

Mikaela Stewart
“Obscura”

Scale: 2560 x 1024 px

Media: 2D Illustration, Processing
Integrated Media Arts

What I really wanted in this piece was to create a sense of involvement with the viewer and the work. When it comes to art, the works that tend to stick with me the most are the ones that I can both mentally and physically integrate myself as it puts me on a more intimate level with the art piece. This is why I decided to go with an installation, blending animation and coding into one. The reason why I decided to name the piece “Obscura” is because of how it affects our visual conception on what is considered fake and what is considered reality.

As an artist I always found inspiration in mythology and the fictional creatures that stem from it. What I find really interesting about these myths are how they are incorporated within a culture and in a way, can even shape how one views the world around them. Each mythical being has a purpose, and some sort of influence on our world. It gives our reality a sense of wonder, a feeling that there is more than what our eyes see on the surface, which is something I really appreciate. The Qilin or Kirin is one of the many mythical creatures that I enjoy learning about. Qilin are mythical hooved chimerical beasts found within Chinese and other East Asian cultures. They share similar physical features to the more commonly known unicorn or dragon, based upon their single horn and scales that cover their bodies. Despite their beastly appearance, they are gentle creatures who are greatly entwined with nature and protect those who are innocent.

This installation was digitally drawn using Adobe Photoshop and Paint Tool Sai. The landscape was drawn in separate individual pieces and then layered on top of one another to create depth. Each was set to pan across from right to left at a different pace. Each creature was also individually drawn frame by frame before being turned into sprites. Everything was then implemented into Processing before lastly being animated. The interactivity is brought through by an ordinary Xbox Kinect sensor, where the sketch tracks the viewer’s movements and changes based on their positioning.