Joseph Horowitz

Final Project: Kenopsia (working title)

Recently I have been really inspired by the concept of long range contact through networks both physically and virtually; ie. the internet, radios, landlines, TV, phone service. I'm specifically interested in the way that we as social creatures have created these networks that collapse the static distances between us and allow us to freely 'move' with agency in these seeming small virtual spaces that are mapped onto very real vast spaces.

Its this sense of vastness and emptiness that I want to inject back into these networks again. I enjoy the concept exploration of a virtual space, wandering through signals, binary and static in an attempt to find human contact. For reference, I'm drawing from trucker radios, late-night radio shows and dead games/websites/chat-rooms.

Kenopsia will be either a p5.js program or processing game in which the player sits in the cockpit of a spaceship. They do not fly or leave the ship, instead the player has access to the ships interstellar radio. The player is able to adjust the 'frequency' of the radio via two buttons and a dial. On one screen will be a 'map' of where in space the player's signal is traveling. Their signal bounces from satellite to satellite, being blocked by planets/ asteroids/ moons. Adjusting the frequency will adjust the path. On another screen will be text displaying whatever the radio picks up. The player will be able to change their frequency to navigate this space and find any broadcast dialogue.

With this project I want the player to sit back in their spaceship on an alien planet in who knows where and tune in to the sounds of distant people and planets, using their radio as a vessel with which to explore the vastness of space and static.
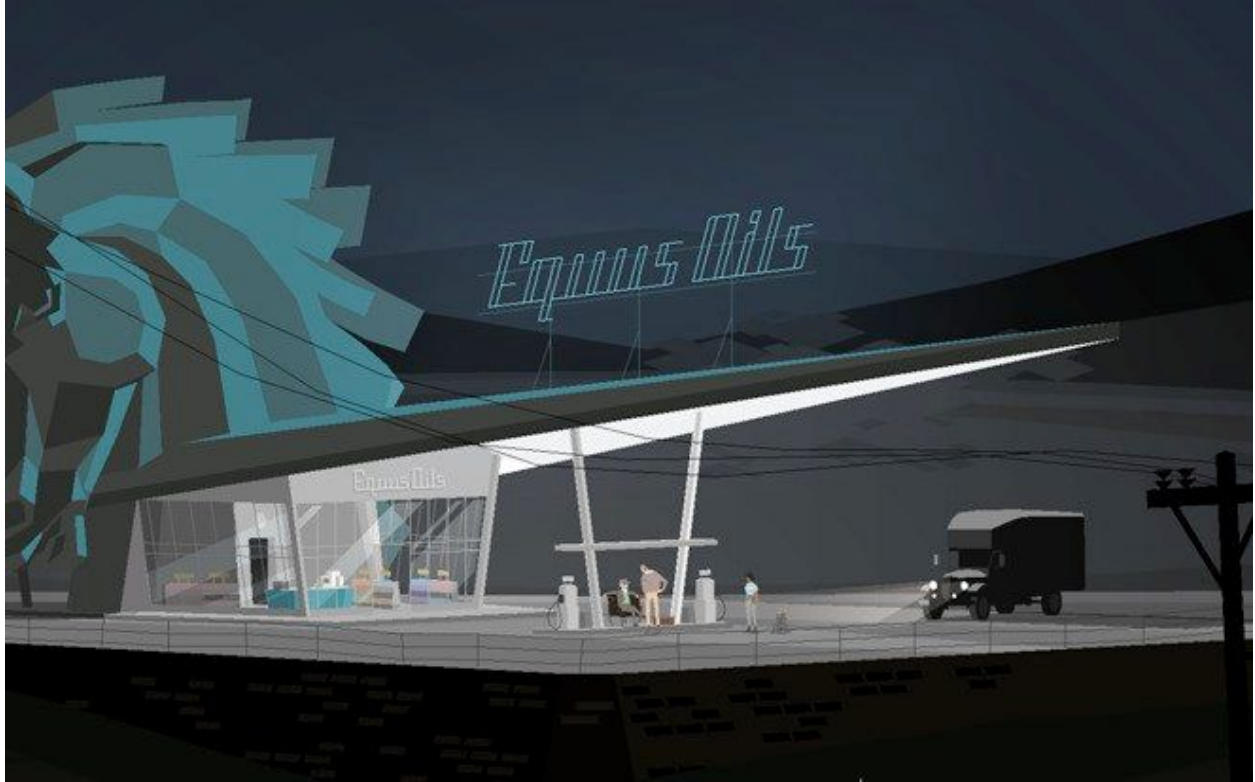
Current most polished sketch:

(also I do plan on fleshing this project out much more this winter and next semester. This will function for me as a smaller prototype to a larger future project.)

Research and Inspiration:

Kentucky Route 0:

I played this game after it was recommended by Marie Fulton during her presentation. To me this game captures the forlorn, eerie atmosphere of these transient, in-between places. Additionally I love how the game has a narrative (however hard it is to actually make sense of) while also allowing the player to just sort of aimlessly drift. This feeling is something I really would like to strive for in this project.

Fire Underground - Nick Crockett:

Fire underground also captured this strange drifting feeling that I really enjoy. Additionally, This animation has a real, functioning railway with trains that carry raw materials to factories and plants. I was fascinated by the idea of actual simulations within narrative storytelling and it inspired me to deliver dialogue through the exploration of a simulated space.
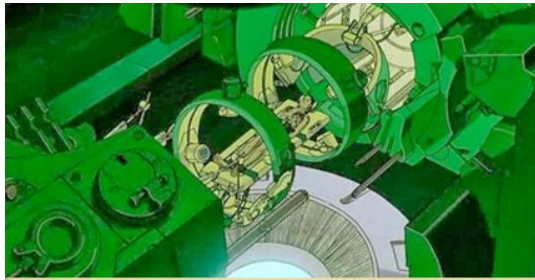
Journey:

What I really appreciate about Journey is its focus on transient human connection. With only chimes, chirps, and twirls I was able to communicate with another person somewhere in the world and form a connection with them.

xs

MOODBOARD