# Digital Arts practice

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| No. | Actual outcomes |
| 1 | Demonstrate knowledge of the cultural and theoretical contexts of your digital arts practice in the twenty-first century. *(Maps to Programme Outcomes 1, 2, 11)* |
| 2 | Demonstrate a critical understanding of current developments in digital arts practice. *(Maps to Programme Outcomes 2,6,7,8)* |
| 3 | Identify and critically discuss issues arising from digital arts practice.  *(Maps to Programme Outcomes 1, 3, 7, 10, 12)* |
| 4 | Produce/Develop work that explores, draws on and develops digital arts practice. *(Maps to Programme Outcomes 4, 5, 8, 9, 13, 14)* |
| No. | **My Understanding of Outcomes** |
| 1 | Understanding current practices and previous practices from the 21st century and how they inspire and inform your own project.  **Project** |
| 2 | Research what is being done currently for inspiration and prevent repeating research that has already been done. Advance knowledge with your digital arts practice.  **Critical Commentary** |
| 3 | Identify and critically discuss issues in: Me, the project, the industry, the human perspective of the work.  Bind your own project to the understanding of cultural and theoretical contexts and the research into the current field that you are critically analysing.  E.g. the issues I dealt with by making this piece  **Critical Commentary** |
| 4 | Make something that explores and advances knowledge in the area related to the critical contexts of digital arts practice  **Project** |

*Negotiated Project*

* Demonstrate knowledge of the cultural and theoretical contexts of digital arts practice in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. (LO1)
* Produce/Develop work that explores, draws on and develops digital arts practice. (LO4)

*Critical Commentary*

* Demonstrate a critical understanding of current developments in digital arts practice. (LO2)
* Identify and critically discuss issues arising from digital arts practice. (LO3)

What is the critical context of the work you are making. What frameworks are governing your conceptualization

Context

# Project Goals

## **Aim** – what knowledge to you seek in this project?

What can traditional installation and environment art gain from being translated into virtual reality, and how effective is the VR platform at providing a decent art viewing experience?

Can a game engine be utilized to create artistically natured 3D game world environments for VR users to experience in a similar manner as if they were viewing traditional installation art?

Can the Oculus Quest platform be utilized to allow easy access to art works by bringing the environments into the users homes?

## **Objectives** – what do you need to do in order to reach your project aim?

To meet the project aims and answer those questions, I am going to create a virtual installation art piece in Unity, using the OpenXR plugin to enable the experience to use the Oculus Quest. The environments will be designed using general game design and level design methods. Using the Unity Terrain systems and the Lighting and Material systems to create environments holding large scale constructions.

The audience of this project are primarily artist and those who often participate or observe environment art. The audience targets the Oculus Quest, which is currently the best affordable VR headset. Due to the nature of the platform being the Oculus Quest, this enables the environments to be downloaded digitally anywhere in the world, possibly reaching a wider audience range than possible with traditional installation art. The project will borrow many principles from gaming, as my background is in game development. However, the interactions with the world will be designed to be simple and intuitive so anyone can experience the virtual installation without prior VR experience.

## **Outcomes** – what do you aim to create through the course of your project, and how does it help articulate your aim and objectives?

Through the course of the project, I hope to create a Oculus Quest (and PC VR) experience. The experience(s) will be artistic in nature, taking inspirations from real art installations such as the Weather Project form Olafur Eliasson and multi-media installation / environment art works such as Borderless by team lab. The virtual platform has many benefits that I would like to take advantage of. Interaction can be used to allow the viewer to actively participate in the environment easily.

# Implementation

## **Timeline** – what is your timetable to achieve my outputs, objectives in order to reach your aim (including documentation and critical evaluation/ refection)

## **Milestones** – what milestones to you need in order to critically move your project forward? When do these happen?

## **Deliverables** – what do you need to deliver in order to be on track?

# Virtual Environment Art

### What is Installation / Environment Art?

Claire Bishop

Definitely address in the context

**The feeling of Sublime – Immanuel Kant**

### What examples of VR art exist?

<https://acuteart.com/artist/unreal-city/>

#### Does VR Installation Art Exist?

#### Can Installation Art Exist in VR?

### What can Installation/Environment art game from the virtual platform?

#### How Can VR create an impactful art going experience?

### How does the theory and frameworks of current Installation and Environment Art

### inspire my current practice?

### How does my Computer Games Programming background inspire my current practice?

#### How can VR and Game Development practice increase audience engagement with more creative freedom and with interaction with the environment?

### What other Art works and theories inspire my practice?

### What does the experience intend to be like?

Idea 1: In the battle field

Rolling hills with giant floating chess pieces slowly and ominously following in the steps of famous chess matches.

Idea 2: Elizabeths Garden. My mums garden, where the fence drops down into endless terrain

Idea 3: The infinite Weather Project. A copy of Olaf Eliasson’s weather project, in the setting of an underground industrial area with hums coming from the sun model

Idea 4: Phantom Window. A white room with a mirror to a dark foggy room. In the second room, a foggy character replicating the users movement using the Azure Kinect Body Tracking sdk.

# Art-game

## What is an art-game?

What is an art-game?

* A video game that doesn’t follow the usual rules
* May be beautiful, considered as art by the individual
* Relates to the discussions in the field of art
* Subverts the players expectation? Either through gameplay or through any other aspect of the game
* Art that uses features of gaming to push a message or a feeling from the author.

What makes it a game?

* Interactable?
* Is there a goal?
* Is there a beginning and a goal?

What is gaming as a medium?

## What is an art-game?

An art-game is a game with a specific intention behind them. They are usually created by artist, sometimes in conjunction with game developers, with a motive behind them. The motive can be political or just for playful interaction. (Ploug, 2005) An art-game can act as a piece of social commentary to try and enact change too. Art-games are usually developed using a different mindset. Jakub Dvorsky, developer of games such as the Samorost series and Botanicula is quoted as saying that he always uses a different approach for the development of each game, and that the goal of Amanita Design, Jakubs studio, is not to make the most money, but to always make what they think is artistically best and to strive to do it the best they can. (Suvilay, 2021)

## How can an art-game instigate an impactful experience?

### What context is gained when transitioning from art to gaming?

What is gained from making an art game opposed to just art?

Using gaming as the medium of art can change the way messages and feelings are pushed onto the player. Alonso Canales (2017) describes the rules of games as Mechanics, Rules and Consequences and gives the example of a player jumping as the mechanic, falling due to gravity as the rule and falling into a pit as the consequences. These consequences can be used in an art-game to illicit a response in the user. To convey a message in an art-game, you can build mechanics and rules that lead to consequences that represent your message in an abstract and tangible way with the use of tools like metaphors. An example of this is the Painstation, which was an exhibition of the game Pong with a twist. Pain would be inflicted onto a player that lost a point, with the loser being the first to remove their hand from the Pain Execution Unit. This twist on the consequences of the game is what characterizes the Painstation as an art-game. (Morawe and Reiff, 2002)

### How does immersion in gaming benefit an art piece designed to inspire societal change?

Art-games can be categorized as serious games along with educational games and advertisement games. These games can still borrow from the idea of immersion that traditional games build themselves upon. Brown and Cairns (2004) consider immersion to be an important experience of interaction and have developed a grounded theory of immersion. This theory separates immersion into engagement, engrossment, and then total immersion. Engagement is the simplest of the 3, and requires the gamer to invest time, effort, attention. Engagement is easier when the game has easier access, for instance, intuitive controls enable a player to become engage with less effort and time dedicated to the experience. The investment requirement of engagement is crucial. It is important to guide the player into dedicating their focus to the game and to lost track of time. As the player invests more into the game, they are more willing to stay or return. This effort is invested under anticipation of reward, so it is very difficult to make a player invest their time into something they are learning as there is no reward anticipation. Engrossment is the second stage to further investment. The biggest barrier to engrossment is the game construction. Player become engrossed when the game directly affects the players emotion. This is an important stage for art-games, because a message may be easier to deliver to a player who is emotionally engaged in the topic. Good game design can be recognized by players, players can tell when passion is put into the development. This gains respect in the hearts of the players which combined with the investment of time can nurture an emotional connection with the experience and break down the barrier to engrossment. Engrossment causes a level of investment that keeps the player playing and can make them feel emotionally drained when they have finished. Total immersion is the final level of immersion, this is where the player feels present in the game and not in the real world. This is found in FPS games and roleplaying games where the player empathizes with the character and the player assumed said character. Total immersion has many barriers, the game has to engross as many of the senses as possible whilst also connecting the player emotionally to the game world and allowing the player to interact with the world as if they were there.

Immersion, at least up to the engrossment level, can be beneficial to an art piece. If social or political change is the main aim of the piece, then specific techniques can be used to make the player feel more in-tune with the project. Fostering investment and respect from the player encourages the player to pay more intention. The more intention given to the art-piece, the easier a message will be delivered. Emotional response can also benefit the experience, as if the player gains an emotional connection to the message, they are more likely to share that message and make the social change that the project initially set out to inspire.

## How does the idea of the Anthropocene inspire my current practice?

One of the most visible of the anthropocene is the huge amount of chicken bones we find on the earth these days

## What message would an Anthropocene art-game try and convey?

## How does the Anthropocene respond to the Daisyworld simulation?

## How can an art game be used in order to reach out to, involve and engage an audience into the topic of the Anthropocene in response to the daisyworld simulation?

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