

Oceania & Climate Change

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// General Overview

In this project, we aim at expanding the scope of the physical exhibition by using augmented reality to convey the connection between the boats of the South Pacific and climate change. The visitor will experience the physical exhibition, that of the boats, but in addition to that, through AR, they will also experience a curated exhibition of climate change : how it is linked to the boats, to South Pacific, to the world, and why action is urgently needed to curb its effects.

This exhibition implores visitors to adopt the ideology of sustainability into their lives, not just as a practise, but as a way of living. It presents climate change as a non-linear narrative as a way of offering a different understanding of the urgent topic; especially a perspective into a region where the effects of global warming are most evident.

We worked towards augmenting one boat - a boat not from the collection of the Humboldt Forum, but one that we acquired most information about in our research, the Hōkūle 'a. Surrounding this boat and its story, we have attempted at giving three different ways of understanding the topic of climate change

- through the story of the boat
- through the story of people connected to the South Pacific boats
- through the story of sea.

The boats are at the centre of the narrative focus, and the augmented experience truly works with the physicality of the space and the objects.

Apart from offering a different way of understanding climate change, not through numbers or data, which tend to overwhelm and distance audiences, but through emotion and human connection/stories; we also offer a space to reflect, for visitors to be 'activated' into action through reflection, writing out/speaking out their objective, and through reading / listening to other people's reflections.

The medium of AR allows us to layer on the physical exhibition of the boats another experience of understanding how climate change is affecting the region and the rest of the world, and what we can do about restricting its effects; that is, AR enables us to provide two perspectives at once to enhancing understanding. AR has also helped us provide an experience where visitors are encouraged to explore the actual space and objects. Visitors will be offered so much more than objective information of boats and Oceania; they will see how their actions have been affecting this region and the world. The learning outcomes from the project is to enable understanding through a non linear perspective, diverging from the data heavy path, and to offer a space to form their own relations through this understanding.

//Context and Core Interaction

The project has a more specific context, as the predefined direction is to be creating conversation/activation on the cultural and specific narratives of the people of Oceania (as an entire region), while inculcating leads that would push the viewers to think more actively about climate change, especially given the perspective of how Oceania, and hence there people would be the first to affected in mass scale (to the real threat of disappearance) by it.

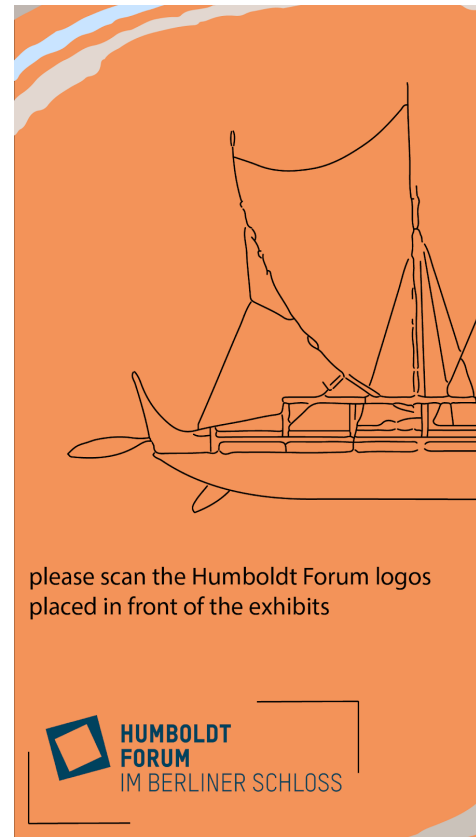
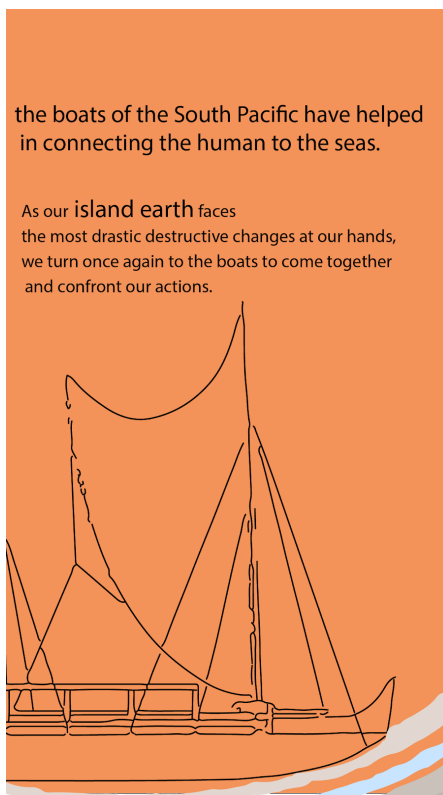
The core of the experience revolves around the story of a singular boat journey that was a milestone in the history of Hawaii, where the traversal by the first wave of Hokule'a sailors marked a huge turn of interests both globally, but more importantly inside their own society, as the onward leg of the journey was essentially an experiment that successfully applied the sailing methods ancient Hawaiians, specifically in the non-use of western "instruments" such as nautical charts, compasses, and sextets. Though the achievements of this voyage was many, what we bring to focus are the perspectives and excerpts (Quotes from people, statistics of their storage, food requirements, living conditions etc.) that pushes, in the first plaque, a perspective of the life that was experienced in the boat, as a possible allusion to what we may be/should be living like on earth. In a very minimal sense, these facts are introduced as floating texts around the object (boat) that motivates users to, on one hand, explore the object, but while revealing information slowly as the reach far end from the point of starting, where there is a large hovering text that contextualizes these facts of the boat, essentially laying out the idea that "Houle'a" had 34 days to fix and be sustainable for/with, we have only 12 years, for "our" boat.

While the first plaque revolves around introducing these ideas from a more factual space, which is aimed on to create a humanized perspective from/"of" the boat, the second plaque is designed to push the users into a more reflective space, by introducing the element of the *people* that were part of the voyage; quotes taken from interviews/notes during/after the voyage express on one side their individual personal situations, such that of thinking of their children and family, but also their worries that revolve around these topics, projecting into the future. With the familiarity established in the first plaque of the experience being about information that exists around the object (another boat), the users move around the various boats where they see augmented versions of these people; pictures grayscale to establish their presence, with texts/quotes placed next to them. Besides the emotional connection made with these people, this would inculcate culture education from a more specific and internal perspective, all while continuing the overarching narrative of climate change and urgent need of it's dialogue.

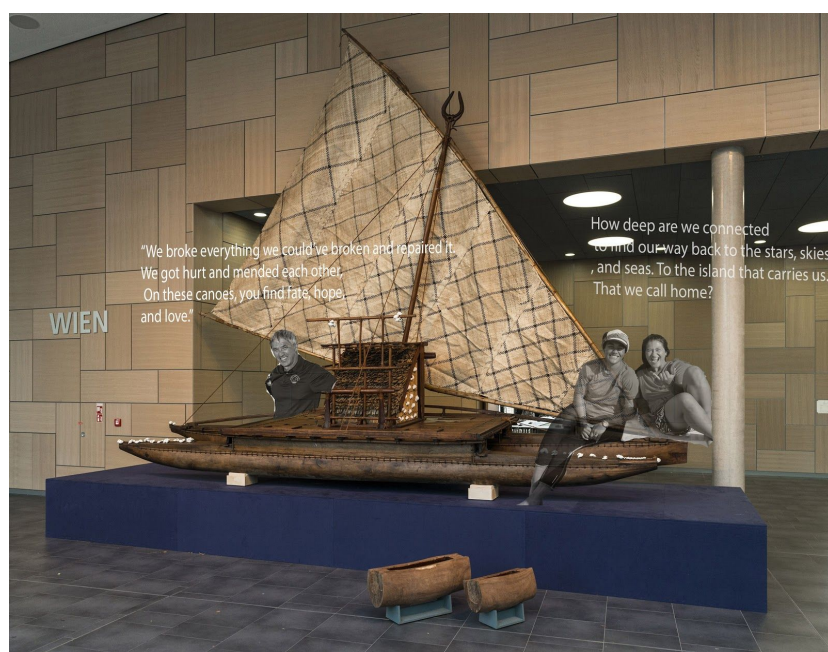
The final plaque triggers an experience that brings in direct instances of what the climate changing is doing now; crowd sourced content from natural (arguable) disasters "flood" the rooms. As they look around; the floor is filled with water, and moving around, they see videos/clips of these disasters throughout the space. Our functional prototype ends their, but conceptually, we envision a continuation of this into a reflective space; by the means of a call to action; in the app; they may write a letter/test addressed to someone they'd like to impact, whether a politician, to a friend, to someone from the Oceanic region, from the experience and knowledge they've just had/gained.

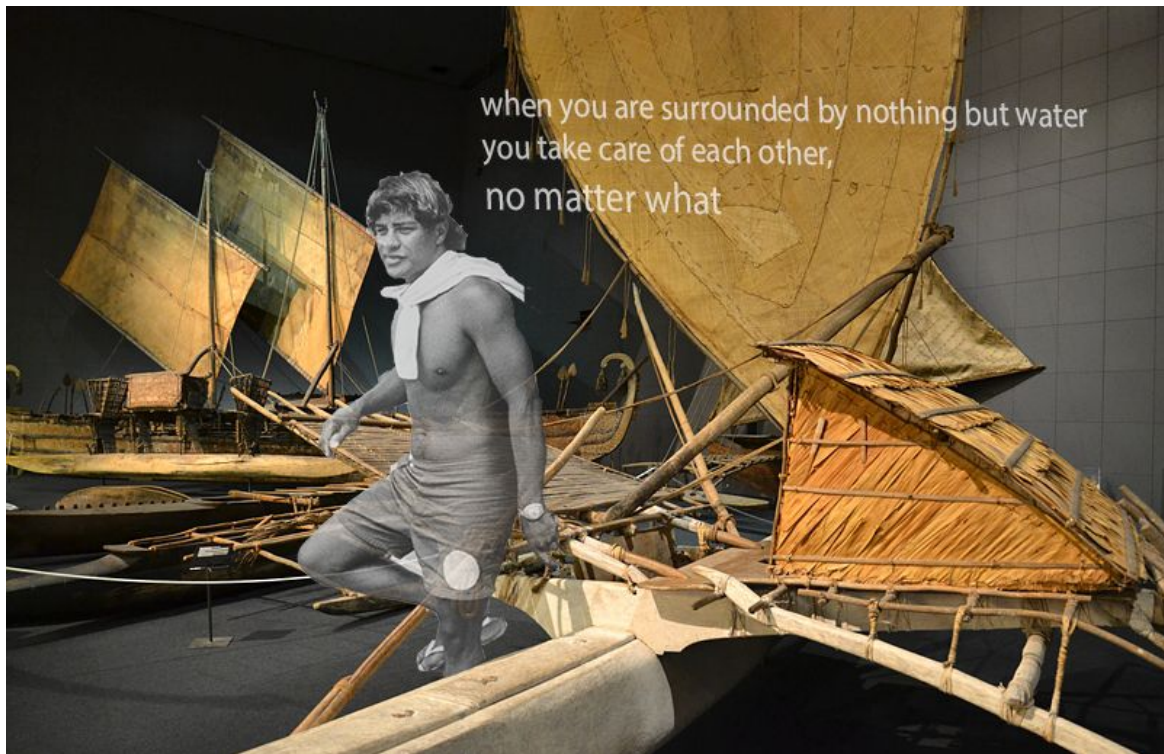
//navigation flow & interface

The app starts with an introductory screen that will firstly introduce the space by orienting the narrative of Hokule'a, or in the perspective of the museum, the narrative they will presenting; with the second page we direct them to scan the plaques to start the experience.



(above) start scenes
(side) augmented
plaque 2





As each experience comes to an end, a screen similar to the second will guide them to the next unique plaque, triggering a fade in to the experience; this happens til the final plaque after which the app conceptually turns into the reflection booth mode where they can head into the call to action.

The overall navigational flow of the app runs very much as a peripheral/parallel experience to experience the space, where it does the partial work of navigating through the space, while still giving freedom for the users to break into their own discovery of the space in their own pace.

//assets

- photos and field notes of people from chosen narrative
- Color scheme of Oceanic Seas
- Humboldt Forum logos and versions
- Videos/clips of natural disasters in the past 2 years;

//Experience Overview

Once the app is downloaded and opened, the visitor sees the *start screen*. The start screen clearly details that the augmented experience of the exhibition is going to tackle the topic of climate change; that is, AR will be used to link and elaborate on the topic of climate change. The start screen will also provide instructions on how to use the app. The visitor will be

instructed to scan the plaques in front of each boat to enter the experience, the visitor will also be shown what the plaques look like.

As the visitor scans the first plaque, the augmented texts appear around the first boat exhibit. Here, as discussed, we have taken the first boat to be Hokule'a. As the plaque is scanned, texts appear around the Hokule'a. The first text reads,

“For you and your family to survive 34 days on Hōkūle‘a, you would need...”

The visitor then sees texts all around the the boat, right up till the opposite end. The visitor, then, makes a choice to go one way around the boat.

As the texts appear all around the Hokule'a, surrounding the boat, the visitor walks closer, to read the text that appears as though on the body of the boat itself. The texts read:

- You would need 900 kg of food stored for your family and you.
- Sea water is not fit for consumption, you would need 1500 kg of water.
- You would have to think before you use anything.
- You would have to pay close attention to how you affect the sea, and how the sea affects you.
- You would have to learn to trust each other, the sea, the skies, to take care of your family, of Hōkūle‘a
- You would have exchange your luxuries for your friendship with Hōkūle‘a and the sea

The visitor encounters these texts in their own manner, according to the path they have chosen. The texts also don't have a linear progression, they can be experienced from both side.

These texts give the visitor the idea that living on the Hokule'a is eerily similar to how we must live on the planet to save it from the effects of global warming, that Hokule'a is being used as the metaphor for living on earth; and thus to live sustainably on earth, we must follow the example of those who have sailed/lived on the Hokule'a.

As the visitor reaches the opposite end, having looked at the boat closely with the texts, they now see two more texts, side by side each other. They read:

“The Hokule'a had 34 days”

“We have 12 years”

These sentences read in the context that they they were given (of climate change in the start screen) enables them to connect the boat to climate change; to connect that living on the planet has to be how they lived on the Hokule'a, and that must be achieved in 12 years. It is a hopeful and a fearful sentence at the same time.

As they look up from this opposite end, they see a text towering over the entire exhibit which reads, “We only have 12 years”, making that link between the boat and climate change. Making the urgency felt.

The visitor can now choose to re-read the texts, or read the texts on the other side, or choose to stay in the space. They space when they want to move on and end the exhibition.

The visitor then moves on to the next plaque, scanning that, figures of people appear around the boat, sized to appear life-size. Next to these people also appear short texts which talk about the human connections these people have experienced while travelling on the boat; how they have felt connected to the earth and to each other; how sailing taught them kindness, and how kindness and mindfulness is the only way to move forward to combat climate change. The visitor here thinks about how, perhaps, the distance we feel from the physical world, from the environment, may also be a reason why climate change has so drastically been aggravated.

This app also encourages visitors to move in the space, encountering AR images of people and texts, up-close.

Then, moving on to the final plaque that we have created an augmentation around. The visitor moves on to the third boat. As soon as the plaque is scanned, the floor changes into ocean, the entire floor becomes a moving water body. Here, the ‘ocean’ is covered with footage of thunderstorms, cyclones wrecking homes, floods, people getting trapped by the water; these videos are spread all over the ocean; so the visitor is directly, unmercifully confronted with images of what climate change looks like when it gets personal.

This visual then dissolves into another set of visuals which consists of a montage of video footage of activities that we do in everyday life that aggravate the global warming effects in the long run; in other words, activities that we perform that are highly unsustainable. This will be a self-produced montage of:

- Huge amounts of plastic being used as packaging in supermarkets
- Huge amounts of straws being sold/used
- Small bits of plastic being thrown away - these bits are not recyclable
- Tap water trickling down; not closed fully

After this montage, the visitor will then see a screen where they will be prompted with a that question, “what now?”. They will, then, be asked to reflect on their actions and devise solutions for a sustainable future by:

- Being prompted to write a letter to their representatives in government or;
- Being prompted to write a letter to a child in Oceania or;
- Being prompted to record a message sharing their thoughts to the people who visit the exhibition or;
- Being prompted to share thoughts on social media.

At the end of the exhibition, there will stand a 'research booth' which will contain all research materials that can be taken home, links that can be copied, and all resources that informed the research of the exhibition.

// conclusion

In essence, our pitch for the Oceania project app is one that's trying to create the empathic and factual connection that the project is trying to make, with relevance to culture specific education and increasing awareness regarding climate change, from a minimal, subtle, yet personal point of view. The aim is to create the intended effect not by bombardment of strong views or facts, but rather by introducing a voice and message that starts from a soft and suggestive tone, slowly working it's way into the more serious and explicit voice; reflective of what should be the seriousness of the subject at matter. In all through this, the importance is given to create the emotional connection, while maintaining a certain sense/level of didactic facts, so the we do not lose focus of what the true core of entire experience is; of people, lifes, futures, and most importantly, our planet earth.