

Written Assignment

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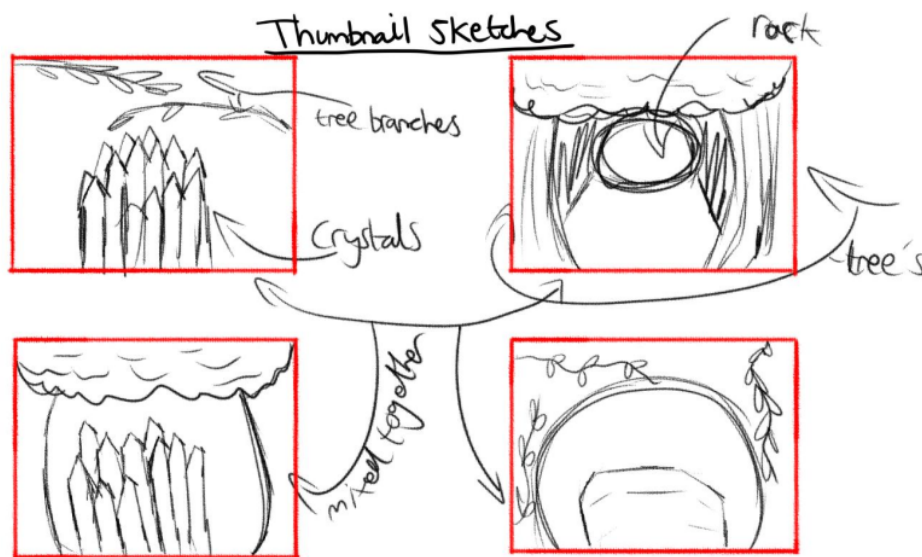
Character count: 8596

Written Assignment

For this assignment we were asked to make an environmental scene mixing elements of 2D and 3D together, the environment being inspired by a piece of written media. For this written assignment I showed my process of how I did this from start to finish.

Firstly, I made some rough thumbnail sketches. I have been re-reading the warrior cat book series lately, so I wanted to make the environment inspired by the universe. In the books there are different areas that the cats visit multiple times. I choose to mix two places, mother mouth, which is a cave with a spiritual crystal inside and Fourtrees, which is forest area were the cats meet in peace.

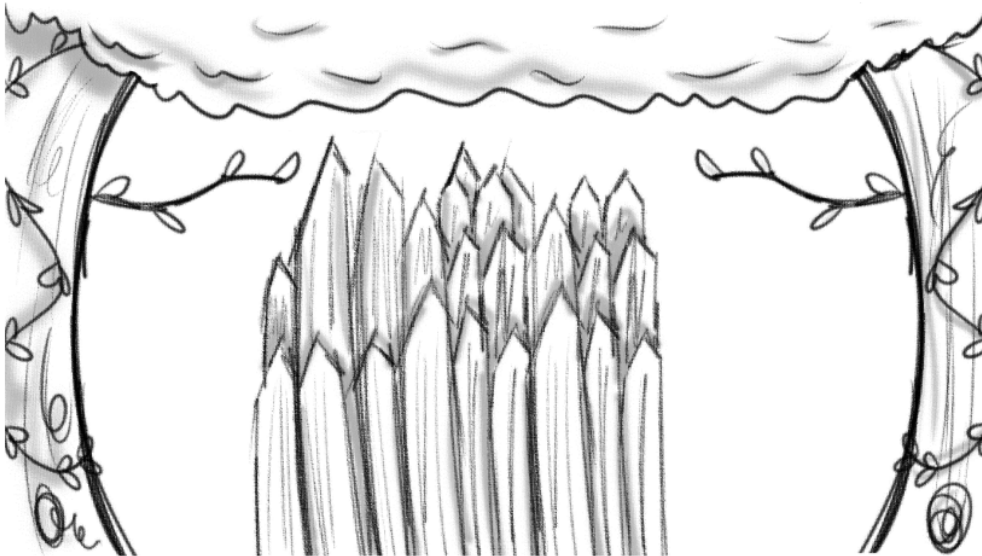
Here are the thumbnail sketches:



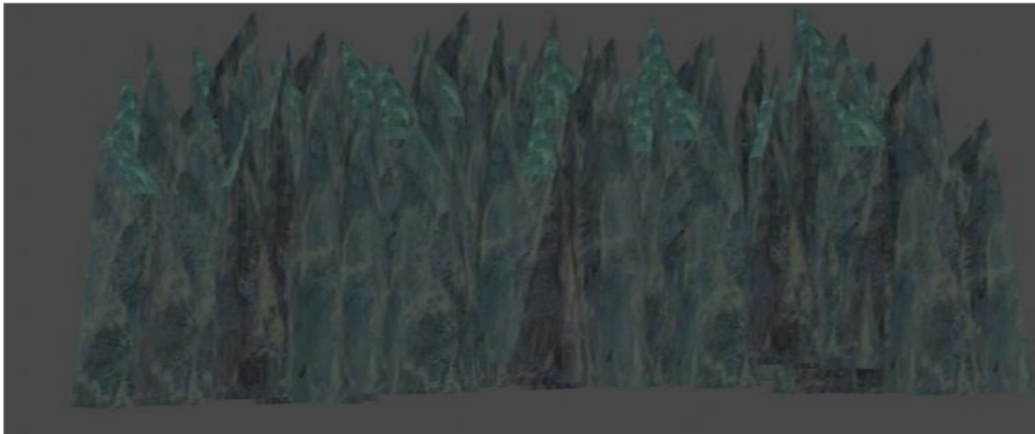
For the first thumbnail, I kept it simple and put the spiritual crystal under some tree branches so the focus could be the crystals, but I decided to not use the idea as it would have been too simple. For the second thumbnail, I made a path of tree's leading to a rock, this idea was scrapped because I wanted to focus on the crystals. For the third thumbnail, which is the one I decided to develop, I put the crystals in the middle of some trees, I went with this because it was simple yet not so simple that it would look dull. And finally, for the fourth thumbnail I went with the rock again, but this time put it in a cave

entrance. Just like the second thumbnail, this idea was scrapped because I wanted to focus on the crystals.

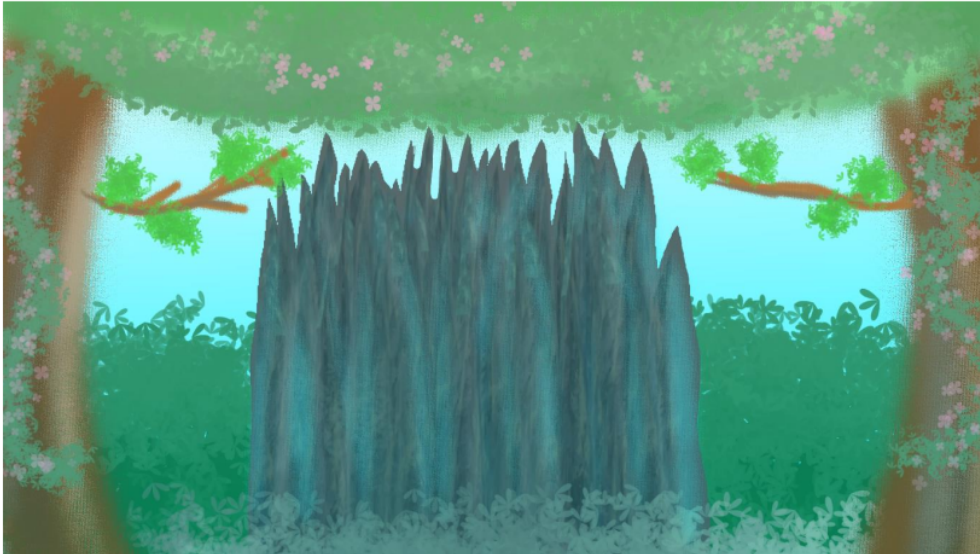
My next step during my process was developing the thumbnail into a more detailed sketch, here is the sketch:



After sketching this I decided to try and model the crystals in blender. I added a cube mesh and duplicated it with different shapes and sizes, I then messed around with the snake hook in sculpting to make them look pointy. I am not particularly good at modelling yet, but I find that I am able to learn a lot by just messing around with different tools and seen as I planned to not actually use these crystals as they were just a test, I used that as an opportunity to go nuts and try out the different tools in blender. Here is the result.



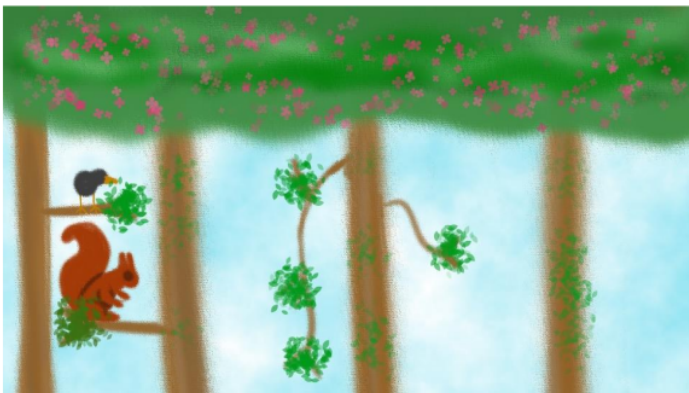
I was quite pleased with how this turned out and decided to put it into a 2D program to mix 2D art with it, I was not going to use it as a final submission as I wanted to add camera movements. But I wanted to see how well I could blend 2D and 3D as I have never done it before. Here is the result:



I think I was able to blend the 3D crystals with the 2D art well, however, I think that it would have looked a lot better if I added blue and green lighting to the crystals, as it would have made them look less dull.

Now it was time to start the final submission, I started by drawing a background in my 2D art program to use as an image plane in blender, I decided to keep the theme of the trees and crystals but decided to add a lot more tree's.

Here is the result:

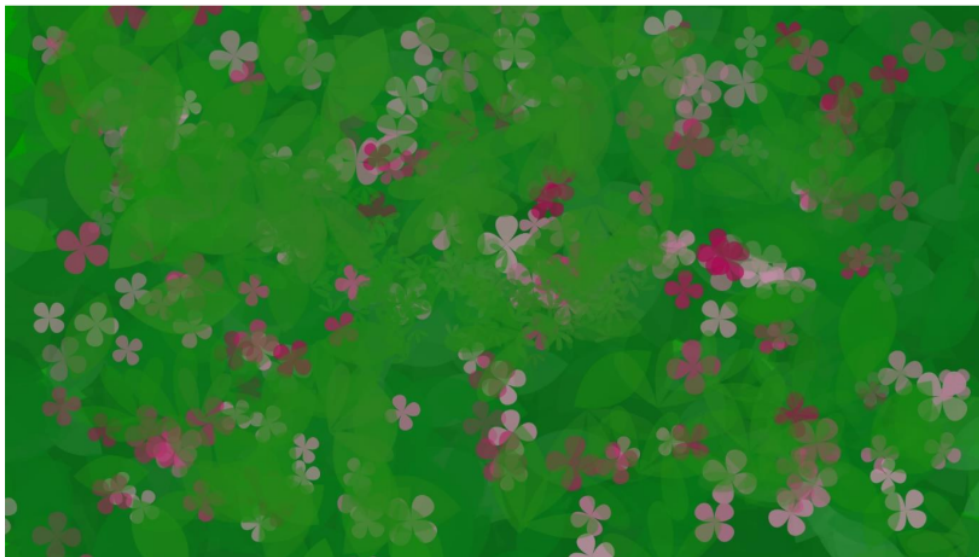


I am happy with how this turned out, I used a sketchbook brush to try to give it a children's story book kind of vibe, I think I was able to draw in that style well. I also added a simple bird and squirrel to add some life to the background. I avoided making this background too detailed as I wanted to keep that simple story book aesthetic.

Once I finished the image, I added it to blender and an image plane and expanded it. Now it was time to animate the camera moving from one side of it to the other. I had never animated the camera moving before as I was not sure how to do it properly, turns out it was quite easy and I was able to get it moving quickly, I made it move across for about 5 seconds. Now it was time to do some modelling.

The first thing I wanted to model was some bushes, using the sphere mesh, I squished it down into an oval shape and made it thinner, I then duplicated it two times to make a basic bush, I then joined the shapes together and duplicated the finished bush across the image plane. Except, it was not finished, it still needed texturing.

I wanted to keep the children's story book aesthetic, so I decided to draw my own textures and import them as image textures, here is the bush texture:



I normally don't use default pattern brushes but I'm glad I did for this texture; I think the leaf pattern mixed with the flower patterns was a nice result. Looking back, I kind of regret not adding in some line art to give it a cartoony

look, but I also think if I did it would have looked odd if I did add this so in a way, I am also glad I did not do this.

After the bushes were done it was time to remake the crystals. This time, I used an Ico sphere instead of a cube. I went on google and had a look at different images of crystals so I could make the crystals look semi realistic, I noticed that they were normally crammed together at the bottom and then spread out near the top. So, I decided to use the Ico sphere and used the extrude tool to expand different areas of it, I then squished it closer together and rotated it, so it pointed upwards where the crystals pointed the most, it was now time to texture, once again I made a texture in my 2D art program and to give it a children's story book illustration aesthetic, here was the result:



using a clouding effect tool, I mixed different shades of light blue and green, I also added some white to it. I was originally going to add sketchy diamond shapes to it but changed my mind as I knew it would look incredibly distracting.

My next and final step was adding in some lights, I added a dimmed sun light to make the overall image plane warmer looking, I then added some blue and green lights near the crystals to make it look brighter.

To be completely honest, I did not think that I would enjoy this assignment as I do not really enjoy modelling. But I was pleasantly surprised. I loved mixing 2D with 3D, as a primarily 2D artist it was nice to work with it alongside 3D which I do not enjoy as much but now I am enjoying a lot more.

I really enjoyed the final result, I rendered it using Eevee and I think it looked really nice, I am pleased with the camera animation and although it was only basic movements, I was still happy that I was able to achieve that basic movement. Even though the models were simple, I am extremely happy with how they look, and it is given me more confidence to try and make more detailed models in the future. I was not too happy with the textures though, I liked how they looked but I think I could have added more detail.

So, was I able to achieve my original goal of making a reference to the warrior cat book series? In short, I think yes. Even though the books get violent for a kid's series and that its violent themes seem to be the focus, I wanted to focus on the cute natural elements off it. The books have never had any good illustrations for its world. So, it was up to the imagination to visualise these areas of this fantasy world. I think I was able to give off the natural fantasy charm in the final project.

At the start of the module, we were told to research an art director, I choose to study Jamie Hewlett. Jamie Hewlett is the co-founder of the virtual band Gorillaz, he works alongside Blur frontman Damon Albarn who makes the music for the band, Jamie Hewlett however, brings the characters stories and visuals to life.

Jamie Hewlett didn't start out with the Gorillaz though, he was actually a comic book artist his most notable work being the Tank Girl comics which came out in the late 1980's and was about an Australian girl who lives in a tank and has a mutant kangaroo boyfriend. I do not know much about tank girl, but the art style is extremely like the Gorillaz art style. Other comics Jamie Hewlett has worked on are: Judge Dredd, Sooner or Later, King of the Hill, Hellcity, Hewligan's Haircut, Doom Patrol, King Leon and Get the Freebies.

Jamie Hewlett was also known for creating comic book covers, he only made two, those being Shade, the Changing Man and Doom Patrol.

Now, back to Gorillaz. Before the band was created Jamie Hewlett and Damon Albarn ended up sharing a flat together, the idea for a virtual band came up when the two of them noticed that MTV had no substance and that a 2D band

would be something to comment on that. Gorillaz made their breakthrough in 2001 with the song Clint Eastwood. The animation in the music video reminds me of 90's cartoon network, this may have been intentional due to the Gorillaz Universe actually being in the same universe as The Power Puff Girls, we know this from subtle details like the character 2D wearing a Mojo JoJo T shirt and the character Ace replacing Murdoc temporarily during phase 5.

The next Gorillaz Album, Demon Days was also a hit, I adore the visuals in all the music videos, the blending of 2D characters with real people is outstanding and the story telling during the song El manana always makes me tear up. Jamie Hewett can write these characters in such a way that you grow attached to them, a lot of people grew up with the Gorillaz, these characters unlike most cartoon characters age alongside the fans who grew up with them.

The next Gorillaz album Plastic beach was the band's first proper start with 3D visuals, the first time being holographic live shows for demon days. The music videos during this album are filled to the brim with story telling elements, something I always highly appreciate as pretty much every other music video has no story and is just *there* almost like there are no ideas, so they must settle for basic dancing. Jamie Hewlett, however, can make stunning visuals and story in his music videos which I find very inspiring.

The 4th phase for Gorillaz was a mix of 2D and 3D visuals that were always changing, to me it felt very experimental as if Jamie Hewlett were deciding if he wanted to focus on 2D or 3D, he seemed to choose 2D as the next and newest phase was all 2D animation.

The 5th phase was extremely short and only had one proper music video, the other songs being accompanied by visual pattern loops. I enjoyed it but, in my opinion, the next and newest phase was a big step up.

Song machine was quite different from what the band normally did, there were more music videos than usual, and each music video worked kind of like an episodic series. The episodes came out monthly so the fans were always waiting eagerly to see what the characters would get up to next.

Overall, Jamie Hewlett has been a huge source of inspiration in my life for years, his amazing visuals and story telling with Gorillaz has always inspired me to work hard. The characters are extremely well written and easy to get attached to which makes me want to make fun, loveable characters in the future too.

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