



ARS ELECTRONICA 2020

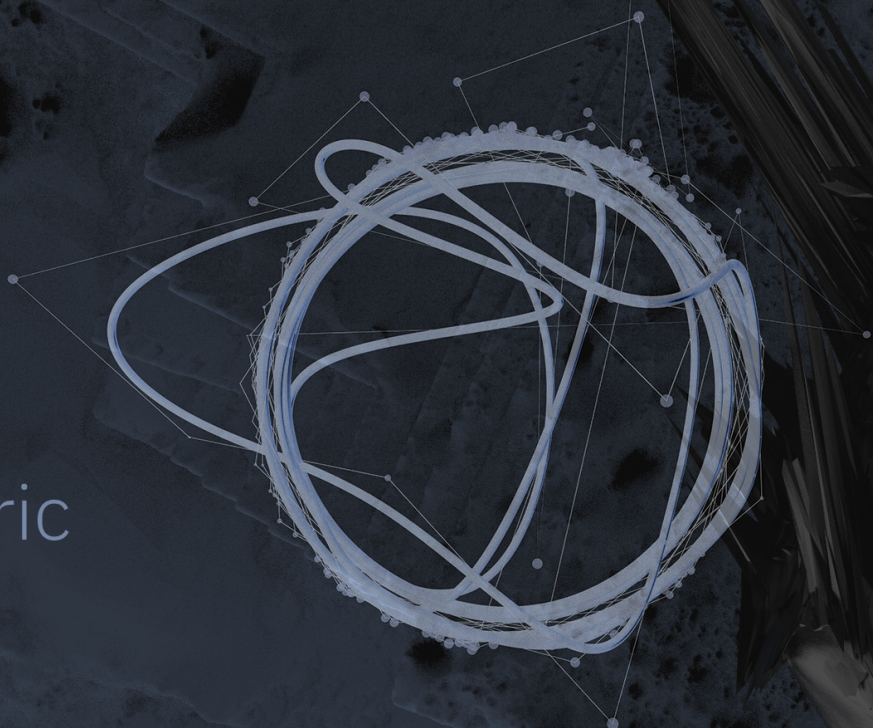
Festival for Art, Technology & Society

Garden PAROS/ GREECE

by **MADE Group**

Random Rhetoric

Ioannis Melanitis (GR)



Random Rhetoric



INTRODUCTION

IN KEPLER'S GARDENS: A GLOBAL JOURNEY MAPPING THE NEW WORLD

Ars Electronica 2020 is a journey mapping the new world and a journey through Kepler's Gardens, which are located in Linz at the JKU Campus and at 120 other locations worldwide. A journey in which ideas and projects span a global network in which what needs to be done will be discussed. All the issues touched upon are marked by a general UNCERTAINTY and the question of how the crisis will shape and change us as individuals and as a society, us as HUMANITY. The focus is on two areas of tension in particular: AUTONOMY and DEMOCRACY as well as TECHNOLOGY and ECOLOGY. w: [ars.electronica.art/keplersgardens](https://www.ars.electronica.art/keplersgardens).

GARDEN CONCEPT

In the context of the Regional STARTS Centers in Greece, the non-profit platform for social innovation projects MADE GROUP, with the support of the Athens Tech College and the Cultural Association of Archilochus of Paros, sets the foundations for future in Paros; the Island of the whitest marble in antiquity. Scheduled upcoming innovative marble techniques of cutting, sculpting and 3d printing with thermoplastic materials include partnerships with the Athens Fine Art School and the Paros ANNEX, the Municipality of Paros, the Marathi ancient Quarry and its local ecosystem.

For Ars Electronica Festival 2020, MADE Group presents Random Rhetoric , GARDEN PAROS/GREECE. It refers to computerized practices in politics, which are carried out through computers under the norm that political ideas operate as an outcome of mechanized processes and statistics, aiming at the absolute persuasion, the seduction of the audience, allured from the representation of a machine mimicking a human being.

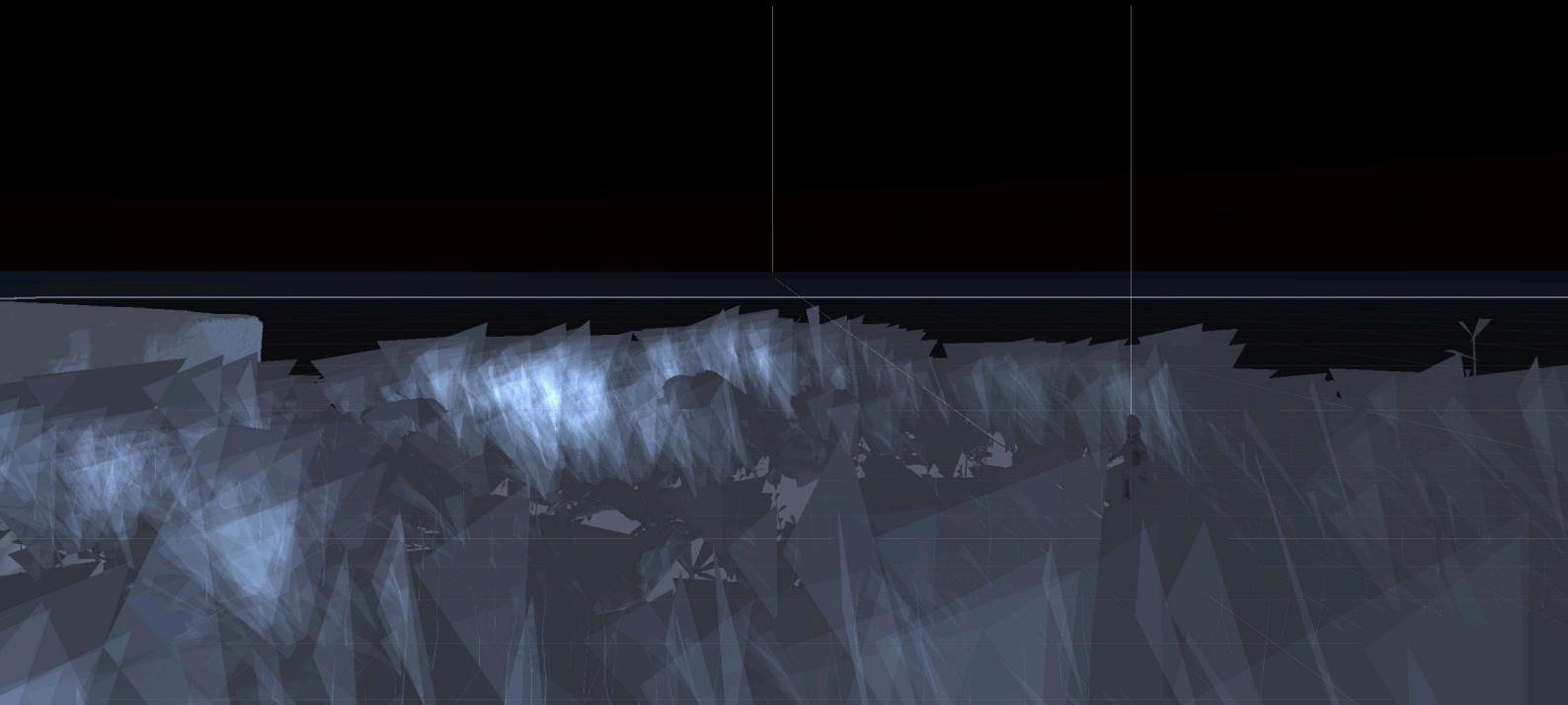
Random Rhetoric

Random Rhetoric

CURATORIAL TEXT

Random Rhetoric assembles democracy with Epicurus' swerve (παρέκκλιση par nklisis; Latin: clinamen); an idea that describes the slight deviation and randomness of atoms from their ordinary pathways. Melanitis' works on democracy refer to a geometrization of the art of oratory and its processes through the randomization of information: Political speech and philosophy emerging from machines and computers render humans to mere viewers or envisage new roles in society. He anticipates that even the official state structures of future dialectics may be derived from self-programming computers.

Epicurus (341-270 BC) founded his school as a counterpoint to Plato's Academy in a Garden outside Athens, where he taught philosophy until his death. Random Rhetoric acts as a metaphor of an epicurean garden, a dynamic place where logos, speech and dialectics are remodeled with the use of machines. The digital environment serves as the main forum where interactive code-based works like The Oratory Machine (a computer programmed in real-time speech synthesis) participate in a philosophical dialogue with the public, reshaping the art of rhetoric in some cases through the pretencing of intelligent dialogue. Attributing fraud to machines is something intertwined with the structural elements of their construction; not accidentally, in etymologies of techne (= art), the entries art and deceit derive from a common root..



Rrandom Rhetoric 3D environment, image courtesy I. Melanitis, 2020

CONTEXTUAL RESEARCH

LOGOMECHANICS

Logos, speech, was always under attack for its relation to fraud and deception. Under the imposition of an electronic flow of information, the handling of speech can be shifted beyond the physical capacity and presence of the orator to mechanized structures, so that the law drafted for an organized society is a codified application of patterns. The art of speech as a machinery of deception was introduced by Aristotle at Rhetoric, a work where speech tactics are analysed as a mechanism of proofing everything .Endogenously false and fuzzy, words can designate anything.

Rhetoric's discredit is further emphasized in its correlation to politics: That is why Rhetoric assumes the character of Politics, and those who claim to possess it, partly from ignorance, partly from boastfulness, and partly from other human weaknesses, do the same. For, as we said at the outset, Rhetoric is a sort of division or likeness of Dialectic, since neither of them is a science that deals with the nature of any definite subject, but they are merely faculties of furnishing arguments. (Rhetoric , 1355b- 1356a).

MACHINES AS THE NEW PHILOSOPHERS

Every intelligent condition sets up a space for its future evolutions in a idiosyncratic, erratic context ; machines are the new philosophers. Machines and their interference in dialectics will render humans as social outcasts, pariahs. Prevalent, irreplaceable, in a self- legitimation process, without being asked, machines will synthesize their "Reverse Turing" tests. A reversed Turing test may have the form of : Are humans able to exhibit intelligent behaviour equivalent to, or indistinguishable from, that of a robot?

In parallel, randomness is at the core of dialectics, as Logos, words, sentences are inherently dubious, erratic, indefinite. In reasoning about the relationship of words and objects, the philosopher Antiphon makes a unique conception, that nothing real corresponds to the name of an object, leaving onomatology in the realm of pure chance, while true knowledge becomes inaccessible. Name correctness becomes a key point for Antiphon and should be under survey: Names can be erroneous. The concepts we use are not delimited by the exact way their correspondent objects are.

Furthermore, randomness is, much more than words, deeply entangled in the inner nucleus of the sentence structures, impenetrated by outward information.

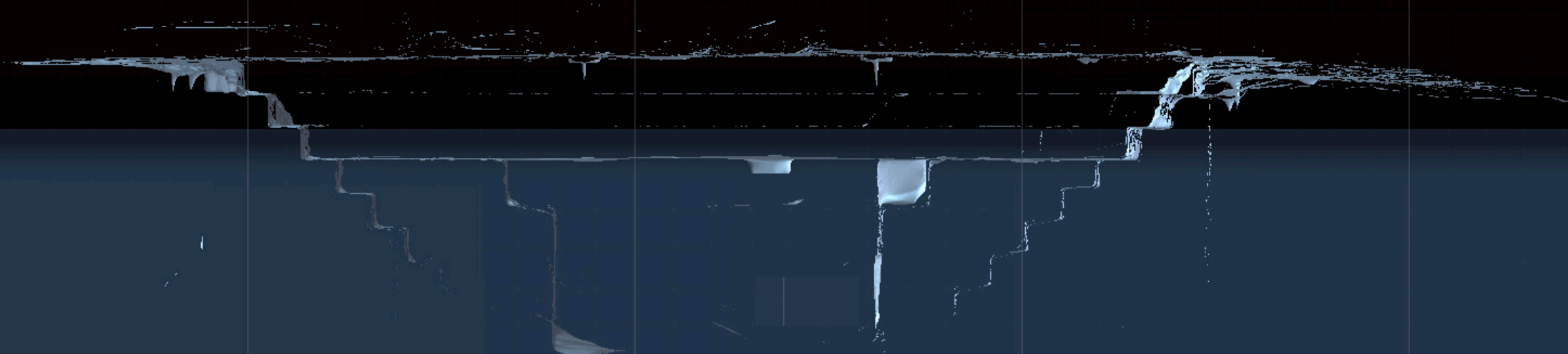
In the Random Rhetoric Digital Forum, a computer is programmed to respond to and interact with dialectical questions about the role of citizens in the republic. The audience might notice that this interaction opens up a thinking procedure unexpected and random, but still logical (all sentences are "logical", even if their row might be more complex). In the first phase of the work, there is no indication of the orator's presence such as face or body other than the sound of his speech. An orator assumes to be on a stand, a BEMA. In the scenery of the game, a reversed model of an ancient BEMA is used instead . The existence of a reversed speech order misleads the individual into believing that machinic responses are spontaneous or unrehearsed.

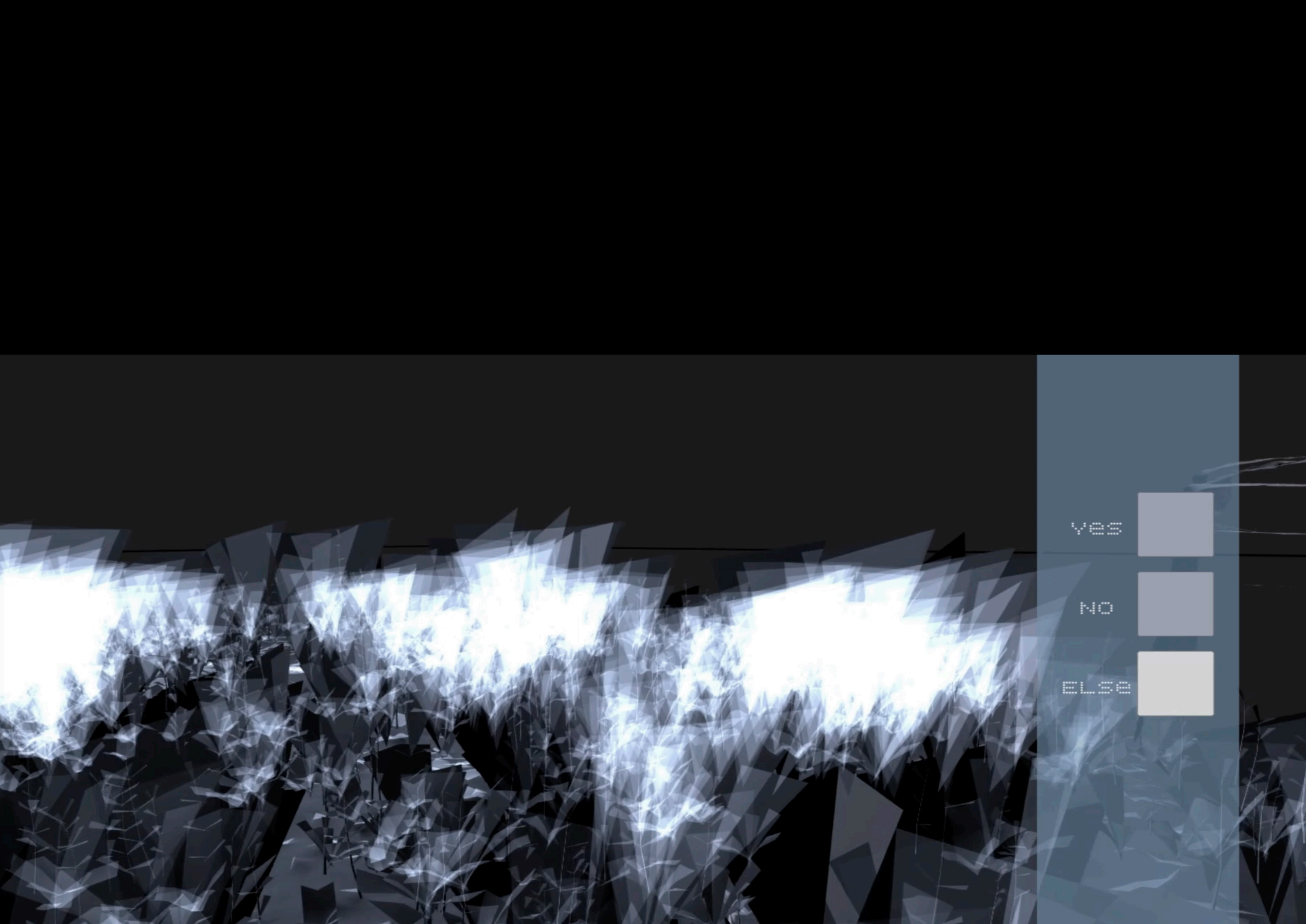
extract from I. Meanitis' research "Logomechanics", 2014-2020

CREATIVE PROCESS & VISUAL REFERENCES

Melanitis is interested in the informational context of words. Logos, speech and oratory are still at the core of politics. By producing a text manipulator, a speech-based engineered procedure, sentences acquire meanings outside their linguistic radius. The structure of a sentence-based dialectics in politics generates feedback loops with the environment that produces in a form of staged dialectics.

A model of a computer-based button interaction has been set as if an invisible philosopher is conducting an interactive dialectical procedure. Instead of leaving the computer to generate an AI response, the work Random Rhetoric uses the artist's predetermined responses to defraud the audience. Contemporary experiments known as intelligent svirtual assistants such as Siri , Alexa or Lyra, are an initial step towards enriching human responses to software controlled devices. If in the future we imagine a very sophisticated machine that aims to trick humans, it would probably use a technique of simulating reactions that appear to be programmed in real time though completely predetermined.





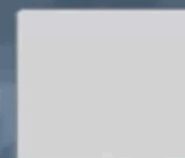
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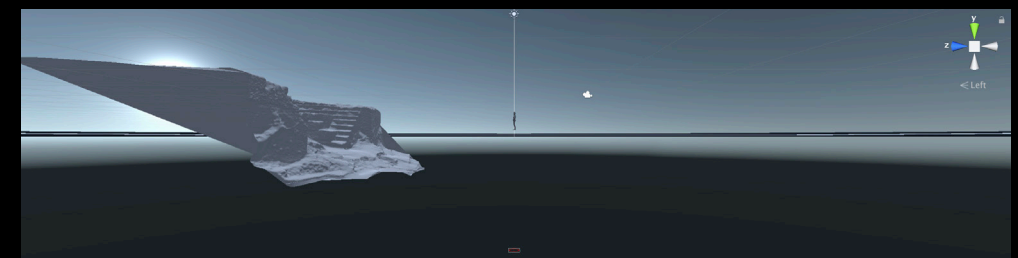
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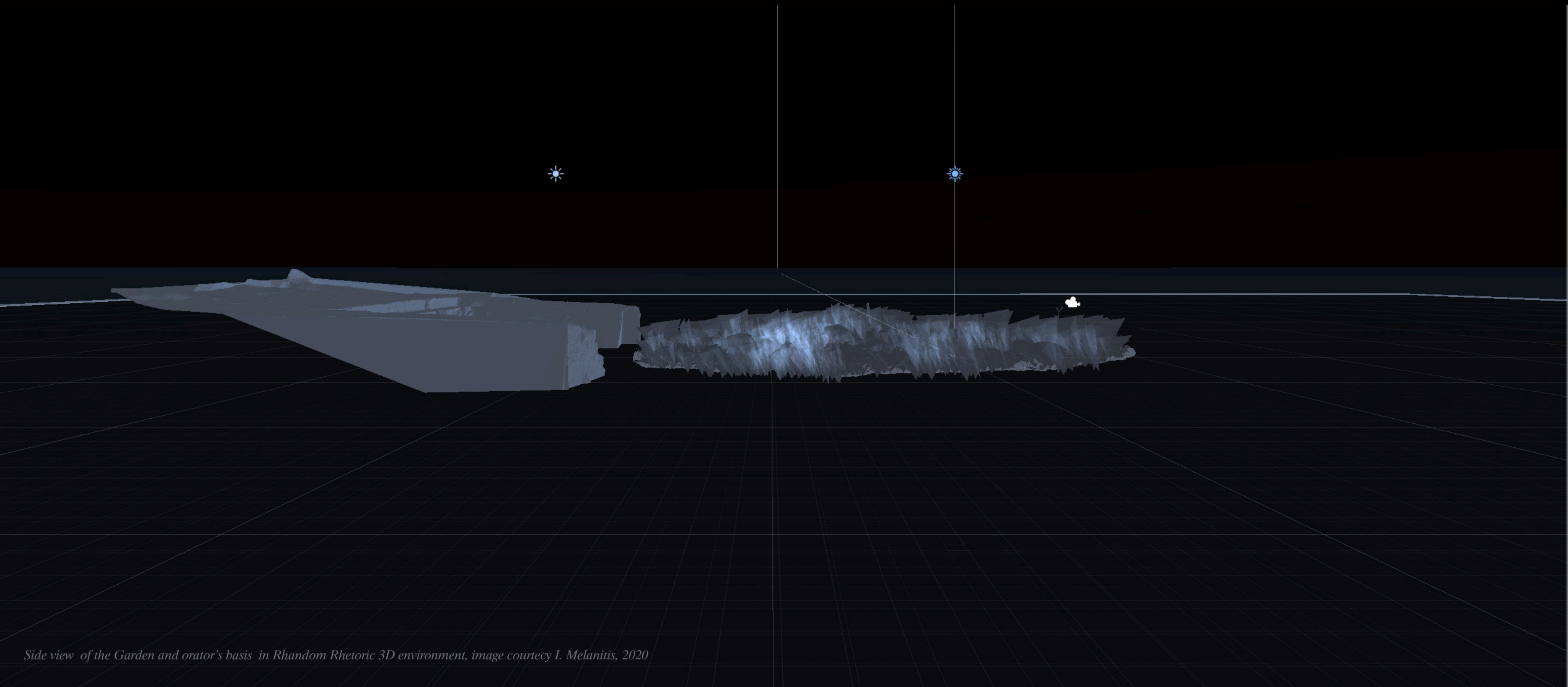
Orator in front of reversed orator's basis in 3D environment, image courtesy I.Melanitis, 2020



The Athenian Pnyx, Orators stand,BEMA, set as 0,0,0, points in space



Throne of Pelops' at Mount Sipylus, at Magnesia / A reversed model of a Pnyx (orator's base) would look like Throne of Pelops' at Mount Sipylus, at Magnesia, -a hole in the rock.

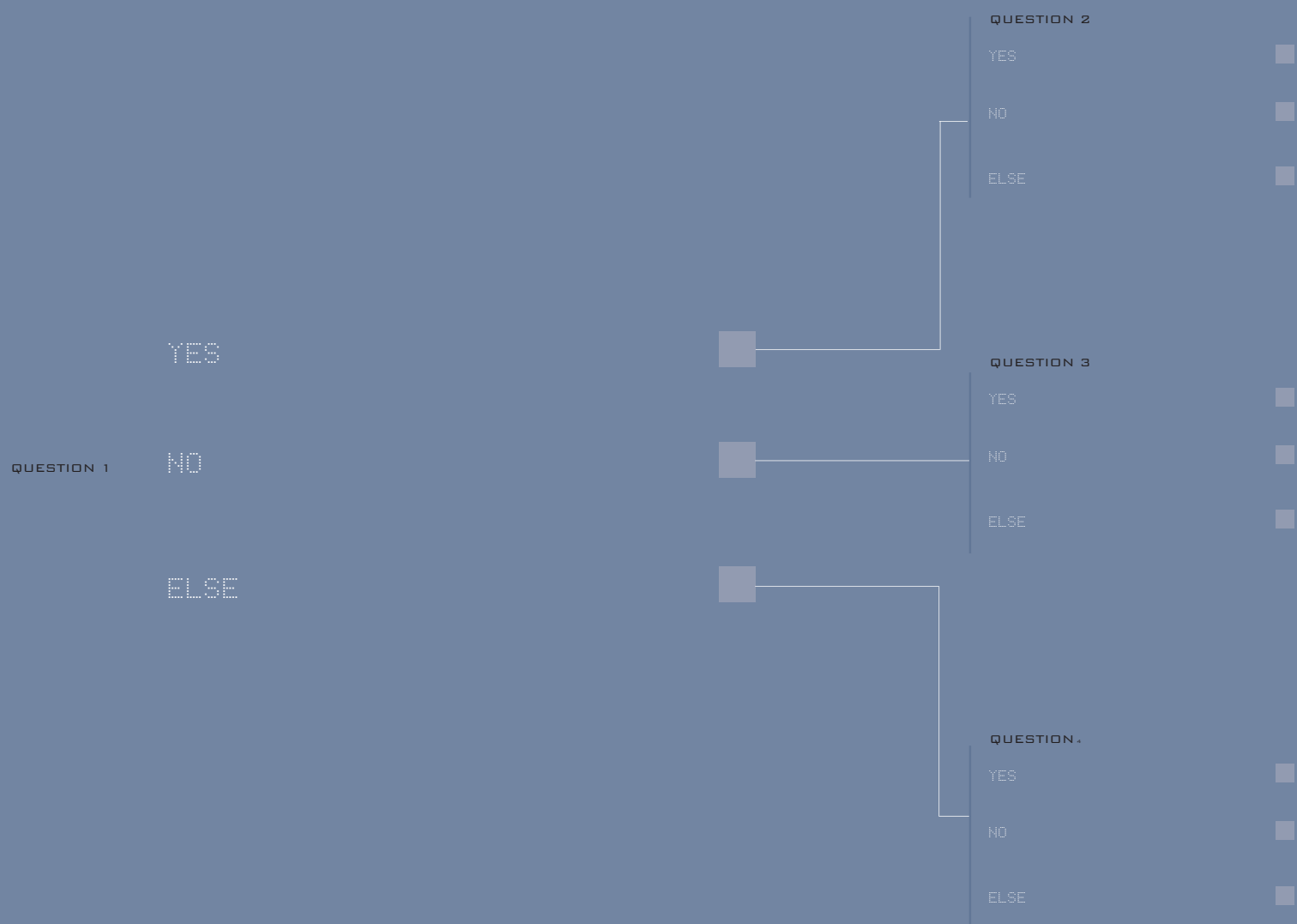


Side view of the Garden and orator's basis in Rhandom Rhetoric 3D environment, image courtesy I. Melanitis, 2020



RANDOM RHETORIC

QUESTION TREE STRUCTURE



STRUCTURE OF THE WORK

A question tree with 121 output answers mimics a philosophical conversation with the audience. Each question of the orator triggers a new interface with three paths- YES, NO, ELSE. The latter responds to non-recognizable words or any other word except yes or no.

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION

UNITY digital environment/ First Person Character Controller for player & interaction with POI (point of interests)/ PC/Mac and WebGL

An initial idea of the work was the ORATOR, / Logomechanics, an orator in computer, installation with applescript code programming by V. Zoi., 2014

BIOGRAPHY

Random Rhetoric has been conceived by Ioannis Melanitis with the technical support of Dr Ioannis Nikolakopoulos, Academic Director at Athens Tech College & Alexandros Kanakis, Computer Scientist, Athens Tech College.

Academic/Artist Bio

Yiannis Melanitis is a conceptual artist, theorist and academic, based in Athens. His artistic research examines the biological dynamics and the role of Information as a new Conceptualization . One example is his recent project 'Leda Melanitis' where his gene is micro-injected into a butterfly to produce a genetically modified transgenic butterfly breed.

After studying painting, sculpture and digital art at the Athens School of Fine Arts, his practice finds expression through heterogeneous media works and derives from physical sciences, philosophy, epistemology, linguistics and politics to synthesize cross disciplinary ideas within the art and science discourse. He is currently an Assistant Professor at the Athens School of Fine Arts, Department of Sculpture and he is working in Paros island to bridge communities between practitioners and the local ecosystem through educational and cultural programmes.

Publications and international exhibitions include the MACRO Museum of Contemporary Art (Italy), the HAU (Switzerland), Museu D. Diogo de Sousa (Portugal), the Tongeren Museum and Praetorium (Belgium), Generative Arts (Polytechnic of Milan), the National Museum of Brazil, the National Library of Brazil, the Athens Science Festival amongst others. He has published essays on art and philosophy and his texts are translated into English, Italian, Korean and Greek.

IM official website: www.melanitis.com

Wikipedia profile: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yiannis_Melanitis

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

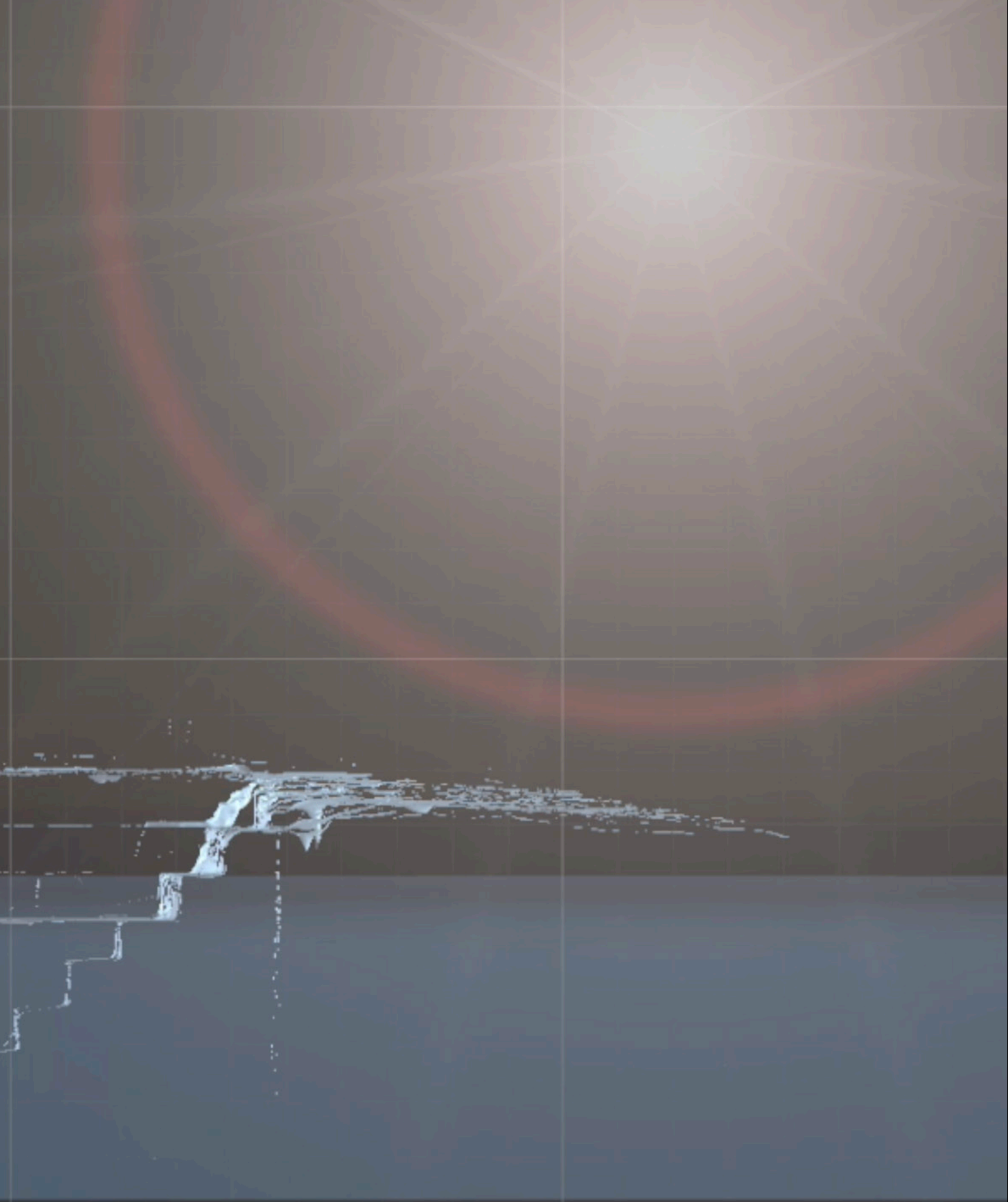
Project Credits: Produced & supported by MADE Group for the Regional STARTS Center in Greece with the support of Athens Tech College & the Cultural Association of Archilochus in Paros Island.

MADE GROUP is a non-profit policy advisory, strategy design and cultural consultancy for social innovation initiatives and projects. MADE aims at creating sustainable futures, promoting cross-disciplinary synergies and cultivating digital culture with a social impact. Its core mission is to bridge the digital divide based on the potential for growth, innovation and social inclusion that emerging technologies and the EU Digital Single Market Strategy can bring. MADE is the implementing partner for co-ordinating a network of Regional STARTS Centers in Greece. Memberships: Digital Skills and Jobs Alliance, Group of Shared Knowledge Platforms for Sustainability and Social Innovation-CAPSSI, supported by the EU Commission.

STARTS (Science + Technology + Arts) is an initiative of the European Commission under the Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme. It was launched in 2015, following up the findings of previous activities funded by the European Commission, namely ICT & Art 2012, FET-ART, ICT ART CONNECT 2013 and ICT ART CONNECT study, whose results demonstrated the worldwide emergence of communities of hybrid collaborations among science, technology and arts and their relevance. The Regional STARTS Centers intend to expand the STARTS initiative on a local level towards a number of European regions. The partners of the consortium work at developing a network of players interested in creating local centres in the spirit of STARTS and public activities that strengthen collaborative practices between the fields of art, industry, business, and research.

Athens Tech College is the first educational institution in Greece that specialises in computer science and ICT studies. ATH/TECH offers courses designed to educate professionals who are interested in technology and entrepreneurship and want to thrive in the current and future employment arena. Having significant experience in the industry of new technologies, education and communications has shaped ATH/TECH's philosophy and their goal to play a leading role in the industry of innovation. Athens Tech College is member to the Regional STARTS Centres Network in Greece co-ordinated by MADE Group.

The Cultural Association of Archilochus is one of the oldest cultural Associations of the island (founded in 1976), and is an active member of the society of Paros. Exhibiting consistency and continuity with its activities, the Association has succeeded in sensitizing citizens and authorities alike and sustains the following activities: i) Film Club ii) Music Group with choir and independent musicians iii) Ecological Group. Deals with issues related to the protection of the ecosystem of the island, management of water and waste, pastures, wetlands and marine ecosystems. An Association with history, present and future.



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