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## IKKUMA: An Artistic VR Storytelling Experience

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### Cover Page Footnote

I would like to thank John Joseph and Althea Steynberg for providing help with the project's production.

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*Abstract– Ikkuma is a story about a land being swallowed by the sea, where conflict cracks ice and fire tears families apart. A VR headset puts you in the mind of an orphan, witness to your mother’s brutal execution and alone in a world of crumbling ice. The players must learn to tame the fire (ikkuma) in their hearts and the hunger in their belly if they hope to survive the harsh yet fragile Arctic tundra.*

*Keywords– Global Warming, Virtual Reality, Inuvialuit, Ice, Fire, Storytelling, Artwork*

The fundamental theme of Ikkuma is global warming and its impact on the Arctic ecosystem. While initially portrayed as a story of brutality and revenge, the narrative slowly pans out to show the futility of these personal struggles against the very real forces of nature and manmade climate change.

Ikkuma is the Inuvialuit word for fire, a central element to this work and a stark visual contrast against the whites, greys, and blues of the frozen wastes.

### PRESENTATION

#### *Experience*

The end goal for Ikkuma is to create a narrative experience that lets the players take on the role of our central “orphan” character, abandoned in the arctic tundra. I’d like this experience to be visceral but also educational, and I intend to do that by giving players a first person perspective of the impact of global warming on the North pole. The players will learn Inuit traditional knowledge (Qaujimagatuqangnit)



Fig.1. Project Demo Video: [https://youtu.be/lS\\_mSTLQJFo](https://youtu.be/lS_mSTLQJFo)



Fig.2. Fragile Arctic Tundra Scene

by watching, listening to, and harvesting on the land, ice and water.

The Inuvialuit people talk about their knowledge of polar bears as a form of Inuit traditional

knowledge. Polar bears and their harvest have long been an important part of Inuvialuit art, culture and traditions. Polar bear meat nourished Inuvialuit people and their imagination. However, at the end of this story, the players may finally come to realize their true identity as a desperate polar bear themselves.

### ***Demonstration***

For the purposes of demonstrating at Frameless, I made a short video that shows the world and characters of this project. This video was filmed using an Oculus Rift headset, and demonstrates the Unity scenes and Tilt Brush models I used in my project.

I would also like to demonstrate the themes of my work - I feel that the visual contrast between fire and ice presents a striking representation of the changing climate, and by using the medium of VR we can create fantastic scenes that compose this contrast in unique ways.

Link to Mozilla Hubs Demo Room:  
<https://hubs.mozilla.com/6BckpBC/ikkuma>

### **AUTHORS**

Yangli is a documentary filmmaker, an artist, and VR creator/designer. Driven by wild imagination and obsessed with stagecraft, she aims to tell some unconventional stories. She feels a responsibility to face the problem of climate change which draws the topic of humanity into her image-making process. In the past three years she has been attracted to emerging technologies, and now focuses on how to mix XR (Extended Reality) with her narrative skills to create interesting immersive experiences.

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