

absolute liberation in constraint

oulipo + haiku

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AN INTRODUCTION TO 'OULIPO'



Oulipo refers to **a group of writers**, mainly of French origin, who created unusual writing **constraints** in order to challenge their own abilities and push themselves as creatives and inspire new projects and ideas out of this key concept.

They use constraints as **tools** rather than treating them as limits. This allowed them to discover that there is **creative liberty** even in these restraints.

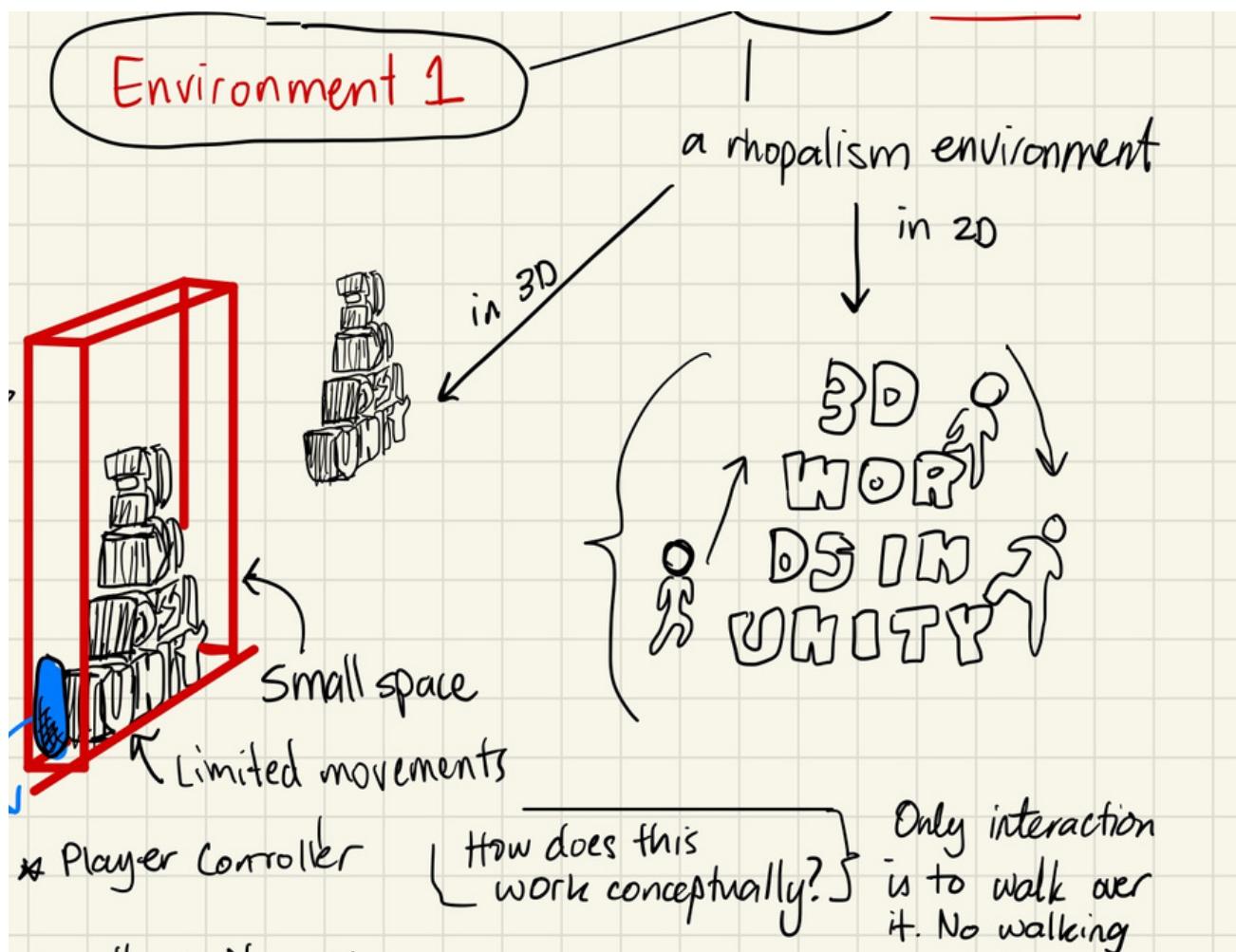
WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO ME

I picked apart what this concept means to me and brainstormed ways to communicate the concept through my digital environments. In doing this, I realised, as an artist that **I often take liberties for granted** and **never** think about limitations and constraints.

Until this unit, I always found myself struggling to create when I have a blank canvas before me. I even struggled to come up with an idea for this assignment myself. But with the focus on limits and constraints the Oulipians strictly adhere to, a burst of new ideas emerged.

I was surprised at what I can make from such unusual restraints.

RHOPALISM



I began by exploring the exercise of “**rhopalism**” and how I could translate that into a digital environment. I thought about making a rhopalist poem and make the words and letters In 3D and have the player simply move around or over it.

But I realised how shallow this idea was and dug even further and pushed myself to do more with the idea of restraints.

**“Every literary work begins with an inspiration...
[which] accommodates itself... to a series of
constraints and procedures that fit inside each other like
Chinese boxes.”**

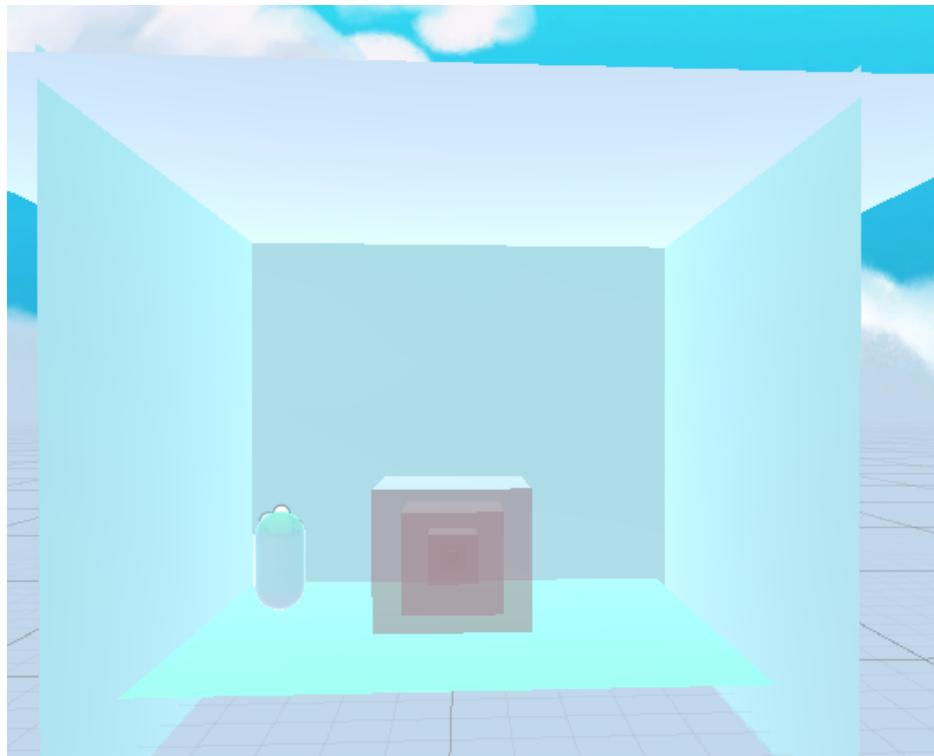
François Le Lionnais, LIPO: First Manifesto (1960), pp. xviii.

I was inspired by Francois and his quote on literary works and their constraints, as well as using Chinese boxes as a metaphor, where you find more within each box as if you're **peeling the layers** to creative liberation as you ironically allow yourself to enter into more and more restrictions. I have this idea, that in constraint there is **deeper substance**.

**“Freeing literature by
tightening its rules.”**

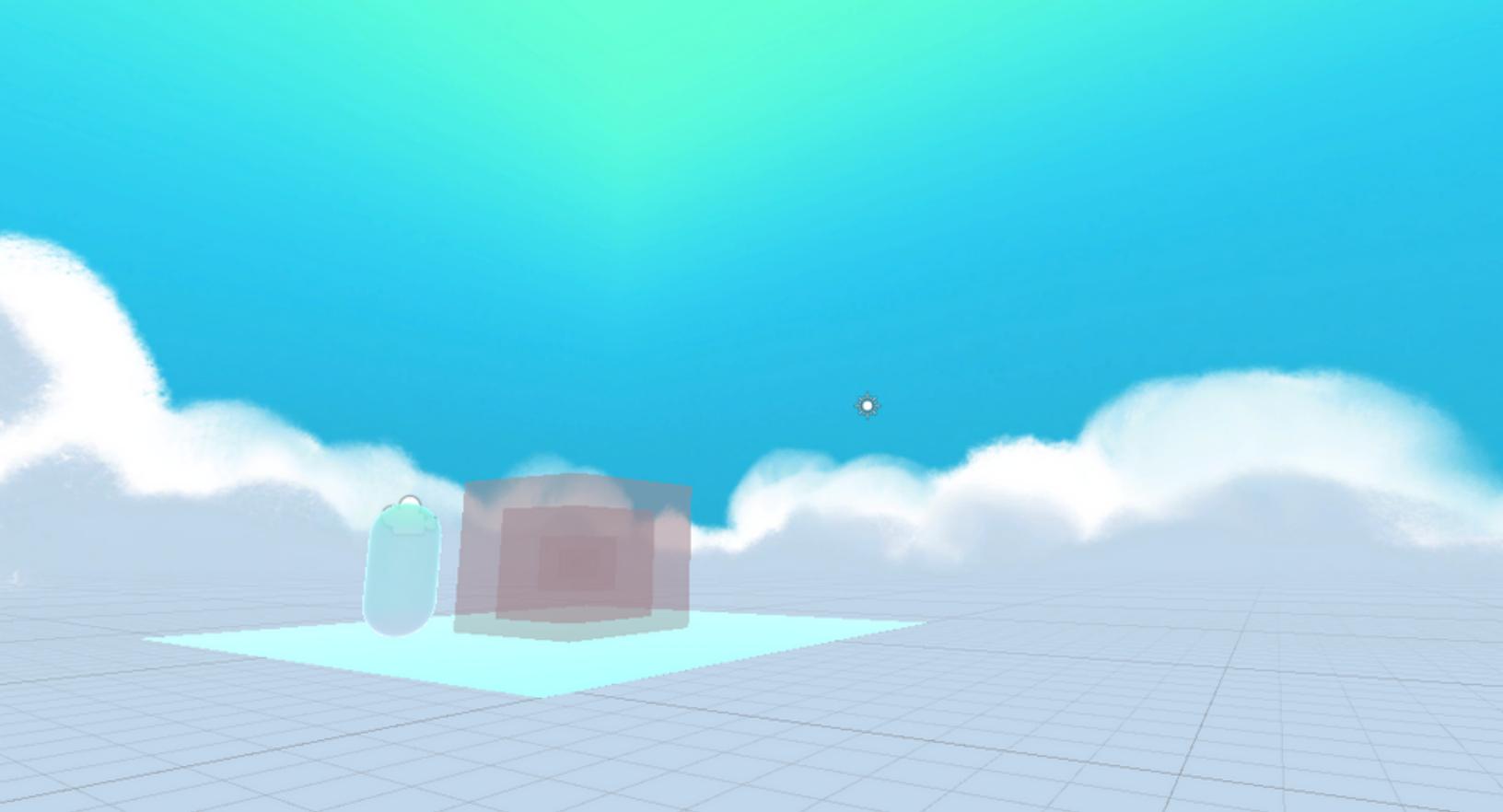
Andrew Gallix on an article of Oulipo, *The Guardian*

I created my environments with Andrew Gallix's quote in mind which really helped me keep the vision of Oulipo.



So I indulged in this concept of "**creative bondage**" and played around with the metaphor of Chinese boxes by creating a square space with a square box within a square box, within a square box.

I constructed this environment with Unity and made my own skybox to not only add a bit of myself to the concept but also emphasise revealing my own creativity in-game as the metaphor for the revelation of creative freedom within restraints.



Imported Object

Destroy (Mono Script)

Assembly Information

Filename Assembly-CSharp.dll

```
using System.Xml.Serialization;
using System.Net;
using System.Collections;
using System.Collections.Generic;
using UnityEngine;

public class Destroy : MonoBehaviour
{
    public GameObject cube;
    // Start is called before the first frame update
    void Start()
    {

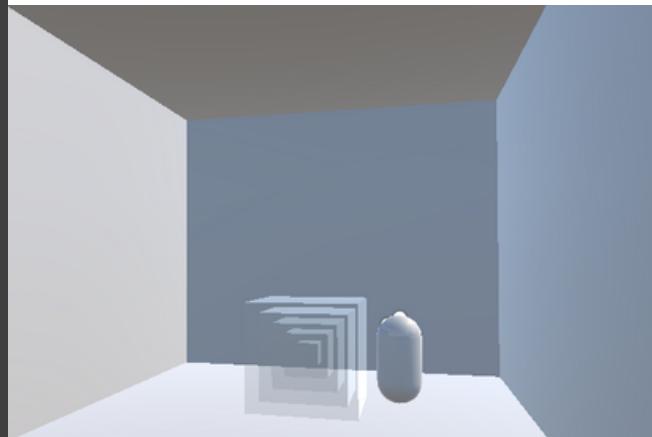
    }

    void OnTriggerEnter(Collider other)
    {
        if (other.tag=="Player") {
            Destroy(cube);
        }
    }

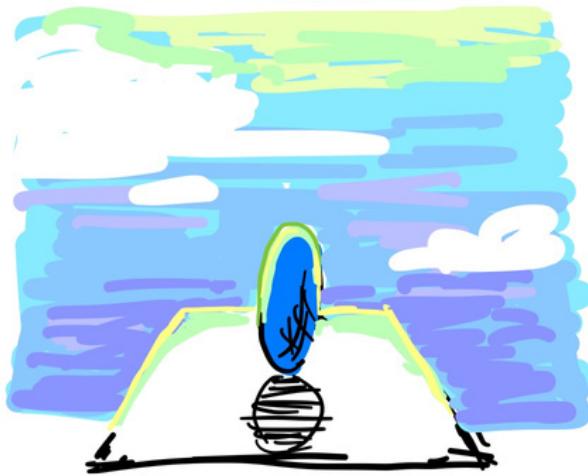
    // Update is called once per frame
    void Update()
    {
    }
}
```

code used to destroy walls

Utilising one of our exercises in our Oulipo session, I took inspiration from the interactive box which holds multiple objects and made digitalised to represent layers of Chinese boxes. The user can collide with the layers of the boxes and as they do, the walls around the player disappears.



Absolute liberation
found in constraints!



This is linked to Oulipo's values where artists within limits can **create better, richer, and more rewarding results** when they are aware and in control of the constraints and limits, using them as tools to create more **meaningful** creations.

haiku

My next environment is based on the idea of “Haiku” and its values of being a short poem **grounded by nature**. A haiku is meant to depict the **essence or spirit of a specific moment in time**.

A haiku was originally part of a bigger poem called a renga and was originally called a “hokku,” which sat at the start of the renga and consisted of three lines.

Masao Shiki



I chose to utilise Masaoka Shiki's treatment of the hokku, which he believed to be separate from the renga, and which he named the haiku that we know of today. He also pushed for the idea of a haiku as an **objective experience that can only be experienced within the moments as what it truly is over** the imagination.

BRAINSTORM

Environment 2

Haiku - "short poem", nature. "Haikai" → earthly, mundane
"Haiga" Painting w/ haiku

Renga → Collaborative
5-7-5 structure

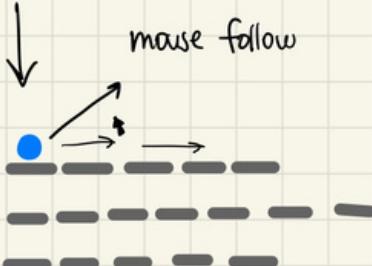
hokku = opening verse (^{toki = season})
(^{toza = session})

↳ OBJECTIVE, from direct experience > imagined
↳ it is what it is

TRADITIONALLY - 17 on

play with music?

2D environment



Rhythmic, durational quality
in Eng = 12 syllables
5-7-5

Collision produces sound
Samples
mundane & everyday.
record my own direct experience

Translating Japanese to English — not exact, so translation is based on the spirit of poem.

Purpose: SHARING of EXPERIENCE

Artfully reconstruct an original moment.

Create a scene sonically.

code used for triggers

```
using System.Collections;
using System.Collections.Generic;
using UnityEngine;
using UnityEngine.Audio;

public class triggerSound : MonoBehaviour
{
    public AudioSource playSound;

    void OnTriggerEnter2D(Collider2D collider){
        playSound.Play();
    }
}
```



sounds recorded

I wanted to highlight the core values of the **earthly** and **mundane** theme of haiku. Being present in the moment and translating what makes the experience into art was what drove me to create this digital interactive.

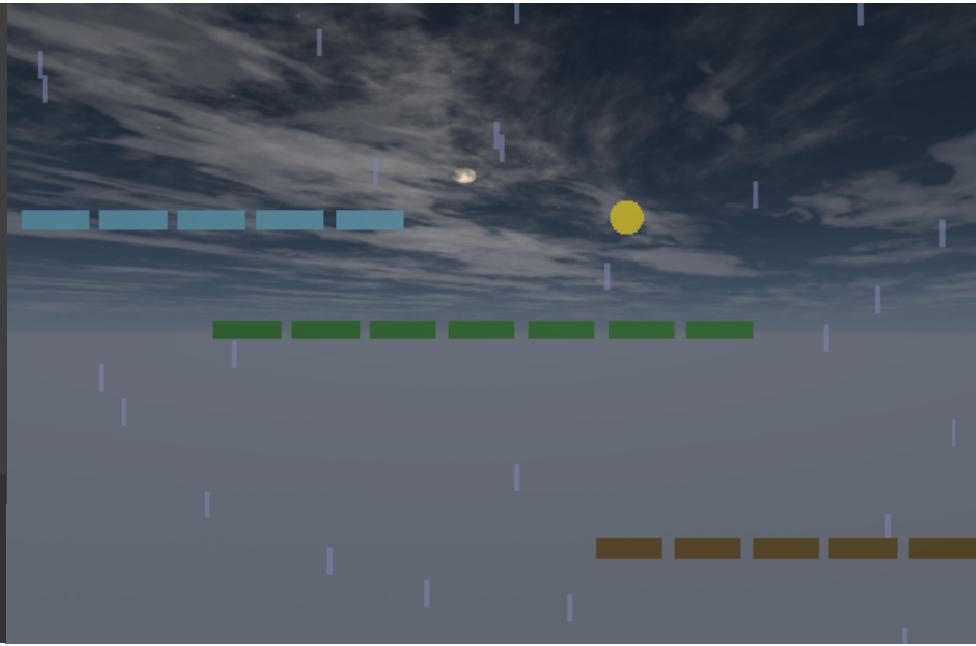
DECONSTRUCTING HAIKU

- **3 lines** in reference to the **5-7-5 structure** of the haiku
- **17 lines** as **17 syllables**
- added sounds to play with rhythmic durational quality observed whilst reading haikus

Muted, earthy colour keys:

- Blue symbolises the sky,
- green symbolises the grass,
- and brown symbolises the dirt.

I also added a *Particle System* to emulate rain, as the moment happened on a rainy day.





sounds of Australian birds, some bush shales and gravel trails are recorded and used in the project.

I was inspired by the objective nature of haiku and based my environment on **my direct experience living in Australia** by going out and recording the sounds of my backyard the same day I thought of the idea in one sitting. These sounds may evoke a familiar feeling within anyone who has lived in Australia for a while.

This allowed me to share a direct moment of my life and capture the spirit of what it's like waking up on winter, Australian morning.

the takeaway

These projects have pushed and inspired me to contribute a part of myself and my experiences not just to the digital environment scene but the perhaps contemporary literary Oulipo and haiku scenes as well.

Practicing the limiting nature of these projects inspired by both Oulipo and Haiku has really placed me in a position as a designer that understands and gains a much deeper appreciation for these ideas. To no longer see them as bindings or vices that hold back creativity, but as tools for inspiration and creation for much more meaningful projects and maybe even carry their values with me through life to simply make the most of what is seen as difficult or impossible.

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