The Recording.

A film about robots, retirement homes,
and our upcoming dystopian future.

Film:
https://media.ed.ac.uk/media/1_hq602e9r

Video Commentary:
https://media.ed.ac.uk/media/t/1_6n8lk2id

Website:
https://havtstudio.wixsite.com/the-recording

Hugo Alberto Villarreal Treviño   *S2437696*

Project Objective

The main objective of the project is to make a film that explores how our continuous reliance on technology (and AI) could lead to a dystopian future where the aging population is forgotten in nursing and retirement homes.

The Story

During the first submission, I got feedback that validated that my project lacked clarity and good pacing. I felt that this was mainly because the story threads were too many and the dialogue needed to be polished further.

So the first thing I did was to re-write the story.

Even though I received positive feedback about the idea of having the setting being a space station retirement home. I felt that story thread was very hard to explain in the short time my film had and I worried it would detract from the main emotional story I wanted to tell.

At the end, I felt that Alex (previously Wren the robot) was enough to express our reliance on technology. Another big thing I scrapped is having the old person as a half-robot for a plot-twist reveal since that didn't add anything to the story.
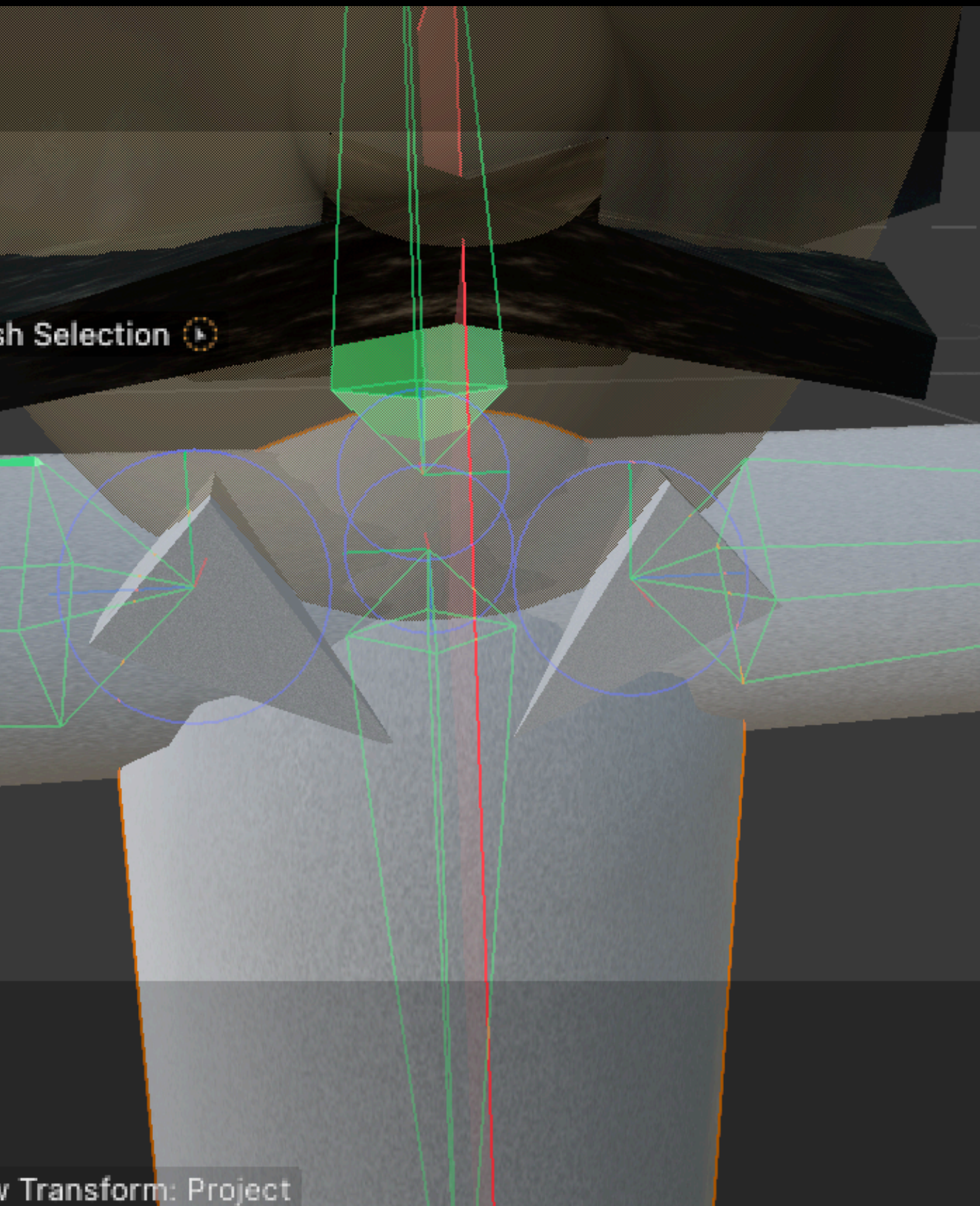
When thinking about possible new dialogues or scenarios, I felt that the narrative needed a better conflict and story structure. Having an old person rant to a robot wasn't interesting to me anymore (or the viewers). I watched various short films and most of them had a family dynamic.

So I figured that having a son was the key to have better dialogue and establish an easier, more relatable connection for the viewer.

For the new script, the only thing I had clear was that the son was probably a good idea and that everything still needed to happen in one take so that the film can be translated easily into a VR experience.

A tutorial on YouTube guided me in crafting key story beats and creating a narrative with a plot-twist so that the viewer feels that the video was "worth it".

(Standard Story Company, 2021)
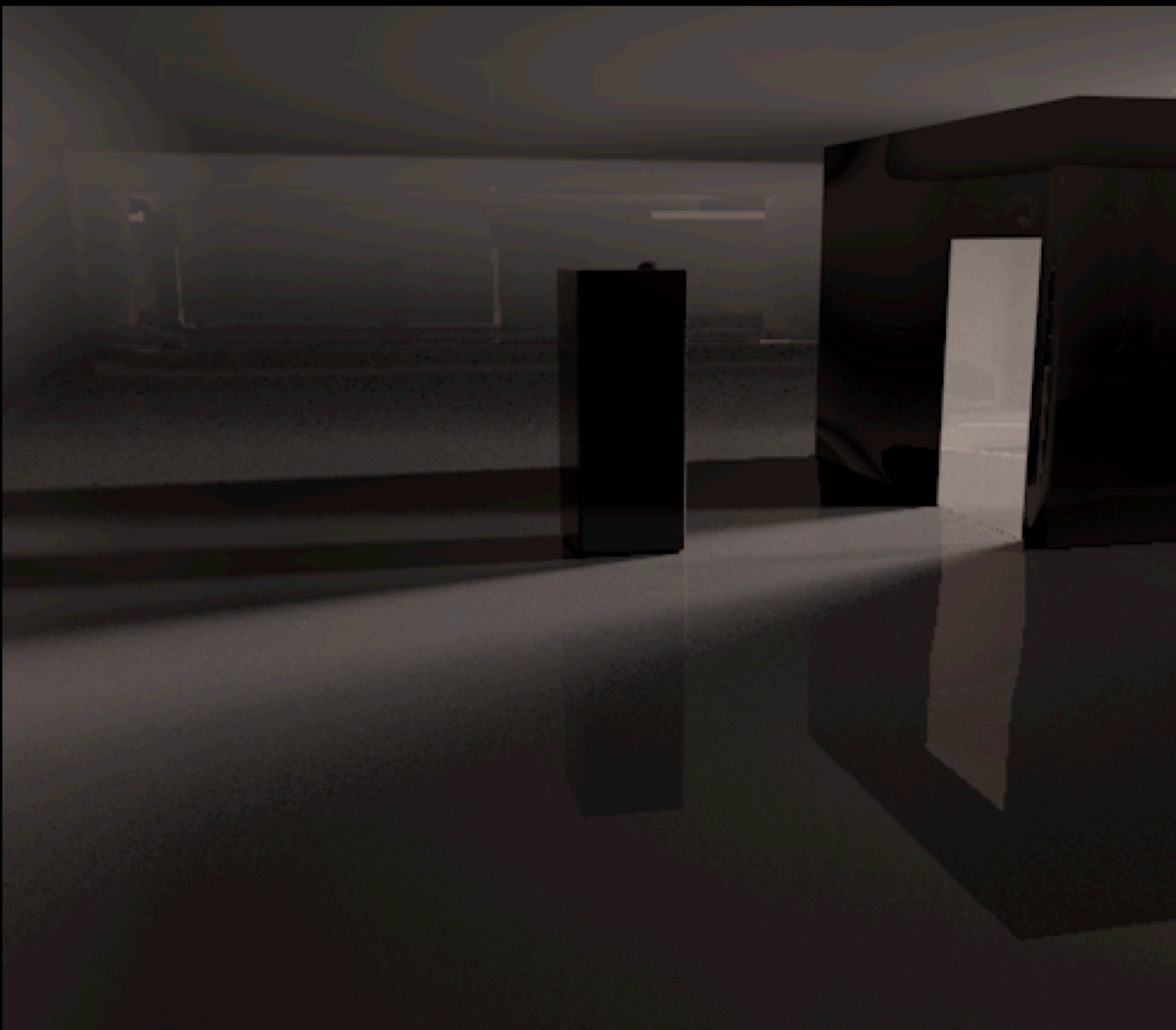
After watching the video, I remembered that one of my ideas was that everything was that everything was a security footage and that the robot was re-living the last conversation with the old guy in a loop to still care for him (because he was programmed to do so).

But I previously rejected that idea because I felt that was too cumbersome to explain in a short film (specially in one-take).

The new decision of adding a son made everything click together. The story would take place in the past via a hologram that the son is playing in the future with the help of the robot. In the future, the son is wearing a suit, implying that his father has recently passed and had his funeral. In this moments with the robot, he's watching the recording regretting not spending the last moments with him.

At the end I added some data about the upcoming old age population crisis and nurses quitting.

(World Health Organization, 2022a) (Yong, 2021)

```
Stuck v3 - Send Off

Retirement Home 6PM

Alex (robot): Good day sir, you have a visitor.

James enters the room.

James: (speaking to the robot)
     Thank you Alex,
(turns around happy but not overly excited)
     Hey Dad!

Sam (an old guy, ) (very excited):
     Jamie! Oh, it's so good to see you! How are you?

James:
     Good! I-I'm good! Chilly today isn't it?

Sam:
     Oh don't get me started on that, I'm freezing… come now please,
take a seat with me son. Do you want

James:
     Oh I, that's ok. I won't be long.

Sam:
     Right, right, you're always in a hurry.

James:
     Right so… anyway, what's up? are they taking good care of you?

Sam:
     Oh sure, that's all they're programmed to do.

James:
     They still haven't hired anyone?

Sam:
     Of course not, who would want to come to this dump?

James:
     …

Sam:
     Well but enough about me, how are you, how's work?

James:
```
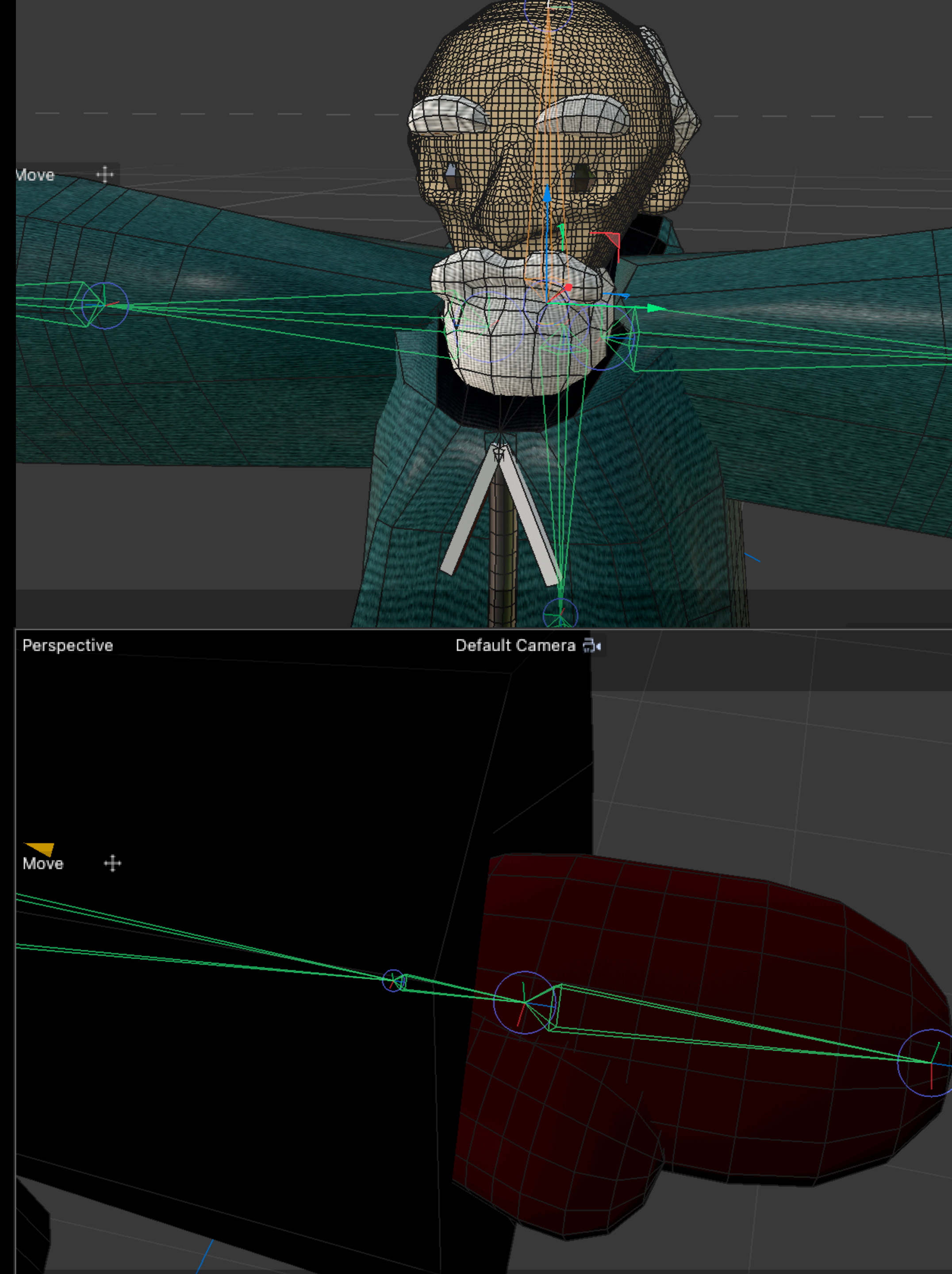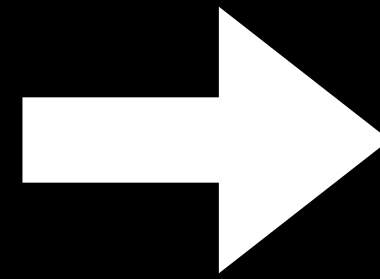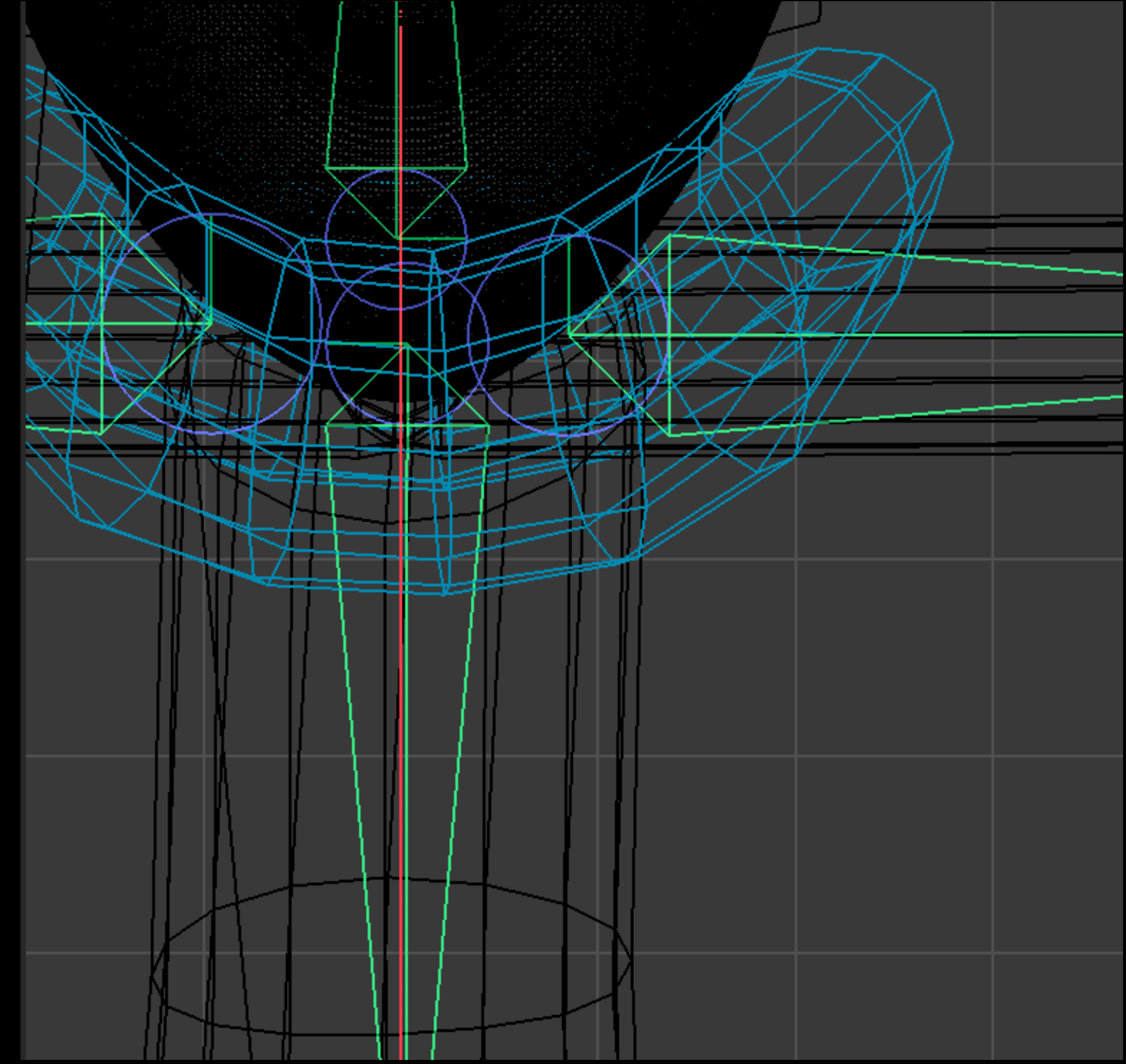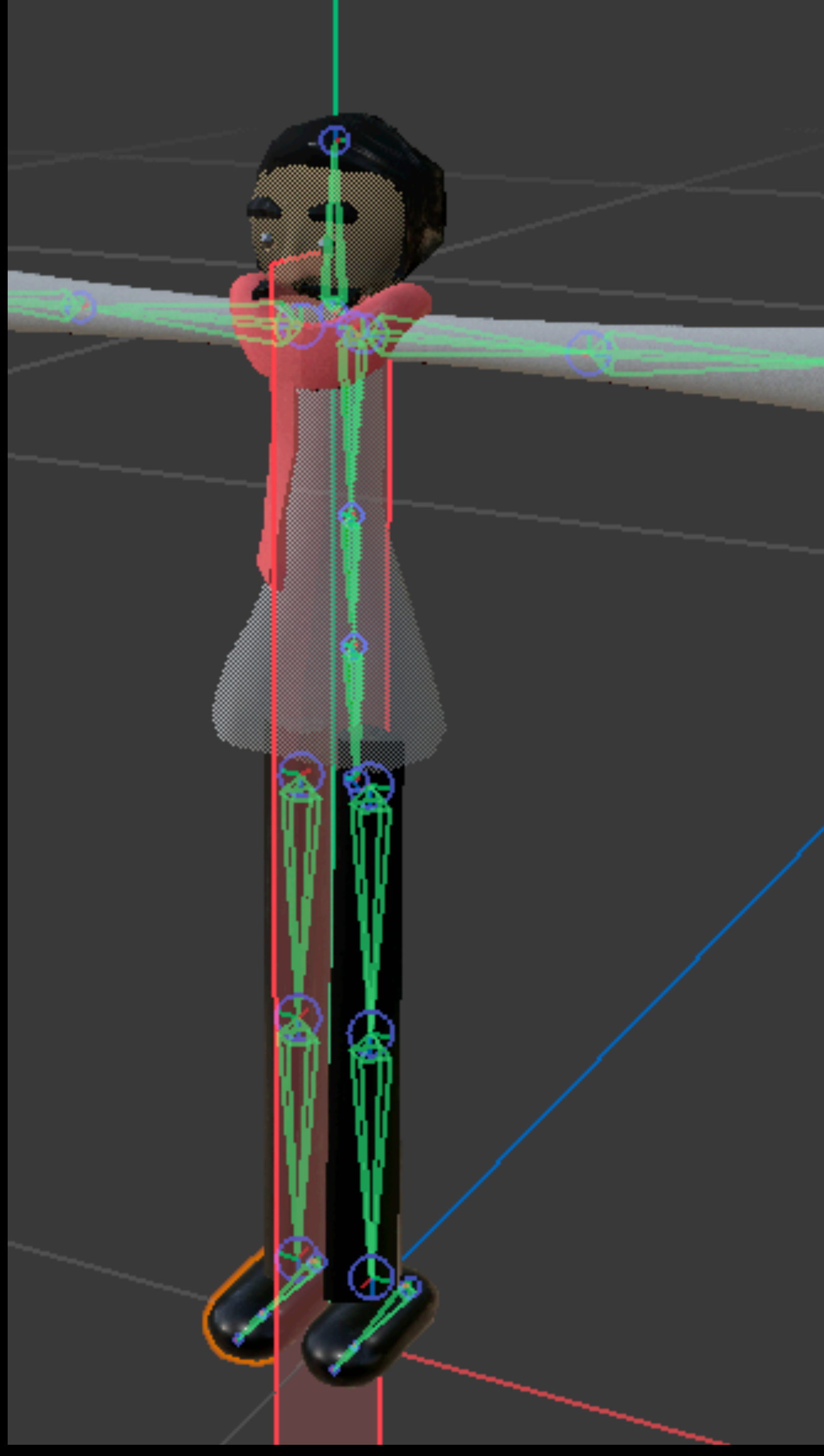
Back to Cinema4D

After the script was settled, the first thing I did was to jump back in Cinema4D and re-do Samuel (the old guy), to remove his robot body and give him a sweatshirt and mittens (so that I didn't need to have to model or animate his hands).

Back to Cinema4D | Samuel

After Sam, the next thing to model was James (the son). With the mittens staying, I felt that it was only logical to give him a sweater and a scarf to match. After some early tests I changed his hair from black to red in the hope that more people recognize him at the final shot (when he's wearing the funeral suit in the future).

Beauty

RGB

< Render >

Your GPU has a lot of VRAM. We recommend increasing bucket size to 256 o...
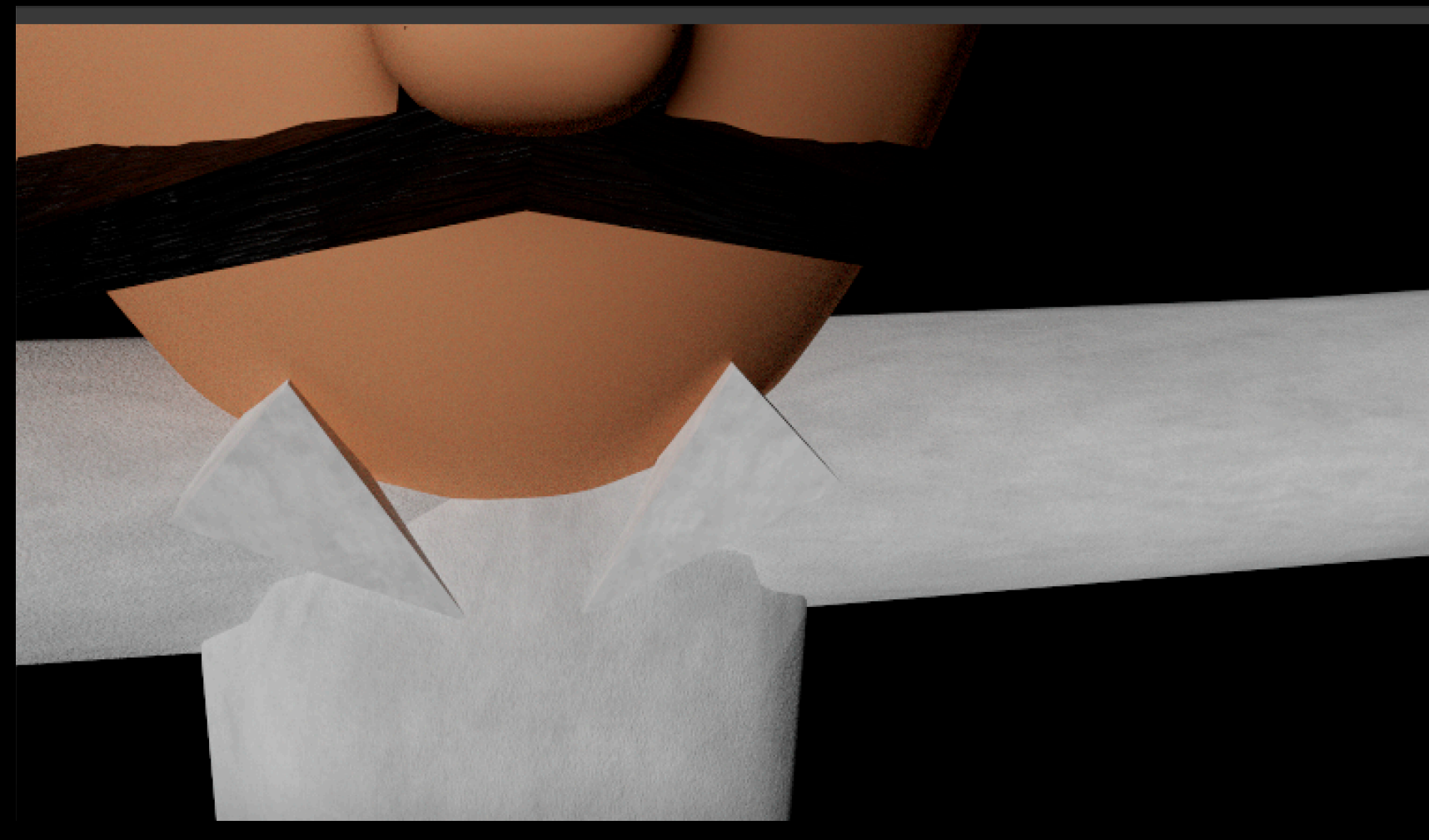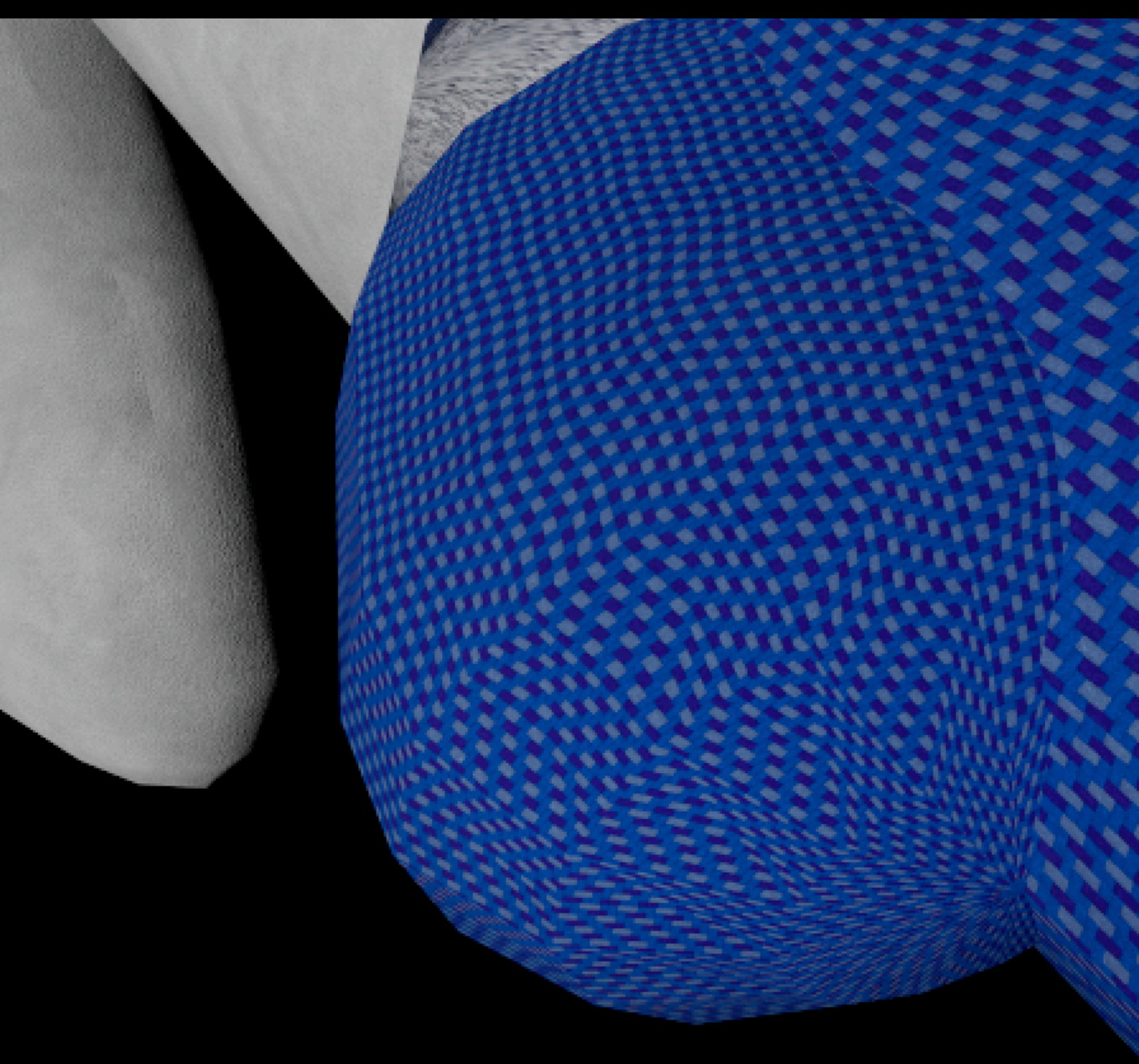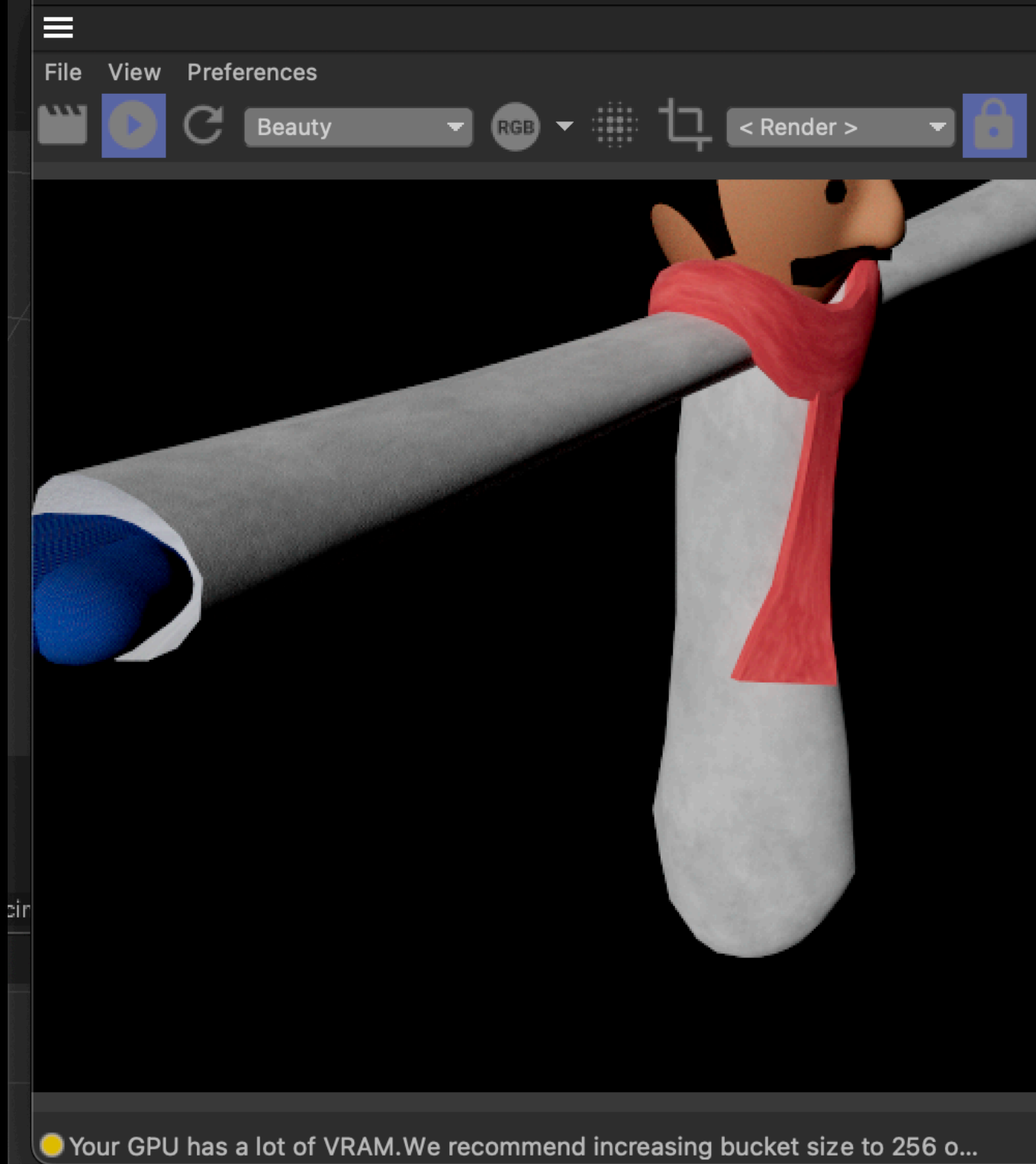
The room was the next big thing that I focused on, making the setting feel more like a normal retirement / nursing home so that the viewer can relate to it in VR and also for hologram twist to be even more unexpected (but possible because of the presence of the highly advanced robot).

After removing assets that I didn't model , I based some of the furniture off of my own using a lot of wooden materials that I felt looked good in that setting.

Move

View Transform: Project

View   Cameras   Display   Options   Filter   Panel   Redshift

Right

Grid Spacing

Frame 559: 2023-04-19 09:03:15 (16.95s)

Frame 559: 2023-04-19 08:42:09 (26.50s)
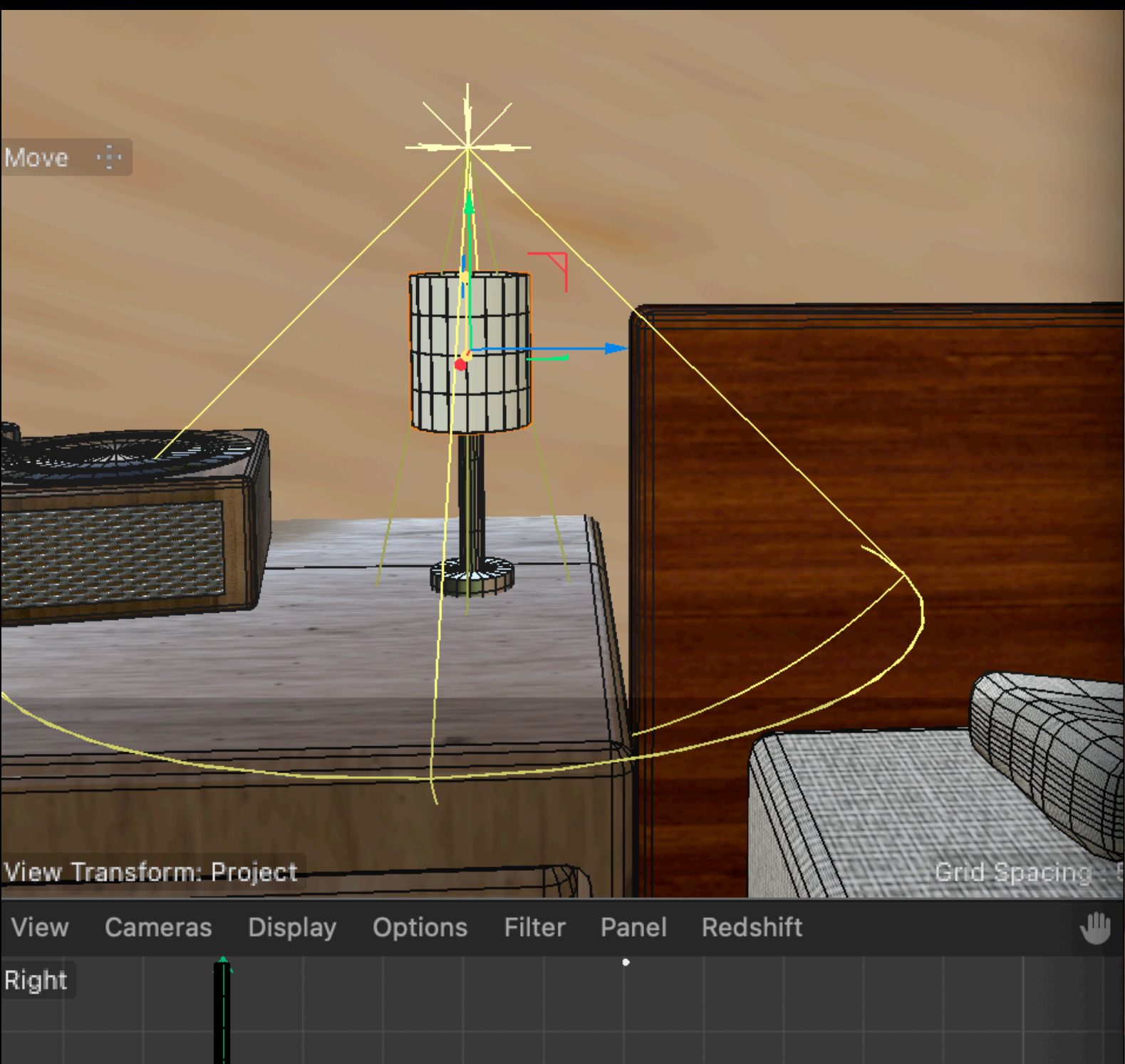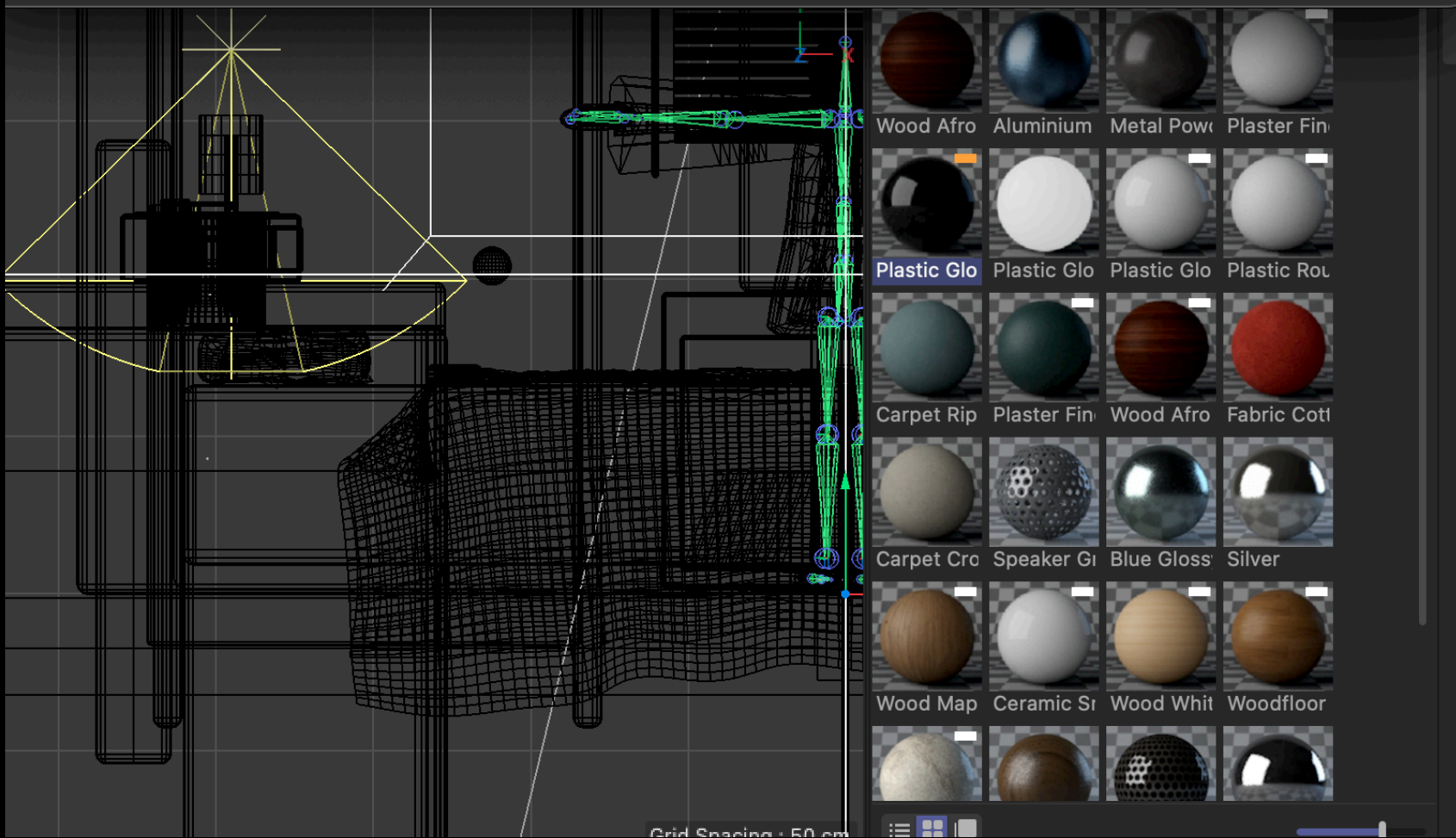
Frame 0: 2023-04-18 18:50:58 (10.64s)

Frame 52: 2023-04-18 20:23:16 (19.98s)

Wood Afro   Aluminium   Metal Pow   Plaster Fin
Plastic Glo   Plastic Glo   Plastic Glo   Plastic Rou
Carpet Rip   Plaster Fin   Wood Afro   Fabric Cott
Carpet Cro   Speaker G   Blue Gloss   Silver
Wood Map   Ceramic S   Wood Whit   Woodfloor

Grid Spacing : 50 cm

I kept the vinyl because it still is a nod for the "recording" title. I then added a photo of the father and son (made in Adobe Photoshop) to show a hint of the father caring for his son and that he's the only one in his life now.

Finally I added a poster of the robot (made in Adobe Illustrator) aids trying to be helpful but giving off a heartless (added the hearts icons for irony/ and to show them trying too hard) gray vibe in the otherwise colorful place.
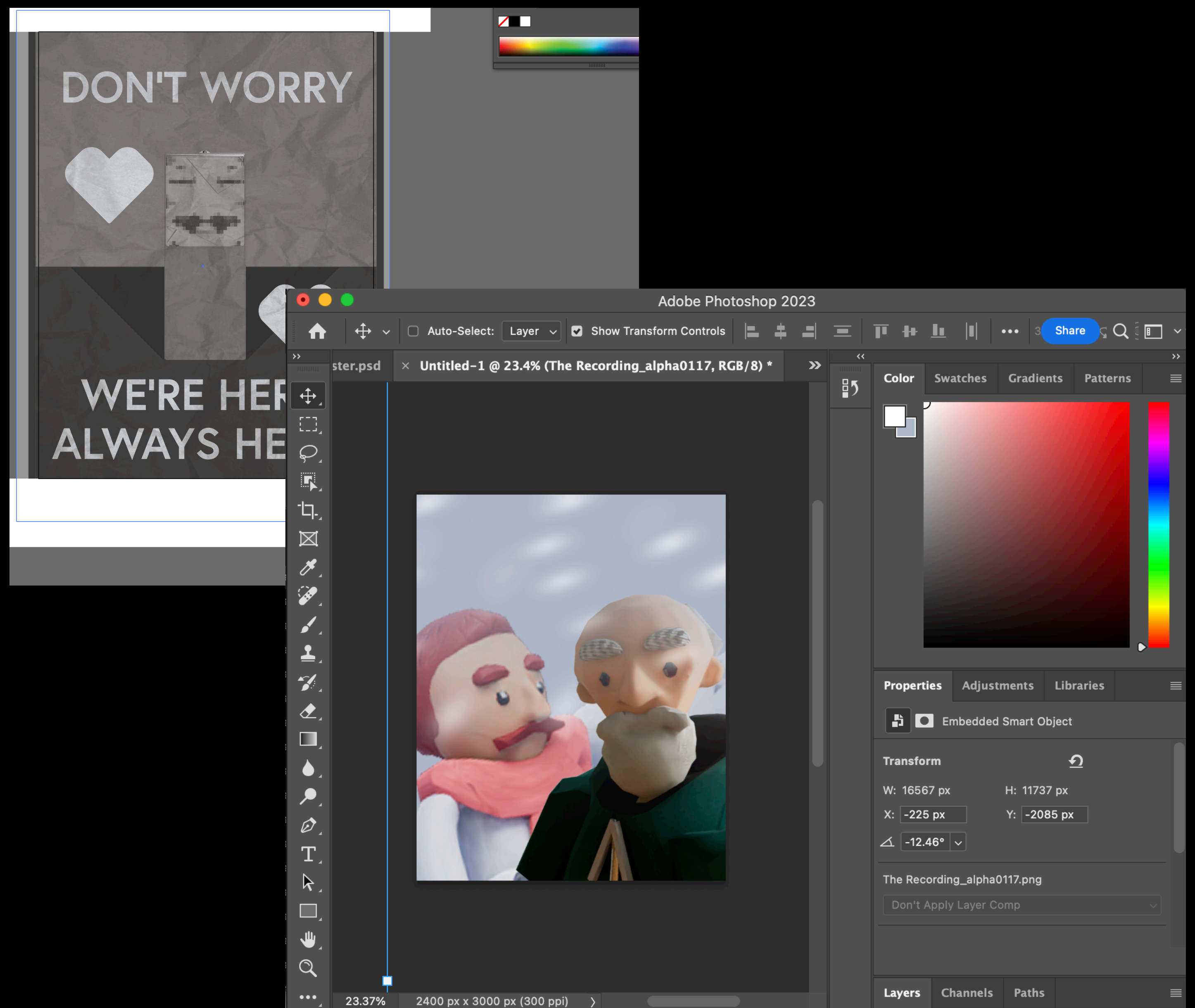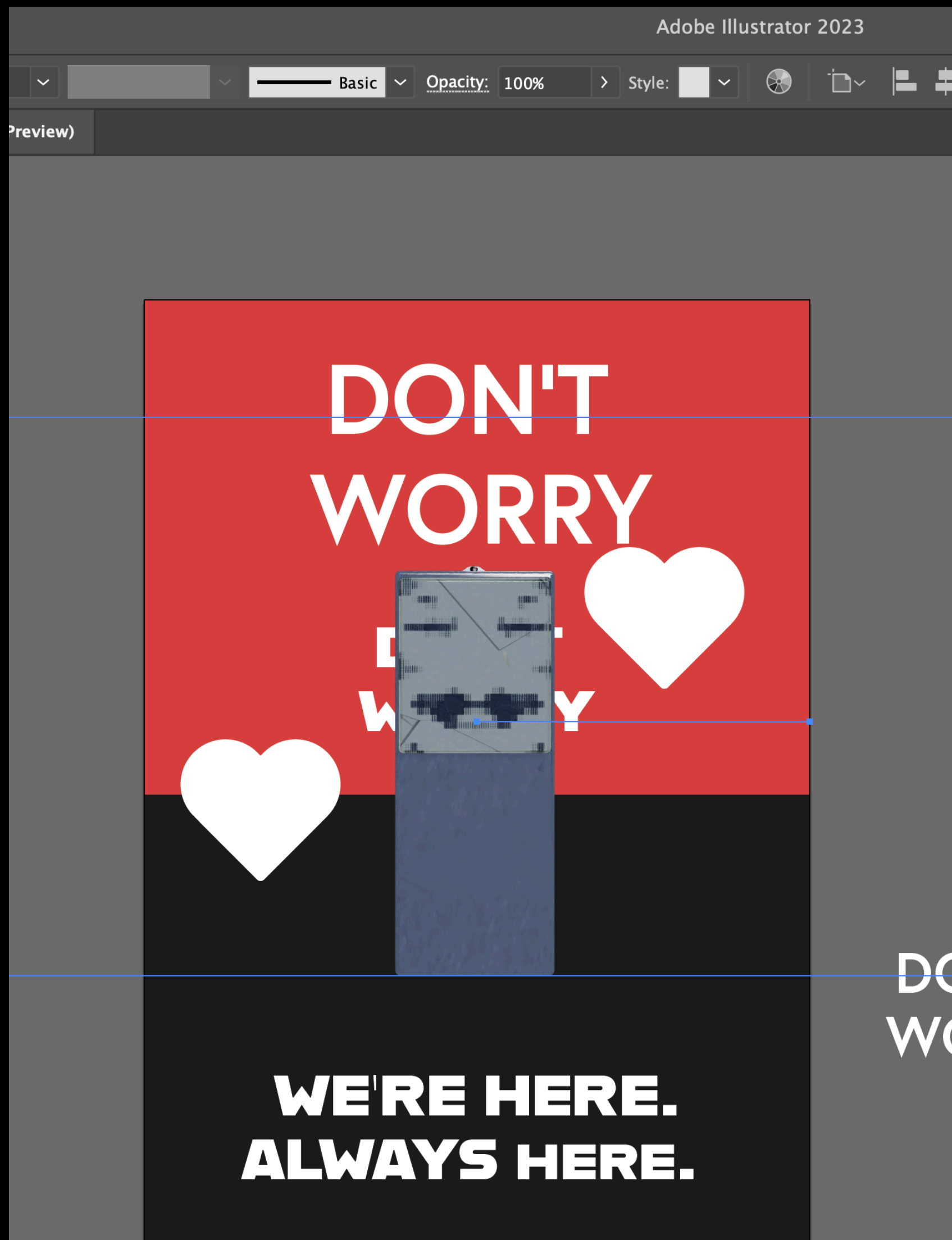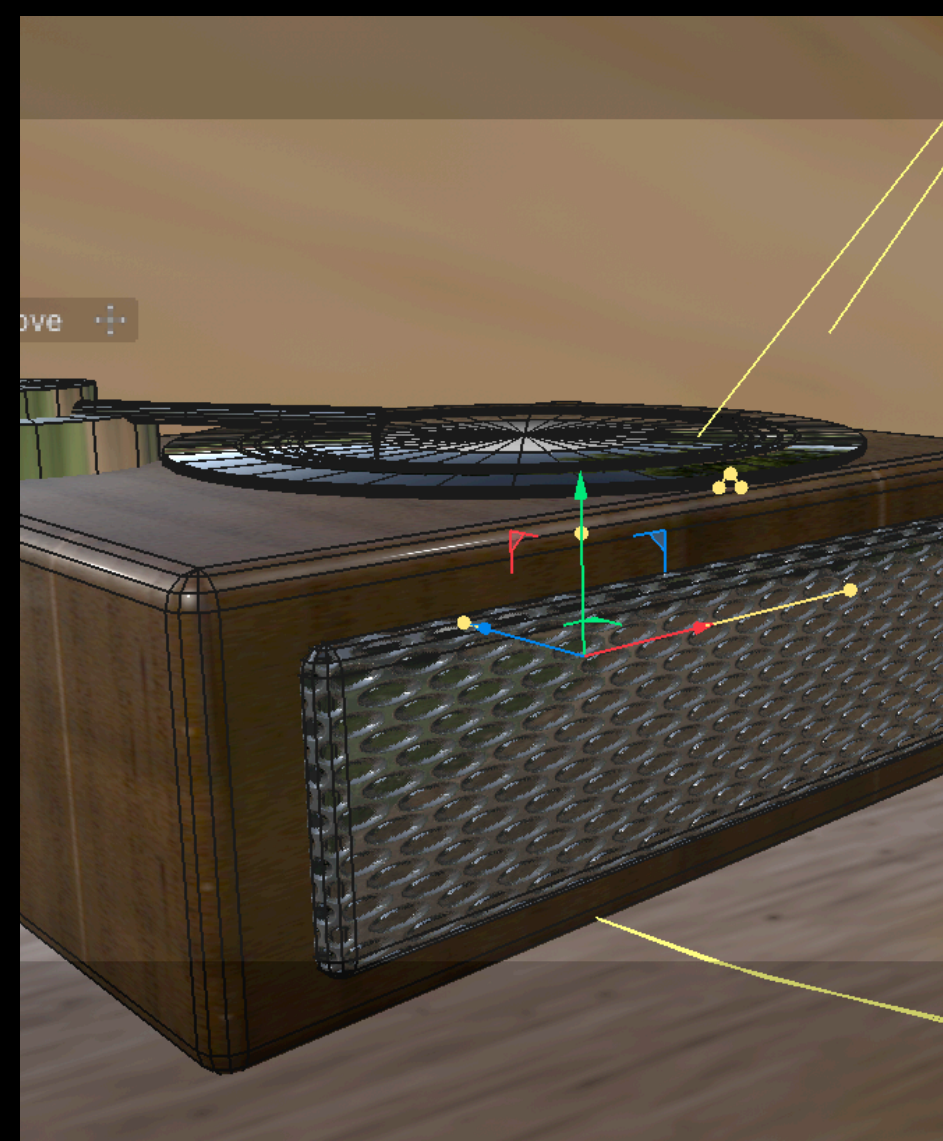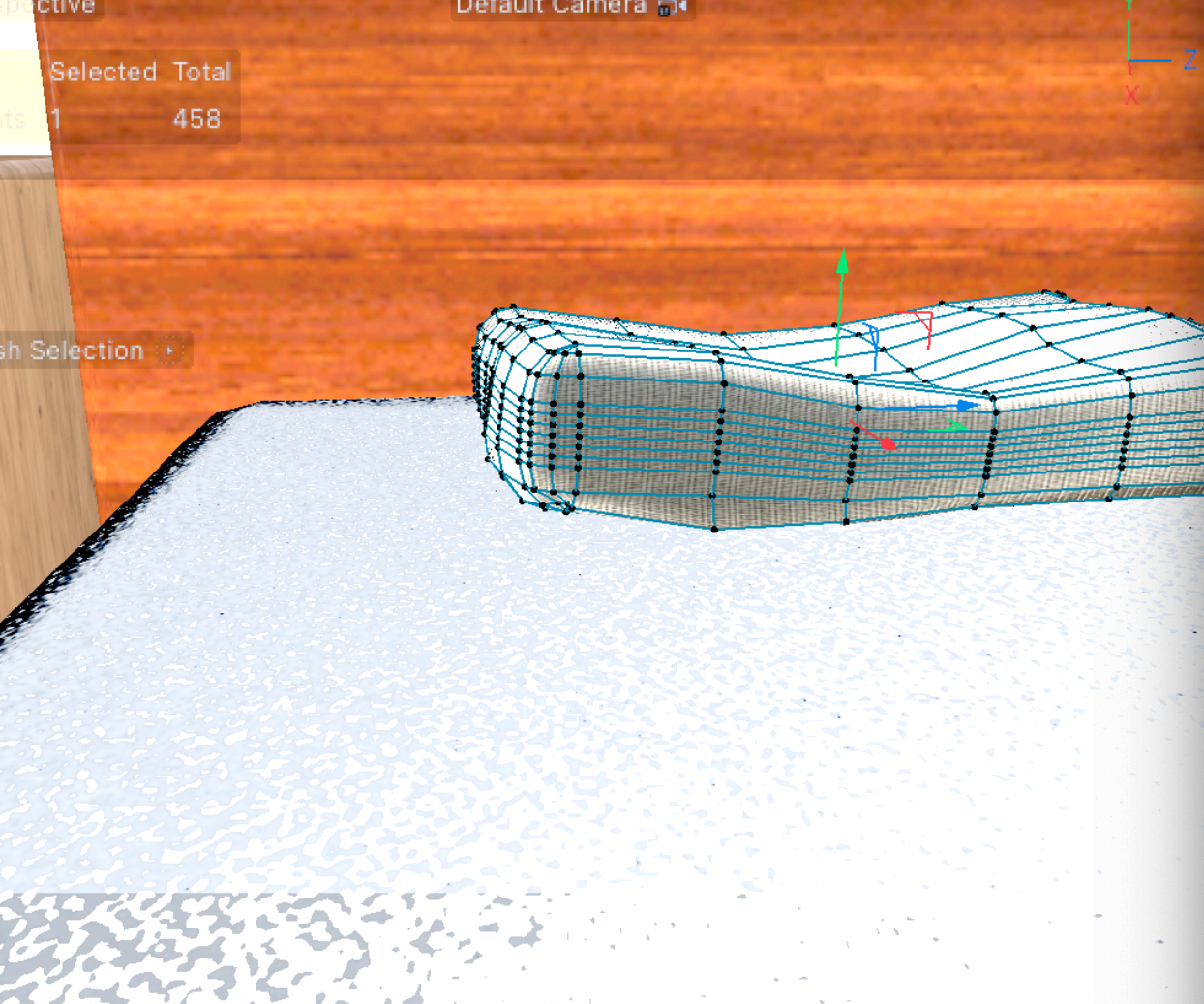
Alex was the only model that didn't change, however with the new face recordings made for the new dialogue I could create a more realistic look to contrast the cartoony look of the other characters. I also learned about nodes and adding animated texture on Cinema4D.

(Texturelabs, 2023) (Emma Nuel, 2023)
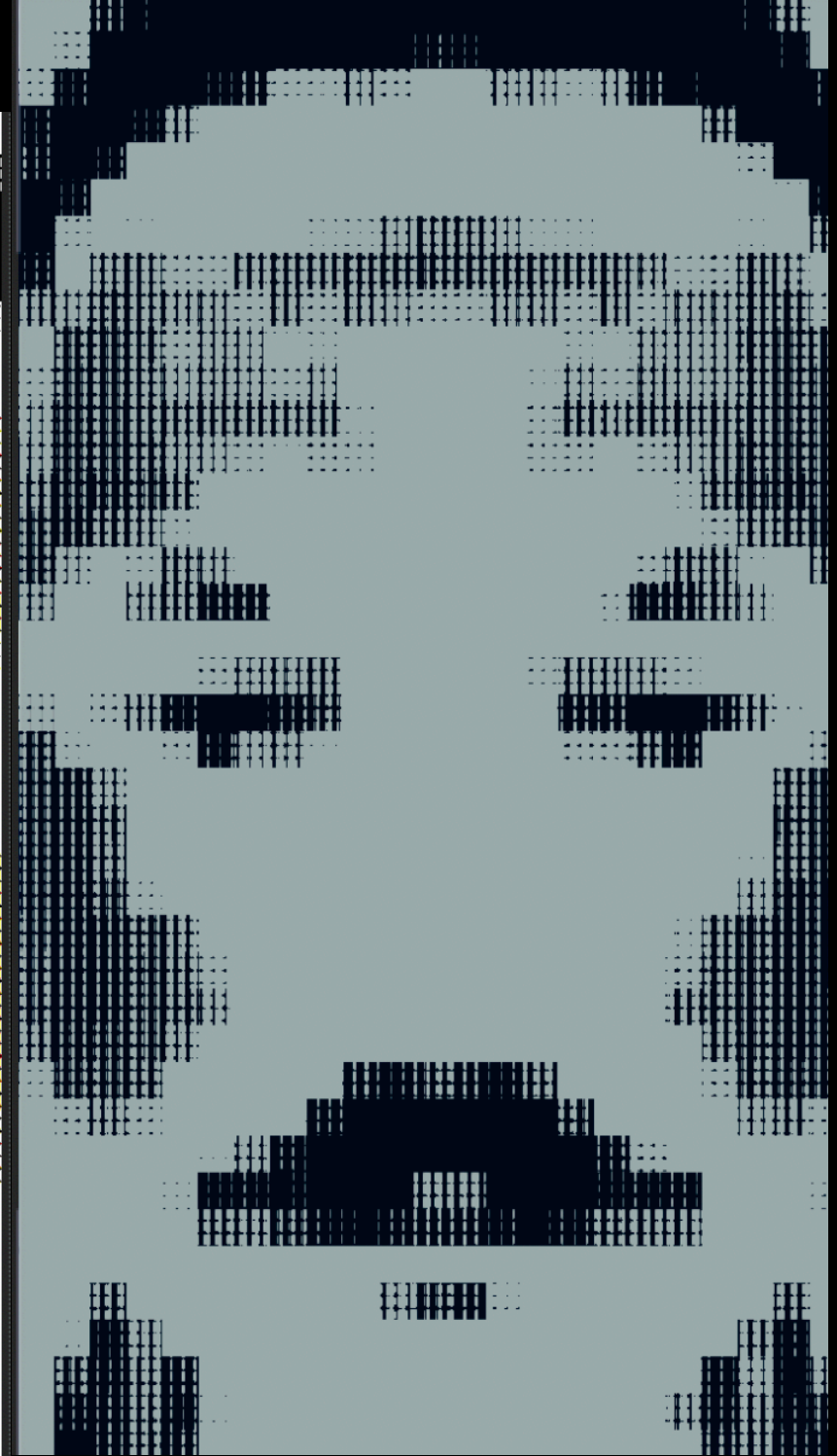
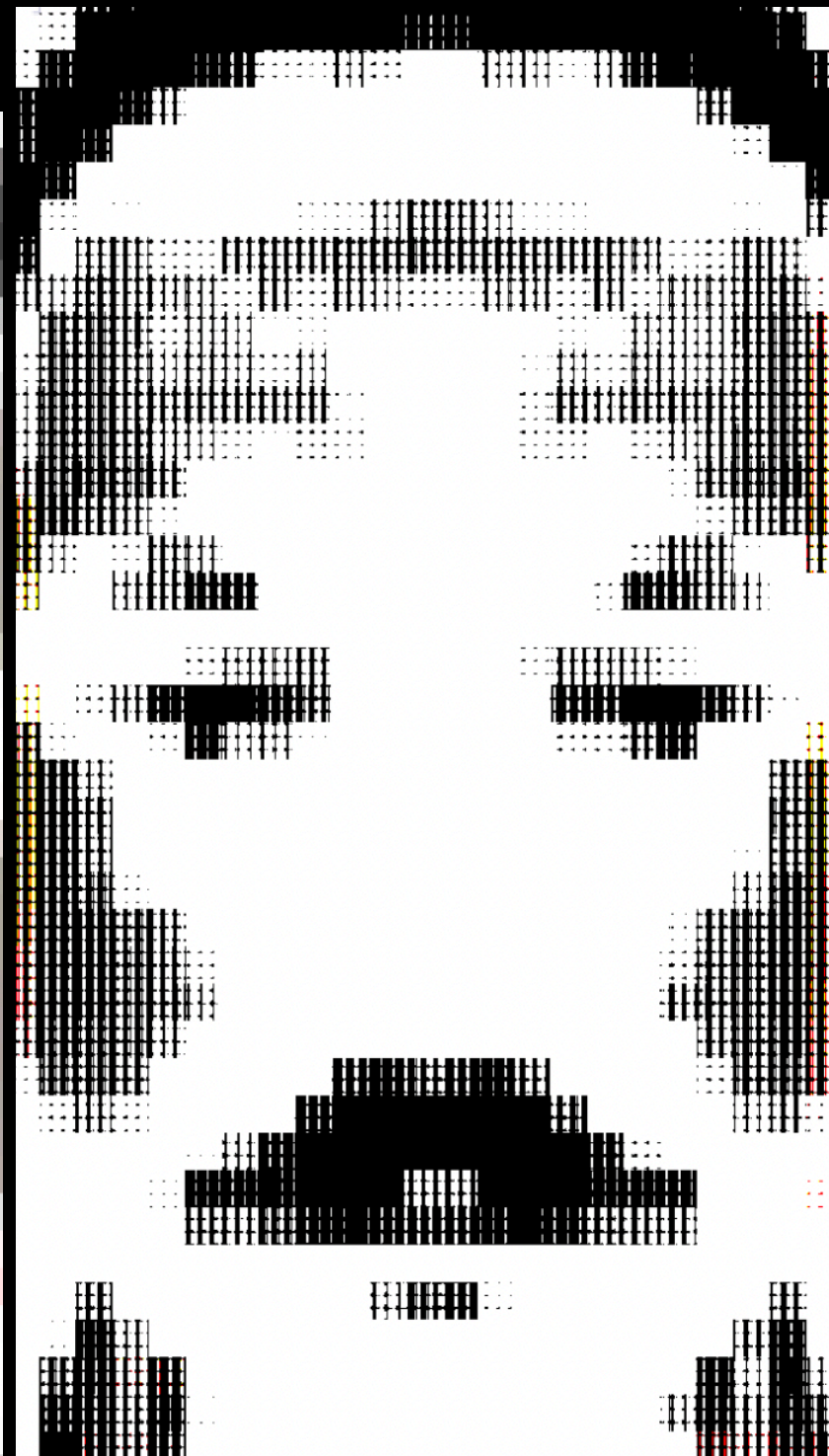|	#	Layer Name	Mode	T	Track Matte					Parent & Link	Render Time
👁	1	CC Toner	Normal		No Matte		fx			None	3ms
👁	2	Glow	Normal		No Matte		fx			None	5ms
👁	3	Wide Time	Normal		No Matte		fx			None	3ms
👁	4	Pixelate Pattern	Hard Mix		No Matte		fx			None	9ms
👁	5	Levels	Normal		No Matte		fx			None	3ms
👁	6	Pixelate Mosaic Control	Normal		No Matte		fx			None	5ms
👁	7	[Pixelate Displacement Reference]	Normal		No Matte		fx			None	
👁	8	Pixelate Displacement Effect	Normal		No Matte		fx			None	6ms
👁	9	Glow	Normal		No Matte		fx			None	6ms
👁	10	Colorize	Normal		No Matte		fx			None	11ms
👁	11	[IMG_9133.MOV]	Normal		No Matte					None	4ms
👁	12	[IMG_9133.MOV]	Normal		No Matte					None	18ms

Redshift RenderView

View   Preferences

Beauty   RGB   < Auto >

Frame 181: 2023-04-19 21:02:45 (1.58s)

Motion Tracker Track Vi...

Double Click to Create MT Object

Tracker View

Grid Spacing : 50 cm

181 F

2000   2200   24D0   2600   3000   3200   3400   36D0   3800   4000   42D0   4400

Cameras   Display   Options   Filter   Panel   Redshift

James::RS   James::Lea   James::Lea   Samuel::Ca
Samuel::Le   Samuel::Fa   Samuel::Ca   Samuel::Ca
nium
c Glo
Plastic Glo   Plastic Rou   Carpet Rip   Wood Afro

Texture
Alex Face Resize0000

Out Color

tandard Material
S Standard   Output

Out Color   Surface

ase   Displacement
Color   Volume
Metalness   Environment
eflection   Light
Roughness
eometry
Opacity
Bump Map

1 node(s)
Name   Alex Face Resize0000
Asset   Texture
Version

Preview   Basic   General   Adjust   Advanced

Preview

Node   Material

General

∨ IMAGE

Image   Animation

Reload Image...

Edit Image...

Locate Image...

Mode   Simple

Timing   Range

Range Start   0 F

Range End   0 F

Loops   0

Start Frame   0

End Frame   4659

Frame Rate   30

Start Offset   0

Detect Frames

◇ Custom Gamma   ○   1

∨ UV

Joints, animation & Mo-cap

The first thing I did after the character models were done, was to learn about joints following a YouTube tutorial, and record the lines to figure out pacing and movements. *(QuickVFX , 2013)*

After carefully rigging my characters, I made the motion capture for the character mostly using Maxon's "Moves" iPhone app while playing the recording in the background.

I then figured that a faster way to have the joints and the motion capture match was to remove my previous skeleton and just use the motion capture joint system as it was imported originally. I then matched my motion capture footage with the audio inside Cinema4D (except for future James which was animated manually with the original joint system)
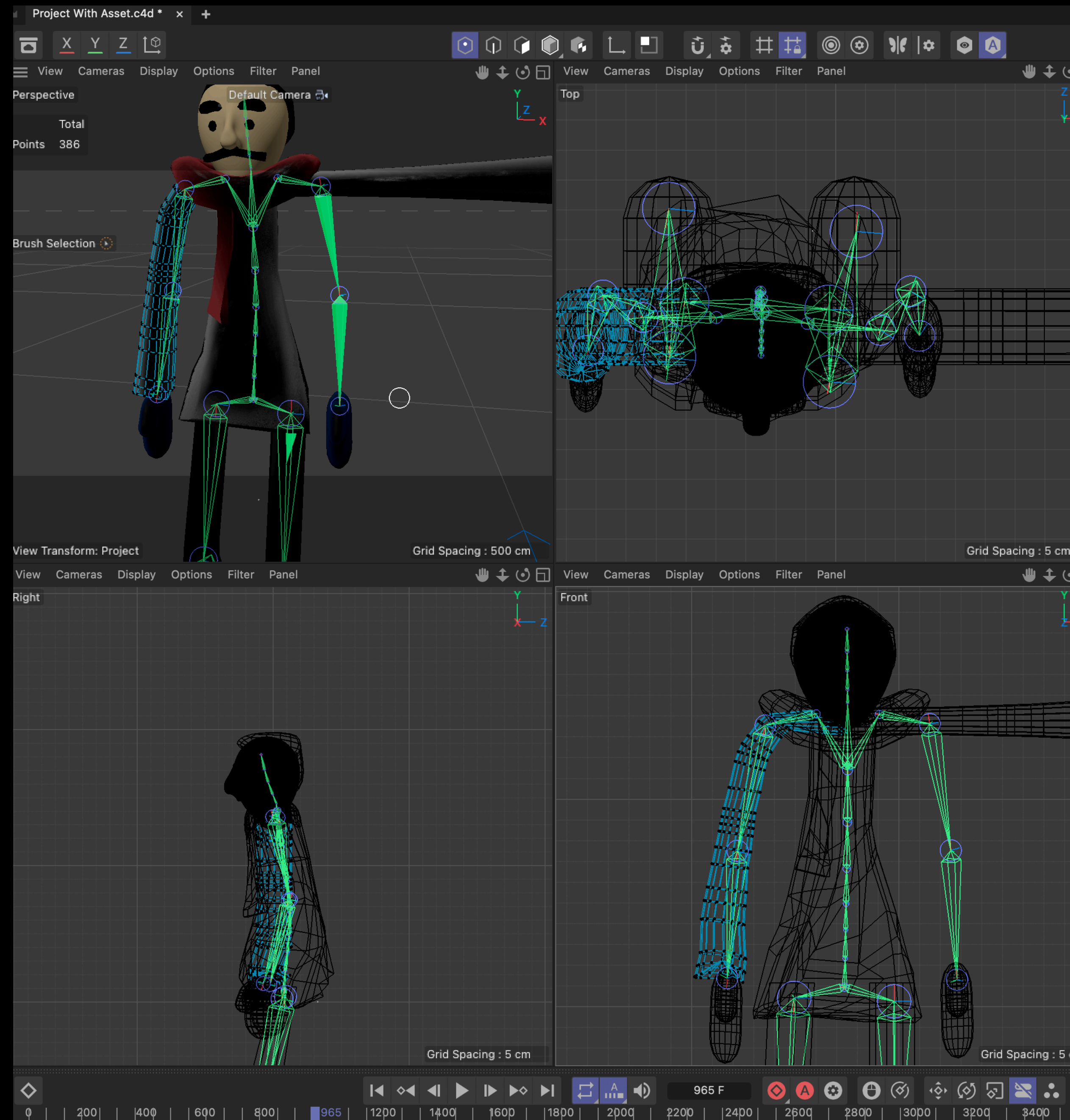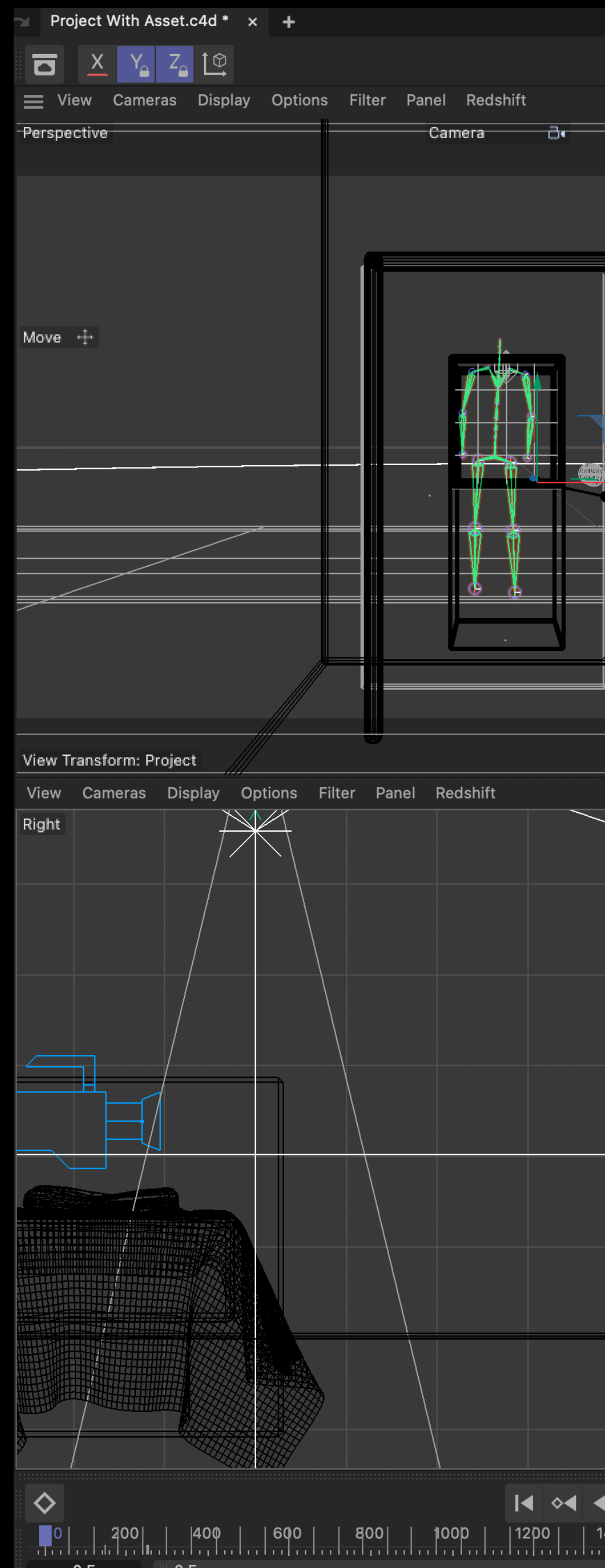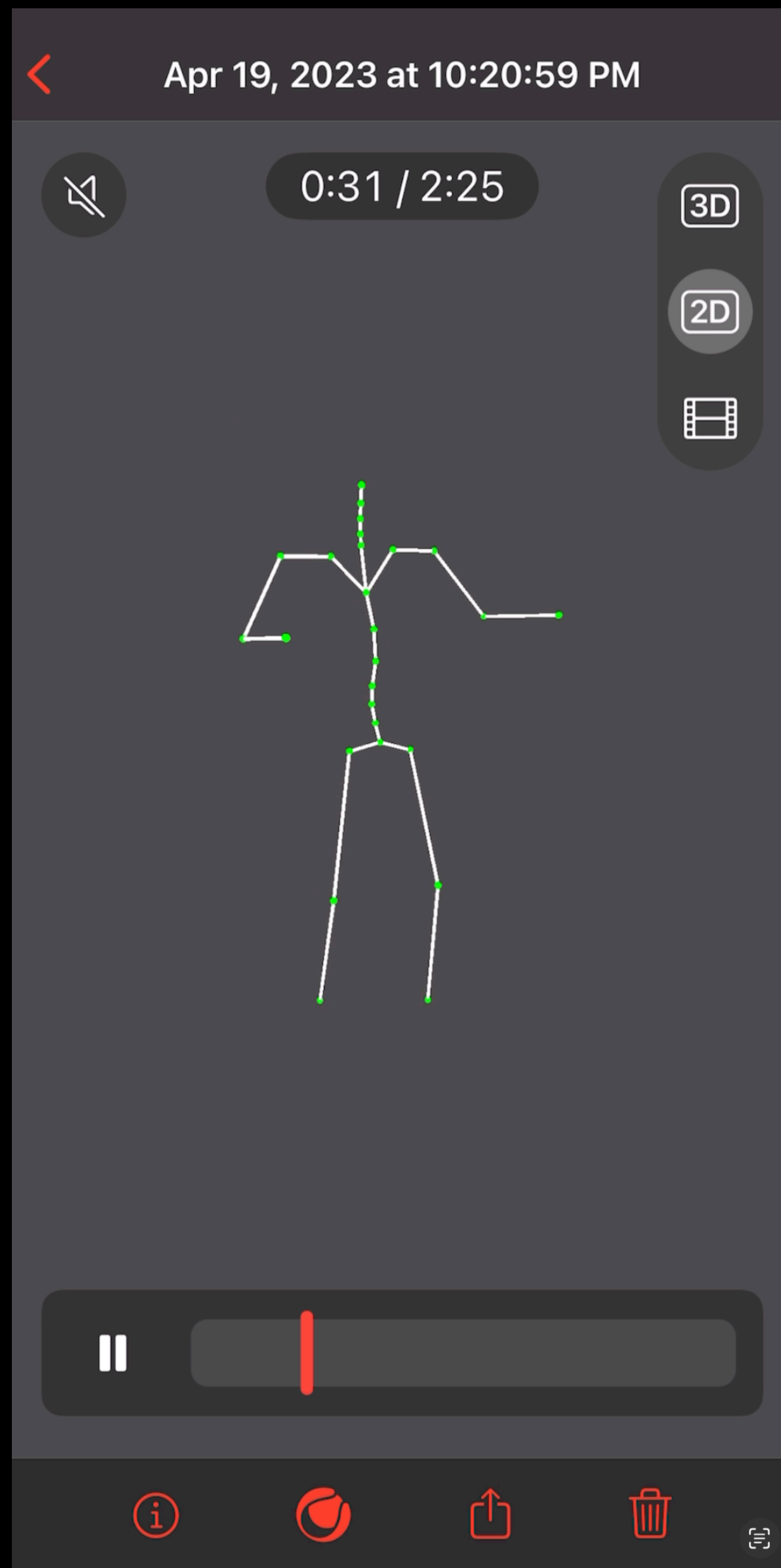
After the main render in Cinema4D was done, I added the intro, outro, color effects, the hologram (effects and sounds) along with some other general edits for the final render.

Adobe After Effects 2023 - /Users/hugovillarreal/Documents/The Recording.aep *

Default | Review | Learn | Small Screen | Standard | Search Help

Project | Effect Controls mixkit-cinematic-
Composition The Recording | Footage (none) | Layer mixkit-cinematic-glitch-trailer-1021.wav

The Recording_Final | The Recording | Main Footage

The Recording ▾ , used 1 time
1920 x 1080 (480 x 270) (1.00)
Δ 0;04;35;10, 29.97 fps

Name | Comment
Scan Lines
The Recording Master 720
Title
Wind Atmosphere
The Rec..._[0000-2320].png
Solids
The Recording
The Recording_3D
The Recording_Final
Submission 2_Cover.001.jpeg
Submission 2.001.jpeg
The Rec...alpha[0000-2320].png
logo_edinburgh white.png
logo.png
The Recording_3D_0000.png
The Recording_alpha1537.png

32 bpc

(80.4%) | Quarter | +0.0 | 0;01;46;26

Info
Preview
Effects & Presets
Libraries
Paragraph
Character

Abril Titling
SemiBold
36 px | Auto px
Metrics | 0
- px
100 % | 100 %
0 px | 0 %
Ligatures | Hindi Digits

The Recording | Holograms | Alpha_Footage | The Recording_Final | Title | The Recording_3D | Outro 3D | Holograms 3D | Alpha_Footage 3D | Wind Atmosph

0;01;46;26
03204 (29.97 fps)

00m | 01m | 02m | 03m | 04

| Layer Name | Mode | T | Track Matte | Parent & Link | Render Time | Stretch
1 | Re-Color | Normal | | No Matte | None | 11ms | 100.0%
2 | Auto Contrast | Normal | | No Matte | None | 2ms | 100.0%
3 | Sharpen | Normal | | No Matte | None | 1ms | 100.0%
4 | Vignette | Normal | | No Matte | None | 2ms | 100.0%
5 | Gaussian Blur | Normal | | No Matte | None | 1ms * | 100.0%
6 | Denoiser | Normal | | No Matte | None | 48ms | 100.0%
7 | Outro Black and White 2 | Normal | | No Matte | None | | 100.0%
8 | Outro Black and White | Normal | | No Matte | None | | 100.0%
9 | Intro Black and White | Normal | | No Matte | None | | 100.0%
10 | [Outro] | Normal | | No Matte | None | | 100.0%
11 | [Title] | Normal | | No Matte | None | | 100.0%
12 | [Wind Atmosphere] | Normal | | No Matte | None | 0ms | 100.0%
13 | [mixkit-elegant-door-announcement-224.wav] | | | | None | | 100.0%
14 | [The recording.mp3] | | | | None | | 100.0%
15 | [mixkit-technological-futuristic-hum-2133.wav] | | | | None | | 129.0%
16 | [mixkit-cinematic-glitch-trailer-1021.wav] | | | | None | | 100.0%
17 | [mixkit-cinematic-glitch-trailer-1021.wav] | | | | None | | 100.0%
18 | [mixkit-cinematic-glitch-trailer-1021.wav] | | | | None | | 100.0%
19 | [mixkit-cinematic-glitch-trailer-1021.wav] | | | | None | | 100.0%
20 | [mixkit-technological-futuristic-hum-2133.wav] | | | | None | | 103.0%
21 | [mixkit-technological-futuristic-hum-2133.wav] | | | | None | | 103.0%
22 | [mixkit-technological-futuristic-hum-2133.wav] | | | | None | | 65.0%
23 | Holograms 2 | Screen | | No Matte | None | 0ms * | 100.0%
24 | Holograms | Normal | | No Matte | None | 0ms * | 100.0%
25 | [Main Footage] | Normal | | No Matte | None | 70ms | 200.0%
26 | [The Recording_Normal_0000.png] | Normal | | No Matte | None | | 100.0%

Frame Render Time 135ms

I decided for the VR experience to work without the need for input and one that had a fixed angle view. That resulted in a 3D experience in which the viewers can immerse themselves and focus on the story without worrying about what to do or where to look. After I searched for tutorials on how to create the experience natively in Cinema4D using 3D-cameras, I then duplicated the camera I had and reworked most of the effects and edits I made in Adobe After Effects. Finally, after some testing I added a timer at the start for the user to place his/ her headset.

(New Tech Tutorials, 2019)

Adobe After Effects 2023 - /Users/hugovillarreal/Documents/The Recording.aep *

Default   Review   Learn   Small Screen   Standard   Search Help

Project
Effect Controls mixkit-cinematic-

The Recording_3D
1920 x 1080 (480 x 270) (1.00)
Δ 0;04;35;10, 29.97 fps

Composition The Recording_3D   Footage (none)   Layer mixkit-cinematic-glitch-trailer-1021.wav

The Recording_3D   Outro 3D

Name   Comment
Scan Lines
The Recording Master 720
Title
Wind Atmosphere
The Rec..._[0000-2320].png
Solids
The Recording
The Recording_3D
The Recording_Final
Submission 2_Cover.001.jpeg
Submission 2.001.jpeg
The Rec...alpha[0000-2320].png
logo_edinburgh white.png
logo.png
The Recording_3D_0000.png
The Recording_alpha1537.png

32 bpc

(77.6%)   (Full)   +0.0   0;00;09;08

Info
Preview
Effects & Presets
Libraries
Paragraph
Character

Abril Titling
SemiBold
36 px   Auto px
Metrics   0
- px
100 %   100 %
0 px   0 %

Ligatures   Hindi Digits

The Recording   Holograms   Alpha_Footage   The Recording_Final   Title   The Recording_3D   Outro 3D   Holograms 3D   Alpha_Footage 3D   Wind Atmosph

0;00;09;08
00278 (29.97 fps)

0;00s   00;15s   00;30s   00;45s   01;00s

Layer Name   Mode   T   Track Matte   Parent & Link   Render Time   Stretch

1   Re-Color   Normal   No Matte   None   6ms   100.0%
2   Auto Contrast   Normal   No Matte   None   18ms   100.0%
3   Sharpen   Normal   No Matte   None   7ms   100.0%
4   Vignette   Normal   No Matte   None   100.0%
5   Gaussian Blur   Normal   No Matte   None   10ms *   100.0%
6   Denoiser   Normal   No Matte   None   326ms   100.0%
7   Outro Black and White 2   Normal   No Matte   None   100.0%
8   Outro Black and White   Normal   No Matte   None   100.0%
9   Intro Black and White   Normal   No Matte   None   100.0%
10   [Outro 3D]   Normal   No Matte   None   100.0%
11   [Outro 3D]   Normal   No Matte   None   100.0%
12   3D Guides   Normal   No Matte   None   100.0%
13   3D Guides   Normal   No Matte   None   100.0%
14   [Title]   Normal   No Matte   None   100.0%
15   [Title]   Normal   No Matte   None   100.0%
16   [Wind Atmosphere]   Normal   No Matte   None   0ms   100.0%
17   [mixkit...oor-announcement-224.wav]   None   100.0%
18   [The recording.mp3]   None   100.0%
19   [mixkit...cal-futuristic-hum-2133.wav]   None   129.0%
20   [mixkit...atic-glitch-trailer-1021.wav]   None   100.0%
21   [mixkit...atic-glitch-trailer-1021.wav]   None   100.0%
22   [mixkit...atic-glitch-trailer-1021.wav]   None   100.0%
23   [mixkit...atic-glitch-trailer-1021.wav]   None   100.0%
24   [mixkit...cal-futuristic-hum-2133.wav]   None   103.0%
25   [mixkit...cal-futuristic-hum-2133.wav]   None   103.0%
26   [mixkit...cal-futuristic-hum-2133.wav]   None   65.0%
27   Holograms 2   Screen   No Matte   None   100.0%
Transform
Anchor Point   640.0,360.0
Reset

Frame Render Time 409ms

The last part of the project was to add everything inside a website using the Wix platform, this is made for the intention of presenting everything to a viewer in a complete and interactive package.

The website is divided in 4 pages:
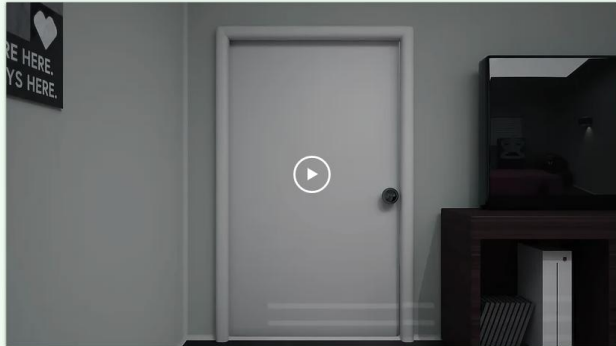
Home...

The Recording.

A student film about robots,
nursing homes, and the upcoming
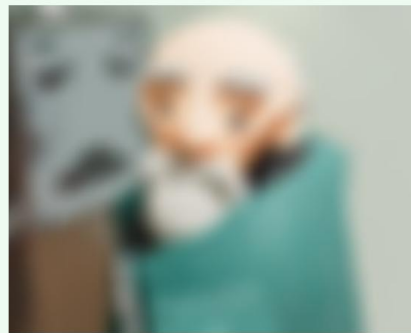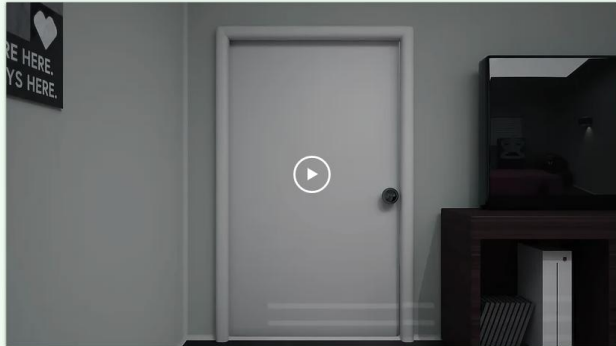dystopian future.

By Hugo Villarreal
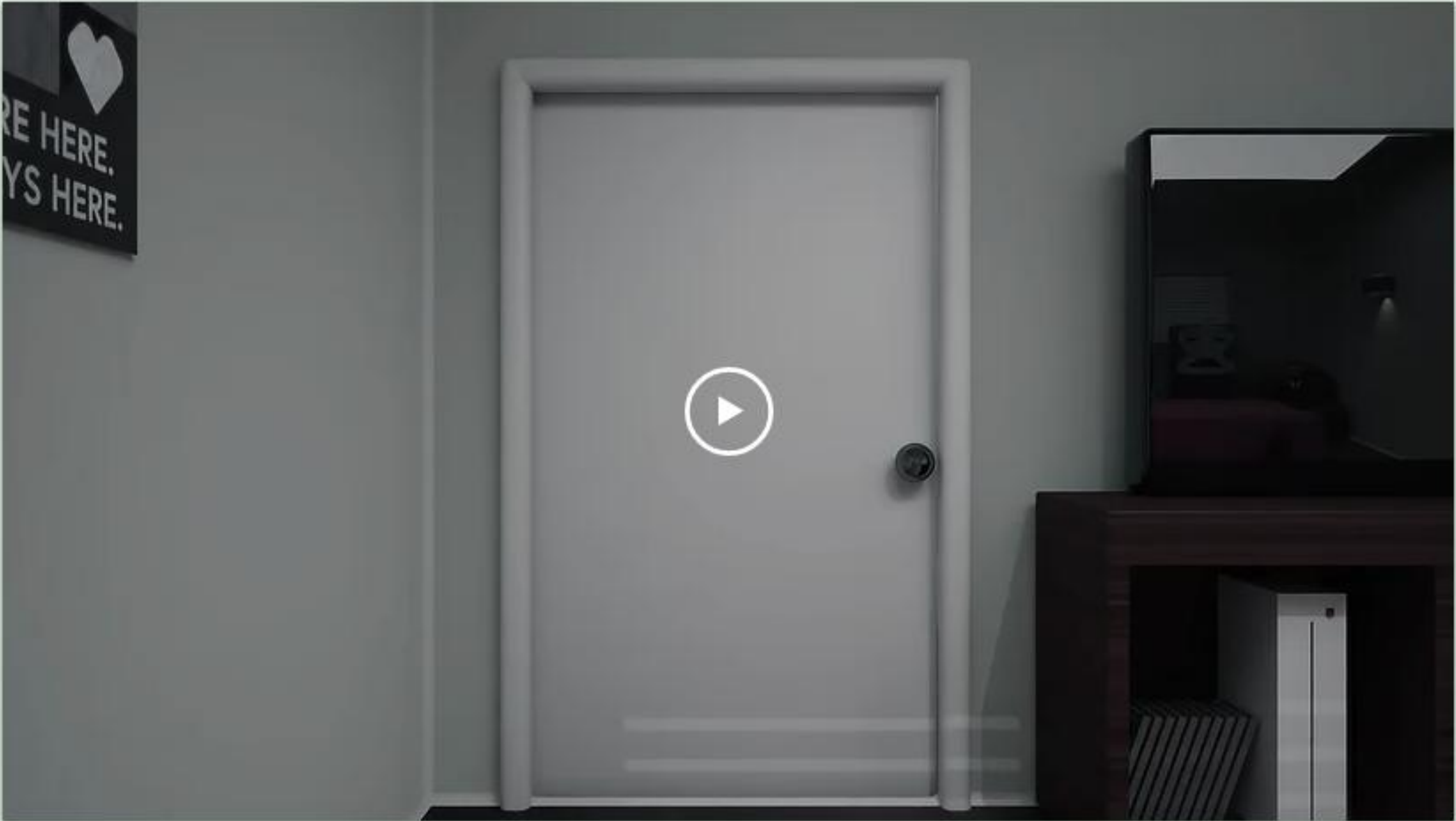
Watch the film:

Project Objective:

The main objective of the project is to make a film that explores how our continuous reliance on technology (and
AI) could lead to a dystopian future where the aging population is forgotten in nursing homes.

**There is an upcoming demographic shift. It is
predicted that 1 in 6 people in the world will
be aged 60 years (or over) by 2030.**

World Health Organization, 2022

Why is there a need
to tell this story?

Want to learn more about this project?

Watch the video commentary

The Recording.

A student film about robots,
nursing homes, and the upcoming
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By Hugo Villarreal

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Watch the film:

Project Objective:

...3D Experience...

3D Experience

Watch "The Recording" film in 3D via Google Cardboard or similar equipments.

Experience the film:

10   ▶   10

About the 3D Experience

I decided for the VR experience to work without the need for input and one that had a fixed angle view. That resulted in a 3D experience in which the viewers can immerse themselves and focus on the story without worrying about what to do or where to look. After I searched for tutorials on how to create the experience natively in Cinema4D using 3D-cameras, I then duplicated the camera I had and reworked most of the effects and edits I made in Adobe After Effects.

Finally, after some testing I added a timer at the start for the user to place his/ her headset.
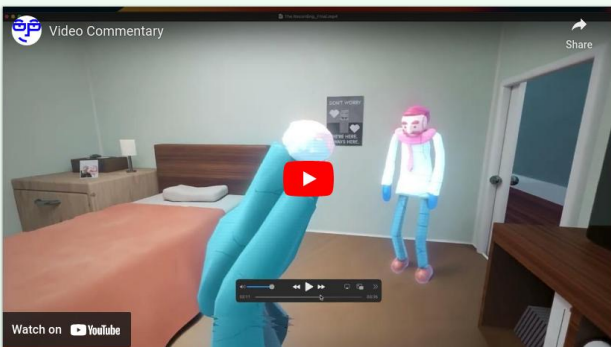
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Video Commentary

The
Recording

info@hugovillarreal.com

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3D Experience

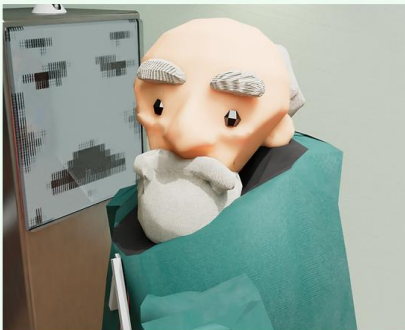Watch "The Recording" film in 3D via Google Cardboard or similar equipments.

Experience the film:

10 ⊙ 10

About the 3D Experience

I decided for the VR experience to work without the need for input and one that had a fixed angle view. That resulted in a 3D experience in which the viewers can immerse themselves and focus on the story without worrying about what to do or where to look. After I searched for tutorials on how to create the experience natively in Cinema4D using 3D cameras, I then duplicated the camera I had and reworked most of the effects and edits I made in Adobe After Effects.

Finally, after some testing I added a timer at the start for the user to place his/ her headset.
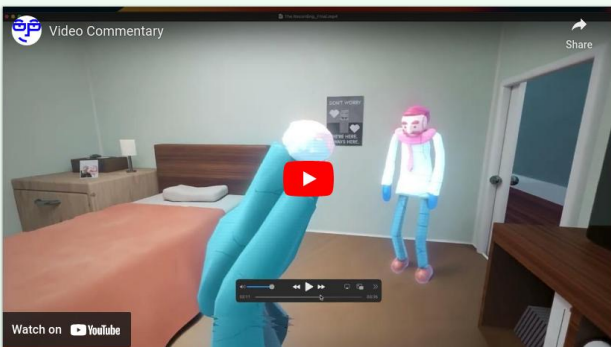
There is an upcoming demographic shift. It is predicted that 1 in 6 people in the world will be aged 60 years (or over) by 2030.

World Health Organization, 2022

Why is there a need to tell this story?

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Want to learn more about this project?

Watch the video commentary

The
Recording

info@hugovillarreal.com

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Video Commentary   Share

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The Recording
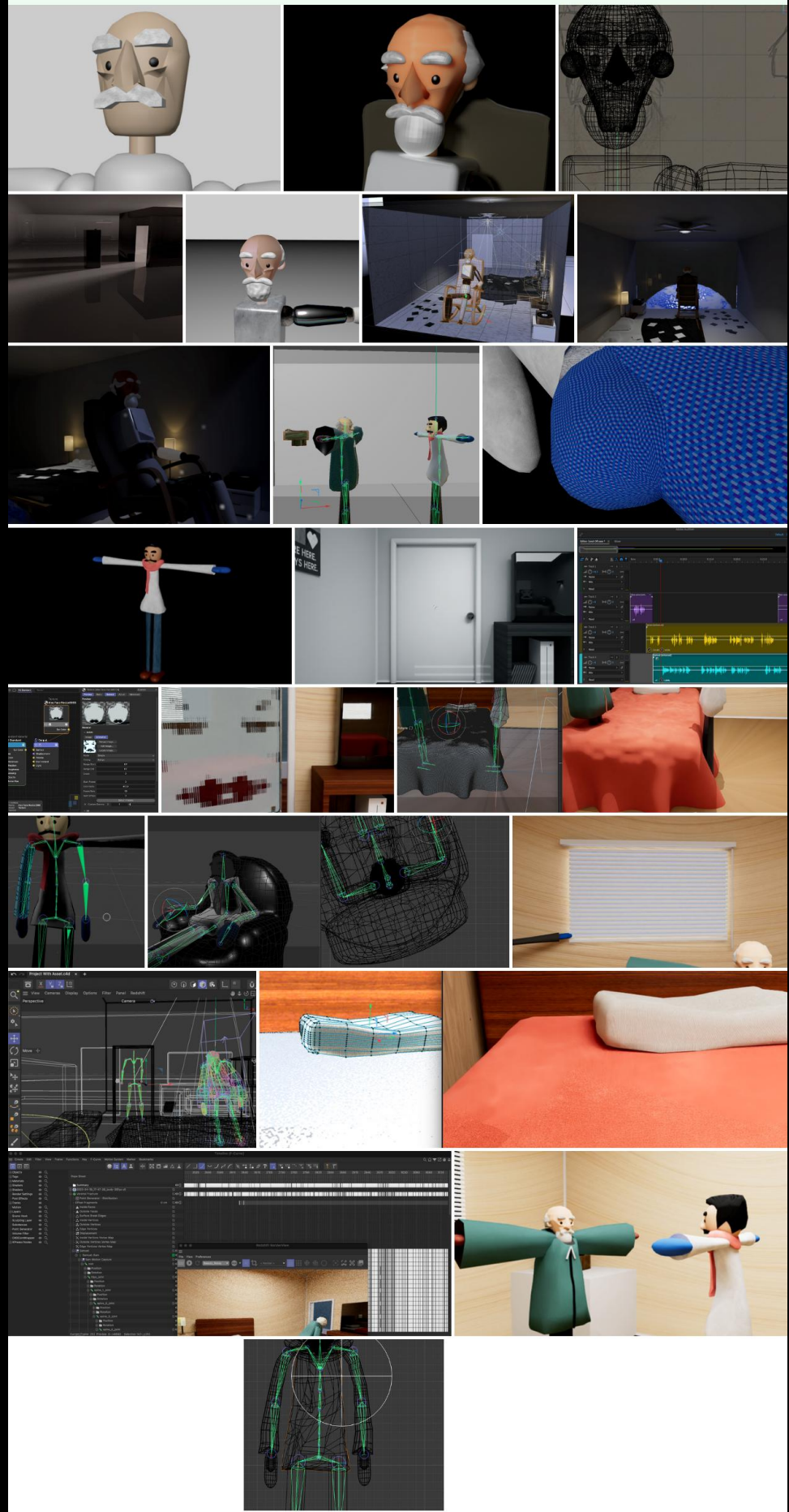
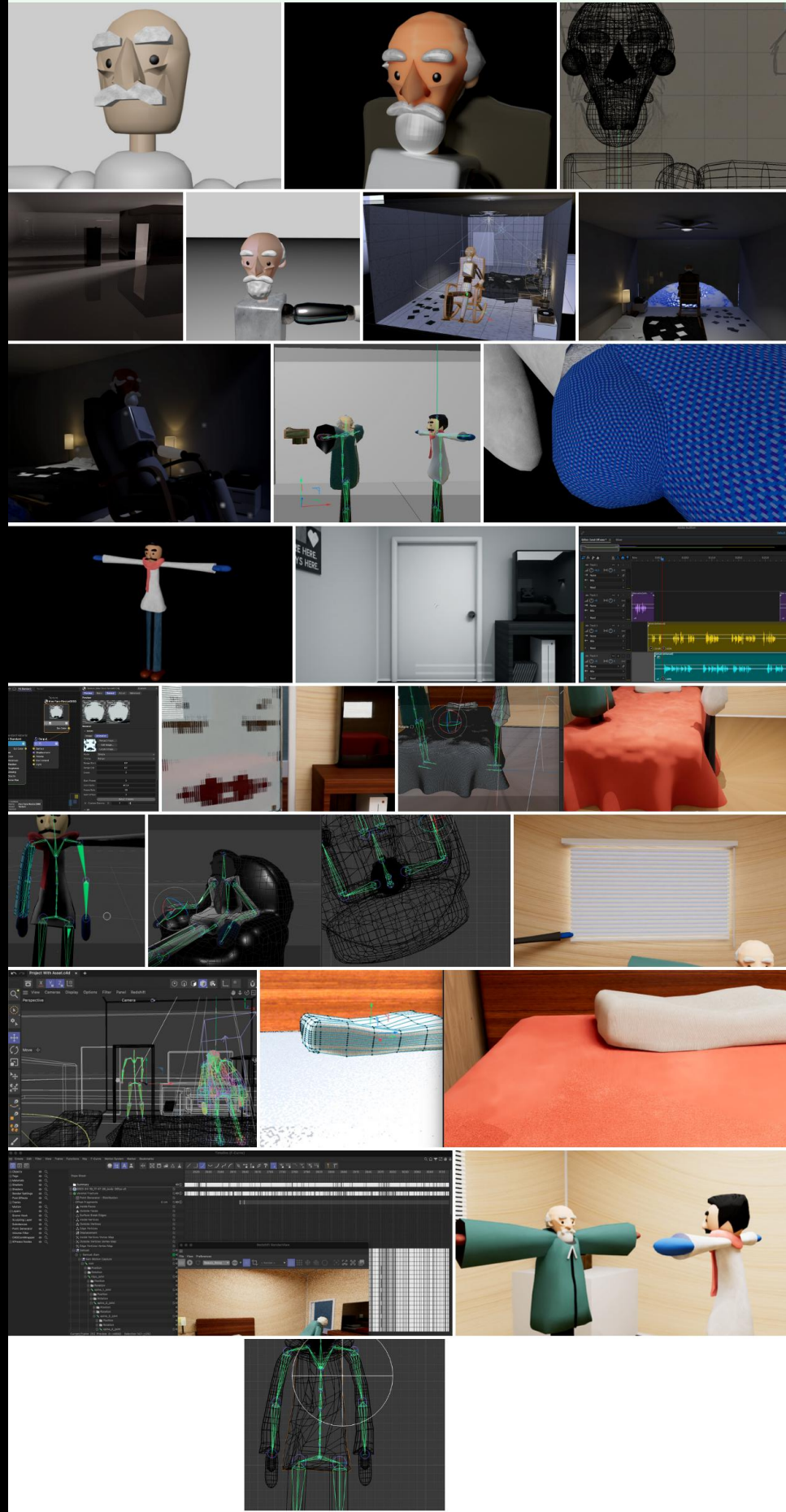info@hugovillarreal.com

...Documentation...

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The ideas were all over the place. The story was changing constantly from a noir detective film, to a two-hander play where the main setting was a space retirement home. At the end, I decided to focus on a human story that could express some very real concerns about the upcoming future. Who are we going to be with when we die?

In any case, here are some pictures and videos taken during the making of this film.

Download the reports

Because this was a student project made for University of Edinburgh, there were two reports made for the class. These document the project's journey completely. Click to download.

PDF
Submission 1

PDF
Submission 2

The
Recording
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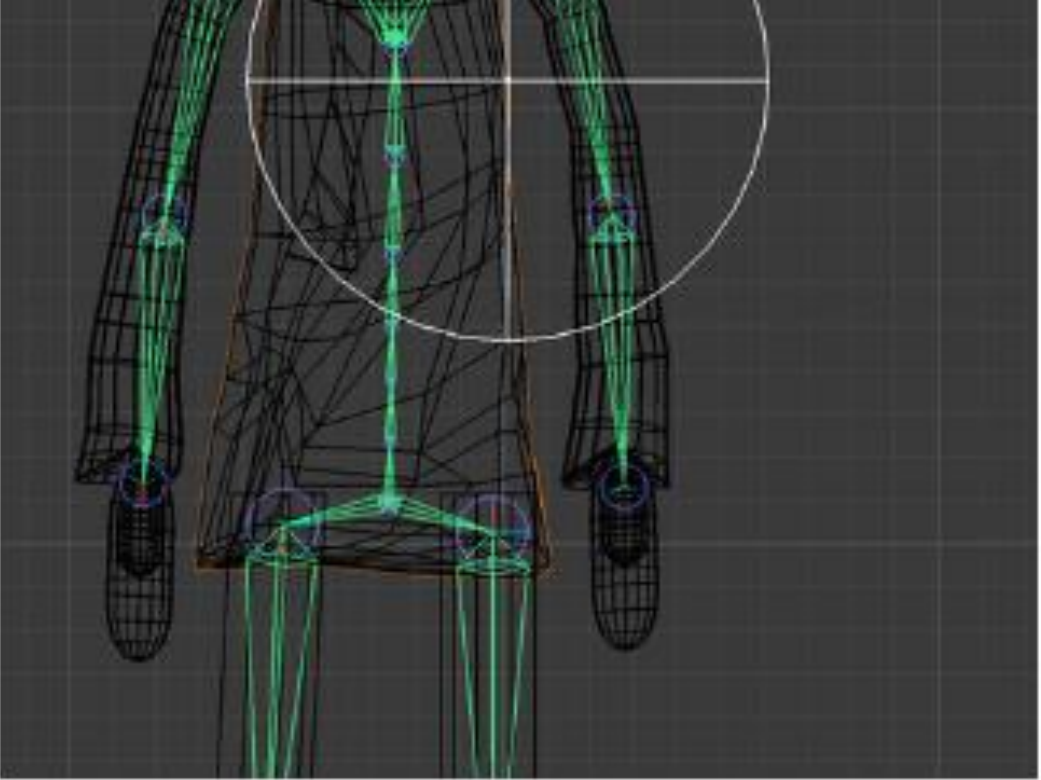

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PDF Submission 1

PDF Submission 2

and References.

References

The following are the references used for this website, the video or in another part of the proyect.

Articles and Studies

AlZamil, A., Alhoqail, R. and Alodhayani, A.A. (2019) "Barriers and attitudes of family and internal medicine residents toward geriatric patients: a cross-sectional analytical study," Advances in Medical Education and Practice, Volume 10, pp. 585–590. Available at: https://doi.org/10.2147/amep.s171376

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Sounds and Graphics

Mixkit (2023) mixkit-elegant-door-announcement-224.wav https://mixkit.co/free-sound-effects

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Photos Public Domain (January 11, 2012) Crumpled olive green paper. This is a photo of crumpled or wrinkled olive green colored paper. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Crumpled_olive_green_paper.jpg

In these pages, the user can watch the film and 3D experience, learn about the data , the process behind the project and even download the reports made for the class. Hopefully this will give the viewers a much better experience to watch the film and learn more about the topic.

Why this story?

There is an upcoming demographic shift. It is predicted that 1 in 6 people in the world will be aged 60 years (or over) by 2030. *(World Health Organization, 2022a)*

It is possible that AI will care for a big portion of this population because of the perceptions of the two main groups involved.

On one hand, nurses (which are the most suited caregivers) are not only lacking in interest but also in training for geriatric medicine. *(AlZamil, A., 2019)*

For the elders, the prospect of having humans as caregivers is frightening because there is some data suggesting that more than half of the older people have experienced some form of abuse in their community settings. *(World Health Organization, 2022b)* And although the main people who committed the abuse are not nurses specifically, it's likely that the incidents will still lead to overall distrust to human caregivers.

The rise of nursing homes is also something that is worth thinking and being careful about. Although it would seem that it is the best option for longer life, it actually can decrease the life expectancy by around 40 months. *(Brent, R.J., 2022)*

But just as I found out that the son was key to solve my narrative problem for this story, there is some research indicating that the family (which is usually overlooked in this conversation) is at least part of the solution by providing social engagement that can increase the life expectancy of the nursing home residents. *(Pastor-Barriuso, R. , 2020)*

Although these are heavy topics, I feel that this type of stories need to be told because it's very common for family members to feel regret after the end of the life of their loved ones. I hope that with these stories in mind, we can take better decisions and spend more time with our families before it's too late. *(Cohen-Mansfield, J. 2020)*

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Thank you.