



**FRAGMENTS OF THE SUBCONSCIOUS: BUILDING DREAMS IN  
THE RUINS OF MEMORY**

Monika Walawender/MPARC/2025

Matter and Media  
Architecture and Urban Design

**Chalmers University of Technology**  
**Chalmers School of Architecture + Department of Architecture & Civil  
Engineering**



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BUILDING DREAMS IN THE RUINS OF MEMORY



MONIKA WALAWENDER  
CHALMERS UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY  
DEPARTMENT OF ARCHITECTURE AND CIVIL ENGINEERING  
MASTER[']S PROGRAMME IN ARCHITECTURE AND URBAN DESIGN (MPARC)  
GRADUATION AND PUBLICATION YEAR: 2025  
CHALMERS SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE

EXAMINER: JONAS LUNDBERG  
SUPERVISOR: KENGO SKORICK





Link to the Video



## **ABSTRACT**

Imagine is to go beyond the bounds of reality, where the imagination explores the unknown and creates new possibilities. It is the process of creating new concepts by combining aspects of the known and unknown. By creating new worlds, meanings, and scenarios, imagination helps us to think beyond the limitations of the here and now.

The essential medium for perception, cognition, language, and memory is the mind. One could argue that imagination is a fundamental component of our human nature. „All reality is brought forth solely by imagination... This act which forms the basis for the possibility of our consciousness, our life“. This thesis investigates how architecture in dystopian environments portrays the emotional interplay of loss, memory and hope.

Architecture becomes an instrument through which dystopian stories are told, serving as a medium for both destruction and memory. Film captures the ethereal beauty of abandoned buildings and neglected environments through its capacity to frame space and mood. Thus, it is a logical progression of this investigation.

This research investigates the interrelationship of architecture, emotion, and film in order to analyze how built environments generate dystopian experiences and how their unsettling beauty is captured through a film's aesthetic. It portrays how dystopian space may be envisioned, built, and eventually experienced through a series of design concepts and visualizations that investigate the boundaries between reality and fantasy.

**Keywords:** ruins; melancholic hope; dystopian architecture; decay; memory



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## **introduction**



**Figure 1** "NO#10-060090-30", Clemens Gritl

## BACKGROUND

The concept of dystopia has intrigued humanity for generations. People have envisioned and aspired to perfect places and societies throughout history. As a result, the imagery and characteristics of an 'ideal land' have long been implanted in our collective imagination, and our fascination with an ideal world has led to an equal interest in the opposite - dystopian landscapes.

Architecture, traditionally perceived as an expression of cultural, political, and social ideas, is increasingly used to explore themes of decay, emptiness, and the lasting quality of hope. In dystopian settings, the built environment becomes a testament to memory and grief, representing the struggles between destruction and resilience, deterioration and renewal. In contrast to completely desolate surroundings, which are commonly characterised by terror and despair, numerous dystopian worlds portray flashes of beauty, nostalgia, and the essence of defiance.

Dystopia illustrates a future society or a distinct present where certain characteristics (such as advanced digital technologies, or population overcrowding) are amplified. In nature, dystopia envisions a grim depiction of our world grounded in current attributes, aiming to caution us against the potential emergence of such a reality.

Dystopian narratives create space for optimism, yet this optimism is always connected with the recollection of pain and grief. Not only do these spaces solely embody despair, but they preserve echoes of former hopes and remains of once-cherished utopian objectives that have either been abandoned or transformed. Thus, this dialogue is frequently intensified through the application of light, materiality, and form, where architecture serves as both a tribute to history and cautions for what is to come.

Whereas utopia takes us into a future and serves to indict the present, dystopia places us directly in a dark and depressing reality, conjuring up a terrifying future if we do not recognize and treat its symptoms in the here and now. (Gordin & Tilley & Prakash, 2011)

In architecture, within the contemporary aspects of life, innovative technologies and scientific advancements have been utilized to develop a visionary society to craft an ideal community that enhances life quality and seeks a "new world" for future generations. Architects have perpetually envisioned the possibility of constructing an improved world through utopian scenarios.

Dystopia is more than just the reverse of utopia. A literal opposite of utopia would be a society that is entirely unstructured or purposely frightening. It rather depicts a utopia

## **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

**How can architecture in dystopian settings evoke the emotional connections among loss, memory, and hope?**

In what ways do dystopian environments maintain or obliterate cultural memory?

What significance does architecture have in forming spaces that embody melancholic hope in dystopian stories?

How can cinema effectively depict the eerie and melancholic beauty of architectural spaces in dystopian contexts?

## **AIM**

The objective of this Master's thesis is to examine and convey dystopian stories by creating immersive digital environments, utilizing Unreal Engine as a creative instrument. This paper explores how visual storytelling techniques might arouse viewers' emotions and psychological depth, particularly through the interplay of memory, surveillance, and post-human degeneration. Ultimately, the thesis investigates how digital art can serve as a powerful tool for crafting intricate and emotionally unsettling dystopian scenarios that reflect contemporary issues related to control, identity, and loss. By differentiating between invasive technology and untouched, forsaken environments, the project examines themes of memory, control, and the sense of alienation that accompanies rapid progress.

## **DELIMITATIONS**

This paper does not aspire to deliver a detailed historical examination of dystopian literature or visual art, nor does it seek to encompass the full spectrum of dystopian visuals. Furthermore, this thesis does not seek to create a game. Although Unreal Engine is utilized to create visual environments, the emphasis is on the design and narrative influence of static or semi-static scenes, rather than on gameplay mechanics, user experience, or optimizing for real-time performance. Moreover, the project does not integrate psychological or sociological research methods to analyse viewer responses. Even though the environments are designed to provoke certain emotional and thematic reactions (such as nostalgia, despair, and loss), the project does not perform audience testing or collect data.

## **methodology**

This thesis investigates how nostalgic and dystopian elements can be implemented in the virtual environment through the use of mood boards, sketches, and visual references. Preliminary research includes a visual and thematic examination of chosen pieces by various artists, including Zdzisław Beksiński and Simon Stålenhag.

Influenced by surrealist artists and dystopian visuals, the initial phase consists of utilizing Leonardo AI to generate numerous AI images. Subsequently, Runway AI is utilized to produce a film inspired by the previously developed imagery. Real-time scene world-building in Unreal Engine, digital painting, terrain creation, 3D modelling, and AI-generated graphics are all integrated in this process of creating dystopian environments. In an imaginative, surreal setting, each stage investigates the thematic and emotional opportunities of form, space, and symbolism.

The arrangement of space and symbolic elements within environments conveys narratives and themes. Every scene encourages the viewer to deduce stories from the atmosphere and details through careful interpretation.





**theory**

## **BLADE RUNNER 1982 (RIDLEY SCOTT)**

The movie portrays a dystopian version of Los Angeles that has fallen into technological degradation as a result of the Tyrell Corporation's authority. The ambience and physical aspects of this project are heavily influenced by its representation of Los Angeles as an ultra-dense, rain-drenched megacity defined by neon lights, industrial ruin, and the overwhelming presence of corporations. The film arouses a feeling of existential sorrow and a sense of imprisonment through its overwhelming verticality and constant darkness. The image of a city destroyed by technology, inhabited by outlaws and marginalized individuals, and overwhelmed by capitalism and technocracy is vividly recognised through the use of special effects along with miniature models of uniquely designed structures. To create a dramatic and cinematic atmosphere, actual buildings are portrayed in a dystopian style in the film.



**Figure 2** "The Oppening Scene of Blade Runnder 1982

## **GOTHAM CITY (TIM BURTON AND CHRISTOPHER NOLAN)**

The immensely famous vigilante known as Batman resides in the fictional Gotham City. Gotham's design is shaped by large urban areas and the characteristics of real-life brutalist and modernist buildings. Gotham serves as a psychological city, a tangible symbol of chaos, corruption, and dread, rather than just a real location. The oppressive height and hidden monitoring of the surroundings are reflected in the emphasis on brutalist designs, dense shadows, and labyrinthine streets. Well-known urban landscapes are distorted into strange dystopian scenarios that challenge logic.



**Figure 3** "Batman" (1989) Directed by Tim Burton

## LE CORBUSIER - ORDER AND CONTROL

One of the pioneers of contemporary architecture, Le Corbusier (birth name - Charles-Édouard Jeanneret) was a Swiss-French architect and urban designer. By integrating ideas of mass industrial manufacturing and scientific accuracy into his creations, he advocated for the beauty of engineering and described a person's home as a „machine.” Driven by the belief that architecture could transform society, his endeavours, particularly in the early to mid-20th century, were founded on the tenets of efficiency, organization, and reason. The Plan Voisin (1925), a groundbreaking proposal for the reimagining of central Paris, portrayed one of his most extreme concepts. Le Corbusier proposed demolishing a big portion of the historic city and replacing it with a strict, grid-like layout of uniform 60-story cruciform towers. The plan outlined a structure where heavy traffic would flow underground, light traffic would operate at street level, and fast-moving cars would navigate along limited-access expressways, all while ensuring the separation of pedestrian paths from vehicular routes.



**Figure 4** Plan Voisin for Paris, 1925

## **YVES TANGUY'S PAINTINGS**

### **Architectural qualities**

Abstract and Fragmented Structures (alien and uninhabitable structures, emphasizing disconnection and isolation)

Fluid and amorphous forms, resembling melted buildings or skeletal frameworks that challenge traditional architectural rules

Objects whose scale is hard to determine — structures that could be tiny sculptures or massive. This creates a sense of unease, as the viewer is unsure how to orient themselves

Floating and Groundless Forms (a dreamlike, unstable quality)

There are no foundations or anchors to the structures

Minimalist, Endless Landscapes (wastelands, devoid of life or purpose)

### **Non-architectural qualities**

Fog/steam

Optical illusion

Color palette is muted yet surreal — soft greys, blues, and yellows dominate (an otherworldly, melancholic tone)

Light is diffused and unnatural, coming from no discernible source

Atmosphere - Tanguy's worlds feels sterile, empty, and cold

Objects have smooth, polished surfaces

The materials feel alien—neither natural nor industrial—suggesting a world that is entirely unfamiliar

The landscapes are flat and featureless, resembling endless deserts or ocean floor

Horizons are often low and unbroken



**Figure 5** Le Prodiges ne revient jamais / (The Prodigal Never Returns) (1943)



**Figure 6** Les Jeux nouveaux (New Games) (1940)



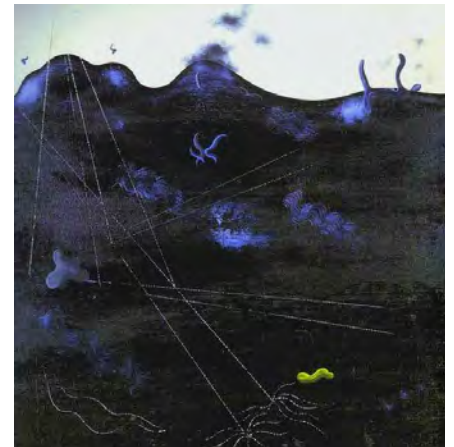
**Figure 7** Les Saltimbanques (The Saltimbanques) (1954)



**Figure 8** Legendes ni figures (Neither Legends nor Figures) (1930)



**Figure 9** Storm (Black Landscape) (1926)



**Figure 10** Blue Bed (1929)



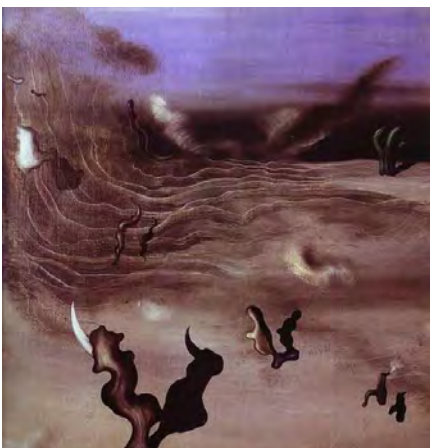
**Figure 11** Mama, Papa is Wounded! (1927)



**Figure 12** Large Painting Representing a Landscape (1927)



**Figure 13** Extinction of Useless Lights (1927)



**Figure 14** Wind (1927)



**Figure 15** Death Awaiting his Family (1927)



**Figure 16** The Absent Lady (1942)

## **ZDZISLAW BEKSINSKI'S PAINTINGS**

### **Architectural qualities**

Decay

Monumentality (gigantic tall structures)

Decayed, fractured, or skeletal structures

The remains of a failed paradise or the ruins of a collapsed civilisation

Hybrid structures—half architectural, half organic (The boundaries between built environments and living organisms are blurred. Frequently, arches, towers, and hallways have a rib cage or twisted spine appearance.)

Endless Complexity (The complex compositions imply endless hallways, secret passageways, or buildings that challenge rational design.)

Ritualistic and Symbolic Settings (images of places that appear to have no functional use, such as altars, colossal staircases that go nowhere, or gigantic entrances. These imply a culture engulfed in ritual or ideology, long after its original significance has faded.)

Buildings blown-up (material is fragile)

Buildings are lacking windows and doors

### **Non-architectural qualities**

Fog

Semi-darkness

Fire

Trees alike structures reminding mushroom cloud

Sense of omnipresence - the eye

landscape seems polluted, radioactive (neon colours)

Intestines, flesh

Darkness and Oppressive Skies

A Soundless Void



Figure 15 Untitled



Figure 17 Untitled

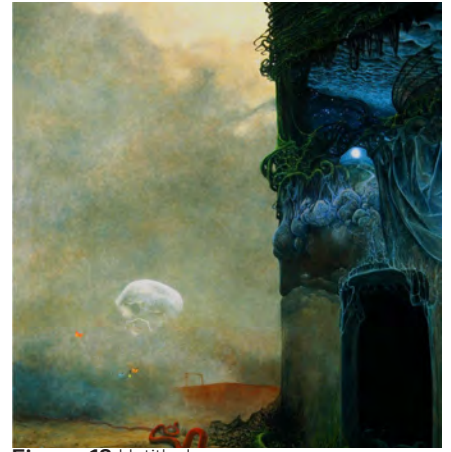


Figure 18 Untitled



Figure 19 Untitled



Figure 20 Untitled



Figure 21 Untitled



Figure 22 Untitled



Figure 23 Untitled



Figure 24 Untitled



Figure 25 Untitled



Figure 26 Untitled



Figure 27 Untitled

## SIMON STALENHAG'S PAINTINGS

### Architectural qualities

Abandoned Futurism (structures are not completely destroyed, but they feel forgotten—massive cooling towers, labs, and industrial sites still stand, but they are rusting and overgrown)

Advanced AI-driven technology or robotic structures are present, but they seem broken or useless—suggesting that humanity has either left or stopped relying on them.

Retro-Futuristic Design (technology appears advanced but outdated, as if progress halted decades ago)

Contrast between small rural houses and futuristic megastructures

Buildings are often massive and inhuman in scale

Despite their size, structures feel empty (the lack of human presence)

Forgotten spaces (unlike chaotic or ruined dystopias, these spaces still work—but no one is using them)

### Non-architectural qualities

Integration with Nature (nature slowly reclaiming its space. Trees grow next to steel towers, moss covers old machines, and rural landscapes are dotted with enormous sci-fi structures)

Soft, overcast lighting, creating a mood of melancholy rather than horror

Neon lights and machine glows are subtle, flickering, or fading, making technology feel like a ghost of the past

Water and Reflections (the light of old machines is reflected, it makes the environment feel more dreamlike)

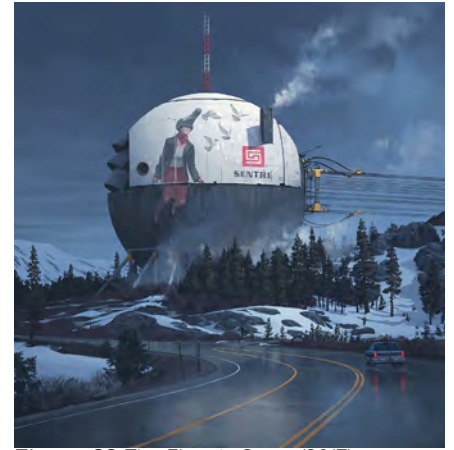
The atmosphere is quiet, but not dead

Humans are small figures in vast landscapes, emphasizing their insignificance in the face of technological decay

When humans do appear, they are often children, making the world feel like an abandoned playground



**Figure 28** Tales from the Loop (2014)



**Figure 29** The Electric State (2017)



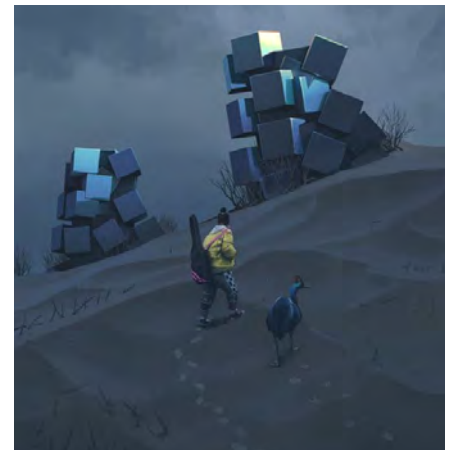
**Figure 30** The Electric State (2017)



**Figure 31** Bellbind And Fireweed (2018)



**Figure 32** Bona



**Figure 33** Crystals and Casiowary (2018)



**Figure 34** Tales from the Loop (2014)



**Figure 35** Things from the Flood (2016)



## **explorations**

## AI IMAGE GENERATION

Numerous images with Leonardo AI were created, mainly taking inspiration from surrealist artists and sometimes integrating stylistic factors from various influences. In this phase of exploration, the aim was to portray surreal, dreamlike landscapes while digging for elements of dystopias. With the use of Runwai AI, selected images were animated and thereafter refined and combined in DaVinci Resolve to create a unified visual analysis of surreal landscapes.



[Link to the Video](#)

To find more AI-generated images along with their related prompts, please refer to the appendix.

Explore the surreal landscapes of your mind, where melting clocks and floating elephants are just the beginning. Let your imagination run wild in this dreamy world inspired by the twisted genius of Salvador Dali.



Explore the surreal landscapes of your mind. Let your imagination run wild in this dreamy world inspired by the twisted genius of Salvador Dali and Vincent van Gogh.



Explore the surreal landscapes of your mind. Let your imagination run wild in this dreamy world inspired by the twisted genius Zdzisław Beksiński and Salvador Dali.



Step into a surreal dreamscape, where the line between what's real and what's imagined is blurred. Salvador Dalí's and R. Magritte's art is brought to life in vivid detail in every corner of the unsettling atmosphere. This exquisite painting captures the essence of surrealism with its intricate details and masterful use of color, inviting viewers to get lost in its mesmerizing world.



Explore the surreal landscapes of your mind. Let your imagination run wild in this dreamy world inspired by the twisted genius Zdzisław Beksiński and Salvador Dalí



Explore the dark dystopia surreal landscapes of your mind. Let your imagination run wild in this dreamy world inspired by the twisted genius Zdzisław Beksiński and his painting



## SKETCHING

A collection of sketches illustrating digital environments was produced to examine the visual principles of the project. This task enabled setting the general mood, spatial arrangement, and atmospheric guidance for the design.

### Phase 1: Shape & Form

scale & proportion  
silhouettes, basic geometric vs. organic shapes  
perspective & composition  
black and white

### Phase 2: Texture & Surface

surface textures (smooth, eroded, organic, mechanical, wet, cracked, reflective)  
weathering & decay

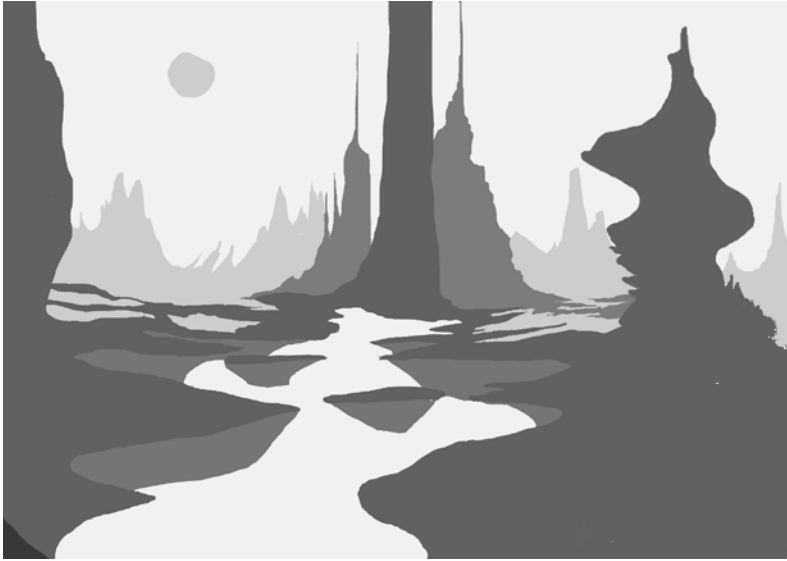
### Phase 3: Light & Shadow (Mood & Atmosphere)

light direction, intensity, and color  
harsh contrasts vs. soft gradients  
does the world have a single, strong light source, or is it diffused & ambient?  
glowing elements

### Phase 4: Color Exploration (Emotional Weight)

starting with grayscale and then adding color variations  
comparing desaturated vs. oversaturated palettes  
color dominance

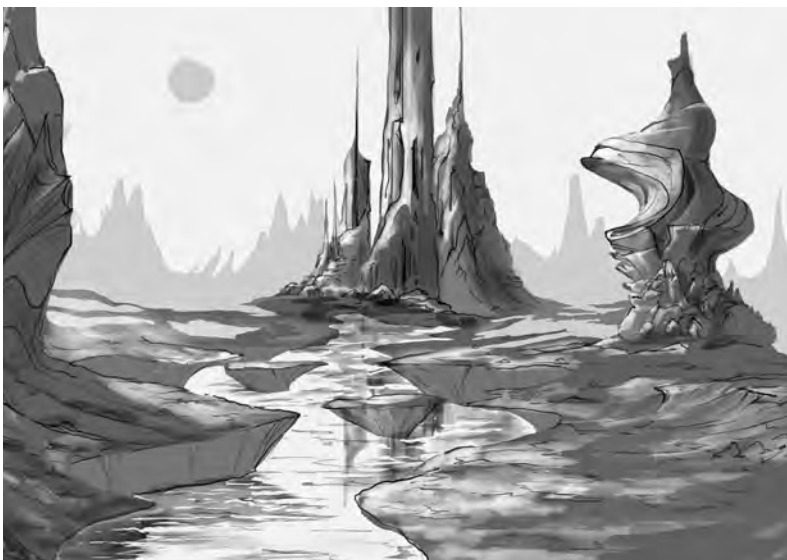
STEP 1



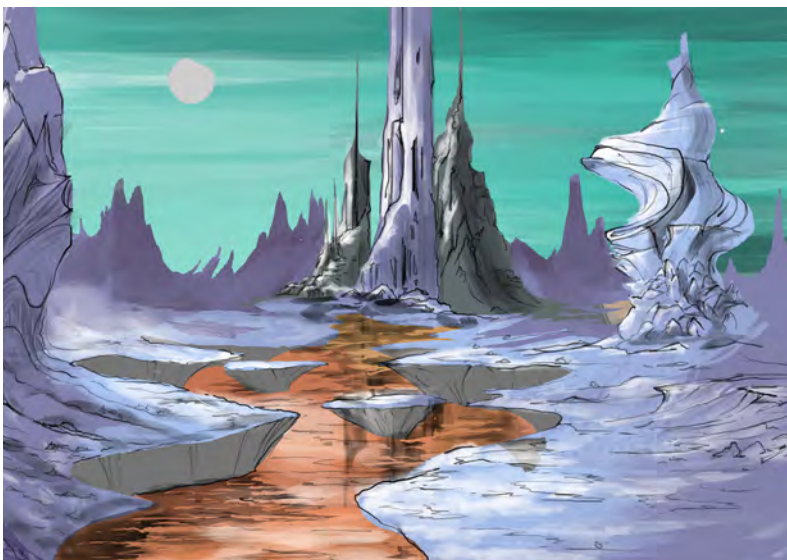
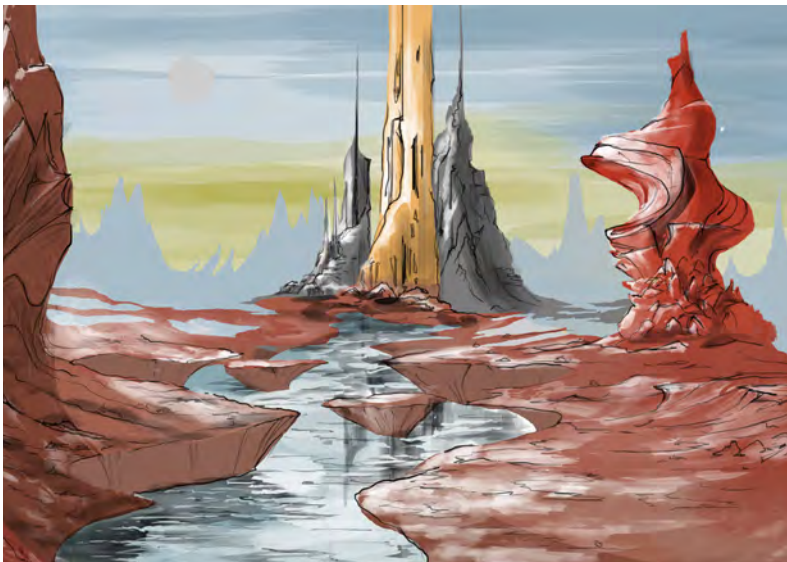
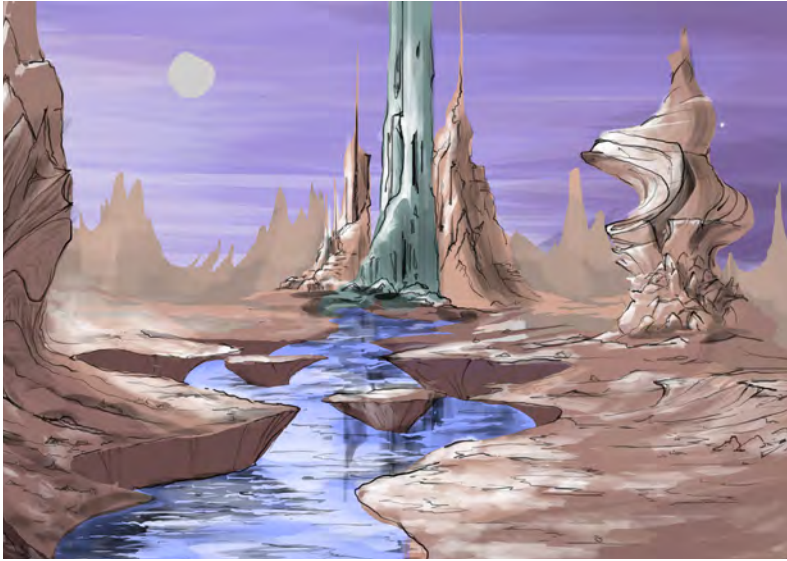
STEP 2



STEP 3

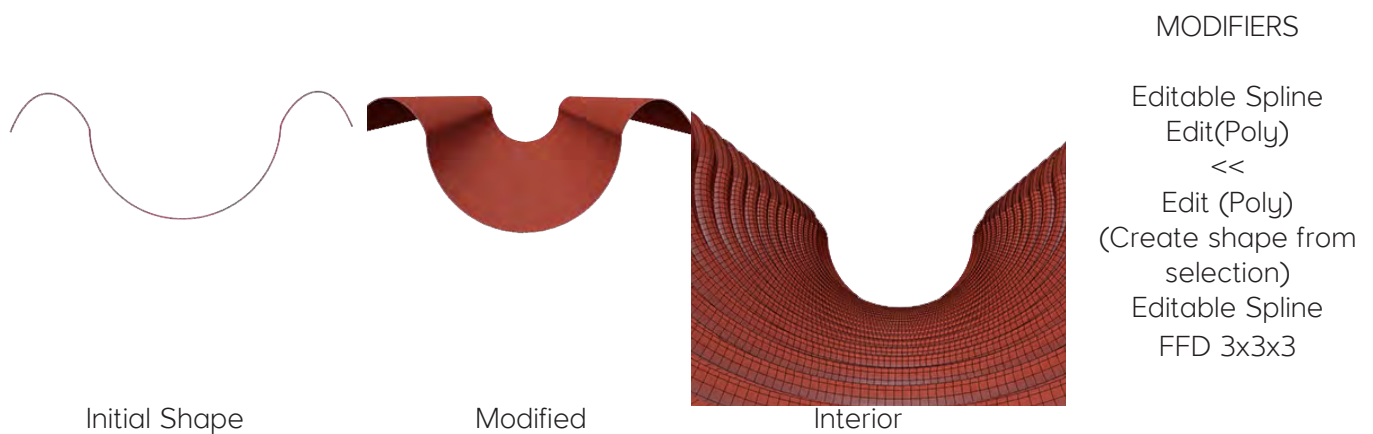
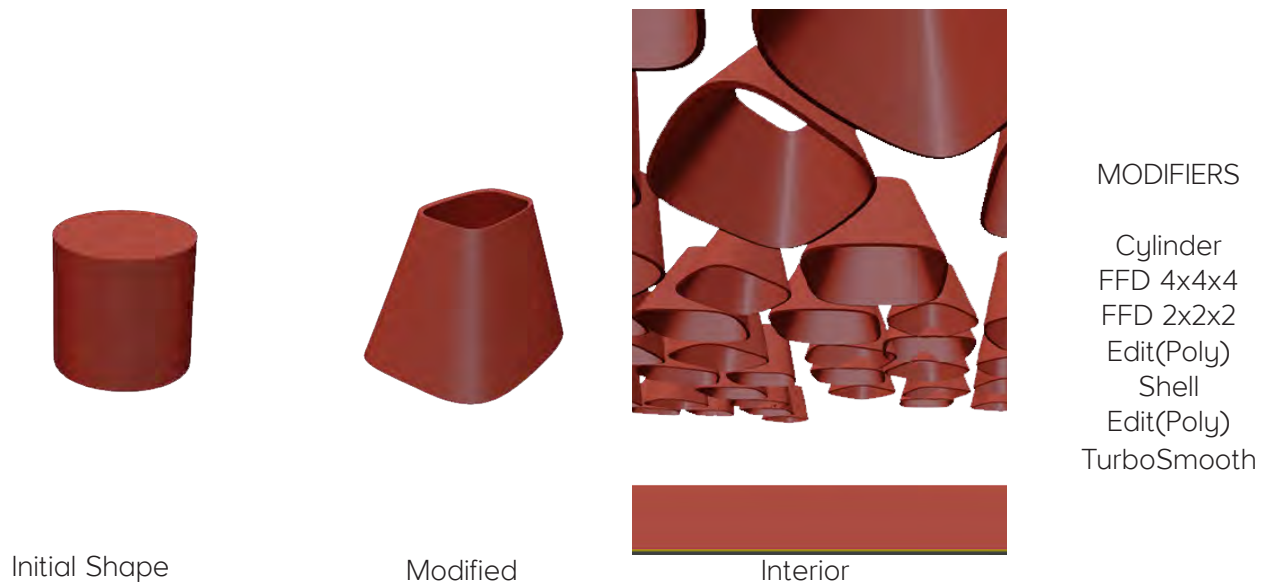


STEP 4



## 3D MODELING

3D modeling was used to explore different modifiers in order to create abstract forms that could elicit emotions. The objective was to design formations that appeared disturbing or foreign, provoking themes of dystopia through its design.





Initial Shape



Modified

#### MODIFIERS

Editable Spline  
Bevel  
Edit(Poly)  
TurboSmooth  
Bend  
Twist  
FFD 4x4x4



Further modifications

#### MODIFIERS

Copy  
Scale  
FFD 4x4x4



Further modifications

#### MODIFIERS

Edit(Poly)  
(Create shape from selection)



Initial Shape



Modified

#### MODIFIERS

Box  
Twist  
Edit(Poly)



Initial Shape

Modified

# MODIFIERS

Box  
Edit(Poly)  
FFD 2x2x2  
Edit(Poly)  
Boolean



Further modifications

# MODIFIERS

Edit(Poly)



Further modifications

# MODIFIERS

Edit(Poly)



Further modifications



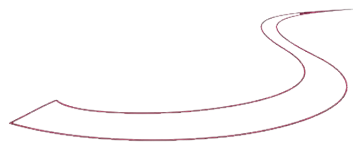
Further modifications



Further modifications

# MODIFIERS

Edit(Poly)



Initial Shape



Modified

## MODIFIERS

Line  
Bevel  
Edit(Poly)  
FFD 4x4x4



Initial Shape



Modified

## MODIFIERS

Line  
Bevel  
Edit(Poly)  
FFD 4x4x4



Initial Shape



Modified

## MODIFIERS

Editable Poly  
Shell  
TurboSmooth



Initial Shape



Modified

#### MODIFIERS

Editable Poly  
TurboSmooth  
FFD 2x2x2  
FFD 3x3x3  
Edit(Poly)



Further modifications

#### MODIFIERS

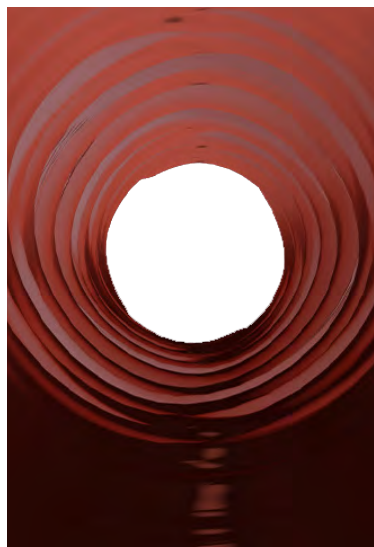
Copy  
FFD 3x3x3  
Edit(Poly)



Initial Shape



Modified



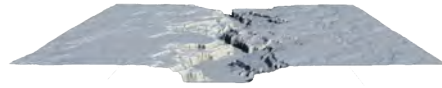
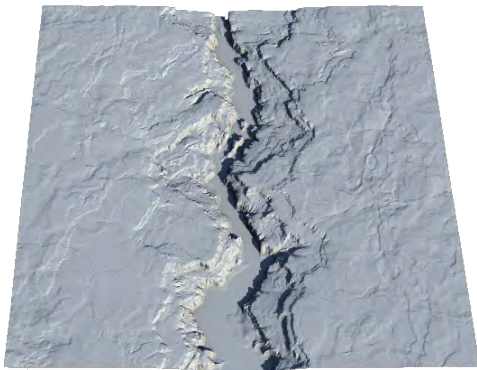
Interior

#### MODIFIERS

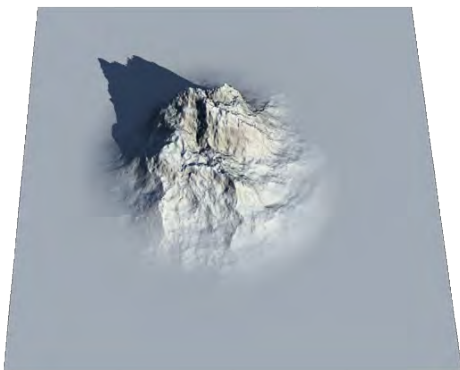
Sphere  
Scale  
Twist  
TurboSmooth  
Slice

## TERRAIN MODIFICATIONS

The terrain used in the scenes was created in the program GAEA - a powerful tool for terrain generation that enables accurate landscape shaping. Starting with the canyon base, two mountain forms were added to the composition. A range of erosion algorithms was considered to obtain realistic surfaces. Furthermore, incorporating water features like a sea, river, and lake was tested.

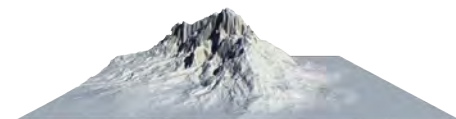
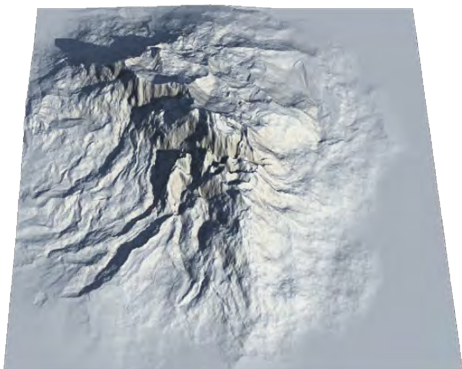


canyon - initial terrain



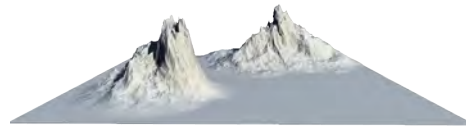
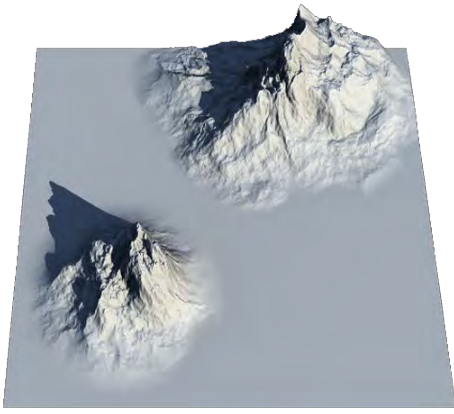
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height - 3.00  
basic  
low  
seed - 20988  
x - 0.50  
y - 0.55

adding mountain 1



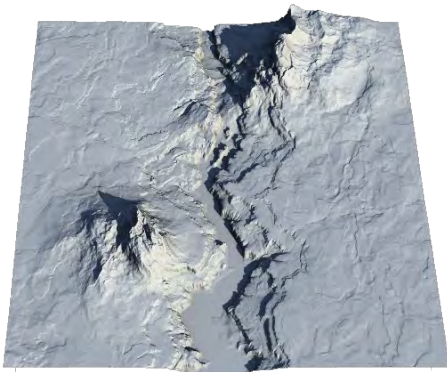
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height - 3.00  
basic  
medium  
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x - 0.48  
y - 0.61

adding mountain 2



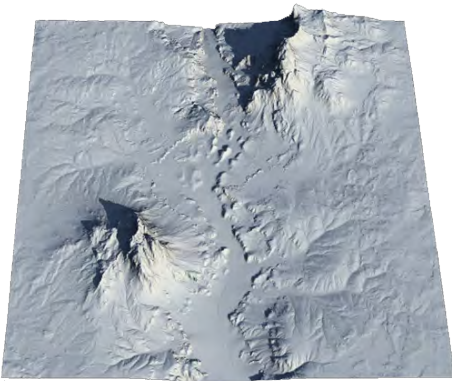
blend  
ratio - 0.50

combining mountains



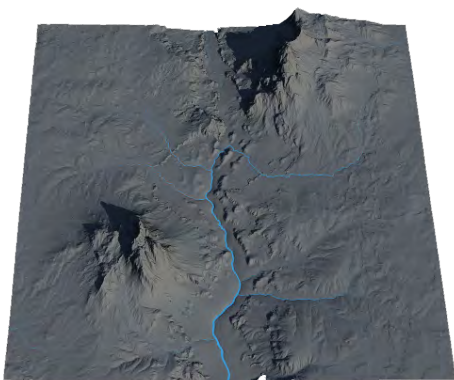
glow  
ratio - 1.00

combining mountains and canyon



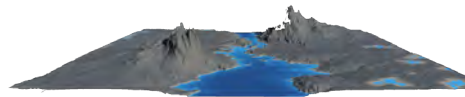
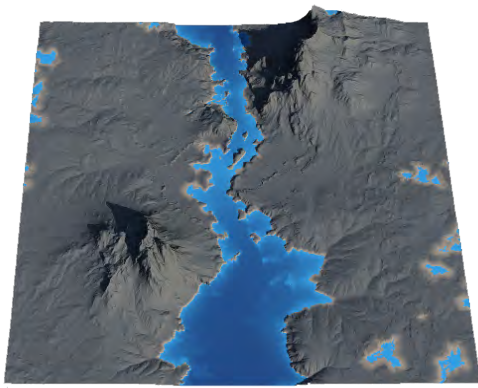
strenght - medium  
density - medium  
material - ultra  
channel depth - medium  
channel width - medium  
deposits - medium  
removal - medium  
bulk - low  
seed - 11242

wizard erosion



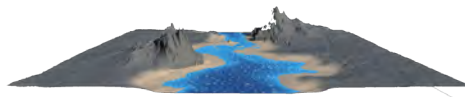
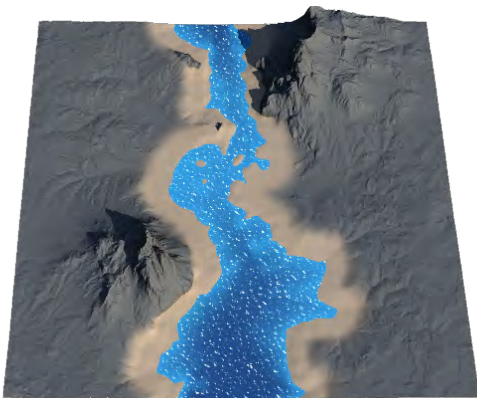
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width - 0.20  
depth - 0.20  
downcutting - 0.10  
river valley width - 0  
headwaters - 200  
seed - 21753

rivers



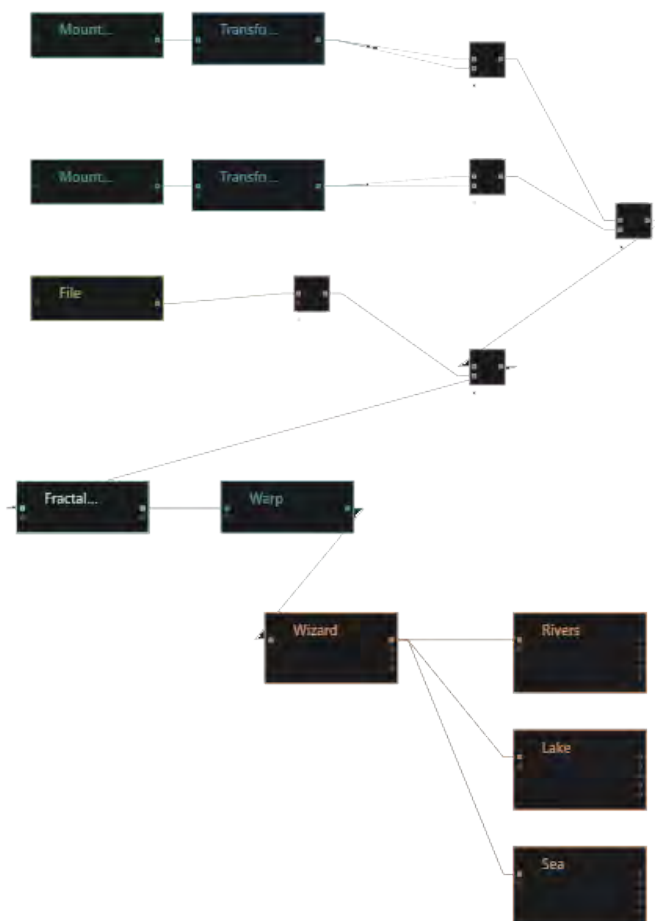
precipitation - 11.87  
 small lakes - 0.00  
 water floor - 0.00  
 shore size - 0.25  
 altitude bias - 0.50  
 size bias - 0.00

lake



level - 0.06  
 shore size - 0.20  
 shore height - 0.20  
 variation - 0.00

sea



## 3D MODELS SOURCING AND OPTIMIZING

A large amount of time was dedicated to sourcing and preparing 3D assets for incorporation into Unreal Engine when creating dystopian environments.

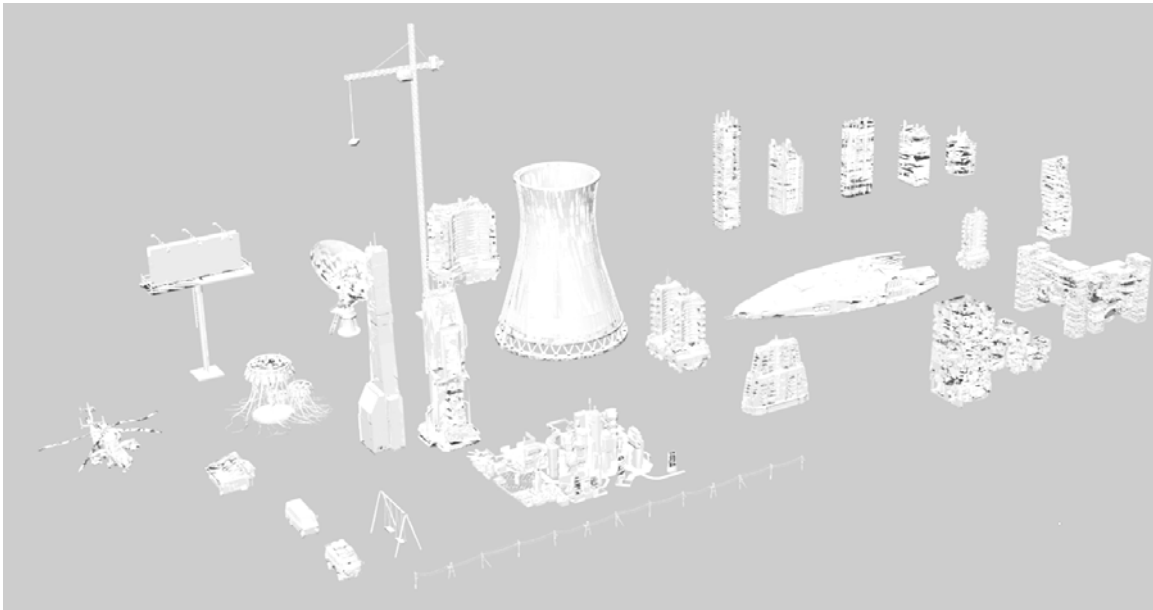
Before importing, every asset needed comprehensive optimization in 3dsmax/Blender: material IDs were revised to guarantee that each surface had a unique Scaline Material assigned.

To further enhance Unreal's performance, every model's separate elements were integrated into a single mesh.

Pivots were centred to guarantee accurate alignment. UVW mapping was set as a box (200cmx200cmx200cm).

The world coordinates of each model were put back to (0, 0, 0).

Used websites: Fab, Sketchfab, 3dSky.



## LIGHT AND ATMOSPHERE

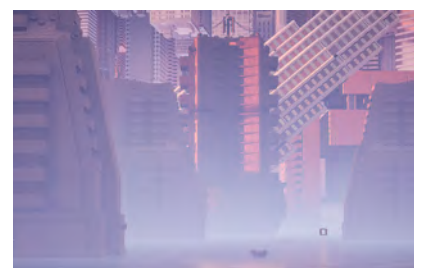
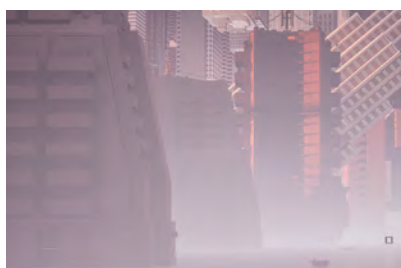
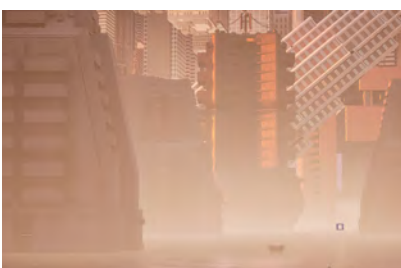
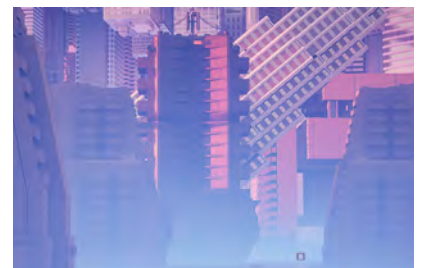
In order to enhance the lighting and atmospheric feel throughout the scenes, different methods were investigated. First, the **HDRI Backdrop** function was used with HDRI maps sourced from **Poly Haven**, where changes were applied to the **colour**, **hue/saturation**, and **brightness** of the cubemaps, occasionally alongside directional lighting. Ultimately, this method was abandoned in favor of the **SunSky** system featuring **ExponentialHeightFog**, which was implemented across all environments.

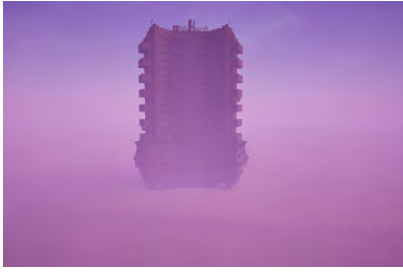
By modifying the **latitude** and **longitude** of the sun, the **SunSky** setup - which consists of components such as **SunLight**, **DirectionalLight**, **SkyAtmosphere**, **VolumetricCloud**, and **CompassMesh** allowed precise control of lighting conditions.

Relevant variables were modified to elicit different times of the day, such as **Sky Luminance Factor**, **Ground Radius**, **Directional Light** temperature and intensity, and **Volumetric Cloud** altitude.

While the **ExponentialHeightFog** was precisely modified for **density**, **height falloff**, and **inscattering color**, **LocalFogVolumes** were implemented for selected regions with customized albedo values and radial and height fog densities.

Moreover, the careful arrangement of shining **neon elements** enhanced the atmosphere, contrast, and narrative emphasis in each scene.







**design**

## ENVIRONMENT 1



### DYSTOPIAN ARCHITECTURAL AND NON-ARCHITECTURAL QUALITIES - ENVIRONMENT 1



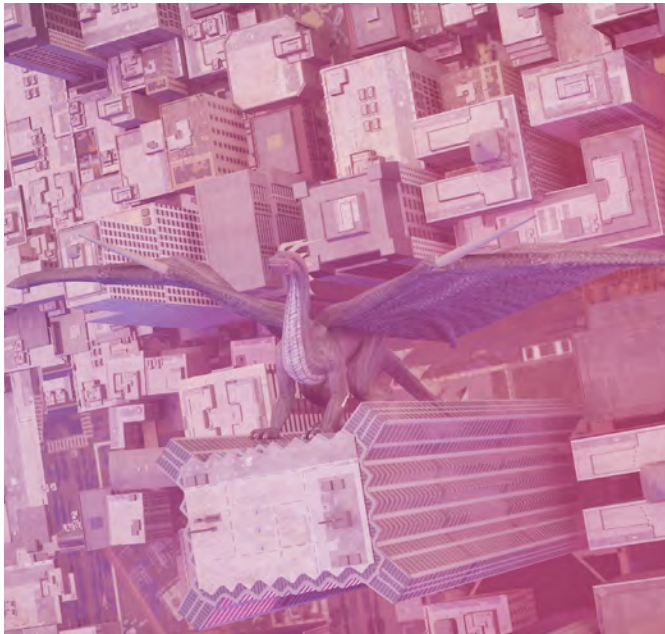
#### **Moon and space ships**

The moon and the ships eliminate the sensation of freedom typically associated with looking up. They represent omnipresence.



### **Familiar architecture in an unknown environment**

Despite the odd layout, the buildings seem contemporary. This distinction between familiar buildings and their unusual spatial arrangements results in a haunting conflict - a reality that resembles our own yet follows different principles.



### **Dragon**

A depiction of different worlds, variety, and imagination. Its presence disrupts the realism of the surroundings and indicates that this future holds not just technology but also unusual and possibly non-human beings.

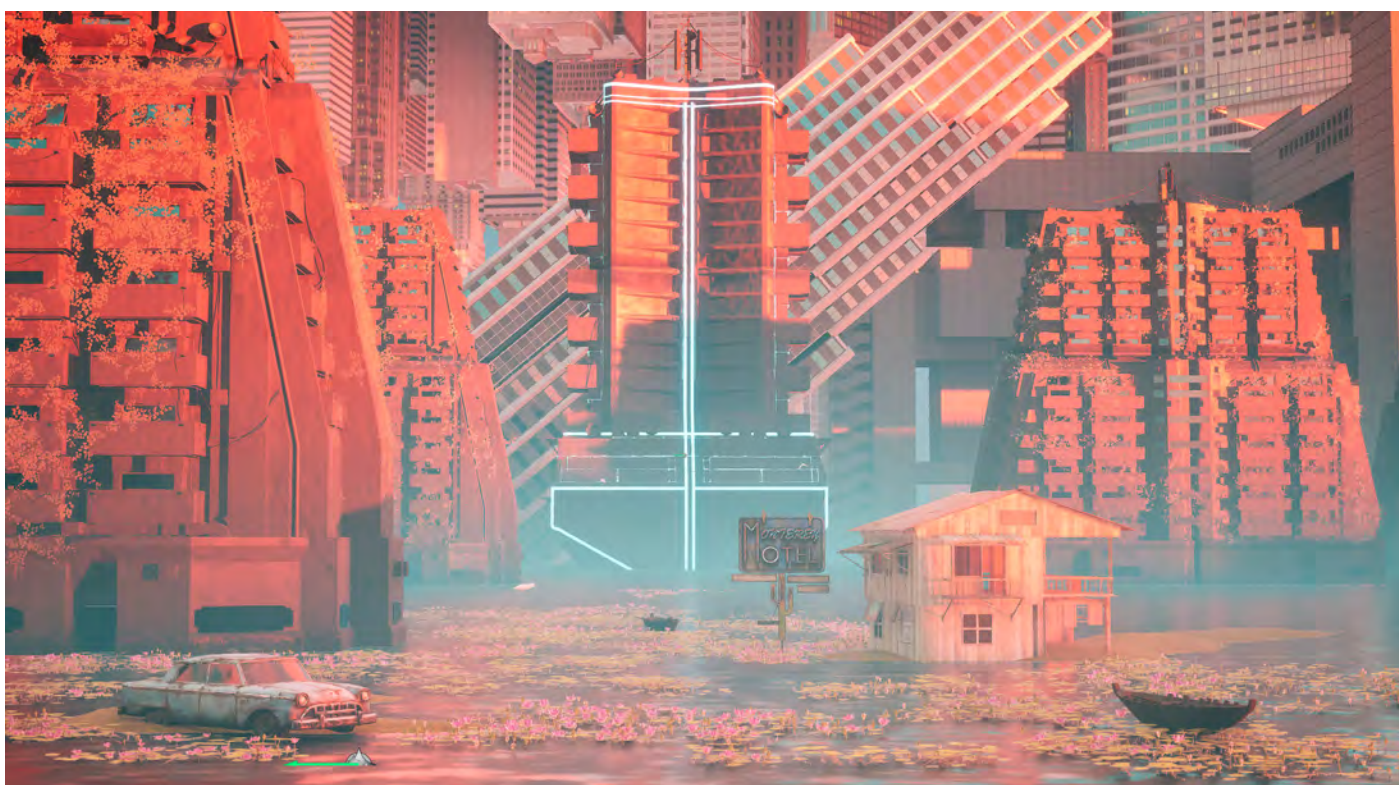


### **Pink, purples and blues**

A surreal blend of colours creates a gentle, serene atmosphere that approaches a dreamlike ideal. However, it appears to be intentionally established, as if the dream is being orchestrated or designed.

## ENVIRONMENT 2





## DYSTOPIAN ARCHITECTURAL AND NON-ARCHITECTURAL QUALITIES - ENVIRONMENT 2



### Abandoned motel

The personal experience has been overpowered in a society driven by grandeur and spectacle, as demonstrated by a deserted motel overshadowed by towering buildings.



### Neon Lights

Bright neon lights cut through the dark environment, illuminating the foggy scenery with a stark, artificial glow. These elements evoke a sleek, futuristic aesthetic.



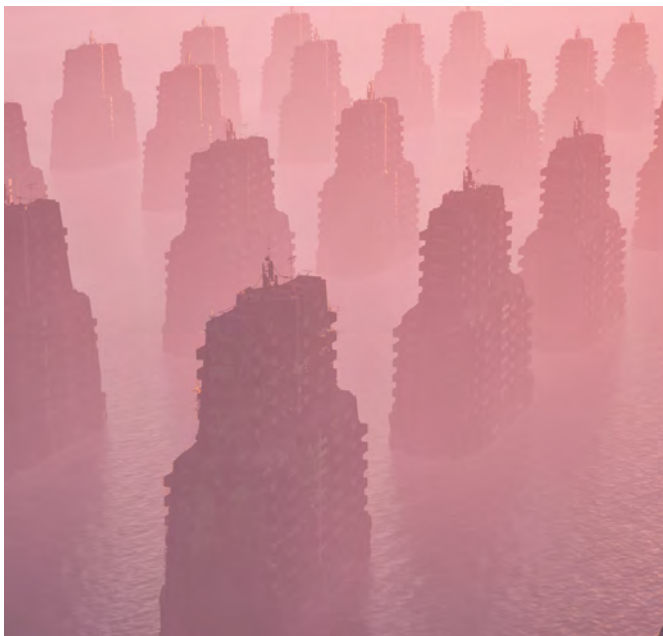
### Car wreck

The car wreck indicates a story of neglect and disrepair, illustrating how the human presence has declined.



### **„Wear Your Mask”**

The billboard presents a concept of control rooted in fear. It serves as a haunting reminder of mandates from the pandemic, reimagined in a future characterized by observation, lack of personal identity, and leadership.



### **Metabolist-style buildings**

Uncanny, otherworldly rhythm evokes feelings of dominance and confusion for these buildings that are repeated endlessly.



### **Water lilies**

Lilies float gracefully, providing a striking, poetical distinction. Their existence indicates nostalgia and tranquil beauty in contrast to harsh surroundings.



### Space ships

High above, spaceships fly, serving as a representation of outside domination. Their indefinite function (monitoring? invasion?) causes discomfort and allows for various interpretations, highlighting a theme of the surveillance of a superior force.



### Balloon

The balloon represents a naïveté, fleeting freedom, or a memory that resists the overwhelming environment. A visual pause, a moment of tenderness in a world full of existential anxiety, is offered by this juxtaposition, which subtly elicits a sense of humanity in the scene.



### Buildings in the air

This oneiric arrangement disturbs the observer's sense of direction, portraying a reality free from the constraints of natural rules.



## ENVIRONMENT 3





## DYSTOPIAN ARCHITECTURAL AND NON-ARCHITECTURAL QUALITIES - ENVIRONMENT 3



### **Glowing city lights**

An unspoiled area of wealth, a continuous development, in contrast to the foreground's decay.



### **Abandoned brutalist skyscrapers**

These deteriorating structures suggest unsuccessful attempts at control and power.



### **Vegetation**

Nurturing plants on concrete buildings serves as a quiet resistance to industrial control and represents the natural world's slow yet unstoppable reclamation.



### **Cooling towers**

As cooling towers dominate like guardians of pollution, observers are reminded that industrial activity persists despite the surrounding decline. These structures imply a culture where environmental damage is regarded as the norm.



### **Microsoft, Apple, Netflix**

Formerly seen as indicators of innovation and world-wide impact, they now remain like relics of culture, indicating the persistence of brand identity even in deterioration.



### **Flooded landscape**

This serves as a reminder of the unrestrained impacts of climate change. It evokes the vision of a world left to flood with no one remaining to reclaim it.



### **Helicopter wreck**

It suggests an unsuccessful effort to intervene or break free.



### **Spherical space ship and car**

Once a symbol of freedom, the car now remains motionless, a relic of human dreams halted by disappointment. The presence of otherworldly ships, resembling something extra-terrestrial, indicates the unknown creeping upon the ordinary.



### **Crane**

Amidst the remains, a stationary and decaying crane stands as a symbol of stunted development, a testament to a construction project that either remained incomplete or fell under the weight of its own aspirations.



## ENVIRONMENT 4









## DYSTOPIAN ARCHITECTURAL AND NON-ARCHITECTURAL QUALITIES - ENVIRONMENT 4



### **Neglected building**

Symbolizes the deterioration of what was once known, a location once vibrant now empty. An emblem of lost protection or neglected homeliness.



### **Alien Machine**

Its form resembles that of an octopus, representing an invasive form of intelligence. It glows within the natural surroundings and symbolises technology.



### **Slow regeneration of nature**

The environment gradually reoccupies man-made structures, implying the deterioration or abandonment of society.



### **A distant city**

Represents a centralized regime or technological elite that is untouched by destruction. It gives the impression that society has moved on and left this one behind.



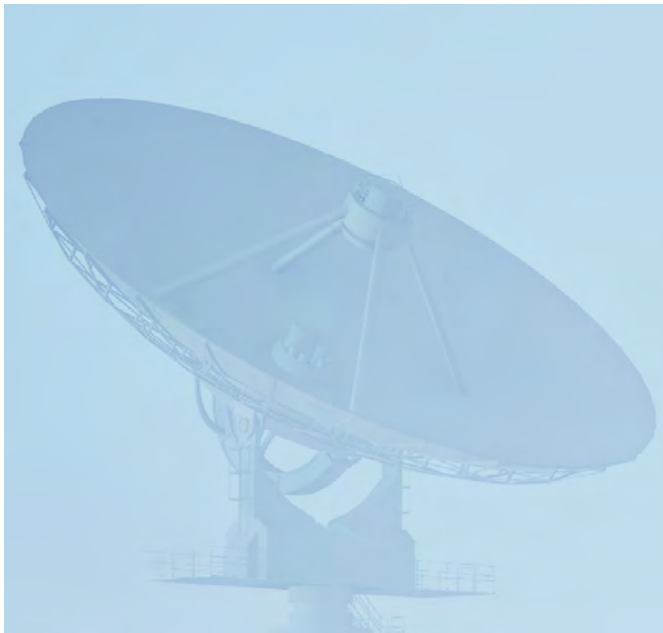
### **Billboard eye**

This is a direct reference to surveillance authorities and constant supervision. It evokes the idea of a dystopian deity or ruler keeping an eye on everyone. The decay of personal freedom, ongoing observation, and the anxiety of being watched.



### **Swing**

A strong symbol of grief, emptiness, or lost childhood. It stirs feelings of sorrow.



### **„You are here”**

This sentence, which typically helps with finding a way on a map, takes on a darker meaning in this scenario - it implies surveillance, control, and a forced presence.

### **Fairy lights**

They may evoke a sense of comforting nostalgia from childhood in contrast to the harsh environment. The lights might symbolize blurred rememberings, misleading warmth, or the illusion of protection.

### **Telescope satellites**

As the internal realm deteriorates, telescope satellites are showcasing humanity's misguided gaze outward.



**reflection**

This thesis aims to explore how dystopian architectural environments could act as vessels for cultural importance in speculative futures and how they may provoke emotional responses linked to loss, remembrance, and longing. A bleak architectural aesthetic seen in crumbling industrial structures or the ageing of buildings stirs a feeling of sadness and melancholy. The architecture of the era mirrors the society and culture. Thus, it becomes crucial to examine how architecture manifests a sociological idea, such as dystopia, which has its origins in utopian attempts.

The project transformed into an artistic investigation and a study of emotional reactions to spaces characterised by deterioration, desolation, and change, utilizing digital design, AI-generated imagery, and movie editing. The scenes completed throughout the thesis raise questions concerning what is retained and what is abandoned amidst the ruins of a possible future, emphasising the struggle between continuity and collapse.

What is perceived as dystopian or utopian is highly subjective and relies on an individual's understanding of the subject, their ability to envision future developments and their overall perspective on contemporary society. One man's dystopia is another man's Utopia (Farca, G. (2018).

In the end, the project reinforced the idea that architecture is more than just its physical form; it is a medium for collective memories, anxieties, and hopes. Even in its deterioration, it communicates. As we move forward into unpredictable times, the imaginative spaces we create can serve as both warnings and mirrors. They are illustrating not only potential paths ahead but also what we need to keep in mind.

To conclude, upon finishing this paper, I find myself driven to further investigate the emotional and narrative impact of immersive architectural environments in digital media. The techniques presented create a wide and ever-evolving area for exploration that is both analytical and artistic. The connections between architecture and memory, identity, and mood of our envisioned futures remain still largely unexamined.



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## **appendix**

## VINCENT VAN GOGH + SALVADOR DALI

### Used prompts:

Explore the surreal landscapes of your mind. Let your imagination run wild in this dreamy world inspired by the twisted genius of Salvador Dali and Vincent van Gogh

Step into a world of swirling colors and distorted shapes, where reality and imagination collide. Let your mind wander through the surreal landscapes of your dreams, inspired by the twisted genius of Salvador Dali and Vincent van Gogh.

Explore the surreal landscapes of your mind, where melting clocks and floating elephants are just the beginning. Let your imagination run wild in this dreamy world inspired by the twisted genius of Vincent van gogh and salvador dali































## **SALVADOR DALI**

### **Used prompts:**

Immerse yourself in the fantastical realms of your subconscious, where boundless creativity thrives in a surreal landscape echoing the innovative spirit of Salvador Dali. Picture an otherworldly setting filled with melting clocks, distorted figures, and dreamlike symbolism. This masterpiece of imagination unfolds like a mesmerizing painting, showcasing intricate details and vibrant colors that transport viewers into a world of bizarre beauty. Surreal, enchanting, and meticulously crafted, this image evokes awe and wonder at every glance

Explore the limitless possibilities of your imagination as you journey through a dreamlike world, inspired by the surreal masterpieces of Salvador Dali

Step into a realm of boundless creativity, where the laws of reality are bent and twisted in a surreal landscape that mirrors the innovative spirit of Salvador Dali

Let your mind wander through a fantastical landscape, where the boundaries of reality are blurred and the only limit is your own imagination, just like in the surreal works of Salvador Dali.











































## **RENE MAGRITTE + MAURITS CORNELIS ESCHER (M.C. ESCHER)**

### **Used prompts:**

Step into a dreamy world, where the boundaries between reality and imagination blur, and the soft pastel hues of R. Magritte's art come to life in every detail of the unsettling atmosphere.

Enter a surreal realm where the laws of physics are mere suggestions and the vibrant colors of Magritte's paintings dance around you in a dreamlike haze

Immerse yourself in a world of impossible shapes and mind-bending illusions, where the lines between fantasy and reality are blurred and the only limit is your imagination

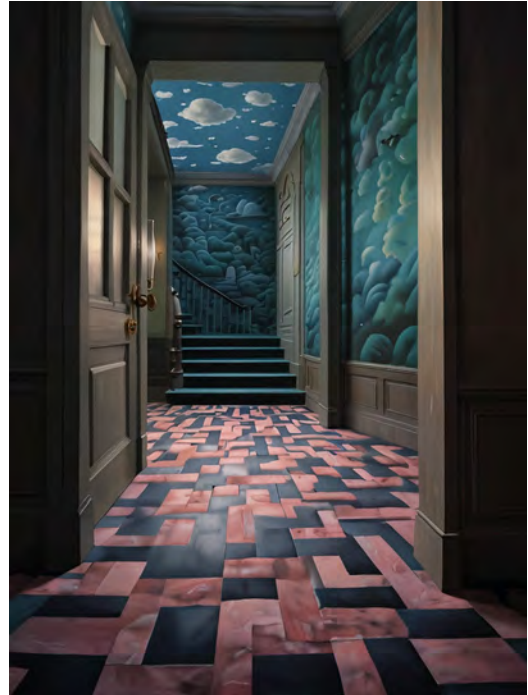
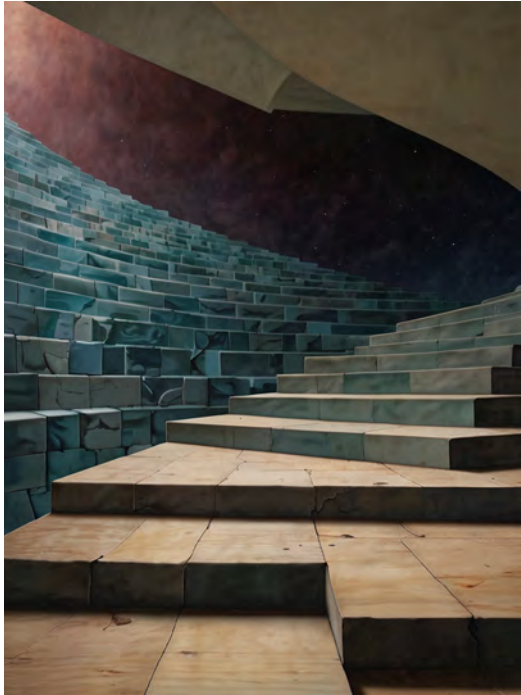
Step into a dreamy landscape where the soft pastel hues of Magritte's art blend with the intricate geometries of Escher's mind-bending creations, creating a mesmerizing and otherworldly experience

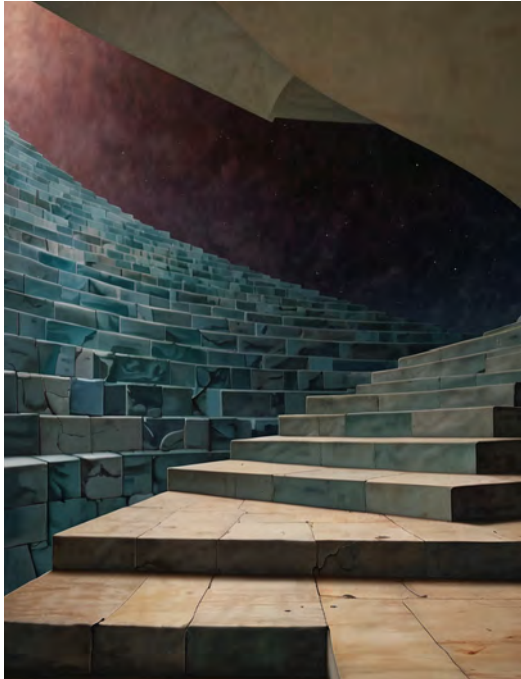






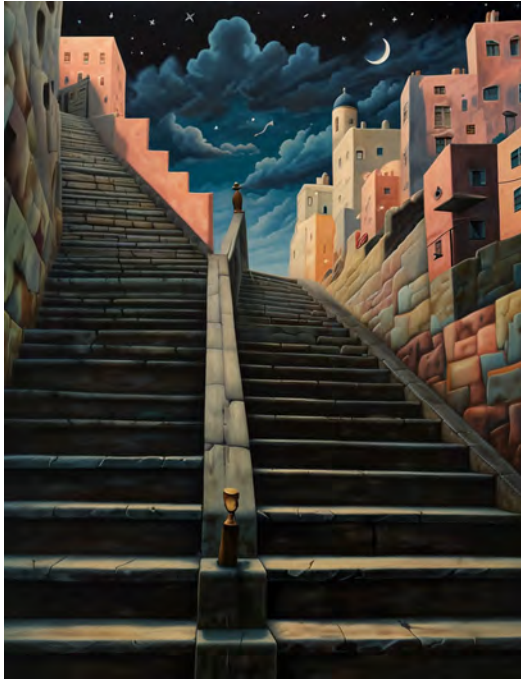




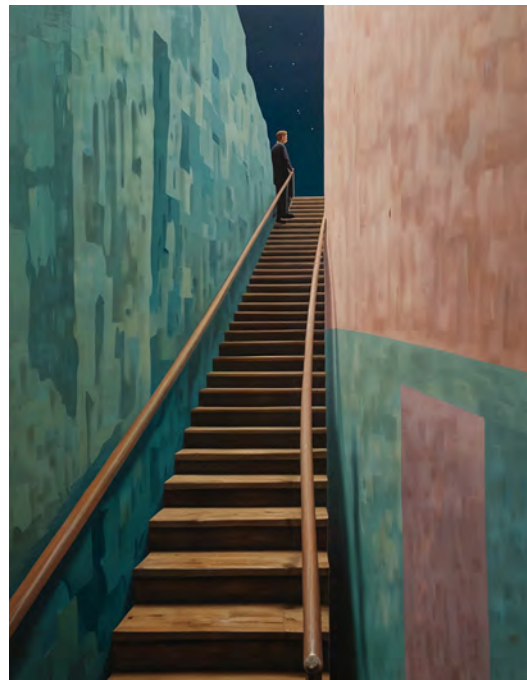


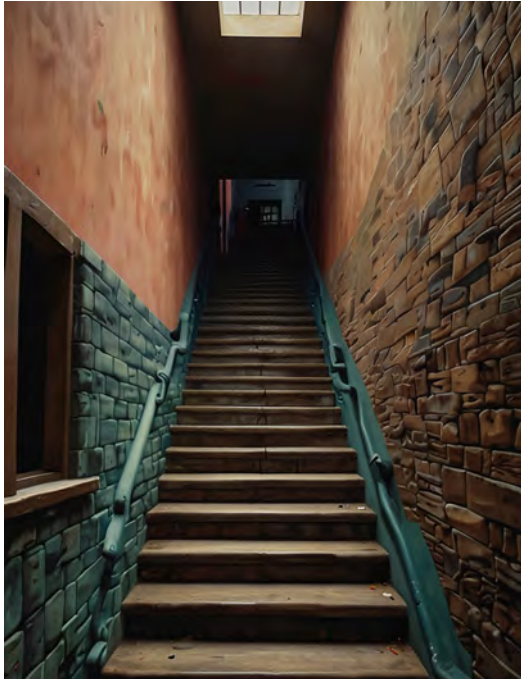


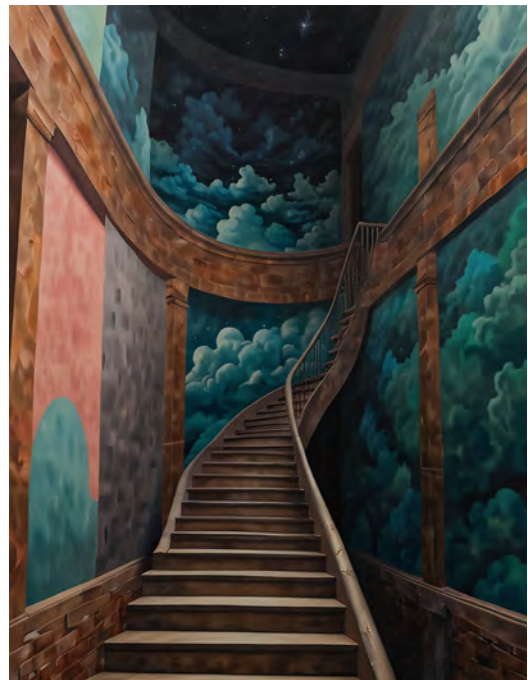






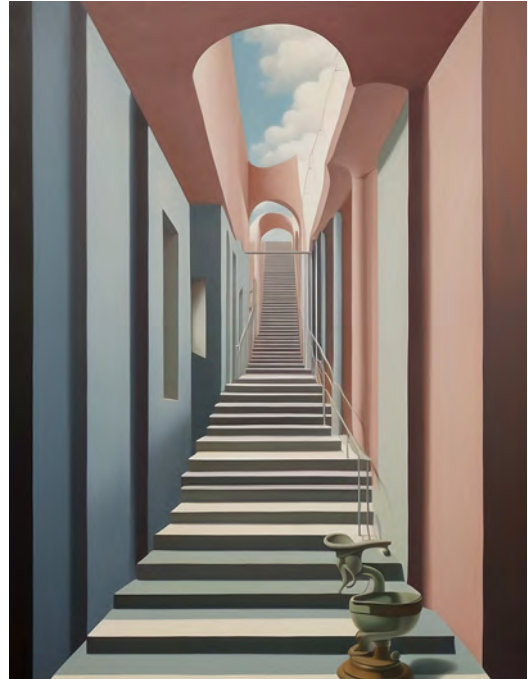














## **ZDZISLAW BEKSINSKI + SALVADOR DALI**

### **Used prompts:**

Explore the surreal landscapes of your mind. Let your imagination run wild in this dreamy world inspired by the twisted genius Zdzisław Beksiński

Explore the surreal landscapes of your mind. Let your imagination run wild in this dreamy world inspired by the twisted genius Zdzisław Beksiński and his bloody sky and Salvador Dali

Step into a realm of endless possibilities, where the boundaries of reality are blurred and the only limit is your imagination. Explore the surreal landscapes of your mind, inspired by the twisted genius of Zdzisław Beksiński and Salvador Dali. Let your creativity flow and watch as your dreams come to life in vivid detail.

Explore the surreal landscapes of your mind. Let your imagination run wild in this dreamy world inspired by the twisted genius Salvador Dali and Zdzisław Beksiński

Explore the dystopian surreal landscapes of your mind emitting an air of melancholy. Let your imagination run wild in this dreamy world inspired by the twisted genius Zdzisław Beksiński and Pirenesi. The atmospheres is slow and hazy, as though time itself has slowed down

Explore the dark dystopia surreal landscapes of your mind. Let your imagination run wild in this dreamy world inspired by the twisted genius Zdzisław Beksiński and his painting

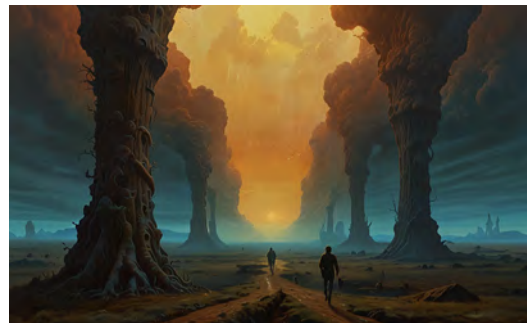


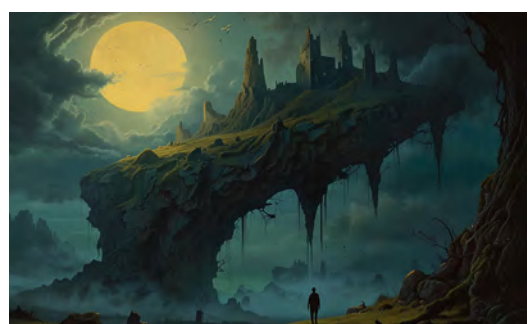
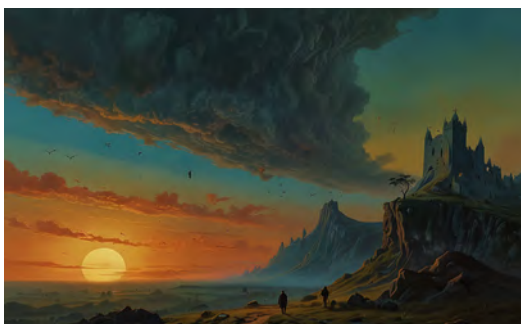






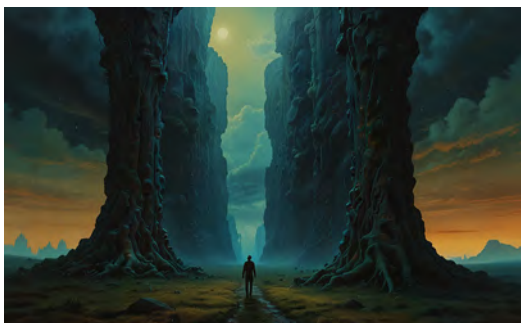




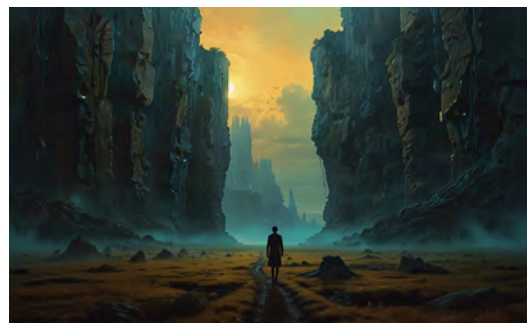


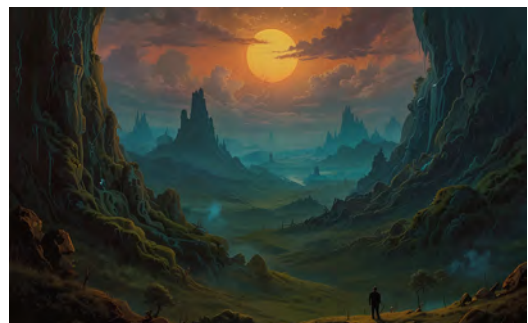


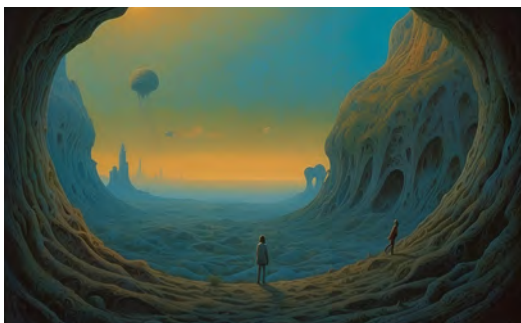






























































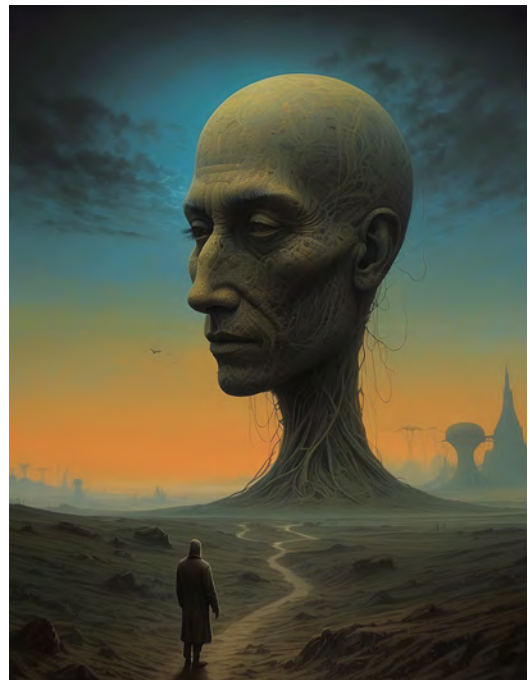














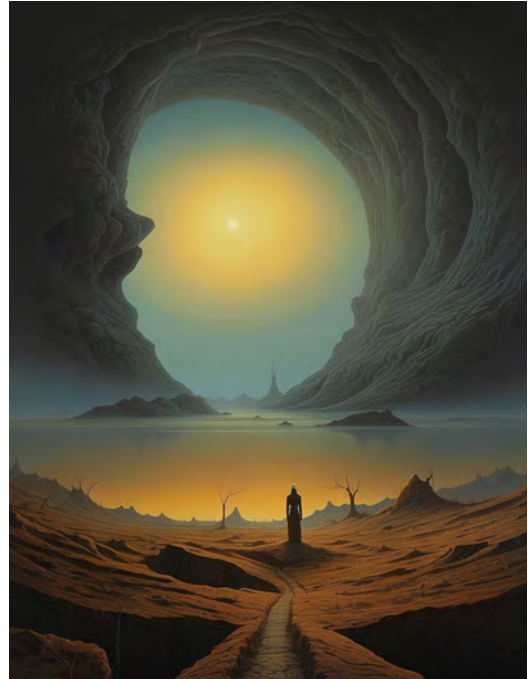






























## **JAMES TURRELL + RENE MAGRITTE**

### **Used prompts:**

Step into a dreamy impossible world, where the boundaries between reality and imagination blur, and the impossible spaces of R. Magritte and James Turrell come to life in every detail of the uncanny and unsettling atmosphere

Explore the surreal landscapes of your mind, where the impossible becomes possible and the boundaries of reality are blurred. Let the dreamy atmosphere of R. Magritte and James Turrell inspire your journey

Immerse yourself in a world of endless possibilities, where the lines between reality and imagination are constantly shifting. Let the uncanny and unsettling atmosphere guide you as you step into a dreamlike realm

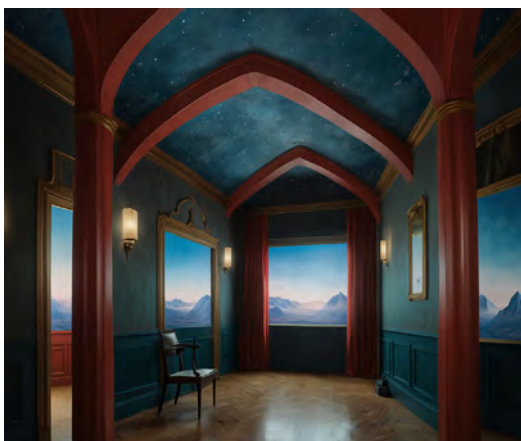
Experience the impossible spaces of R. Magritte and James Turrell come to life before your eyes. Let the vivid and detailed renderings transport you to a dreamy and otherworldly realm











## **GIORGIO DE CHIRICO + SALVADOR DALI**

### **Used prompts:**

In this dreamy world, the lines between reality and imagination are blurred, and the spaces of Salvador Dali's and Giorgio de Chirico's art come to life in every detail. Imagine walking through a surreal landscape, where the sky is a canvas and the ground is a stage for your wildest dreams

As you step into this dreamy world, the boundaries between reality and imagination begin to blur. The vibrant colors and distorted shapes of Salvador Dali's and Giorgio de Chirico's art come to life in every detail, creating a surreal landscape that is both mesmerizing and unsettling

In this fantastical realm, the laws of physics are mere suggestions and the impossible becomes possible. As you wander through the surreal landscape, you can't help but feel like you've stepped into a painting by Salvador Dali or Giorgio de Chirico, with every detail meticulously rendered in vivid colors and mind-bending shapes

As you explore this otherworldly landscape, you can't help but feel like you've entered a dream. The familiar spaces of Salvador Dali's and Giorgio de Chirico's art come to life in a new and unexpected way, with every detail carefully crafted to transport you to a place where reality and imagination collide























## **ANDREI TARKOVSKY + RENE MAGRITTE**

### **Used prompts:**

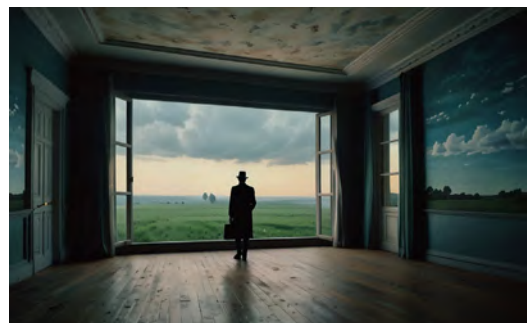
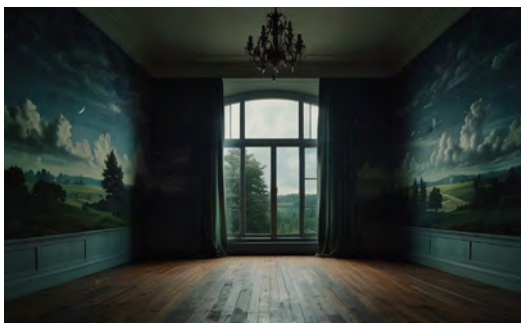
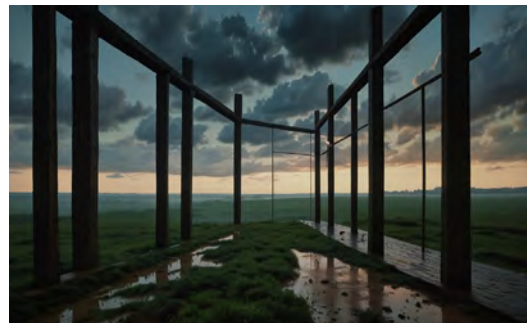
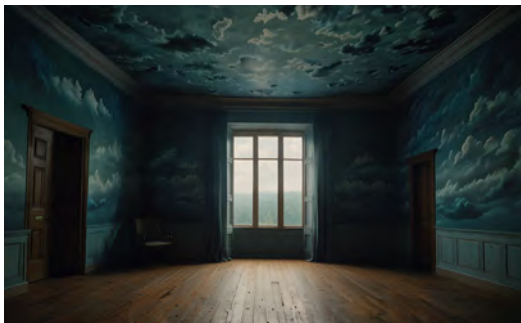
In this dreamy world, the lines between reality and imagination are blurred, and the spaces of Tarkovsky's movies and Magritte's art come to life in every detail. Imagine walking through a surreal landscape, where the sky is a canvas and the ground is a stage for your wildest dreams

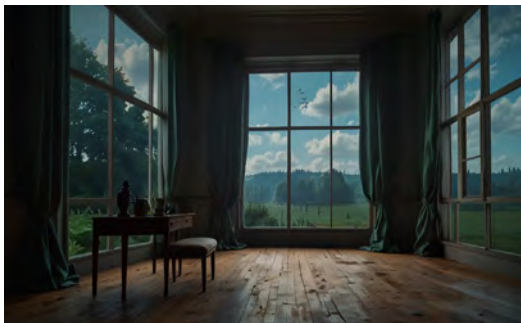
Step into a world where the impossible becomes possible, and the familiar becomes strange. In this dreamlike realm, inspired by Tarkovsky's movies and Magritte's art, you'll find yourself surrounded by surreal landscapes and uncanny characters. Let your imagination run wild as you explore this visually stunning and thought-provoking world

Explore a world where the laws of reality are bent and twisted, where the ordinary is transformed into the extraordinary. In this surreal realm, inspired by the works of Tarkovsky and Magritte, you'll encounter bizarre landscapes and enigmatic beings

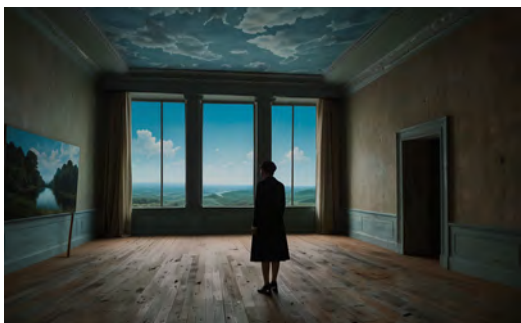
Step into a dreamlike world where the impossible becomes possible and the mundane becomes extraordinary. Inspired by the surreal visions of Tarkovsky and Magritte, this realm is a fusion of reality and fantasy, where anything can happen















## **SALVADOR DALI + RENE MAGRITTE**

### **Used prompts:**

Step into a surreal dreamscape, where the line between what's real and what's imagined is blurred. Salvador Dali's and R. Magritte's art is brought to life in vivid detail in every corner of the unsettling atmosphere. This exquisite painting captures the essence of surrealism with its intricate details and masterful use of color, inviting viewers to get lost in its mesmerizing world

Explore a twisted world where reality and fantasy collide, as Dali's melting clocks and Magritte's floating bowler hats come to life before your eyes

Immerse yourself in a surreal dreamscape, where the boundaries of the mind are pushed to their limits and the impossible becomes possible

Step into a world of paradoxes and illusions, where Dali's melting landscapes and Magritte's floating objects will leave you questioning what is real and what is not



















