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A Place through Time

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A Place Through Time

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The goal of this project is to create the initial framework and preliminary content for a proof of concept Virtual Reality (VR) experience that allows the user to control time and see the evolution of one location through time, from the earliest stages of planet formation to modern day. Users will be in a fixed location in VR space but will be able look around an immersive environment and fast-forward or rewind time as well as skip eons, periods, epochs, or ages. A representative loop of time will be created for as many divisions of time the project team deems appropriate. During these loops if the location is underwater, then the user will see what it would have been like underwater at that time, if it was on land and in the Mesozoic era, then the dinosaurs from the area will be part of the loop, etc., right up to modern day. The final product will have several well researched locations the user can choose from and will likely incorporate procedural generation. Subject matter experts from a variety of fields such as biology, geology, history, and paleontology along with production staff of coders and artists will be needed to produce the fully featured project. The RCEU project will seek only to prove out the concept for the larger project by prototyping the major features needed to create the experience and by creating several initial content loops.

The student member of the team will model, texture, shade, light, rig and animate 3D assets for use in the real-time VR simulation. As a prototype, the emphasis will be on creating the necessary assets quickly at the appropriate resolution over the fidelity of any one particular asset. As a collaborative project, an emphasis will be placed on scene upkeep, file naming, and proper use of version control - all industry best practices the student will benefit from better understanding. The selected student should be prepared to create a lot of models with very tight time, geometry, and texture restrictions imposed on them. In addition to the asset work, the selected student will collaborate with faculty mentor to
conceptualize, assemble, set dress and animate prototype environments in the game engine for two to three time loops.

This project will have an intense schedule, but is an outstanding opportunity to learn and develop artistic and technical skills, gain a better understanding of industry best practices, as well as produce portfolio work. A positive attitude, good organizational skills, strong communication, and self-motivation are important traits the successful student will need for this role.

Students interested in this position need to have a solid understanding of the 3D CGI pipeline and are required to have completed ARS 220 Animation: Introduction and at least one 300 level animation skill development course (ARS 32X) before the RCEU project begins. Students with at least one 400 level animation production course (ARS 41X or 42X) are preferred.

The student will work on site with faculty member in Wilson Hall. Working hours will be flexible. Faculty member will not just be supervising & mentoring, but will also be working on the production, so regular contact will be vital to the success of the collaboration. Direct interaction will occur daily to assess progress, talk about issues or potential roadblocks, and to evaluate technical and artistic work completed. Thoughtful, detailed feedback will be provided, and is expected in return. Help will always be available, but a good deal of independent troubleshooting and problem solving is expected.
2016 - RCEU_Animation_Argentina
Jess Bailer worked on storyboarding, character design, character modeling, prop modeling, texturing, shading, facial blend shapes, and motion graphics for the short film we worked on as part of RCEU 2016. She learned new 2D and 3D software tools and techniques and improved existing skills and aesthetic sensibilities though work on the project. She also created some strong work for her portfolio on the project. The experience from the RCEU project helped her land an internship in the fall of 2017 that will become a full-time job when Jess graduates in December.

2017 - RCEU_Animation&Theatre_Argentina
Tanya Chavez worked on script analysis, environment/set design, modeling, texturing, shading, lighting, user interface design, and scene setup in Unreal Engine. She learned new, and enhanced existing skills in both 2D and 3D art production. She created a high-quality 3D portfolio piece during the project and the RCEU experience was the turning point in the quality of her art production. Working full time on animation production and needing to meet specific quality standards clearly makes a tremendous difference for students. She consistently made quality models from this point forward and was able to land a full-time job at graduation because of the quality of her work.