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The Fast Fashion Apocalypse

The intent of this project is to positively impact the real world, environmentally and human rights. Fast fashion came to mind, as we are all consumers who have purchased this type of clothing. While most of us may have heard of the issues that face this industry before, many of us do not understand the major impact it has on the planet and garment workers. For example, the Rana Plaza Tower collapse in Bangladesh killed thousands who toiled in garment factories that produced products for many high street brands (Thomas, 2018). Changes to practices prevalent in this industry would benefit the planet and our fellow humans so this project targets consumers and empowers them to drive improvements to better the fashion industry.

The combination of art and activism can be a very persuasive tool used to change people's opinions and habits. *The Fast Fashion Apocalypse* is a 3D experience that visually walks users through the amount of waste produced by fast fashion [via a visit through San Francisco] while informing them on how much pollution, waste and unethical labor this industry is responsible for. Also included are tips to guide shoppers on their journey to becoming more conscious consumers.

For this submission I began by creating the terrain that my city would rest upon and implementing all my models to develop the basic cityscape based on my storyboard.

I duplicated the cityscape to create a light and dark version of San Francisco, coloring each scene, the light with white and bright colors and apocalyptic scene with various shades of grey. I then researched fast fashion facts, tips on becoming a more conscious shopper, and fast fashion brand offenders. Once I collected all the information, I determined when to introduce certain facts along the user journey. The facts involving fast fashion waste and relevant quotes are emphasized through graphic tees. Those related to pollution are represented by oil drums and chemical containers floating in the bay. For the fast fashion brands to avoid, I created a "virtual high street" where buildings are assigned a brand and information is revealed on why that brand is a part of the problem as the user passes.
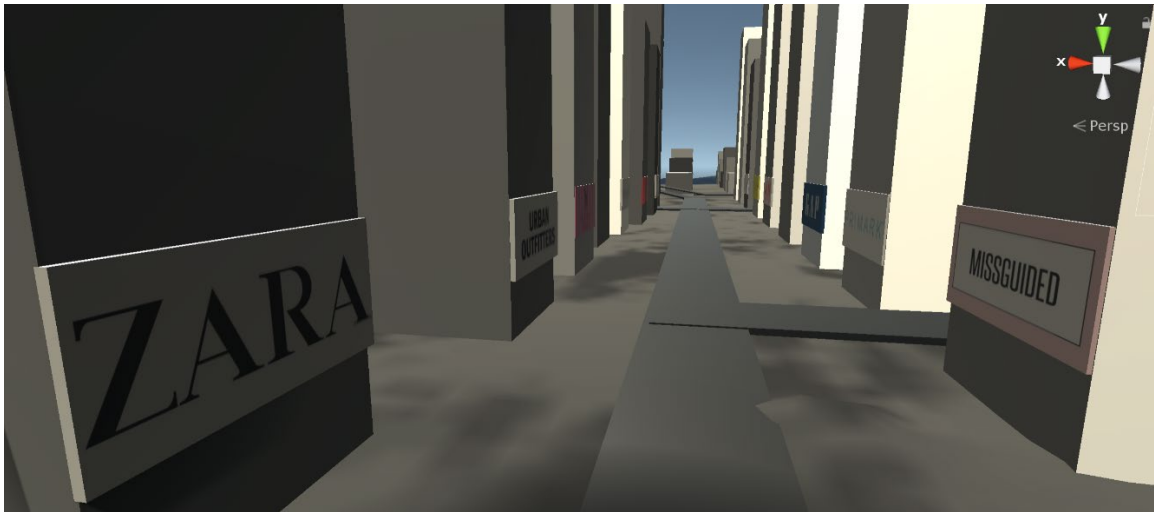
After selecting and placing the content, I focused on how the information was displayed to draw immediate recognition through icons, symbols or graphics. For instance, I used warning signs for pollution statistics, graphic t-shirts for the facts and quotes and simple shopping bags for the stores. The end component of the user journey involves the player triggering a clothing avalanche and becoming smothered by piles of clothing. I spent hours turning my clothing models into materials and animating them to fall as fabric and then hit a target; however the animation did not transfer from Maya to Unity. After trying several different ways of exporting, I concluded that I had to scrap the idea of clothes falling on top of the user. The falling clothes was replaced by a mound of clothes to dig through.
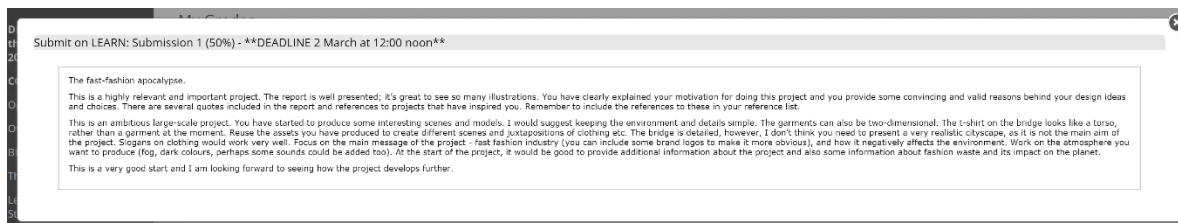

After running into various issues, I reread the feedback from the first submission to see what I could improve upon. Some of the critiques mentioned keeping the environment simple and not necessarily super-realistic, for example, garments can be two-dimensional. With the feedback in mind, the city buildings could be represented by cubes, except for key San Francisco landmarks. I wanted the San Francisco skyline to be easily identifiable so that the city's size could help users visualize the enormity of fashion waste. I flattened the clothes to appear more like clothing (vs. mannequins) and replaced the informational graphic t-shirts with two-dimensional images to make them more legible.

For the apocalypse environment, I used darkness to represent the gravity of fast fashion's negative impacts by lowering the light intensity, darkening the colors and adding particle effects like fog. I used juxtaposing wave sounds: in the light scene, calm, gentle waves of the bay and then in the dark scene, crashing waves and the sound of sewing machines to represent the amount of labor involved in the industry added as the user approaches the city area. I varied the two different atmospheres with coloring, lighting, sounds and the quantity of fog.

Some tips I received were to identify specific brands and reuse assets. I added fast fashion brands to demonstrate that many high street stores shoppers frequent are culprits, harming the environment and using unethical labor practices. The virtual high street is the perfect way to display the information; as you approach each brand's building it is revealed why that brand is a fast fashion offender.

Several things I envisioned in my original submission did not turn out as planned and were reworked to complete this submission. First, the idea of turning this project into VR was not possible as I did not have access to the equipment. One of the major problems I encountered was the animation of clothes falling onto the user. I tried to import the animation from Maya into Unity but could not get it to work, so I decided to scrap the concept of smothering the user in clothing and come up with another way to display the immensity of fashion waste. Reusing my clothing assets became very beneficial when I hit this roadblock.
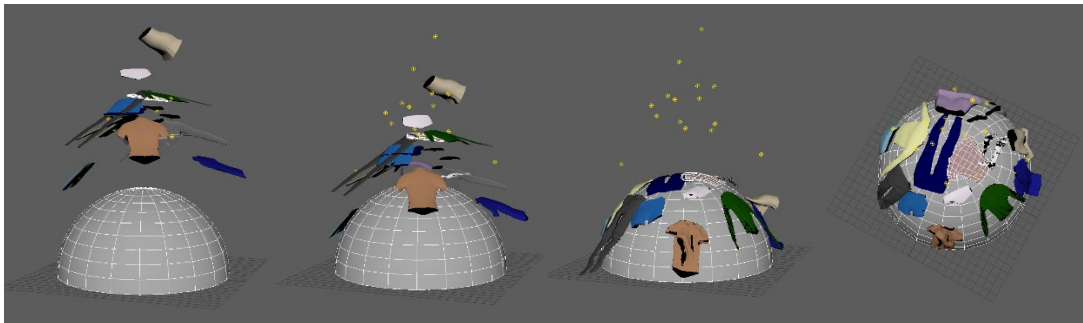
I replaced the animation by using gamification of the user clearing a path through a mound of clothes.


Numerous concepts I imagined for this project did not visually turn out as expected and needed so they were replaced. For example, instead of making the buildings appear to be bales of clothes, I created mounds of clothing in the background of the city to visualize the amount of waste produced by the fashion industry in comparison to San Francisco.
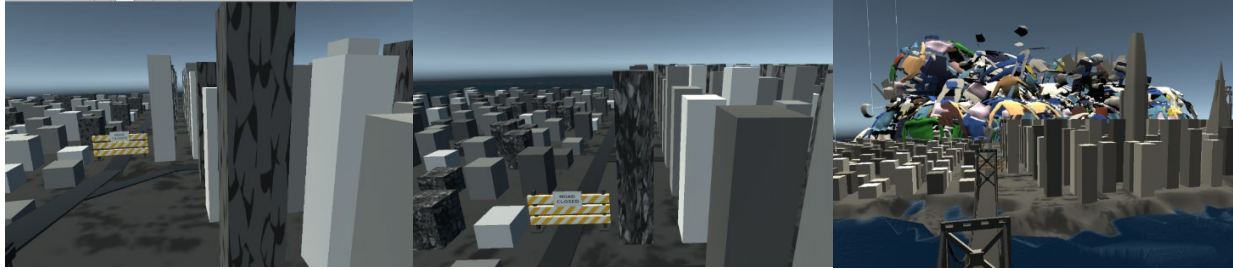
Once I completed the edits, I needed to script all the interacts within my project. I created scripts to set objects active and inactive, trigger images by walking through an object, click on or hover the mouse over an object, and collect objects to trigger a new scene.

I originally wanted the tips to becoming a more conscious shopper appear as the player made the pile of clothes disappear. This however made the project cluttered and the script was not functioning properly. Instead, I created a scene that congratulated them on their journey to smarter shopping and giving them some easy tips to get started.

I created a simple website to display my project by coding a simple home page where you can download the game file and an about fast fashion page where I reiterated key fast fashion facts, tips to cut your fashion waste, and identified some ethical and sustainable clothing brands. Lastly, I developed a page about my project where people can find out why I made *The Fast Fashion Apocalypse*. I ran into some trouble while coding and continually edited it until I found a makeshift solution.
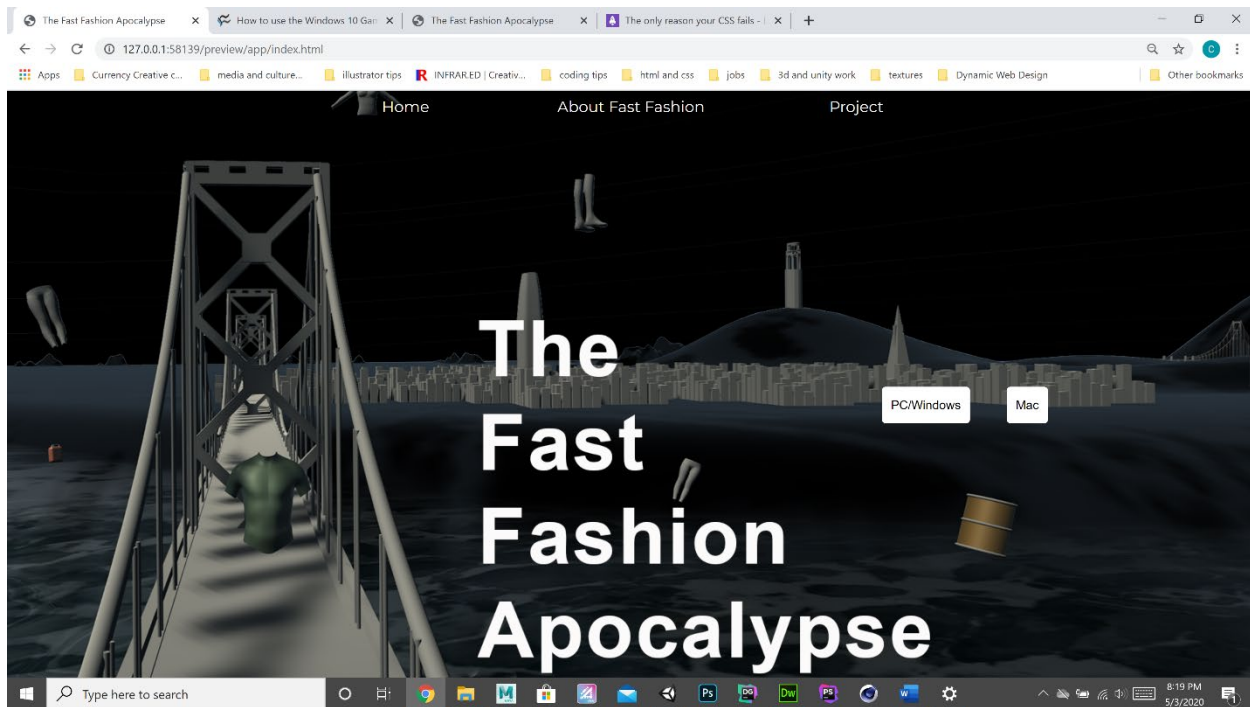
Once I completed the majority of the project, I edited all of the writing elements and replaced the corresponding components. I did a final walk through the project and the website to double check everything and fixed any errors.

With more time, I would add more textures and sounds to make it more detailed and realistic, which would emphasize the severity of the problem. I would incorporate various styles, patterns, colors and textures to the clothes. I would make the environment more realistic by having the chemical containers and oil drums float and work with a sound designer to overlay additional sounds. I would make the scene more apocalyptic without being too overwhelming. With additional assistance and resources, this project would work well in VR. I also believe that it can be varied for many other causes like food waste. Other global cities may represent different causes.

Report Resources

https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/24/style/survivors-of-rana-plaza-disaster.html

Project Resources

Info

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5qVC5b-CNz4WH-CiAUCZ-Bs8u9e-CQdiEV-DL4qFG-GCR99h-EG4ML5-CtCwwG-HqSRJa-5PveUB-KgDm6z-HYaUAz-ek6vQo-BmfGfb-awYSrZ-oYjMwj-ff9k6C-cDvm6U-afvKat-dgHoiG-cUWozG-x98mpX

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Sounds

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Ocean- https://freesound.org/people/xserra/sounds/161699/

Sewing machines- https://freesound.org/people/Yin_Yang_Jake007/sounds/415299/