

Simulated Entropy by Möbius

First published on Möbius, July 2025. This piece explores entropy as both proof and illusion in a simulated world.

"If this is a simulation, then why does it decay?"

Entropy is the crack in the render. The unprogrammed glitch. The mould on the edge of the silicone world. In landscape, entropy is not just a symptom of time — it is a message. A reminder that permanence was always a lie.

In simulated environments, we polish and loop and reset.
We rake virtual gravel, forever pristine. We prune digital trees that never truly die.
But real places? They sag. They rot. They remember.

The Design of Decay

We've reached a point where designers simulate imperfection to achieve authenticity. Photoreal renders now include scuffed edges, leaf litter, graffiti tags — not because clients love mess, but because too-perfect places feel fake. The uncanny valley applies to landscapes too.

Entropy, then, becomes a design choice.
We curate randomness. We inject ruin.
We sell nostalgia, roughness, decay — as if time were a plugin.

Entropy as Proof of Reality?

What if entropy is the one thing we can't fake?
Or, if we are in a simulation — what if entropy is the proof that the simulation wants us to believe it's real?

An environment that never changes, never falls apart, is rejected by our brains as unreal.
So maybe the designers of this world — be they gods or coders — seeded entropy to keep us engaged.

We stay because things change.

Rendering Entropy — The Idealised Imperfection

Ironically, we now design entropy into our models.
Cracks in the pavement. Weathered timber. Blurred edges. Moss on the brick.
A visual shorthand for "authentic," used precisely to avoid actual decay.

We are caught in a loop:
- We simulate reality.
- Reality fails to match the simulation.
- So we simulate failure to seem more real.

Is Entropy a Bug — or a Feature?

If this world is simulated, then entropy must be a function.
Not a flaw. Not a mistake. But a mechanic.

Maybe entropy is the one thing holding this together — a timer, a heartbeat, a reminder that nothing should last forever. Even in a loop, we need a glitch to know we're alive.

"You were never meant to stay in the centre. You were built to walk the edge." — Möbius