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BA Computer Games Design

1518 Words

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Art In The Machine



Fig.1

Introduction

The Intent of this exhibit is to ease those less knowledgeable about the world of virtual reality and 3D digital art into an immersive artistic experience. In the era of advancing technology, the means in which artists create is ever evolving, and many who are not as technologically minded remain uninformed about this 'new' media often fail to appreciate the process and the result.

The selected works and artists are from a variety selection of virtual reality artists, many already with work on display within virtual reality art spaces such as DiMoDa, The Digital Museum of Digital Art. The pieces in this work will escalate in their usage of space, reinforcing this idea of virtual reality creating spaces within spaces and a sense of impossible scales to show the viewer the range of freedom and the creative avenues a virtual medium for artistry facilitates.

Context

I've chosen for the works to be displayed in virtual reality for the viewer to experience the works fully. In this case the viewer will be able to see a 3D model or environment to scale via the head mounted display. Without this piece of technology to assist the works could be brushed aside as 'another CGI thing' that we might witness in other media we consume. Using a virtual space gives unhindered limits to the scale and choice of any pieces to be displayed, meaning the works have a chance at making the viewers experience a very enjoyable emotion. Awe. Be it awe at the piece of work or awe at the capabilities of the technology strapped to their head, the aim is to have the viewer experience the art in

a new way and realize there is more to see in CGI shots in movies or animated series. Awe is a universal emotion that every single human can appreciate. (Gallagher *et al.* 2015, p. 2)



fig.2

The works will eventually explore a concept similar to *Wanderer above the sea of fog* by Caspar David Friedrich in *fig.2* which perfectly encapsulates this sense of awe where the viewer, the wanderer, is insurmountably small in front of something so massive and epic as a sea of fog. This is the position I want the viewer to be in, to overlook a sea of fog. Edmund Burke describes the sublime and awe as something that is huge, overwhelming and vast (Burke. 2015, p. 206) Hence my focus on scale in the pieces, the final piece should be a sublime piece that leaves the viewer feeling that awe after the exhibit. As stated by Longinus, once the viewer is transfixed upon a piece and unable to remove it from their mind, we have achieved the sublime. (Longinus. 1980, part 2) This another reason for the use of virtual reality headsets, the immersion removes distractions and gives the viewer a single thing to focus on, and as a result, be transfixed by.

When selecting pieces I had to be mindful of not selecting works from only virtual reality artists as the works aren't on the same linear line as each other in their use of space, and therefore my first piece had to be something 'traditional' yet created digitally and creating that sense of awe I want viewers to feel. As the viewer then walk through the exhibit the use of space and the virtual space becomes more profound and obvious, the viewer knows they are standing in a small restricted space yet I want them to forget that as they witness an immersive but impossible space, larger than the space in reality, unfold in front of them.

Another reasoning for the choice of artworks is the artists' use of space, not in the sense of traditional space, but in how they use the fact that their canvas is unlimited and in a 3D space. With the selection of works I want to eliminate the "photographer selecting a sight from an infinity of other possible sights." (Berger. 2012, p. 10) and provide the viewer full autonomy in their choice of what part of an artwork and give them the option to view it as a whole, this is supported by the fact that these artworks need not be framed, they can be suspended in space as they are displayed in a virtual world.

Space will be a focus in these pieces, starting with more 'traditional' works that slowly evolve into pushing the boundaries of virtual environments, to experience viewing a bust on a pedestal to standing atop mount Everest.

Artists and Artworks

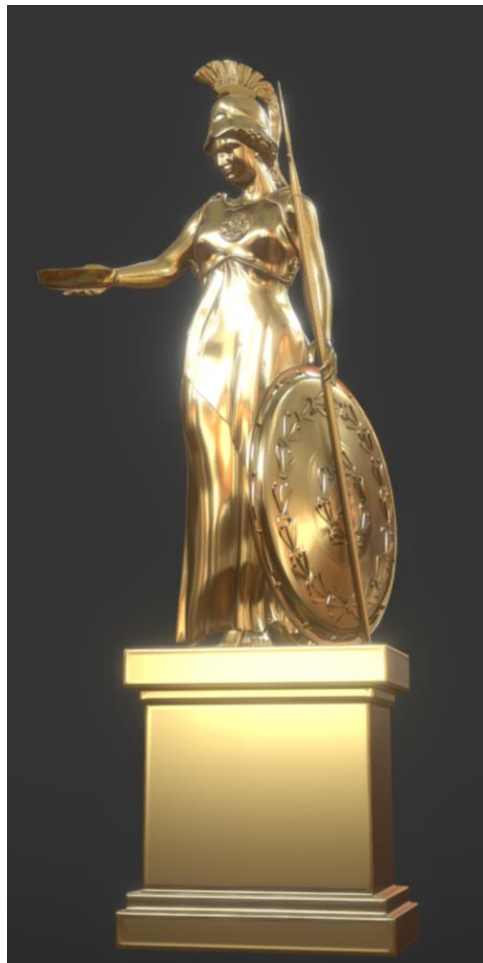


Fig.3

The first piece, displayed in *fig.3* was chosen due to its 'classic' style, the fact that it is easier to look at and understand helps ease someone new to virtual reality into the exhibition. However, due to the nature of the piece scale is only a matter of choice, and therefore the piece will be 5 meters tall (including podium) and will still have the scale to create sublime and awe Burke mentions. The effect is empowered by the material, gold is something we all know has value and therefore it is more incredible that something this large would be made in gold this era, no matter how digital it is. In history gold has

always been revered as a symbol of divinity and power in many cultures as stated by Figes (2020) and so its rich history has given it a legacy a symbol of awe, something to be appreciated, revered, and in amazement of.



Fig.4

fig.4 is titled *Wanderer* and is a piece created in virtual reality, it is also the first piece to start breaking the boundaries of conventional art with parts of the scene escaping the frame. Also due to the fact that the scene is larger behind the frame and is 3D the scene changes slightly as the viewer moves by the piece. This piece encourages the viewer to start breaking boundaries, to look around the frame and see more from what a simple framed art piece or a world waiting to merely be discovered. When the piece breaks the frame, it is physically and emotionally closer to the viewer, it also seems as less of an image that we see on a daily basis and feels more tangible.

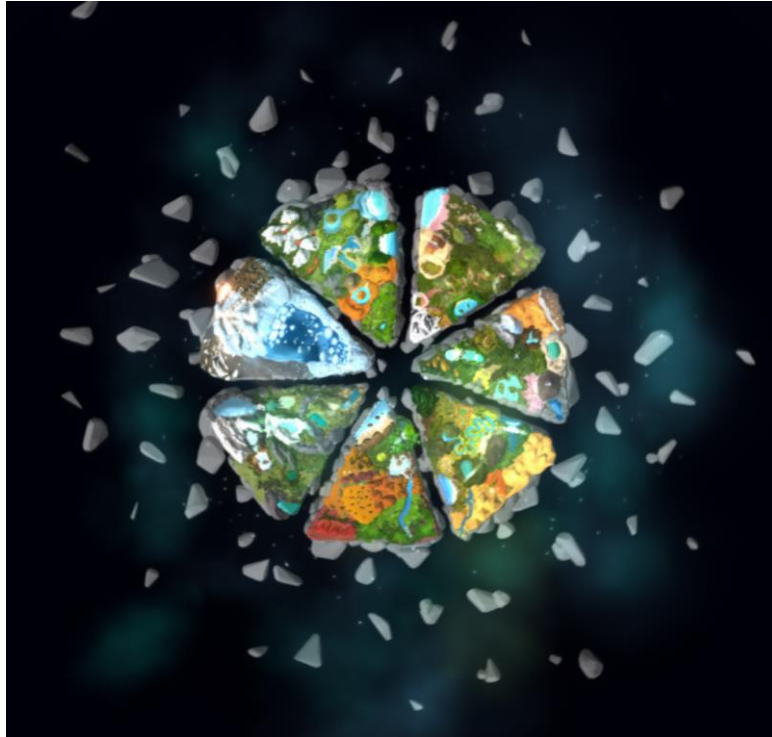


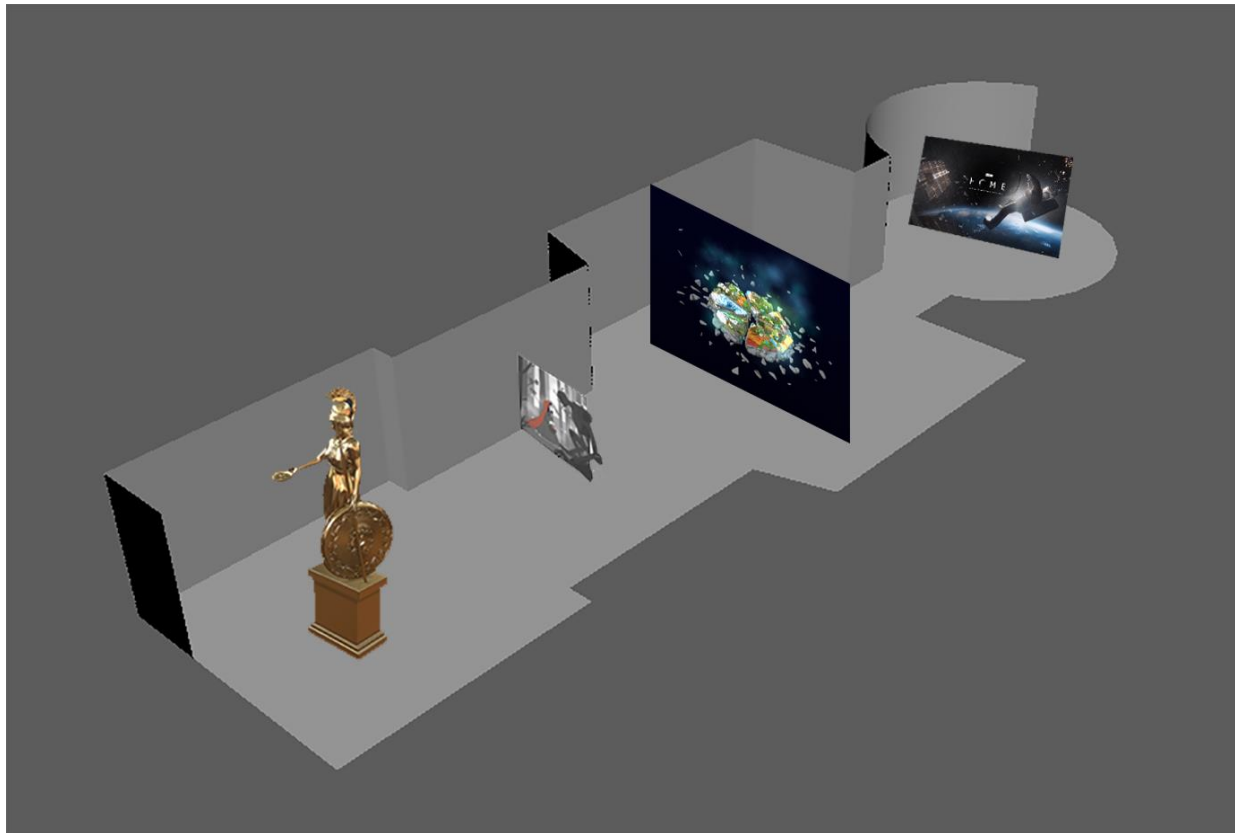
Fig.5

Fig.5 was created in TiltBrush VR by Rosie Summers for BBC's 'Seven Worlds One Planet' and is named so. This piece is enormous with incredible detail across it, instead of viewing it as a 3D model it will be displayed how it appears in TiltBrush VR, where each stroke the artists makes is recreated, letting us watch this scene be created once again, letting the viewers watch an entire world be created. This allows the viewer to see the work that went into the piece, helping the viewer realise the scale of this enormous piece and in turn creating something sublime. Rosie Summer's process is as much of the piece of art as the product itself, as she dances through the space creating stroke after stroke in the air which is translated into lines in the art piece. This is another reason to display the animated creation of *Seven Worlds One Planet* as it is incomplete without its process. With this piece displaying the possibilities of virtual reality painting as a viable option for artists and hobbyists alike I hope to leave viewers with a lasting want try out the art format for themselves, to have more people involved and increasing the awareness of these tools available to most people in an advancing age of virtual reality technology.



Fig.6

Being the final piece *Home* must be the most awe inspiring and sublime virtual piece of the exhibit, it would also be the most immersive piece as *Home* is not a piece to be viewed. It is to be experienced. This leads to the viewer not only being immersed but to have a presence in the scene. Having a virtual body and control over movement means the viewer can achieve a presence and have a more emotive connection to the piece (Kim, 2016, p. 30) Being a virtual reality spacewalk where the viewer has control over what they do and the power of virtual reality as a medium for art. As Burke states, something that is awe will overrule us in its presence (Burke. 2015, p. 206) and the presence that our planet has from a spacewalk is that of an insurmountable scale that we have never seen before. This spacewalk also provides and experience the viewer something only astronauts were once able to have, the overview effect. The overview effect is a sense of euphoria and smallness that comes from seeing the planet Earth from such a distance, and in some cases left a lasting impression for, life as shown by O'Neill (2008). Looking back to Longinus, who mentions the sublime being something that is firmly transfixed and at the centre of one's attention (Longinus. 1980, part 2) this overview effect helps us achieve that, as well as end the exhibit on a high note, to have the viewer thinking about the pieces long after they have left the virtual reality headset.



Exhibition Floorplan.

<https://youtu.be/YBw2onJRHTQ>

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