expression. And I use design to bind together technology and art, engineering and the humanities.

I'm a professor at Stanford University, in the Center for Computer Research in Music and Acoustics, or CCRMA.*

*pronounced "karma"

I design by writing code.

```
// our radius
.99999 => float r;
// our delay order
500 => float l;
// set delay
L::samp => delay.delay;
// set dissipation factor
Math.pow( R, L ) => delay.gain;
// place zero
-1 => lowpass.zero;

// fire excitation
1 => imp.gain;
// for one delay round
L::samp => now;
// cease fire
0 => imp.gain;
```

I design new tools — like CHUCK, a music programming language.

...to synthesize new sounds and experiment with musical interactions.

There is an art to design.

I design sound and graphics in tandem.
I build new interfaces for musical expression...

...combining sound design and interaction design.

I invent new instruments that we don’t have names for -- and that often defy classification!

We use these instruments to craft performances for laptop ensembles...

...like SLOrk, the Stanford Laptop Orchestra!
I design apps to transform mobile devices... into expressive musical instruments... to be played by anyone... novices and pros.

In 2008, I co-founded a mobile music startup called Smule... and designed Ocarina for the iPhone.

这些问题，玩具，乐器，已达到的用户超过200万！

这些游戏，玩具，乐器，已达到的用户超过200万！

I served as chief creative officer and CTO during our early years, until I stepped down in 2013.

How to play:
- Hold the phone as you might a sandwich.
- Blow into the microphone to play.
- Use multitouch to control pitch.
- Tilt the phone down to add vibrato.

Within that time, I also designed Ocarina 2, Magic Piano, and other music-making artifacts.

These games, toys, instruments have reached more than 200 million users.
...a small feeling that there is someone, somewhere out there... and that we are more alike than different.

This kind of design would not be possible without technology...

...yet hopefully the user never notices the technology.

Reflecting something of our nature, technology pushes forward, always changing, ever evolving.

It is artful design -- how we make use of technology -- that is our constant. Design should understand something of our needs, dreams, fears. It should enrich our lives, reinforce our humanity. Design should make us feel.

No matter your walk of life or what you think about technology or art, and no matter our differences, I invite you to venture into a realm where technology meets the intangible...

A realm of...
ARTFUL DESIGN
TECHNOLOGY IN SEARCH OF THE SUBLIME
written and designed by GE WANG
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In our age of rapidly evolving technology and unyielding human restlessness and discord, design ought to be more than simply functional; it should be expressive, socially meaningful, and humanistic. Design should transcend the purely technological, encompass the human, and strive for the sublime.

Sublime design presents itself, first and last, as a useful thing, but nestled within that window of interaction lies the novel articulation of a thought, an idea, a reflection—an invisible truth that speaks to us, intimate yet universal, purposeful without necessity of purpose, that leaves us playful, understood, elevated. It is a transformation so subtle that it escapes our conscious grasp but that once experienced—like music—we would never want to be without again.

Design should be artful.