

## Survival “Simulator”

Keywords:

Theme: **reversal**

Aesthetic: **fantasy**

Feeling: **empathy**

Introduction:

This project is about a virtual world with unusual, irregular or even reversal laws of nature compared with the world we are living in, targeting letting the audiences think and feel from the perspective of non-humans.

The project's main purpose is to let humans empathize with other beings that are easily neglected, and notice the importance of protecting the natural environment.

Inspiration:

My initial scene is a tiny individual planet that has mostly forest and a small ruin. It has one huge elder tree with wisdom that act as the controller of the planet. It is surrounded by sea, and covered by a dome that protects it. As I've mentioned, the idea of the forest came from "The Lord of the Rings", like the Mirkwood Forest. I'm fascinated by the mystery ancient trees with tangled branches.

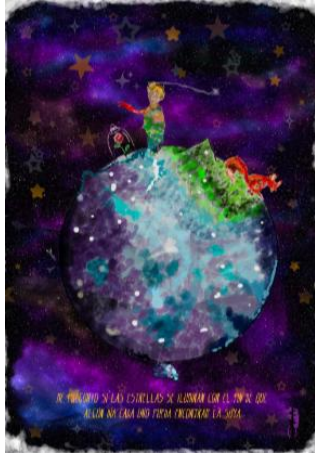


Mirkwood Forest

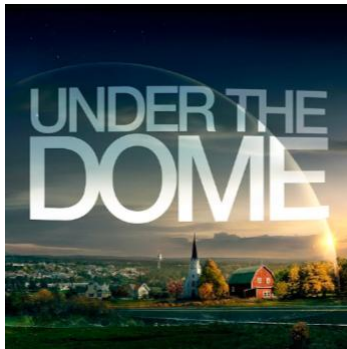


The Hobbit-Filming location

Talking plants, empathy, fantasy... Another work that pops into my mind is "The Little Prince". That makes me locate my world on an individual planet; For the small ruin, I referenced an African ruin since that's where humans originated from.



Mentioning environmental issues, in China, especially in Beijing, people all have strong feelings about air pollution. Several years ago a documentary "Under the Dome" by Chai Jing came out, concerning air pollution in China. It has the same name as one of the authors I liked—Stephen King's novel. I then combined them, and create a dome with fog, covering over the planet. I want people to focus on environmental issues in my project.



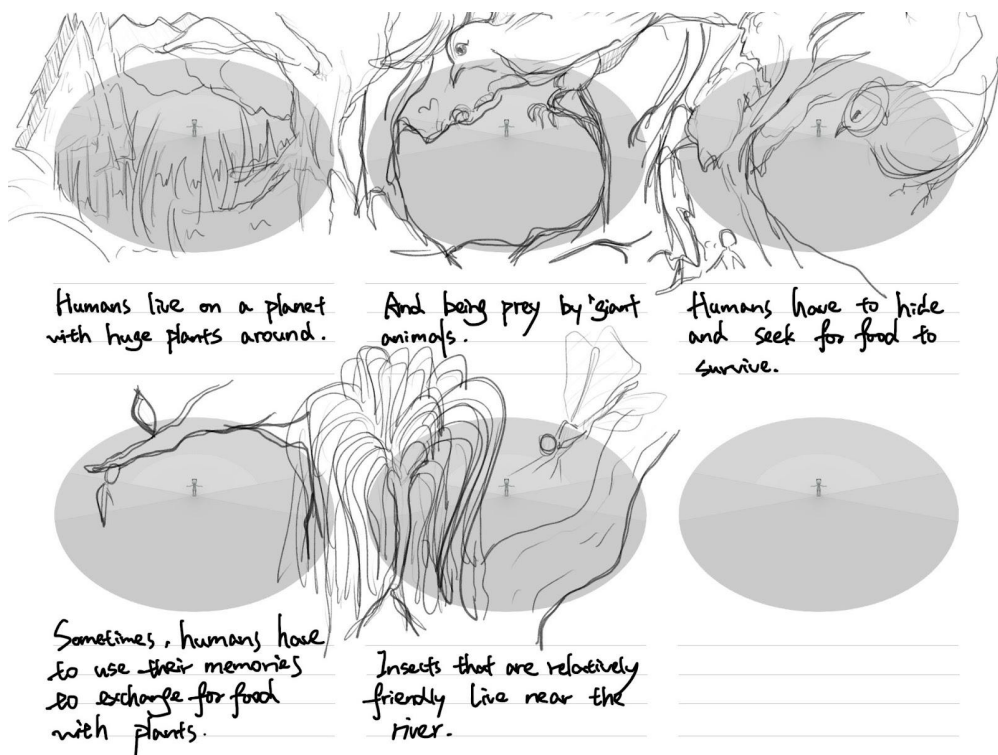
Smog&sandstrom in Beijing

## Process

Mood board:

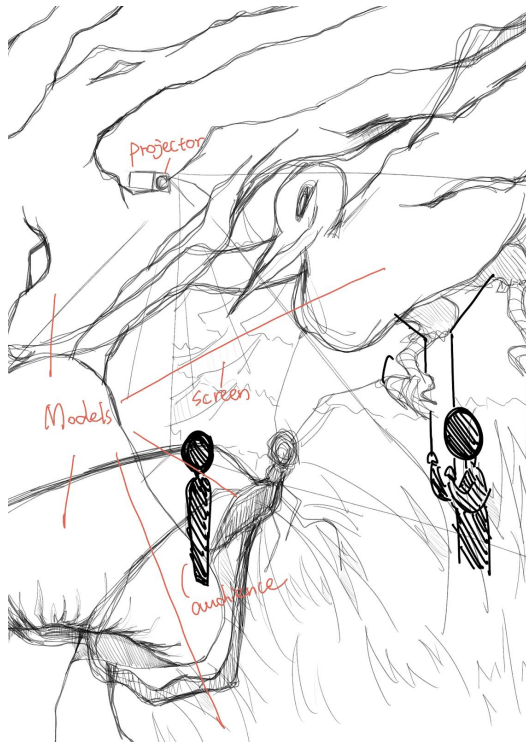


### Storyboard:

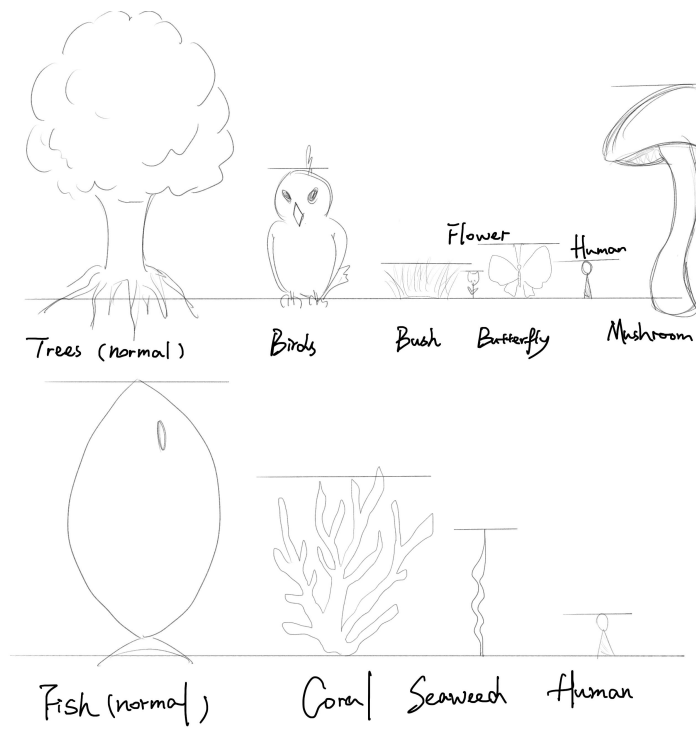




## Installation diagram:



## Visual comparison in sizes:



Forest & Waterworld Size Comparison

Previous logline:

The project will be presented in an interactive first-person three-dimensional environment with a dense and giant forest. In this world, humans as the prey (or at least the vulnerable group) can hardly develop any systems on their own, which is similar to some of the groups being oppressed here on the earth—for instance, endangered species, or any existing minority groups. Humans have to escape from the predation of animals, and try to survive whether from their own efforts or being helped by any possible individuals.

Background and narrative:

On this tiny planet, the land is separated into two different parts—forests and flatlands. Most of the living creatures settle in the forest, and the flatlands are basically ruins of unknown ancient civilizations. Since there are very limited resources for all the species, the forest becomes their active area.

The forest and flatland are separated by a lake. The lake isn't very broad nor deep, but quite swift. While it's lucid, the bottom is unable to be seen. On the east side of the lake, a dense primordial forest sits; on its west side, a deserted flatland with bare land and a few scattered ruins remains. There are millions of living beings in the forest, but it's still relatively quiet; also, near the lake, there are several cabins that look similar to the ruins. Nevertheless, they seemed to be dozens of times bigger than humans, not suitable for animals, and too small for the plants.

Some animals that are unable to fly once try to use rocks and stones to help them to cross the river but fail. The river is like a bottomless pit. Birds and insects can easily cross it, though. With the help of wind or insects, plants and humans gradually get able to do so—but none of them find the flatland valuable. Except for columns and planks, there's merely marbles and soil. Interestingly, though it rains often, the soil is dry. Since creatures cannot survive here in the long term, they decide to settle in the forest. Sun rarely occurs on this planet—during the day, whether raining or not, it's always filled with clouds. At night, though, stars are quite clear. It's hard to tell when the rain is gonna come down, but the temperature is relatively stable.

All of this originated from fungi. They absorb nutrients from the soil, then spread them, feed all the creatures. Until nowadays, the mushrooms are still being respected by others, even though they are no longer the most powerful species. Humans are rare and weak here. There's merely around 200 humans, and each of them acts alone. They are tiny—around the size of simple newborn weeds, or insects. They are not aborigines, and nobody knows where they came from. Since humans here have no gender, they are not able to reproduce. A new human can only be born with the help of mushrooms.

Huge animals here are predators, according to humans. There are mainly birds, and most of the animals have similar sizes, except for insects. They are acting mainly based on instincts, but this does not mean that they do not have intellect. It seems

communication problems only exist between humans and them—though they cannot talk, plants and animals can communicate.

Plants are the one with the highest wisdom here. They can think and talk, though they are unable to move without others' help. According to humans, they are relatively mild, even friendly sometimes. Unlike animals, plants do not need any physical food. They absorb memories as nutrients. So humans are able to “trade” with plants to exchange some food—but, the price might be great according to some of them.

#### Producer's statement:

In this project, I would like to bring out the relationship between humans and nature through building a virtual nature environment.

In my work, I decided to present everything including plants, animals, and humans in a reversal way, which means it's opposite to reality. I focused the variations mainly on the scales and intelligence, stressing the exchange of status or social hierarchy. For instance, humans, as the smallest creatures in the world of my project, are only about one twentieth of the scale of common animals like a bird. Plants, which are even larger than animals, have got senior wisdom, enabling them to control everything both physically and mentally. In the real world, though, humans are in charge of everything, doing whatever they want. This has caused uncountable harms to other species intentionally or unintentionally, even threatening their survival. I realize that it's even hard for people to truly understand other people's feelings, not to mention other non-human creatures. That's why I'd like people to experience what if they have to worry about their survival like many other creatures around them.

I'd like to take this project as a starting point of my works relevant to nature. The same as the sustainable lifestyle we advocate today, I want projects about nature to be one of a consistent topic in my future works. Additionally, adding fantasy elements in this project showcases what I'm passionate about starting several years ago, and will keep exploring in the future.