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AME 520 Understanding Activity

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Out of Place

Introduction

Out of Place is a three-dimensional animation created to provide the viewer with an interesting story and visual experience. The idea behind this piece is to confuse the viewer and leave them with more questions than answers. Within the animation there is a character that interacts with a realistic shelf in a world that is unfamiliar to the viewer. The world has an art style that is almost lowpoly and does not provide much detail so having a high-resolution object within the scene naturally draws the user's eye to it. Within this world, the only character notices this object and struggles to understand the purpose of the shelf and what it should offer.

Animation Summary

To begin the animation *Out of Place* begins with a humanoid character named "Paul" doing stretches and push-ups within its small three-dimensional enclosure. Once Paul has completed the ground exercises they begin to do a light jog around the perimeter of their environment. As they jog in a circle, they then discover a new object which they have not previously discovered in the world. Paul struggles to first grasp the idea of the object and cannot figure out the functionality of the item. Paul does not know how to behave around this object and initially uses it as a stepping stool. The mood begins to shift as Paul leaps with excitement after discovering such an interesting item with the small world. Paul begins to move the shelf around and proceeds to try different uses of the shelf. As they move it they try to use it as a seat and as a

bed to be slept on. Throughout the animation Paul shows many signs of enthusiasm towards the shelf and concludes by falling asleep on top of the article of furniture as the camera zooms out.

Meaning

The meaning behind this piece is to create a visual representation of comfortability and how breaking free from it can result in positive change. There are a lot of people within the world that suffer from a fear of change and the animation demonstrates how breaking free from these cycles can be beneficial. Being present within the world and seeing what it has to offer is a great way to improve mental health. While constantly staying at home for long periods of time is extremely linear and can result in a more negative mindset.

Design Gap

As the animation started to take form there were many different ideas that were either not achieved or improved upon. The motion capture that was created originally had some interesting ideas that were never achieved. The character Paul was originally intended to backflip within the animation but that could only be achieved with more space and shoes. The animation began to then be about testing the limits of the optitrack rig and how well it can track motion. I wanted to use Adobe Premiere Pro but it lacked some very important settings that were needed so Blender had to be utilized instead. To begin the animation, the initial idea for the character and environment was to download them off the internet and use them. Doing this made the animation seem dull and lacked a proper art style. Both the character and the surroundings did not match each other and looked very displeasing. After these items were completed then the bvh file and armature were linked together. The character Paul was also intended to have clothing but when adding these arose as an idea the project was already too far along. Overall the animation resulted in a pretty similar outcome which was desired.

Goals

The work completed with this course has definitely made an impact on my overall goals within the field of animation. There are many different uses for the information I have learned and one of those being music videos. I enjoy editing for artists on Premiere Pro and I have always wanted to try and create a high quality animation that captures the unique movements of the artist. There are many animated music videos which inspired me and sparked my creative energy and I now have discovered how to generate these types of videos. It will definitely be something I will try to continue to learn and grow. Creating music videos in a style with motion capture is a skill I thought I would never develop but now it is within my capabilities and I will try to develop my skills in animation.

Course Curriculum and Movement Studies

The concept of *Out of Place* was conceived through the curricular materials from AME 520. In relation to Interaction, Dourish (2004) describes how computers and technology are becoming cheaper, faster and more accessible to people. He highlights that interactions need to be developed to meet the needs of people, moving beyond procedures. There are four phases of development: electrical, symbolic, textual and graphic interactions. My creation focuses on symbolic interactions and graphic interactions. Dourish (2004) describes symbolic interactions as "a much more natural and intuitive form of interaction for us than electronic form…[based on] a more powerful set of intuitions and abilities" (p. 10). *Out of Place* was designed to specifically focus on intuitive interactions based on human behavior and interests. It was built to be humanlike; built to focus on how humans interact based on curiosity and physical movement. Second, graphical interface models have advanced how people interact with technologies. The transition to graphical models improved interactive experiences like peripheral attention, pattern

recognition and spatial reasoning, information density, and visual metaphors. *Out of Place* uses many of these concepts within its design. I have included direct manipulation within my design, which is a component of the graphic interface models. Dourish (2004) also discusses how computer interactions are continuing to grow and expand to improve on the range of human abilities through computer interactions. This is directly related to the design of *Out of Place* which tries to improve how humans interact within a system to address their novel interests.

Loke and Schiphorst (2018) discuss the somatic turn. There are several components of somatics including: valuing the first-person perspective, including somatic values, understanding the body as a creative and imaginative object, as well as other components. Within *Out of Place* certain components were considered and integrated into its development. In relation to first person, there is a direct interaction with the user. There is a focus on interaction with one's own body through the use of the tool. There is a specific focus on the movement of one's own body and the visual images that are created by this movement. Somatic values always play a role in the development of computer interactions. For example, if something is developed in a country with a large Christian population, those values will then be embedded either consciously or unconsciously within the products created by that country. This is true of computer interactions as well. The values of the society will influence the computer products and programs that are created. Third, the body is a critical element of *Out of Place*. The interactive movements of Paul are designed to highlight creative movement and motion of the human body through the interactions and movements of Paul.

Less impactful but still influential on *Out of Place* was Doidge's (2016) work. With Doidge's chapter, he describes how Feldenkrais came to the realization that "No part of the body can be moved without all the others being affected" (p. 166). This is true in relation to *Out of*

Place. There is a focus on the importance of movement and how each and every part of the body needs the other parts to properly function and react in terms of the interactive nature of the design. There is a focus on the awareness of movement—how each individual bone, muscle or tendon impacts all the others. In other words, there is not idle movement, but distinct, attentive, conscious, purposeful movement built into the interactivity.

Future Research

For future investigations, more experience with creating movement and data collection and analysis through movement. While I have grown tremendously in my knowledge, there is still much to learn. Specifically, I would like to pursue a career in this field. I have started to look for employment and realize that it is very tough to find a job. Therefore, I need to pursue studies and experiences on my own to better advance my knowledge of moment and three-dimensional programming with movement.

I would also like to learn more about the founding scholars in this field. While we were exposed to some very well-respected researchers, I would like to continue to learn more. My particular interest is in somatics. Somatics has some components that are clear, other parts are still unclear to me. For example, what role does religion play? And how does the first person perspective change in relation to the time period and the cultural attributions of the population? I think that there are many questions that I have that I can further research and develop. Just for fun, I would also like to read more articles/chapters like Doidge's (2016) work. I found it interesting how the history was connected to the current development of interactivity.

As I become more versed in this field, my future research will continue to develop and expand. Specifically, I would like to create a more interactive system that is linked through music and movement. For example, I would like to create a system that can sense the mood

created by certain musical styles. Then, using that musical style, produce movement through interactions of first-person users. There would be a direct connection between how the person responds to the music and the interactive movement created by the programming.

References

Doidge, N. (2016). *The brain's way of healing: Remarkable discoveries and recoveries from the frontiers of neuroplasticity*. Penguin Life.

Dourish, P. (2004). *Where the action is: the foundations of embodied interaction*. MIT press.

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