The BxNU Citizens' Jury Commission:
A Public-Interest Arts Project on Video/Computer Gaming

Name/s of Applicants: Daira Ronzoni, Oli Valentine Kemp

Project Working Title and Short Summary (maximum 100 words): But Human Nature Feels: An experience of decaying and blooming in the urban-digital habitat

Names, institutional positions, and contact details of two referees:

Referee 1: Ashley Woodward, Senior Lecturer in Philosophy at University of Dundee

Referee 2: Tiffany Boyle, Curator/Head of Exhibitions

Biographical Summary of Applicant/s (approximately 500 words per applicant):

https://dairar99.myportfolio.com/artwork

Daira Ronzoni is a multidisciplinary artist based in Dundee. Born in Buenos Aires, Argentina, and raised in the United Kingdom in a multicultural family, these themes run through the artist's work. Through storytelling, she investigates the origins of culture, agriculture, ch'ixi landscapes, digital VR and AI realms, algorithmic and digital culture in response to the human and non-human experience, the fourth dimensions within Chicana futurism and ancient mythology from the Meso-American and Andean regions, and the inspiration and input they have in modern society. The artist's work also conveys the balance of community, sustainability, rituals, abundance of flux and flow, and is part of a current movement 'Rasquachismo', however taking a contemporary theory approach. Moreover, the artist is well known for her eccentric 3D dimensional sculptures, mixed media mosaics inspired by the Pachamama deity.

Oli Valentine Kemp is a multidisciplinary artist based in Dundee. Born in Fife, Scotland, her work grows from the diverse experiences of her young adult life, wrestling with religion and her queerness and mobilising this as a process in her body of work. Seeking to create a new, exploratory and experimental landscape with each piece, the artist aims to bring forward a safe setting for excitement and contemplation stimulating all sensory realms. Her practice combines several points of inspiration to draw from imagery in folk art, religious icons, magical realism, information technologies and pop culture. Her concepts typically aim to explore and critique contemporary culture through reflection on the Abrahamic religions, Anglosphere folk cultures and New Religious Movements in a humorous and poetic style. Her work contains a strong use of colour line and texture, utilising drawing, painting, embroidery and textiles and taking these tools forward into a digital practice and installation works.

Project Proposal (maximum 1500 words):

In response to the jury's inquiry into a public-interest creative project that critically compares power, domination, and the glorification of violence in gaming with everyday life, we propose a groundbreaking VR game. This game aims to explore the interconnected themes raised by the judges, delving into the consequences of malevolent invented worlds and their potential links to a lack of control and collective material investment in our physical reality. Additionally, we will investigate how gaming's invented realities might contribute to social isolation and ecological catastrophe.

Considering the themes of the proposal, which prompt a holistic approach to gaming, our project strives to build an environment that challenges players to reflect on their power in the virtual realm compared to the real and the emotions it evokes. Traditionally, games have been a realm of escape where the rules of the world are intended to be subverted and abused. Violence is not just permitted but encouraged, and destruction of property is without consequence, akin to death being a mere stepping stone.

We would like to focus on the rewarded violence of video games and how this is paralleled in the actual world. Can we explore the ways in which the actual world is gamified, where violence is rewarded in much more subverted and perverted ways? For example, the ways in which we are forced to rely upon violent systems, particularly in relation to the destruction of the planet, and how violence and cruelty are rewarded by capitalism.

What would it mean to create a game in which we subvert the 'no rules' element of gaming to instead build a world in which we can use the freedom to make choices we otherwise struggle to make in the actual world? Would we be gentler, slower, more protective? Worldbuilding, arguably one of the most important aspects of a game, is enhanced in the virtual world by the presence of 'no rules,' or rather, 'make your own set of rules.' Creating the rules of the world is crucial to creating an experience, and when done properly, can be the trigger for stimulation as opposed to mere simulation. To create a stimulating experience, we believe that there must be a tangible and relatable element in tandem with something new, fantastical, which enables our mind to engage and grow.

The world is experienced through the box, both bedroom and phone. We are preoccupied with the protective and controlled environments of our homes and our technologies, the part of existence that we seem to have the most control over. In comparison to previous centuries, we have lost sight of the commons, of shared experiences of land and environment. The world burns around us; we, feeling unable to affect this, retreat. Our daily realities have a rehearsal of the present, lacking in spontaneity and creativity. Technology has made it so that it appears all that will be is already laid before us, action has become without consequence, in the most inhibiting way.

Spawning – no rules, free movement, spontaneous contact with nature and environment, stimulation through the unexpected and the grace of having something manifest, exactly when we need it. Within gaming we must note that the medium is the message – thus adjusting sensory stimulation to the digital medium. Though the presentation may be similar to that of the real, in the virtual we have the freedom to experience objects in new, imagined ways. How can we enhance the experience of an apple rotting- what does it sound like, how would it move, does it have an aura, a transcendental element? - this is the

freedom of technology. What is the purpose of technology if not to liberate, enhance and challenge our perceptions of experience?

This holistic perspective on gaming informs our VR game proposal, which prioritises public interests and is devoid of rigid rules. The game features spawning objects that initiate diverse sounds, sensations, and colours, drawing inspiration from the natural decay overtaking urban landscapes. Our game showcases the growth of flora and fauna from remnants, reflecting our shared experience of repetition embodied by the act of decaying in bed.

As a player immersed in the game, your presence inhabits a bedroom, observing the evolving world. Each interaction, such as clicking on objects, sets off a chain reaction with diverse outcomes. For instance, water flooding the room creates a scene of serene waves or flowers unexpectedly sprouting from the walls and ceiling, echoing the organic growth of mould. Every decision unfolds a new narrative, contributing to an immersive and unpredictable experience. The game reveals an array of seemingly arbitrary room objects, accompanied by emergent decay, radiating, and reflecting the sun's shimmering rays.

In alignment with public interests, our game contends that happiness thrives when humans adhere to general rules. Drawing a parallel with angiosperms, which entice through vibrant colours and enticing scents, our game enthrals players by following a similar principle. You'll be prompted to follow a general guideline, the invitation resonating through the ringing phone's noise, as a mesmerising cloud of particles unfolds behind your bedroom window, each shimmering apple or glistening flower spawning and sprouting, each time implicating worldling processes.

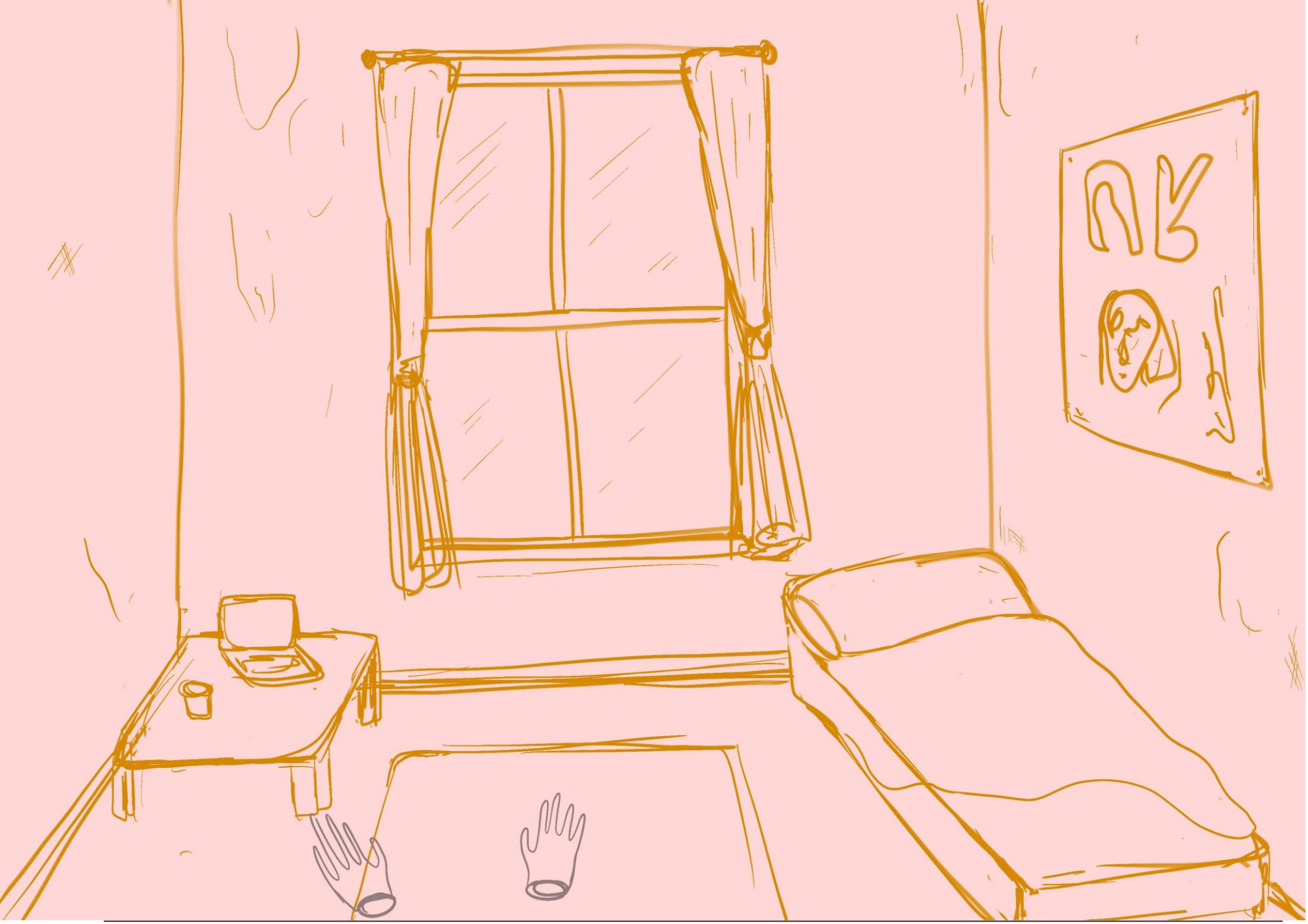
In sync with the allure of nature's beauty, the game acts as a compelling force. Creatures within it yearn to be embraced by the experience, surprise, and radiant fleeting moments whilst the digital realities of social isolation and ecological catastrophe continues. As players dive in, a profound exploration unfolds of our intricately interwoven world—its decay and growth, the nuanced interplay of routine and social realities. Even the ordinary sensory stimulation of ASMR sounds which is enhanced by the digital, interwoven rhythms of nature, multiplying, and adhering to the ‘no rules’. Our proposed VR/PC game, ‘But Human Nature Feels: An experience of decaying and blooming in the urban-digital habitat’ is the freedom and liberating potential of technology when used creatively, transforming into a nexus, weaving connections amid the intricacies of our shared existence.

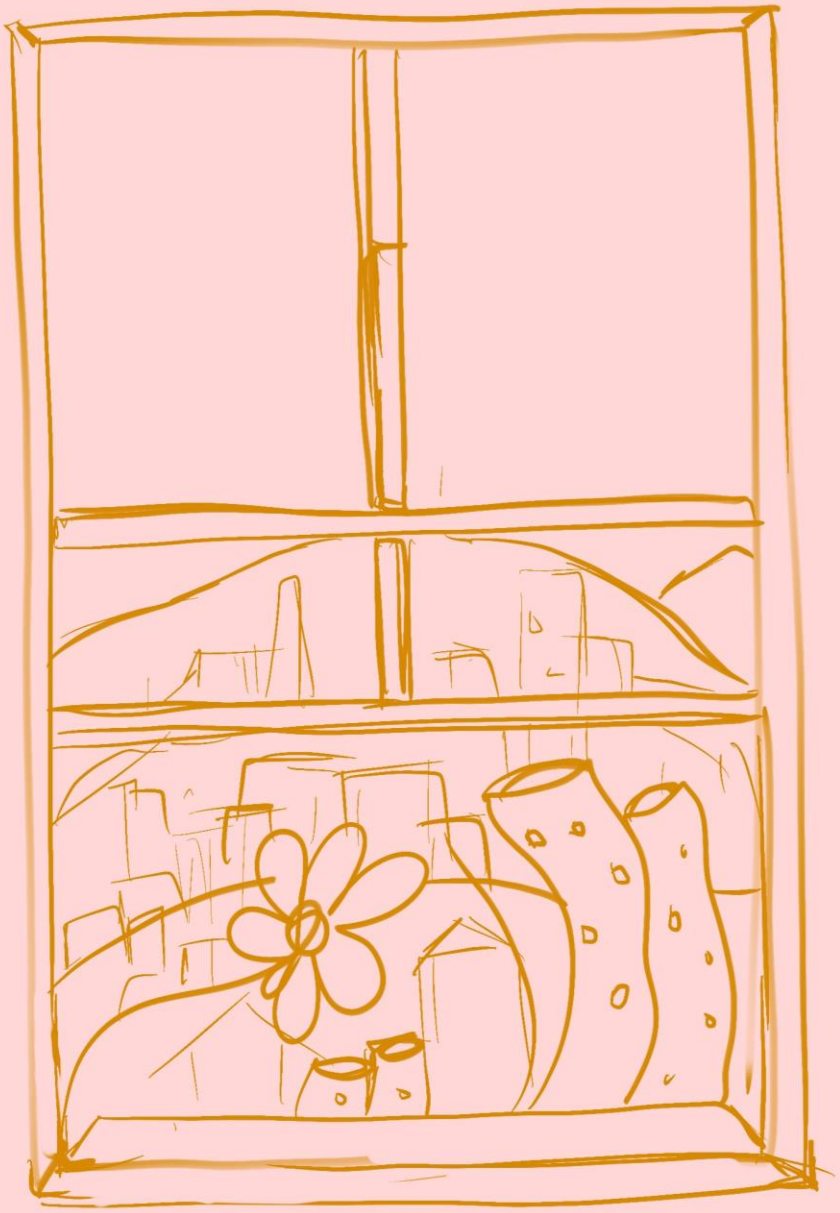
Outline Budget:

Artist Fee: £21.60 (£20.77) per hour for a new graduate artist, Based on Scottish Union Artist Rate
Production: £1000/2000
Packaging: £21
Return Transport: £100/200
Installation: £100
AV Equipment: Meta Oculus headset £350
Technician coders: £15 per hour (roughly £700)
Software: blender, unity, c++, html £200

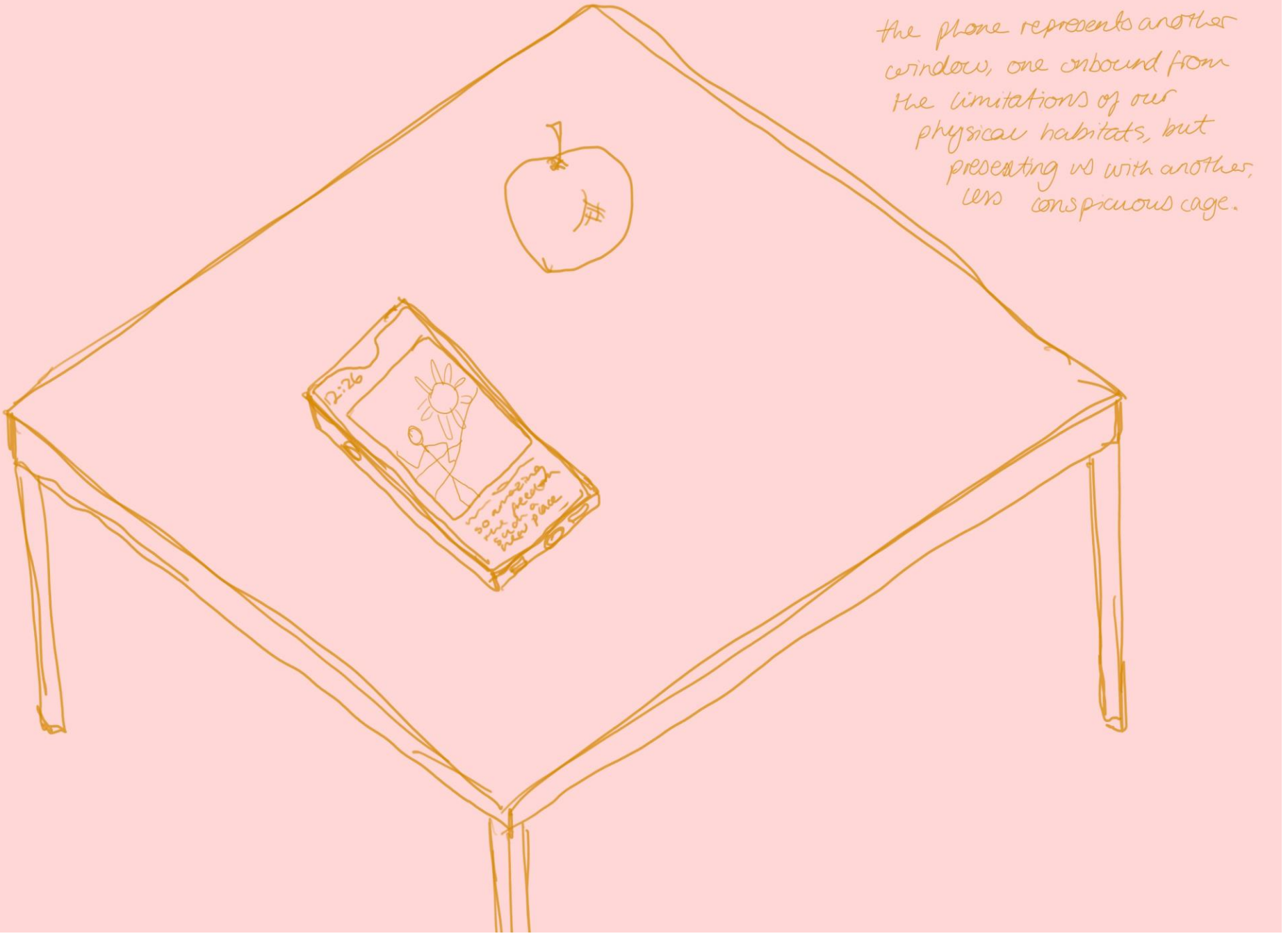


But Human Nature Feels: An experience of decaying and blooming in the urban-digital habitat – sketch 1,2,3,4 below





looking outwards, watching the urban landscape shift with liveliness as the internal blooms & decays in an ebb and flow. How does the cycle of our habitat affect our communities & interpersonal relations in the urban-digital landscape?

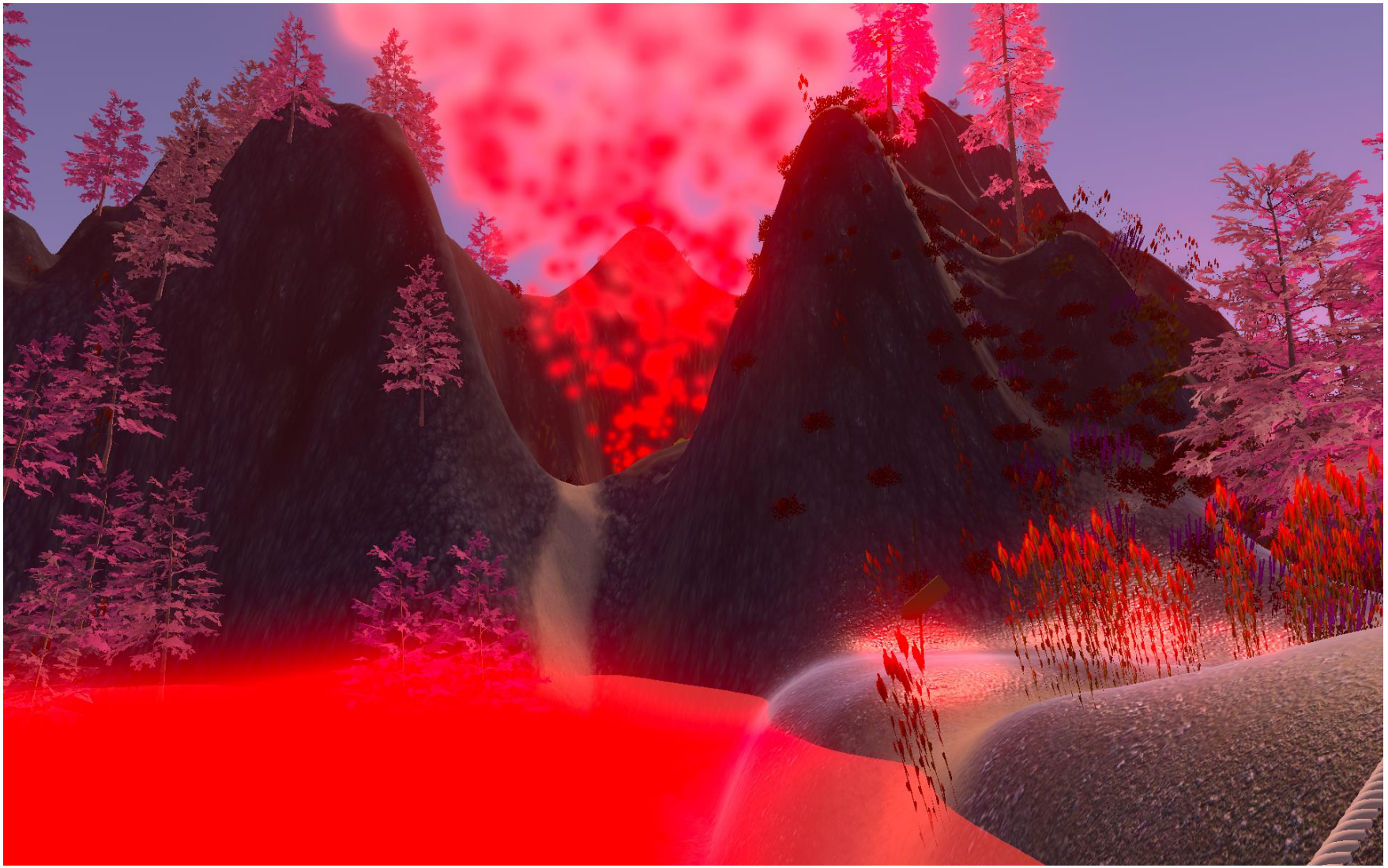

the phone represents another window, one onbound from the limitations of our physical habitats, but presenting us with another, less conspicuous cage.
2:26



Daira Ronzoni VR game still: Corazon de Pachamama



Daira Ronzoni degree show: Corazon de Pachamama



Daira Ronzoni: VR game: Corazon de Pachamama, video to game:https://youtu.be/2jF8mcDooSE?si=rnwIvbPRY_WuFCJX



Oli Valentine Kemp: degree show ‘It’s Slime time’



Oli Valentine Kemp: degree show ‘its slime time’, video to film
:https://youtu.be/d8p5NS6aElI?si=xLz2zu20zEGWPSUQ