

# Ch'ixi Universe - A Land of Fileteado Flowers

An Exhibition Proposal for Arebyte Gallery by Daira Ronzoni

## Summary –

Ch'ixi Universe is a playable installation that takes you through the journey between the above and the in-between worlds. Ch'ixi is the notion of cultural hybridity where two realms cannot exist without the other, blending shapes, colours, and timeless origins of culture. From virtual to reality, fruits illuminate the universe while offerings honour Pachamama. Exploring the Volcano to the cavern's depths, where the Great Goddess of Teotihuacan sleeps, you must awaken the fileteado flowers and mark a time in the universe's calendar. Guided by Mosquito and Shedding Toad, ancient wisdom illuminates the cosmos, flowers, fruits, and time.

## Background –

This exhibition explores various notions from pre-Columbian aesthetics, Andean, Mayan mythology, and the concept of ch'ixi within Daira Ronzoni's own artistic practice. Drawing inspiration of personal family migration throughout the artist's life, between South America and the United Kingdom, played a role in shaping the imagination, adventure, wisdom, and survival, leading to the creation of the ch'ixi universe.

The term, coined by Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui, derives from the Aymara language and Andean cosmology to signify the nonduality of something and nothing at the same time. It denotes the mixing of indigenous and European blood, rejecting Mestiza/Mestizo, which are enforced identities.

This identification often exacerbates divisions related to race, gender, class, ethnicity, and ecology. Ch'ixi instead unifies our community rooted in a diasporic culture, symbolising the mixing of cultures that come together but while honouring their differences. A decolonial gesture, acknowledging Aymara beliefs in the interconnectedness of humans and non-humans. In this exhibition, the contemporary concept of ch'ixi explores the complexities of mixing in the modern world.

The Andean region holds the very essence of the Pachamama deity, where rituals are celebrated before the harvest season. Pachamama lives within the Andean mountains and represents Mother Earth. Every year we give thanks and offerings to Pachamama and in return foods, fruits, and crops are protected. Corazon de Pachamama, which translates to the heart of Pachamama, is a paradise-scape, where everything is endless, and where our hands hold the collective ancestral wisdom of these communities.

Throughout this exhibition, traces of the metaphysical Great Goddess of Teotihuacan permeate the universe. A deity from the Mayan empire, embodies agriculture and serves as a bridge between realms. Named after the lost Meso-American city of Teotihuacan, sightings are depicted in pyramids, now enigmatic puzzles. She sits in the middle, connecting the celestial and earthly realms, where the world tree of fileteado flowers rests. This in-between realm controls time and space, fostering agricultural growth in the cave. Teotihuacan symbolises hues from the cosmos, agriculture, and the Mayan concept of human creation from maize (Sweetcorn): white corn for the bones, yellow corn for the muscles, black corn for the eyes and hair, and red corn for the blood. Blue is also present in the exhibition, as it embodies the shades of the cosmos, mirroring the vastness of space and the omnipresent divine of Andean spiritual beliefs.

Throughout the exhibition, maize imagery reflecting themes of microorganisms, growth, and decay, particularly flint corn, come to be inspiration for the ch'ixi universe.

This universe also unfolds through the artist's unique visual language, employing a decorative style known as 'Fileteado', originating from the 19th century in Buenos Aires. Combining Argentinian artistic drawing and lettering with stylised lines and floral motifs, the artist has reimagined this traditional signage into a distinctive three-dimensional visual expression. Fascination with shapes, movements, flowers, and plants embodies the essence of the ch'ixi universe's creation. Influenced by astronomical and cosmological time, fileteado flowers undergo nyctinasty, blooming between night and day. They respond to the audience's virtual touch, initiating timed movements that manifest as physical flowers dancing throughout the gallery.

The Mayans' deep fascination with time led to the creation of deities and stories to mark their calendar, organising their community. Inspired by the 'Popol Vuh', the Mayan book of creation, the characters 'Mosquito – that drips blood from its anus' and 'Poisonous Shedding Toad' are revered as gods, caring for the ecosystem. The toad's poison protects crops, while Mosquito acts as a spy, gathering secrets from its observations. Both guide the audience through the cosmic flow of time, awakening the flowers. As a sign of respect to the universe, which is draped with bright colours to promote abundance, both mosquito and toad must wear ornaments and dress elegantly.

Within the ch'ixi universe, the flowers hold significant importance. Each flower embodies both ancient knowledge and modern wisdom of ch'ixi. Like the Mayan concept of time, when touched, these flowers serve as markers in the calendar. The audience themselves become integral to this universe, collaborating to awaken the flowers in both virtual reality and through automated movements within the gallery space.

Traversing this universe ensures that participants experience and understand the diverse energies of its various worlds. They learn the

significance of touching each flower, which releases particles and seeds back into the higher realm, marking the importance of this timed interaction. The ch'ixi universe isn't meant to be explored in solitude; rather, it's a puzzle to be approached with curiosity, wisdom, and care. In exchange, the time spent within this space becomes a sacred moment inscribed in the cosmic timeline of the ch'ixi universe.

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## About the Artworks

### Virtual Reality Game 1, 'Corazon de Pachamama' -

The first game is the passage and offerings to Pachamama, where plants and trees animate and move slowly. When a fruit is touched it will dissolve, planting a seed into the ground, followed by a growing tree, and cyclically transforms back into fruit across the land. The paradise-like aesthetic parallels with abundant fruits, drawing inspiration from the sun's hues of pink, red, and orange. By following the path and entering the volcano, players enter through the in-between world. Subsequently, the game screen presents texts that prompts them to transition to the second virtual reality headset. Game 1 will be showcased on a 44-inch TV/casting cable, engaging the audience, and enabling the shared experience.

In the first game the player's hands were made of metal, however, in accordance to the exhibition's aesthetic and Ch'ixi theory, they will now show as human appendages.

Software's: Blender, Unity, C#, Oculus Meta 2 or 3

## **Virtual Reality Game 2, ‘The Cavern of sleeping Fileteado Flowers’ –**

In the second Virtual Reality, players are prompted to engage with two characters from the Mayan bible that are symbolic for the growth and decay of the ecosystem.

Mosquito communicates with text on the screen to accompany its sound. This character provides a backstory to the player's journey from their teleportation from the Volcano to the cave. This journey serves as a symbolic representation of traveling between ch'ixi realms, from game 1 and 2.

Subsequently, Mosquito encourages the player to continue further into the cave to converse with Toad. Toad elaborates on the origins of the fileteado flowers, introduces the Great Goddess of Teotihuacan, and explains the significance of the player's interaction with these flowers. Both sway in motion. When touched, the player triggers a response from the physical 3-dimensional fileteado in the gallery. Both sets of flowers animate and dance in synchronisation. Toad advises the player to remove the headset to witness the flowers' movement, timed accordingly in the gallery. The movements of the flowers differ between virtual reality and the gallery. In the game, unique particles emanate from each flower and from Toad's flower crown. These particles are characterised by distinct colours and durations.

The game 2 will also be showcased on a 44-inch TV/casting cable.

Software's: Blender, Unity, C#, Oculus Meta 2 or 3, Atmosphere OS developed by new Ray Interactive, New Media Scotland.

### **Fileteado flowers (6) –**

Six flowers will be displayed around the gallery walls, each composed of three interlocking pieces of wood. For the main sculpture, the dimensions are as follows: Largest size: 54x56cm, Small size: 79x79cm, and each arm size (4): 43x39cm. Each flower will have varying weights due to the materials used, which include MDF/plywood wood, hand-dyed fabric,

velvet, grout, found mosaic materials, spray paint, and acrylic. These materials will be utilised appropriately to enhance the weight and aesthetics of each flower.

Software's: Alan Brown of 9 Volt Projects will develop the automata components, Rhino 3D/Adobe Illustrator/Autodesk/Autocad used for laser cut.

### **Ceramics (2 Large & 8 small pieces)-**

Ceramic 1: Mosquito, dimensions: 60x40cm

Ceramic 2: Toad, dimensions: 50x40cm

Ceramic 3-10: Fruits and Maize, dimensions: 9x9cm

### **Volcano Humidifier –**

Using a volcanic humidifier, steam will be emitted from water in a recessed floor section, requiring regular water refills. Positioned above will be a square plinth serving as the base for presenting ceramic pieces. The steam mirrors the game particles, symbolising the universe's ecosystem.

### **Gallery lighting -**

As this ethereal exhibition is presented in the darker winter months, lighting will be added during the most obscure part of the day to shine vibrant colours of pink, blue and orange.

### **Soundscape –**

Sound engineer Naomi Iris will produce the gallery and game sound. The one-hour looping soundscape, consisting of six 10-minute tracks, utilising four speakers in the gallery. Drawing from folk influences across Latin

America and the UK, it merges ambient electronic music and experimental orchestration to embody ch'ixi's values.

1. The construction of eruption: Traditional instruments and harmonic patterns blend in the volcano's depths, birthing new life from chaotic symphonies.
2. Calls from the inner ancestral core: Voices from past and future generations merge, forming a collective tapestry of ancient, eternal sounds transcending human and mechanical boundaries.
3. Cavern of reflection: Fileteado symmetry manifests in nature, with melodies and rhythms echoing through the cave, complemented by the chamber's curious creatures.
4. Oneness with the maize: An homage to the goddess of Teotihuacan, where white, red, black, and yellow corn are represented as distinct instrumental parts before harmoniously merging into a bright prism of light.
5. The wholeness and nothingness of time: An experimental segment distorts time within music, conveying a sense of simultaneous presence and transcendence beyond time.
6. Ch'ixi: The cyclical journey's conclusion, featuring musical dialogue between particles and the wider universe, culminating in the blooming of fileteado flowers—a melody merging call and response into one.

#### **Outreach Programme –**

A 4-hour dinner and discussion inspired by traditional South American foods, fruits, and sweetcorn will feature yerba mate, symbolising friendship, and kinship. Shared among friends and strangers, pouring, and sharing mate embodies values of sharing, offering, and community while exploring ch'ixi universe theories and mythologies. Participants will

receive an A6 booklet created by the artist, detailing the exhibition, dinner, and soundscape, created using Risograph provided by the DCA.

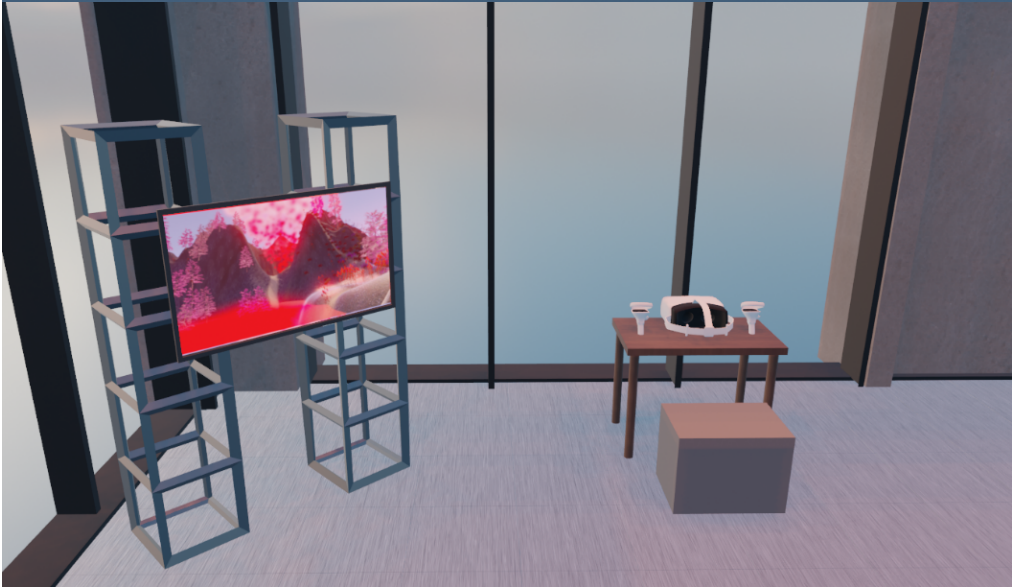
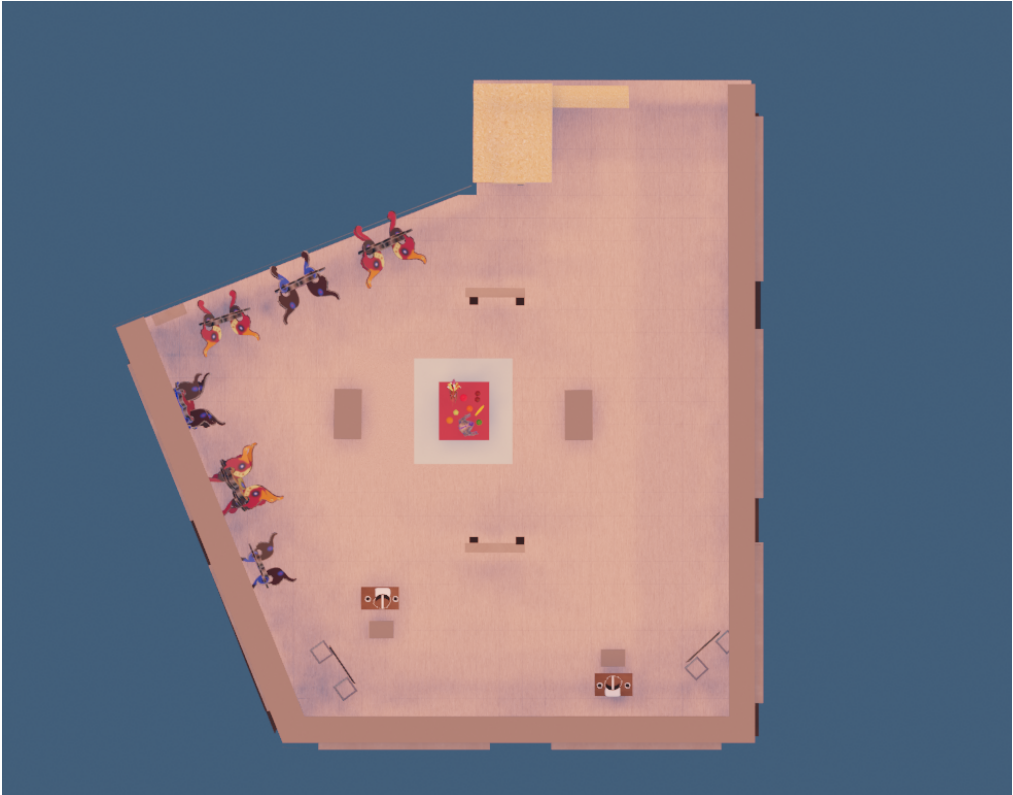
**Final exhibition budget: £8600**

#### **Biography –**

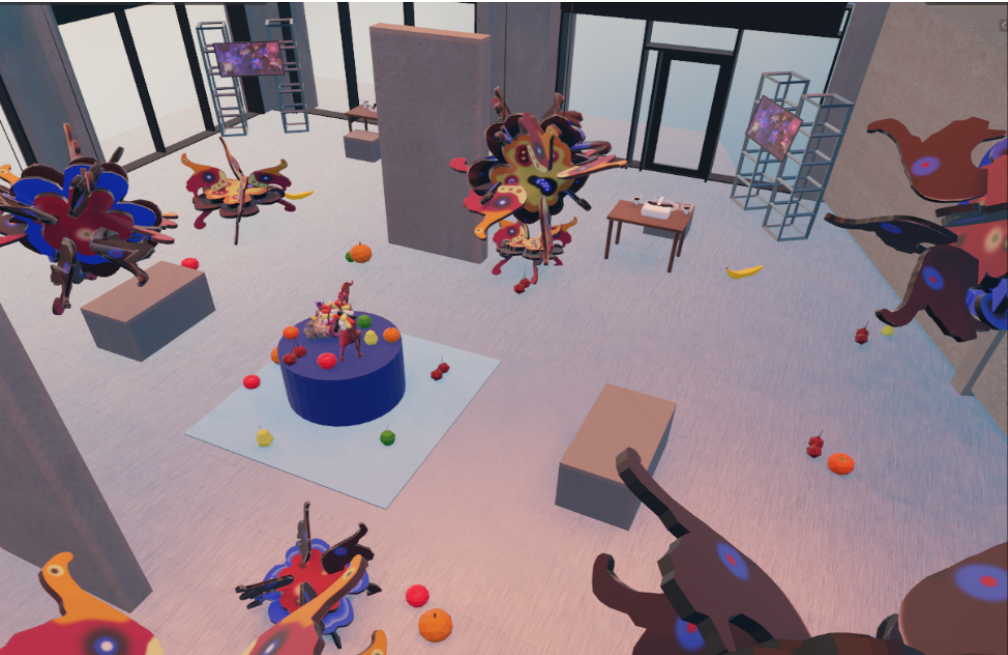
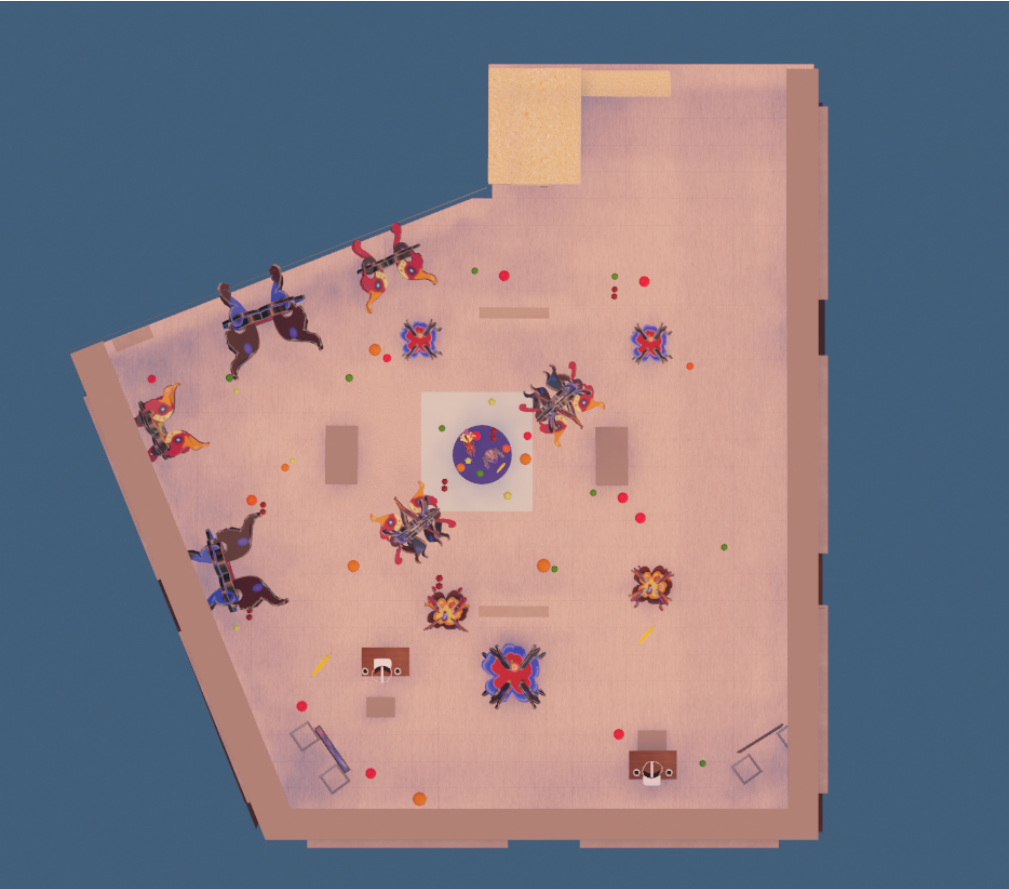
Daira Ronzoni, an artist residing in Dundee, Scotland, investigates the origins of culture, agriculture, mythology, contemporary theory, and ecology. Born in Buenos Aires, Argentina, and brought up in the United Kingdom within a multicultural family, her artwork reflects the interplay of these cultural influences. Worlds, landscapes, and immersive universes, is a recurring theme in her work, complemented by extensive research. Her family, as first and second-generation immigrants, has endured significant migration experiences, particularly during Argentina's dictatorship period. Settled now in Scotland, the artist pursued her passion by earning a degree in Fine Art, at DJCAD. Her talent has been recognised through numerous awards and exhibitions.

- Visual Artist Award Bursary for studio expenses towards Hotel Generation, provided by Creative Scotland, 2024
- Scottish Landscape Exhibition, at City Arts Centre and winning the Young Landscape Artist Award for Virtual Reality 2023/2024
- DCA Prize Award for Degree show, 2023
- BA Fine Art, DJCAD, Degree Show 2023
- Generators Project, Members Show exhibition 2023
- Forgan's Art Centre, Collaborative exhibition 2023
- Hospitalfield Residency Courthouse Studio Programme 2022

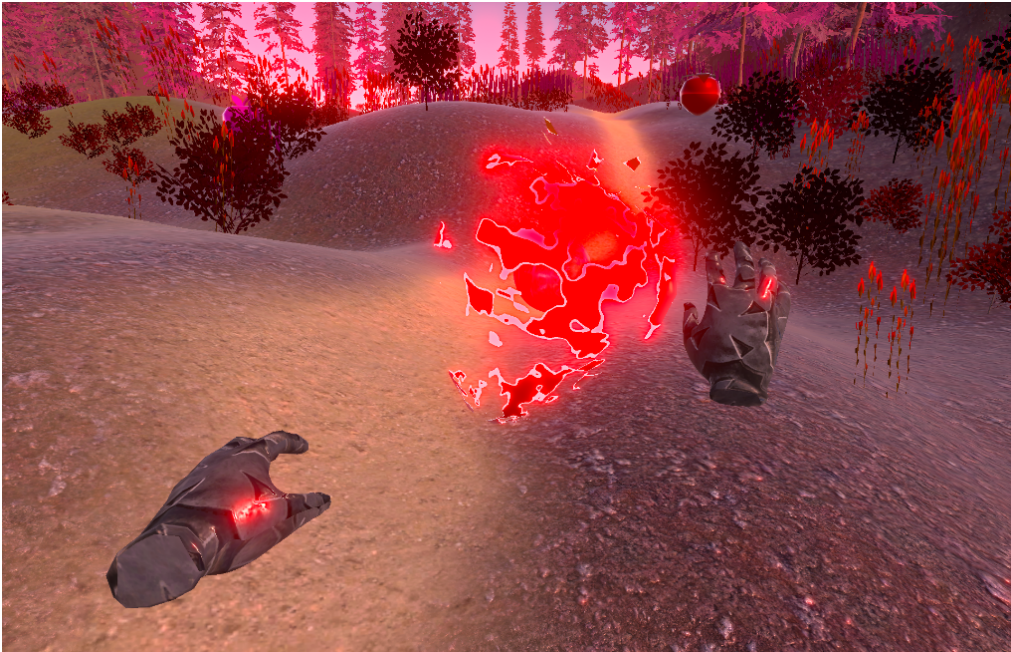
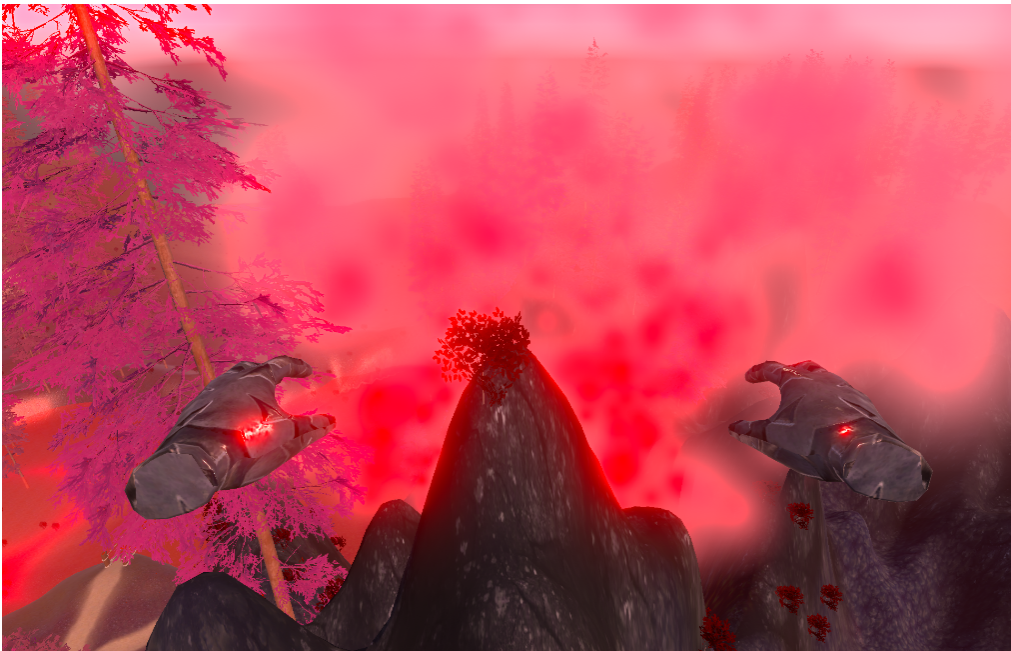
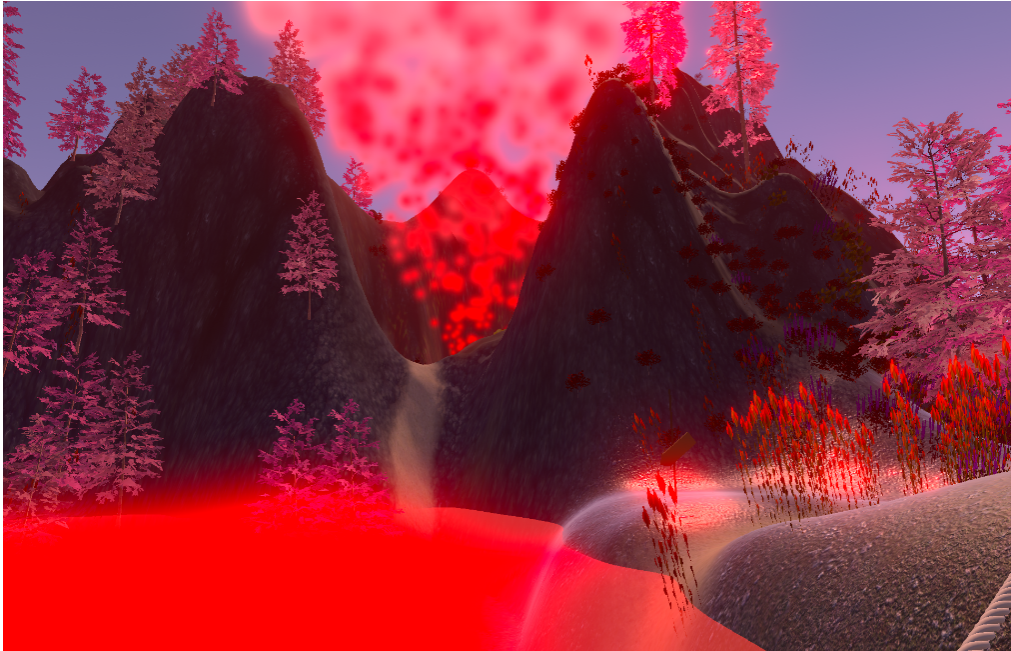
Gallery Space Layout - Option One



Gallery Space Layout - Option Two



Game One



Game Two





## Timeline –

	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
Curatorial & concept discussion	From 03/02/24								
Production									
Test days									
Instal on site									
Exhibition duration								7 <sup>th</sup> Nov – Sat 21 <sup>st</sup> Dec 24	
Events									1 <sup>st</sup> Dec 24

## References –

(Cusicanqui, n.d.)

(Martin, n.d.)

(Bebergal, n.d.)

(Wood, n.d.)

(Paztory, n.d.)

(Tsing, n.d.)

(Enriquez, n.d.)

(Tedlock, n.d.)

(Thacker, n.d.)

(Rivero, n.d.)

## Links –

### Sound Engineers work –

<https://on.soundcloud.com/m1WZDbgb1xFeTHo79>

### Video of Game 1&2 –

<https://vimeo.com/924617403?share=copy>

### Artists Website –

<https://dairaronzonistudio.myportfolio.com>