

 Loreanna Lastoria

## Artist Statement

**With the recent increase in natural disaster occurrences, it seemed fitting to address this issue with my project.** Given how saturated the internet is, it's easy to subconsciously become desensitized to world issues, such as over-pollution. This interactive piece was developed in hopes of bringing environmental concerns into the conversation.

Users are presented with a blank island which they must populate with trees. The more trees the player generates, the longer the island will live. Over the course of this experience, buildings will sprout from the island, therefore, creating pollution. By planting trees, the effects of pollution are withheld. However, if not enough trees are placed, the island will go through different stages of deterioration. The first stage is when the acid rain begins to fall. If trees are still not being planted, the island will experience the second stage which is polluted air and smog. Finally, if the island reaches a certain limit, it will move on to its final stage which is erasure; the screen becomes entirely black.

Users are presented with only one goal—place trees. This feature is activated utilizing a key pressed function using the letter T. Once activated, trees can be placed on the island depending on the mouse pressed input. Sound effects and other object animations will be apparent allowing the scene to really come to life. I used Jazz for the background music as I felt the smooth music made everything seem less game-like. Every stage has a different sound effect which represents what is happening. When the island is destroyed, I included a sparking noise to initiate that the island burned down which I felt was a nice touch. Although various sounds are used, they work very well collectively.

It is important for users to stay conscious of the external factors which will cause damage to the island if not taken seriously. Once the first stage of pollution is reached, it will be very difficult for the user to overcome the pollution levels and revive the island with trees. This is a reference to our current environmental situation. Society has waited too long to implement any regulations concerning pollution, therefore, it is much harder to repair the damage now.

While there is user input, a goal, and quirky illustrations which give the feeling of a game, I still do see my project as an art piece. I believe I successfully achieved this by limiting the number of elements within the game and only including one user input—to place trees. In addition, by limiting my elements, I was able to focus more on each one and develop them into something more intricate. For instance, the acid rain stage is two-dimensional yet looks three-

dimension because of how different variables were mapped. Also, the air pollution particle system uses vectors and Peril Noise, two elements which I had time to fully explore.

Looking further, I imagine this interactive piece to be projected onto large walls where people can walk up and add trees by just touching the screen. A future project perhaps.