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Written Analysis

For our 'Out of Your Head' Project, we decided to make an animation about a specific species. We chose the red panda as our subject because they have been endangered due to their habitat loss. Forests are usually being cleared leaving no homes to the red pandas. Following onto this thought, we had an initial idea of making an animation of the cause of red pandas to be endangered. We have a 20 second limit to our animation so we had to try and make it as simple and as clear as possible. Within this project we used both Maya and Blender for the modelling and animation, and Procreate for the idea generating.

We started off by separating the scenes into three main/key scenes. The first scene would be a camera shot of a human walking into a forest, the second scene would have been the cutting down of a tree (which the panda is on), and the last scene would have been the red panda falling from the tree as trees are being cut down. This technique makes it easier for us to get a clear idea of the plot involved in the animation. After that we gathered more of our ideas to create an animatic using Procreate, where we could calculate what we'd want to include in our film, how many seconds we wanted our frames to be, planning out our character shapes, the camera choices and angles and lastly the colour schemes. We made a draft storyboard animation of how the camera changes within scenes. At this point we had a few more seconds left to include so we added an introduction scene of a 'night to day' transition scene to set off our animation.

After we discussed the plot and the scenes, we started to make and model the 3d objects involved in the animation. We created the human posture, a red panda, a weapon (an axe), and some environmental models such as trees and grass. Afterwards, we combined every object into one world/scene. This is where the animation started to take place. We started making and rigging the human figure walking, and capturing its motion with the axe on his waist applying it with its gravity like motion to give it the most realism. We also rigged the red panda movement on the tree branch stretching. We started to create the animation according to the scenes being discussed earlier. Coming towards the end, it turned out that we had three seconds left for our 20 seconds animation, so we thought we could make additional changes to it. If we were to animate the red panda falling down from the tree, it would have needed way more than three seconds, so we try to simplify the ending by creating a transitional black background with a noise/SFX of the red panda crying whilst the tree falling down to give a hint of what is happening without the audience seeing the visuals. The final scene would be the red panda crying on top of the broken tree with an engraved 'RIP' on its home.

There are some complications during the process. For example, the grass model in the animation. It is made in XGEN and it is not polygon based, so we had to convert it. But during the process of converting, it crashed the laptop continuously, but after attempting several times it managed.

Making the sound effects for some of the things were challenging too, for example the tree. We had to combine many different sounds we made and compile it into one sound. We used a ruler and hit it against a hairbrush to make the sound of the axe hitting and chopping the side of a tree. We also used a hair brush and rubbed it against a jacket to create a creaking sound of the tree about to fall down. We also poured rice down to make the sound of the rustling leaves and when the tree hit the ground. The challenging part is to make the sound close enough to the actual objects within the animation. We also made the red panda's crying noise by using our own voice and changing the pitch and speed of it. Most of these were edited through IMovie and Adobe Premiere Pro.

The process of creating our animation has been very interesting. Teamwork and communication is extremely important during group projects in which we need to be able to gather our ideas and communicate our progress. We get a chance to meet everyday but gladly we are able to communicate things well through technology (Whatsapp and Email). We constantly updated each other, and updated the feed with models and renders on Onedrive and took every chance we had to come into campus and continue with our process. We learned a lot of new things along the way. Whenever there was a problem, we attempted to find the solution to make it work.