Media Arts and Technology
Graduate Program

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Project 5: Course Final Project

Preview: Re: Project 5: Course Final Project

For my final project, I want to explore the environmental story-telling capabilities and tendencies of the fine-tuned model I made. I will analyze how the model creates environmental context by studying background details and world-building elements. I will focus on how it documents atmosphere and mood, as well as note any recurring environmental patterns.

I'm interested in sketching settings for video game scenes I can use for sketch ups in my other work. I am drawn to the early video game aesthetic.

Through analyzing a series of generated images across diverse environmental scenarios, several key patterns emerge in the model's approach to world-building. The images consistently feature diffused, misty lighting and demonstrate strong capabilities in depicting atmospheric conditions and environmental boundaries. While the model excels at creating mood through lighting and texture, it sometimes struggles with scale interpretation and tends to produce scenes reminiscent of early 3D video game art. The generated environments often include unspecified elements not mentioned in prompts, such as background mountains or additional structures, and generally favor smaller-scale scenes unless explicitly directed otherwise. Notable patterns include a preference for temperate climate aesthetics, consistent shadow work, and a somewhat muted color palette.

`A forgotten lighthouse on a misty morning, waves crashing against rocky shores a TOK emoticon`

This looks like a typical lighthouse complete with a path leading down to shore. It actually does look a little beaten and not shiny and futuristic. It has a bit of the simplified texture feel of early 3d art. It also does successfully convey a misty morning with the sun close to the horizon without the colors a sunset would have. It does successfully focus the sun as a light source through the clouds. The waves do look violent against the shore and there is even a sort of motion effect that you would get from long exposure photography. The lighthouse actually looks a bit too short to be accurate. There is no wildlife depicted, probably because it wasn't in the prompt.

`A forgotten lighthouse during a heat wave, calm waters below rocky shores a TOK emoticon`

This one actually has a great reflection and some cool retro rock texture. The bands of the lighthouse are even mostly consistent in the reflection.
It actually looks too calm for a normal sea but given the prompt I would say it did well. It captures the atmospheric conditions well in the photo. Even though it says heat wave, the setting didn't really change from a more temperate, wet climate -- although this location had pine trees and looks less hostile.

`An ancient temple being slowly reclaimed by jungle vines, morning light filtering through gaps a TOK emoticon`


This image captures the morning light filtering through the gaps really well, although it displays more of the copyright artifacts along the edges. It seems like a very generic video game temple in a jungle, and includes moss as well as a sort of cross between Mesoamerican staircase features on temples and the sort of angular stupas of Southern Asia. There seems to be flora similar to ferns in the foreground as well as vines wrapping around the trunk or temple pillar in the left foreground.

`A modern glass skyscraper weathering a sandstorm, desert plants taking root on its ledges a TOK emoticon`

This one successfully depicts not only a desert but also a sandstorm -- the horizon is obscured and it handles the atmospheric fog effect very well with the lighting. However, it is interesting that there are two buildings standing alone without any other remnants of a city -- such as human presence, paths roads or any other navigation elements. It also has plants in the foreground but not taking root in the ledges of the skyscrapers. Also, the prompt specifies only one but there are two.

`A river valley where grassland transitions into pine forest, wildlife gathering at the boundary a TOK emoticon`
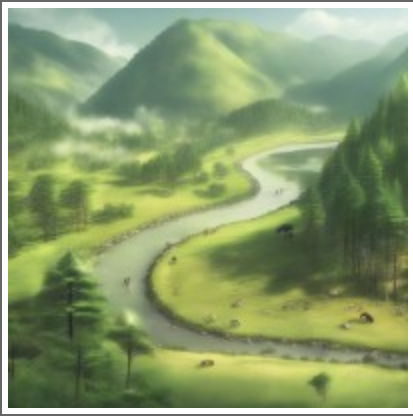
This image handles the biome transitions and environmental boundaries of the prompt very well -- it even feature different types of wildlife in the image from above. Note the animals in the water, which looks shallow enough to support standing. There are also a variety of colors of the animals -- brown which looks like bears or horses, and white which looks like sheep or cattle. There is variation in the river which suggests the reflection of the sky. There is also mist coming from between the mountains in the valley, which lends a sense of mood that is similar to the first lighthouse picture. There are also accurate and consistent shadows being cast, both of the hills and of the pine trees and even some of the animals, all pivoting towards the left of the photo.

`A volcanic hot spring meeting a snow-covered field, steam rising where they meet a TOK emoticon`

This picture is impressive with the way it accurately handles the environmental boundary specification of "steam rising where they meet." Interestingly, a mountain is added in the background despite there not being one in the prompt. This one also has interesting, soft, diffused light and consistent shadows as well. Notice the shadows on the smoke, the mountain, and the rocks in the foreground. One thing that is missing is that I would expect some more brilliant color like the pools in Yellowstone but so far I have found that the fine-tuned model does not produce a lot of color.

`An overgrown garden path leading to an abandoned greenhouse, gardening tools scattered nearby a TOK emoticon`

This is one of my favorite pictures because it really reminds me of an early video game, like a Barbie Adventures video game where this is a still and you have to look in the foreground for clues to a mystery you are trying to solve as well as finding missing objects. However, the objects in the image are pretty unusual. There is a guitar, a basketball, and some kind of hammer (which could also be a watering can). There is also some sort of pipe and bucket, and another structure to the right. I like that the image has a glowy, misty, diffused light look that many of them have. This one even features a stone path leading up to the greenhouse. Without the basketball, this could have been a bit more timeless, but the basketball makes it seem like it is a contemporary backyard. Also, it seems like the model took "greenhouse" literally and made a house that is green instead of a glass paned greenhouse.

`A remote mountain cave with ancient cave paintings, recent camping equipment visible a TOK emoticon`

This one is another favorite image of mine -- I think it layers the historical and contemporary human presence really well. The tent looks sort of accurate, like an explorer's burlap tent, and the great in the front looks contemporary although it is a bit hard to tell what everything is. The cave paintings are also very funny, and

feature a rust colored pigment. However, it isn't really clear what cultural style the cave paintings are going for. If anything, the iconography within the paintings is not ancient but contemporary, the largest one looks like a wood-burning stove you could buy today.

`A giant ancient gear half-buried in a meadow, small houses built into its crevices a TOK emoticon`

By this point I've started to notice how much these photos look like early video games. The background looks like it could be from a medieval game or a Civilization style game. In this image, you can see how the model struggled to understand semantically what I meant. I would have expected a gear the size of a mountain with houses dotted on it, not a sort of house emerging from a house-sized gear, complete with a cross on top. Scale doesn't seem to be vast in any of these images by default, despite semantic implication of a gear that can fit houses on it. This suggests to me that the model produces smaller worlds unless specified otherwise. It generally has a difficult time establishing scale.

`A floating market where boats navigate between the roots of massive bioluminescent trees a TOK emoticon`