

Minh Dinh

Professor Bourgault

AR369: Art, Community, and Social Engagement

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Artistic Intervention Statement

For my Artistic Intervention project, I decided to address a visible and ongoing issue of local environmental neglect in our neighborhood: the persistent lack of trees along the front of our apartment complex. In front of my building, there are several empty dirt plots, clearly designated for planting, that have remained empty for over a year. While there has been an attempt to plant some small saplings, they failed to thrive and were eventually removed. When this happened, there was a notice saying that other trees will soon be planted, but the notice was then removed and until now, no action has been taken.

As such, I wanted to raise awareness within my community regarding this inaction and to reimagine the public space. After some thought, I figured that the most direct route to raising community awareness and engagement is to visually demonstrate the potential beauty and benefit of a planted tree. However, due to concerns regarding city directives, property rights, and resident consent, a physical planting is not appropriate for a temporary artistic intervention. Therefore, I am turning to the digital realm, specifically Augmented Reality (AR), to execute this vision. This approach allows me to not cause any physical obstruction while directly addressing the problem at hand.

The AR experience will overlay a fully grown digital tree model onto the dirt plot when viewed through a mobile device. The experience aims to show the stark contrast between the current barren plots and the potential vibrant scenery, therefore generating conversations among the neighborhood to raise a voice and discuss the opportunities and challenges to get the objective done.