



# THE LIMIT

Final thesis experiential manual

# CONTENTS

INTRO.....	2
THE SUBCULTURE GROWS IN THE UNDERGROUND.....	5
INDEPENDENT GERMINATION.....	29
THE EPITOME OF STYLE.....	39
YOUR TURN.....	49
A FOREWORD FROM WORLD4JACK.....	53
CARLOSKNOWSNOT INTERVIEW.....	65
BRWLER INTERVIEW.....	71
LONDON MOTO INTERVIEW.....	77
BIIBOCC INTERVIEW.....	83
TOKYO MEGAPLEX INTERVIEW.....	91
DOLLO INTERVIEW.....	97
CH4CH INTERVIEW.....	105
KAMI.EXP INTERVIEW.....	113
WORLDBLOG INTERVIEW.....	119
DECINT INTERVIEW.....	125
MALLBAT INTERVIEW.....	131
YADOOG INTERVIEW.....	137
PATCH3 INTERVIEW.....	147
W311WHY INTERVIEW.....	155
CURSEWEB INTERVIEW.....	161
EXILE INTERVIEW.....	167
ATHST4R INTERVIEW.....	175
KAVOTAVO INTERVIEW.....	181
JASPER GOLDING INTERVIEW.....	189
OSAMU SATO INTERVIEW.....	197
NOSTALGIA BURSTING.....	207
PRETTY LAG MACHINE.....	215
DREAMBOX.....	223

# YOU HAVE REACHED THE LIMIT

For easy access to the final products of this  
research project, please visit:  
[ncbourget.github.io/the-limit](https://ncbourget.github.io/the-limit)

# TO OPERATE THIS BOOK

Click and drag using trackpad or mouse.

Scroll wheel or gesture up (trackpad) to zoom in, it's a good  
idea to zoom back out before flipping onto a new page.

Shift-click to skip ahead 10 pages.

This object is not intended to work on mobile devices.

Please share to your friends through email.

# INTRO

Wielding a diamond for too long enables one to see its a just a rock, and wielding a rock for too long enables one to see its the whole world...

and the world is yours.

There is a persistent fascination that exists with products and ideas that are incomplete, outdated, or in some other way limited by a constraint. Although these mantras are applicable to many experiences, for our purposes we will focus on early CGI 3D environments, low-resolution graphics, compressed textures, and crude simulations continue to attract attention despite, or perhaps because of, their lack of fidelity. These forms leave gaps, a phenomenon that could not be truly realized if they were not forced to by their limit. Thus they do not fully describe the world they represent, inadvertently leaving the viewer to fill in the gaps with their mind. In other words, rather than diminishing the experience, these very gaps invite participation. The viewer is not presented with a finished image, but instead with a structure to complete. Space becomes suggestive rather than fully explicit. Scale is implied rather than shown as the world is not fully given but assembled in the mind. This project begins with a simple question: why do incomplete worlds sometimes feel more resonant than complete ones? Through this series of interactive experiments, theory, and interviews, this work explores how constraint, abstraction, and force can transform small digital environments into experiences that feel vast, intense, and emotionally charged. But where do we go from here and why do we feel this way?



Quote in part taken from creator **w311why**, his interview appears on page 123.

The groundwork for this phenomenon is laid with the writing of German filmmaker, **Hito Steyerl**. In the paper they wrote the paper for E-flux's tenth Issue, *In Defense of the Poor Image* released in 2009, they describe the high quality image as a wealth indicator. HD images are perfect and take up gigantic amounts of space. On the other hand we have the poor image where circulation of ideas becomes the paramount motive of reproduction. A blurry image with a readable and understandable message becomes much more impactful for the masses rather than a ultra high quality image locked away only for those who have the hardware to view it. This displays a modern image culture, where photos and videos are shared and saved with the core values of speed, low image size, and impression quality over perfection. As examples, a blood-boiling video of two kids fighting outside of a highschool, a bully knocking out a smaller guy with no one coming to the rescue. A pornographic fantasy video depicting your supposed rival with your crush. A video of helpless fisherman floating adrift in the ocean, picked off one-by-one by assault rifle. You are able to project yourself, your loved ones, your community onto these people as easy as it would be to imagine the very situation yourself, but now the media is forcing you to think in this manner. Imperfection invites participation, and requires the viewer to complete the situations mentally. The missing information doesn't just make the video easy to spread but now it pulls directly on your heartstrings.



This is important because helpless fishermen were actually picked off one-by-one by assault rifle in the middle of the ocean. Bloody, meaningless murders at sea that the world would've never known about if it wasn't filmed on an early smartphone in September 2012 and endlessly shared. An otherwise calm afternoon in the Indian ocean off the coast of Somalia as a crew of fisherman attend their nets on their dhow. A freight appears on the horizon, a large Taiwanese flagged longliner with guns surrounding the deck. In an instant the dhow was obliterated by the Kalashnikov rifles. Not a single crew member survived. That being said, this is not to distract from the point of the project, which is far less heavy than these topics. The groundwork is laid, if the high quality digital image is a beautiful mansion, the low quality image is the hammer and nails.

Dhow fisherman in Indian Ocean

# THE SUBCULTURE GROWS IN THE UN- DERGROUND

With all art movements, the genre is always defined at the end. The categories that box the art in and give it a name are only established after the body of work is fully developed by the community.

There are many artists that have found great footing and success with developing a visual language for this kind of "missing information" art when it comes to 3D.

The two main visual artists the scene had sunk their teeth into for their groundwork are Mel Chin (Houston, b.1951) and Osamu Sato (Kyoto, b.1960). Although the subculture I am about to delve into develops experiences directly in spite of the system hardware, these two artists were forced into a much more unironic role as each had been developing for their respective hardwares with fully serious intent.

**Osamu Sato** is a name synonymous with "digital experience". **Sato** was working as a photographer when he turned to graphic design and computer art in the mid 1980's. He began to experiment with a form of technology known as the CD-ROM, which was brand new at the time replacing the floppy disk. He created interactive 3D experiences. These experiences, the very first one titled *Eastern Mind: The Lost Souls of Tong Nou*, resembled video games. **Sato** went on to discredit the term "Video game" completely, adding another never-before-seen credibility to digital experiences and his entire artist statement. His first video interactive

experience was funded by Sony, at the time the company was much more embracing of experimental and psychedelic ideas. For a few years, Sato developed with Sony and eventually released the experience titled *LSD: Dream Emulator*. He developed the program at a game studio called Asmik Ace where he had been directing and developing other experiences for video game intent over artistic experience. While working there met a young woman named **Hiroko Nishikawa** who was a game designer. The two had begun talking when **Sato** discovered she had been writing every morning for decades in a dream journal.

06

SATO

**Sato** worked as project lead and sole creative visionary on the program, however all of the scenarios for the game were taken, with permission from **Nishikawa**, from her dream journal. The program was released for the Sony Playstation in October 1998, and was nothing less than a full body surreal experience. The game had the player explore environments envisioned by the dream journal, dreamt up by **Hiroko**. Endless, wild environments, not one of them alike. And at the end of the short explorations, your character would wake up and track the progress in their in-game dream journal. Sometimes you would dive deep into the same environment twice and the second time the textures would change into typography, faces of pornstars, or horrific grimaces and warping pixels. This only added to the mystery and draw of the experience. The game is the prototypical surface dweller's idea of "weeeirrrddd trippy art maaan". Nothing in the game makes much sense, it does look very strange, it is completely psychedelic in nature, and there is no apparent point to the experience. But that is the point, to experience. Created by two talented visual artists on very limited hardware to drill into your mind and make you *FEEL* something. What came from their collaboration is to most people, a nightmare. But for the open minded few, *LSD: Dream Emulator* became a first real glimpse into making a digital experience with a heavy magnitude in emotional draw. The program gained a massive cult following, the likes of which hasn't been replicated by any other underground digital experience. Remaining CD copies of the game are resold in the 600 to 700 American USD range on Ebay. Sealed copies are well into the high four-figures.

Many talented programmers and artists nowadays do their absolute best to restore *LSD: Dream Emulator* to a playable version on modern hardware. This invites a new dialogue about unlimited-limited production. In this process of digital experience restoration, does the program lose some of the charm that came from it's limitations in the first place? Or are the modern contemporary artists

so incredible at recognizing what makes these experiences special that their restoration only improves the quality of life (controls, frames-per-second, save files) that was missing and called for when the experience first came out? My opinion is that the contemporary artists of the 3D limited digital scene are cult specialists.

"Giant Head" in Kyoto with sexual textures

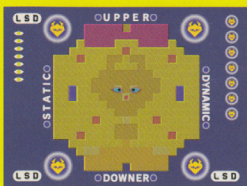


Two "Buddha Statues" in Kyoto with Kanji textures



## DAY&amp;GRAPH

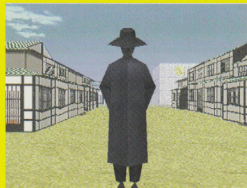
DREAM EMULATOR



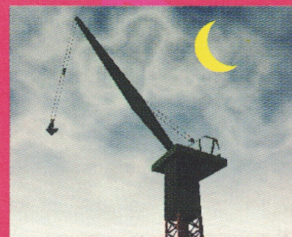
「LSD」では時間が流れています。ある時間が過ぎると、夢から覚め、1日(1プレイ)が変わります。この時間の流れ方はフィールドによって異なり、たとえば自然界などの落ち着きた雰囲気のある場所にいるときはゆっくりと、ハイオレンス街のような怖い場所だと速く流れています。つまり、ゆったりとした雰囲気の場所にいれば1回のプレイ時間は長くなり、激しい雰囲気の場所にいれば短い時間で1プレイが終了します。1日が終わると、その日の心理状態を示したグラフが表示されます。歩いた場所や見たモノによってグラフのポイントが変化。このポイントは、つぎの日の夢の始まる場所とも密接なつながりがあります。いったいどんな関連性があるのか、考えてみてください。

## FLASHBACK


いろんなフィールドをさまよい、数々のモノを見ていくうちに、メニュー画面に「FLASHBACK」という項目が現れるようになります。この項目を選択すると、それまでに見えた、印象的なシーンを思い出し、もう一度見ることが出来ます。ただし、ときどきフィールドに出現する謎の紳士に出会うと、記憶が消されてしまうので注意してください。



SLPS 01556



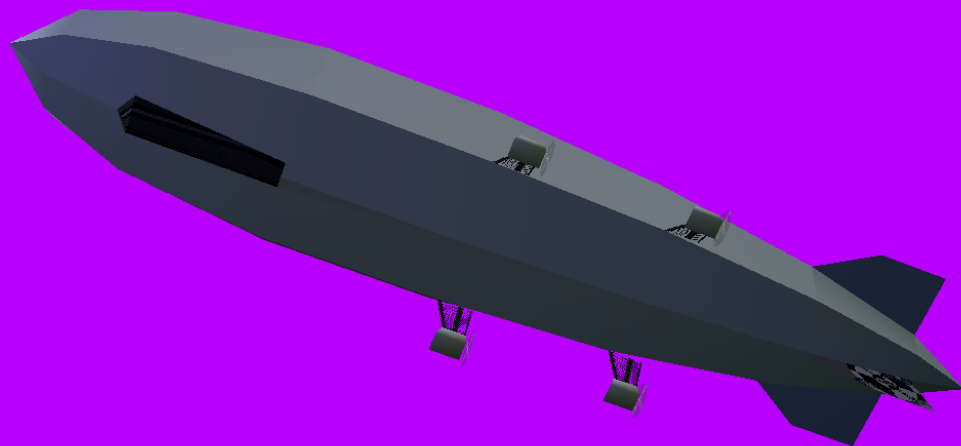
おれおれ

in   
 Lunacy,  
 the  
 Savage  
 Dream.



© ASMIK/OUTSIDE DIRECTORS COMPANY





# CHIN

**Mel Chin**, like **Sato**, is a multimedia artist. His surreal 3D experience dabbles much more with the idea of video games, however in essence is also meant to be an experience that washes over you rather than a game with an object of completion. It has a gallery space attached to it, it has an artist statement attached to it, it has a concept deeply rooted in **Chin's** culture, it is not even close to **Chin's** most popular work and it does not exist outside of a few stray screen-shots saved on his website. **Mel Chin** is a visual and sculptural artist, his most well known piece is titled *Revival Field* which dealt with removing heavy metals from the Earth's soil. The majority of his work deals with ecology, dreams, violence and surrealism.



*Revival Field* 1991 - ongoing

Although his work spans many mediums and concepts, we are going to focus on his interactive 3D experience titled *KNOWMAD*, released in the year 2000. **Chin** describes the piece as a video game with an installation of a tent and rugs. The game is based around this MAP concept, meaning that “The *KNOWMAD* Confederacy is united by the spirit of MOTION that drives the creative impulse into ACTION and sets the conditions for PLACE.” Motion + Action + Place = MAP. The landscape of the video game is mapped from real world nomadic tribal groups throughout the world, eradicated for different reasons. The rugs serve as cultural icons for respective tribes as they weave a psychedelic landscape in the virtual space.

Literally every texture in the game, every inch, every pixel comes from a UV Map, meaning projected image, of a tribal rug. Every wall, every mountain, every animal is made up of the digital cotton rug textures, each completely patterned and winding. *KNOWMAD* exists to pay homage to the tribal cultures it pulls from as well as the virtual space of computer art. *KNOWMAD* promotes the transition of consciousness from the virtual world experience back into real life. The game is built within a classic arcade video cabinet, but then a tent was built around it.

“The worlds within the *KNOWMAD* tents are created in reverence for the beauty of human expression as found in the cultural content of tribal rugs.”  
The nomadic life of tribes has a history of danger, shepherding animals, and civil strife, however nomadic tribe existence bestows the gift of knowledge onto those they come in contact with.”

In a way, the same way that **Steyerl** describes low quality images having the benefit of information/knowledge speed and efficiency, the same can be said about spoken stories. Nomadic tribes bestow these gifts upon other travelers, loved ones and family. They leave out pieces that they want to leave out, and the rest is filled in with the recipient’s mind. Knowledge transfer is a central concept of missing information especially in the face of a limited circumstance.



Unfortunately, *KNOWMAD* was never released publicly, remaining constrained to the short period of time it was on view in gallery in the year 2000. Perhaps the limitation and constraints here was the small amount of people who got to not only view the 3D experience but also understand it. A tragedy can be viewed here! The same way that *KNOWMAD* is no longer able to be experienced by the public, are the stories of nomads no longer able to be experienced by the world? Have all the nomads of Asia been killed and their stories forgotten? The program was limited by the hardware it was created on, making for visually memorable, beautiful and surreal 3D landscape. Hopefully the people who had the chance to go into the tent and play the game were able to remember it as clear as the day they played it.



above: *KNOWMAD* - In game detail captures



right: *KNOWMAD* - Installation view

The works of **Sato** and **Chin** are not the only examples of striking pieces of art that utilize and thrive in the limitations of digital 3D software, although they may be the strongest and with the greatest convictions. There are many fragments and layers of shrapnel that would be let off by these two artists. I would like to dive into the game *Germs: The Targeted Town*, another limited PlayStation game released Japan-only in 1999. The game was only given an English dub in 2024, connecting the two chronological poles of my project headspace, and illustrating the cult nature of restoration

and bringing older, limited pieces of art into the light. A cutty release, *Germs* is relevant to this thesis as it was released unfinished with many textures missing, developed a deep dreadful atmosphere through the content but also the limitations of the machine, and revealed many game mechanics such as a day/night cycle that had not been seen before by any video game title. The visuals of this experience I feel have influenced many modern artists who attempt to get their feet wet with haunting, psychedelic, and very much constrained 3D experiences.



Release cover for *Germs: The Targeted Town* 1999

Likely the oldest title in this strange repertoire is *Immercenary*, a virtually unheard of game even to cult collectors today, released in 1995 only for the 3DO, a console virtually no one bought. The game features many aspects that are dreamlike and very very odd. Many textures in the video game are just stretched out photos of people's faces on buildings or other obstacles. At the time it fell flat, today it remains shrouded in obscurity, only worth something to those with an eye for this 3D psychedelia.

Although it may seem disconnected from this thesis as a whole, I hope you have found these other examples to be important for early examples of limited visuals. Later in the project we will look at modern creators who use nostalgia from these experiences as driving factors for creation. I feel that it's important to gloss over some of the well known, relevant and niche releases that influenced the modern subculture.



With this in mind we should also give some time to **From Software's** first ever release: *King's Field*. The company is famous worldwide today for releases like the *Dark Souls* franchise, *Bloodborne*, *Sekiro: Shadows Die Twice*, *Elden Ring* and the *Armored Core* franchise. But like all great developers, **From Software** had a very

humble beginning with this very visually limited title. I feel as though *King's Field* may be one of the most important titles in this introduction for the lengths that the developers pushed the visuals. The environments are gorgeous in this very spaced out and crunched down way that's hard to put your finger on. The skyboxes are

so expansive and vast. The game is beautiful in these ways as it was one of the very first attempts at making a fully 3D dark fantasy video game with the sole intention of doing just that. You will find that, later in the upcoming interviews, many modern 3D artists attempt to replicate nostalgic feelings that were staked

into them from experiences such as this. I suppose that *King's Field* can provide artists with a suggestion or perhaps a lesson. Ideas come first, in this project it is very easy to get lost in the medium and thus use it as a crutch. The medium is cool, early 3D graphics make my mouth water with how beautiful they are. The same way that early RPG maker games do though, maybe that would be better for your concept. That's all I am trying to say here though, *King's Field* was a massive success for From Software because they really cared about conveying their message. They wanted to make a dark fantasy game the most realistic way that they could. They were simply so blessed to have such talented artists on the team that the worlds feel so touching, expansive and full of magnitude even today. The models and environments are still fine art where maybe the game has aged much quicker. If you are an indie developer looking to make a game, start with your concept, the rest will follow.



**“It’s been so long since anything I remember of my childhood has been so real as to stand right before me-speaking to me. Everything is different now... please be careful.”**

— Lyn Reinhardt in King's Field III



Beyond this sprawling, beautiful, and colorful list of games that came from actual companies with funding, where were the very first signs of the everyman? Where were the beautiful, passionate, independent developers? In the 90's when these experiences were being fleshed out, it was difficult for anyone to make videogames on civilian hardware, it was not at all like how accessible it is today.

...

So instead, they took to modding already existing games. Modding what exactly, though?

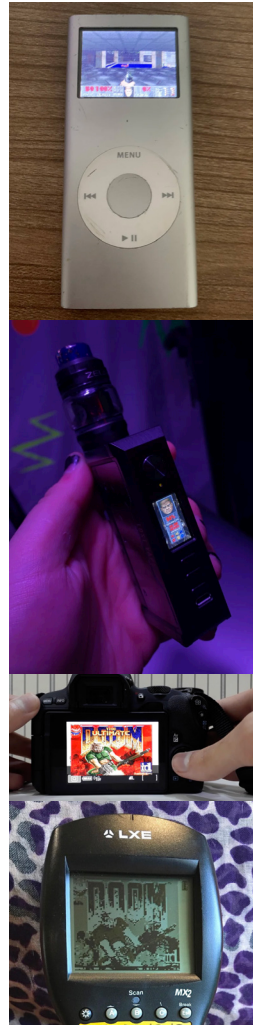
...

*DOOM.*



# INDEPENDENT GERMINATION

*DOOM* modding may be the most culturally rich, conceptually artistic, and many times controversial internet community of all time. When **John Romero** and the **id Software** team created the video game back in 1993, there is no chance that they guessed what their community would become. The most common inside joke that you will find when viewing the classic *DOOM* subculture today is the community of *It Runs DOOM*. This is not what we are going to be focusing on in this paper, but to boil it down, the *It Runs DOOM* community finds innocuous and disparate hardware to run a playable copy of 1993 *DOOM* on. Some of the most famous examples of this phenomenon are running *DOOM* on a calculator, a treadmill, an iPod, a vape, a camera, a price scanner, and a pregnancy test.



This was evidence enough that *DOOM* was a game, no, a digital experience that was incredibly different from the rest. There were psychically unique properties that attracted waves of talented, young and independent developers. Running **Romero's** copy of *DOOM* on different hardware's is a cool gimmick, but certainly not a new, beautiful experience that expands upon the source material. The game would need to be changed, in every fundamental way and the real meat of the subculture would come from the modding community of the game. Nearly since the conception of *DOOM* there were people opening up map makers such as the Doom Editing Utility (DEU) released by Brendon Wyber, Raphaël Quinet, and Renaud Paquay a year after the game's release.

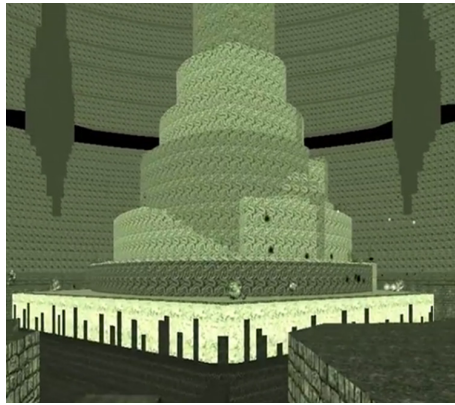
There are many little inside jokes and funny caveats that would be born from these modders. Doomcute was one of those jokes where you would model real life objects as authentically as possible. Modeling your own house as a playable mod was another classic part of the modding community. As the years went by, a few mods stood above the rest and some stood in absolute infamy. Now using GZDoom to run all sorts of .wad files and using Ultimate Doom Builder (UDB), modding doom is easier than ever, for better or for worse.

In essence, the true lifeblood of the medium. Professional games have come and gone, interactive art pieces by real artists have been experienced and then have been lost to absolute obscurity or cult fanbases. We are left with shooters and kids looking to make their own video games through these mods, it would be remiss not to mention them before cracking into the modern graphical experiences of today.

The first mod I would like to speak on is “The Sky May Be”, which is an interactive art experience for a DOS version of DOOM known as Chocolate Doom. The title came from one of the textures that was created for the mod but ironically never actually used in the mod. The texture was called “Sky\_(Maybe)”. The mod consists of three levels, each with massive color blocks covering the walls. Large typographic statements appear on many gigantic billboard textures in Jenny Holzer-style, like a massive white rectangle that states “THIS IS A TRIANGLE” over and over again. Included in the mod is a list of hard coded rules that change the very essence of how enemies interact with the character, although the rules are very complex and it is unnecessary to get into them here. The main level is the most monstrous with its color blocking and nonstop Bach’s Brandenburg concerto no. 3 playing in the background. It was ranked 7th out of 100 most memorable modded maps in its year.



The A.L.T mod has been described as DOOM's most psychedelic experience. Vice magazine described A.L.T as "The Doom Mod That Best Describes Our Uncanny Reality". The game's namesake stands for Absolute Life Transformation, and follows the protagonist after landing in a hostile world after a plane crash. Visually, not much is different, however the game has been completely overhauled gameplay and audiowise.



In fact, there is a massive theme of DOOM mods following the greats of literature. Myhouse.wad flips a classic DOOM tradition of modeling your own house completely on its head. Although the map is very convincingly the modder's suburban house, very subtly the mod will introduce impossible hallways, changes in animation, and even added notes to the titular soundtrack that those only accustomed to DOOM already would notice.



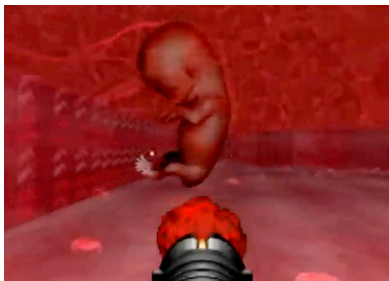
The game opens with you conversing with the dead visage of yourself on the airplane just before it crashes. Later, you will watch yourself be flung into outer space as your ego dies. The rest of the game plays out closer to Conrad's Heart Of Darkness.



The game is a spin on a classic modding trope that follows more or less the story of House Of Leaves by Danielewski. It leaves the mind warped and twisted even if the references go over the viewer's head. It is dark and deeply psychedelic.

Surprisingly, DOOM being dark, like truly dark behind all of the demons and fighting through hell, the game has had a strange history of controversy. For a short mention, we must delve into the mod *ROOTPAIN.wad* of which mirrors of the download today are typically unplayable. There are many video recordings of *ROOTPAIN* and the gameplay is quite simple.

As soon as you open your map it's clear that you are playing inside of a uterus, and the boss is a fetus. The only objective you are tasked with is to "Destroy the Zygote". Today, this would be quickly brushed off as an edgy teenager's reaction to abortion rights, but back in July 2013 it meant war. Anti-abortion activists swarmed the mod, claiming it was poisoning the minds of the youth to kill babies, babies were the enemy! Nowadays, let's laugh this one off.



Unfortunately we are ending the DOOM section on a bad note, *ROOTPAIN.wad* was nothing compared to our almost unmentionable final entry. REALDOOM is a mod for DOOM that has never seen the light of day, meaning no one has played it. It is still in the hands of some three-letter-agency, and hopefully it will stay that way forever. The mod was the very catalyst for the claims that violent video games lead to real world violence. The mod was designed by one of the slimiest, most despicable users of the internet at the turn of the century, Eric Harris, one of the Columbine shooters. Harris was very deep into industrial rock music, video production, web development and DOOM modding. He was an incredibly hateful person before his death, there were thousands of signs of his plans but the world wouldn't hear him. During his time creating his website, he uploaded 10 DOOM .wad files for people to play. Upon closure of each mod, the splashscreen would show his email and an 11th file would be able to be played upon contact request. REALDOOM.wad was the final mod and the contents of the file were as to be expected. It was a recreation of Columbine, all of his classmates had been replaced with demons and ghouls. That's probably just how he saw them. This experience is one that should be locked away forever, as it is easily the darkest entry to grace the digital 3D computer art sphere.



Moments like this are why I find the 3D/CGI, video game and digital experience subcultures to be so profound, fascinating and one-of-a-kind. These experiences can convey deep emotion, conceptual thinking or push boundaries into worlds never before seen. They can be dark, they can be beautiful, 3D experiences can be life itself. Or even greater.

# THE EPITOME OF STYLE



Travis Bell in *Killer7*

As developers moved into the early 2000's, style and design would begin to seep through the limited hardware and overtake the new surreal atmosphere that had been laid in the groundwork. Developers had a strong handle on the unspoken and unrealized magic of what

made the limits of the hardware special and now were developing deliberately with it in mind. Visionary video game director **Goichi Suda**, also known as **Suda51**, developed *Killer7* playing directly into the limits of the machine. Shadows, polygons, verticies, animations, character designs, GUI menus. Everything had the

thought, dedication and deliberate precision of a 3D design surgeon. And it wouldn't have happened so beautifully and masterfully if this gifted team of artists at **Suda's** company, **Grasshopper**, hadn't been given the task at the perfect intersection right at the limited moment of the hardware landscape.



Dan Smith of the Smith Syndicate

*Killer7* features a full length assassin storyline with many playable characters and extraordinarily unique designs. The game is strange and relevant for many reasons including the very way that levels are traversed. Every time you begin to walk, even if you are in a battle where you need to be zoomed into first person ready to shoot, the camera will spin around to watch you slowly model-walk. It's absolutely bizarre. There is great difficulty even in the beginning stages as most of the enemies you will be up against become invisible or otherwise glittery spectrals that do everything they can to obscure your vision. Suda and the rest of the design team at Grasshopper would go on to make many other games with the same, if not even more visual sauce than they had when creating *Killer7*. Grasshopper is one of many success stories in early digital experiences, and would pave the way for contemporaries.



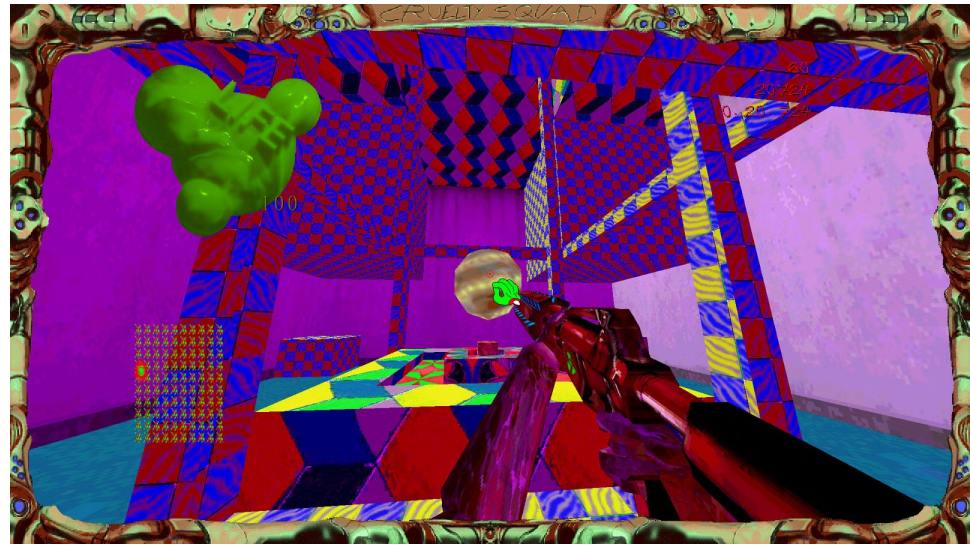
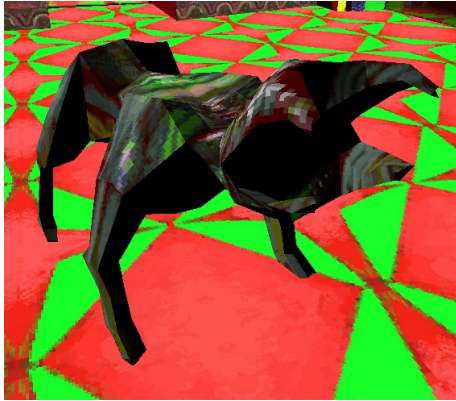
Beyond style, assassination video games seem to be gateways for artists to get their feet wet with game development. One of the most important video game of the modern day is *Cruelty Squad*. Released in 2021, part assassin shooter, part fine art award-winner, part social commentary and completely brutal, *Cruelty Squad* sits around the center of the CGI/3D subculture. With this entry we are beginning to delve into modern projects, the mastermind behind the artwork is a developer known as **Ville Kallio**. Although a solo creator, they have a front for the game company that represents them, **Consumer Softproducts**. I think this differentiation is important, because as Ville is still making new video games today under the **Consumer Softproducts** name, **Ville** himself is truly a separated artist.

**Ville Kallio** is a digital visual artist working out of Helsinki, Finland. They were making comics to sell at local and international fairs as early as 2015. Some of their publications like *Bio Whale* and *P-FE/FRAF* never saw commercial or internet success but we would see their visual language develop severely through their illustrations. They were clearly influenced by the 3D sphere, Japanese animes such as *Technolyze* and the general aesthetics of the military-industrial complex worldwide. Eventually they began making PSX inspired visual content, uploading a Blender-made animation to their YouTube channel titled *Venmo Combat*. In fact, the video was added to a gallery space Kallio had prepared at the SIC gallery in Helsinki.

The gallery featured many sculptural objects such as an improvised suicide vest, a printed towel, a strange fleshy orange with a large metal spike poking out, as well as many paintings and assemblages. There was a clear energy here, one bursting at the seams. Here we had a true shut-in artist, all of their work was informed by American politics, modern political cartoons and 4chan.



They needed a release and found such through this gallery exhibition. It wasn't enough though, they needed a trainer, a virtual experience that one could play over and over again. They took the hate of all of the boomer shooters before them and made an "ultimate violence simulator" known as *Cruelty Squad*, recipient of Finland's State Prize for Media Art in 2023.



The game details a deranged loner that got released from his government job and got rehired as a mercenary-for-hire type of psycho lunatic. The game plays out in a monstrosity of textures, typographic billboards and captions, complete programmer art upheaval. The NPCs are riddled with dialogue you could only assume to see in the dark corners of the Q-Anon side of the net. The models feel childish but SOLID, all of which were designed in free softwares such as Blender. The final video game was designed in a free, open source game engine called Godot. The game was released with not much press release but it immediately caught on like wildfire. It was a game everyone needed to experience. It was the revival of a true computer art interactive art piece. People would begin and end the experience as two different people. It was a trainer, a virtual combat cocktail for those in need.

Style is where the experiences of the old-world technology and the modern day collide. *Killer7* was a clear inspiration for the upcoming video game *10hit*, currently in development by a mysterious developer known as **Dollo**. Despite the developer using Unity, a high capacity game engine and almost definitely creating the game on a computer with higher-end specs, the digital experience shows signs of the limit from the released demo. The game has incredibly heavy shadows like in *Killer7* (very easy for low-end computers to render), the game is in almost complete greyscale barring a few colors used in the GUI and bloodsplatters, and the game is very low-poly. With all of this in mind, I can confidently say that the demo for this video game was the most stylistically important, impactfully designed experience I have ever been lucky enough to witness. All the sound design, every blip, click and slide feels like it was incredibly carefully designed by a composer with the word "SLEEK" etched into their forehead. There is genuinely no experience that makes you feel as immersed and as streamlined as the main character "0" of *10hit*. It is fully immersed in style, and it could've completely missed the mark if the developer wasn't trying to replicate the limit.

Although mentioned nowhere in game, the storepage describes the plot: "With the ability to hijack the minds of anyone who answers a phone call, '0' builds an army of remote controlled assassins to overthrow his twin brother, '1' as standing president."

So how *exactly* are people replicating the limit?



Dollo is one of many beautiful examples, to me, of independent publishing of surreal 3D experiences stylistically heightened and with increased emotional magnitude caused by a recreation of limited hardware. The same way that online communities have come together to rebuild *LSD: Dream Emulator* for modern hardware with modern quality of life enhancements, creators like Dollo develop today to create an independent experience reliant on style, abstraction, and mechanics over intense realistic visuals. But why? What drew everybody in? Where did this cult following come from? Did everybody read Hito Steyerl's paper and bring the neo-liberalism talking points into every low-poly first person shooter they ever set their digital foot into?

In the age of innovation through capitalism at lightning fast speeds, it's not nostalgia that makes humans wish we still lived with vinyl records, flip phones and low definition video games. It's because we have gone too far and now the world has become sterile. Too much is explained for us. Our own experiences, thoughts and ideas have no room to be projected onto the current landscape. It's not that the limit is a design gimmick, it is a tactile necessity for meaningful, memorable experiences. The limit is making room for the audience as a central part of a complete whole.

50

We as a nation must push back against realistic video games and experiences as much as possible in order to reclaim experiences that honor us directly and allow us to breathe our unique human experiences into the media.

YOUR TURN

With strong hindsight now, viewers can look at the old technology and see how it sculpted the final products through constraint. Now in the present era we have looked at a game much more contemporary and without limits, but still replicating the feeling. Viewers ask who are some of the key artists today? How has the subculture grown since conception over the past thirty years and where has it been improved? In these hardware-limited experiences, how is the audience honored? A few names come to mind but one of the strongest is a young man named Jack Christian Kradolfer. A Bostonian skateboarder in his late twenties, online he is most commonly known as World4Jack, Jacka, or 9jack9 among other pseudonyms. As he rose to prominence in the early 2020's he found himself with a few important collaborations as well as a short film titled *Videopix*, both propelling the subculture and budding art movement into the limelight. Before we take a look at Jack's work, it's very important to get a sense of the digital landscape at large he operates in. For a long while he would release parts of his short film as short clips which he would host on his Neocities blog as they were completed. It's clear that Jack was taking the short film as an opportunity to learn the software that is pivotal to every member of the subculture: Blender3D, a free 3D modeling and animation software.

If you are lucky enough to find old savestates of his blog, you will find a brain in a jar waiting to be studied, the mind of an artist the likes of which only come around every millennium. His aesthetic is incredibly unique, focusing on the techniques and hardware of the medium (3D) itself first, fleshing out his artistic vision. Old technology is a must, inspired by his love for skateboarding, we can find fully modeled ribbon cables and VX-1000s featured in many of his pictures. He was the first person to do squashing-and-stretching so perfectly in the 3D medium. The worlds he describes are acute and mysterious. Strange ideas he has come up with in his movie *Videopix*, like a rare supercomputer called OilSlick that can generate entire cities with the press of a button. Four kids able to steal an entire skyscraper and attach it to the top of a bullet train. Ideas that the average person would never in a thousand years generate with their own feeble mind. An artist that inspired an entire generation of 3D animators and video game creators, some of which you are about to read about... now.

A foreword from...

# world 4 jack

**NATE BOURGET** Hey Jack, I'm going to start to do some interviews on the 3D/CGI subculture. I think a lot of people (myself included) consider you to be one of the great founding fathers of the movement. I would love to hear any of your thoughts about this subculture, if anything at all.

**JACK CHRISTIAN  
KRADOLFER** I'd be happy to back and for or a write up for your work. Whatever way you want to send that over or chat or whatever you need just let me know. I'll be prompt with it.

**NB** (Jack was then given the same five interview questions as the other 20 interviewees. He felt that a letter to the community at large was more appropriate, which I found to be very eloquent and profound in his style.)



# A celebration!

For all who surrender to the expression.

The 1 truth is in the pursuit.

*Please,*

A toast to the futuristic,

and to the beautiful brides

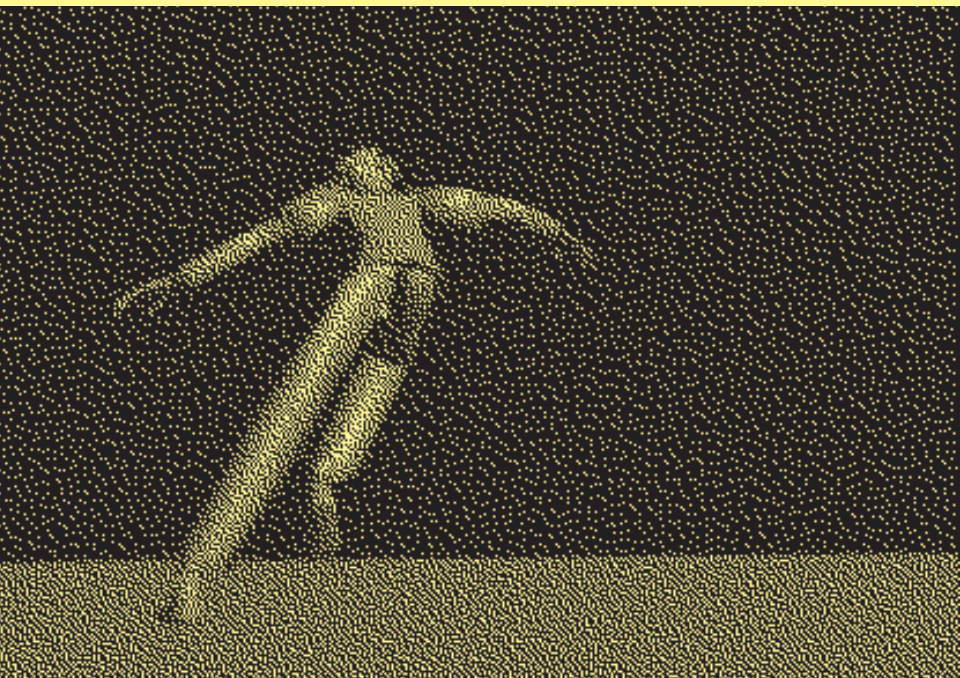
*and grooms.*



**NB** This message, I strongly feel, was addressed directly to the members of *up3* (previously *house2*) as well as the entire 3D/CGI subculture and all of it's students wanting to break through and learn the way!

At the heart of The Limit

A foreword from Jack Christian Kradolfer

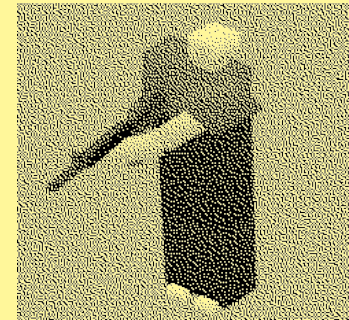
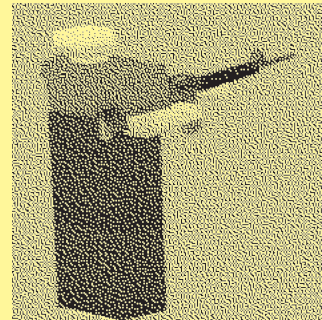
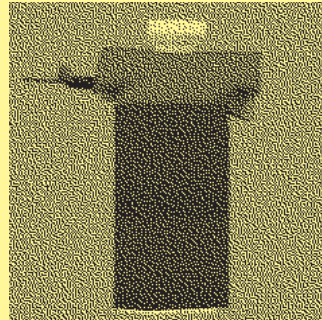
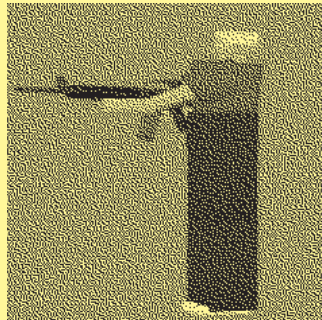






**JACK CHRISTIAN KRADOLFER** Very thankful you asked me, by the way. I tried several times in earnest, writing to the topics- but this feels right- when I tried to write to the topic, I was left feeling not like myself. I hope you do understand, I do not want to come across as arrogant or combatant to your project which I respect and think is excellent work. Thank you Nate and I'm also sorry I took as long as I did. Thanks for the opportunity and the thoughtfulness.

**NATE BOURGET** Always pleased to have spoke to you.  
Talk to you later my friend!



An interview with...

# CarlosKnowsNot

of Knopes Productions

An interview with Carlos Rodriguez-Roy

**NATE BOURGET** You are the first interviewee for this... I have 5 questions, answer them at your leisure, or don't answer them at all if you don't want to.

**CARLOS RODRIGUEZ -ROY** i gotchu.

**NB** What drew you into working with constrained visuals? Meaning your use of low poly models and compressed textures. If it's an intangible feeling or hard to put your finger on, who are some of your greatest inspirations in your journey?

**CRR** Originally I was inspired to work with 3D when making youtube videos with my friend, I remembered the old PlayStation save icons, the ones that would show up on the PS1 to load your saves from previous games you've played, and I just wanted to make something simple like that, thats what originally pulled me in. after doing abit of research and looking into that style I found **Nam Mac a.k.a Lordstingray**. somebody who I was very inspired by early on. after finding a bunch of cool lower poly art and music videos i eventually discovered the homie **World4Jack**. I saw his Paris Texas Video called *Situations*. Instantly, I knew that I didn't really want to go the Cutesy N64 low poly route and thought that the closer to "realistic character design" was much more interesting. Aside from that, it was also hardware Limitation. I didn't have an amazing computer, so lower poly made the most sense.





**NB** Why do you design this way over realism? Not to say that your style does not use textures from real life or realistic proportions etc. More like why do you not try and go full hyperrealistic now that you have a capable machine? Sweat, pores, wrinkles in the skin? Is there a style here that you've found?

**CRR** I think that at first it truly was just a constraint of what my computer could handle, then at some point I ended up getting a better computer, And even then I kind of knew that I didn't really want to explore into "realism" Realism to me is boring in a way. I'd compare it to stylized drawing VS a *Dwayne The Rock Johnson Hyper Real Drawing* with pores and perfect texture and details. The latter is just boring. It took me some time to truly find my style, about 2-3 years before I was really confident in what I was making was aesthetically true to me. But to wrap it up the reason I chose this style over realism is simply because I like it more lol.

**NB** What do you want people to feel when they experience your work?



**CRR** Damn...thats a good one. Honestly it can depend but generally I think of it like this. The stuff I make especially my Fisheye.Guy series or work thats more personal. It really is RAW nerve endings and my spirit. The best thing about this stuff is when I can actually just distil my spirit into something. A lot of my personal work is referencing my childhood in some way, or maybe showcasing the music I like and grew up with. Or a strong Evocation of energy. I want people to feel how I feel? The animations are my best attempt at putting my emotions and ideas into software to then present to somebody. Or atleast it's my favorite way over directly telling somebody how I feel. because the words dont do it justice.

...

sorry for rambling. Also I dont mean it in a "I'm so cool and complex" way. I mean it more in a "this is how I bridge the gap between my essence and communication" Ideally I want someone to feel a strong emotional connection beyond nostalgia, beyond OUUUUU EYE CANDY! It's Me.

**NB** Would you consider the current landscape of 3D art, especially in the realm of constrained visuals, to be its own art movement? Or is that overstating it, do you feel it's more freeform?

**CRR** Another great question, give this guy an A.

...

That's kind of tough to answer since to me personally it feels complicated, I think yes it very much was an art movement. Early on maybe 2020ish to 2023? It was very much a smaller and more innovative community, specifically our lil clique, it was kind of like **CG Punk**. Very much a "fuck your 4K Renders" it was anti-higher-resolution for the sake of big number, anti-feed-the-algorithm slop. It put a lot of emphasis on the fundamentals of not just computer graphics or story telling but also the personalization and aesthetics. Unfortunately I think today's 3D lowpoly scene has been gobbled up by capitalism and the machine of attention. Maybe in this day and age that's what's bound to happen to all art movements. It's worth getting saturated, extracted and squeezed until *the cow is crying for mercy*. Not to say that there are no cool lowpoly artists in today's scene, contrary, there are more than ever. It's to say that the scene itself has been partially cannibalized.

70



**NB** CG Punk... is that what you would name the movement?

**CRR** It's kind of hard to label it, since there is a lot of things happening at once, it's not just simply "lower poly count character models and 256x256 textures" the scene *to me personally* should represent anti-consumerism, anti-engagement-farming, emphasis on creativity within the "style".

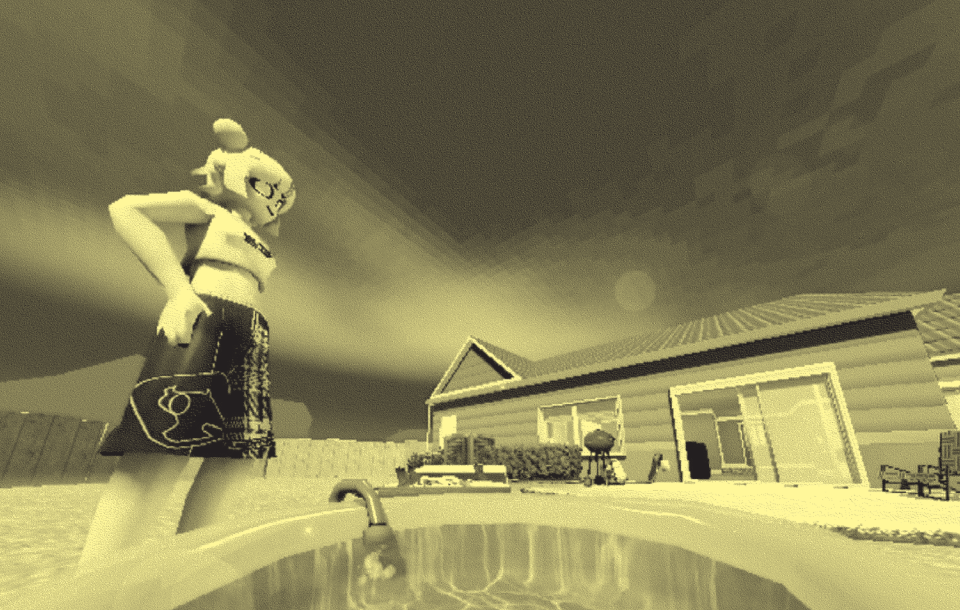
...

Sorry for yap I'm just very passionate about it. Low poly in a broad sense works as a label, even though it's "beginning to lose its cool points" but underneath that hype current is the scene itself. The scene I care about, is not just the aesthetics, limitations, or style. It's the creative philosophy that uses it. I don't like to be called a lowpoly artist, it's almost like calling somebody a YouTuber lol.

**NATE BOURGET** Thank you for your time.

**CARLOS RODRIGUEZ** All love, I like to yap every now and then.

**-ROY** Sorry if my answers are weird or long.



An interview with brawler

**NATE BOURGET** I'm interviewing some heads in Jack's server. I'm wondering if you would be open to answering a few direct questions in the next few days to see where you stand on a few things in the CG/3D landscape.

**BRWLER** Always happy to answer questions.

**NB** What drew you into working with constrained visuals? Meaning your use of low poly models and compressed textures. If it's an intangible feeling or hard to put your finger on, who are some of your greatest inspirations in your journey?

**B** It is accessible; it isn't intimidating to attempt, and allows a lot of room for exploring your personal style without the pressure of getting things absolutely perfect. And when it came to rendering, it was very lightweight, so you didn't need a built PC to cook up animations.



An interview with...

# BRWLER



**NB** Why do you design this way over realism?

**B** I do both, not one or the other. By studying and learning from realism, I can better interpret the same idea in my own style, and with greater detail. If you limit yourself to just one methodology, your art will lack the intention that helps it improve.

**NB** What do you want people to feel when they experience your work?

**B** I hope it makes them feel refreshed. I also hope it motivates them to try 3D out for themselves.

**NB** Would you consider the current landscape of 3D art, especially in the realm of constrained visuals, to be its own art movement? Or is that overstating it, do you feel like the scene is more freeform? Or has it already gone by the wayside?

**B** It definitely was a movement back in 2019-2022, I'd say. It feels a bit solved, these days. Now I think it's time to look what could be next and start trying something different.

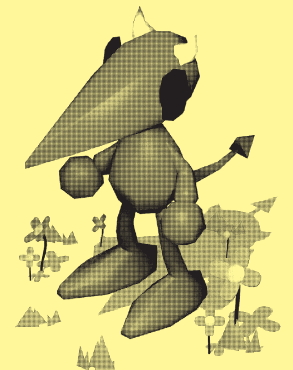


**NB** What name would you give the movement?

**B** Low-poly revivalism.

**NATE BOURGET** You're a gift. Thank you for your time.

**BRWLER** Honored to be apart of it, good luck!



An interview with...

An interview with Landon Moto



# Landon Moto



**NATE BOURGET** Your work is uniquely... glowing. Interested in an interview?

**LANDON MOTO** Yes, I would love to.

**NB** What drew you into working with constrained visuals? Meaning your use of low poly models and compressed textures. If it's an intangible feeling or hard to put your finger on, who are some of your greatest inspirations in your journey?

**LM** I think the bar to entry felt very approachable when I was first starting to create. I was comfortable with that style and learning that style, which was exciting, especially considering how uncharted blender and 3D design felt for me at the time.

**NB** Why do you design this way over realism?

**LM** I've always been obsessed with noise, artifacts, and imperfections to fill the void of space and create character within an environment. Realism is all about emulation and that's just not my style. I like when artists use exaggeration, personality, and absurdity to get their points across. I like to do the same.

**NB** What do you want people to feel when they experience your work?



**LM** I want people to feel the sense of nostalgia, comfort, and excitement that I feel when creating my work. With my mixtapes and (soon-to-be) comics, physically holding it in my hand gives me a unique sense of inspiration. Like, this piece of work has this ability to immerse me into a world if I want it to, or the piece can simply just sit on my shelf and become a part of my daily environment. I want that for others too; to give them media they can escape into and be inspired by at will, or just be decoration on the wall. A story to collect, personalize with, and look back onto as time passes by.



**NB** Would you consider the current landscape of 3D art, especially in the realm of constrained visuals, to be its own art movement? Or is that overstating it, do you feel it's more freeform?

when i go,  
when i breathe,  
when i live,  
when i die,  
when i see,  
when i am blind,  
when i am dead,  
when i work,  
when i move,  
when i bleed,  
when i laugh,  
when i cry,  
when i retreat,  
when i envy,  
when i observe,  
when i learn,  
when i teach,  
when i eat,  
when i piss,  
when i shit,  
when i fuck,  
when i am invested,  
when i am reclusive,  
when i am open,  
when i am closed,  
when i am angry,  
when i am miserable,  
when i kill,  
when i fly,  
when i fall,  
when i focus,  
when i dream,  
when i am blank,  
when i write,  
when i draw,  
when i create,  
when i destroy,  
when i relax,  
when i struggle,  
when i am bold,  
when i am prideful,  
when i lay,  
when i hurt,  
  
when i love, i



**LM** I think these constrained visuals are part of a larger art movement taking hold of the current creative culture in general, and this movement is most definitely based on nostalgia. Local culture has all shifted onto the internet and their niche subsections, and nostalgia for the days past is so much more accessible and prevalent in our lives than ever before. This inevitably promotes a ton of regurgitation and slop, but there truly are some amazing sub-genres within sub-genres that produce such innovative work. I would include those who take low-poly visuals and put their own spin on that, as a strong forefront of this movement.

**NB** What name would you give the new movement?

**LM** I don't know what I'd call it, I don't even know if I'm right or touching all of the bases. I just see this piece of a culture that yearns for the past, like it was a utopia back then. It sort of was, artistically speaking. But it's definitely gotta make you think that we took that all for granted, to be wanting it all so badly now. I believe it's a lesson that we can't take what we have now for granted either. So I'd probably base this movement on the idea of a future nostalgia. A phrase that could land us right in the present. How beautiful is that.

**NATE BOURGET** Thank you for your time.

**LANDON MOTO** Of course, I hope this is okay, It might be some bullshit, lmk.



An interview with...



# Biiboccc

**NATE BOURGET** Wondering if you would be open to doing a short interview about your work over text?

**JACK JOBLING** Sure, I'd be happy to! Send over the questions when you have time.

**NB** What drew you into working with constrained visuals? Meaning the low poly models, and compressed textures. If it's an intangible feeling or hard to put your finger on, who are your greatest inspirations?

**JJ** The thing about low poly and *optimized art* is that it feels like a kind of impressionism. With the tech we have now, that look is optional, which makes it more interesting to me. I always get my best ideas when there are limits. I used to draw a lot, and the idea of describing something with as little as possible has always appealed to me.

...

There is also a practical side to it. If I have a character idea, I can make it fast. Sometimes in under two days, instead of spending weeks on one AAA-style asset that also destroys my PC. So I stuck with this style for both personal and business reasons. Personally, I think it has a really distinct look that attracts a certain audience. It is obviously pulling from the past, but there is still room to invent inside it.

...

My biggest inspirations are **Alejandro Jodorowsky**, **Laura Lico**, **Hideo Kojima**, **Alensandro Taini** and **Alberto Mielgo**. There are many more but I'll keep the list small.

**NB** Why do you design this way over realism? Not to say that your style does not use textures from real life or realistic proportions etc. More like why do you not try and go full hyperrealistic now that you have a capable machine? Sweat, pores, wrinkles in the skin? Is there a style here that you've found?

**JJ** I covered a lot of this in the first answer, but mainly it is more economical time-wise and it still lets me keep things handmade. A lot of 3D now is outsourced, bought, generated, or stitched together from existing stuff. I really do not like that for personal work. Maybe that is a control freak mindset, but if it is my own work, I want it to feel authored. Low poly makes that possible without it taking forever. I care more about communicating an idea or an energy than chasing realism for its own sake. The visuals just help me do that in whatever way fits the piece.



**NB** What do you want people to feel when they experience your work?

**JJ** “wow, that’s cool.”

But past that, I want it to feel fresh. I want people to feel like they have not seen something quite like it before. Freshness matters a lot to me. I am always thinking about what is derivative and what actually pushes an idea somewhere new. Especially now, with so much stuff feeling recycled, if I am not doing something new with it, then I do not really feel like I am adding much.



**NB** Would you consider the current landscape of 3D art, especially in the realm of constrained visuals, to be its own art movement? Or is that overstating it, do you feel it's more freeform?

**JJ** I think calling it a full art movement might be overstating it a bit. Right now it feels more hobbyist-driven. People know how long it takes to make hyper-real 3D that also feels distinct, and a lot of people lose interest before they get there. Constrained visuals have always existed in some form anyway, even outside 3D. You can see the same thinking in painting and other art. What is happening now feels more like an extension of that, helped by the fact that 3D is more accessible now through Blender and free resources. It also helps if you grew up around games, because a lot of this visual language comes from older game limitations in the first place.



**NB** If you had to give the subculture a name what name would you give it?

**JJ** If I had to give it a pretentious gallery name, I would probably call it "**impressionism through optimization.**" Not because all of it is literally about optimisation, but because the mindset is similar. You are following a set of limits to create a specific feeling (these limits were created by content that had to work on older hardware) , and that way of working is a big part of the appeal.



**NATE BOURGET** Thank you for your time.

**JACK JOBLING** Hope this helps you in your thesis.  
I tried my best to keep it concise and digestible.

An interview with...

# Tokyo Megaplex



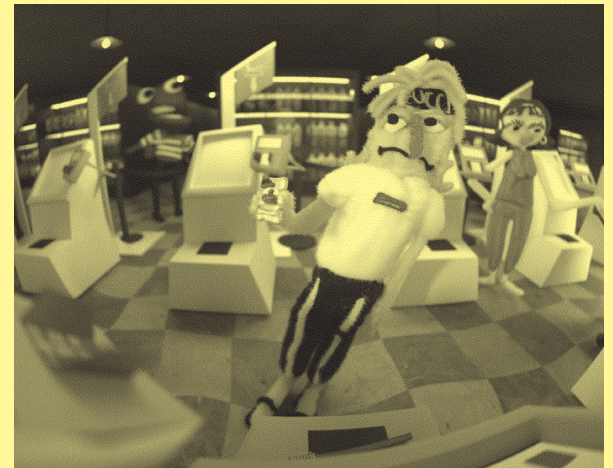
**NATE BOURGET** Hey friend, I was reading your substack article on the new 3D/CG movement, and I found it to be a very impactful read. I'd love to pick your brain some more about this stuff. Down for an interview?

**CHRISTOPHER RUTLEDGE** Yeah dude of course! Gladly.

An interview with Christopher Rutledge

**NB** I have been using the same questioning line to interview a few people, so maybe not all of the questions are directly applicable to you. That being said, what drew you into working with constrained visuals? Meaning the low poly models, and compressed textures. If it's an intangible feeling or hard to put your finger on, who are your greatest inspirations?

**CR** I'm not sure I really fit into this category, my stuff tends to be a bit more maximal. but I do love working with constrained visuals, setting limitations. It's amazing how much choices like that can liberate other parts of your workflow. Having low poly characters for example can allow you to create a lot more characters and have them all be renderable on screen at high frame rates, so you can work a lot quicker, focus on things more like the character animation, and you dont have to worry about things like perfect intersections/collisions when you are emulating aesthetics that were driven by hardware limitations of the past.



**NB** Why do you design this way over realism?

**CR** I think choosing your strengths and playing into those while also cutting corners where you can, giving yourself limitations and just getting things out there is the best way to develop an identity as an artist, discover a style, and get better at finishing things, which is how you make better things.

**NB** What do you want people to feel when they experience your work?

**CR** I primarily want them to be surprised and to feel like they are seeing something fresh and new, or a combination of things they have never seen before. I hope that the ideas resonate with them, whether they are visual / aesthetic / technique based or conceptual.



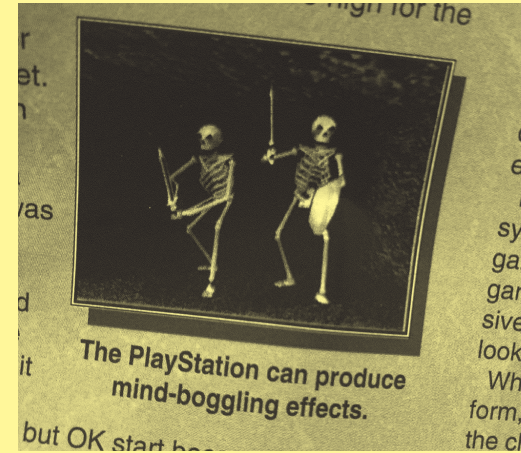


**NB** Would you consider the current landscape of 3D art, especially in the realm of constrained visuals, to be its own art movement? Or is that overstating it, do you feel it's more freeform?

**CR** I think there are a lot of movements within the realm of 3D art and computer art in general. It's most interesting watching ones develop for me that feel more unique and fresh, because there is certainly a lot of computer art that is just confining itself to the realm of what people are used to seeing already. My hope is that by more people seeing this more cutting edge, unique indie work, they will be inspired and have their mind opened and realize that they can explore outside of the box as well.

**NB** What name would you give the new movement?

**CR** I talked a bit about this in my Substack article. I don't think it's mine to name. I played around with some ideas though. I sorta landed on calling it "boggle" when chatting with some people in a Discord. Could call it "boggle-jack", "aliased-boggle", "vertex-boggle". It was a partial reference to this image (attached). I think it's more than just about constrained visuals and low poly aesthetics though. **MailBat** threw some names out there too including "4core" which is, of course, also more referential to **World4Jack**.



Chris attached this photo at the end of the interview

**NATHAN BOURGET** These are all amazing answers, thank you so much this is a great help.

**CHRISTOPHER RUTLEDGE** Dude no worries! Good luck super happy to help.

View Chris's substack article on this new art movement at  
<https://tokymegz.substack.com/>

An interview with...

# Dollo

An interview with Dollo

**NATE BOURGET** I was wondering if you would be interested in doing a short interview about your work over text?

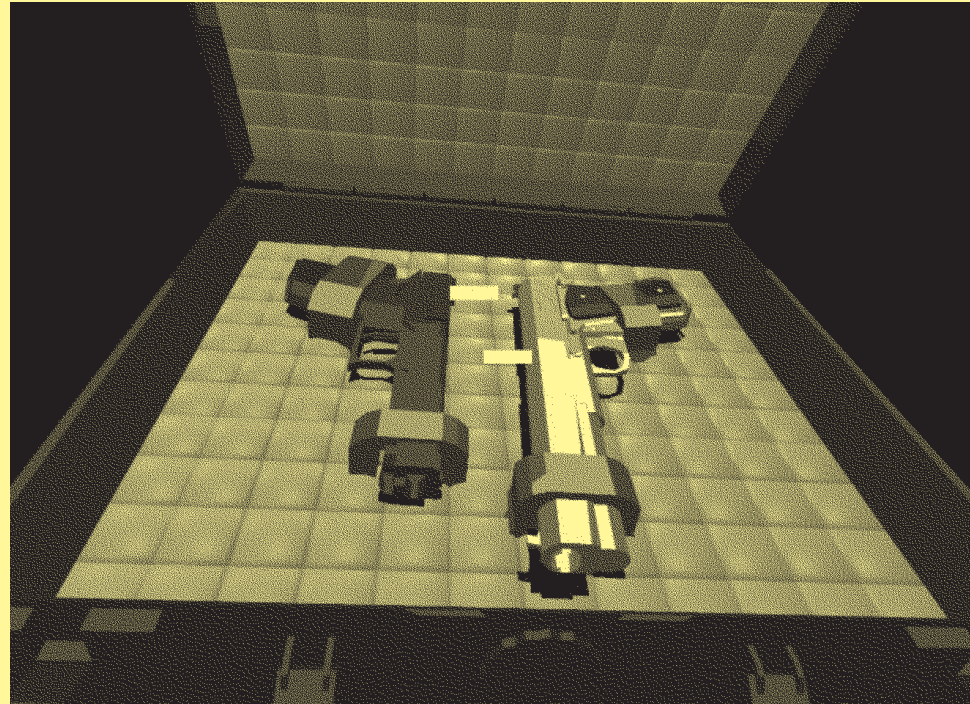
**DOLLO** Sure, I can do one here.

**NB** What drew you into working with constrained visuals? Meaning the low poly models and lack of textures instead relying on the raw coloring and reflection of the object shader. If it's an intangible feeling or hard to put your finger on, who are your greatest inspirations?

**D** The more constraints on things the more is reflected to the viewer. I played a ton of browser games when I was a kid in the 2000s and the high contrast style and tasteful color choices for things really defined that era to me. One of my biggest inspirations has always been madness combat, among many other flash games. I like minimalist abstract painters from books I've randomly opened in libraries as well.

**NB** Why do you design this way over realism?

**D** Realism in games never interested me a lot. Games cannot be a copy of reality we already live in. It has to be an interpretation, and you can do many things with this. Even when you do something like shoot a gun or swing a sword, there should be aspects that make you feel like you would in real life doing these things, exaggerations or extremities that define the experience. Its more important to interpret real life instead of directly copy it.



**NB** How do you want people to feel when they experience your work?

**D** How I feel.





**NB** I know you've worked with **w311why** a bit and are part of the **World4Jack** community. Would you consider the current landscape of 3D art, especially in the realm of constrained visuals, to be its own art movement? Or is that overstating it, do you feel it's more freeform?

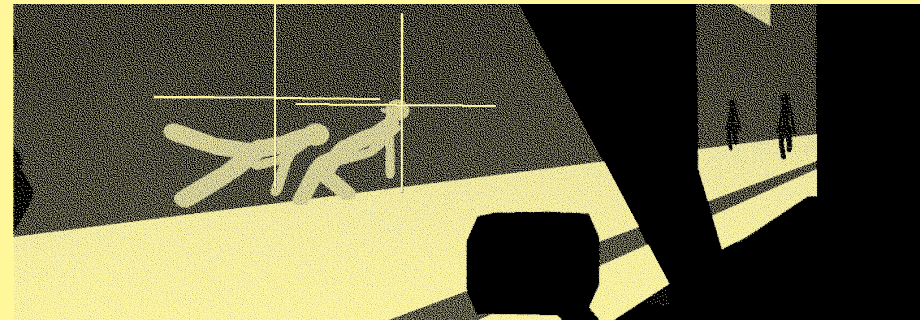
**D** I'm not sure. I think its more freeform. I can't really speak for others on this too well. The style has great building blocks for solo developers or animators. (Your only option majority of the time is to do things solo.)

**NB** What name would you give the new movement?

**D** I couldn't be bold enough to create a name for these trends. I think it's better for people who are participating in their own artistic endeavors not to focus on titles or names for things ever, or you'll be trying to understand yourself too well. And not to listen closely to others trying to name your style.

**NATE BOURGET** Thank you for your time.

**DOLLO** Thanks.



An interview with...

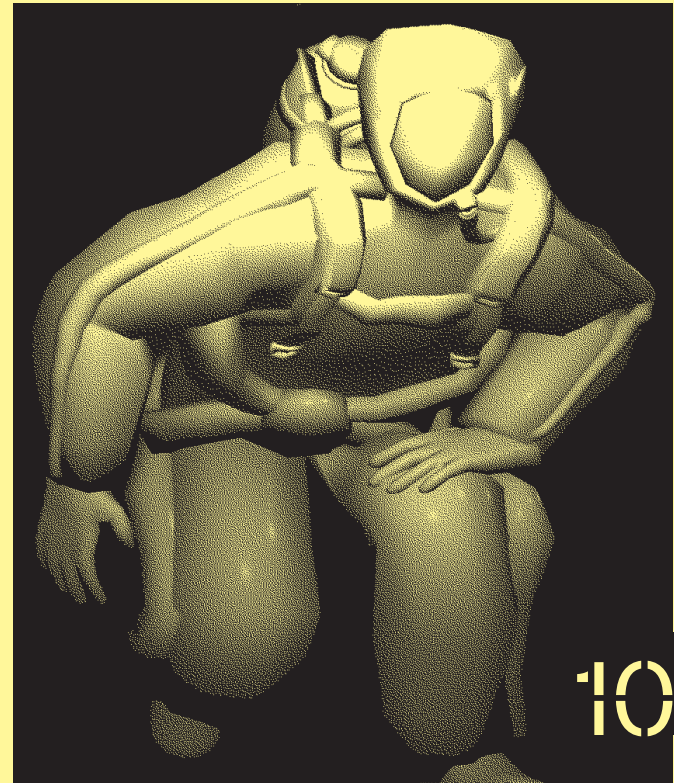
# Ch4ch

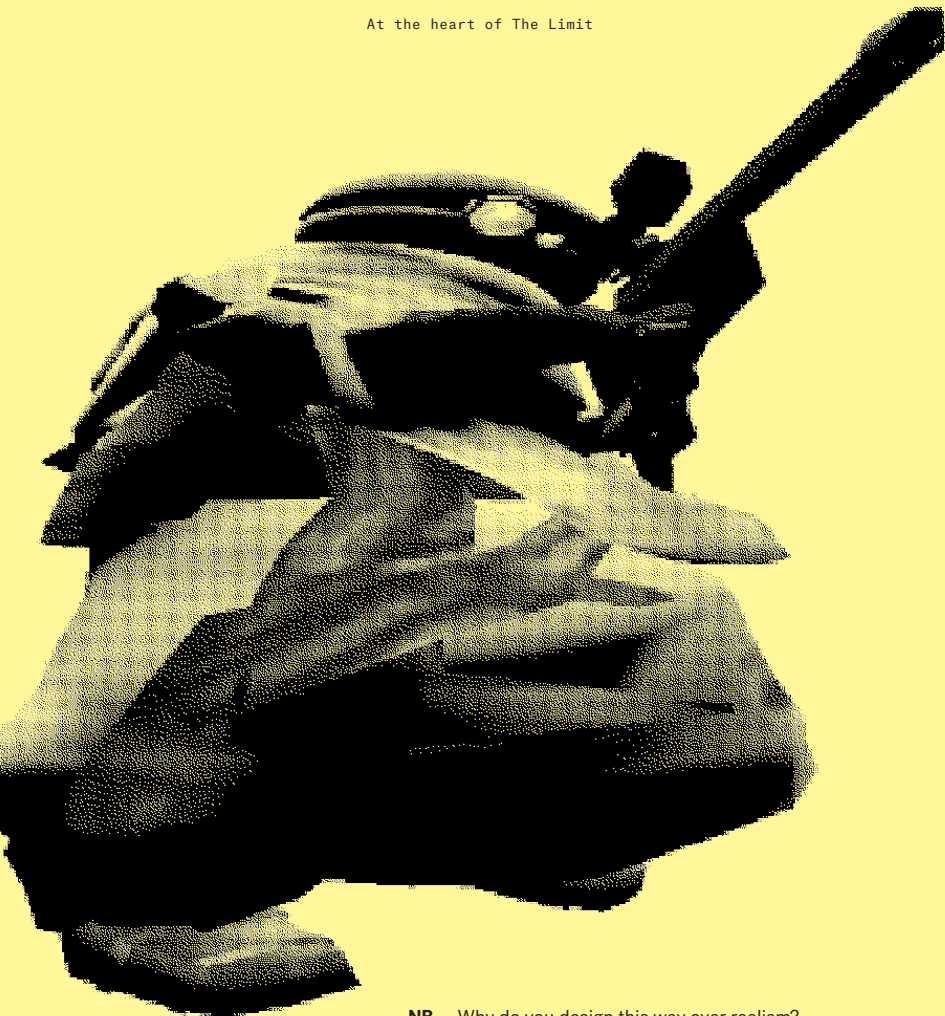
**NATE BOURGET** I'm wondering if you would be open to doing a short interview about your work and yourself over text?

**AARON PATRICK** Hey :) would love to help, yes, let's do it.



- NB** What drew you into working with constrained visuals? Meaning the low poly models, and compressed/flattened textures. If it's an intangible feeling or hard to put your finger on, who are your greatest inspirations?
- AP** I make that kinda stuff because I enjoy seeing it. I spent all my time playing video games growing up, and it was all these low poly graphics that looked insanely hi-tech at the time. *Custom Robo*, *Twilight Princess*, early *Resident Evils*, etc. In fact, those games are all still insanely polished and ahead of their time compared to most of the low-poly stuff people make on Instagram. But yeah, I'm just obsessed with the process. lykyk, **limitations create more opportunities for creation than if you make stuff with every tool available on hand.**



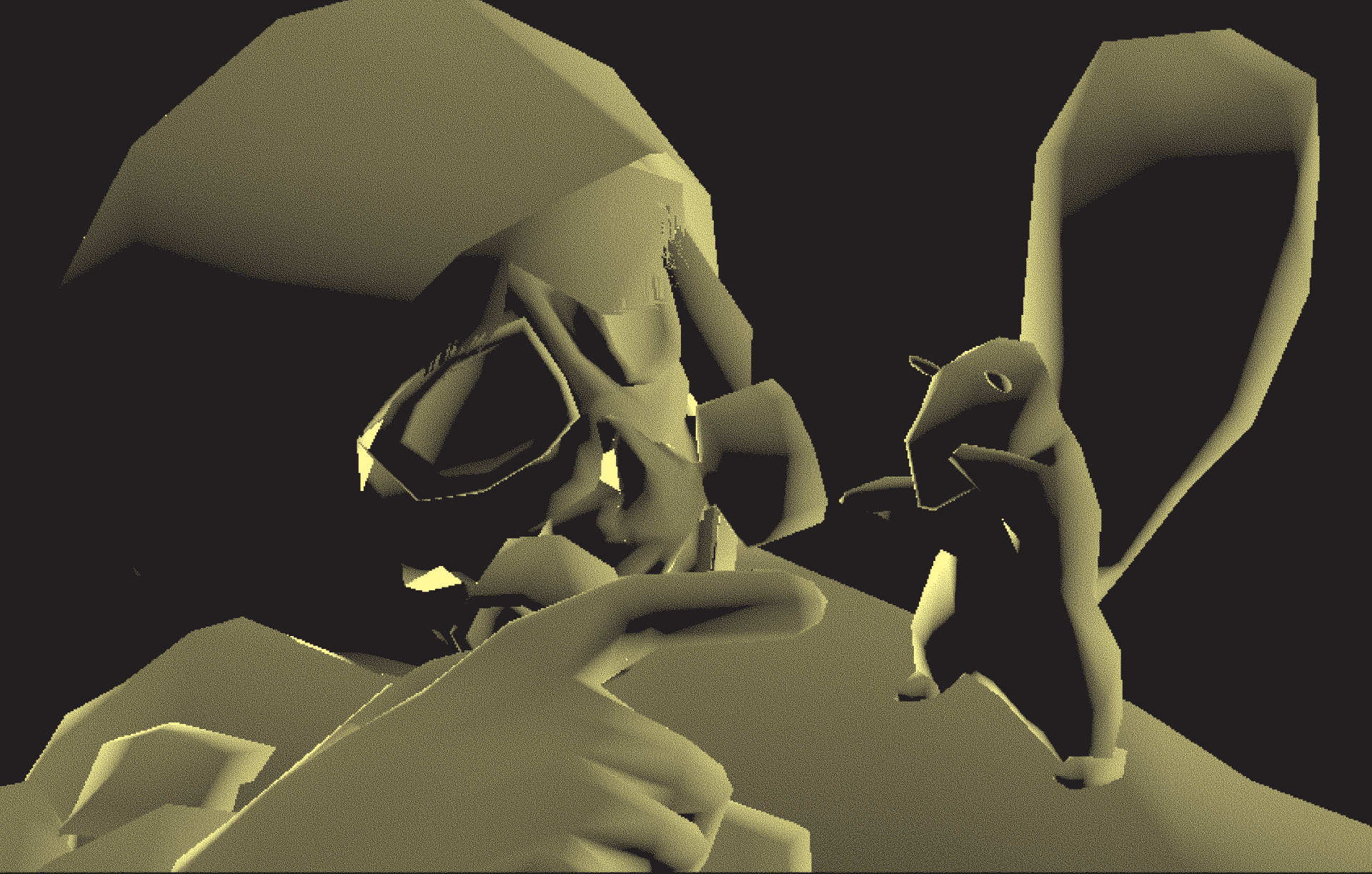


**NB** Why do you design this way over realism?

**AP** I don't have anything against realistic 3D, it's just like *what's the point* if you can't let your brain have a use a little imagination as your watching what's on the screen. Realism does all the thinking for you, like, *here's what it is* and there's no wiggle room.

**NB** What do you want people to feel when they experience your work?

**AP** I'm out to impress and entertain myself before anyone else, it's very awesome to hear when people resonate with certain things I make, but I can't possibly know what that actually feels like for them, let alone strive to create specific feelings for people. Anyway, it's usually the thing you think is junk sitting around in a folder for months and when you randomly post it, that's what everyone loves the most.



**NB** Would you consider the current landscape of 3D art, especially in the realm of constrained visuals, to be its own art movement? Or is that overstating it, do you feel it's more freeform?

**AP** Yeah, obviously there was a huge wave of people post Covid making low poly stuff, myself included, and it's influence has spread way beyond social media. I saw an ad on TV the other day of people wearing makeup to look like low res GTA npcs, who knows if they got inspired from the same childhood stuff we all did though. The post Covid content-pilled internet definitely distorts and blurs the lines of where "movements" begin. Just because there's mad content about it now, doesn't mean there wasn't a gang of people doing it before that.

**NATE BOURGET** Glad I got to chat with you and see your perspective on these things. Thank you for your time.

**AARON PATRICK** Glad I could help, good luck on finishing up your thesis!

# An interview with...

# kami.exp



**NATE BOURGET** I'm doing my final thesis on the current landscape and art movement of CG/3D. I'm wondering if you would be open to doing a short interview about your work and yourself over text?

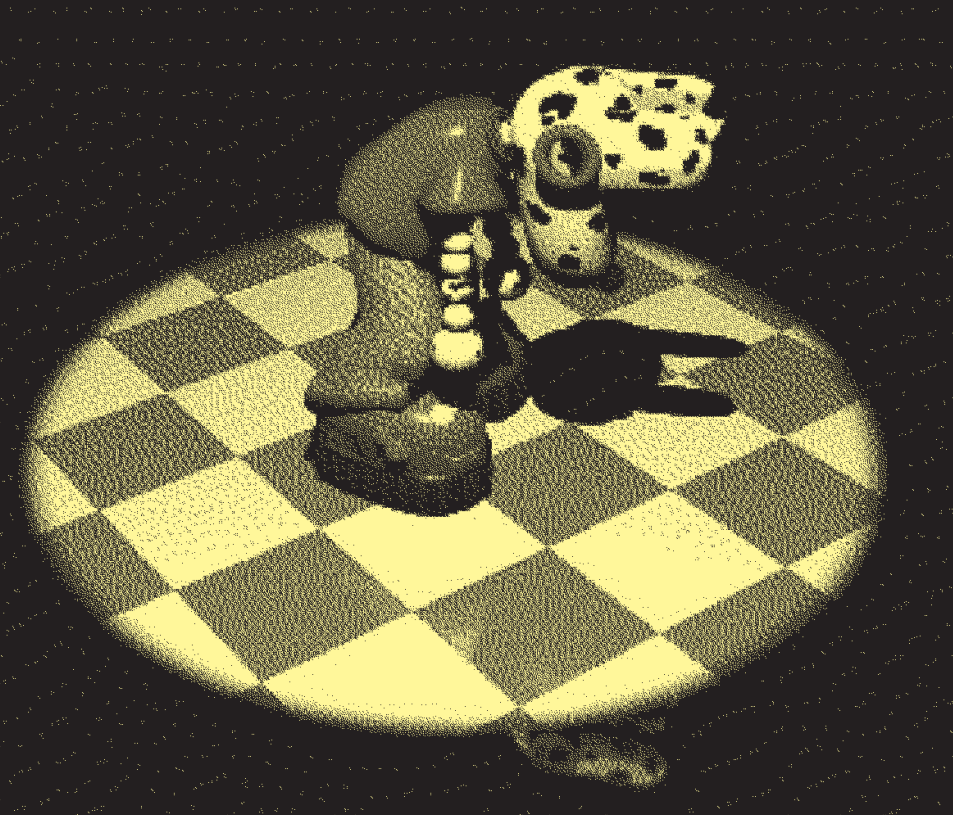
**KAMI.EXP** Yeah I would be open to it!

- NB** What drew you into working with constrained visuals? Meaning the low poly models, and compressed/flattened textures. If it's an intangible feeling or hard to put your finger on, who are your greatest inspirations?
- K.E** I started in this medium of low poly art because I was always a huge fan of video games back in the early 2000s. I think having limitations in art can result in more interesting outcomes. I feel like the charm of N64 games gives you a sense of imagination, instead of graphics being right there at face value, those games made you think and fill in the gaps yourself.

...

Like for example, the fountain in the back of Mario 64's castle where the sign is blurred out, people thought it said "L is Real." People seriously believed it was an Easter egg for Luigi. Just something that simple causes people to think for themselves.





**NB** Why do you design this way over realism?

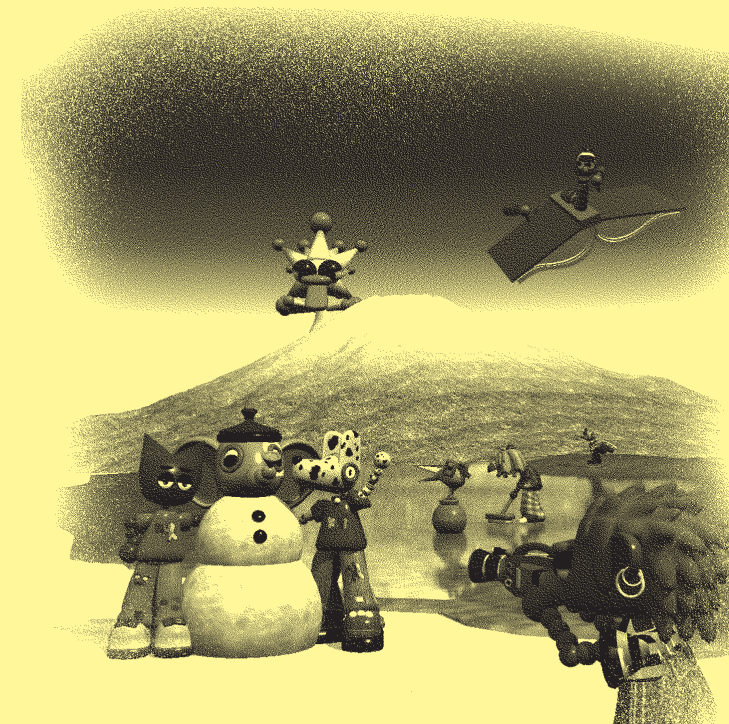
**K.E** I was always fascinated with surrealism, to me art is more than what that we see in the real world, it's how we see it. I have always been interested in spirituality, religions and myth and how those stories come together to shape someones reality. I'm not a religious person whatsoever but I do constantly think about what is happening in the spirit realm and a lot of my art is what I think it would be like in my own perspective.

...

In the early 90s-2000's a lot of kids shows and edutainment games really experimented with surrealism in their shows to grab kids attention span and I think a lot of my inspiration was really rooted from there.

**NB** What do you want people to feel when they experience your work?

**K.E** I want people to feel love, to feel the importance of every living thing in this world. The world we live in goes a lot deeper than what is at face value. I think people don't look at animals as equal to a human life and that's something I want people to see.



**NB** Would you consider the current landscape of 3D art, especially in the realm of constrained visuals, to be its own art movement? Or is that overstating it, do you feel it's more freeform?

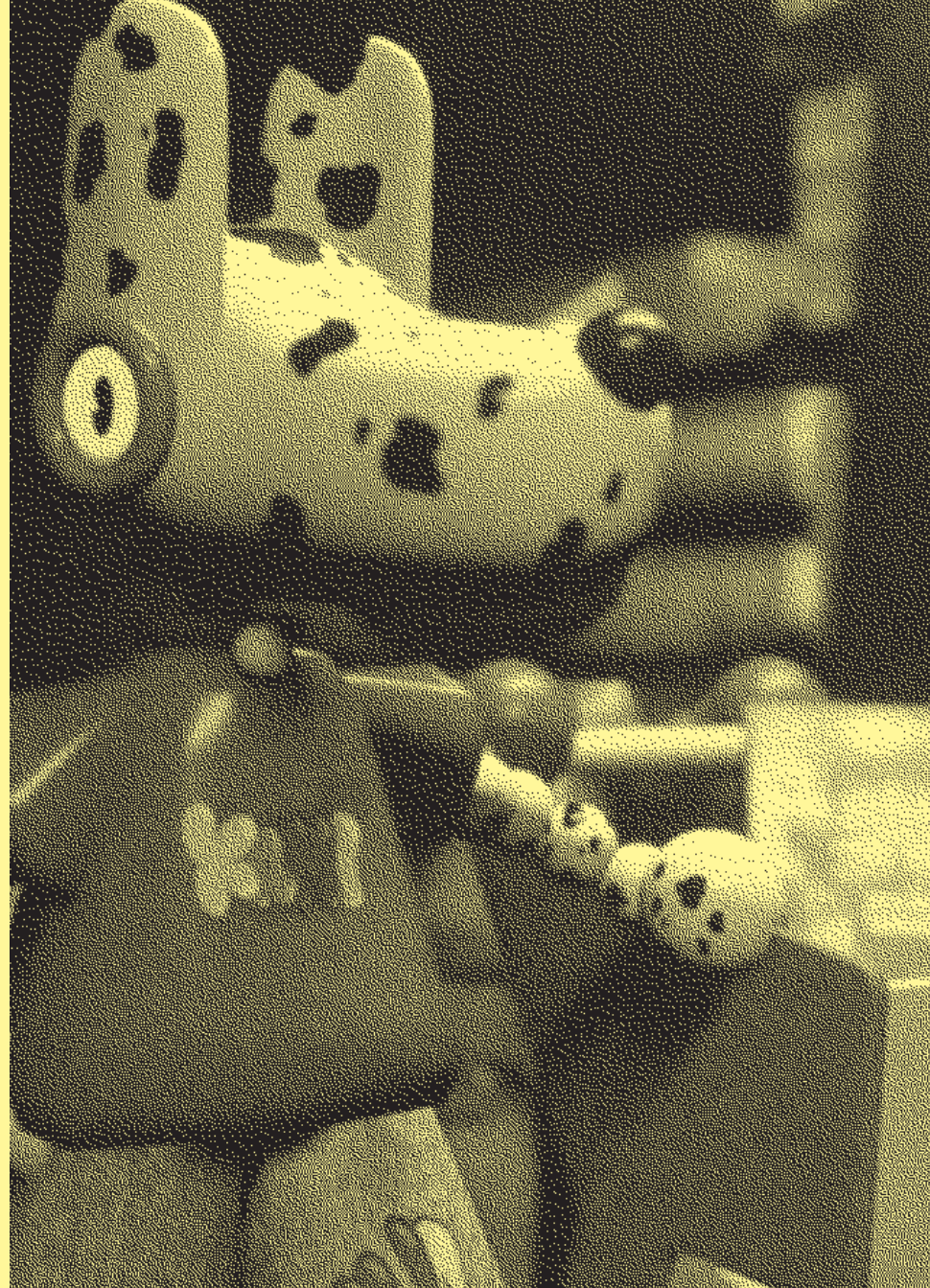
**K.E** I do think the current landscape of 3D art is its own movement, but it has so many different facets. Like low poly art from LordStingRay is completely different than what I'm doing. We're both working in low poly, but approaching the style in completely different ways, and that's the beautiful thing about it. It's not forcing artists to compete within the same styles if you try to find your own lane. You would think the restriction of low poly would corner artists into doing similar things, but if you truly care about the art style, you can find your own way without having to replicate what's already been done.

**NB** What name would you give the new movement?

**K.E** That's very hard to say and I don't think I could be the one to name this type of movement, it would have to be something that fans of this art style would have to name it as a collective. Haha.

**NATE BOURGET** Thank you for your time, this has been very insightful and inspiring.

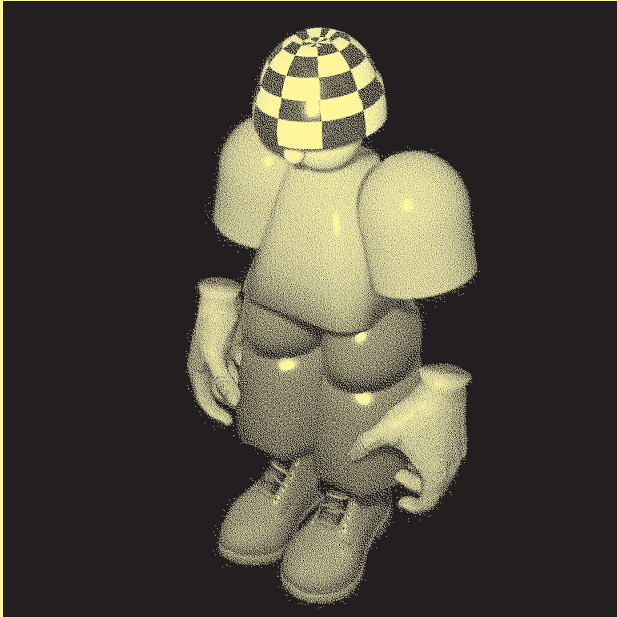
**KAMI.EXP** I'm glad my art inspires you ٩( 'ω' )و



An interview with...



# wOrldblog



**NATE BOURGET** I was reading an article on CGI by Christ Rutledge and saw you were mentioned. Was wondering if you would be free for an interview soon?

**JEFF VILLEGAS** It's so nice to meet you! Thanks for reaching out to me!  
I would be so interested in a interview by you.

- NB** What drew you into working with constrained visuals? Meaning the low poly models, and compressed/flattened textures. If it's an intangible feeling or hard to put your finger on, who are your greatest inspirations?
- JV** What pulls people into constrained visuals—low poly models, compressed textures, limited palettes—is usually less about limitation and more about clarity. When you strip things down, every shape, color, and pixel has to justify itself. There's no place to hide messy ideas behind detail. That can feel really honest, even a little raw. There's also a kind of tension that's hard to replicate with high-fidelity work. Low poly forms sit right on the edge between abstraction and recognition—you know what you're looking at, but your brain has to fill in gaps. That participation creates a stronger connection than just being handed a photorealistic image. It's similar to why people still love pixel art: suggestion can be more powerful than precision. Another big draw is the aesthetic side effect of technical constraints. Things like texture compression artifacts, vertex shading, or limited geometry weren't originally "choices"—they were necessities. But over time, they've become a visual language. When you use them intentionally, you're kind of referencing the history of games and digital art, not just making something look retro.

...

As for inspirations, a lot of artists point to creators who embraced constraints as style rather than compromise. For example, Super Mario 64 is a classic—its worlds are simple, but incredibly readable and expressive. Silent Hill used hardware limitations (like fog and low draw distance) to enhance mood rather than fight it. And something like Vagrant Story leaned into sharp geometry and dramatic lighting in a way that still feels stylistically intentional today. Outside of games, you can see similar thinking in movements like Cubism—breaking forms down into simpler shapes to show more than one perspective at once—or even in modern indie developers who deliberately reject realism to focus on atmosphere and design.

...

If you're asking because you're exploring this style yourself, it might help to think of constraints not as "limits," but as rules of a game you get to design. The question shifts from "what can't I do?" to "what can I express with just this?" If someone sticks with constrained or stylized visuals instead of chasing hyper-realism, it's usually a deliberate trade—not a fallback.



**NB** Why do you design this way over realism?

**JV** Realism (like what you see in Unreal Engine-driven AAA games) is powerful, but it comes with expectations. The closer you get to reality, the more everything has to hold up under scrutiny—lighting, animation, physics, facial detail. If one piece falls short, it breaks immersion fast. Stylization sidesteps that trap. You're not trying to perfectly replicate the real world—you're building a coherent visual language that players accept on its own terms. There's also the question of focus. Realism tends to distribute attention evenly—everything is detailed. With low poly or compressed textures, you control exactly where the player looks. Big shapes, bold colors, and simplified forms guide the eye much more intentionally. It's closer to graphic design in that sense. Another reason is longevity. Realistic graphics age quickly because technology keeps improving. What looked cutting-edge five years ago can start to feel dated. But stylized work—especially when it leans into abstraction—doesn't rely on matching reality, so it often holds up better over time. That's why something like *The Legend of Zelda: The Wind Waker* still looks fresh, while many "realistic" games from that era feel noticeably older. And honestly, there's a creative freedom aspect. When you're not bound to realism, you can exaggerate proportions, break lighting rules, or use textures in unconventional ways to evoke emotion rather than accuracy. A foggy, low-detail scene can feel more unsettling than a perfectly rendered one—*Silent Hill 2* is a classic example of that. So the choice isn't really "less detail vs more detail." It's more like: realism = simulate the world convincingly stylization = interpret the world expressively. Neither is better across the board, but if your goal is mood, readability, or a distinct identity, constrained visuals give you sharper tools for that.

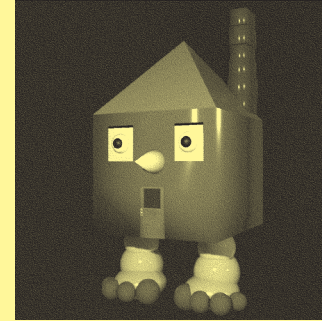
**NB** What do you want people to feel when they experience your work?

**JV** If I had to distill it, I'd want people to feel a mix of curiosity and quiet unease—like they recognize what they're looking at, but something about it isn't fully explained. Constrained visuals are great for that because they leave space. When forms are simplified and textures are rough or ambiguous, the viewer has to participate a little. That participation can turn into curiosity ("what am I actually looking at?"), and sometimes into a subtle tension ("why does this feel off?"). It's not about overwhelming someone with detail—it's about giving just enough to spark interpretation. I'd also want a sense of stillness. A lot of low poly or minimal scenes naturally feel frozen in time, almost like a memory you can walk through. That can be calming, but also a bit haunting depending on context. Games like *Shadow of the Colossus* do this really well—huge, quiet spaces that feel meaningful even when nothing is happening. And then there's a kind of honesty I'd hope comes through. When visuals are stripped down, there's less noise between the idea and the viewer. You're seeing the structure, not just the surface. That can make things feel more direct, even if they're abstract. So overall, something like: "I get this... but I don't fully get it." "This feels calm, but not completely safe." "There's more here than what I'm being shown." If someone walks away thinking about the atmosphere or filling in their own story, that's usually a sign the work did its job.



**NB** Would you consider the current landscape of 3D art, especially in the realm of constrained visuals, to be its own art movement? Or is that overstating it, do you feel it's more freeform?

**JV** It's close to being a movement, but calling it a single, unified one might be a bit too neat. What we're seeing right now with constrained 3D—low poly, PS1-style textures, intentional compression, limited lighting—is definitely more than a coincidence. There's a shared visual language, a kind of collective attitude toward rejecting hyper-realism and embracing limitation as expression. That's one of the ingredients of an art movement. But traditional movements (like Cubism or Surrealism) usually have clearer boundaries, manifestos, or at least a tighter philosophical core. What's happening in constrained 3D is more decentralized. It's spread across indie games, Twitter artists, itch.io projects, and small studios—people influencing each other without necessarily agreeing on why they're doing it. If anything, it's more like a cluster of micro-movements or tendencies: A nostalgia-driven branch (pulling from late '90s / early 2000s hardware limits) A minimalist/design-driven branch (focused on readability and abstraction) A mood-driven branch (using constraints for atmosphere, often eerie or liminal) Games like Paratopic or Cruelty Squad sit under the same broad umbrella, but they're almost ideologically opposite in tone and intent. So rather than a single named movement, it might be more accurate to think of it as a shared visual dialect that a lot of artists are speaking right now. If it keeps consolidating—if people start writing about it, naming it, or defining its principles—then yeah, it could solidify into something more formally recognized. Right now though, its looseness is kind of the point. The lack of strict rules is what lets it stay experimental instead of turning into just another formula.



**JV** If I had to name it, I'd avoid anything that locks it too tightly to nostalgia (like "PS1-core"), because what's happening now is broader than just looking backward. A name that might actually fit is "Constraint Expressionism." The idea being: the constraint isn't a limitation you work around—it's the primary expressive tool. Geometry, texture loss, clipping, repetition, even awkwardness all become emotional signals rather than technical flaws. It lines up loosely with how Expressionism distorted reality to convey feeling, just translated into digital space. If that feels too formal, a few other directions that capture different angles of the same space: "Digital Brutalism" – borrowing from Brutalism, emphasizing rawness, exposed structure, and refusal to polish things "for comfort." "Lo-Fi 3D" – simpler, more accessible, but maybe undersells the intentionality behind it. "Post-Realist 3D" – frames it as a reaction after the industry's push toward realism. "Artifact Aesthetic" – focusing on compression, glitches, and imperfections as a visual language. If I'm being honest, though, the fact that it doesn't have a universally agreed-upon name yet is part of what makes it alive. The moment everyone agrees on a label, it risks becoming a style people imitate instead of a mindset people explore. So "Constraint Expressionism" works as a lens—but it probably shouldn't be a box.

An interview with...

# Decint

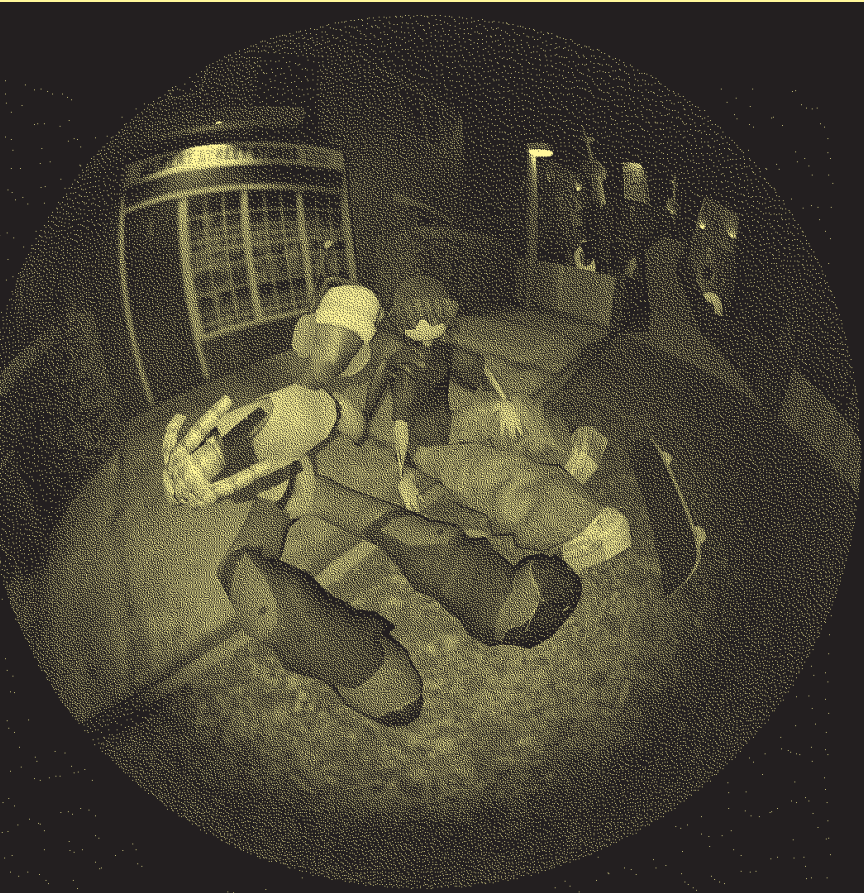


**NATE BOURGET** Hey my friend, I'm wondering if you would be open to doing a short interview about your work and yourself over text?

**DARIO CINTURRINO** Whatsup Nate!! I hope your project is going well, I would be down to help if you still need it.

**NB** What drew you into working with constrained visuals? Meaning the low poly models, and compressed/flattened textures. If it's an intangible feeling or hard to put your finger on, who are your greatest inspirations?

**DC** I think my main preference comes from the media I grew up with but I do think in general it is definitely a mystery why people prefer low poly visuals. I personally grew up mainly watching 2D animation so all my life I have preferred it over the smooth and corporate 3D movie look. There is so much more play and imperfections that go into 2D. The first time I saw 3D media that played with the cartoony style was *Jet Set Radio*. The cel shading and outlines are just insanely appealing and I highly prefer that look over smooth polished and well lit 3D models. And, of course, recently *Spider-Verse* broke 3D rules and started the animating on 2's, 3's and 4's in 3D trend. I think the main reason as to why people (and I) like it is the use of imperfections in art. Imperfections show the passion of the artist more than polished work. My main inspo's in this field are definitely **Masaaki Yuasa** and **Taiyo Matsumoto**. They both have such a way of playing with imperfect lines and perspective and it just looks so sick.



**NB** Why do you design this way over realism?

**DC** It's mainly the way my style progressed. I think the main thing that drives the forming of an artist's style is inspirations from other artists. While I was learning animation, especially 3D, I came across many artists like **Toasted.Sushi** or **superbundafighter007** and they perfectly influenced my style at the right time. Also lowpoly modeling and cel shading can lowkey look better with less effort. It is very hard to realistically model on the lever of the industry standard. I prefer art where the artstyle stands out more than the technicality so using the lowpoly style and giving it your own twist is perfect for me.



**NB** What do you want people to feel when they experience your work?

**DC** I love it when people feel inspired by my work. Having grown up with so many inspirations and then getting messages from people who started making art because of my videos is like the biggest compliment ever.

**NB** Would you consider the current landscape of 3D art, especially in the realm of constrained visuals, to be its own art movement? Or is that overstating it, do you feel it's more freeform?

**DC** I think if you really isolate it to only animation, it could be considered an art movement or, at least, a very big change in the industry that is currently happening but if you look at the bigger picture, I think this is a way that humans just connect to art. Especially in modern times with social media and evolving technology, more and more people like to trace back art to it's roots and go for the more vintage stuff (like thrifting). I think this is a prime example where people crave nostalgia and simplicity. People like art that is packed with personality more than the overproduced polished animation. I think it's also kinda interesting to trace this to the movement against AI, I think there are a lot of similarities.



**NATE BOURGET** Thank you for your time and perspectives.

**DARIO CINTURRINO** Might have talked too much but I hope you can use it. I love talking about animation my bad. Good luck bro, let me know if you have any questions!

An interview with...

# MallBat

An interview with Jesse Patience

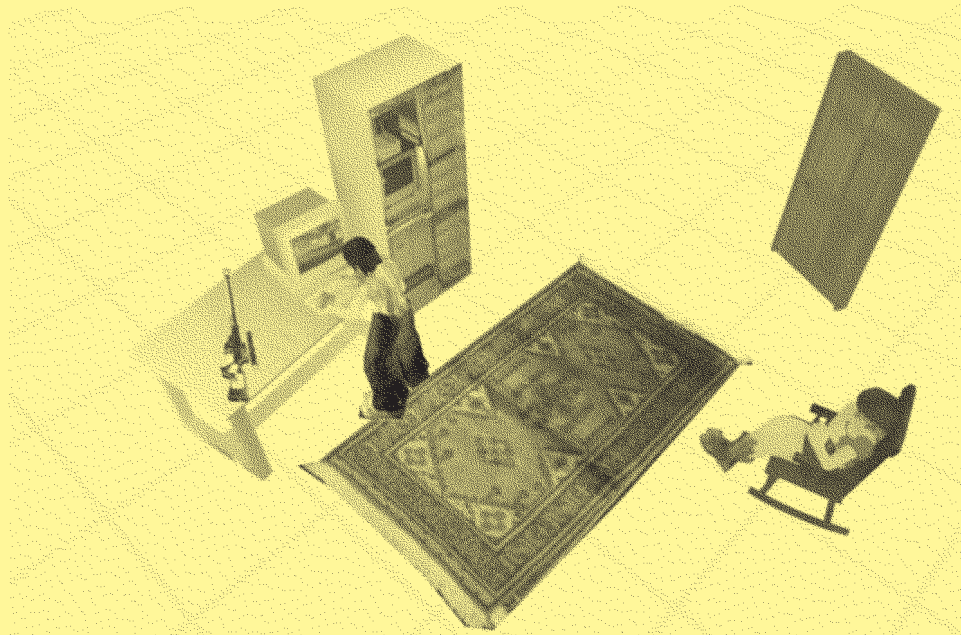


**NATE BOURGET** Hey my friend, I'm a fan of your work and I'm wondering if you would be open to doing a short interview about said work and yourself over text?

**JESSE PATIENCE** Hey! That sounds super cool! I'm definitely down

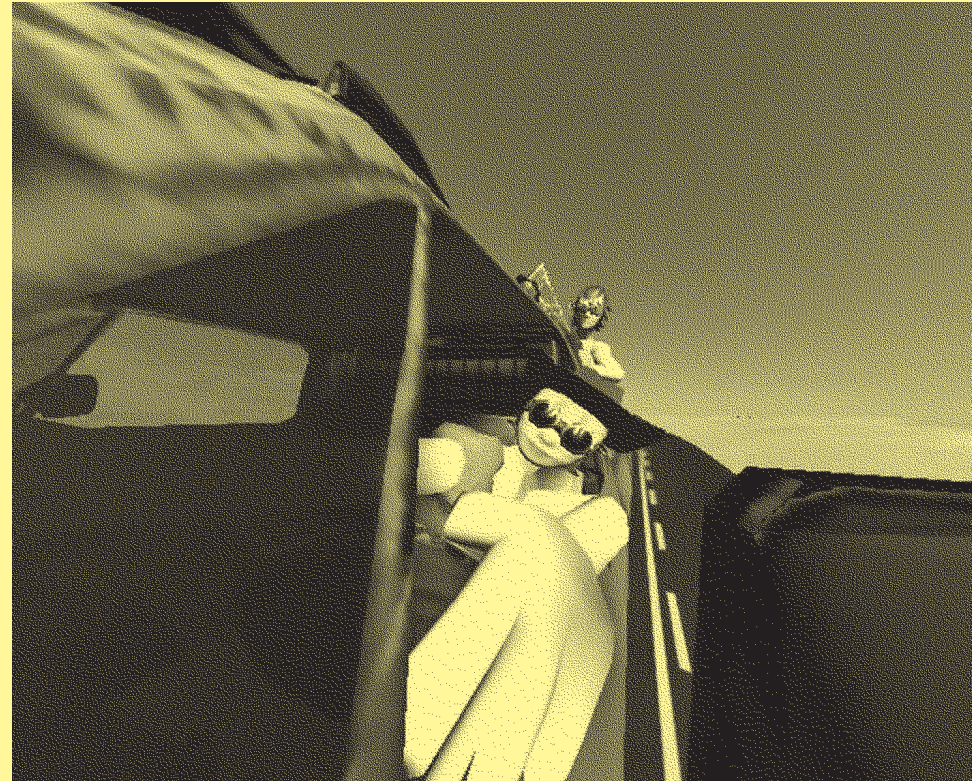
**NB** What drew you into working with constrained visuals? Meaning the low poly models, and compressed/flattened textures. If it's an intangible feeling or hard to put your finger on, who are your greatest inspirations?

**JP** I come from the world of stop-motion originally. As a kid I made brickfilms (Lego) and later moved onto claymation with puppets and miniatures. At a certain point it got too expensive to continue telling stories that way and I took a turn toward 3D animation- in 2022 I think. I spent time exploring and experimenting with different styles but quickly found myself drawn to low-poly art. I'm super inspired by the games I played growing up like Crash Bandicoot, Jet Set Radio, SSX, Shadow of Colossus, Half Life 2, etc... The artists behind these games worked on super tight technical constraints that led to beautiful art and well defined styles. The lack of detail many of these games have leads you to fill in the blanks yourself. I love making the audience do a little more guesswork.



**NB** Why do you design this way over realism?

**JP** To be honest, CG realism often just bores me. Don't get me wrong, it's impressive and there's some work that I do really love but most of it is entirely unaffecting. There's something so honest about low-poly/low-res CG art. There's clearly no attempt to hide the fact that it's digital and I admire that. You can see the "brush strokes" and "fingerprints" in the jagged edges and flat textures which makes it feel more human strangely enough.



**NB** What do you want people to feel when they experience your work?

**JP** It largely depends on the project. With something like *GOOD GIRL WITH A GUN* I hope to give the audience a sense of catharsis and radicalize a few folks along the way. With *Mall City* I hope people leave with a sense of peace and belonging in a rapidly changing world. I think above all I hope people feel seen in my work—that their unspoken thoughts are heard.

**NB** Would you consider the current landscape of 3D art, especially in the realm of constrained visuals, to be its own art movement? Or is that overstating it, do you feel it's more freeform?

**JP** Yes and no. There's undoubtedly been a boom in low/poly 3D art in the past decade but it feels too large to narrow down to one singular movement. Some artists are pulling from the cel shaded looks of Jet Set Radio and Okami, while others pull from the phototexture collages of Counter Strike and Deus Ex, and so on and so fourth. Perhaps I'm confining folks too much though. It's just hard to say until you're looking back years later.

135

**NATE BOURGET** Thank you, really thoughtful, I greatly appreciate it.

**JESSE PATIENCE** Yea of course! Happy to help!



# An interview with...

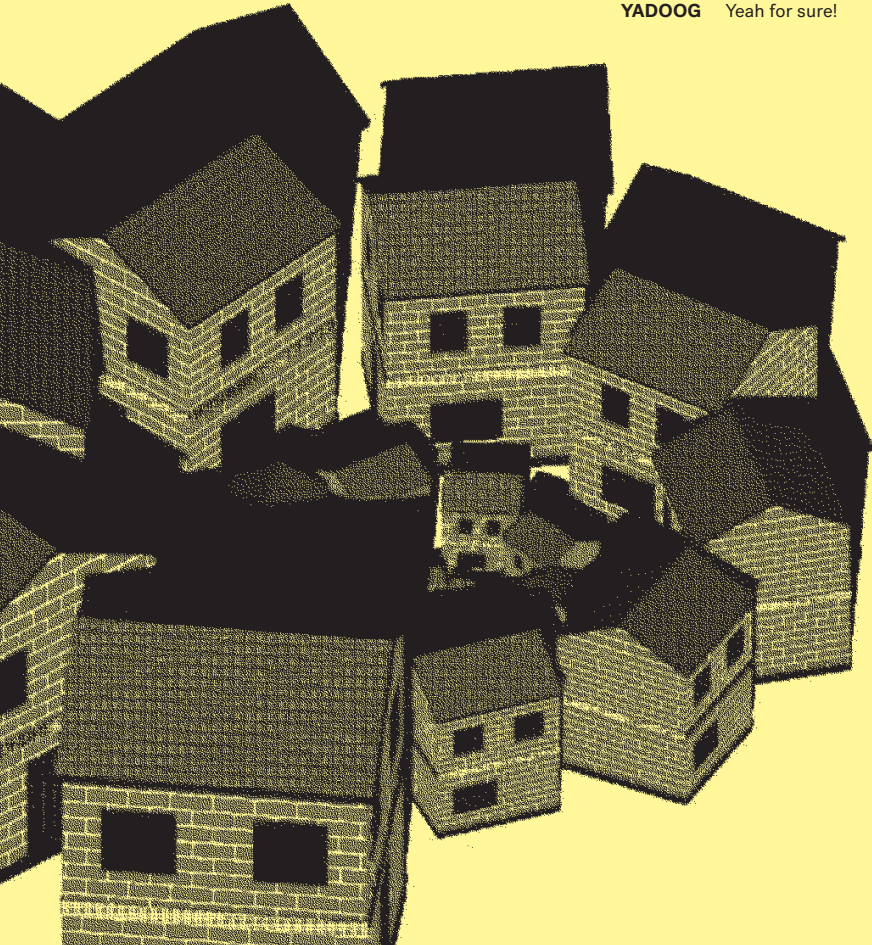
# yadoog

An interview with yadoog



**NATE BOURGET** I'm wondering if you would be open to doing a short interview about your work and yourself over text?

**YADOOG** Yeah for sure!



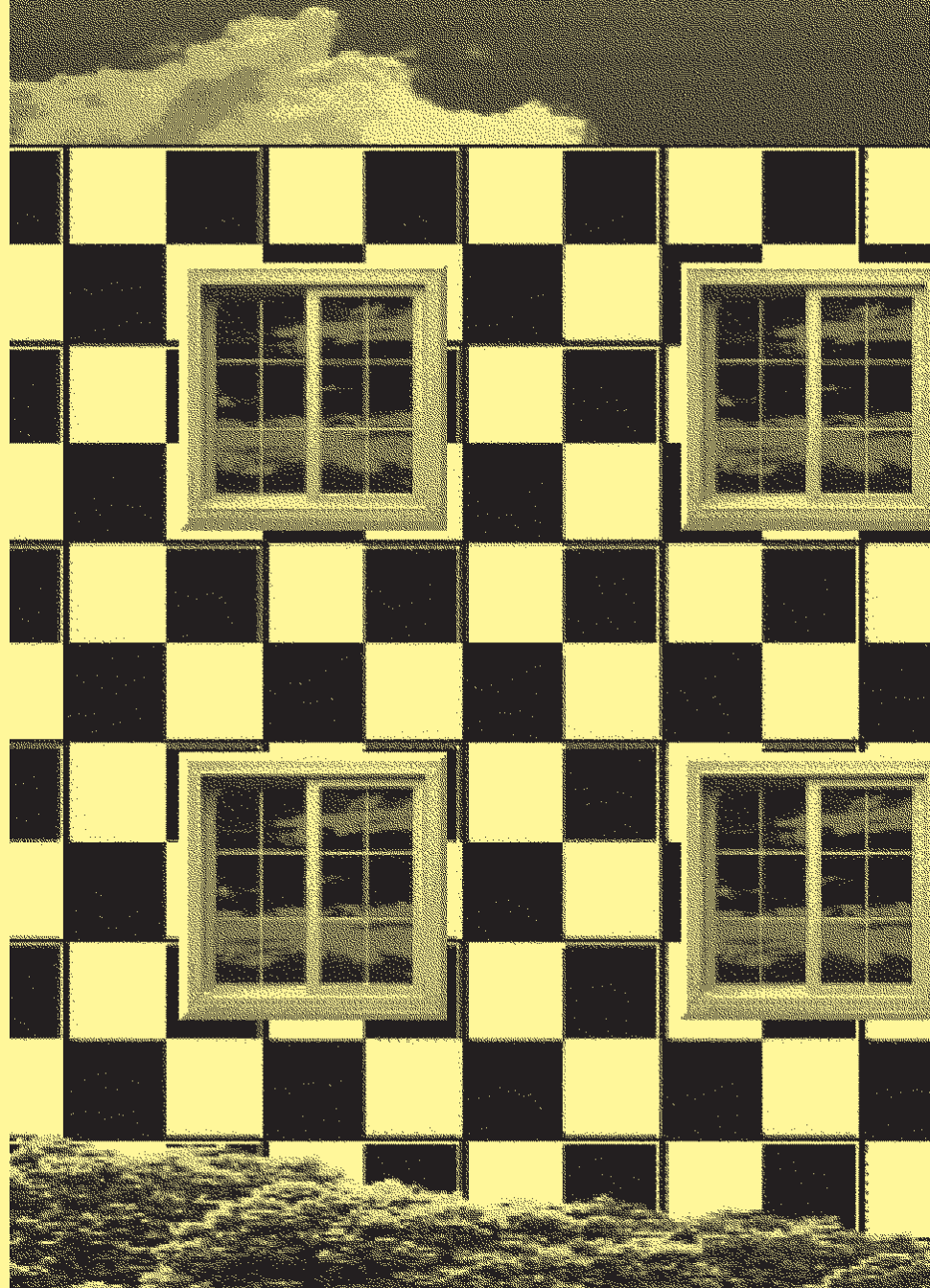
**NB** What drew you into working with constrained visuals? Meaning the low poly models, and compressed/flattened textures. If it's an intangible feeling or hard to put your finger on, who are your greatest inspirations?

**Y** The initial seed was that I was doomscrolling instagram in 2019ish and seeing a post from the **world4jack** series *VideoPix*, I remember thinking "this is the coolest thing I've ever seen" (this was before the pop off of the low fidelity movement I believe) and unlike anything I'd seen before. Thinking about why it resonated with me gets a lil blurry but I think that growing up with playstation games is a part of it, I don't think I was just interested for the 'nostalgia factor' though, I think the actual 'low poly' way of approaching 3D can be used in new ways and say a lot more than just being an emulation of PS1 games, and it also feels achievable at entry level for someone like me who was incredibly intimidated by learning 3D.

...

Other inspirations in the scene include **alec.fbx**, **brwler** (great character designs and compositions), **CarlosKnowsNot** (really knows how to build environments that feel real within the typical constraints) and a lot more!

- NB** Why do you design this way over realism? (meaning like Unreal engine type realism that you see from AAA games nowadays)
- Y** I think a few reasons, firstly I just don't feel inspired at all when I see the hyper-real graphical style in a lot of media, and it sometimes feels like the further an art direction pushes into realism, the less room there can be for stylisation - and this doesn't vibe with me because there's a lot more freedom when you loosen the constraints of what something 'should' look like. I think that while 'low poly ps1' style definitely has a certain look, it feels like there's just more you can do with low fidelity graphics to create expressive art. This thinking also goes for music and a lot of other art forms in general, i've never felt inspired to learn the 'right' way to do things, but instead learn as many tools and techniques as I can and build a personal toolbelt for creating what I visualise in my head.
- Y** Also I can't lie that a portion of it comes down to simply lack of skill, I'd love to have the technical ability to make realism, but only as a means to see how I can warp it into my own thing! I think that even if I was a professional industry grade 3D artist I would personally prefer to work in low fidelity a lot of the time.







**NB** What do you want people to feel when they experience your work?

**Y** Not something I typically think about a lot as for me it's more about the process of making things for me and as a way of challenging myself and trying to make things I see in my head. I try to push for new ideas and things that haven't been visualised before because a lot of my biggest inspiration moments are from seeing something new - so I guess I'd want to recreate that feeling for others.

...

I've never been driven by making 'emotional' works in any sense as I feel like I have nothing to say in that regard and I consider myself more of a technician than a storyteller, which is why a lot of my works are short loops or images mostly focused on the pure aesthetic, but thinking about it further I do think that a 'story' can be told or expressed to the viewer from a single image or just from the mood / blend of colours and composition, and I hope that my work conveys this to people, but I'm never thinking about sending a specific message or anything like that



**NB** Would you consider the current landscape of 3D art, especially in the realm of constrained visuals, to be its own art movement? Or is that overstating it, do you feel it's more freeform?

**Y** For sure! or at least i'd like to think so, however i've definitely been in a social media bubble of this kind of stuff so I guess it's hard to say how it's had an impact of art as a whole, but i've seen a lot of artists working in this style who have picked up work from major names so it's definitely being recognised. But yeah 'art movements' aren't really the same thing they used to be, maybe in 100 years there'll be people deep into an art history book reading about the new wave of low poly blender heads.

**NB** Would you consider the current landscape of 3D art, especially in the realm of constrained visuals, to be its own art movement? Or is that overstating it, do you feel it's more freeform?

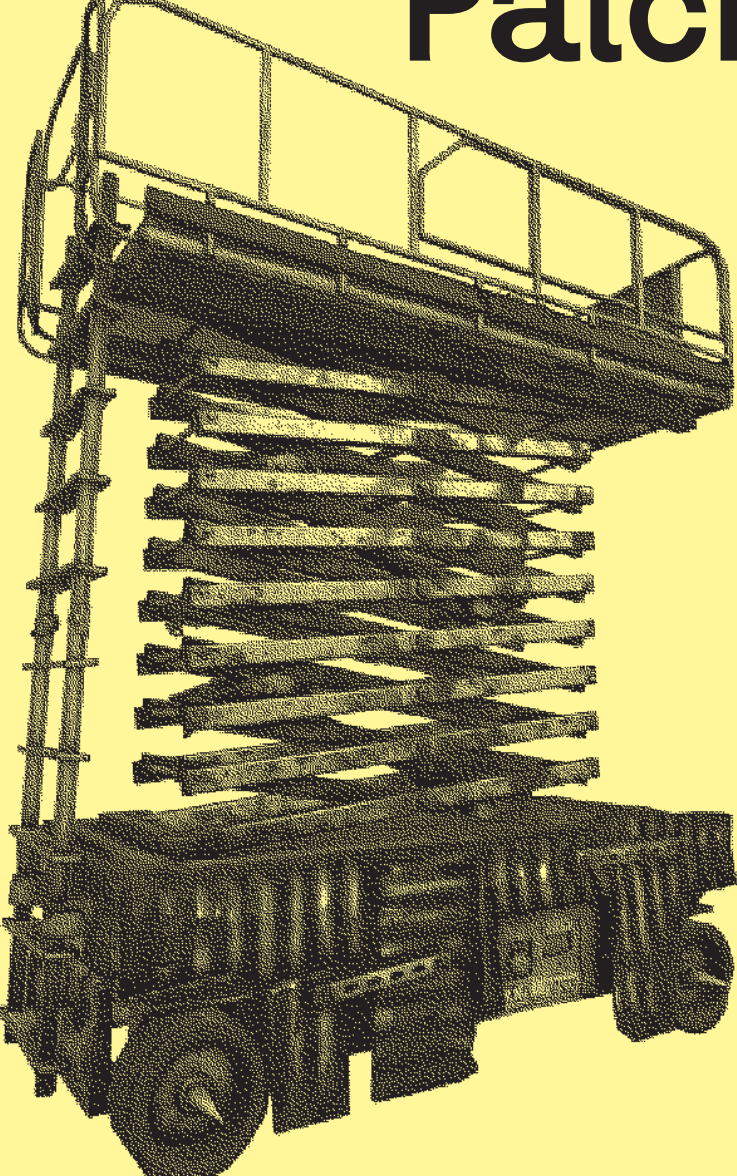
**Y** Polyfidelity.

**NATE BOURGET** Thank you for your time.

**YADOOG** Sorry if it's a bit a rambly, I don't really ever write about my own work so this was really fun to think through! Thank you, and good luck with your thesis!

An interview with...

# Patch3



An interview with Jack Blaum

**NATE BOURGET** I'm wondering if you would be open to doing a short interview about your work and yourself over text?

**JACK BLAUM** Ayee yah, I'm down.

**NB** What drew you into working with constrained visuals? Meaning the low poly models, and compressed/flattened textures. If it's an intangible feeling or hard to put your finger on, who are your greatest inspirations?

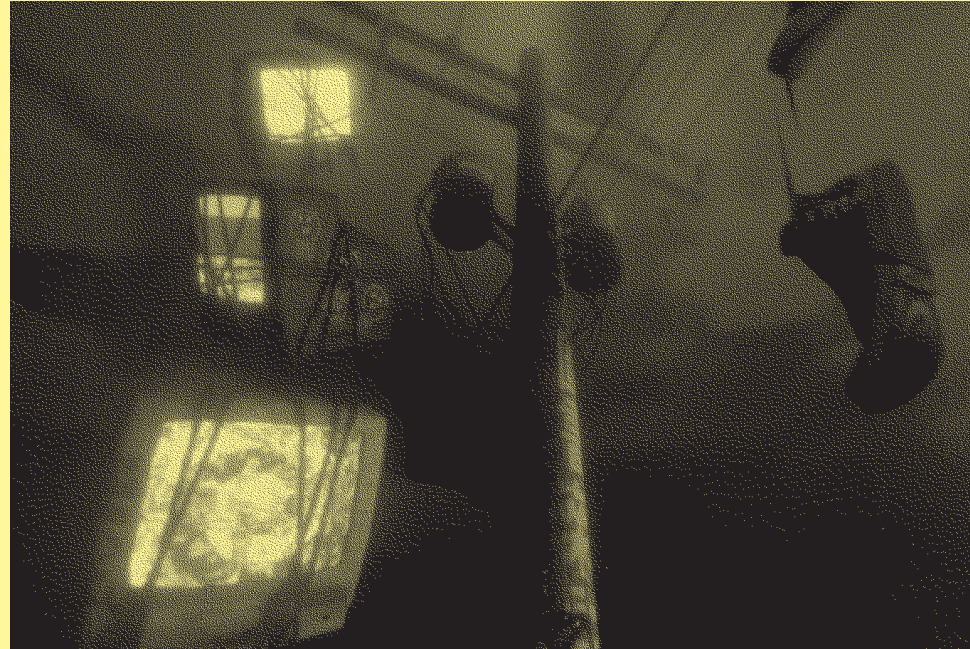
**JB** Lately I am for sure working within constraints, and I agree it could be described as lower polygon, lower resolution, compressed textures, etc... I believe constraints are of utmost importance if not completely necessary for almost all creative endeavors, that is if your goal is to ever finish a project. Though I have logically known this to be true prior to getting into CG, I had to learn this the hard way for myself. Nearly 8 years of project files where most have never made it off the hard drive can speak to that. Many such attempts at grandiose environments and animations with no regard for managing scope have shown me that the limitlessness must be tamed. Constraints are the key that seem to be solving this for me, and they can be anything, but they also aren't hard rules you must follow, just guidelines to think about, rules you can break when doing so enhances the work. So I guess I was drawn to this constrained look by trying a lot of different things, and then finding a happy medium between speed of production and maximizing on less. Less truly is more. Inspirations for me are very hard to pinpoint, as they can come from almost anywhere. It is the unique combination of all one's experiences in life that is revealed through the lens of an individual's art that makes such art interesting and good. Technical mastery is impressive, but it does not necessarily make good work. Whether it's the media that had shaped me when I was younger, the many characters I've had the joy of interacting with, the real world history and architecture of where I have grown up, or my day to day experiences working on construction sites, I like to pull from all of it. I heard the advice that the best inspiration to create is to just go out and live life, which has been something I've been thinking about a lot the last couple years. I am trying to find a healthy balance of going outside and pursuing my life and my relationships with others, while also engaging in deep periods of intentional work with my creative craft.

**NB** Why do you design this way over realism? Not to say that your style does not use textures from real life or realistic proportions etc. More like why do you not try and go full hyperrealistic? Unreal engine style, sweat, pores, wrinkles in the skin? Is there a style here that you've found?

**JB** Part of the reason it has taken me almost 8 years to find my own pocket of work, is because I did high fidelity/more realistic work within that time. At one point I had convinced myself I wanted to be a prop/environment artist in some big AAA pipeline. I spent a few years learning the workflows to do this sort of stuff, months on one or two models. Unreal was also a tool I explored within this timeline. I think the ideas I am pursuing have pulled me away from this space, but I don't think I've departed fully from doing projects with realism in mind. Looking back I kinda see this as my "learning to paint" era as I sort of approached it like a painter would study the techniques of the masters that came before them, but now I must break away into my own direction where I can twist the rules I have learned. On top of this, I have been disillusioned with the reality of working in a big studio, I believe that path has had the magic stripped from it.



149

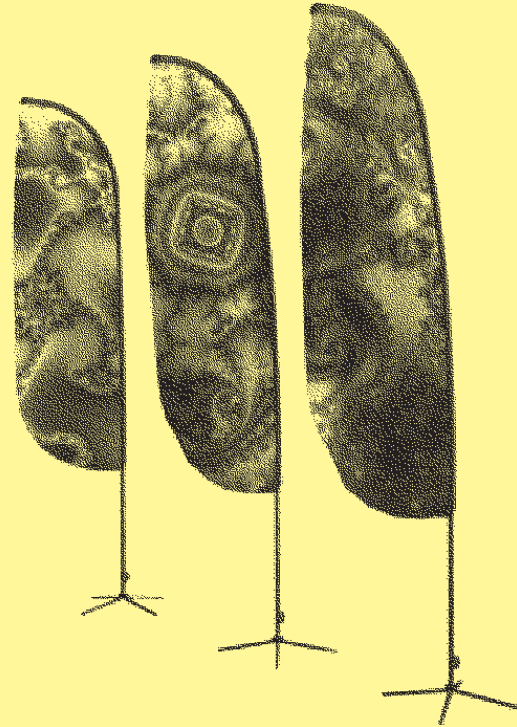


**NB** What do you want people to feel when they experience your work?

**JB** Thinking about this recently, I was wondering what exactly is the purpose of making any of this stuff at all. I was trying to figure out what I truly make it for, or who I make it for. My intentions have changed much over the last 8 years as I've just grown up more and the world is a lot different now, the digital landscape I desired to have more work in originally, exists no longer. With all this in mind, I think the community aspect of making art has been where a lot of the joy has come from. For those beside me, and those who I look up to, I would hope they become inspired and driven to continue in their own pursuits when they engage with my work. I love talking about the processes behind the things I make and helping those who wish to learn how to do it themselves. I would hope for those who are seeking the inspiration to begin or continue, that they find that drive to keep going.

**NB** Would you consider the current landscape of 3D art, especially in the realm of constrained visuals, to be its own art movement? Or is that overstating it, do you feel it's more freeform?

**JB** Again, I do think constraints are a sort of fundamental attribute of all mediums in art, the difference with something like 3D is that it has many more dimensions, each sort of exponentially increasing the number of directions you can go with it, so you sort of have to put more energy into setting your own constraints. Other mediums such as pen and ink drawing already have very hard constraints built into the tools. There's only so much that is physically possible with an ink pen on paper. But yes I believe I have witnessed trends that could be described as movements that have arisen within the last decade within the 3D art landscape. There is a major link between what you are referring to as "constrained visuals" and the large leaps made within the realm of tool accessibility. Both high level hardware and high level software have become increasingly accessible. Blender has revolutionized 3D, being that it is free and open source, as well as its developments reaching a stage where it has become extremely powerful/competent. Of course across the board there are many other pieces of software, but I believe Blender is the greatest example. Previously available software was locked behind being incredibly expensive, as well as lacking in public documentation on how to learn and use it. You had to either get hired by a studio or be willing to spend a hefty chunk of change to get started. The last piece of the puzzle follows a major wave of new users, including myself, that spawned out of the COVID19 pandemic era. Us new users are nostalgic for those earlier game consoles and early CGI/animation that we grew up on. There have been leaps and bounds in the development of graphics since then, but the obtainability of creating graphics, like say what you would have seen on the PS2, has become within the grasp of the individual. What would have taken a studio of twenty people in the early 2000s can now be accomplished by a hobbyist on their laptop. I think that this era from the PS1 and up to PS3 is sort of the graphical equivalent of what you may call the "constrained visual". I think that this trend of new and even veteran users creating in this style is only natural given the context. It is an umbrella for a variety of style choices which allows one to create completed projects within a reasonable amount of time and do so without needing to be incredibly technically proficient or specialized in their skill.



**NB** If yes to question 4, what name would you give the new movement?

**JB** Maybe Techno Homogeny, pulling from technology driven art in the hands of all people. Maybe Precariat Exponentialism, pulling from the lack of security and predictability of this last decade, and the sort of exponential curve of individual expression through digital art.



**NATE BOURGET** Thanks for your time and these thoughtful answers.

**JACK BLAUM** Thanks for the interview!

An interview with...

An interview with Jake Engelberg

156

# w311why



**NATE BOURGET** I find you to be a name that comes up a few times and in a few references. I interviewed **Dollo** and your name came up. I had been talking to **Jack** for a couple years but lately I can't get a hold of him. I became really invested in your website and the videos on it and eventually tried to mine out the 3D model you use on the homescreen but then had only seen texture UVs in the inspector. Are you interested in an interview?

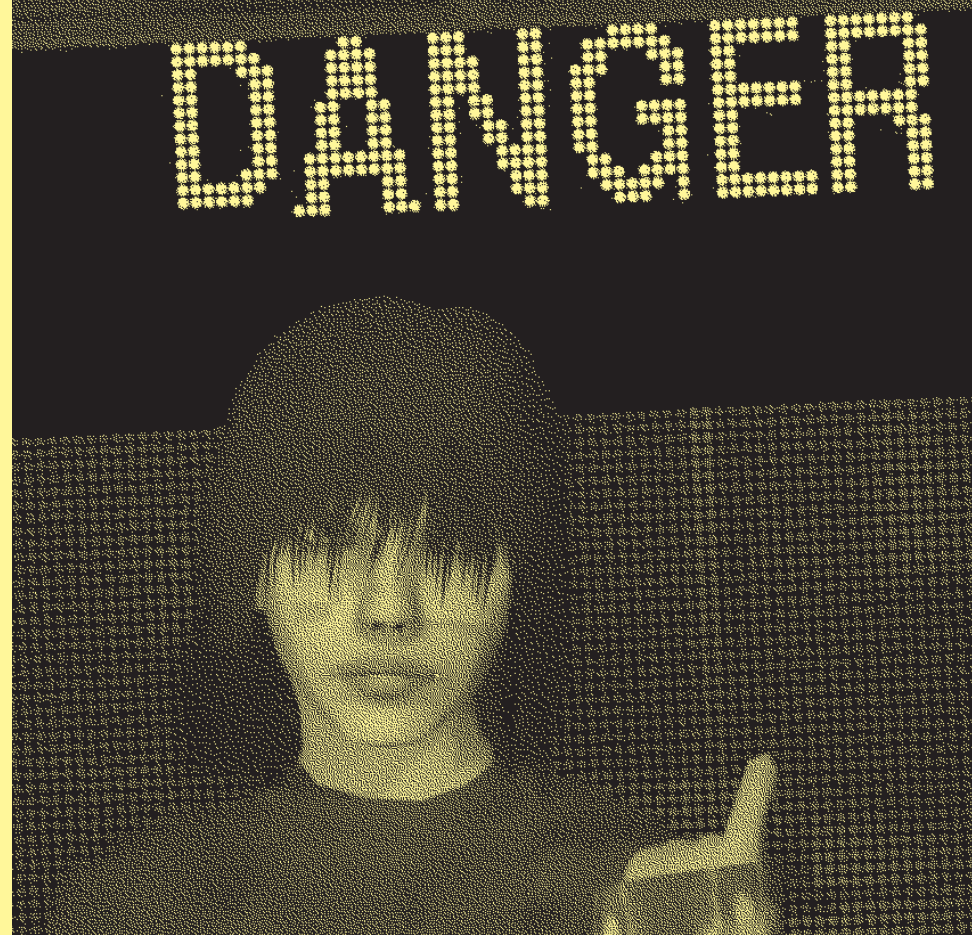
**JAKE ENGELBERG** Thanks for digging into my stuff; I do the same all the time out of insatiable curiosity; it's a skill in itself to harness that into action. *hyperkid2morph* is very derivative but also seems to be a nice wrapped up set of ideas representing a way a lot of people were thinking/wanting. I think most art is quite derivative (in a neutral sense), and has an additional aspect that "validates" its derivative nature, in some backwards way proving it not derivative.

**NB** What drew you into working with constrained visuals? Meaning the low poly models, and compressed/flattened textures. If it's an intangible feeling or hard to put your finger on, who are your greatest inspirations?

**JE** I encountered Super Smash Bros Melee when I was about 4 years old. Hexagonal spheres smooth shaded, hand authored VFX cards, compressed photo CD textures. Through restricted graphics, There's a strongly effective pathway to communicate the feeling of wonder that the organic world provides. It more clearly evokes the idea that a person with their organic brain and experiences made active decisions to create what you're seeing when you can identify each vertex or texel. Also, representing an idea with less raw material is satisfying in a way like a hole-in-one is more satisfying than a bogie, or like how hyperbole exists. My second greatest inspiration is a smooth-shaded 8-vertex cube.

**NB** Why do you design this way over realism?  
(meaning like Unreal engine type realism  
that you see from AAA games nowadays)

**JE** I enjoy the spectacle of graphics approaching realism, and some of the games associated with it. It's a fascinating goal to simulate what we see around us, and the opportunity to immerse ourselves and then defy expectations in whatever way the game finds fun. To me, though, it's a totally different goal than reduced graphical fidelity which seeks to display ideas with a boiled down, strikingly "in-your-face" presentation.



**NB** What do you want people to feel when they experience your work?

**JE** To feel like they are activating some additional region of the brain that feels nothing like the way they experience the physical world.

**NB** Would you consider the current landscape of 3D art, especially in the realm of constrained visuals, to be its own art movement? Or is that overstating it, do you feel it's more freeform?

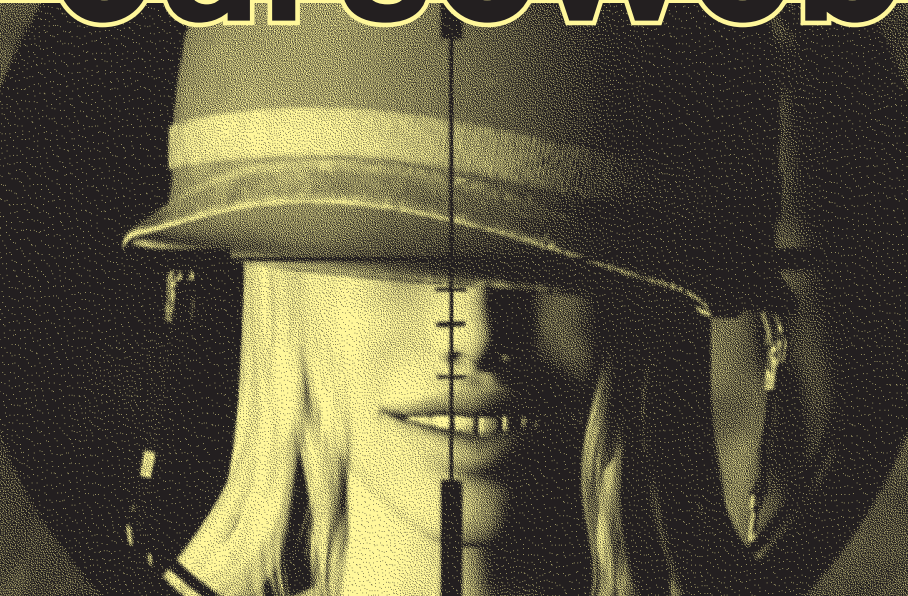
**JE** I guess I'd consider it more of a textbookish spectrum, riding the same coattails of previous art mediums, photorealistic and non-photorealistic art. There's definitely room to split things into multitudes of subgenres, but I'm constantly over-inundated with moodboards and inspo and breakdowns and video essays to the point where I feel like the organism of the internet creates the things like art movement names through consensus, rather than a single person like myself.



**NATE BOURGET** Thank you for your time.

An interview with...

# curseweb



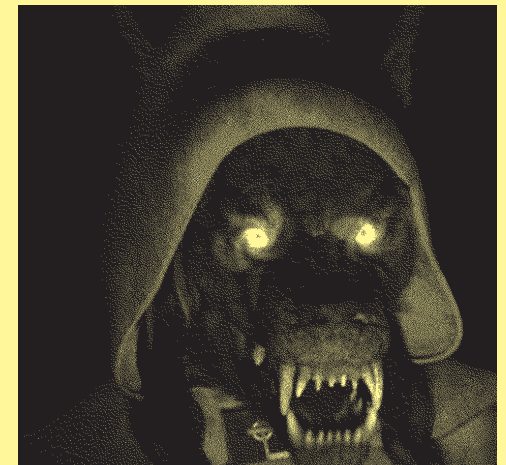
**NATE BOURGET** It is my understanding from your page that you are very talented with 3D softwares. I have gleaned that you are well acquainted with the CGI community, working with **Jack Jobling** on a Pink Pantheress video as a 3D artist. Despite being a longtime follower of yours, there is still a great deal of mystery surrounding your work, forgive me if all of these questions are not directly applicable to you because of that. Or perhaps even if you are a group of people, rather than one person, forgive me again. Feel free to answer any of them at your leisure or none at all if you aren't feeling it.

**CURSEWEB** Hey! this is cool I'm so down! Oh yes **biibocc**, that is so cool, yes!!!!!!! Bro thank you this means so much. I'm just one, singular person hahaha, just a guy.

An interview with curseweb

- NB** What drew you into working with constrained visuals? Meaning the lower poly models, and compressed/flattened textures. If it's an intangible feeling or hard to put your finger on, who are your greatest inspirations?
- CW** I have always been driven towards primitive 3D, initially stemming from point and click games I would play with my grandmother on her computer (ex. Lucky Clover on Big Fish Games). So of course, nostalgia stands as a pillar to the resurgence of constrained visuals. But also enjoying to creep myself out, I feel that older 3D can accidentally be uncanny and off-putting in an authentic way, which is an inspiring element to me. It is surreal. Major inspirations are early PS1-PS2/Dreamcast/Xbox videogame cutscenes, as they are the fragments of a specific visual quality that did not often get conceptualized into long form movies and shows (Final Fantasy: The Spirits Within is a movie like this). I wanted to recreate and grab something so fleeting.

162



**NB** Although I would say your work is realistic, there is a quality that is reminiscent of late 90's to early 2000's video games, advertisements and animations. Why do you design this way over the kind of realism we see today in Unreal Engine style AAA games/animations?

**CW** To be honest, I have realized recently that this quality partly stems from my lack of high technical skill with 3D. But on the other hand, I think that there is a spectrum of realism that has developed over the past 30 years. With modern technology making realism only recently accessible and post-internet art (and post-post-internet etc.) opening a larger room of discussion, I think there is a newfound tangibility in a specific visual quality. The 'low poly videogame' quality sits in between blatant cartoon and photo-realism, and is now more than a ceiling of technological advancement. I have enjoyed sitting in this middle ground, not hindered to an objective to make something look as realistic as possible, or the opposite. But, I am really interested in exploring the full range.



**NB** What do you want people to feel when they experience your work?

**CW** I want people to be moved in some way.  
But, at the end of the day, feel anything they want.



**NB** Would you consider the current landscape of 3D art, especially in the realm of constrained visuals, to be its own art movement? Or is that overstating it, do you feel it's more freeform?

**CW** I see this as a movement, a turning point in animation and aesthetic history. Can you believe how recent animation really is? I believe that there is a new freedom to explore the timeline of realism, and people might find themselves looking towards something familiar to their childhood, which is easier/quicker to accomplish and accessible. With terms like 'nostalgia-bait' and a growing concern for true depth in the visual language, I think that this movement could be dispersing in a unique way, and becoming more freeform.

**NATE BOURGET** Thank you my friend these are incredible and so thoughtful, super huge!!

**CURSEWEB** Great, thank you, I'm honored.



## An interview with...

**NATE BOURGET** Hey my friend, my name is Nate Bourget, I am a student at art college in Boston. I'm doing my final thesis on the current landscape and art movement of CG/3D. I was wondering if you would be open to doing a short interview about your work over text?

**ALFRED FRANCIS  
PIETRONI** Hey, sounds good to me, email me your questions and we can go from there

**NATE BOURGET** Excellent my friend, you will hear from me.

167

# EXILE



**NB** Hey friend, this is nate. Here are the questions I have for you. My thesis is focusing on limited visuals in the 3D/CGI sphere online, but I was attracted to your work for the completely unfettered style it embodies. Because of this, a few questions are going to be different than everyone else's as you aren't designing in low poly or with compressed textures.

...

What drew you into working with stylized visuals rather than pursuing realism? (The kind of realism you see in AAA games or Unreal Engine expos)

**AFP** It will be a dull day when we lose our creative interpretation of the world. Nothing is ever one way and people do not experience life as one entity. The world is multifaceted, shattered, pieced together and viewed as if through a kaleidoscopic lens. As an artist I don't aim to pursue mundane things, I want visual dialogue, visual storytelling, visual questions. There is a special zone of graphical interpretation where the collision of stylisation and realistic fidelity meet. My creativity can flourish in this area where the world is slightly skewed, something feels within touching distance and yet still remains otherworldly.



**NB** What do you want people to feel when they experience your work?

**AFP** Some kind of peace, the kind you find when you are engrossed in a film and the boundaries have dissolved, you feel emotional connection, fear, love and sadness all as if you yourself are in that world.

**NB** Do you see your work as reacting against mainstream digital aesthetics, or simply building a different path?

**AFP** Maybe? I don't feel like I am necessarily trying to rebel against anything, I'm just making the art that I want to see, that I want to experience. So, building my path, whether it is different or not, isn't really the main focus. If something aesthetically, conceptually or atmospherically works for me, then that's all that matters.

**NB** Would you consider the current landscape of 3D art online to be its own art movement? Or is that overstating it, do you feel it's more freeform?

**AFP** It may be a little strange but I don't feel like I actually follow many 3D artists or any kind of '3D art movement', I am much more drawn to paintings, sculptures and fashion, and their respective evolutions. With the state of an over-saturated videogame market and an ease to access 3D software there is a whole sea of creativity but also mediocrity within 3D art. So I don't think of it as a niche art movement, it's a large scale medium open to infinite interpretation.



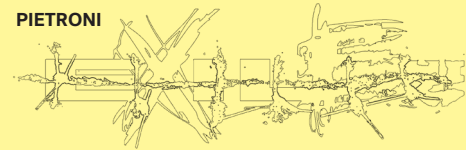
At the heart of The Limit

An interview with ALFRED FRANCIS PIETRONI



**NATE BOURGET** Thank you for taking the time to write these out, this is very thoughtful.

**ALFRED FRANCIS PIETRONI** Thanks,



An interview with.

# athst4r

An interview with Athina \*

176

**NATE BOURGET** Hey my friend, my name is Nate Bourget, I am a student at art college in Boston. I'm doing my final thesis on the current landscape and art movement of CG/3D. I was wondering if you would be open to doing a short interview about your work over text?

**ATHINA \*** This is so sick omg, when I was back in college I was also insanely inspired by people already in this scene and did one of my projects around it!

**NATE BOURGET** Amazing, would love to see it! Here are the five questions, feel free to answer them anytime at your leisure, or not at all if you're not feeling it.



**NB** What drew you into working with constrained visuals? Meaning the low poly models, and compressed textures. If it's an intangible feeling or hard to put your finger on, who are your greatest inspirations?

**A\*** Since I grew up playing video games like the Legend of Zelda series, Space channel 5 and Animal Crossing series, I have always been naturally drawn to the older style of 3D artwork and video games in general. I was actually strictly a 2D illustrator up until college, when we were asked to do a 3D assignment. Dreading the experience, I attempted to at least find something which resonated with me, which is when I came across lord-stingray and y2\_kyle and felt insanely inspired! It never really struck me that I could combine older graphics with animation to bring my own stories to life. Alongside many amazing games, these two extremely talented artists were my biggest inspirations and to this day I strive to create visuals as compelling and immersive as theirs!

**NB** Why do you design this way over realism? (meaning like Unreal engine type realism that you see from AAA games nowadays)

**A\*** As a kid I always had a distaste for realism in video games lol. I really believe that being able to create your own style is much more impressive and fun than recreating what we already have in real life. I do love high resolution graphics also, just as long as they're stylized!



**NB** What do you want people to feel when they experience your work?

**A\*** When people come across my art, I want them to feel almost at home; the same way we feel when we watch our comfort shows, or fall in love with a new anime or movie. I absolutely love small details included in plot lines, or visuals in general and feel so appreciated when my audience notices the ones I also include. I love to create artwork which resonates with people from all different backgrounds. I have always watched animations online, such as MMDs, flip note animations etc. and want to continue the culture of kids coming home from school to watch fun videos online!



**NB** Would you consider the current landscape of 3D art, especially in the realm of constrained visuals, to be its own art movement? Or is that overstating it, do you feel it's more freeform?

**A\*** I believe the current landscape of 3D is extremely diverse, even in our specific niche. There are so many artists with all kinds of interests and talents! You would think that with so many of us, the lines become blurred, however in my experience I can instantly tell which artist made each piece. Many have also used the original aesthetic of the constrained visuals to further build their own styles and find what they're comfortable with in the creative world.

**NB** What name would you give the new movement?

**A\*** As a blanket term, many of us refer to this style of artwork as low-poly, which refers to the low polygon count in our models. Combining this with the low resolution textures was the method to creating optimized video games back in the day. There are also so many video game developers currently which also love to continue using this style!



**NATE BOURGET** Thank you thank you so much my friend, these are incredibly thoughtful.

**ATHINA \*** Good luck with everything man, I know how busy it gets!

An interview with...

# Kavotavo

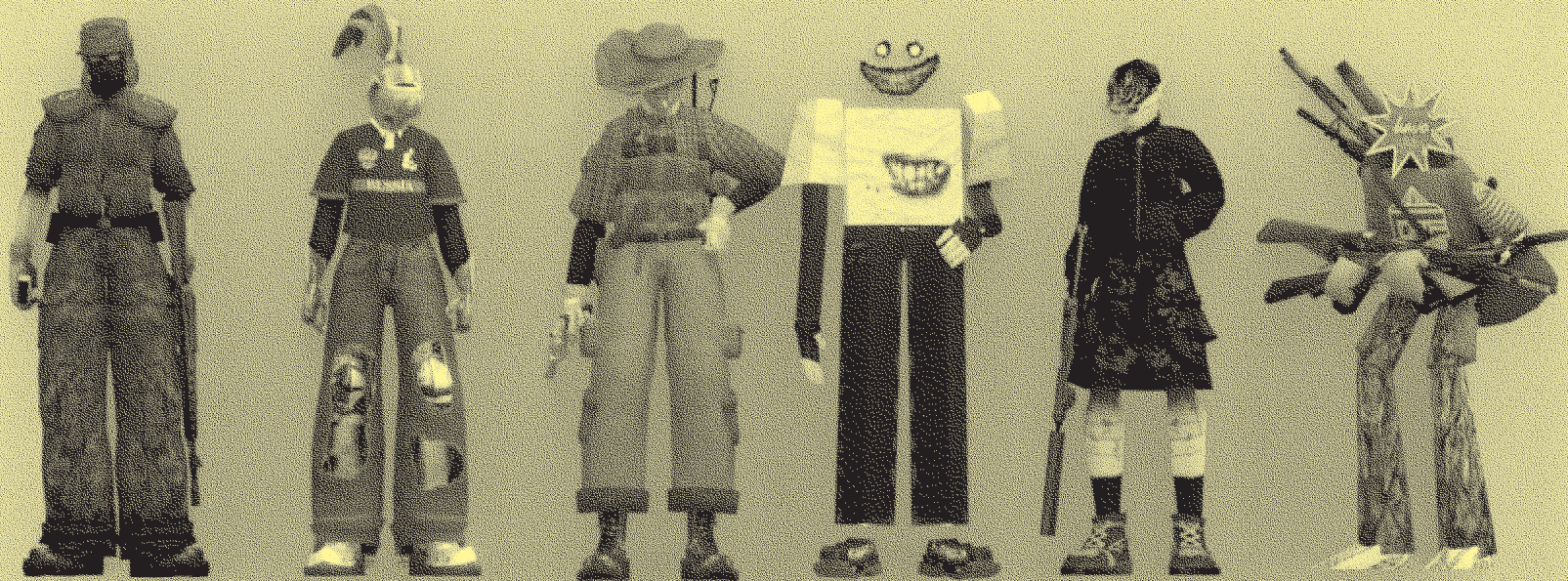


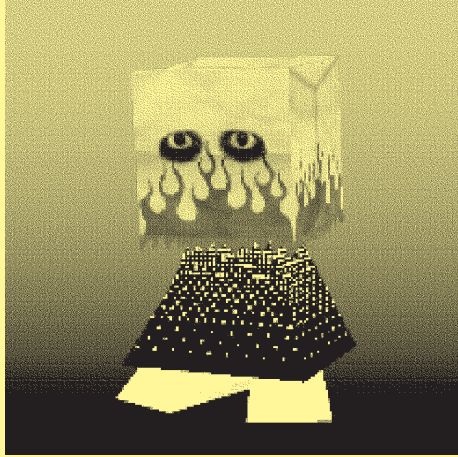
**NB** What drew you into working with constrained visuals? Meaning the low poly models, and compressed textures. If it's an intangible feeling or hard to put your finger on, who are your greatest inspirations?

**KT** Because I've liked this kind of graphics since childhood. I spent almost my whole childhood playing PlayStation 2.

**NATE BOURGET** I have seen a lot of your work in the **World4Jack** server last year and was wondering if you would be open to doing a short interview about your work over text?

**KAVOTAVO** Hey, sure, why not!





**NB** Why do you design this way over realism?

**KT** I think someday I'll probably come to realism too, but for now I'm just experimenting.

**NB** What do you want people to feel when they experience your work?

**KT** I want people to feel whatever they want to feel. I don't put one specific emotion into my work.



At the heart of The Limit

187

An interview with Kavotavo



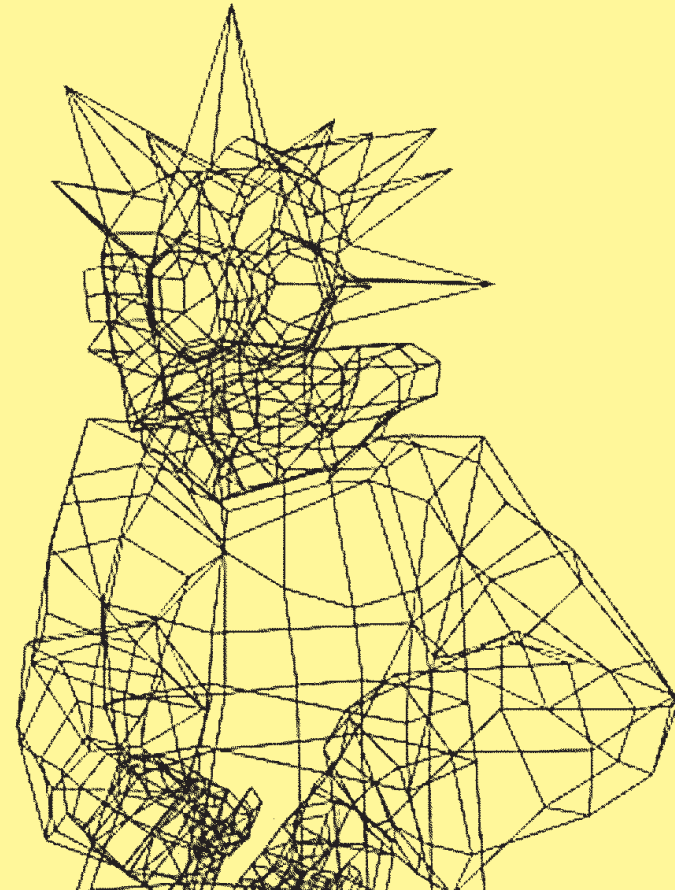
**NB** What name would you give the new movement?

**KT** I think something obvious, like  
“PSX, PS2, low-poly, retro.”

**NATE BOURGET** Thank you for your time.

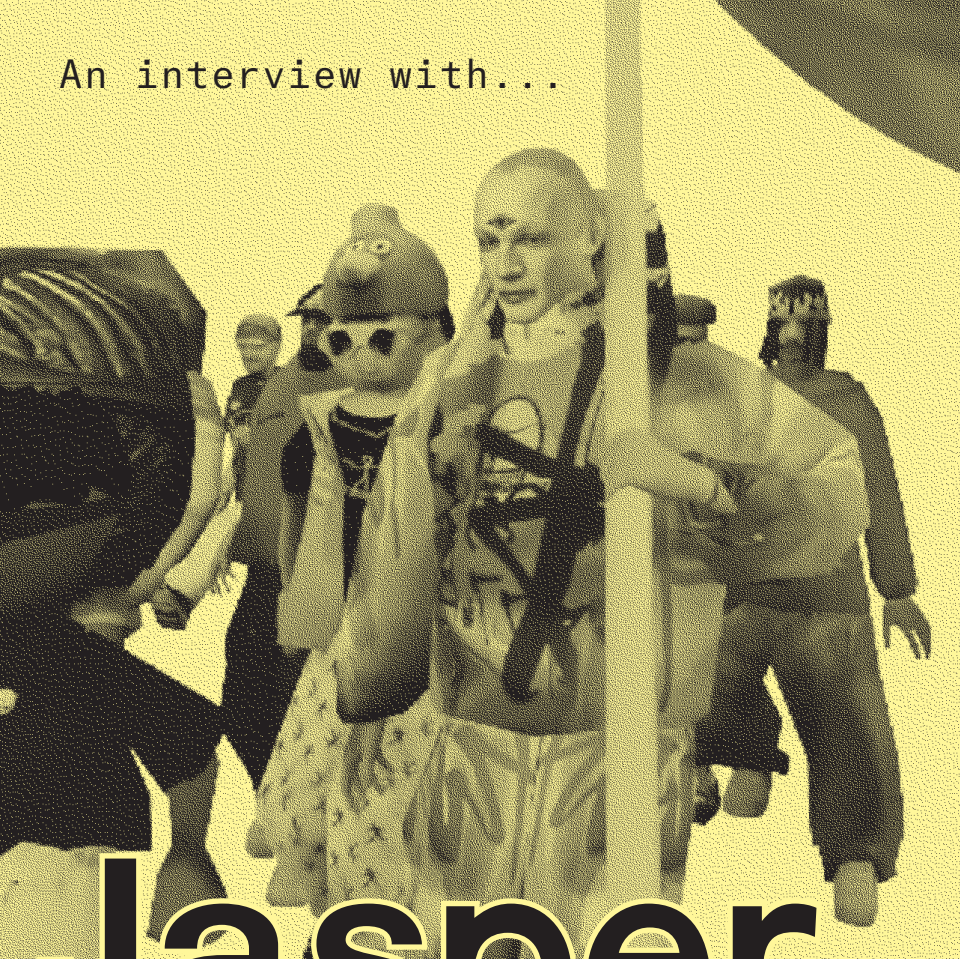
**NB** Would you consider the current landscape of 3D art, especially in the realm of constrained visuals, to be its own art movement? Or is that overstating it, do you feel it's more freeform?

**KT** Of course. I think it's just as much a branch of design as any other direction, because in a way it makes us feel nostalgic for older times.



An interview with...

An interview with Jasper Golding



190

# Jasper Golding

**NATE BOURGET** Hey my friend, my name is Nate Bourget, I am a student at art college in Boston, MA, USA. I'm doing my final thesis on the current landscape and art movement of CG/3D. I'm a fan of your work and I'm wondering if you would be open to doing a short interview about said work over text?

**JASPER GOLDING** Hey Nate, I'd for sure be down! Feel free to fire any questions my way





**NB** What drew you into working with constrained visuals? Meaning the low poly models, and compressed textures. If it's an intangible feeling or hard to put your finger on, who are your greatest inspirations?

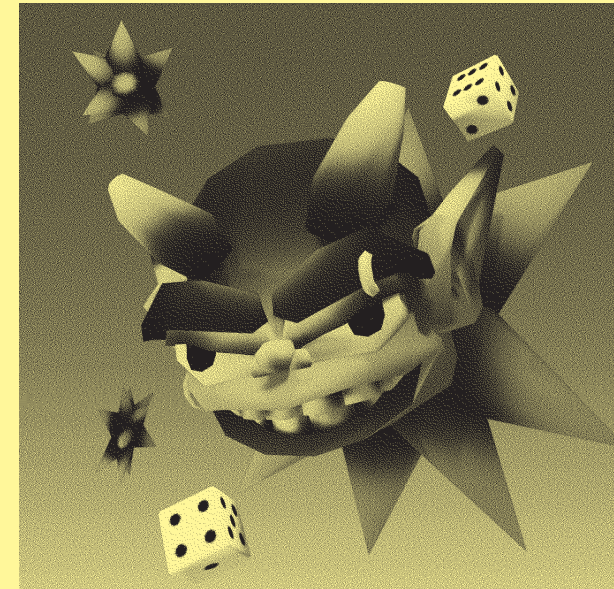
**JG** I just saw low poly visuals as a fresh way to express a visual identity. I really loved the work of Alec.fbx, lordstingray, Ch4ch, monyyplus, world4jack. They were my contemporaries when I was first getting in to it, and I was stoked to even be in a shared Discord with them called 3D homies, created by sabdog who is now killing it as a creative director.

**NB** Why do you design this way over realism? (meaning like Unreal engine type realism that you see from AAA games nowadays)

**JG** For me, being part of this online scene felt so great, kind of a feeling I hadn't had since Xbox(360) live days. Being able to just jump online and see who's on without arranging anything, or scroll through forums to get cool links to texture resources or other tips on how to make cool stuff ik blender, it felt like such a natural process of discovery. Every little new lesson was really exciting. I think that process of learning and honing skills is what got me hooked

**NB** What do you want people to feel when they experience your work?

**JG** The low poly style in particular is just something I have a lot of nostalgia for. I used to watch my dad play games like deus ex or grim Fandango or monkey island, and then when I got a console it was time splitters 2 or PlayStation demo disks. For me the purple hand painted backgrounds of games like pyjama Sam and the slightly off kilter animation of lucky luke, or just the pacing of video games, exaggerated idle animations, slight pauses before loading screens, lifting all of these elements and then making new stuff with these aspects in mind just feels great, it feels like a continuation of a time when digital art felt a bit more flawed and human. It's kind of the same reason people like hand painted mugs or screen printed zines, when you can feel the process of something not so polishedz that's where the magic is.

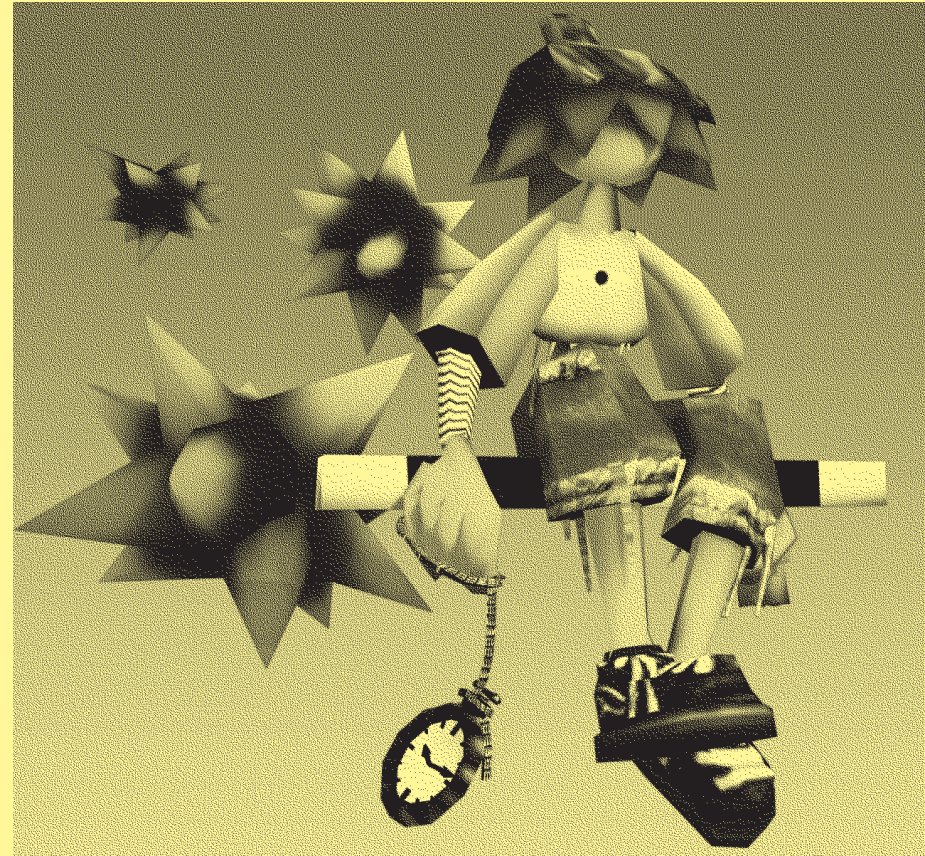


**NB** Would you consider the current landscape of 3D art, especially in the realm of constrained visuals, to be its own art movement? Or is that overstating it, do you feel it's more freeform?

**JG** I feel like it's definitely a scene, and it's definitely something people are extremely in to. You just have to look at the countless indie games on steam that are of that PSX sort of style. I think the work that takes some elements from PSX but pushes them in to a new area is something that feels like more of an aesthetic movement to me. not just deriving precisely from sega Saturn or GameCubes visuals, but combining some of that style with dynamic lighting or complex particle effects, or just new interesting color palletes and themes, that's where I feel there's a future in this stuff, and where I feel it's adding to the zeitgeist in a real way. So yeah I'd say if you define a movement as a shared way of doing things, done by current practicing artists then we are definitely seeing that happen.

**NB** What name would you give the new movement?

**JG** It's probably most commonly known as 'low poly' art



**NATE BOURGET** Thank you for your time.

**JASPER GOLDING** Super stoked to be a part of this.  
Thanks a lot.

An interview with...

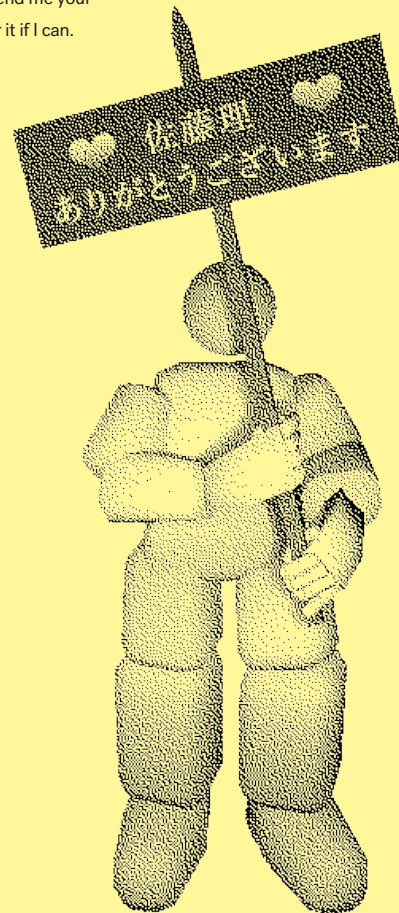
# OSAMU

# SATO

An interview with Osamu Sato

**NATHAN BOURGET** Hey my friend, my name is Nate Bourget, I am a student at art college in Boston, MA, USA. I'm doing my final thesis on the current landscape and art movement of CG/3D. I'm a fan of your work and consider you to be a founding father of the entire movement. I'm wondering if you would be open to doing a short interview about your work over text? Let me know what you think, would love to buy you a coffee for your time!

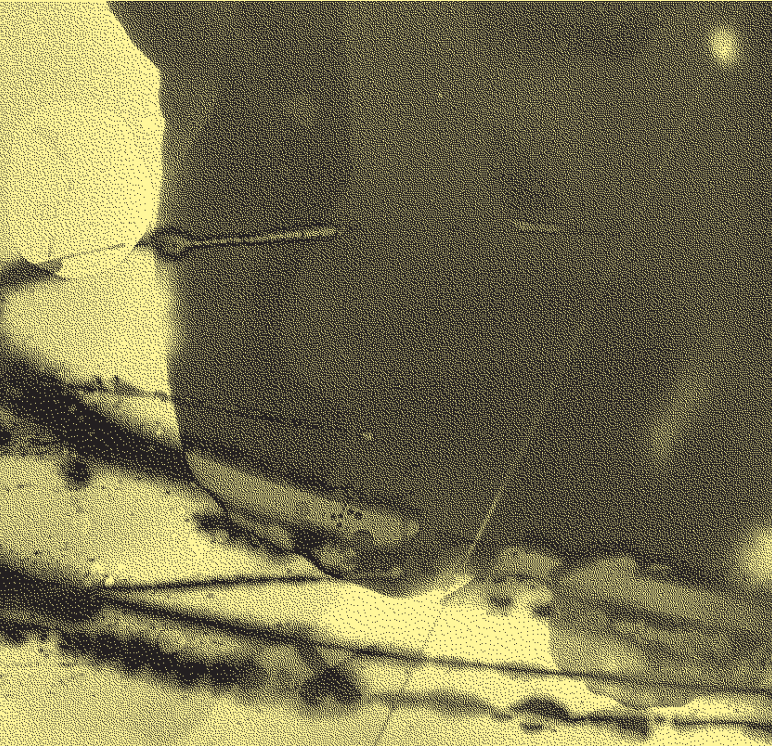
**OSAMU SATO** Understood. Please send me your question. I will answer it if I can.



**NB** What do you want people to feel when they experience your work?

**OS** I don't have any particular intention regarding what people should feel.  
I prefer to leave it to each individual's imagination and interpretation.

199



**NB** Did the technical limitations of the PlayStation positively or negatively shape the final form of your work in your opinion? Possibly the limitations opening abstract visuals to more interpretation?

**OS** At the time, the fact that real-time rendering was possible on a consumer device was itself groundbreaking. So I don't really see it in terms of being good or bad.

...

Even if I had access to today's latest technology, I think I would still choose an abstract approach—at least for *LSD*.

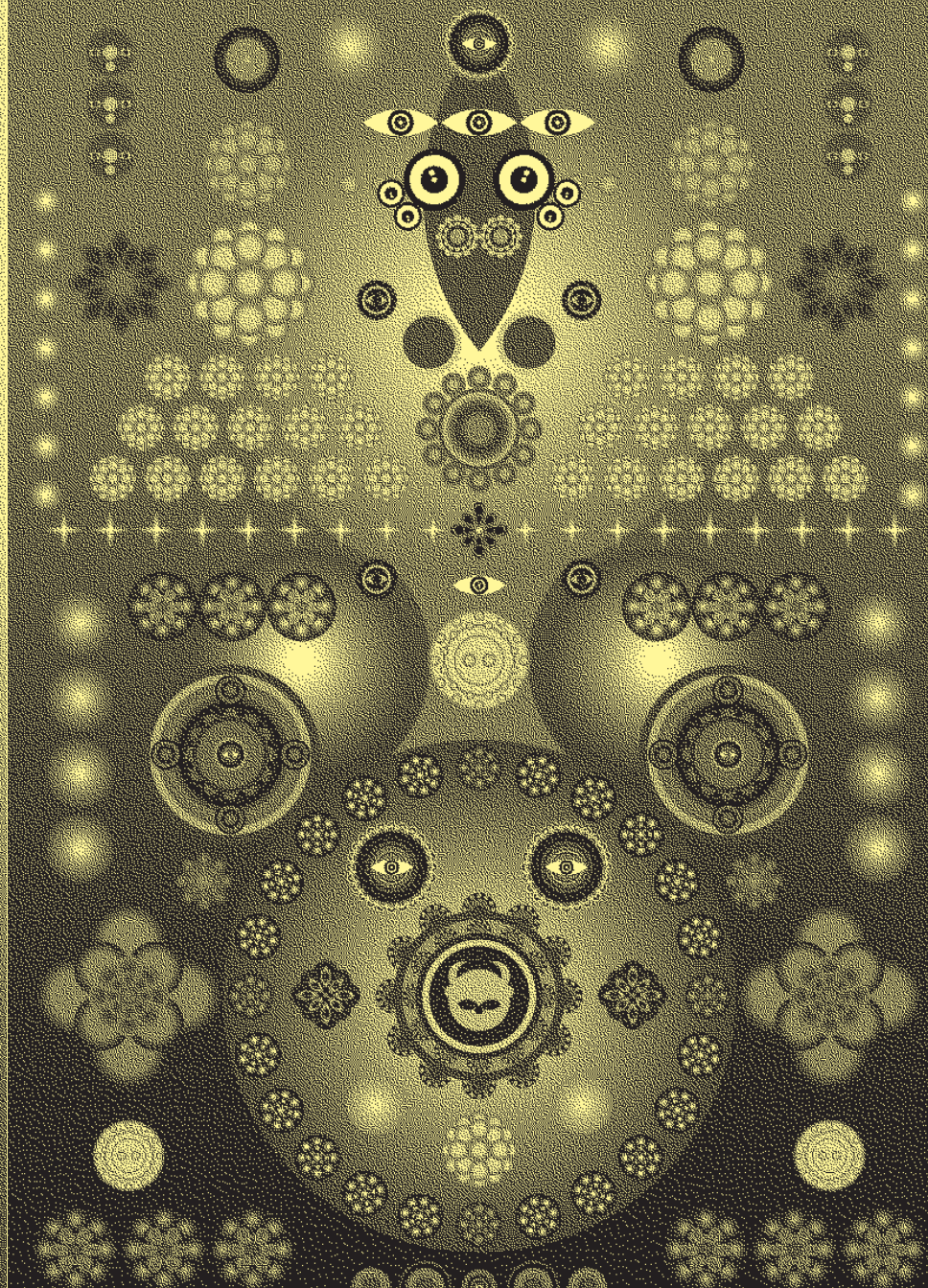
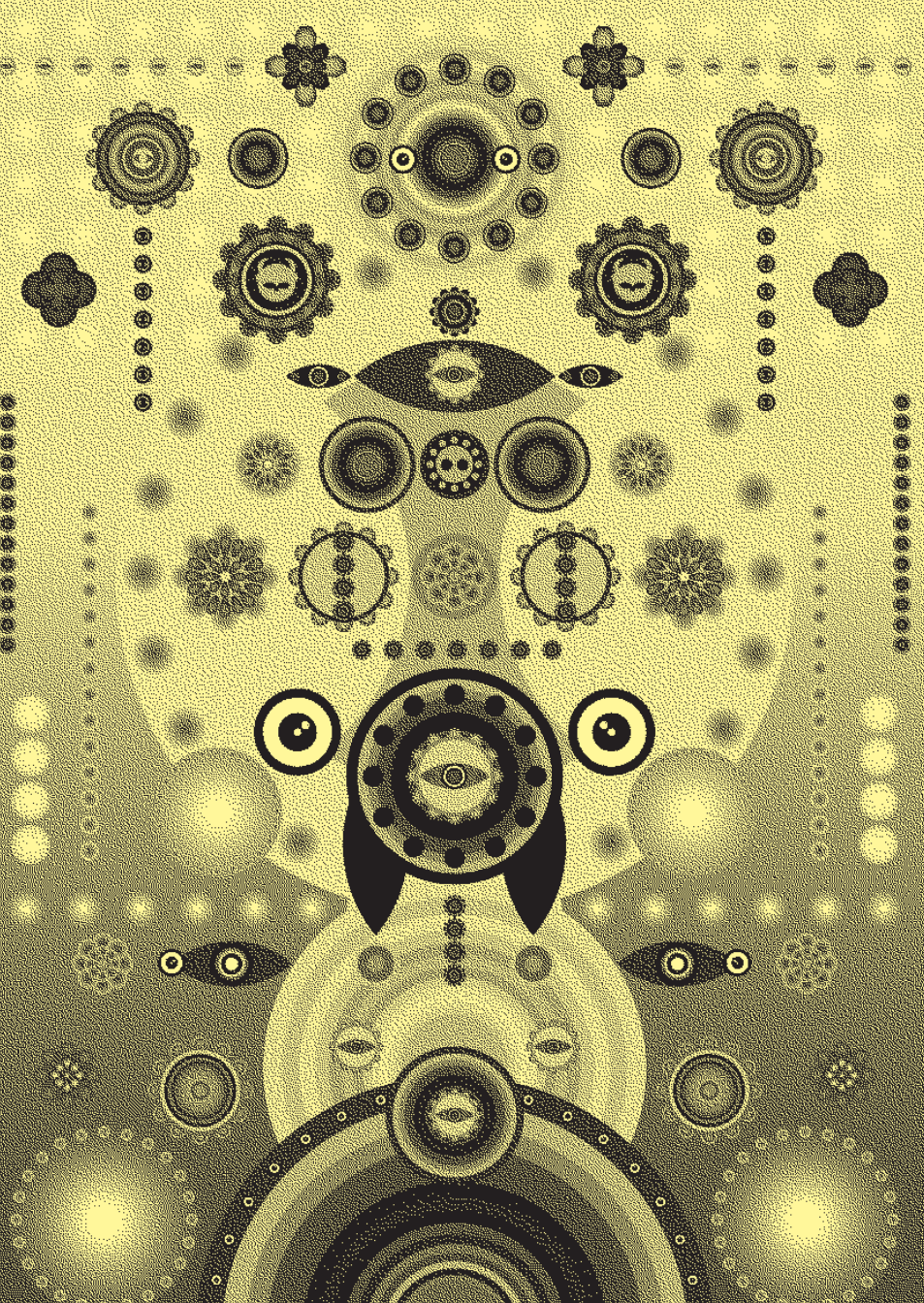
...

For example, in art movements like Cubism, instead of pursuing realism, artists simplify and reconstruct forms.

I believe that this is where human creativity, thought, and conceptual expression truly emerge.

...

I'm not very knowledgeable about current technology, but I'm interested in the idea of virtual spaces that change based on various parameters affecting the player. For instance, elements like temperature, humidity, date and time, location, and even psychological states—combined with AI—could create highly complex and layered experiences.



**NB** I have read in an interview that you don't like the term "video game" to describe the kind of work you make. Who are some of your influences for your digital experiences?

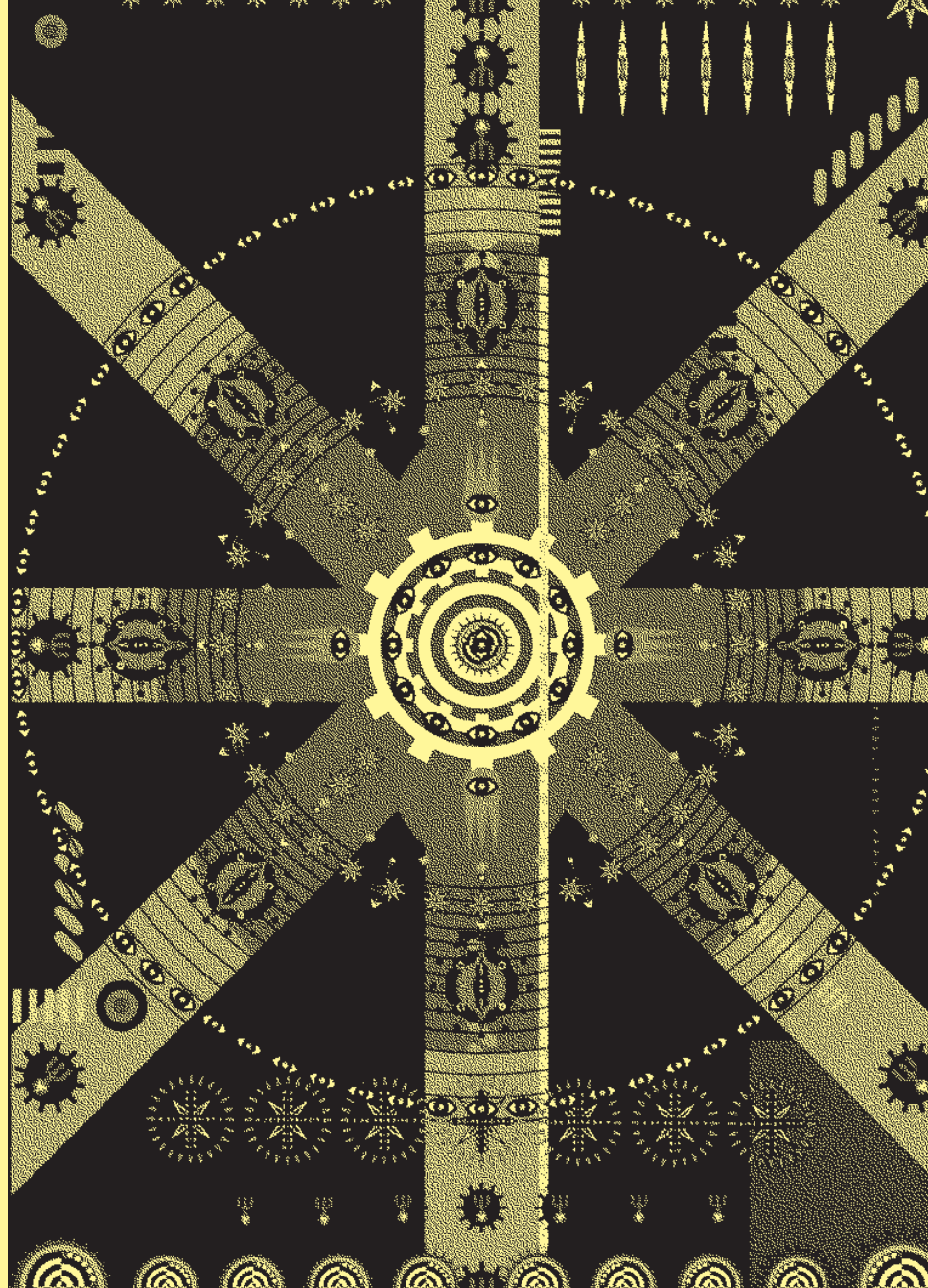
**OS** In Japan, they were called "TV games" at the time, but I've never really played what you would call games. Because of that, I don't think I can make conventional games.

...

Instead, I used the game console as a medium to create a work. In LSD, there is no objective, no enemies to defeat, and no scoring system. That's why the package at the time was promoted with the phrase, "This isn't a game."

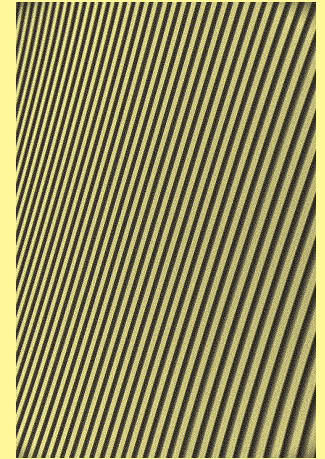
...

As for influences, they are not limited to digital works. I draw inspiration from many things—not only people or artworks, but also nature, artificial objects, temperature, texture, places, and time (or age).



**NB** If you were to restart your life with what you know now, what would you do differently?

**OS** That's a difficult question. Even with the knowledge I have now, it wouldn't be easy—but if possible, I would want to eliminate war.



**NB** Are you still aware of or a part of the 3D graphic communities online? Some say there is a new art movement, many list you as a main inspiration. Do you feel this is a positive direction for people's work, or should people focus on something other than 3D in design/art/experience?

**OSAMU SATO** I have never been involved in 3D graphics communities—past, present, or future. And as for how people perceive things, I don't have a strong opinion either way.

...

At present, I'm not very interested in new technologies. I mainly create 2D drawings and graphic works, compose music, and recently I've been writing novels.

...

As much as possible, I prefer to work with traditional media and focus on things I can do independently.

**NATHAN BOURGET** Thank you so much for your time Osamu, this is incredibly insightful.

# NOSTALGIA BURSTING

208

With the knowledge bestowed from these extremely talented creators, we now have a wealth of information and perspective on the limited, mysterious subculture of 3D. My eyes well up thinking about the fact that all of these creators spent time doing this writeup for my project. I feel as though artists, especially nowadays in the face of new technologies are unable to find the time, agency or whitespace to write about themselves (which a few of them mentioned, a couple of the artists even apologizing for rambling on about themselves). To design in this way requires a special breed of person in the right time, place and headspace, before beginning this project I found 3D modeling to be one of those special arts that would be untouchable for most people to learn, and now from delving into the subculture at large, some-

thing that everyone must know about. From these words I found two pieces of information most common between interviews, most of the creators say the subculture was born over Covid (or late 2019) when everyone was locked inside with nothing to do and then quickly died in 2022-2023.

The other piece of info is that a lot of these creators found interest in limited animation or styling from their own deep seated nostalgia. Curseweb brought up, Lucky Clover on Big Fish Games, Athst4r brought up the Legend of Zelda series, Space channel 5 and Animal Crossing series, and so on. Nostalgia or the video games that the artist had grown up with on the playstation or N64 were listed as the main inspiration for eight of the interviews above.

I want to make it known that I take a stance against this. At least for new artists.

I don't think that these artists are wrong to draw from nostalgia at all though. The experiences that affect us deeply as children typically find their ways into being the most honest and true sources of creativity, these systems are deeply connected to childhood for many people. But I do not believe nostalgia alone is enough to explain why these experiences continue to feel alive, especially for younger artists and viewers who never meaningfully lived through the original hardware generations. Like me, I never owned a PlayStation growing up however there is something so clearly and obviously here. It's obvious that a lot of my nostalgia is built within early computer flash games as well as Roblox, which I began playing in 2012. I think it's a great artist statement as well, when people ask you "why do you design how you design?" a great, conscious and genuine answer is that you are attempting to honor the material you grew up with. For the individual I believe that truly is a beautiful thing and isn't a cop-out, seriously. For the artistic movement at large and outward facing writing about the subculture, I can't help but feel that the nostalgia narrative is only beginning to cheapen limited visuals in 3D.

There are too many people emotionally affected by these worlds who have no authentic memory of the Playstation 1, Nintendo 64, or Dreamcast beyond secondhand exposure online. Something deeper is clearly happening beneath the aesthetic, which I believe we have touched on a lot with our groundwork. It is my idea, theory, thesis and absolute cross-section of this underground subculture that what these artists are really returning to is not simply the imagery of old technology but the psychological conditions those technologies accidentally created, formed in the superheated crucible of limited visuals. Early 3D spaces were full of uncertainty. Fog covered distant geometry because the hardware could not render farther. Textures stretched violently across walls because there was not enough memory to correct them. Characters moved stiffly because animation systems were primitive. Audio compressed and filtered in clever ways into strange frequencies, mimicing human laughter. Worlds repeated themselves as corridors looped unnaturally. Faces beyond lacked expression, they lacked any features at all. Objects floated slightly above the ground. Everything had a visible, pixelated crust around them. Nothing was fully stable. Yet through all of these imperfections the player was asked to believe anyway.

When you are young, its easy to project the little life experiences you've had onto these incomplete renders, many people who grew up with these limited visuals often recount how they seem to remember the graphics being a lot better. However when you're older, hopefully viewers can find the beauty in the abstract.

In many ways these spaces demanded belief more actively than modern games do. The player became responsible for finishing the illusion.

I'm certain this is why so many of these environments continue to feel strangely intimate and memorable. A photorealistic world attempts to describe itself completely. Every surface is accounted for, every reflection raytraced, every animation interpolated to perfection from dozens of mo-cap references. The image arrives already solved, there is very little room left for the projection of your own experiences. Early digital worlds on the other hand often feel psychologically unfinished. They contain holes and absences that the viewer must unconsciously repair, signed up for the moment that they begin playing. In this way, the mind begins participating automatically. A staircase disappearing into fog becomes infinite not because it is modeled infinitely, but

because the player completes it mentally. A low resolution face becomes emotionally expressive because the viewer supplies what is missing. These constraints force collaboration between the machine and the imagination directly. This became increasingly obvious while building my own experiments throughout the project. Whenever I pushed an environment toward realism, something often died within it. The world became technically impressive but emotionally flatter. Conversely, moments where systems broke slightly or remained unresolved often became the most memorable experiences. The default greys that the game engine would use for basic models became an instant love for the environment. A badly compressed slideshow projected in the multiplayer room carried more tension than a pristine fullscreen image. A physics object desyncing between two players became a little bit funny, and oddly social. The instability itself created participation.

## 212

This is also why I reject the idea that these aesthetics are simply a retro revivalism. To reduce this movement to nostalgia alone would be in the same vein as saying black and white photography only exists because people miss the past. In reality limitation itself can foster new artistic languages. Many factors of 3D/CGI, The low resolution image, the compressed texture, sparse geometry, the very incomplete simulation as a whole all force different relationships between viewer and environment. These systems are not just old but instead are structurally different from the seamless forms of contemporary digital realism. Another thing that became increasingly clear through the interviews was how temporary and fragile this entire subculture seems to be. Many artists

described the late 2019 to 2022 period almost like a dream state. People were isolated indoors during Covid, spending enormous amounts of time online, experimenting obsessively, sharing unfinished work, posting these strange renders that were solace for them drawing on their nostalgia. They were making virtual rooms, learning Blender together, there was a genuine feeling that something new was forming. The barrier between professional and amateur had collapsed almost completely, similar to how there was an adverse amount of pixelated indie games being made from 2014-2018. Someone could make an emotionally resonant world from their bedroom with free software, low-end hardware, and no institutional support whatsoever.

This energy resembled some older internet subcultures with emphasis on retro revivals but with one major difference: the tools had finally become accessible enough for people to construct entire spatial experiences instead of simply images or text posts literally anyone could make these worlds and would be praised, accepted and welcomed for it.

...

According to these interviews, like many other internet-born movements, the scene also burned extremely fast. Online platforms shifted toward short form content and monetization, as it always does, which wasn't horrible for these creators but certainly is soul sucking. The scene may have also just been saturated, now that everyone was special, maybe no one was. Many artists disappeared, pivoted careers, became exhausted, or simply stopped posting. Some of the people interviewed for this project admitted they no longer even make this kind of work regularly despite once being central figures within the movement. The subculture already feels partially archaeological despite existing only a few years ago or in many bright eyed creator's -- still existing.

...

This ephemerality is important because it mirrors the worlds themselves. Many of these environments feel temporary, unstable, half-lost, or difficult to archive properly. Projects vanish when hosting expires. Experimental games become impossible to run on modern operating systems. Entire aesthetics survive only through blurry reposts and fragmented memory. In a strange way the subculture embodies its own philosophy of incompleteness. It resists permanence by the very nature that birthed it.

# PRETTY LAG MACHINE

<https://ncbourget.github.io/pretty-lag-machine-live/>

My first completed experience created in Godot with the limit in mind is titled "Pretty Lag Machine". Once you begin to open your eyes to the limit, it immediately expands past 3D and CGI, you begin seeing it everywhere. To ramble for a second, in the shower at my apartment there is a window that faces the outside. It's less perverted than you may be imagining though, it's fully frosted glass. The thing is, and actually the perversion comes back now, the apartment is very old and the windows weren't truly frosted but instead had a blurring laminate that began to chip away. Now the window is covered with chips of clear glass and frosted glass, when I take a shower, the outside can get disconnected glimpses of may naked body, leaving their mind to fill in the rest. It's so strange, when I moved into the apartment, I was really offput by this window. Eventually, it didn't bother me, the window didn't really face that many windows outside, but now all I can think about

is the missing information it provides. To end the ramble, for some reason I feel tuned in and obsessed very quickly to this limit, again, I feel like I am seeing examples of it everywhere now. From looking at many inspiration sources online, I became very inspired by the visual appeal of robotic arms. I felt that there was something here that was in conversation with my thesis directly. Robotic arms I had seen online were representations of human arms but with a massive amount of missing information. It takes thousands of dollars and hours of programming to recreate something inferior (in some ways) to what humans are born with. The robot arm in some ways became an extremely emotional autonomous martyr, although having no face there is still plenty of emotion to be seen in an inanimate object like this. One of my more obvious references for this project was *Can't Help Myself* by Sun Yuan & Peng Yu. In the installation, a large industrial robotic arm continuously

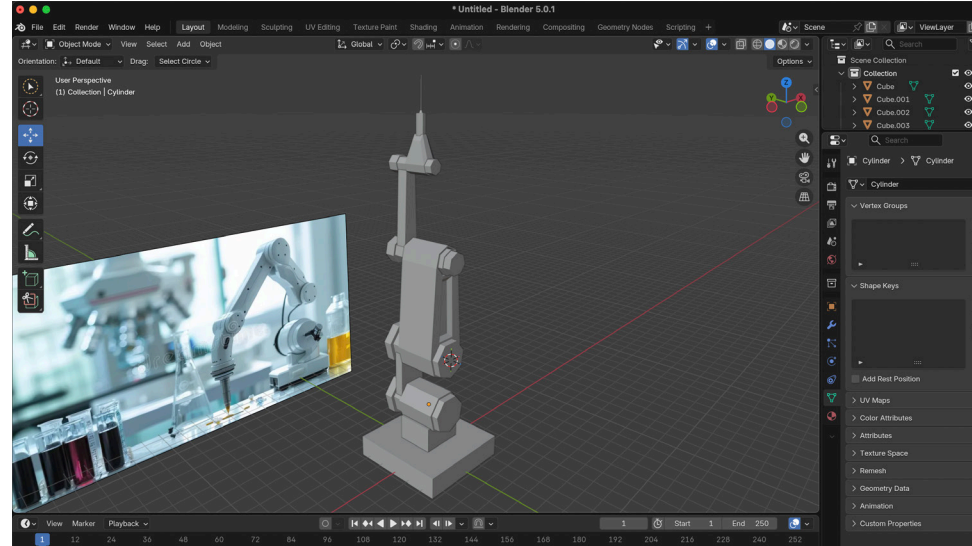
attempts to contain a dark red liquid spreading across the floor. The arm performs this task endlessly, repeatedly sweeping the liquid back and forth, only for it to escape again moments later. Although entirely mechanical, viewers consistently describe the machine as exhausted, desperate, suffering, obedient, or

even aware of its own futility. Emotion emerges not because the machine resembles a human visually, but because the audience projects humanity into its incomplete gestures. The work demonstrates how little information is actually required for viewers to begin assigning emotional interiority onto movement.



In this way I began to feel that a robotic arm was a great actor for this experiment, a spiritual successor to Sun Yuan & Peng Yu's sculpture. Before talking about the process of creating the program very bluntly, there is one last part of theory and perspective I would like to offer on this software. The robot arm would now become in conversation with the limit in a few ways. Robot arms are limited, abstract representations of human arms, that's a given. Robot arms show a great deal of emotion through their complete lack of emotion, heightening their movements such as desperation (allowing viewers to project their own ideas on it's sentience) as we have seen in *Can't Help Myself*. Now we are going to place a digital recreation of this object into 3D modeling, a medium that has ties to an underground art movement known for harnessing the limit to provide massive amounts of information by using very little. Finally, the robotic arm will have a special functionality to tie this thesis all together. Similar to the liquid poured by the robotic arm from *Can't Help Myself*, the robot arm from this experiment will automatically drop a small collider object shaped like a droplet constantly between half second to three second increments. The idea is that the colliders, which require a lot of processing power to determine how they interact with each other and other physics objects, will eventually bog down and crash your computer. Now the experiment is in direct conversation with the limit of your own personal computer's hardware. I feel as though these connections bring this program to the next level for communicating the concept of the limit.

217



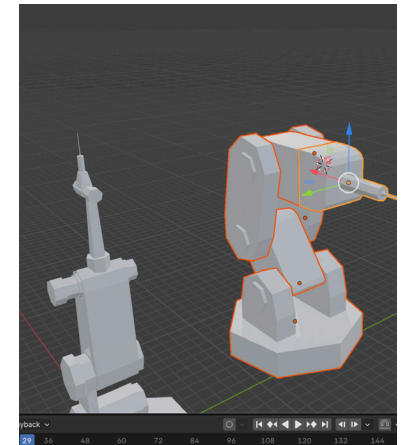
All in all there were two iteration of the model. My first instinct really wasn't the right direction, I had no idea what I was doing. It was my idea that I was going to put a skeleton rig through the object and fake the rotations that a robot arm would have. This turned out to be far more difficult than actually attempting to replicate how one works. From the image above you can see that I was planning on having the robot arm have 5 axes although they were all in line with each other. This would never work how I wanted it to. Unexpectedly this actually pointed the project in a much more realistic direction, which I was pleased with in the end.



The second iteration of the model was right where it needed to be. It was completely perfect. It has the right amount of axes in the right directions. It was modeled after a few different real life Chinese medical robot arms. In Blender while I was modeling the object I had to place these invisible axes called "empties" at each of the places on the arm that I wanted to rotate. The bottom would rotate along the Z axis, the first, second and third segments along the Y axis and then the head along the X axis. As long as I kept these rules in mind, finding GDScript solver code online wouldn't be that big of a challenge.

The project ended up being a lot more rewarding and serving to my concept than I could've expected. My initial 3 sketches for this project came nowhere close to how much I enjoy using the Pretty Lag Machine. There is truly some unspoken kinetic energy about it that I feel like reinforces the concept of a greater magnitude through these limited visuals.

# 220





# DREAMBOX

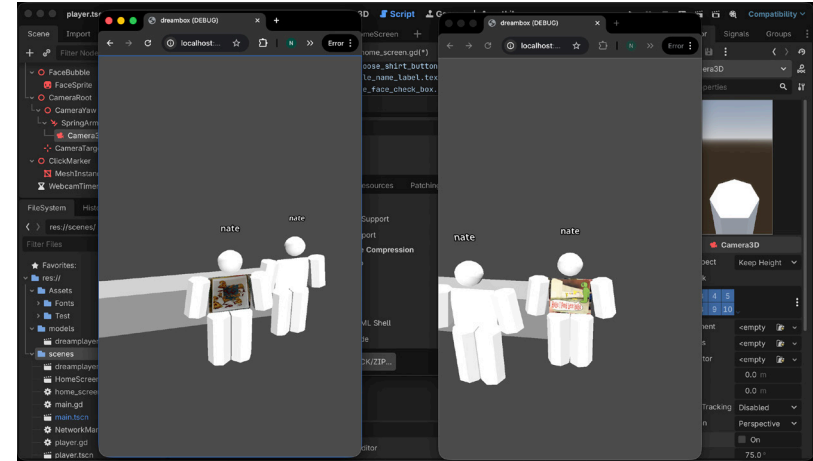
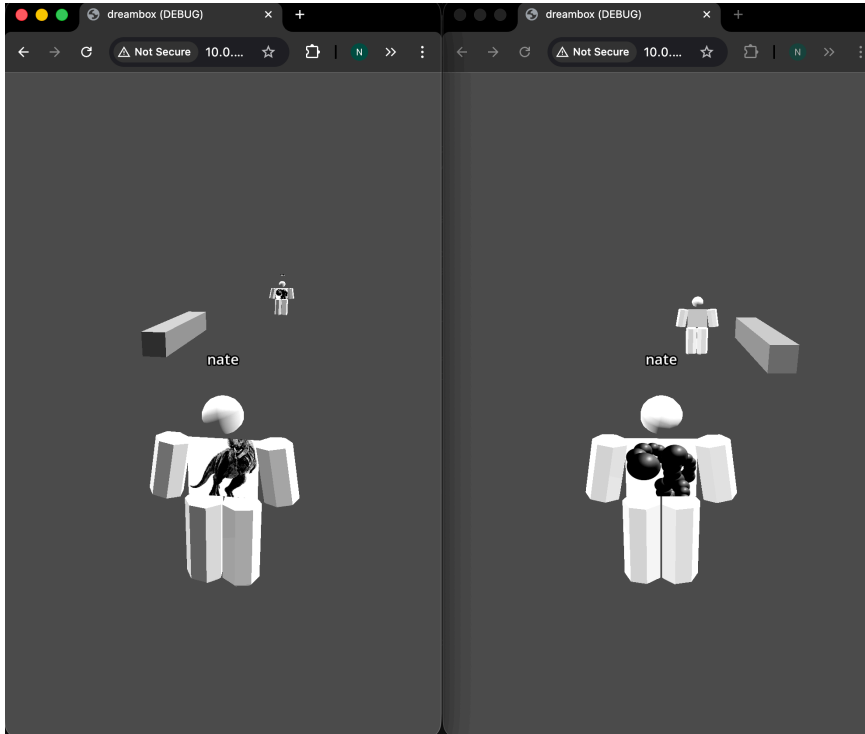
For my Dreambox game final version, I wanted to take my interviewees advice in some ways and look at some of the things from my childhood that made me interested in 3D and game development. I would not describe these influences as purely nostalgia though, I feel as though beyond this I can see nowadays with fresh eyes why this material would be so satisfying to play when I was young. My main inspiration for this experiment is earlier versions of Roblox, which is clear to see in the final product. Roblox had a chokehold, no, a death grip on my friends and I from 2012 to easily 2016. Perhaps even later. What was explained to me as a Minecraft clone, a poor-mans-GMod, a low effort shovelware game akin to Blockland quickly let my curiosity get the better of me. My brother and I played it one night in 2012 as guests and were instantly hooked. The game they would set you into when you would start at the time was Welcome to Roblox Building,

which was clearly riding some coat tails from Minecraft's creative mode. But then we played Logride by smokenchicken, Crossroads by Roblox, Armored Patrol, The Super Mega Fun Obby Course, Jet Wars, Fall Down Stairs, Area 51 Survival, Build to Survive the Zombies, Call of Robloxia, and dozens of tycoon games. There was something here that was seriously fresh. It was not a clone, and it certainly wasn't shovelware. Early Roblox left a taste in your mouth that you couldn't quite place. Looking back on it now is like smelling a candle you haven't smelled in decades. It had an incredible sense of "toybox" mixed with architecture that you couldn't quite place. It was a massive feeling game, endless, and hopeful. Not to mention it was the height of Dubstep, scene and rave revivalism which influenced plenty of the games and aesthetics at the time. It was a hopeful, plasticky toybox, the kind of feeling you would get from playing with Legos for the first time.

But with all good things, especially those you feel nostalgic for, must come to an end. The state of the game today is a dark age, but one I am not interested in being a part of. I had my time as a eight year old to enjoy a piece of internet history in a broad stroke. Though I may go back sometimes to Roblox to see the few preserved games of the time, its much more like how someone would go to a history museum, there is nothing left for me to play truly.

So I gave it a shot. I did not want to create a Roblox clone but instead create a clone of the feelings I have for the game. In my opinion I fell short massively here. I do not feel like my game inspires me with the nostalgic, liminal expansive feeling of old Roblox. I do not feel like I honored the aesthetic in the ways that made my heart swell before. Instead it does feel very fresh, at least to me, someone very close and deep with the subculture. To others, they felt it was a lot like Roblox, which in some ways is a success for what I was trying to accomplish. I knew I wanted to incorporate the general Lego minifigure type playermodel aswell as the static image for the shirt. I also had the idea to limit all of the chat features, something that Roblox is in a lot of controversy for nowadays, and instead find a clever new way to communicate. I had the idea to also replace the head with the user's webcam. This would allow users to write notes down on paper and hold them into the webcam.





After creating the playermodel and getting the scripts working for the image upload (which eventually became built into an HTML shell that boots as soon as the page is opened), my biggest issue was server syncing. Players would be in two different places at once. Shirts wouldn't update for players. Sometimes the first player that would join would have all the privileges, would be able to see everyone's shirts and active locations, but people that would join later would have no visibility of anything at all.

```

web_build_dream2 — python3 -m http.server 8000 — 80x24
Last login: Sat Apr 18 17:11:36 on ttys000
admin@admins-MacBook-Pro ~ % cd ~/Desktop/web_build_dream2
admin@admins-MacBook-Pro ~ % python3 -m http.server 8000
Serving HTTP on :: port 8000 (http://:::8000/) ...
::: - [18/Apr/2026 17:11:53] "GET / HTTP/1.1" 200 -
::: - [18/Apr/2026 17:11:58] "GET /index.js HTTP/1.1" 200 -
::: - [18/Apr/2026 17:11:58] "GET /index.wasm HTTP/1.1" 200 -
::: - [18/Apr/2026 17:11:58] "GET /index.pck HTTP/1.1" 200 -
::: - [18/Apr/2026 17:11:59] "GET /index.audio.worklet.js HTTP/1.1" 200 -
::: - [18/Apr/2026 17:11:59] "GET /index.audio.position.worklet.js HTTP/1.1" 2
88 -
^C

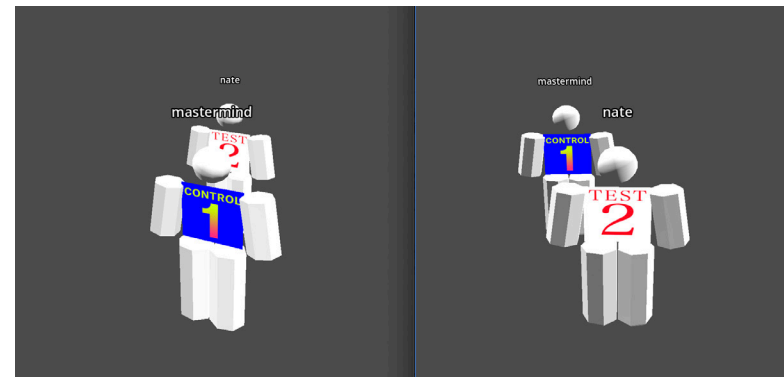
godot_server — node server.js — 80x24
Last login: Sat Apr 18 16:58:16 on ttys001
admin@admins-MacBook-Pro ~ % cd ~/godot_server
admin@admins-MacBook-Pro ~ % node server.js
Server running on port 8918
Player connected: 12xowmssl

```

I knew that I wanted people to be able to join the server at any time, my node localhost wouldn't cut it. Eventually I chose a cheap option on Render and hosting the game for free through github pages. It really made for a beautiful, smooth workflow. Make changes, push, the game would update seamlessly in the next 5 minutes. I was so stoked, when stuff started working I would always run around the room jumping around.

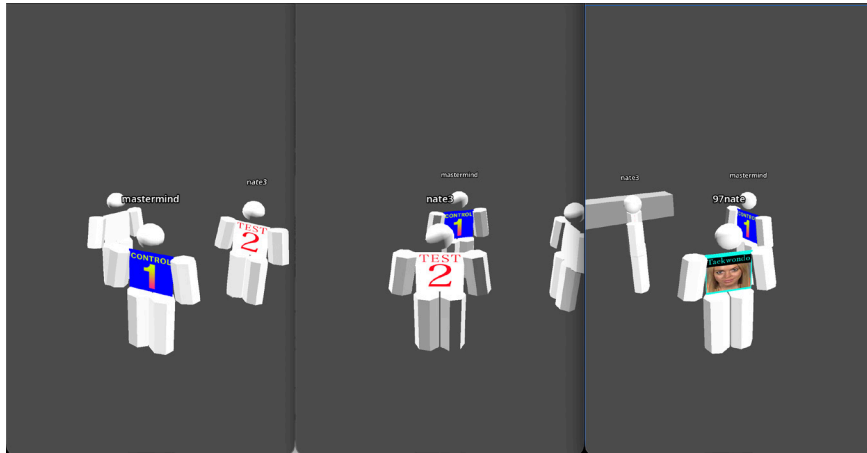
Name	Domain	Type	Initiator	Trans.	Time
10.0.0.93	10.0.0.93	document	—	4.10	141ms
index.js	10.0.0.93	js	10.0.0.93:8918	0ms	0.03ms
index.wasm	10.0.0.93	blob	10.0.0.93:8918	93.7	7.47s
index.pck	10.0.0.93	fetch	10.0.0.93:8918	1.60	559ms

That being said, I knew 99% of the playerbase would be playing on their phone. Which for some reason, maybe just Safari, would never work. I needed to do a lot of debugging by plugging my phone into my computer and using Safari's devtools to figure out that the audiodriver scripts (which weren't even in use) were causing issues.

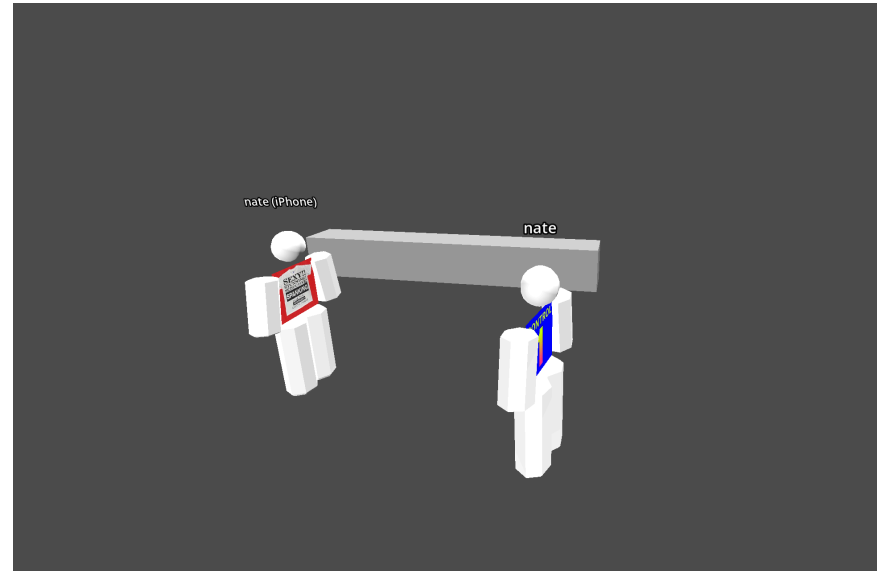


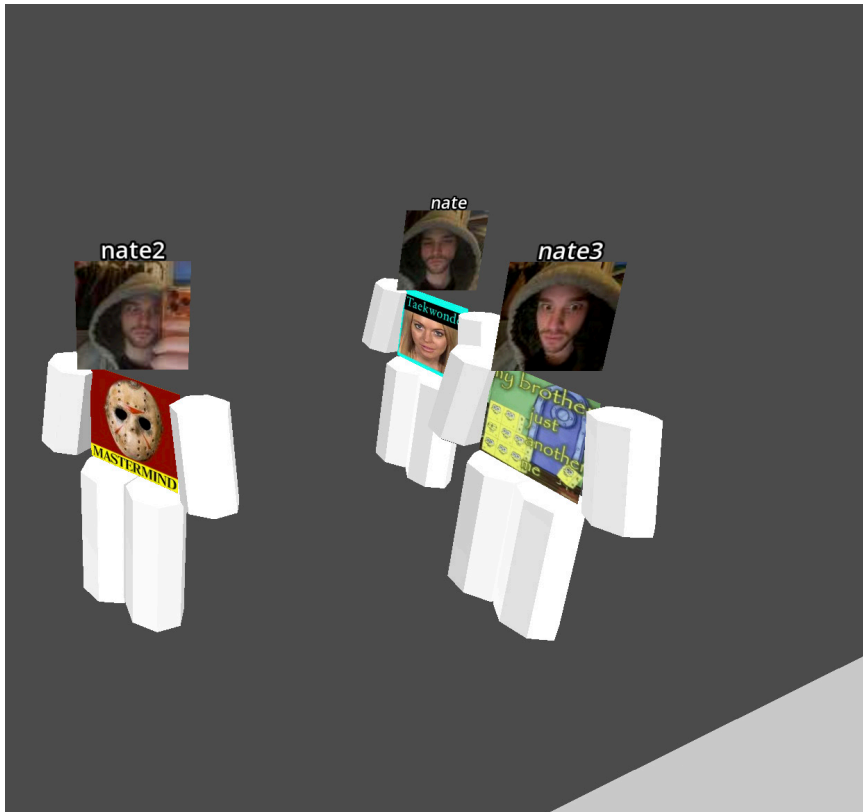
## Sudden death

Finally syncing was updating. On phone too. This was the big break that took me 2 and a half weeks of onn and off work to figure out. I was so pleased.

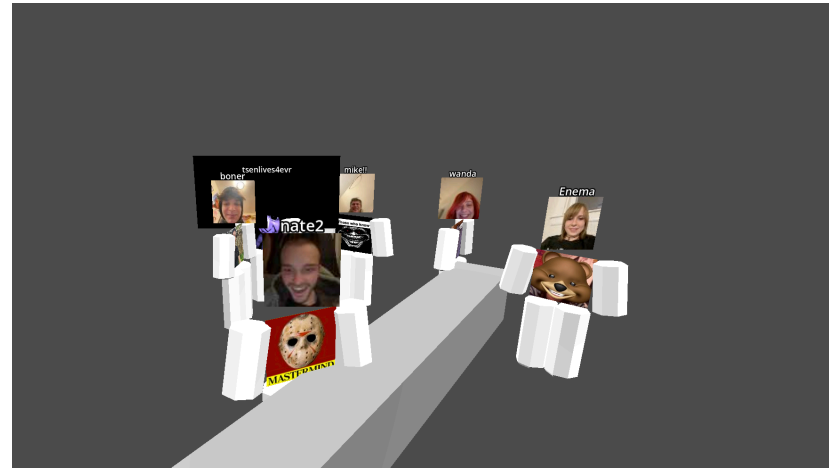


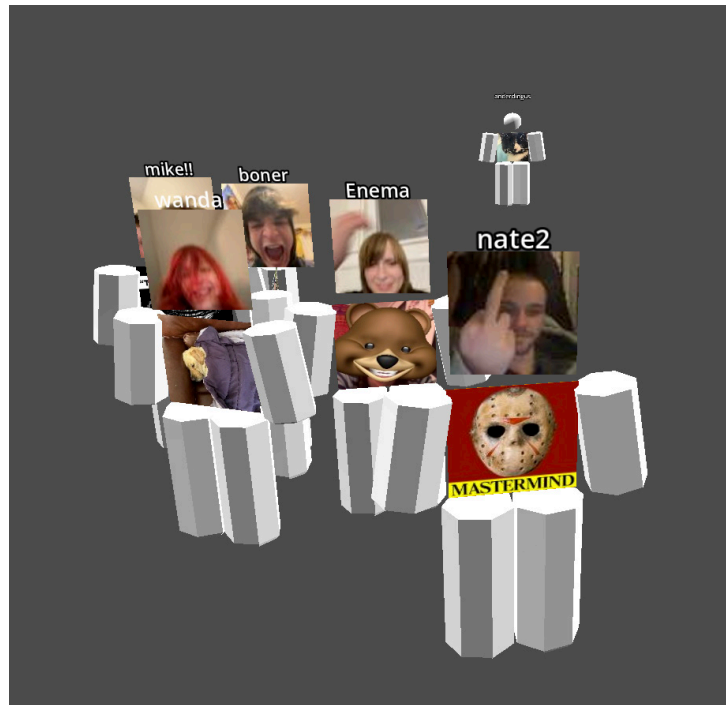
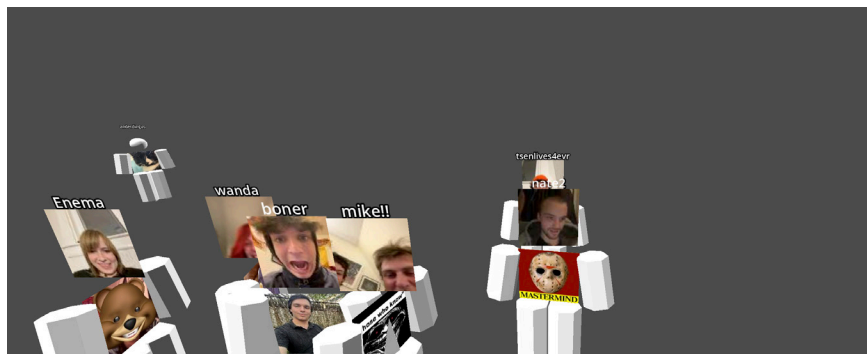
And then the third person to join's shirt wouldn't load for everyone else.  
Guhhhhhhhh.





After 3 tireless days of only working on the program, the webcam and all the syncing was working. The server was up and people could join right from their phones at anytime and see everyone else in the server.

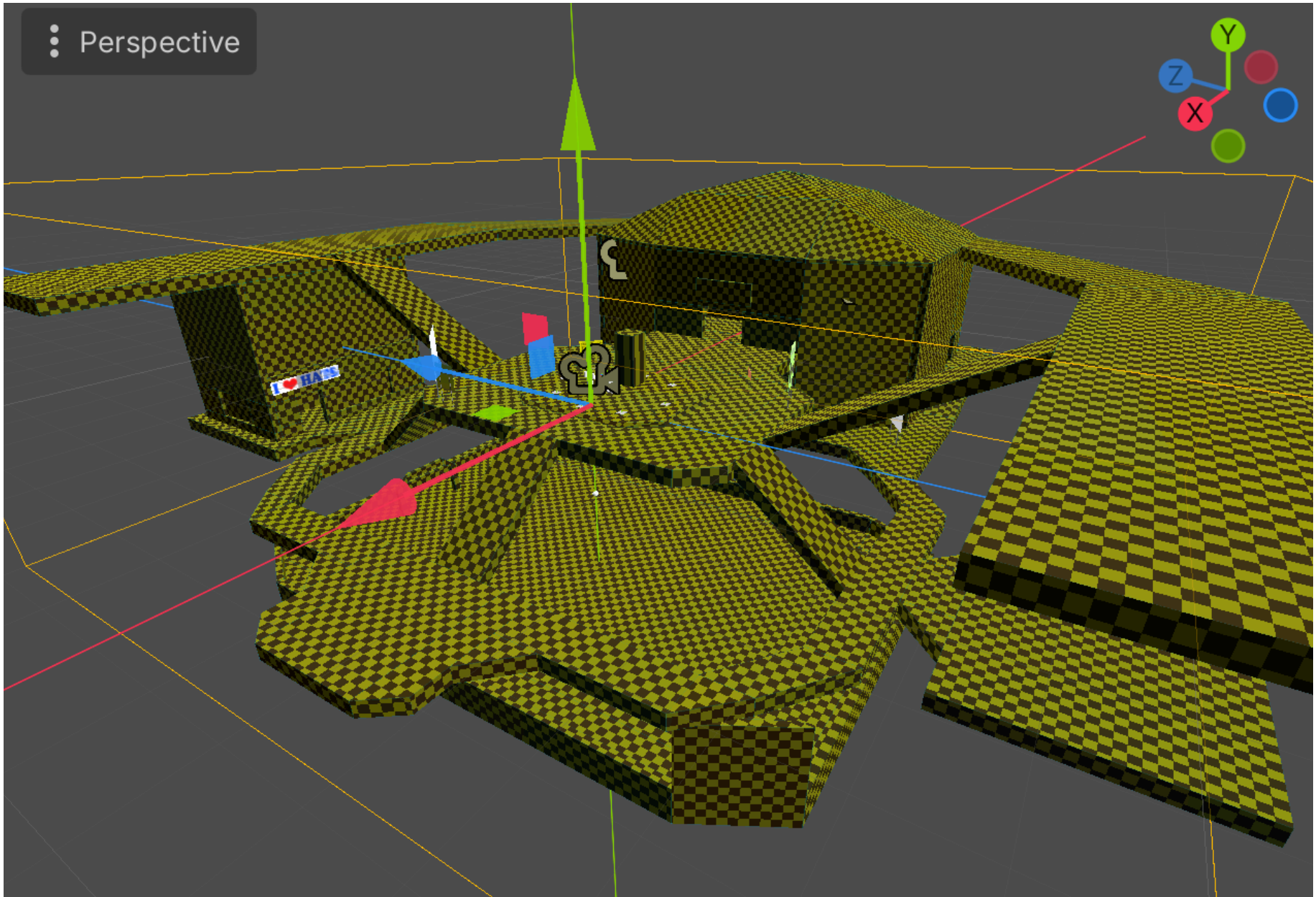




# It's a party!

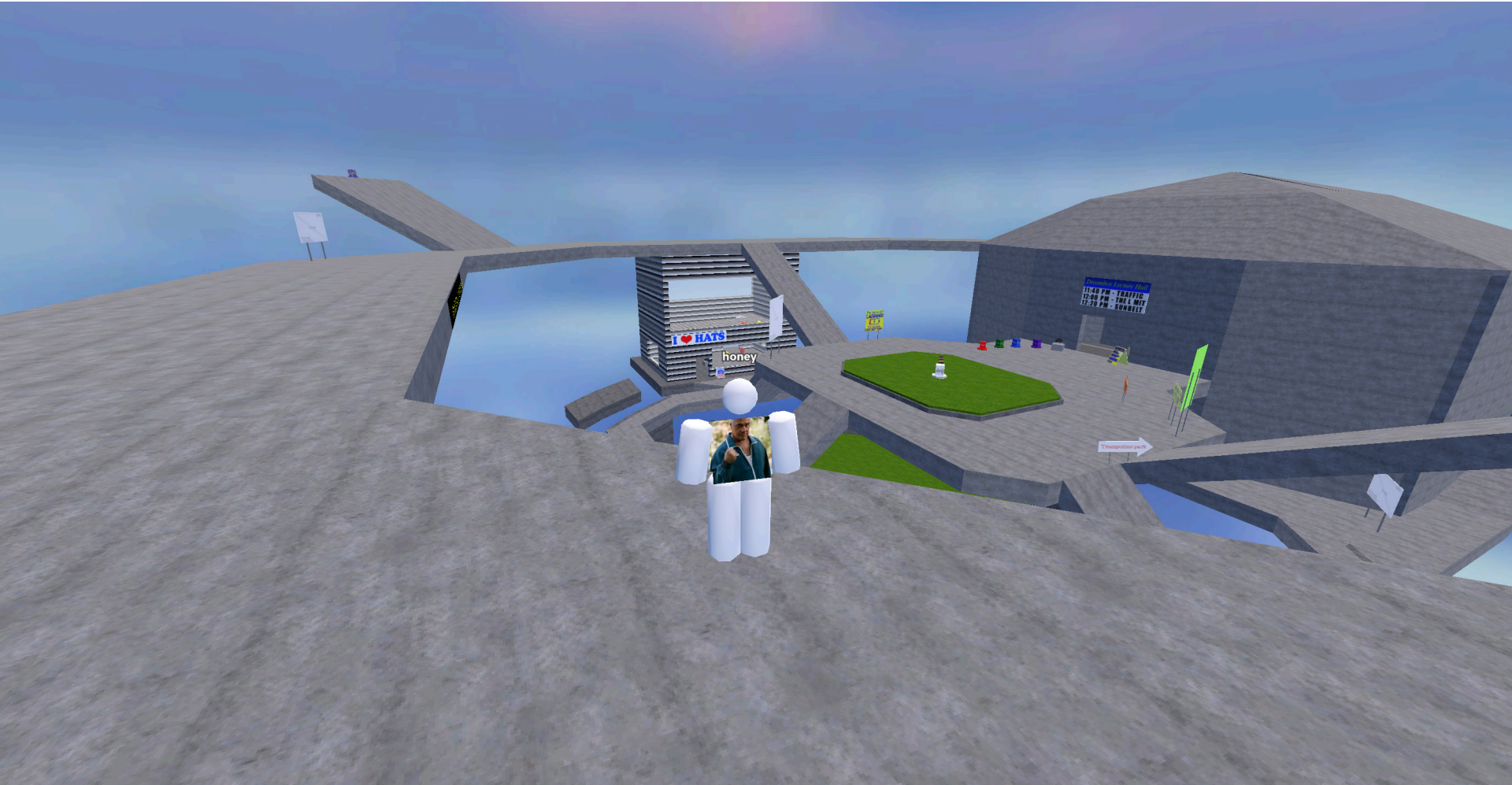
But now there was nothing to do  
besides walk around the void.

⋮ Perspective



I decided to make the map in TrenchBroom, a map maker for Quake. The maps that the program creates are super lightweight and perfect for mobile. I would describe making the maps in TrenchBroom to be similar to a zen garden. Really architectural. It reminded me a lot about making maps in Roblox a lot actually. I began with a full lecture hall and then created a script that would allow me to play my entire slideshow from within the actual game. I added other fun stuff like a working soccer ball, paint stands that would change the color of your arms, legs and would paint a filter on your webcam. I added hats for those without their webcams enabled aswell. I added trampolines, signage and a working clock set to EST that I could read during my presentation to see if I was running out of time.







I was super nervous about everything. Presenting my ideas, presenting the interviews and I was most nervous about the stability of the program as well. I was exporting the final slides at 8pm the night before. And then I figured out that the script I had made had a fatal error that would only allow the first three slides to play. On top of that, my slides were exporting as 18mb images. I stayed up until 1:30am bugfixing the night before. What a nightmare. A nailbiter!



In the end, the presentation was fantastic. My heart was so full speaking on all of the projects and the future of them. I hope to continue to work on the Dream chatroom throughout the whole summer and see where it goes!

TOWER ROOM 605 — APRIL 28, 2026 — 12:00pm

Come to the artist talk  
& thesis symposium

Play now, the game  
updates every day.  
*(Better with friends!)*

AN EXPERIMENTAL  
ONLINE EXPERIENCE  
LIKE YOU'VE NEVER  
SEEN IN YOUR LIFE



← Connect now

← Connect now

[ncbourget.github.io/dream-chatroom-live/](https://ncbourget.github.io/dream-chatroom-live/)

Contact: [ncbourget@gmail.com](mailto:ncbourget@gmail.com)

TOWER ROOM 605 — 12:00pm — APRIL 28, 2026

# THE LIMIT

APPH/ART  
DIGITAL/ART/SPACE  
2026/10/2026  
2026/10/2026

Weird online  
video game



Connect  
now.

# THE LIMIT

More info at [Nervepilot.com](https://Nervepilot.com)

# BIBLIOGRAPHY

- "The Sky May Be." Doom Wiki, [doomwiki.org/wiki/The\\_Sky\\_May\\_Be](https://doomwiki.org/wiki/The_Sky_May_Be). Accessed 18 Dec. 2025.
- DoomWiki
- "WADs/Mods That Feel Like Experiences." Doomworld Forums, [www.doomworld.com/forum/topic/122020-wadmods-that-feel-like-experiences/](https://www.doomworld.com/forum/topic/122020-wadmods-that-feel-like-experiences/). Accessed 18 Dec. 2025.
- Ancient Aliens and Rebirth: The Most Psychedelic Doom Mods." VG247, [www.vg247.com/ancient-aliens-and-rebirth-the-most-psychedelic-doom-mods](https://www.vg247.com/ancient-aliens-and-rebirth-the-most-psychedelic-doom-mods). Accessed 18 Dec. 2025.
- "LSD Is Groovy: An Interview with Osamu Sato." Gata Magazine, [gatamagazine.com/articles/art/lsd-is-groovy-an-interview-with-osamu-sato](https://gatamagazine.com/articles/art/lsd-is-groovy-an-interview-with-osamu-sato). Accessed 18 Dec. 2025.
- "Osamu Sato on Music, Art, and Video Games." Red Bull Music Academy Daily, [daily.redbullmusicacademy.com/2017/11/osamu-sato-interview](https://daily.redbullmusicacademy.com/2017/11/osamu-sato-interview). Accessed 18 Dec. 2025.
- "OsamuSato/Graphics." Minus World, [minusworld.co.uk/2017/05/01/osamusato-graphics/](https://minusworld.co.uk/2017/05/01/osamusato-graphics/). Accessed 18 Dec. 2025.
- "The Most Elusive Video Game Creator." Vice, [www.vice.com/en/article/the-most-elusive-video-game-creator/](https://www.vice.com/en/article/the-most-elusive-video-game-creator/). Accessed 18 Dec. 2025.
- "No Return to Normal with Artist Mel Chin." Monument Lab Podcast, [www.monumentlab.com/podcast/no-return-to-normal-with-artist-mel-chin](https://www.monumentlab.com/podcast/no-return-to-normal-with-artist-mel-chin). Accessed 18 Dec. 2025.
- "Mel Chin: KnowMad." Art21, [art21.org/read/mel-chin-knowmad/](https://art21.org/read/mel-chin-knowmad/). Accessed 18 Dec. 2025.
- "KnowMad." Mel Chin Official, [melchin.org/oeuvre/knowmad/](https://melchin.org/oeuvre/knowmad/). Accessed 18 Dec. 2025.
- "Alt-Doom Mod: STALKER." Vice, [www.vice.com/en/article/alt-doom-mod-stalker/](https://www.vice.com/en/article/alt-doom-mod-stalker/). Accessed 18 Dec. 2025.
- "Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold Tribute and Home Pages." A Columbine Site, [www.acolumbinesite.com/ericpage.html](https://www.acolumbinesite.com/ericpage.html). Accessed 18 Dec. 2025.
- GERMS The Targeted Town (1999) Longplay, YouTube, uploaded by Ermacgerd, [www.youtube.com/watch?v=IbNjiIP2ubs](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IbNjiIP2ubs). Accessed 18 Dec. 2025.
- "Venmo Combat & Ville Kallio at SIC Gallery, Helsinki." Ofuxo, [www.ofuxo.net/venmo-combat-ville-kallio-at-sic-gallery-helsinki/](https://www.ofuxo.net/venmo-combat-ville-kallio-at-sic-gallery-helsinki/). Accessed 18 Dec. 2025.
- "Ville Kallio." Lv13 Official, [lv13official.com/ville-kallio/](https://lv13official.com/ville-kallio/). Accessed 18 Dec. 2025.
- Note to self: Please look into Hito Steyerl — Factory of the Sun (2015), Tabita Rezaire — VR works (Deep Down Tidal, etc.), Morehshin Allahyari — speculative VR worlds, Ian Cheng — Emissaries (2015-2017), Jakob Kudsk Steensen — Berl-Berl (2021), Jeffrey Shaw — The Legible City (1989-91), Maurice Benayoun — Tunnel under the Atlantic (1995), Char Davies — Osmose (1995) & Ephémère (1998)
- And, of course the 21 lovely creators I interviewed and who I am so thankful for.

## Thank you

to all of my beautiful and truly dedicated interviewees,  
my professors at the MassArt Communication Design Department,  
my thesis professors: Willis Kingery, Ryan Diaz, and Martha Rettig,  
My Mom, Dad and Brother.  
as well as all of my friends who pushed me when times were tough.

And you, I couldn't have done it without you!

YOU HAVE  
PASSED  
THE LIMIT



THE LIMIT