VIRTUAL
LANDSCAPES

The magical essence of natural landscapes since the dawn of man have been a source of intrigue, wonder and inspiration in art, philosophy & literature. With each new era in civilisation, new methods of creative expression have been used by artists, designers and writers to capture the rich natural landscapes, and with the 21st century and the emergence of new interactive technologies, this innate desire is being expressed through the digital domain.

From the giant mushroom forests of Morrowind, the Archipelago islands of Zelda: Wind Waker, to the tropical underground caves of Phantasy Star Online, Virtual landscapes have enthralled, and captured player imaginations for over 30 years.

Virtual Landscapes is is a practice based research project that for the first time, explores visually illustrates, and critically reflects upon the unique virtual natural landscapes within Computer & Video Games.

http://www.virtuallandscapes.co.uk/

Virtual Landscapes Exhibition

From the giant mushroom forests of Morrowind, the Archipelago islands of Zelda: Wind Waker, to the tropical underground caves of Phantasy Star Online, Virtual landscapes have enthralled, captured and engaged player imaginations for over 30 years.

Virtual Landscapes was an exhibition presented as part of the Manchester Science Festival, for the first time, visually illustrate, share and critically reflect upon the unique, virtual natural landscapes within Computer & Video Game

VIRTUAL LANDSCAPES

FROM THE GIANT MUSHROOM FORESTS OF MORROWIND, THE ARCHIPELAGO ISLANDS OF ZELDA: WIND WAKER, TO THE TROPICAL UNDERGROUND CAVES OF PHANTASY STAR ONLINE. VIRTUAL LANDSCAPES HAVE ENTHRALLED, CAPTURED AND ENGAGED PLAYER IMAGINATIONS FOR OVER 30 YEARS.

VIRTUAL LANDSCAPES IS A PRACTICE BASED RESEARCH PROJECT THAT FOR THE FIRST TIME EXPLORES, VISUALLY ILLUSTRATES, AND CRITICALLY REFLECTS UPON THE UNIQUE, VIRTUAL NATURAL LANDSCAPES WITHIN COMPUTER & VIDEO GAMES.

HTTP://WWW.VIRTUALLANDSCAPES.CO.UK/

1970s

The 1970s were marked by political and social unrest in the UK, with waves of student protests, workers' strikes, economic turmoil and civil rights riots.

During this time the University went from strength to strength. The Newton Building was opened by the Duke of Edinburgh in 1960. Computing, Science and the Open University, approximately.

Virtual Landscapes

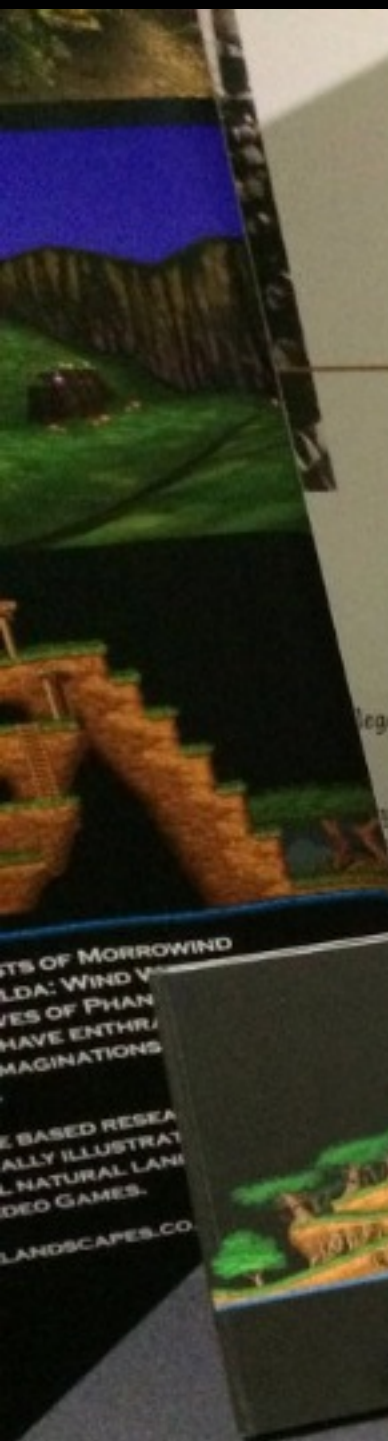The Embryonic Era

Virtual Landscapes

The Transition Era

Virtual Landscapes
The Modern Era

Khan, the Chief Executive of Barnardos, Andrew Bond, former CEO of ASDA, and Dr David Tupman, former Vice President of hardware engineering for iPhone and iPod, to name just a few.
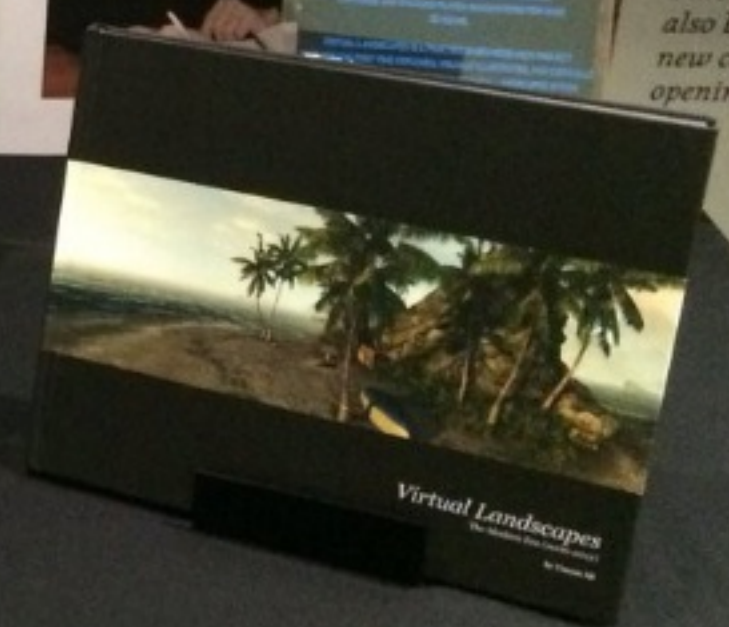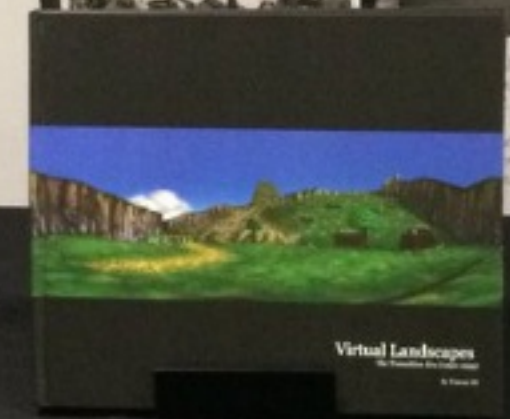
prominence in the British music, the University launched the UK's first ever honours degree in Popular Music and Recordings.

Sir George Martin, record producer and musician, had 30 number one hit singles in the UK and was awarded with an honorary degree at the University in 1992.

Left: Sir George Martin recipient of honorary degree, 1992.

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Virtual Landscapes

VIRTUAL LANDSCAPES

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Virtual Landscapes
The Embryonic Era (1980-1989)

by Umran Ali

Virtual Landscapes: The Embryonic Era *(1980-1989)*

The magical essence of natural landscapes since the dawn of man have been a source of intrigue, wonder and inspiration in art, philosophy and literature. With each new era in civilisation, new methods of creative expression have been used by artists, designers and writers to capture the rich natural landscapes, and with the 21st century and the emergence of new interactive technologies, this innate desire is being expressed through the digital domain.

From the giant mushroom forests of Morrowind, the Archipelago islands of Zelda: Wind Waker, to the tropical underground caves of Phantasy Star Online, Virtual landscapes have enthralled, captured and engaged player imaginations for over 30 years. *Virtual Landscapes* is a three part series attempting to, for the first time, visually illustrate, share and critically reflect upon the unique, virtual natural landscapes within Computer & Video Games.

Virtual Landscapes: The Embryonic Era visually illustrates the emergence and rapid evolution of the virtual natural landscapes in computer & video games from 1980 to 1989. From the pixel based, block form environments of *Forbidden Forest*, the strange lands of *Golvellius*, the eerie 'ant-farm' landscapes of *Ghouls'n Ghosts* and finally to shifting interactive lands of Populous, *Virtual Landscapes* presents these virtual spaces for the first time, in stunning unseen digitally enhanced. high resolution and panoramic forms.

Virtual Landscapes: The Transition Era *(1990-1999)*

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Virtual Landscapes: The Transition Era visually illustrates the period from 1990 to 1999 that marked the decline of 2D natural landscapes from the 'Embryonic Era' and by the emergence of true 3D technologies which would radically shape virtual landscapes in the years to come. From the intricate, picturesque landscapes of *Kings Quest 5*, the isometric forests of *Landstalker,* through to the beautiful mysterious lands of *Kyrandia*, and finally the magical forests of *Zelda: Ocarina of Time*, *Virtual Landscapes* presents these virtual spaces for the first time, in stunning unseen digitally enhanced, high resolution and panoramic forms.

Virtual Landscapes
The Transition Era (1990-1999)

by Umran Ali

Virtual Landscapes
The Modern Era (2000-2012)

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Virtual Landscapes: The Modern Era *(2000-2012)*

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Virtual Landscapes: The Modern Era visually illustrates the revolution in complexity and richness of virtual natural landscapes that occurred in computer & video games from 2000 to modern day. From the tranquil landscapes of *Morrowind*, the rolling forested autumn hills of *Oblivion,* the eerie landscapes of *The Witcher,* through to the beautiful deep crimson Maple forests of *Phantasy Star Universe*, the vast epic landscapes of *Skyrim*, and finally to the lonely landscapes of *Dear Esther*, *Virtual Landscapes* presents these virtual spaces for the first time, in stunning unseen digitally enhanced. high resolution and panoramic forms.

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I would like to thank to all the artists, designers, and developers that were involved in the creation of the virtual landscapes illustrated in the research Without their creativity, and artistic endeavours I and many others would have not been able to immersive ourselves in the worlds they that created. It is through their work, I have been inspired to undertake the research, to share the wonder of these virtual lands and to forever protect them for future generations to enjoy and reflect upon.

I would also like to acknowledge the following developers and publishers whose works I have illustrated and attempted to bring to a wider audience:

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