

Project Proposal

Project Title:

The Inner Room: An Interactive Animation of Social Anxiety

Brief Choice:

Brief 1: Expanded Animation / Context and Practice

Project Overview

For this project, I plan to create an interactive animated environment in Unreal Engine. The work will explore how social anxiety is produced through everyday urban life, especially through time pressure, digital information overload, and the loss of quiet personal space.

The project will be structured as four connected spaces. The first three spaces each represent a different source of anxiety. When the player has not entered the space, the environment is quiet and still. Once the player enters the trigger area, objects in the room begin to float, separate, and move around the space, while related noises become louder and more layered. The final space will be the quietest room, representing the inner voice. It will invite the

player to slow down, listen inward, and think about what they truly want, rather than simply following the rhythm of society.

Through this project, I want to use animation not only as a visual form, but as a spatial and emotional system. The player's movement through the environment will activate sound, motion, and atmosphere, turning anxiety into something that can be experienced physically and gradually released.

Concept and Theme

The main theme of this project is the relationship between social anxiety and everyday environments. I am interested in how anxiety is not always created by dramatic events, but often by ordinary things: alarm clocks, notifications, deadlines, construction noise, traffic, crowded spaces, and the feeling that we always need to be faster or more productive.

The three anxiety spaces will focus on:

1. Time Anxiety

This space represents the pressure of time, efficiency,

deadlines, and the fear of falling behind. Objects may include alarm clocks, calendars, schedules, countdown numbers, ticking clocks, and unfinished to-do lists. When the player enters, these objects will float and scatter around the room while ticking sounds, alarms, and countdown noises become louder.

2. Information Anxiety

This space represents the pressure of digital communication and constant online connection. Objects may include phones, notification bubbles, message windows, unread icons, emails, likes, comments, and warning symbols. When activated, these elements will appear, overlap, and move around the player, accompanied by notification sounds, vibrations, keyboard typing, and fragmented voice messages.

3. Urban Noise and Space Anxiety

This space represents the pressure of living in a dense city, where personal space is constantly interrupted by external noise and movement. Objects may include windows, construction signs, traffic lights, bills, rental documents, advertising screens, road signs, and fragments of walls or streets. Sounds may include construction noise, drilling,

traffic, footsteps, subway announcements, and crowd noise. The final space will contrast with the previous three. It will be visually simple, quiet, and slower in rhythm. This room represents the player ' s inner self. Instead of noise and scattered objects, it will contain soft light, minimal sound, and a short text message such as:

“Move at your own pace.

Listen to your inner voice.

You do not have to follow the rhythm of the city.”

Interaction Design

The project will use simple interaction in Unreal Engine. The player will move through four spaces in first person. Each of the first three spaces will contain a trigger area. When the player enters the area, the anxiety source will be activated.

The interaction will include:

Objects floating, scattering, or separating from their original positions.

Sounds becoming louder and more layered.

Visual elements such as text, symbols, lights, or particles appearing in the space.

After the player has experienced all three anxiety spaces, they will be guided toward the final quiet room.

The final room will not require complex interaction. Instead, it will create a moment of pause and reflection. The player will be encouraged to slow down and reconnect with their own thoughts.

Visual and Sound Approach

Visually, the first three spaces will feel unstable and fragmented. I want the objects to look as if they are losing their fixed positions in the world, reflecting how anxiety can make everyday objects feel overwhelming. The floating and scattering objects will create an animated environment that reacts to the player's presence.

Sound will be very important in this project. Each anxiety space will have its own sound identity. For example, the time anxiety room may use ticking, alarms, and countdown sounds; the information anxiety room may use notifications and message alerts; the urban anxiety room may use construction, traffic, and crowd sounds. These sounds will become more intense when the player enters each space.

In contrast, the final room will use very minimal sound, such

as soft ambient noise, breathing, wind, or silence. This contrast will help the player feel the transition from external social pressure to internal calmness.

Technical Plan

I will build the project in Unreal Engine. Since I am still a beginner with UE, I will focus on achievable interaction systems rather than complex game mechanics.

The main technical elements will be:

A first-person player controller.

Four connected interior spaces.

Trigger boxes or collision areas to detect when the player enters each anxiety room.

Blueprint events to activate floating objects and sound.

Simple object movement using Timeline, Move Component To, or pre-set animation.

Sound attenuation and volume control.

Basic lighting and post-processing changes to create emotional atmosphere.

A final text or visual message in the quiet room.

I will avoid overly complex systems such as realistic physics simulation, advanced AI, or fully random object generation.

Instead, I will create controlled animated events that give the feeling of chaos while remaining technically manageable.

Research Context

This project connects to expanded animation because it treats animation as an environment rather than only as a linear film. The animated elements are not just watched by the audience; they are triggered by the player's movement and presence. The work explores how animation can become a system that responds to interaction, space, sound, and emotion.

The project also responds to contemporary social conditions. In modern urban life, people are often surrounded by constant pressure: the pressure to be on time, to respond quickly, to stay productive, and to live within noisy and crowded environments. I want to use this project to question how these everyday pressures shape our emotional state.

Rather than presenting anxiety as only an individual problem, the project considers anxiety as something connected to social rhythms, digital culture, and the urban

environment.

Intended Outcome

The final outcome will be an interactive Unreal Engine scene lasting approximately 3 – 5 minutes. The player will move through three anxiety spaces and then arrive at a quiet inner room. The project will combine animation, sound, interaction, and spatial design to create an emotional journey from external pressure to internal reflection.

My aim is to create a poetic and experimental interactive animation that allows the player to experience anxiety as a changing space. By the end of the experience, I want the player to feel a sense of release and to reflect on the importance of moving at their own pace.

Possible Title Options

The Inner Room

A City That Won' t Stop

Move at Your Own Pace

Rooms of Anxiety

The Quiet After Noise

Listen Inward