

S P A C E S

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Project Proposal

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## VIDEO INSTALLATION

Exploring the concept of isolation and distance within a relationship, Spaces portrays the lives of a couple living together but are worlds apart. The loss of their child becomes the driving force behind this disconnect and through their inner-struggles, we see two individuals fighting for peace and the love they once shared.

## CONCEPT



A triple screen projection is used to tell the story of Jordan and Tris, a young couple divided by the loss of their child. Using symbolic sequences and imagery, the themes of unresolved emotions and grudges will be illustrated. In addition, a transformation of the space where audiences will be viewing this video installation will further invoke a sense of distance and isolation and allow them to contemplate what is seen on the screen without any disturbance or alternative voices.

## RESEARCH

**Account #1:** I have always been interested in exploring the theme of distance and isolation within characters in their own homes. This stems from having experienced a sense of separation from my own parents throughout my entire life. The main factor that causes this estrangement between us is our relationship with my brother. My brother has always been an extremely emotionally charged child and growing up with him was difficult. As he entered his teens, he developed serious anger management issues and had frequent emotional meltdowns, venting his frustrations at home. My parents and I approach the relationship with my brother in very different ways, and that gradually caused a rip in the relationship. Both parties decided to ignore the problem at hand and would often retreat into our rooms to deal with it individually. Hence, I feel strongly about themes regarding distance between people living in the same space. I hope to present this very personal theme in the most genuine and relatable way possible.

**Account #2:** My close friend became a mother at the young age of 19, but lost her child one month into pregnancy. The father of the child had decided to propose to her when he found out that she was pregnant. The miscarriage caused a deep divide between the young couple and raised many issues that they had never thought they would be facing so early into their relationship. Again, there is the theme of distance and divide between two people caused by differing ways of approaching the relationship with a loved one. We drew largely from this account while creating the world and the characters that live in it. We also drew from personal experiences of distance from the people we should be the most intimate with and used that to emotionally fuel the story.



# RELATION BETWEEN CONTENT & FORM

Three screens will be used to portray space in the house and the couple involved in the narrative. Each screen will work interchangeably to construct the narrative.

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## **Character Profiles:**

**Name:** Jordan

**Age:** 25

**Place of Birth:** Singapore

**Family Background:** Jordan comes from a small family consisting of his older sister and his parents

**General Appearance:** Usually dressed casually and doesn't make any effort to look good or dress up anymore

**Occupation:** White-collar worker

**Key Relationships:** He has a wife of five years whom he met during his first year of polytechnic. Due to an unplanned pregnancy, they got married and moved in together when he was 20.

**Flaws:** He puts on a strong front and often seems emotionless in an attempt to conceal his feelings. He thinks that showing his emotions makes him look vulnerable.

## **Character Needs:**

- Freedom because he feels trapped in a relationship that's not going anywhere.
- Emotional security as he has lost almost all emotional connection with Tris.
- Gaining control of his life and putting himself first again.

**Professional:** Jordan is a confident employee at work and maintains a good relationship with his co-workers. He doesn't discuss much of his personal life with his colleagues and enjoys unwinding after a long week at work with drinks. Because of the stress he faces at home, work has unexpectedly become a place he can relax and be himself.

**Personal:** Jordan carries himself as someone who is patient and loving to his wife. He doesn't complain while often having to be her emotional punching bag and resorts to being passive-aggressive to maintain peace in the house.

**Private:** Deep down, Jordan still blames his wife for the loss of their child. Despite looking like he has gotten over the pain and has forgiven her, he still believes that if Tris had been more careful, things wouldn't have gotten to this state. Having to take care of her and be with her through her depression and being the sole breadwinner of the family has also taken a toll on him and he longs to be happy once more.

**Name:** Tris

**Age:** 24

**Place of Birth:** Singapore

**Family Background:** Before moving in with Jordan, Tris lived with her Dad as her Mom had passed away a few years ago

**General Appearance:** Because she stays home most of the time, Tris doesn't take care of her appearance anymore and is unkempt

**Occupation:** Jobless

**Key Relationships:** Married to Jordan. Because she lives with him, she has grown even more distant from her father

**Flaws:** Isn't able to express her feelings much and has shut herself out from the world and her husband, Jordan. The constant blame she put on herself also takes a toll on her life and affects not only her but the people around her.

**Character Needs:**

Tris seeks purpose in life. After the death of her child, she is left lost and has no direction or ambition in life and is in a state of limbo. She wants to move on and get over the death, but is constantly haunted by the incident and blames herself for letting it happen.

**Professional:** Tris got fired from her job 1 year ago after she had a mental breakdown in the office one day. She feels alienated from her peers in the office as she can no longer connect to or relate to the people around her, and finds their small talk uninteresting and even frustrating. She has been unemployed ever since.

**Personal:** Tris developed a severe case of depression and anxiety disorder ever since she lost her child. She makes it no secret to Jordan that she blames herself and as much as Jordan tells her he doesn't blame her, she makes it her main focus to be the best wife she can be. Coupled with her anxiety however, she often becomes a ball of nerves and is constantly pessimistic and emotional.

**Private:** She blames and hates herself for her child's death and seeks redemption. She has always been a perfectionist, and sees her child's death as her biggest failure. Hence, she is not able to get over it and is stuck in the past.



# STORY SYNOPSIS

A young couple is forced to deal with the loss of their child in their shared apartment.

Act I: Jordan and Tris both sit at the dinner table for a meal. Jordan abruptly leaves halfway during the meal and goes to the couch to watch TV. Tris finishes her food alone at dinner table and goes to join him on the couch. After a short moment on the couch, Jordan gets fed up and goes to the balcony to take a smoke. She sits at the couch alone for a little longer. Jordan walks straight to his study room, leaving Tris alone on the couch.

Act II: Seeing that he is not responding to her, Tris returns to the master bedroom and takes a moment. She is overcome with guilt and grief over her lost child. Consumed by her thoughts of her lost child, she begins to take out old baby toys from a box she keeps stashed away. She gets more agitated as she pulls out more toys, and finally sits on the ground in a daze.

Act III: Jordan walks into the master bedroom where Tris is. He sits down opposite her. He thinks about how Tris used to be and the relationship they had. He misses the person she used to be. Tris is still in a daze, staring at the toys on the floor. Jordan packs the toys back into the box and pushes it to the side. He reaches out to hold her hand.

# EXPERIMENTATION

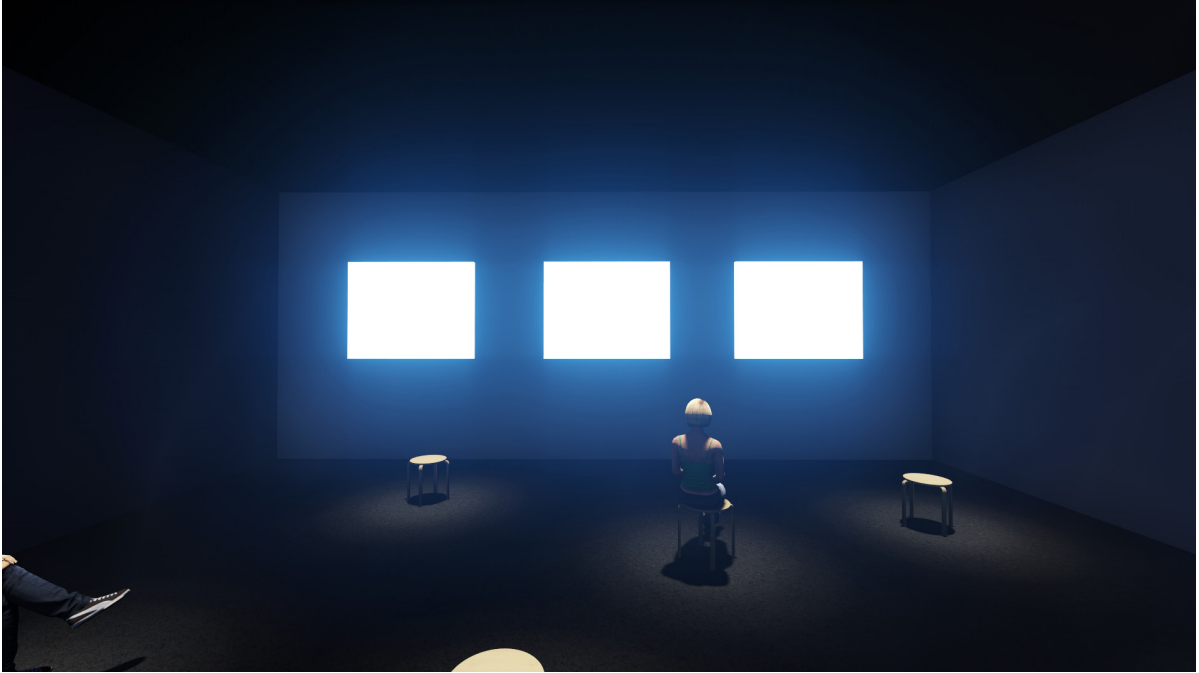
The theme of distance and separation is something that has been explored many times but we hope to present a fresh angle on it by highlighting the loss of someone precious to our two protagonists as the main cause for their isolation and distance from each other. Through extensive research, we found a wide range of films that expressed the themes of a broken relationship and mental stress. Some relied heavily on dialogue and monologues while others included just imagery to bring the theme across. Some of these films include:

The Wind by Eija-Liisa Ahtila (2002)  
American Beauty (1999)  
Multi-screen projections by Bill Viola  
Requiem for a Dream (2000)

We want to make use of the multi screen element to tell our story through subtle imagery and strong sound design. We took this narrative route as we hope to present a story that probes our audience to think about the underlying issues and themes revealed. Because of this, we spent more time on coming up with simple but powerful shots that contained multi-layered meanings and subtext. We will also make use of sound design to push the story forward.

Another way in which we will bring across the feeling of distance and isolation would be how audiences experience our video installation. In a traditional cinema setting, audiences are often seated side-by-side and are able to talk or discuss whatever is on the screen with whoever's beside them. By increasing proximity between audiences, we hope to fully translate the feeling of not being able to express yourself when you want to, to feel oppressed and alone and ultimately step into the shoes of our characters.

# INSTALLATION LAYOUT







### **Installation Venue:**

Our challenge was to find a space that would best suited to house our video installation. After doing a location recce around the ADM campus, we decided that some possible venues included:

- Film Studio (Level 1)
- Photography Studio (Level 2)
- Foundation Drawing Room (Level 2)
- Foudation 4D Classroom (Level 2)
- Crit Room (Basement)

## P R E S E N T A T I O N

Much like all our other assignments for this semester of Foundation 4D (II) and given the limited time we have to complete this project, pre-production is key and we will aim to carefully and purposefully come up with moodboards and a comprehensive script and shot list in order to facilitate the editing process.

We hope to finish production soonest so as to give ourselves enough time to work on the installation space such that setting-up will be as efficient as possible.

