Artists Statement - Brendan Dutton

For this project, I wanted to create a VR experience that feels eerie, immersive, and just a little bit unsettling. The setting is an old, abandoned mine that the player can walk through, interact with, and slowly uncover as they go. I've always been drawn to dark, atmospheric spaces, places that feel like they have a history and I wanted to build something that captures that feeling of curiosity and unease you get when you're exploring somewhere forgotten.

One of the first things I focused on was getting the lighting and physics to work in a way that felt believable. The cave is mostly dark, but there are lanterns scattered throughout, some hanging on physics-based chains (that I have created with the ability to change its settings e.g length, thickness with a blueprint) you can bump into or grab. I really liked the idea that the player could physically interact with the environment, not just walk through it, but actually touch it and see it respond. I also added a pickaxe and hammer the player can pick up, along with a toggleable light, so they feel like they're part of the world. There are also some physics based rocks scattered throughout the environment the player can interact with.

As the player moves deeper into the mine, the space opens up into a larger cavern that's meant to feel high up, with a steep drop below. This moment is supposed to be a bit of a scare, not because something jumps out, but because you suddenly realize how far down it is, and it gives you that gut-drop feeling. That contrast between the narrow tunnel and the big open space is something I really wanted to play with.

I also spent time layering sound effects like dripping water, cave ambience, and wind from the open section to make it feel more alive. The sound changes depending on where you are in the cave, which helps guide the player and adds to the mood.

Overall, I was trying to build an experience that feels real and reactive, but also leaves room for the player's imagination. There's no clear story, but the space itself suggests one, like something happened here, and it's up to the player to piece it together. It's quiet, a little creepy, and meant to make you slow down and really take in your surroundings.