



FOUR HELL HOUNDS OF THE APOCALYPSE

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A New Media Capstone Project

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Abstract

“I am presenting a digitally animated narrative through a sculpture.”

The centerpiece of this installation is a sculpture on which multiple video sequences are projected. These projections will contain introductions to four characters: *The Four Hellhounds of the Apocalypse*. Their introductions will lead into a much longer and larger sequence, containing a sneak peak for an animated, fictional narrative.

The Opportunity

Browsing around the cinematic marketing field I have seen many beautifully made movie/video game trailers. However, I have not come across many marketing projects that require some form of interaction, or are even delivered in a physical way. Like the cinematic trailers for “Dawn of War 3” or “Asura Online,” while wonderfully animated, they are presented straightforward as just another video link to click on and then pass by. Sure, there are a few interactive websites here and there, but not a lot that is introduced to you by something other than through the screen of a television. I want to use this field to experimentally create the basis for a new genre of fictional narrative where the user must actively seek out pieces of the story.

The subject for a narrative that I intend to expand upon is loosely based around the legend of the Four Horsemen of the apocalypse. The story will consist of the elements of famine, pestilence, war, and death.



Other Approaches

Disney has experimented with something close to what I have in mind by projecting film onto unusual surfaces at a larger scale like the Disney World Castle. The concept of a large projection, coupled with a narrative, is certainly enticing.



“Disney World Castle ON FIRE and Shape-shifting!!! 3D Building Projection Mapping 1/27/2011”

The next example is by the artist, Harsha Biswajit. The image below is of an elephant sculpture with projections detailing it. This particular photo only shows the back of the elephant, looking more like a large stone. I had something similar in mind with incorporating projections on the surface of a sculpture.



“The Animal is Absent (Elephant in the Room) | 2014| Harsha Biswajit ”

This is a large-scale projected narrative that uses the color black to shape the subject matter of the piece. I wanted to use black to help manipulate the shape and scale of my projections. Essentially, I'd like to recreate what the yU+co company did, but inverted.



“YU Co Creates 22-Story Projection Mapping Experience for Grand Park's N.Y.E. L.A. | YU Co.”

My Approach

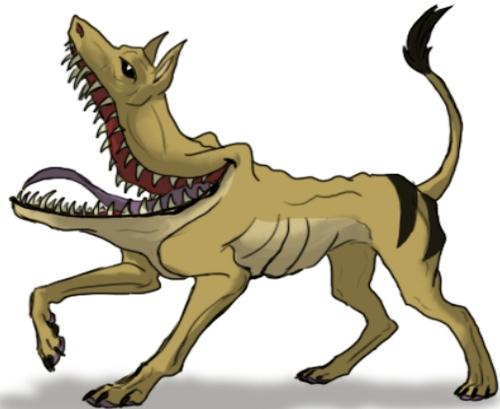
My physical sculpture would have a fanciful tree-like formation or pedestal donned with a variety of foliage, carvings, and other artistic elements. The most vital feature connected to this sculpture would be a series of four pressure plates designed with four unique symbols. They would be on the floor surrounding the sculpture. This is intended to be the interactive element in the piece, though I am also experimenting with sensors in the sculpture itself. Each pressure plate would activate the individual projections: canid beasts representing each element of the apocalypse. When all four are “awakened,” then the final projection will begin.

The projection will utilize a surface behind the sculpture as well as parts on the actual sculpture to enhance the movement and connect the separate entities as a whole. My supplementary materials include designs for the characters intended for display. They will each be introduced by their own individual voice actors.

Character Designs



PESTILENCE



FAMINE



WAR



DEATH

The Four Horsemen, Modernized

The legend of the four horsemen has been around for centuries. However, they do not by any means lack relevance in today's age, especially with how my project will go.

In the case of Pestilence, humankind has developed one medication after the other with rapid production. The rapid production represents the core principles of the drug industry today, who lean more in favor of making a profit rather than researching the effectiveness of their drugs. The carelessly designed medicines that are not properly tested now not only make some patients, but have given preexisting viruses the opportunity to mutate and evolve into super bugs.

In Famine's case, the ever increasing population has forced the needs of the people to increase and the available resources to dwindle. Pollution has also done no favors for plant life or the quality of the water supply, making what little resources one can find a gamble of either survival and extinction.

Now War may seem fairly obvious as the development of weaponry has long since advanced from swords and ballistas to nuclear bombs and lethal chemicals with the capability to obliterate most life on the planet. There is also the matter of the more subtle changes. People have dug their heels further in on their personal prejudices and grown to be more hateful, mistrusting, and itching for conflict.

Death has changed the least. He is at the end of everything. While what remains after him is debatable and in some cases no longer taken very seriously; regardless, he remains absolute, constant and mysterious. Even in our modern world, death is still death.

The Interactive Aspects

By incorporating sensors into the limbs of the tree sculpture, the installation can be programmed so that the animation reacts to its environment. Imagine, for instance you reach your hand out towards the tree, towards the fanciful beast that lounges above it. The moment your hand passes through the branches the beast known as famine's hound looks at you, at your hand, and snaps his massive unnatural jaws at it.

The other feature of the installation has to do with the pressure plates. The order in which plates are activated can determine which animation sequence is played. Each sequence reveals a little more of the story and reveals that there may be a little more to it than simply the end of the world.

The Main Sequence

When the main projection, which will be the longest out of all the possible projections, is activated, then Death's hound will appear and walk away from the sculpture entirely along the wall behind the scene that would expand into a longer animation. This scene would act as a preview to the story these characters make up. The script below is a draft to illustrate the general idea of how the sequence will go. Sequences can be activated in any order, but all the others are meant to compliment this larger one.

Main Sequence, Draft:

We see a military chopper approach a decrepit New York City. There is a massive crater sitting in place of where tall buildings once proudly stood. The chopper lands in this crater, revealing that a military encampment has been established at the base of it. As human soldiers discuss the the current state of their civilization, a German Shepherd, one of the army's canine units is seen slipping away from the encampment and making their way to Grand Central Station. They encounter a sermon being held by a white wolf preaching how the world can be saved with the deaths of the four horsemen and their hell hound servants. One by one the hell hounds appear at the gathering and a viscous battle ensues, later being dragged outside where the human soldiers take notice and also attack. When the hound of Death arrives on the scene, then the white wolf's form begins to twist and misshapen into a ferocious beast, revealing his true colors...

The full detailed draft may be viewed in a PDF on my website:

<http://sarahcourtright.weebly.com/capstone>

At face value, this sequence is just a medley of action; but when paired with alternate sequences that the viewers must unlock, then we are given a little more context and a little more understanding of how this entire situation was not just simply good versus evil. The entity that poses as the white wolf places the blame of the world's ruin on the horsemen and their hounds, but what if that was not the case? What if the horseman were not really the cause of the apocalypse, but the solution? However, in this case, it will be revealed that the horsemen have been incapacitated and it is left to the hounds deal with the end of the world with this misunderstanding in mind that they are in fact the cause. Not only must the survivors of the end learn the truth, but the hound themselves must rediscover the purpose of their existence.

Project Timeline



2016

2017

Milestone review 1

Test Run

Office

September

October

November

December

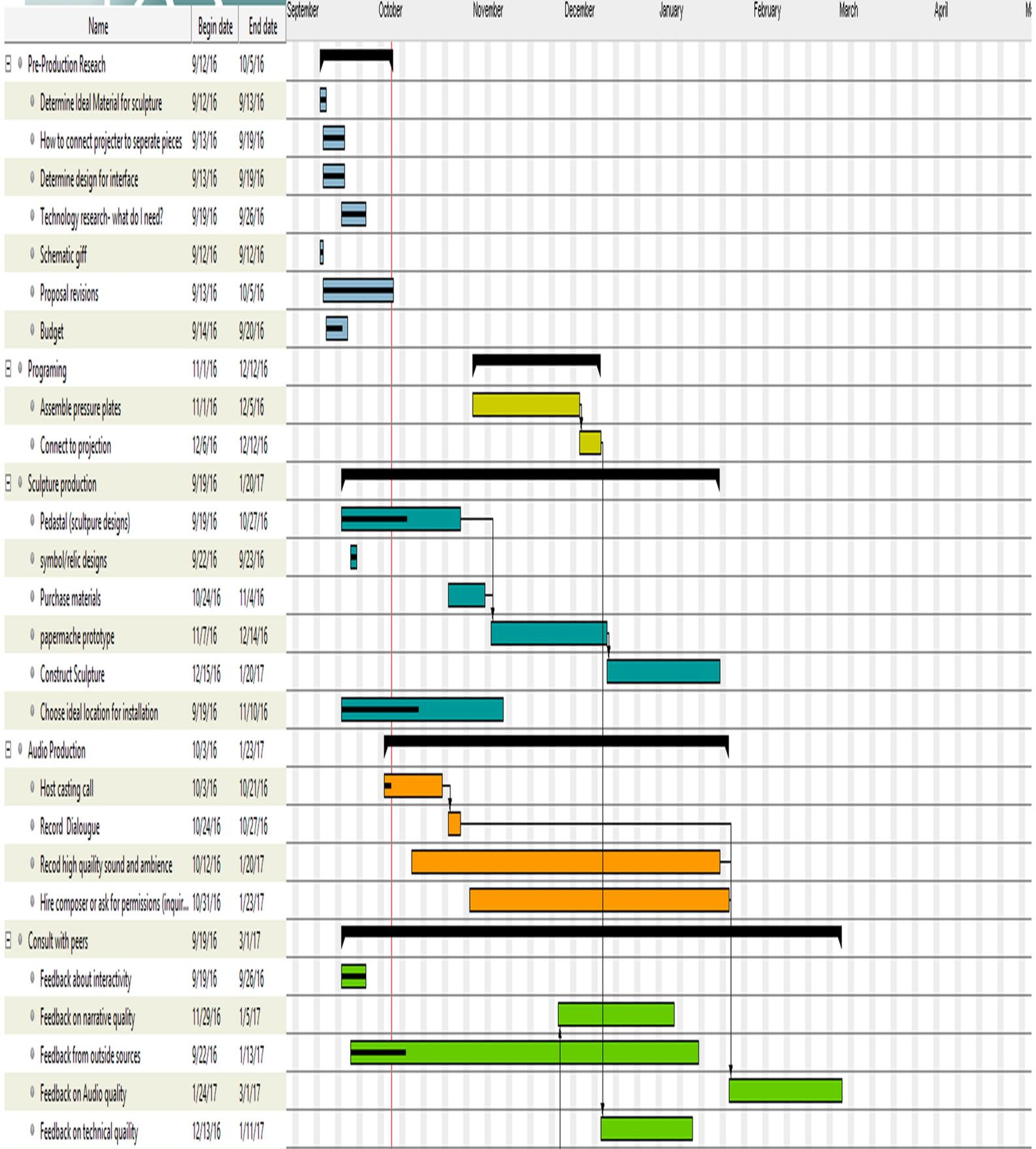
January

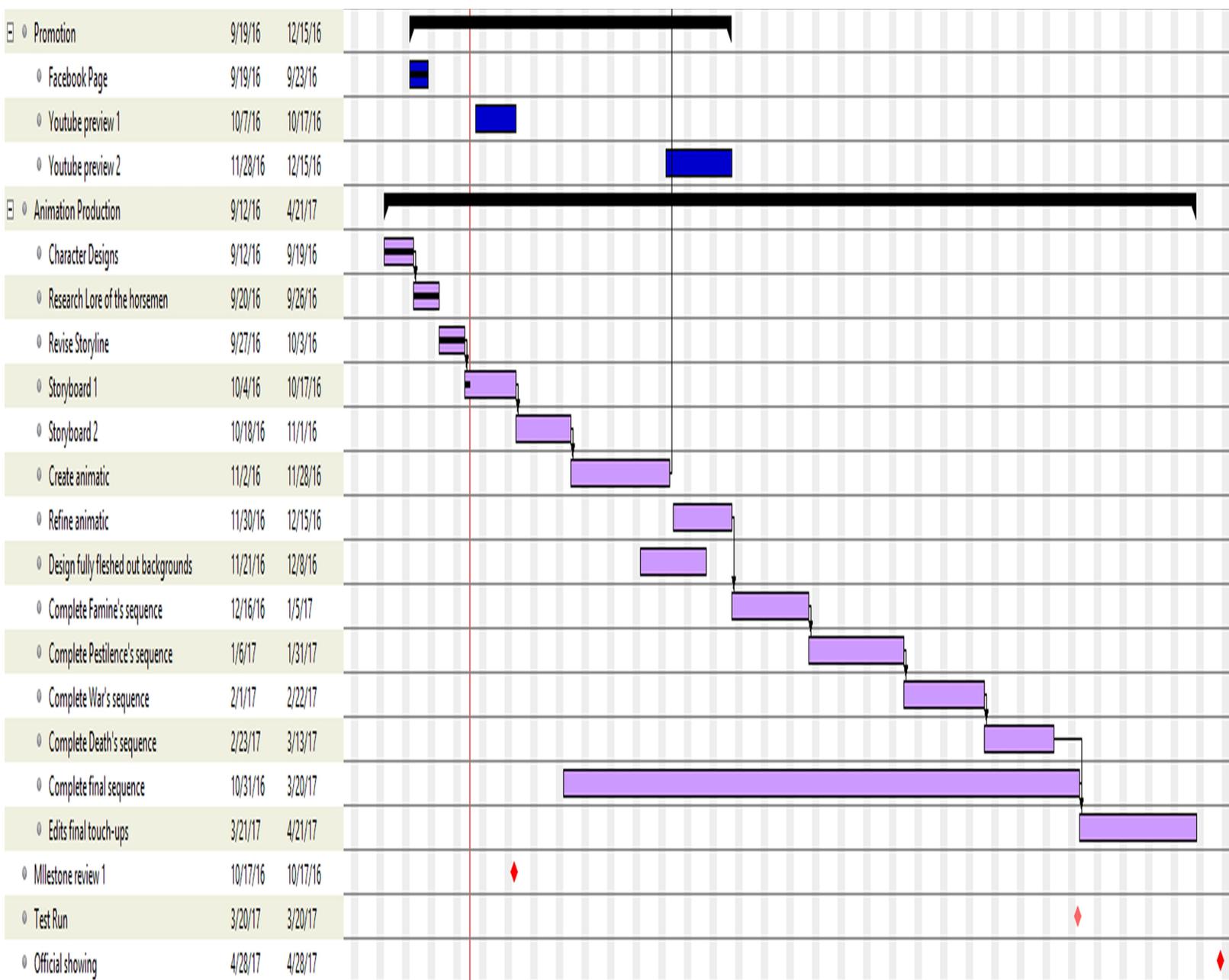
February

March

April

May





For a better view of this timeline please visit: <http://sarahcourtright.weebly.com/capstone>

Needs

Line	Category	Item	Detail	Year 1	Year 2	Total cost	Sponsored	Needed	Notes
1	Sculpture subtotal:			\$85.00		\$85.00	\$85.00	\$0.00	
2		Steel rods	Quarter inch	\$25.00		\$25.00	\$25.00	\$0.00	My contribution
3		Burlap	5 yards	\$20.00		\$20.00	\$20.00	\$0.00	
4		Spray paint	Several cans	\$15.00		\$15.00	\$15.00	\$0.00	
5		Chicken wire	72' H x 50' L	\$25.00		\$25.00	\$25.00	\$0.00	
6	Technical subtotal:			\$207.00		\$207.00	\$50.00	\$157.00	
7		Plywood	Thin sheets 2ft X 8ft	\$25.00		\$25.00	\$25.00	\$0.00	My contribution
8		Wires	Insulated, single strands	\$20.00		\$20.00	\$20.00	\$0.00	
9		Aluminum Foil	Sheets, 12 X 10 ¾	\$5.00		\$5.00	\$5.00	\$0.00	
10		Max/MSP	Student license, 1 year	\$59.00		\$59.00		\$59.00	
11		Millumin	Student license 8 months	\$98.00		\$98.00		\$98.00	
12	Animation subtotal:			\$510.00	\$375.00	\$885.00	\$105.00	\$780.00	
13		Animator	\$15 per hour	\$300.00	\$330.00	\$630.00		\$630.00	
15		Music	Royalty free	\$150.00		\$150.00	\$50.00	\$100.00	
14		Voice actors	4 actors x \$15 per hour	\$60.00	\$45.00	\$105.00	\$55.00	\$50.00	My contribution
15	Total before contingency:			\$802.00	\$375.00	\$1,177.00	\$240.00	\$937.00	
16	Contingency: 10% of subtotal:			\$80.00	\$38.00	\$118.00	\$24.00	\$93.00	
17	Total after contingency:			\$882.00	\$413.00	\$1,295.00	\$264.00	\$1,030.00	

Budget Justification

A majority of the budget can be personally covered. There is really only the matter of program licenses and labor hours. The costs of the materials to build the sculpture and the pressure plates are personally covered mainly because they can easily change depending on the building process. There will be a little experimentation on how the sculpture can be built to be easily dismantled and reassembled.

The two programs listed on lines ten and eleven are key elements in how the project can be built. Max/MSP is the program meant to bridge the gap between the physical sculpture and digital animation. As it is Arduino Circuit Board friendly, it will allow for the programming of visuals that will give the project the level of interactivity that I have previously described. Millumin is the video projection mapping program that is intended for performances such as the one I am proposing. I listed the prices for student licenses as they contain a reasonable discount.

As far as labor costs go, voice actors are important to endear an audience to a character. The actors will most likely be students themselves, and I would like to compensate for their time spent away from their own busy schedules. It would also motivate them to put in their best efforts. I will also contribute partially to this cost.

Then there is music. While most of the audio will most likely be self recorded, musical composition is not among my skill sets. I will most likely need to enlist a composer or search through royalty free soundtracks that only require a single payment as they were created to be used by indie films.

More than fifty percent of this project is animation. The professional animator is paid around an average of thirty dollars per hour, however, I felt that was a bit much for this project so I lowered the hourly rate to fifteen dollars per hour for about six hours per week. As animating would be a constant, on-going process, the total will add up to twenty-three weeks of work, which would sum up to two thousand and seventy dollars in total. Instead, I proceeded to lower the expense to accommodate for the limit. Please refer to the table above for details.

I did not include projectors for the project, for I intend to utilize the University of Maine's IMRC building which contains vast projections rooms intended for the use of installations like this one.

Thank you for your consideration, and for more visuals and a better idea of how the actual animation may look like please take a look at my website:

<http://sarahcourtright.weebly.com/capstone>

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