



Project

In this workshop, we began with a close reading of Heidi, written by Johanna Spyri in 1880 & 1881. Based on this close reading, six prototypes were developed, transforming this classical text into an immersive 360° experience for virtual headsets.

Objective

Build a VR demo by June 14, 2024. This demo was to be a proof-of-concept experience. From these six prototypes, one prototype was selected for a demonstration in Osaka 2025 : **Johanna's Sprit.**

Dates

Prototypes were developed from May 6 to June 14, 2024

Technologies

Meta Quest 2 & 3 virtual reality headsets, Unity Game Engine, Photogrammetry (Polycam, et al.), 3D AI asset generation (Meshy.ai, Luma.ai, Tripo 3D), 3D modelling (C4D, Blender).

Team

- Sabrina Calvo, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sabrina_Calvo
- Douglas Edric Stanley, Master Media Design, HEAD
- Pierre Rossel, Master Media Design, HEAD

Out of the eons

During her trip to Frankfurt where she is to stay with Clara Sesemann, Heidi falls ill. The story of her suffering, a poor child uprooted from her mountain, and her possible fever-induced dreams and nightmares about the industrial city, allow us to identify a problem illustrating the tension between the dream of an idyllic nature and a fallen mechanical world. Between the two, a glimmer of hope: the faint flickering flame of our heart's beating, facing the impossible task of having to frame and understand the world, while rejecting both the facile postures of idealism and progress.

From this starting point, we explored the dynamics of virtual worlds in a world on fire, our relationship with nature, and the possibility of mental landscapes reflecting back onto us abstractions and semi-figuration. The increasingly important role of these new spaces in our lives, the inversion of cyberspace in our daily lives — the accretion of new sensitive materials as a proxy for interaction — and our \$\$\$-up social priorities... what memories will remain of the world of sun and rain? Of the living? Of freedom?

Will we be exiles from reality? From matter? Can we be little potential Heidis, frolicking in an endless wonder of the childhood of the world?

Is innocence soluble in cyberpunk?

Gothic Fiction

Between children's literature and decadent fiction, we proceeded with tenderness as we questioned the finiteness of all things; as we interrogated decay; as we explored the unknown.

The Idea of Nature

What are we talking about when we discuss nature and hypernature? The veil of Isis: a clichéd metaphor transformed by each era... should it be replaced by some other gesture?

Switzerland

Switzerland was at the heart of our investigations — as a place of tension, of paradox, but also as a real place of mountains and lakes.

The Technological Nightmare

In the no-exit hellscape of this world, do we have the keys to rediscover the work of the hand and of the heart, combined with the forces of the virtual?.

Melancholy and Hope

A final tension: as we lose our bearings, a desire for an absolute that could save everything — opening the fragility of our tiny little existences onto some form of eternity.

References

The original German text is freely available online in multiple formats: **Heidis Lehr und Wanderjahre + Heidi kann brauchen, was es gelernt hat**. Heidi has many translations. **Heidi** (English), **Heidi** (Français), and over 50 other languages as well.

Heidis Alptraum

Heidi's Nightmare / Le cauchemar de Heidi

Anita Hugi

2022

<https://vimeo.com/816699168/48527d4efc>

[https://narrative.boutique/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/](https://narrative.boutique/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Heidi-Presses-FR.pdf)

Heidi-Presses-FR.pdf (dossier presse)

アルプスの少女ハイジ

Heidi, Girl of the Alps

Isao Takahata

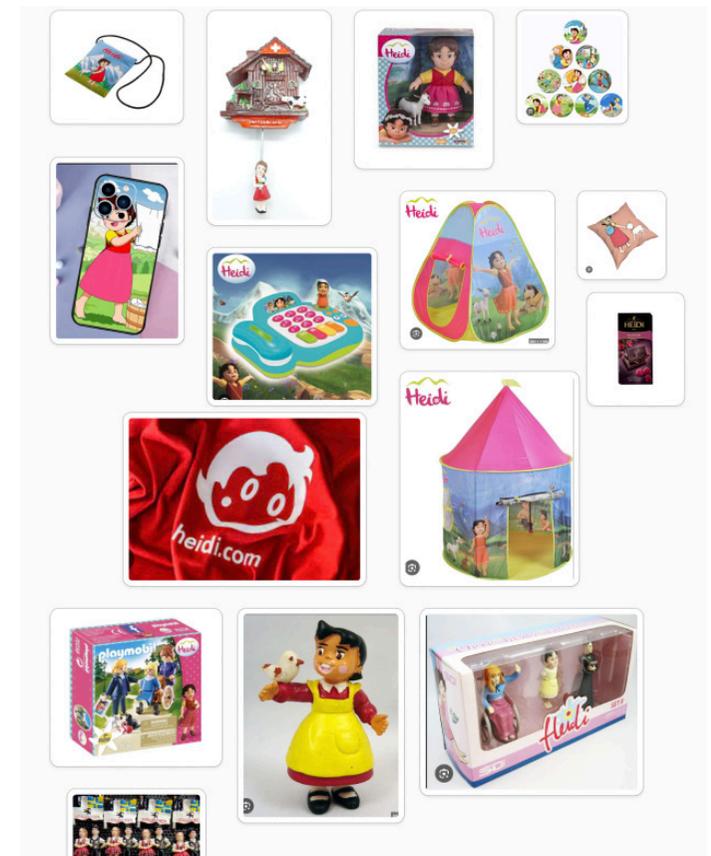
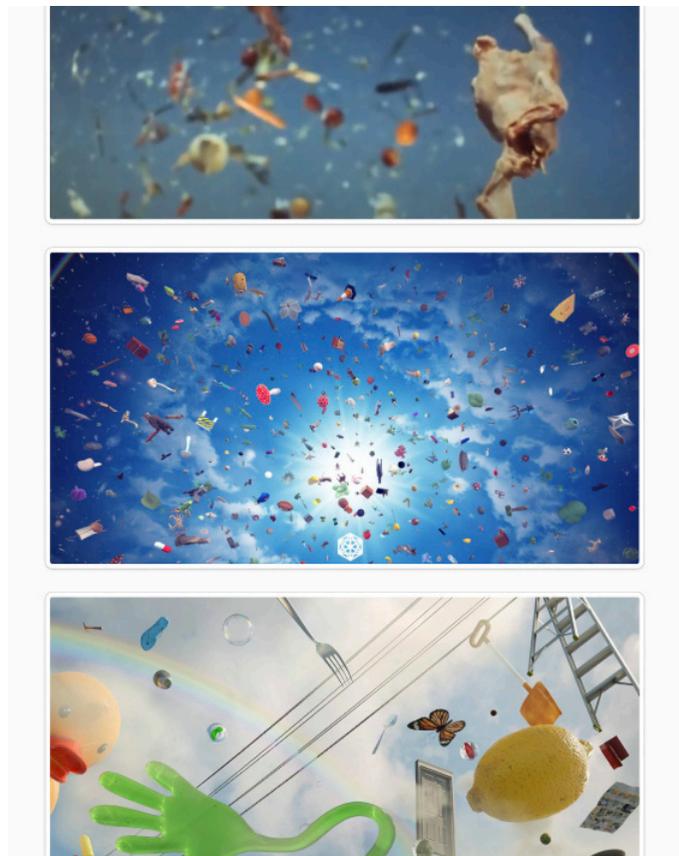
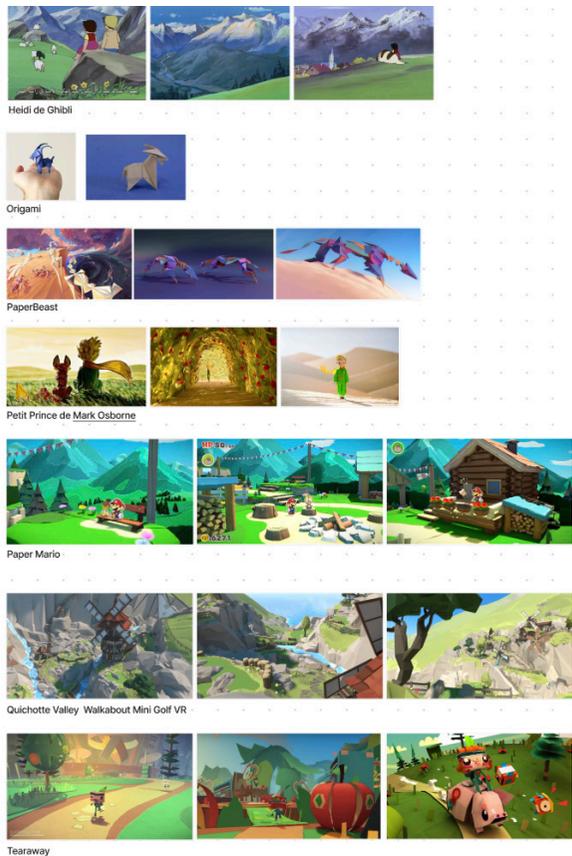
1974

Additional references

- **Le Grand Dieu Pan** - Arthur Machen
- **Le Voile d'Isis** - Pierre Hadot
- **The Weird and the Eerie** - Mark Fisher
- **Nostalgia** - Svetlana Boym
- **The Carrier Bag Theory of Fiction** - Ursula K. le Guin
- **Heidi contre les Zombies** - Katie Hayoz & Maya Mrak

World Building

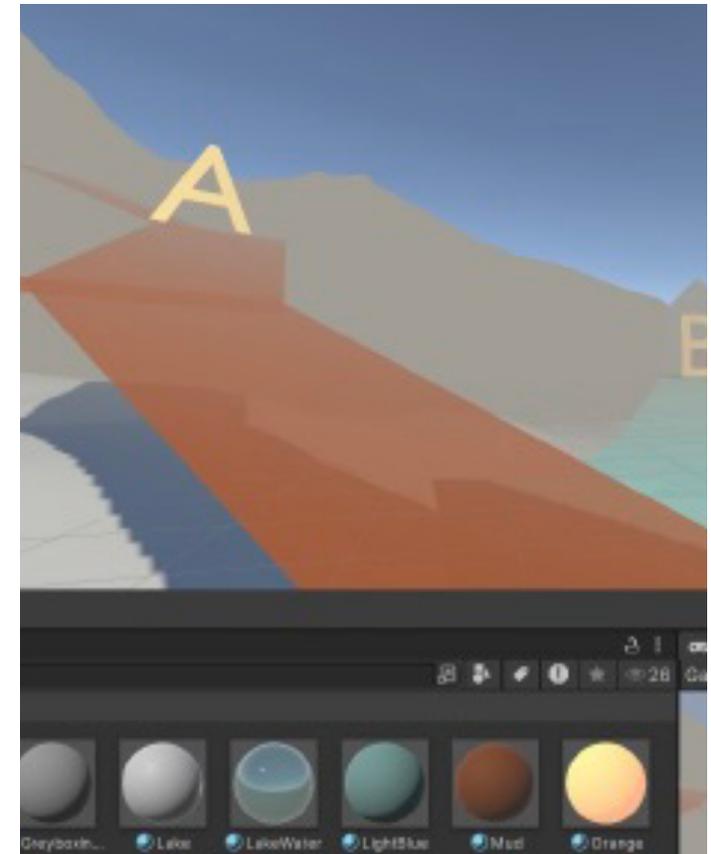
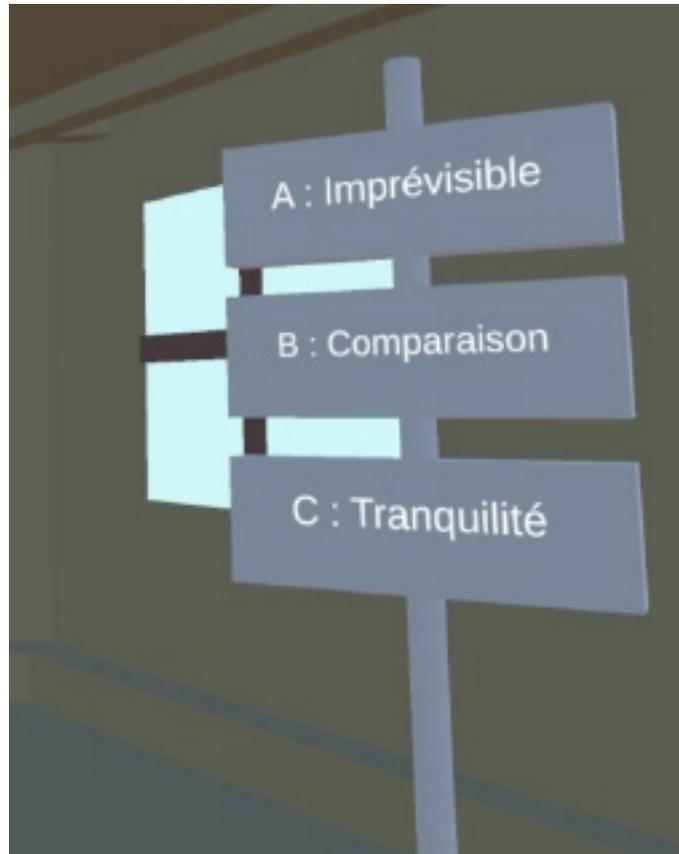
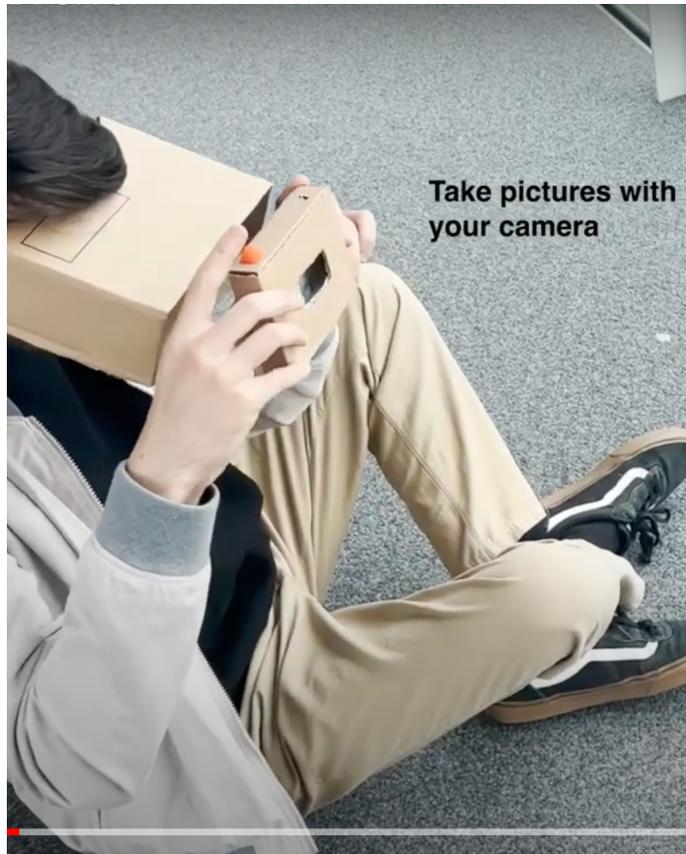
Each project used its own process for defining its vision of the world. Here are some Figma/Miro boards for each project — using traditional visual moodboards, but also more conceptual boards, exploring more abstract concepts.



Cardboard Prototypes & Greyboxing

Depending on the project objectives, each group used our standard paper-prototyping methodology during the opening reading + ideation phase, working with our hands and our hearts. This could include paper, cardboard, pens, and another other materials easily available to explore the concept.

All projects are currently in the « greybox » stage, i.e. approximate 3D volumes with little to no graphical indications. This allows us to get a sense of scale and possible interactions before we enter in the development phase.



Johanna's Spyrit

Project Description

Johanna's Spyrit is a VR experience that allows the visitor to play in the mind of Johanna Spyri, Heidi's author when she begins writing the book in 1886. Will the first page always be the same ?

Keywords

Inner Reflection/ Contemplation/ Evolution/ Dilemma/ Creation

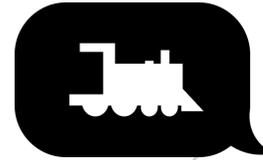
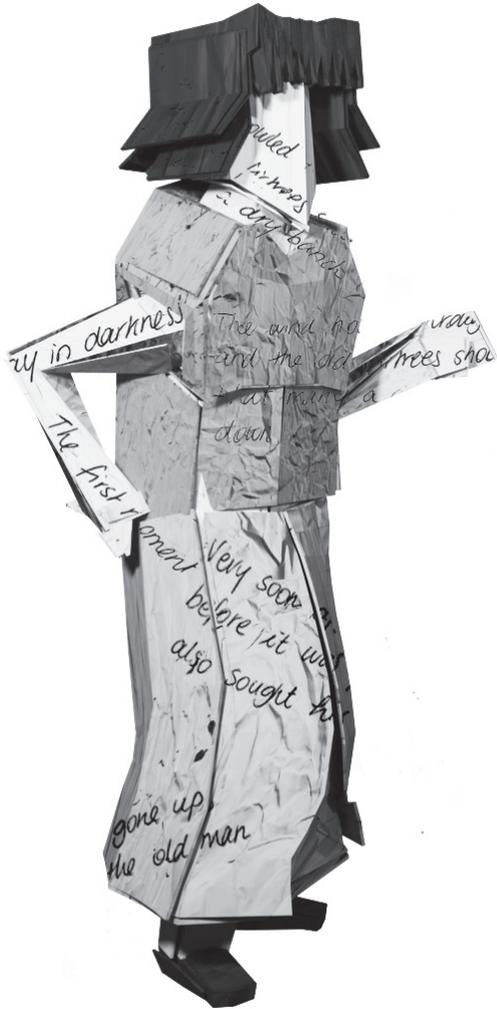
Immersed above a paper mountain, the visitor is confronted to a «Blank Page», where they can contemplate and listen to the characters in their hands.

Each choice they make impacts the environment and creates a unique composition of the landscape. Various narrative and visual alternatives are therefore feasible.

At the end, the visitor can walk out with the first page of their own story as a souvenir.

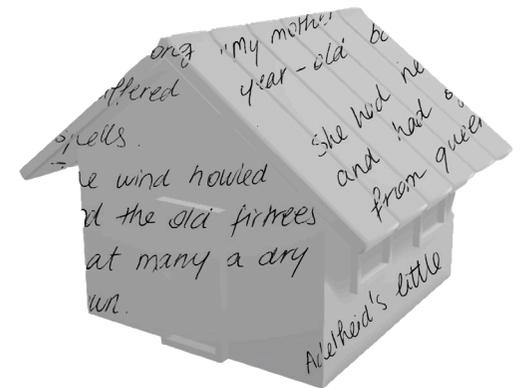
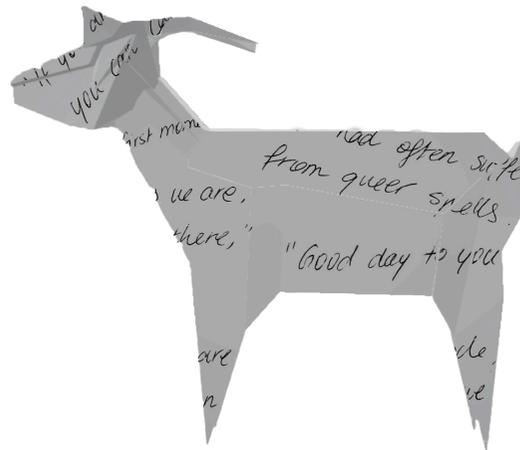
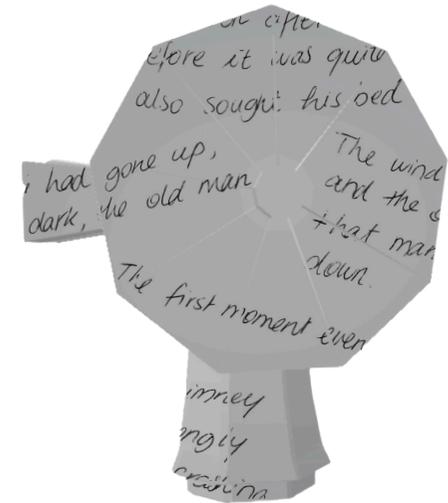
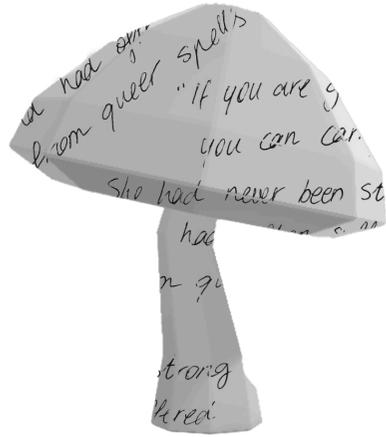


Characters



Assets

A handwriting is visible on the multiple assets (stylized as origamis), incorporating some passages of the Heidi book. Representing the first draft of a story.

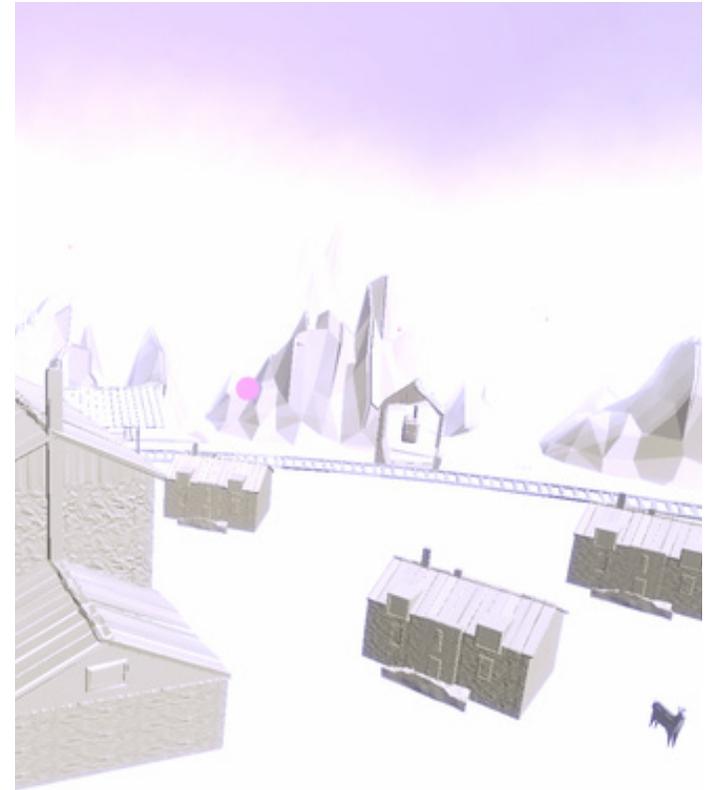


World

Each character from the book generates a visual linked to them to fill the visitor's «Blank Page».

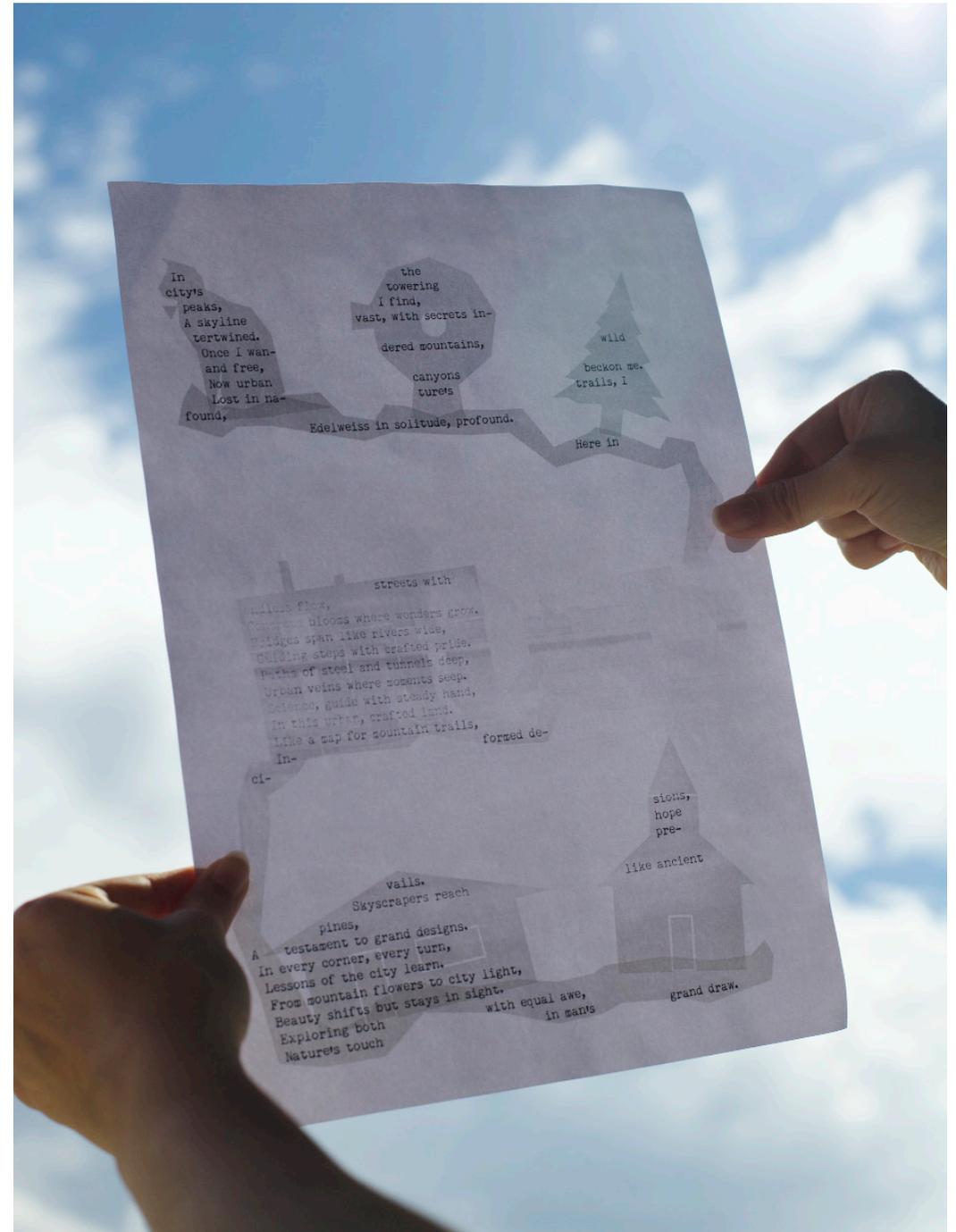
Natural visuals are generated by : Heidi/ Grandfather/ Peter/ Priest/ Goat

Urban visuals are generated by : Aunt Dete/ Rottenmeier/ Clara/ Doctor/ Cat



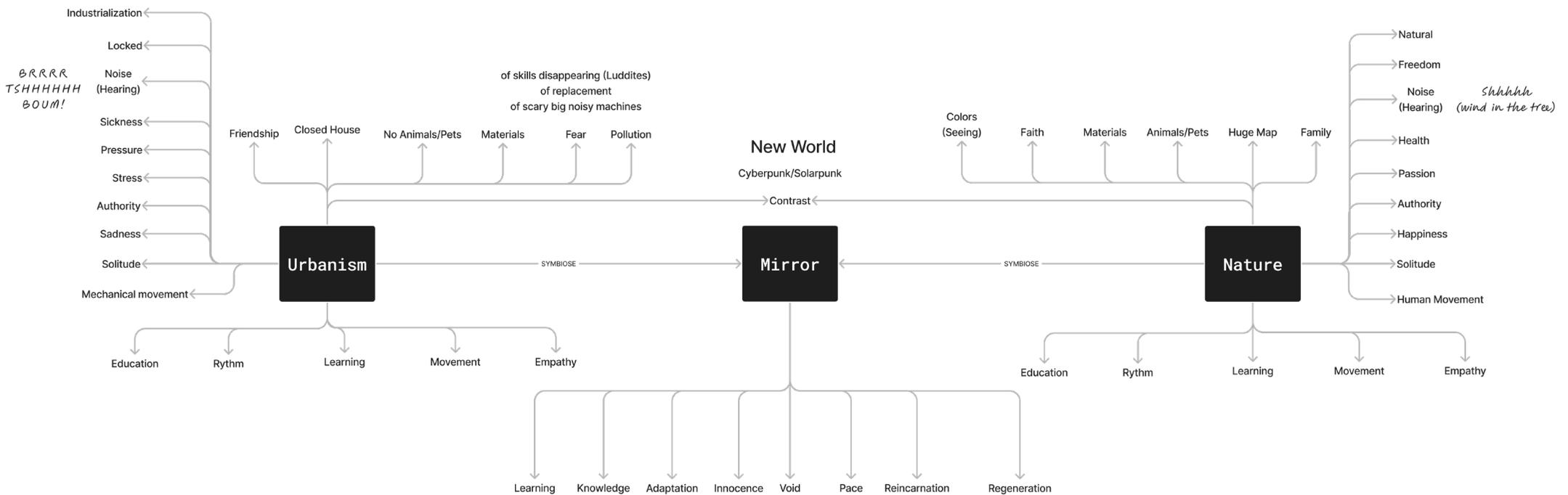
My first page

At the end of the experience, the visitors will receive a print of their own story. The text and the visuals are the results of their choices.



Constellation

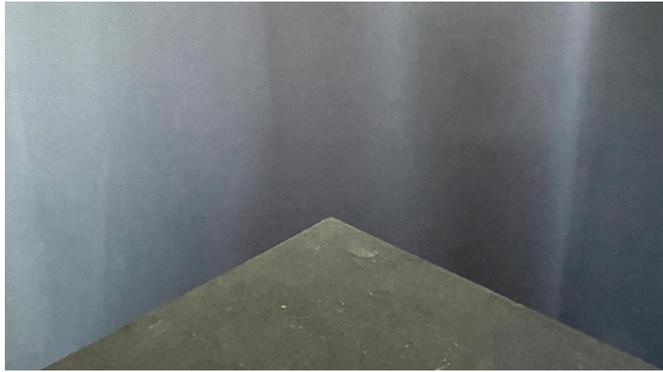
Confronting Urbanism and Nature, two words that seem without commonalities at first, we create a «New World» where they reflect themselves as an harmonious symbiosis.



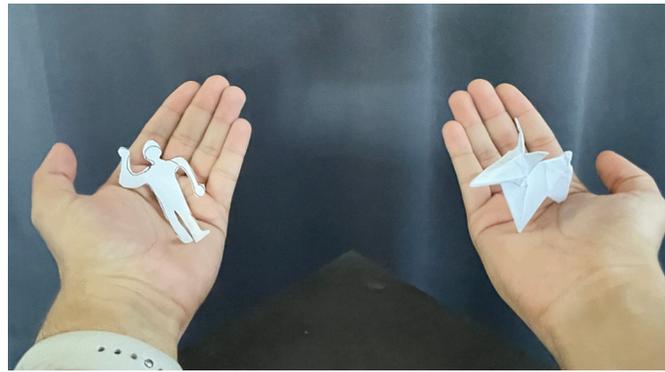
User Journey

1. You start on the top of the mountain (metaphor of the «Blank Page»)
2. Two characters representig two ideas in each hand
3. They start a discussion and confrontation
4. Squash the carcter you don't want by closing the hand (like an idea you don't want to keep)
5. The other character will then impact your environment and a new confrontation begins

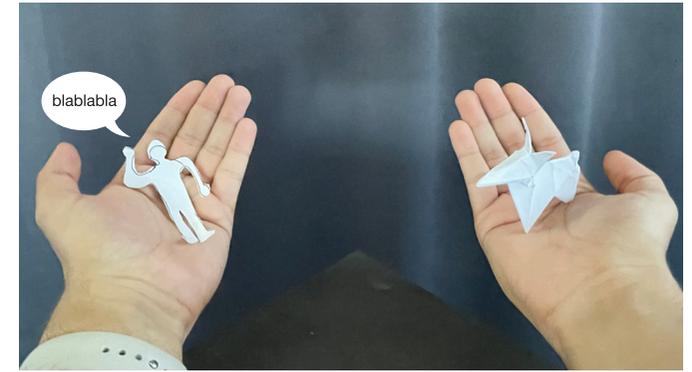
1.



2.



3.



3.1



4.



5.



Ali-lenti

Voices of the uprooted

Project Description

In Old German, «Ali-lenti» means ‘the other country’, ‘the foreigner’. It contrasts with the untranslatable word «Heimat», which describes the feeling of being at home, a deep sense of comfort and belonging in a place.

Like Heidi, tossed between worlds, torn from what is familiar to her, the viewer finds herself alone in the face of elusive entities. It’s up to them to find a way to establish relationships, to turn their attention to others. Like a metaphorical confrontation with migration, the spectator will have to turn this unknown and alienating place into their heimat.

In the course of their quest, spectators will establish links of varying strength with others, and hear the testimonies of people who, like Heidi, have been orphaned from their world. «Ali-lenti» highlights the difficulty and necessity of adapting to new environments. The tour invites us to reflect on our own ability to find our place in the unknown and to create meaningful human connections despite cultural differences and distances.



Field research and analysis

Our understanding of the novel Heidi focuses on the little girl's sense of belonging. Orphaned from the world, she is tossed between different environments, forced to build her identity in a changing world. Many questions emerge from this reading. How to build identity from scratch ? What does inhabiting the world mean ? What is heimat ?

In the aim to illustrate the sense of belonging of uprooted people. We went to meet women born in different parts of the world whose life paths had brought them to Switzerland at different stages of their lives. During these interviews, we asked them what 'feeling at home' meant to them, we questioned their relationship with Switzerland and the impact of their migration on their cultural construction and identity in an unknown country.

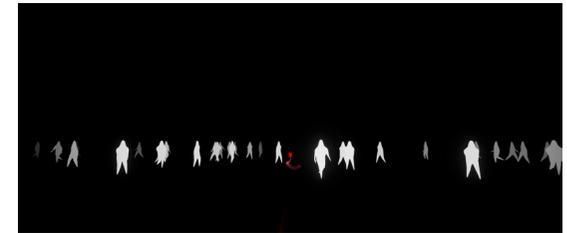
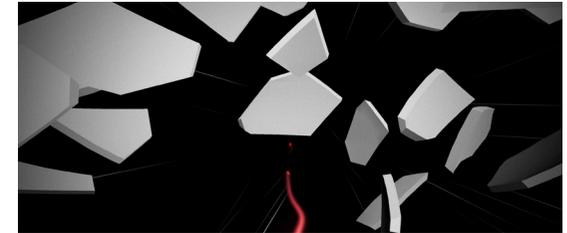
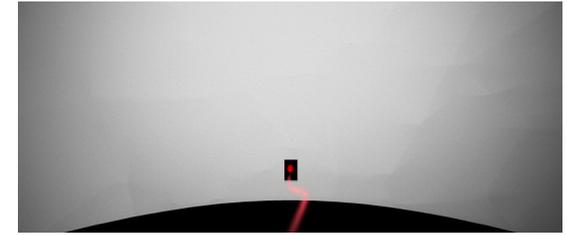
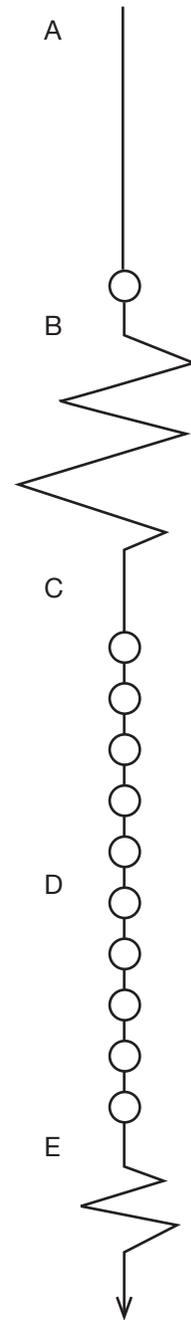
Our contemporary Heidi's have told us their stories. They are heterogeneous and naturally inherent to each life path. One of the things that resonates in many of these stories is the importance of initiating a process of socialisation, essential to the sense of belonging and heimat. We therefore decided to undertake a project focusing on the creation of interpersonal links.



User journey

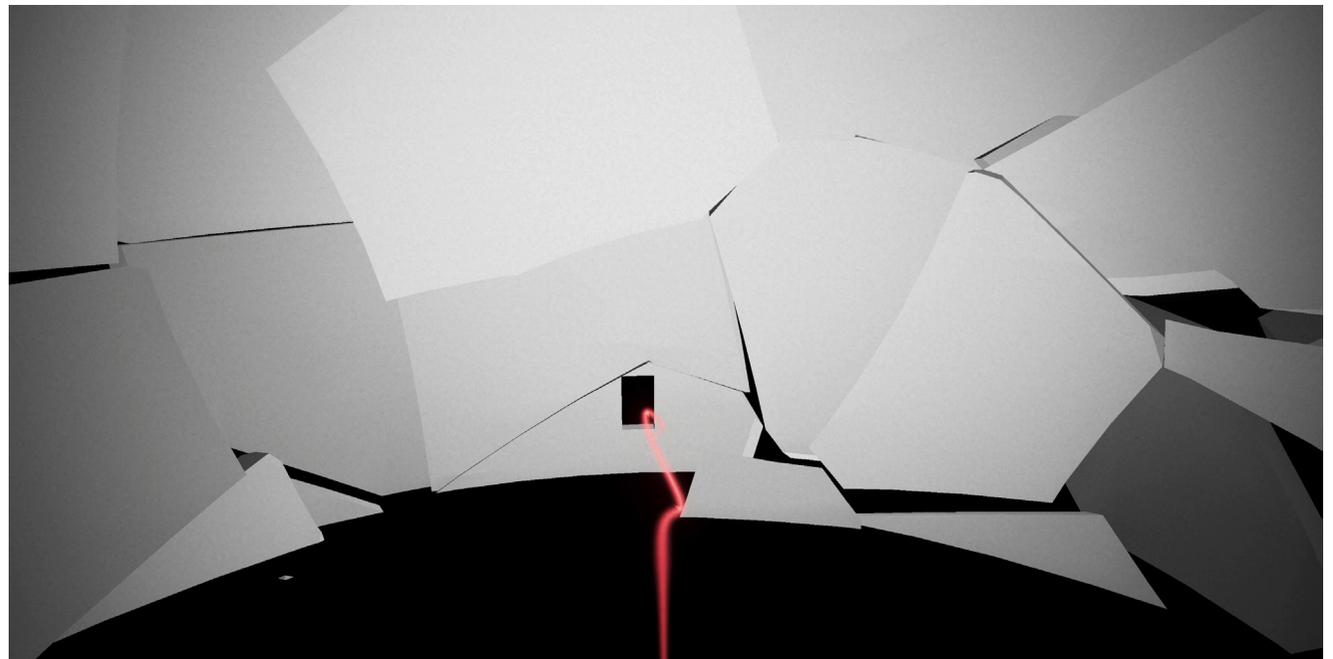
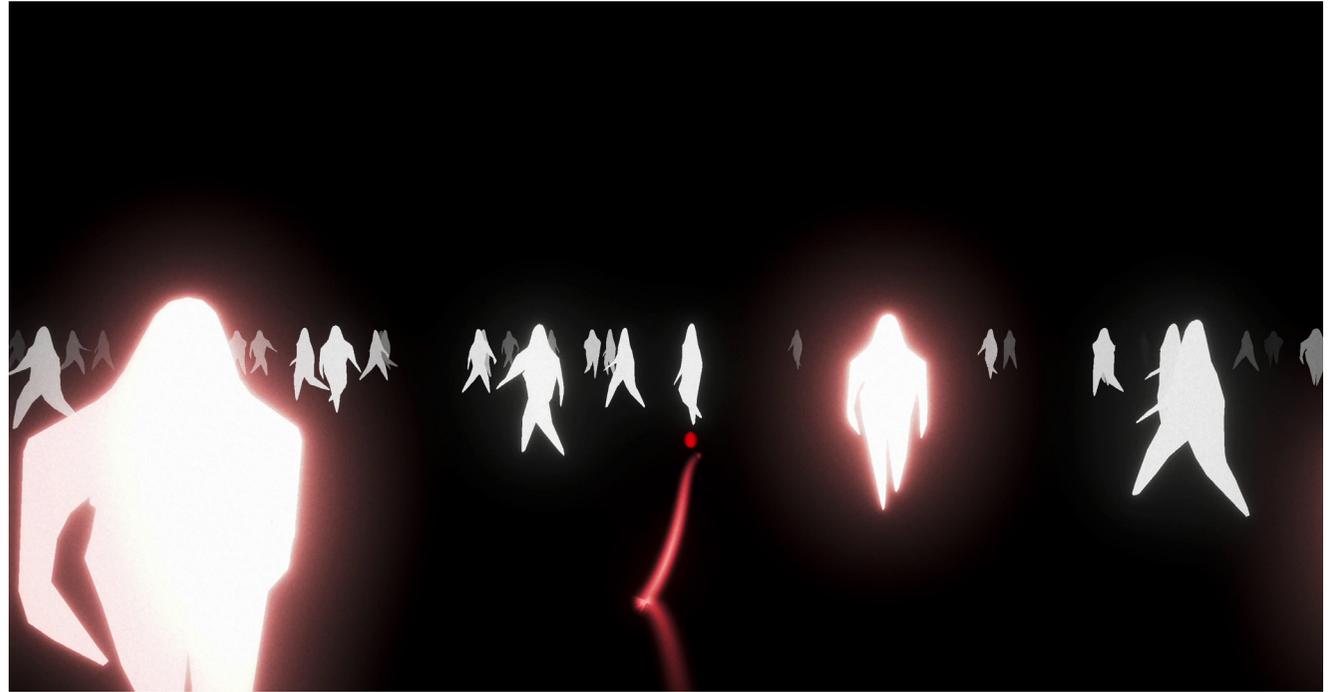
Sitting on the ground on a rotating platform, the player first finds herself in a soothing place, a heimat (A). This home is soon destroyed resembling uprootedness, leaving a void (B). The newly orphaned user is forced to rebuild his environment. This reconstruction involves trying to establish connections with entities that spawn in the vicinity (C).

The user's attention to these entities allows them to hear brief excerpts of testimonies from contemporary Heidis, facilitating the establishment of a connection with them (D). When the socialisation process is complete, the person, having become an integral part of the world around them, experiences the joy of belonging to a new society and of being supported by meaningful relationships which are the foundation for the development of the ultimate sense of well-being. In our experience, the entities approach the user and embrace her with their light, allowing her to become and be able to call this new place «home» (E).



World

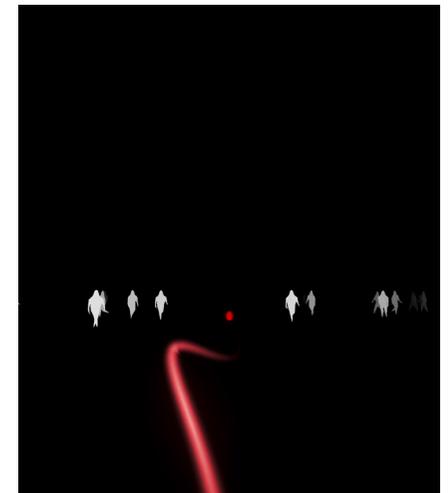
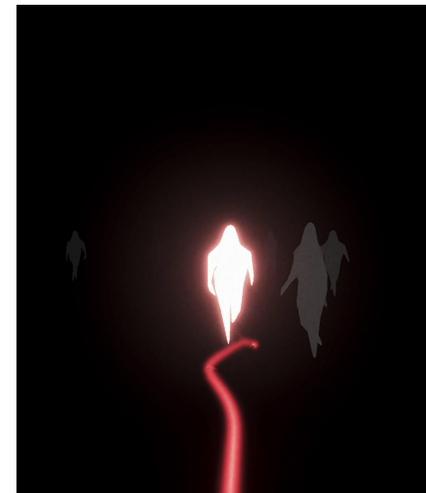
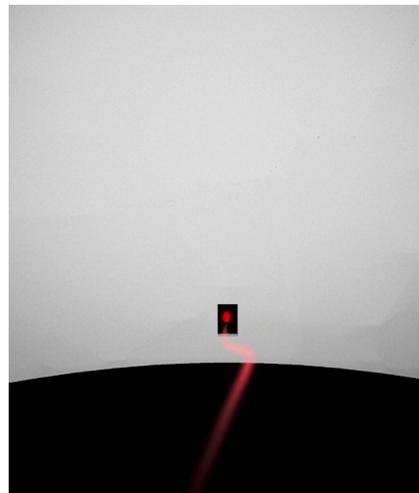
The visual aesthetic of the experience is defined by various effects of distortion, blur, and light. The color palette of our world is striking, predominantly featuring black, white and swiss red. The entities are humanoid beings, all identical to each other, and the player is one of them. The entire experience is accompanied by ambient sounds, which change according to the different stages, and the voices from the interviews are modified by interactive sound effects.



Interaction

Just as the first stage in socialising with a person is eye contact, the essence of Ali-lenti's interaction is driven by gaze. It's not a question of success or failure, but rather a recognition of the player's effort to focus on connection-making. Gradually, the player starts seeing the entities appear. Thanks to the user's head movements, and therefore the direction of his gaze, the user can discover the entities surrounding her.

By focusing the attention on any of the beings, the image of the entity in question becomes clearer and so does the sound it emits. When the user manages to focus all his attention on one of the entities, and takes the time to listen to the excerpt of a testimony that is then audible, a connection is established with the entity. The player starts building his network of connections over time by focusing on bonding with the entities, one by one.



HEIDI.CH.JP

Project Description

Visiting and taking pictures in Swiss mountain villages, searching for authenticity, one can discover the true reality of our times : the commodification and ensuing chaotic waste of what Heidi traditional world is about.

Key Words: Consumerism, Hypermarketing, Utopia/Distopia

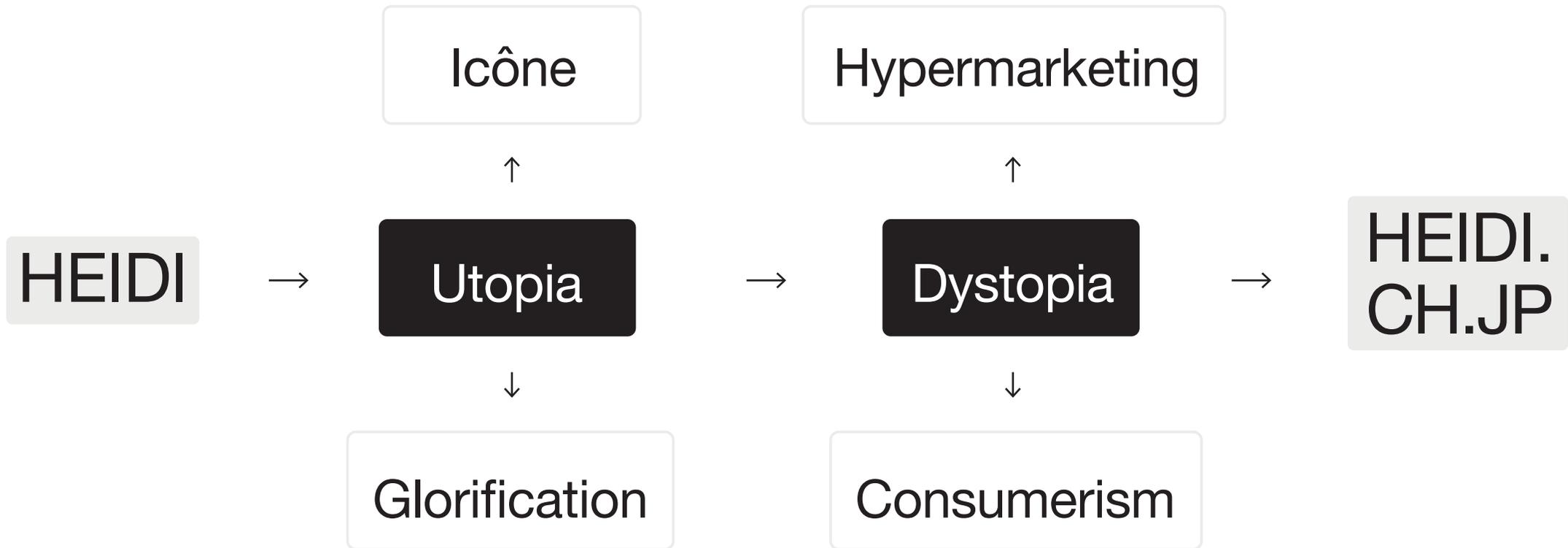
HEIDI.CH.JP is a virtual environment offering an experience in a utopian world composed of real villages linked to the literary figure of Heidi.

The experience aims to make us reflect on the issues related to over-commercialization and consumerism towards a literary character originally symbolizing harmony and respect for nature.

This project aims to highlight the importance and, at the same time, the difficulty of preserving the world and the nature that surrounds us.



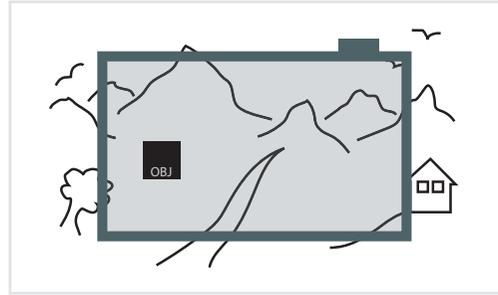
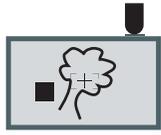
Constellation





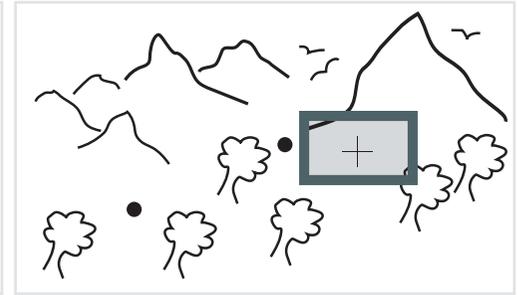
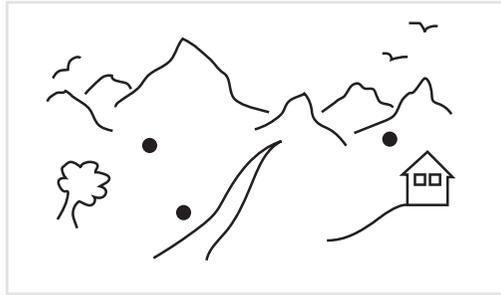
User Journey

Point
+ Click



Add
object

Aim



Change
point
of view

Objects

The HEIDI.CH.JP project explored the use of artificial intelligences for the generation of 3D assets, including assets based on real commercial products related to the character of Heidi.



Journey Back

Pitch

Help a lost soul find its way back home to rediscover its true self.

Key words

Transition, compassion, restitution, guidance, color

Description

'Journey Back' is a VR experience inspired by Heidi's travels and her return to the Alps.

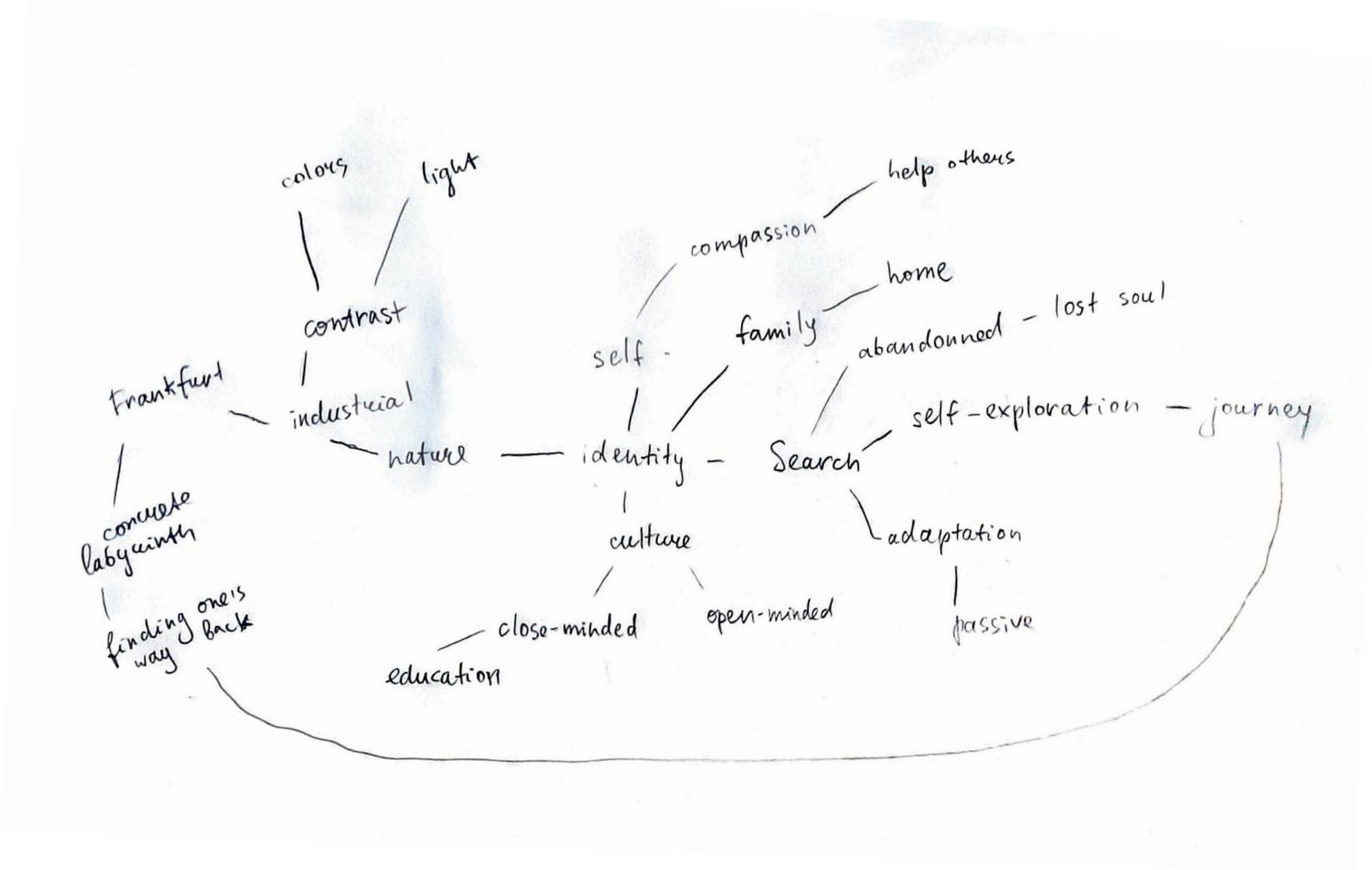
By following the lights and helping various creatures in distress, the user progresses through an environment that gradually changes from a colorless, dark concrete maze to a bright and colorful mountaintop.

By the end, the true role of the user is revealed: they have been a guiding spirit for the lost soul, Heidi, helping her come back to her world.



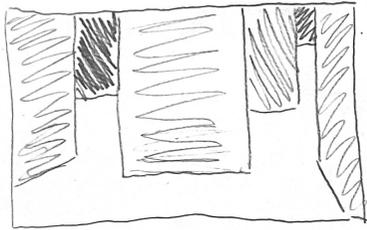
Constellation

Identity - search - nature - finding one's way back - helping others

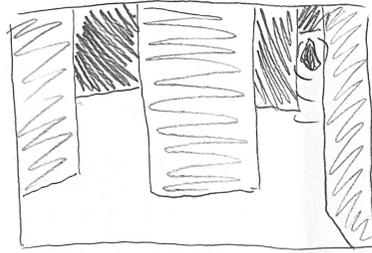


User Journey

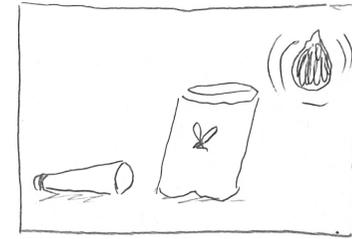
(interaction aspects in *italic*)



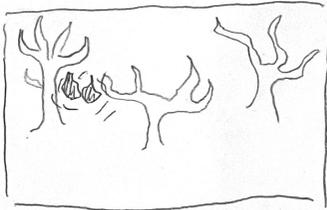
Concrete maze. No light, no color, no sound.



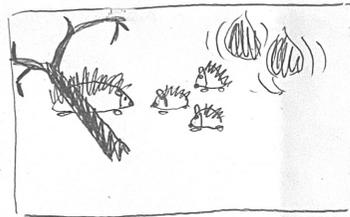
A blue light appears. Pull yourself to the light.
Point at the light with palm and pinch or grab



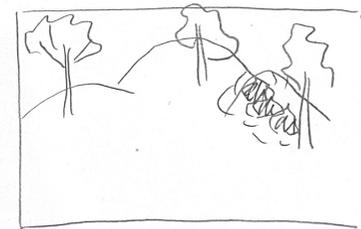
There is a trapped firefly. Free the creature using the light.
Take object with a pinch and throw it



Scenery changes to a gloomy forest. A bit of light and color, some sounds.



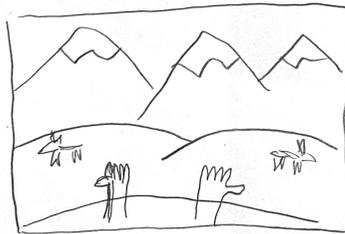
There is a family of hedgehogs. Free the mother trapped under a branch.



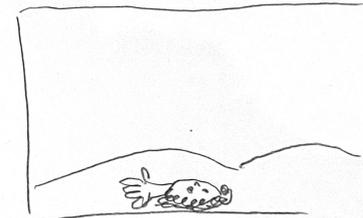
Scenery changes again. More light and color. Now you are going up a mountain.



There is a dying bird being attacked by a fox. Scare away the fox. The bird dies. Cover it.



You reach the mountain top. All colors and sounds are back. You now have a body.



You start separating from the body and realize that all this time you have been helping Heidi.

Moodboards

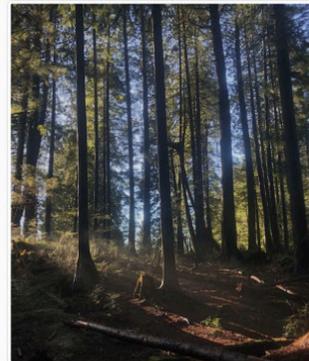
Scene 1



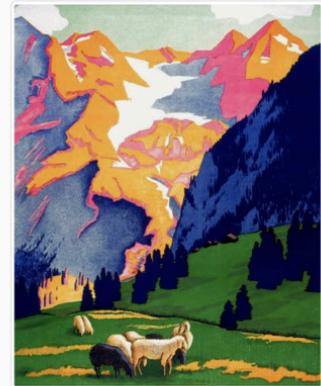
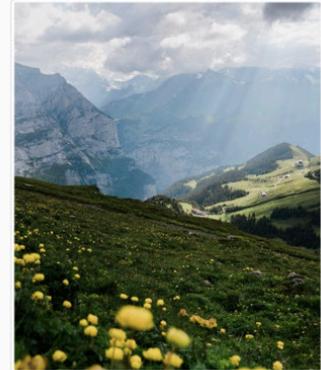
Scene 2



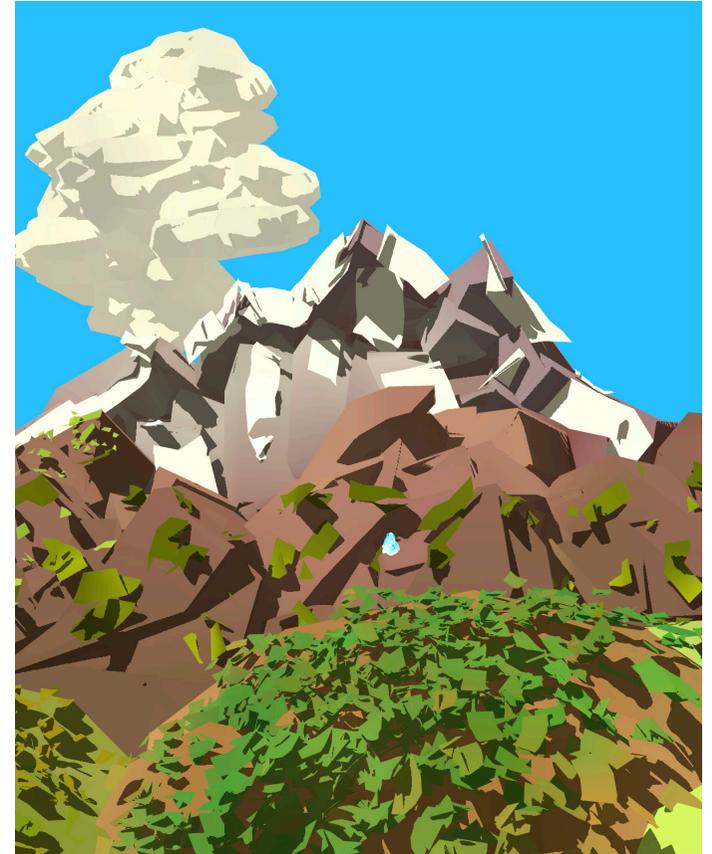
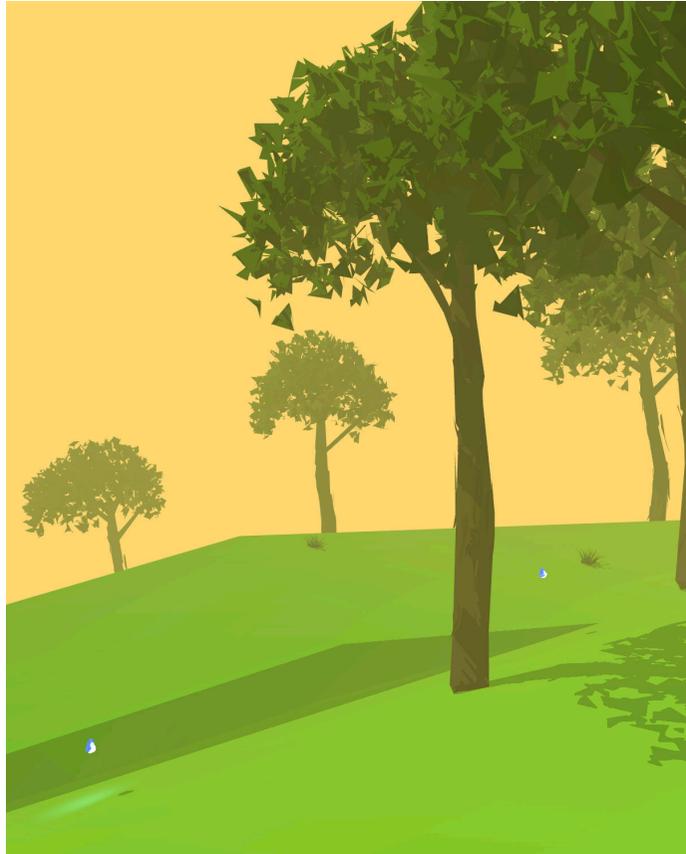
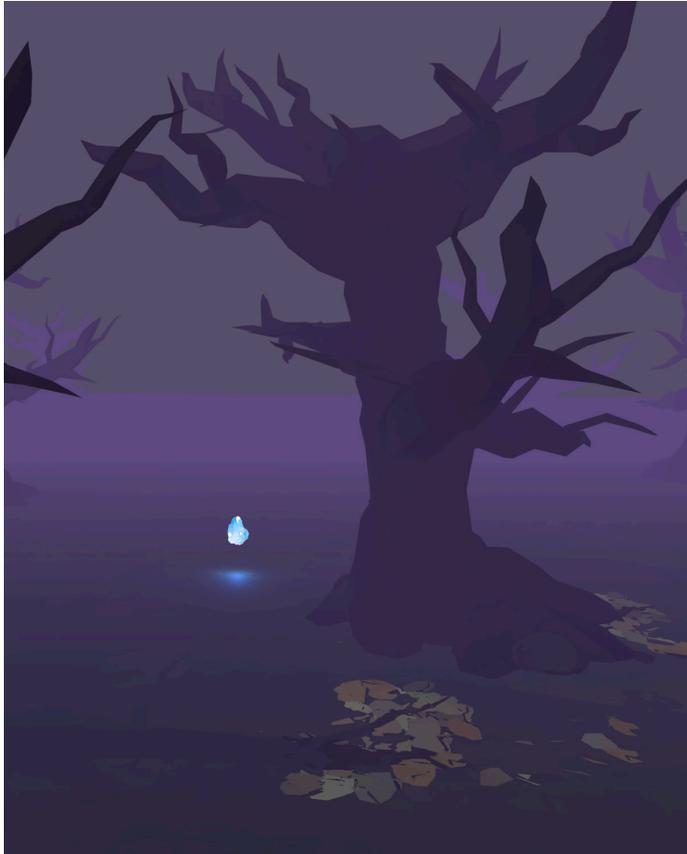
Scene 3

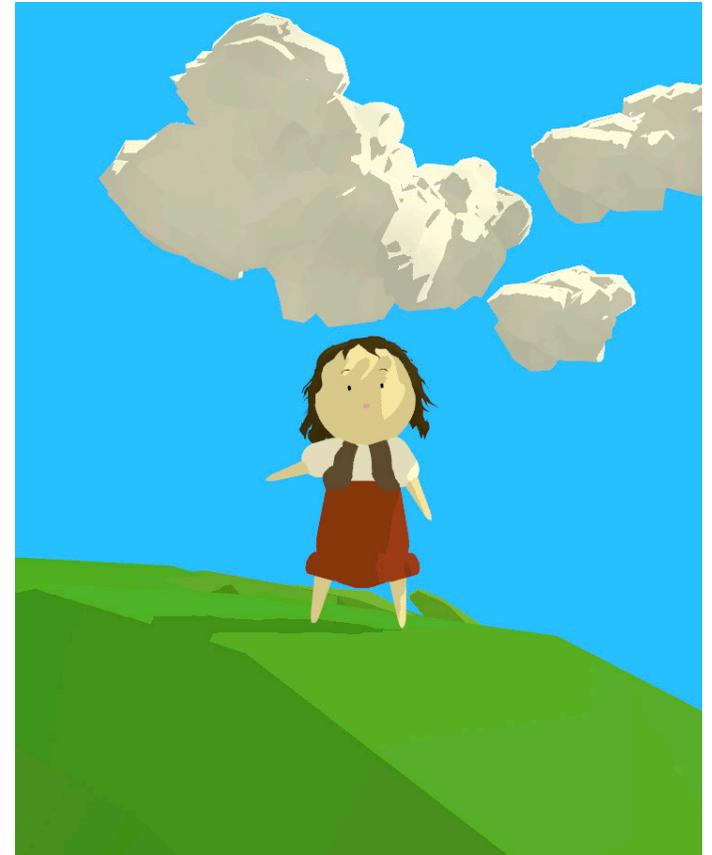


Scene 4

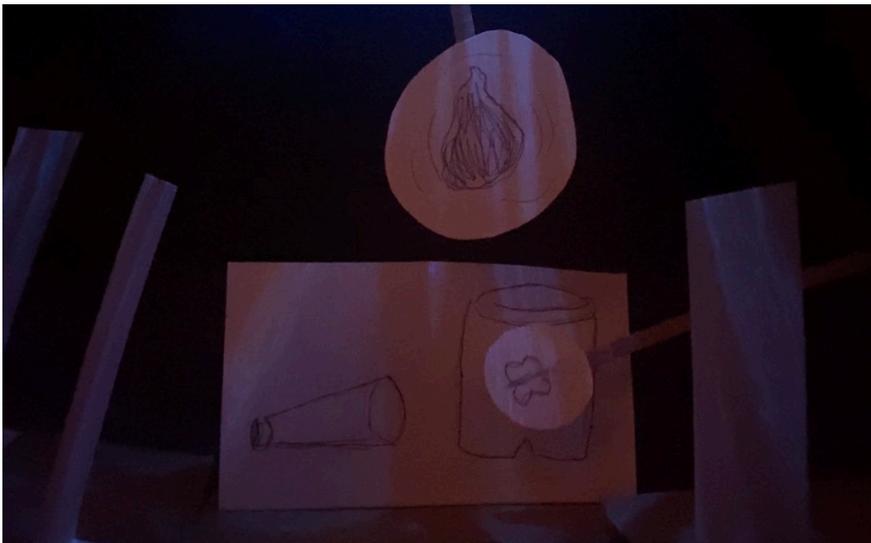


World





Paper prototype



T3 19.9 KM

Pitch

An introspective ascension in the Swiss mountains that invites you to develop emotional harmony.

Key Words

ascension — choices — evasion — contemplation — time

Description

The experience takes the form of a mountain walk, with the aim of reaching the top.

Inspired by Swiss trail walking, this «hiking simulator» takes us on a journey through the landscapes of the mind. As the user ascends, he or she will regularly come across several «psychic» paths, i.e. a personal perception of the landscape. These choices of itinerary will gradually enable him/her to define the quality and meaning of their inner journey. In this experience, there are no right or wrong choices.

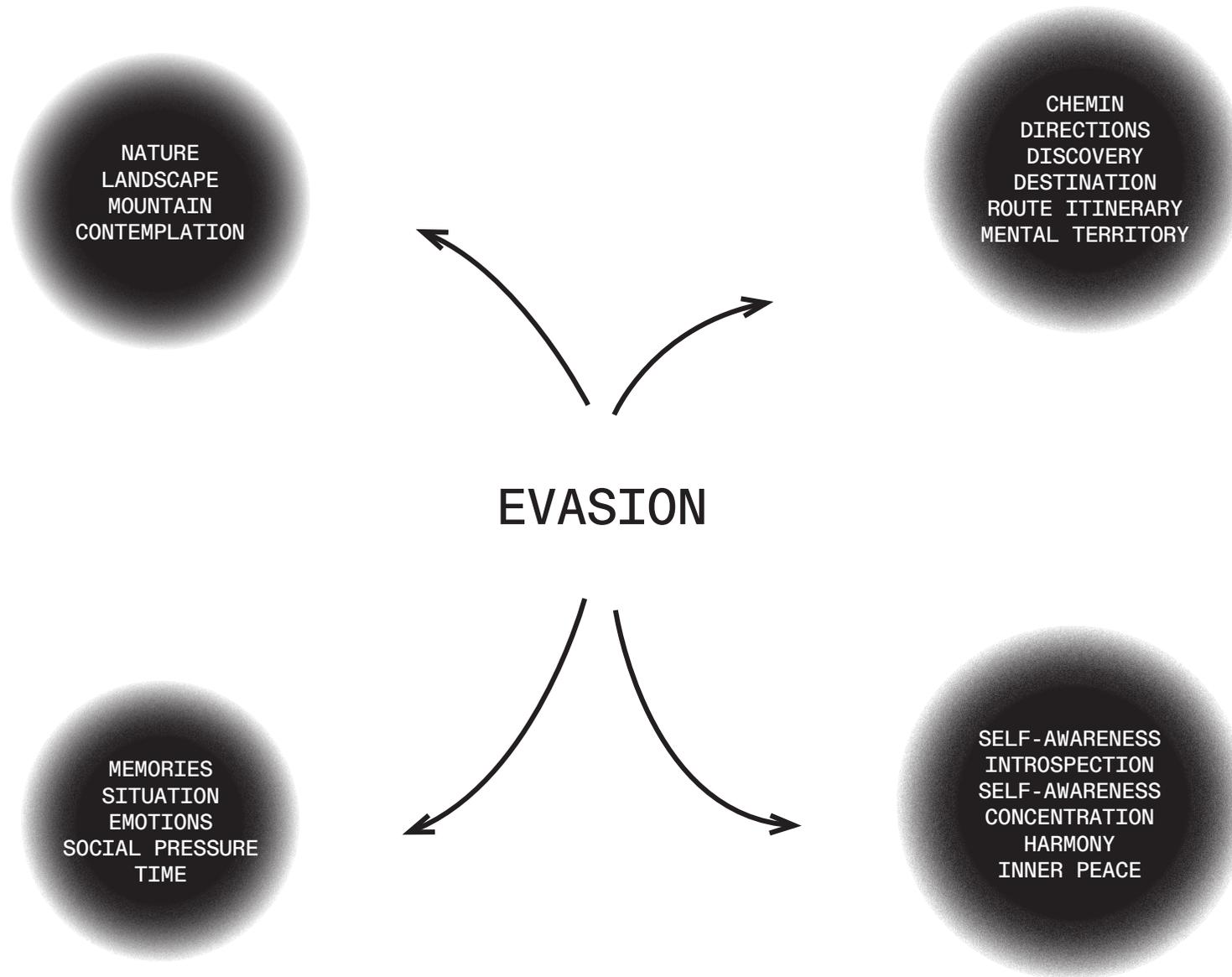
At the end, the viewer will reach the top of the mountain, where a bench can be found: a place to sit and perceive the golden hour of sunset.







Constellation

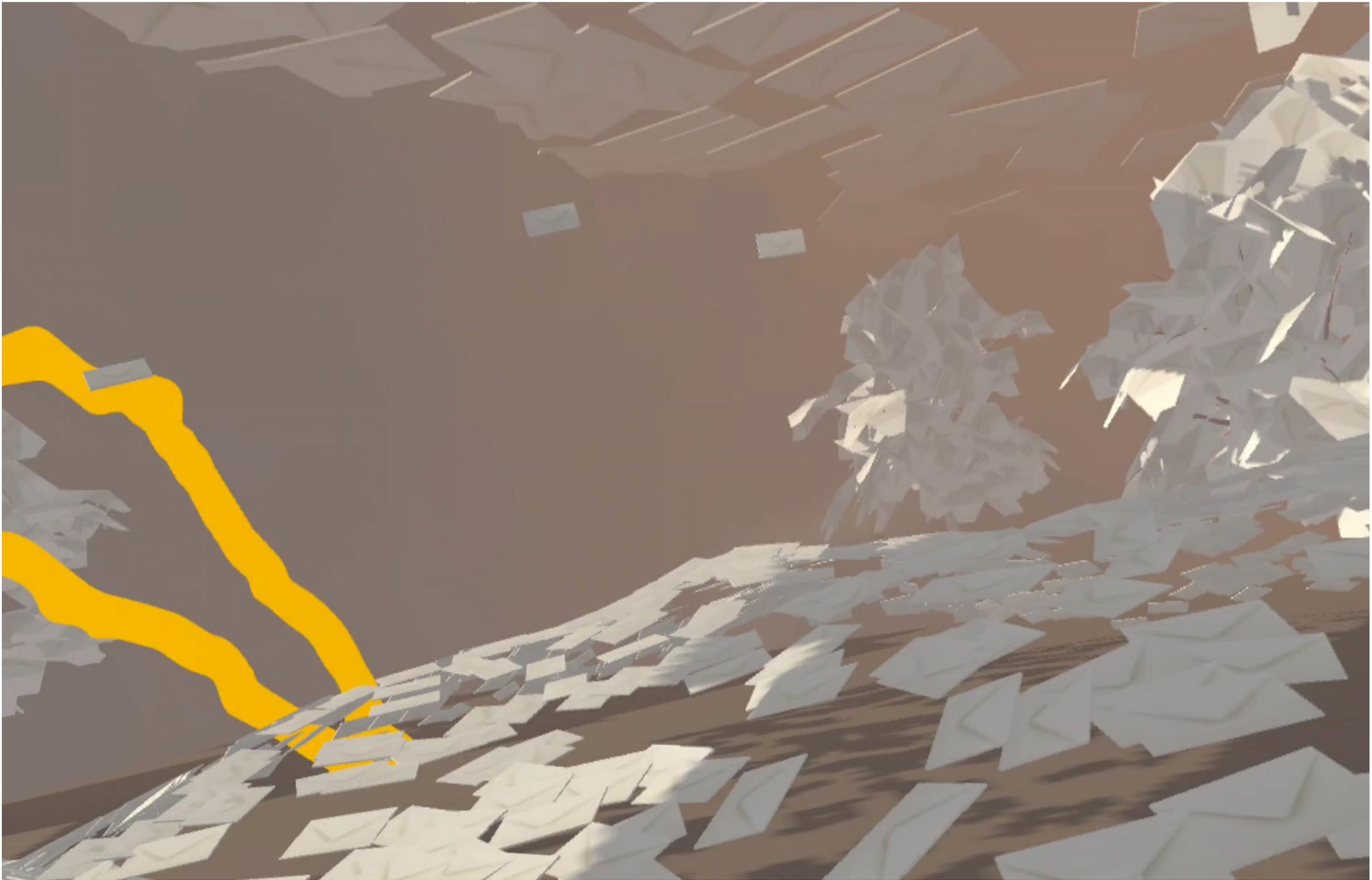


World

Virtual space represents an escape from everyday life and an appreciation of the present moment. The journey begins in the midst of heavy, artifact-laden urban environments. As the experience progresses, the scenes become more peaceful, both visually and sonically, and finally reach a state of total plenitude.









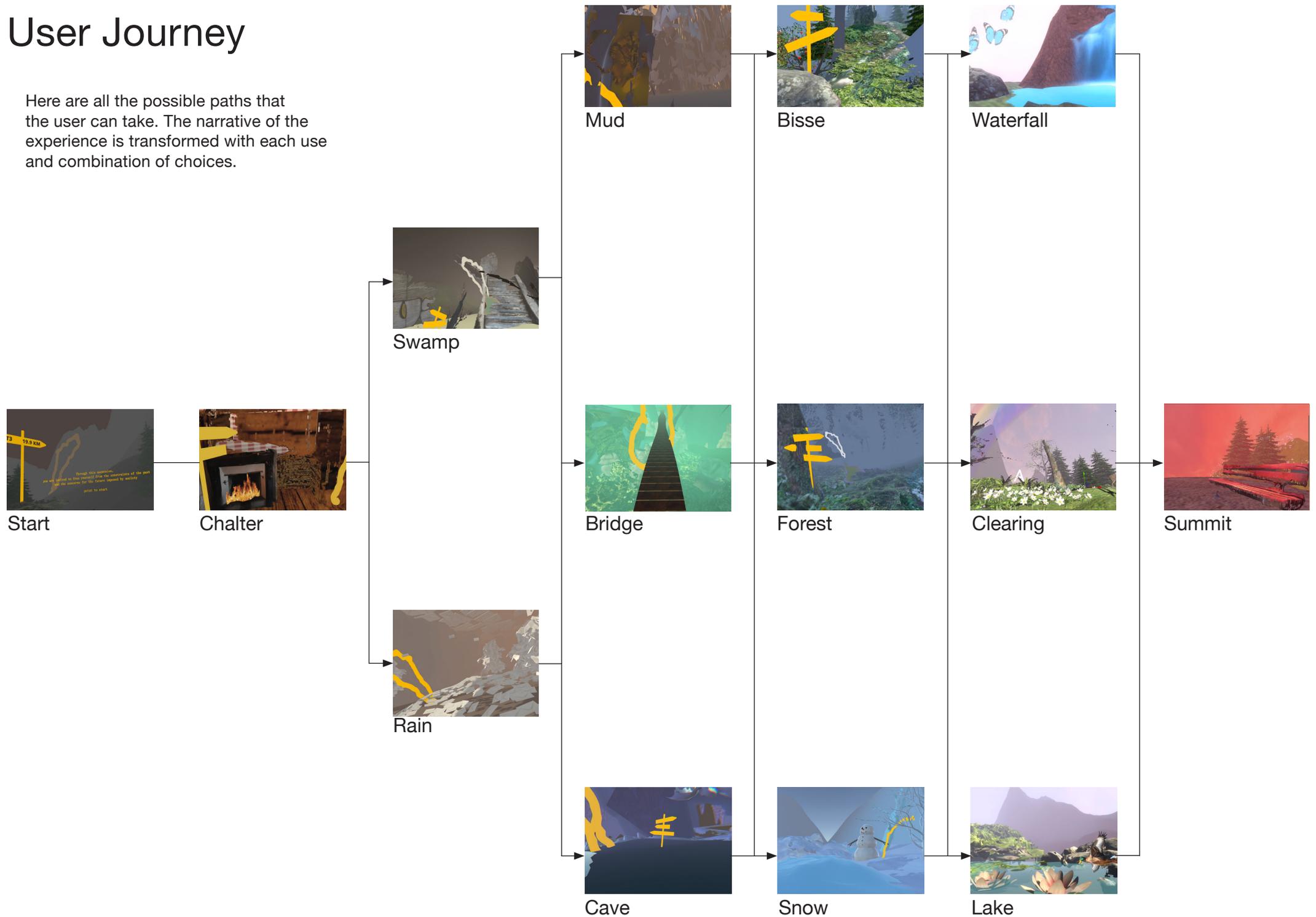






User Journey

Here are all the possible paths that the user can take. The narrative of the experience is transformed with each use and combination of choices.

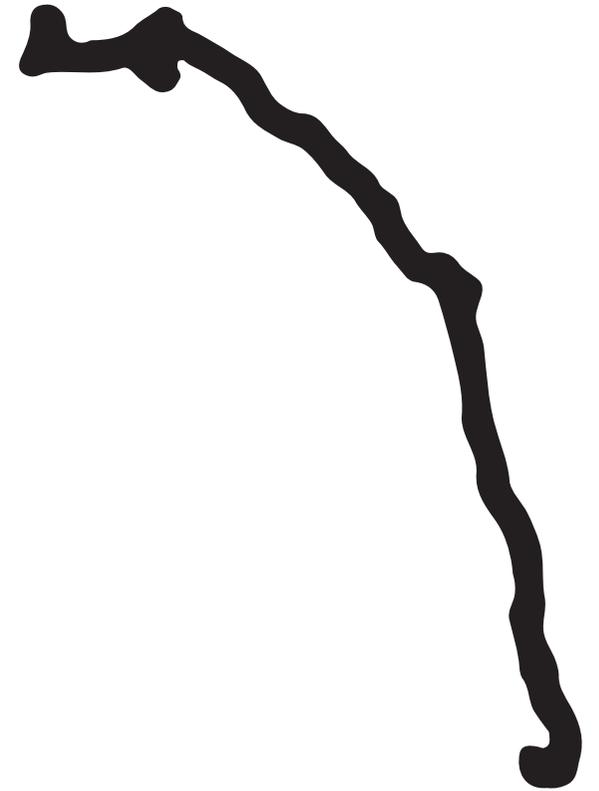
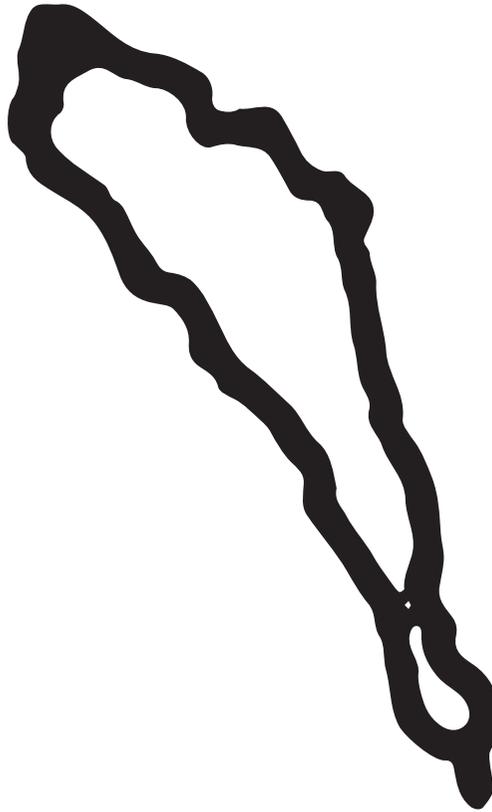
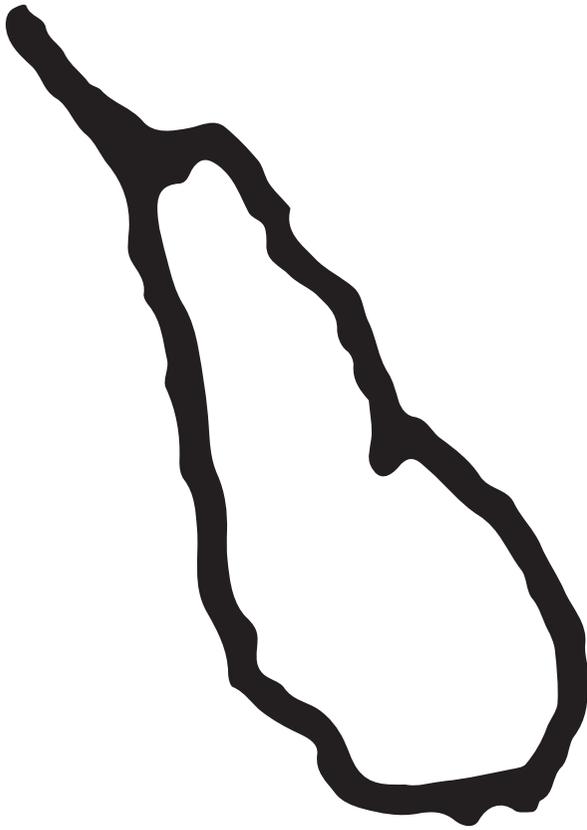


Interaction



Symbolics

The name of the project as well as the symbols found throughout the experience are inspired by the language used during hikes in the Swiss mountains. T3 being the third level of difficulty of the walks, 19.9 km the length of a feasible hike in the mountain where Heidi's story takes place and the pictograms indicate the route.



Inspiration





Murmuration

Project Description

Through this immersive experience, the user follows the journey of a lost alpine Bluebird Mound. It symbolizes Heidi in a pastoral setting affected by urbanization. The journey reveals the impact of human development on natural rhythms and the resilience of nature to adapt and recover.

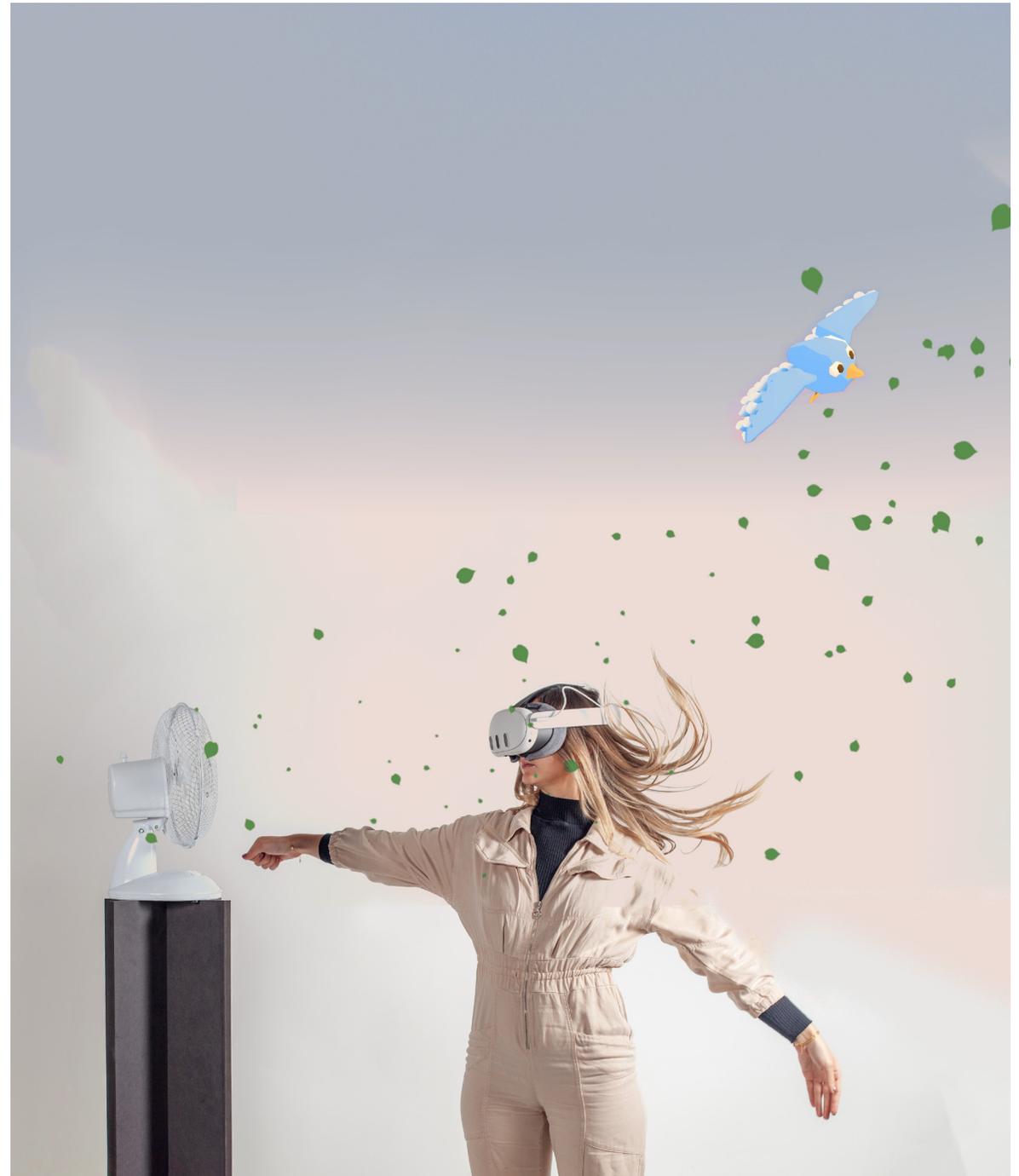
Keywords

Contemplation/ Window/ Bird/ Resilience/ Ecology

The user is in a room of a chalet with four windows, reminiscent of Heidi's story, where she often looks out to observe the environment. Each window provides a view of a different season.

By opening a window, it activates a fan which gives you a sensation of wind. A bird enters the room, dropping artifacts that reflect the state of the environment it comes from.

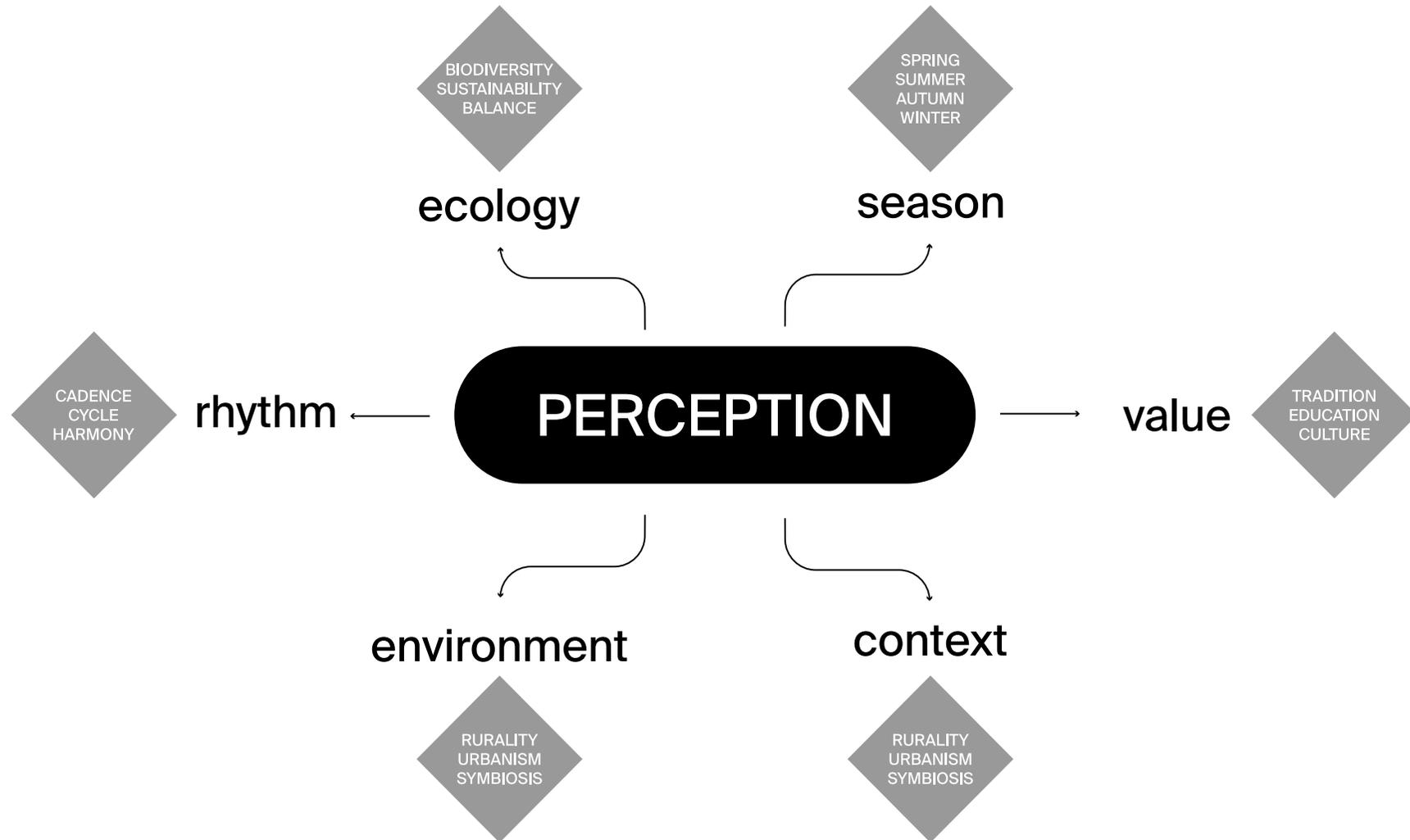
After opening all four windows, the state of the world transforms, shifting from the Valley to the City, and finally to a symbiosis between urbanity and rurality.



Constellation

This project revolves around the theme of perception through the window, highlighting environmental, ecological, and cultural issues.

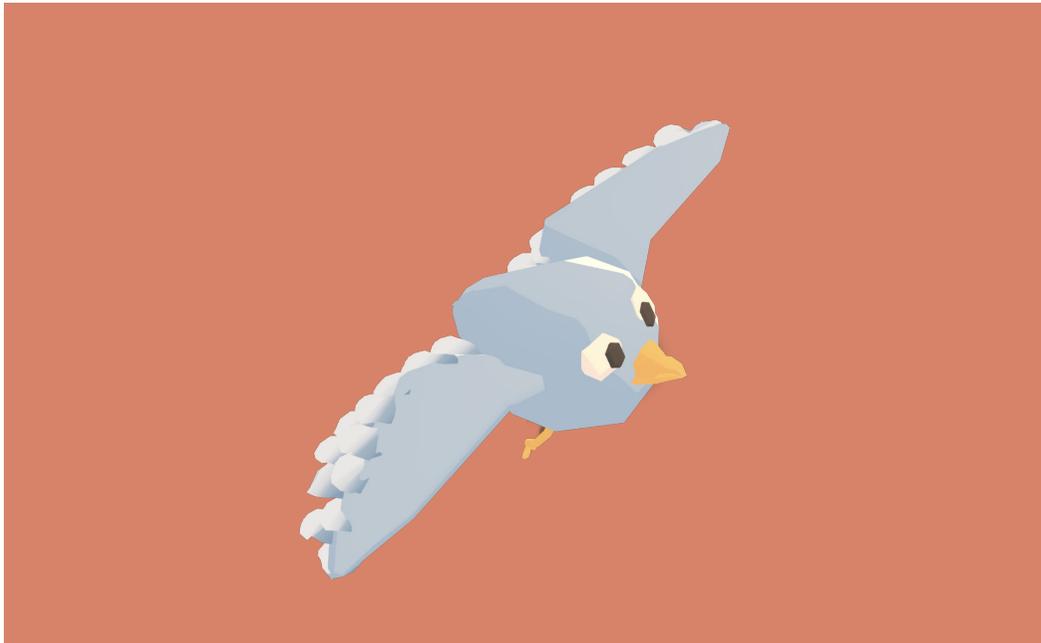
It aims to demonstrate the harmonization of chaos with nature reclaiming its place.



Symbolism

The Bird

The bird symbolizes freedom, travel, and a deep connection with nature. It represents rising above earthly concerns and adaptability. Birds are seen as messengers and reflect resilience, thriving in diverse environments. Their migration highlights strength, resourcefulness, hope, transformation, and life's continuity despite challenges.



Heidi, fille des Alpes, Zuiyo Eizo, (1974)

Symbolism

The Window

The window symbolizes a connection to the outside world and a transition between different states. It represents moving from the safety of an enclosed space to the vast, unpredictable environment outside. As thresholds, windows offer perspectives on life, from changing seasons to personal growth, embodying the duality of introspection and embracing new experiences and changes.



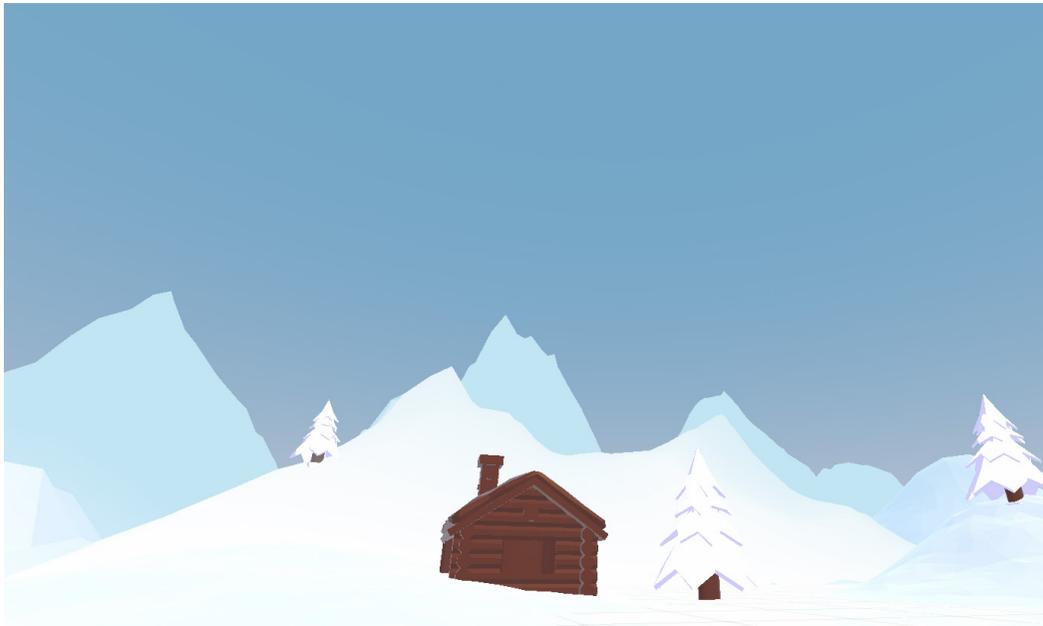
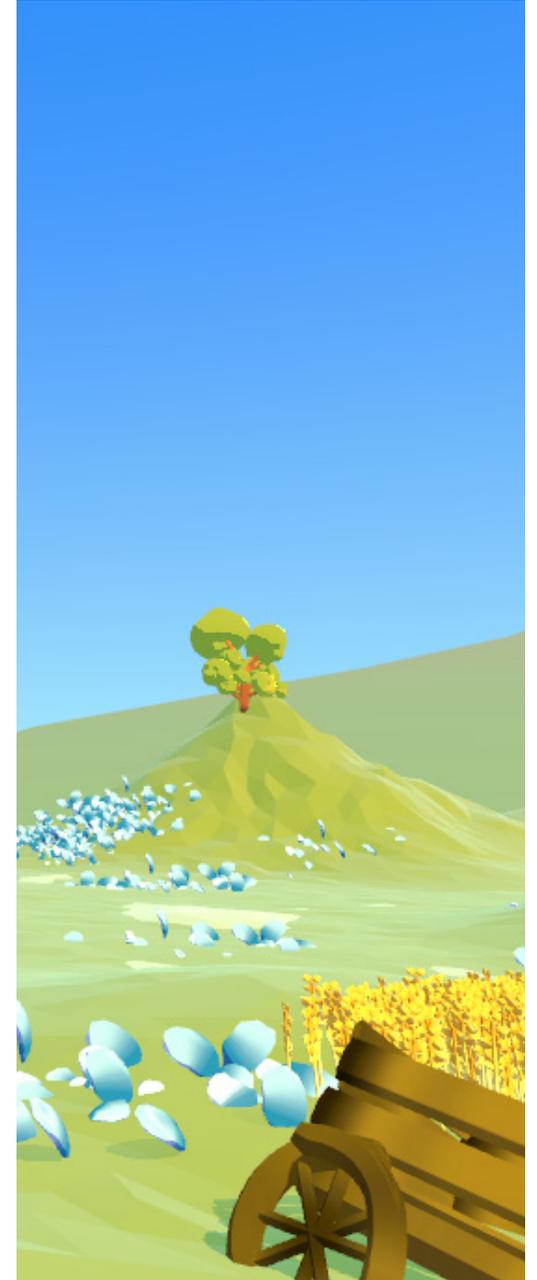
Heidi, fille des Alpes, Zuiyo Eizo, (1974)

World

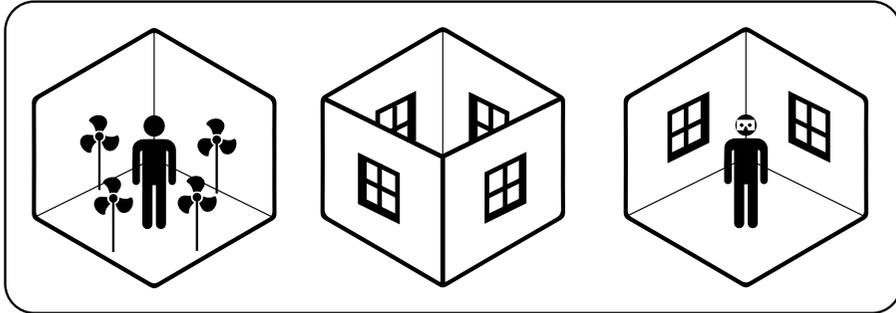
There are 4 seasons, each of them containing 3 states.
Every asset has been created using Quill VR.
The composition of the landscapes has been researched based on the Swiss environment.



World



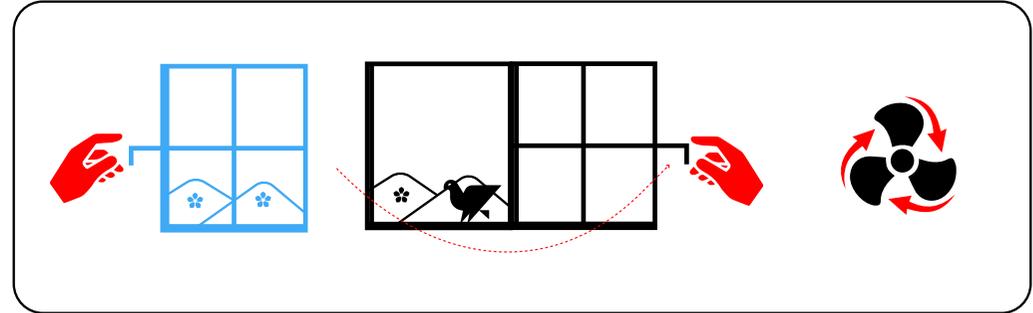
User Journey



The scenography consists of 4 fans.

The experience is in a room. There are 4 windows, each representing a different season and state.

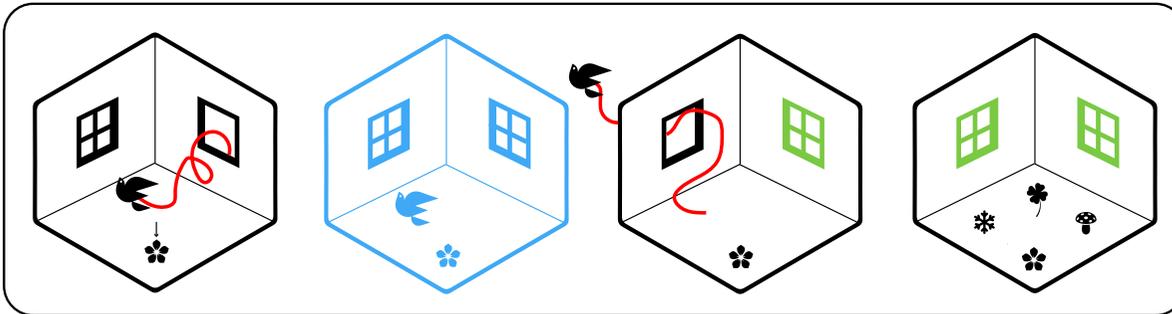
The user is inside.



The interior and exterior environment remains static if the windows are closed.

When a window is opened, a bird enters and everything comes to life.

By opening the window, the fan activates providing a sensation of wind.

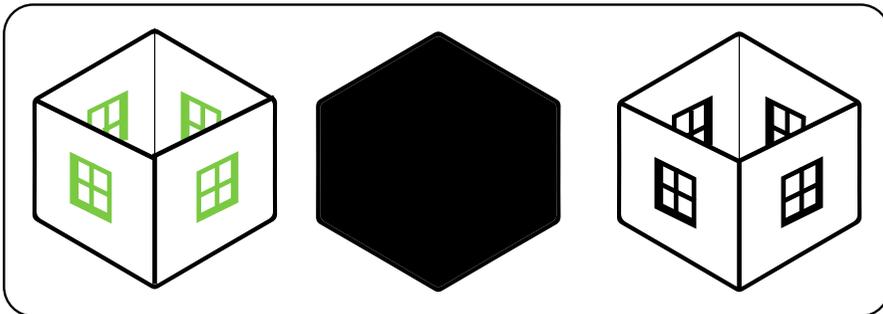


It enters inside and deposits an artifact represented in the environment from which it comes.

The window closes and time is frozen.

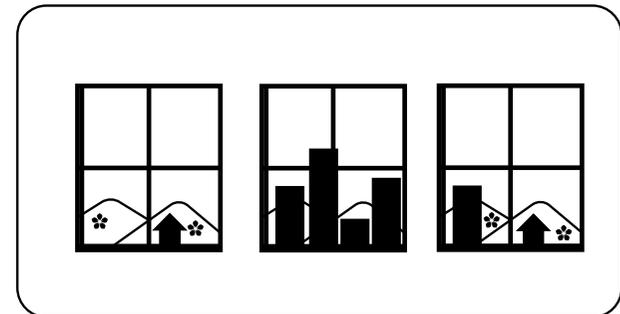
By opening another window, we allow the bird to go out again into another season.

For each season and each state, it deposits a different object.



When all interaction allowed the bird to bring all the artifacts,

the scene transforms and we move to a different state.



The states are rurality, urbanism, and resilience.

User Journey

Rurality

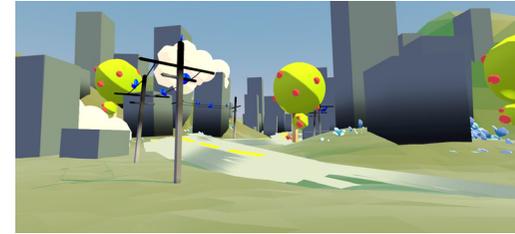
Urbanism

Resilience

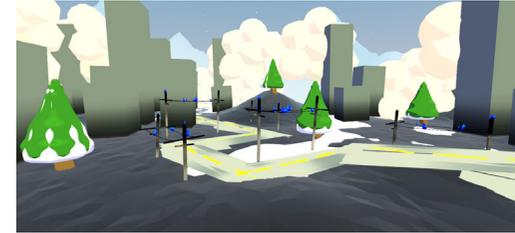
Summer



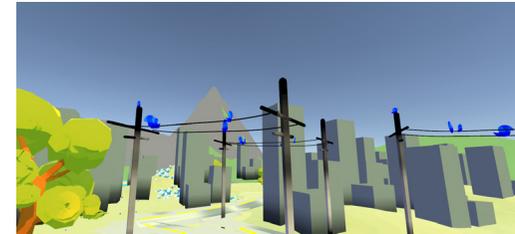
Autumn



Winter



Spring



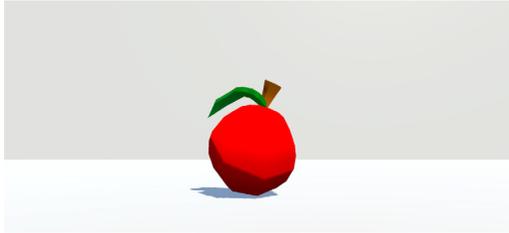
User Journey

Rurality

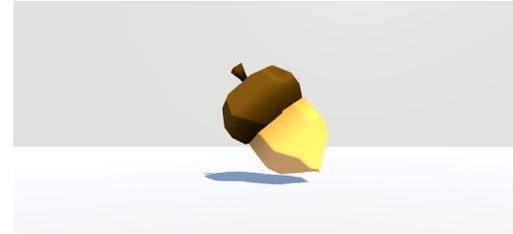
Urbanism

Resilience

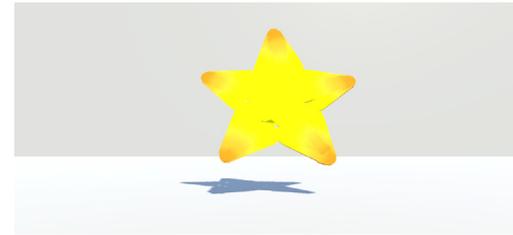
Summer



Autumn



Winter



Spring

