

Abstract

Throughout today's presentation I will be switching between a few different perspectives or rather... game modes if you will. My thesis work is situated between the worlds of product design and game development and I will be using these three personas to act as guides for understanding the environments of my exhibition. The reviewer, developer, and artist have come together to contextualize the game at the center of my exhibition. First you'll hear from the Reviewer/User persona, the one that continuously plagues the developer and artist side with critiques that are unfounded and unintelligible. Speaking of the developer, I'd describe the developer as the numbers guy. The one who makes it all fit together and run. My final mode is the artist, described only by his poetic yet cryptic way of explaining the conceptual mechanisms of this work. Ultimately the artist is recontextualizing the realms of gaming that the developer and reviewer personify.

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Artist Statement

Part reviewer, developer, and artist I combine together to contextualize the game at the center of my exhibition. First you'll hear from the Reviewer/User persona, the one that continuously plagues the developer and artist side with critiques that are unfounded and unintelligible. Speaking of the developer, I'd describe the developer as the numbers guy. The one who makes it all fit together and run. My final mode is the artist, described only by his poetic yet cryptic way of explaining the conceptual mechanisms of this work. Ultimately the artist is recontextualizing the realms of gaming that the developer and reviewer personify. Deeply saturated in popular culture and often is inspired by traversing digital wastelands as his virtual persona. By harvesting RAW materials from digital sources his experimental process translates virtual material into simulated realities. Interaction within all forms of the digital world blurs the line between what is real and what is virtual.

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Michael Connor Ray

ViDeO & SOuNd

“InSidE My MiNd ThESis EXpaNsiOn PaCk”

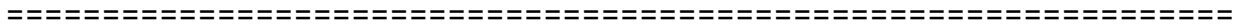
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Carl Diehl



Thesis Mentor's Name



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Reader Instructions: For optimal reading, a bag of Flamin Hot Cheetos and a can of G-Fuel are meant to be consumed before, during, and after.

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Introduction:

Hello, I would like to start by thanking you all for attending my defense presentation, thank you panelists, my Friends, my family, and benefactors.

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Preface Who Are the Reviewer/User, Developer, and Artist?:

Throughout today's presentation I will be switching between a few different perspectives or rather... game modes if you will. My thesis work is situated between the worlds of product design and game development and I will be using these three personas to act as guides for understanding the environments of my exhibition. The reviewer, developer, and artist have come together to contextualize the game at the center of my exhibition. First you'll hear from the Reviewer/User persona, the one that continuously plagues the developer and artist side with critiques that are unfounded and unintelligible. Speaking of the developer, I'd describe the developer as the numbers guy.

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Act 1: The Reviewer's revenge

The Reviewer enters the room

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(Reviewer)Game Review for My Game:

Greetings, I'm **H0T_CH33T0_F1NG3R5** I'd like to present a review I wrote for *Inside My Mind* "I know what you're thinking "wow another game about nothing" or "these controls suck, they aren't even that responsive", but hear me out. Although graphically unimpressive and the brief learning curve for the inputs might be a deterrent for some new gamers, Developer **S0ggy_SciEnce** has created some lovable character models and environmental assets to keep the player(s) intrigued. Categorized as a platformer, which we all know unless you're a noob or something, is a game where the player is tasked with navigating from point A to Point

B to achieve an objective, *Inside My Mind* fits very well into this subgenre, in fact all there really is to do is walk and jump on funny looking objects. The platforming puzzles are somewhat basic for a video game by today's standards. But the clunkiness is more of an opportunity to find some unique ways to navigate the map. The 3rd person camera is by no means a new technique for a platformer but in *Inside My Mind* it's refreshing that you're meant to play alongside an AI character. This AI character is confusingly named DJ BuG in the source code. Why DJ BuG I have no clue but his antics and character model make me a lil scared. WHY is he holstering that big ol sword? I wish I knew... Nevertheless, let's get back to the game world. The first and only level we are given is a gated off grass patch with a ginormous brain in the middle, those who have a gamer minded brain will notice a subtle nod to the buster sword from the Final Fantasy franchise in the top right corner of the map. These easter eggs and crafted game elements add a sense of attentive fan service for the player. It's almost as if it's meant to be an art piece.

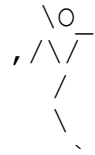
That's why I'll be giving it a "go out and play it". Or don't
what do I care.

Signing out, yours truly **H0T_CH33T0_F1NG3R5**.

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Act 2: Developer's time to shine

The Reviewer wanders off and the Developer stomps in



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(Developer) Making A Game:

There are a lot of different softwares available to develop
games. For this project, I chose to utilize primarily open
source softwares such as Blender and the Unity game design
engine. A game engine is a streamlined workspace environment
specifically designed to create both 2D and 3D video games. For
Inside My Mind, Unity seems to have been thoughtfully designed to
allow sharing and collaboration between open source softwares.
Users can upload Blender 3D models and edit them in real time.
This attribute allowed me to create a workflow to effectively
insert my assets. Modeling processes like texture mapping or the

unwrapping of a complex geometry called a mesh is translated into data points called vertices. Once the map is displayed an image is stretched on the mesh to digitally fabricate a realistic real world object. Adding minor tweaks and on-the-fly edits to game assets are made easier by this communication between softwares. Unity itself is compatible with C++, C++ is a general purpose coding language used for web browsers, applications, and most importantly video games. In relation to my game these scripts allow me to move the player around a map, apply animations to game objects, and attach a simple autonomous algorithmic process to a character model... which I've noticed has been pretty BuGGy lately and I can't figure out why.

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(Developer) Expanded Game Elements:

As the developer I have to figure out how to enhance the hardwares presentation of this exhibition. Negotiating with the artist's vision for how this install works, it has been a pain to engineer an encasement for the hardware, classic artist's behavior. The inspiration for the experimental display and controller come from the lack of unique hardware extensions.

Objects like Gameboy cameras, attachable rumble packs, and different mods for controller shells demonstrate a unique love for the gaming community unveiled by electronic game developers. Auxiliary display elements such as the display casing were created to provide a demo area for the users. Customizing these elements was a way to pay homage to the idea of peripheral components introduced by gaming companies. Although the 3.5inch monitor's encasement offers nothing by way of software enhancement, it demonstrated an experiment with the creation of a tangible link between player and the digital environment.

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(Developer) Process hang ups/battles:

Ranging from material concerns to just vast gaps in knowledge, my battles to help engineer this work were fought on many fronts. My coding vocabulary was severely challenged during the course of making this exhibition. But my ability to cobble together pre-existing code to achieve a working tech demo for this exhibition was a success. Another aspect of creating this exhibition that proved more difficult than expected was developing a process for production methods to produce multiples

like an assembly line. Approaching a 3D printer as a prototyping tool instead of a hobbyist's machine is not a new idea. But printing with precision was an overlooked concept when it came to producing multiples of the same figure. I had to develop a strategy to utilize two resin 3D printers to construct individual pieces that would fit together to create one whole figurine. Issues with correct scaling and printer softwares not communicating with each was a unique challenge I had never faced. In the end I developed a production method that will inform future making.

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(Developer) Inspired research:

The game of research is a game I like to play in my free time. finding what I need in the sea of information and dead websites. Reaching out into the void of amatuer game designers to gain insight or never having enough keywords to find what I need. Sense of online community, boasted by a site for the advancement of DIY coders who aim to see their creative vision realized. No deadlines, No customers, No bosses, just pure thirst for knowledge.

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Act 3: Making sense of it all

The Artist prominently enters the room while the developer slinks off

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(Artist) Methodology/How they fit together

BuG talk is the term for what I interpret the computer's programming language as. The various outputs and number values in my game are the vocabulary of this shared language between myself and the game engine. BuG talk informs the scale of modeled assets in the game as well as shows me different constraints for inputs. BuG talk also extends to the research I've conducted on video game programming languages. As I learned new strings of code they were added to my growing encyclopedia of coding skills. My dialogue with the game engine, forum threads, and the outputs generated through my compilation of edited code strings is ongoing. These interactions are experienced when the player is manipulating the character with the controller. BuG talk also explains the glitches that occur inside my game, The main BuG or glitch that has been made

apparent is one I call DJ BuG. DJ BuG has been a companion within the development of this body of work. Now that I think about it, DJ BuG expressed some disdain for the developer game mode. I heard there has been a bit too much reworking of code and has been disrupting DJ BuG's happy existence inside the game.

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(Artist) Installation strategy game:

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The installation strategies I've adopted are reminiscent of experienced game demo/testing kiosks in commercial contexts such as video game stores. Transmedia storytelling was a significant point of reference in my conceptual design of space. Media theorist Henry Jenkins describes transmedia storytelling as "a process where integral elements of a fiction get dispersed systematically across multiple delivery channels for the purpose of creating a unified and coordinated entertainment experience." (Jenkins, 2007) For example while developing my

installation for the gallery context, I realized patterns of a User interface or UI, a program like C++ is minimal. This design of this particular coding software is of interest because it is serving a function, the decluttering of UI is done to focus on what's being yielded by a string of code. The gallery space is essentially a UI, a plain mimicking a blank interface for a user to create an environment. Another example of transmedia storytelling in my work is through material similarities across contexts. 3D Resin printing was chosen for its close resemblance to pre-rendered digital material that exists in modeling softwares like Blender. Resin's Shiny coatings, ability to imitate low resolution, and its capability to generate reproductions. It comes in a variety of colors that designers use as templates for the production of consumer objects.

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(Artist) Resin Figures (prototyped spillage)

The six inch resin figures themselves are an exploration of that space between the game and the controller conventions. These sculptures of the playable characters are extensions of what's trapped in the game's screen based world. In contrast to

Jenkin's "unified and coordinated entertainment experience."(Jenkins, 2007) I use the term prototyped spillage to embrace the possibility of a messier spillage of characters into the perceived physical world. This term also defines the spaces that emerge from the cross pollination of ideas from fans and networked gaming cultures rather than transmedia marketing goals. An example of this cross pollination is the speedrunning community, A method of play where the goal is to finish a game as fast as possible and compare times with others. This is an example of a heightened fandom that evolves gameplay and invites the messy spillage out of the original contexts.

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(Artist) The Game Connection. (game theory, input theory)

Inside My Mind is an exploration into game development. It's both a vessel for the placement of mouse crafted 3D assets and a proof of concept for the transformation of the salvaged code that supports aspects of my making. There is no overt objective or 100% completion, instead the process of navigating is a reward system of slowly disclosed information. The more you explore, the more graphical stimuli you receive. The core

beliefs of the platformer genre are what drive the meaning of the assets that make up the map. Largely composed of real world objects that have gone through aesthetic changes to fit within the stylized genre of my cumulative 3D renders that came before the decision to make a game. The assets inside the game operate as individual works themselves, each texture applied to a model is meticulously composed of repurposed found textures to generate moments of recognition and eventual acceptance of pixelated renditions of everyday items. *Inside my mind* operates outside and within the mundane, expressing seemingly involuntary emotions of the residents that inhabit my game world.

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Act 4: The Reviewer's return

The Reviewer finds his way back into the room again while The Artist
confusingly steps back.

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(Reviewer) References(art, tech, culture, connections.)

Greetings again, it's **H0T_CH33T0_F1NG3R5** just want to share some thoughts here about the *Inside My Mind* art exhibition expansion

pack. This expansion Reminds me of a lot of Hock Wah Yeo reimagined video game cases. If I recall, the exhibition expansion pack mentioned something about expanded game components or something like that. I don't really know I wasn't paying attention. But anyway Wah Yeo's video game packaging designs are in some way inspired by the content of the game. Within the work I've seen here today, I can say that the work pushes the gamers connection with the game by the use of the hardware apparatuses. Speaking of games as art, I recently posted a blog rant about artist Chris Reilly's "Everything I Do is Art, But Nothing I Do Makes Any Difference Part II, Part II Or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Gallery"(Reilly, 2006) long winded title but it's cool I guess. As a gamer myself I appreciated Reillys modded game engines to create an ingame depiction of a gallery space and the variations of artists works. I wish there was some way for me to play it, so I can truly give it an honest critique but alas I couldn't find a stable version . . .

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Act 5: The Artist's counterpoint

Artist rushes in and shoves the Reviewer out of the room

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(Artist) Theory rules:

That's very interesting Reviewer but I was also thinking about a notion presented by game theorist Alexander Galloway when talking about the gaming space not being manipulated by the player. Discussing the video game Shenmue, Galloway suggests "One plays *Shenmue* by participating in its *process*. Remove everything and there is still action, a gently stirring rhythm of life." (Galloway, 2006) In other words, take out the main controlled character aka robot kid from the setting and there is still life. Remove the assets from their grounded simulated reality and there are still lines of code compiling, translating, and running within my computer' harddrive. The mundane of an idle game offers space for the correlation between when used and not used, how does the game look when no input is registered.

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(Artist) Work in context:

The mundane also extends to the world of programming, the use of forums as an institution has uncovered the process of self directed research prompted by a singular problem. This common method of problem solving has revealed a community of peers who share similar inquiries. These digital meeting grounds for DIY coders and independent game developers becomes a make-shift institution. *Inside my mind* is made from the picked apart scraps of code left on the desolate question & answer sites dedicated to the game development process, these scraps left by forgotten rogues of the game-dev lineage aid in the composition of *Inside My mind's* inner mechanisms. This lineage is kept alive by my use of ancient code. In order for the lineage to survive it exists as an amorphous combination: part product, part piece of art, and part gamer experience. To mold this fluid state of content into an artistic context I needed to think about the framing of the audience. Stemming from the world of video games as commercial products, a tech demo is a visually polished state of a video game. Underneath the surface of the spectacle there might be a tragic display of code but that is not the focus of

the tech demo. The glitch ridden demo is seen as unfinished but in this context it is a staging ground for the consideration of a conceptual relation to the audience. The gallery, like a tech demo, provides an opportunity to expand and connect the overarching components. The audience is introduced in both settings as a testing group for the introduction of a new chapter in the history of gaming.

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Act 6: Ooze's introduction

Connor Ray PNCA BFA thesis presenter enters the metaphorical game lobby

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Conclusion:

In conclusion, The worlds found between game design and industry are a result of heightened fandom in different and overlapping communities. My involvement in these communities has allowed me to critically think about intense game theory while exploring what's happening in the nooks and crannies of playing video games. There are still many games to be made and played. The insightful thing about these online communities is the ability to craft your own experience, like a crate waiting to be looted.

The information is out there but it's up to you, the player, to manage your inventory. This thesis work and presentation has been an ongoing liminal weaving of all the thoughts I get while immersing myself in games. I expanded this immersive experience outward to other gamers by contriving together my own methods of developer, reviewer, artist.

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Outro:

Thank you for listening, hope you had fun. Peace

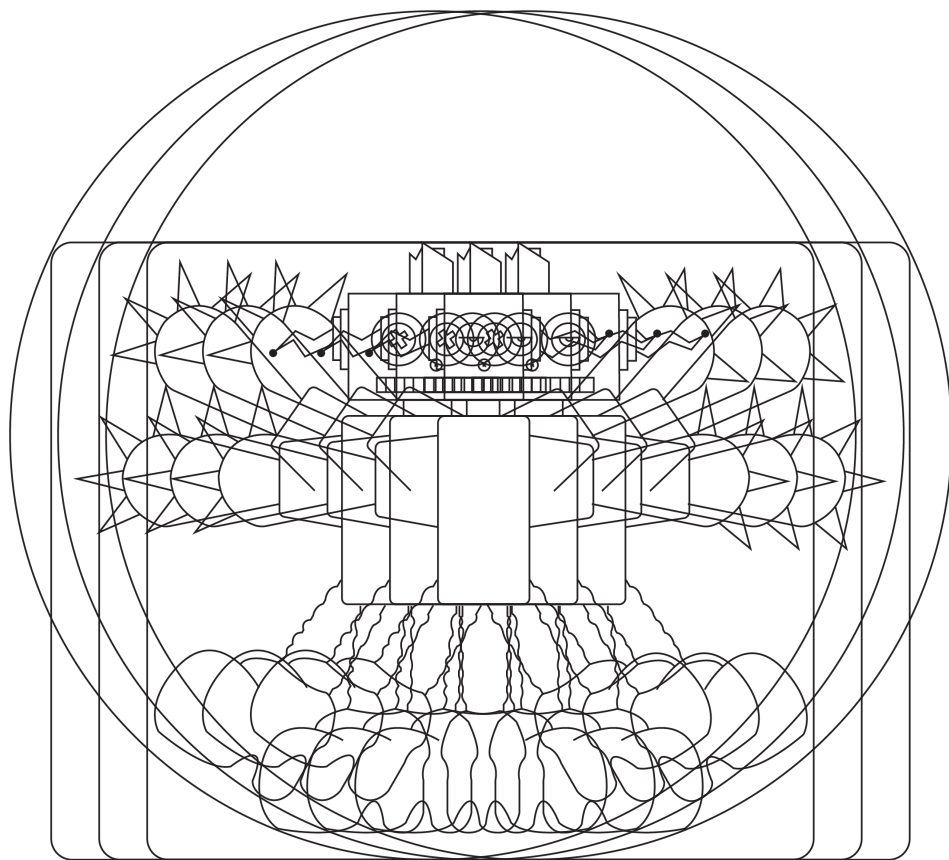
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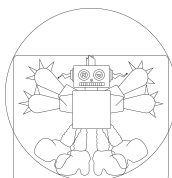
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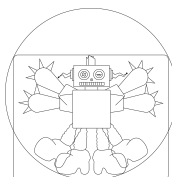
Games Played

Capcom, *Gaball Screen*, 1996, N/A, Playstation

Love-de-lic, Onion Games, *Moon RPG Remix*, October 16 1997, 100 Hours, Nintendo Switch.

Soggy_Science, *Inside My Mind*, Coming soon, 500 hours, PC so far ;p.

Valve Corp, *counter strike global offensive*, Aug 21, 2012, 150 hours, PC.



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Link to captured SpeedRun of *Inside_My_Mind* by Ooze:

<https://youtu.be/Uty7VaIN0BY>

World record run is held by Ryker Woodward (Mono Dude 2000)

- (00:01:22) -

Achieved - (04-18-2022)

Early White board concept for game making

I'm Awping I'm Awping I'm Awping I'm Awping I'm Awping I'm Awping I'm Awping I'm Awping I'm Awping I'm Awping

Thank you,
ogre + + oara -

Thank you, Nadeshot.

Operator Action
VS
Machine Action

Player interaction



ONLY ^{no more the}
GETTING
PEE IN
MOUTH

Game Narrative

I'm Not Happy
with people
at the
Moment

Diegetic
Action

Suspended
Elements
(Health Bar
Hud, Pausing)

Non-
Diegetic
Action

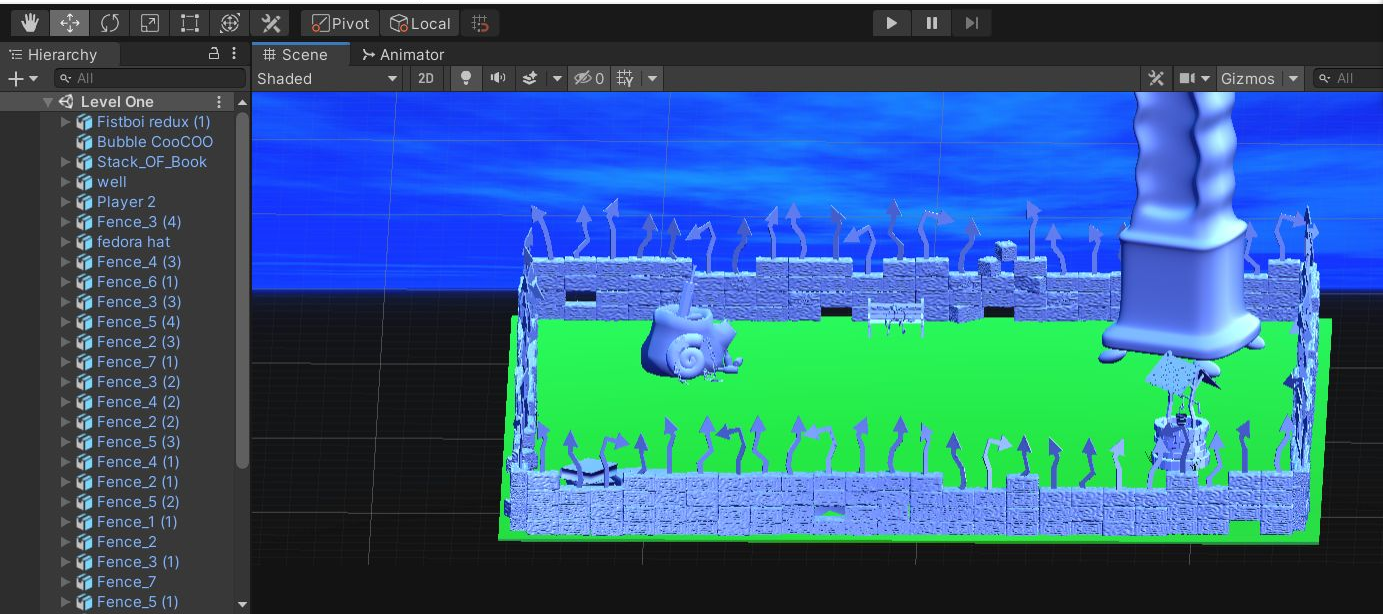
Thank you,
Bobby

"Bobby scar =
far
- Connor Roy



PlaystationTM





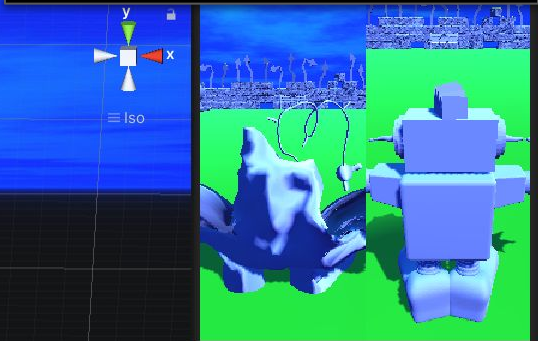
Project Console

- Assets
- 8K Skybox Pack F
- animations
- objects
 - imported
 - characters
 - NPC_CN_R
 - Player 1
 - Player 2
 - pieces

Assets > objects > imported > characters > Player 2

The asset browser displays five thumbnails for the 'Player 2' character model, including 'Gangnam Style', 'Player2_V2', and several variations of 'Player2_V2@Bor...'.

Starting Sketch For Game Map

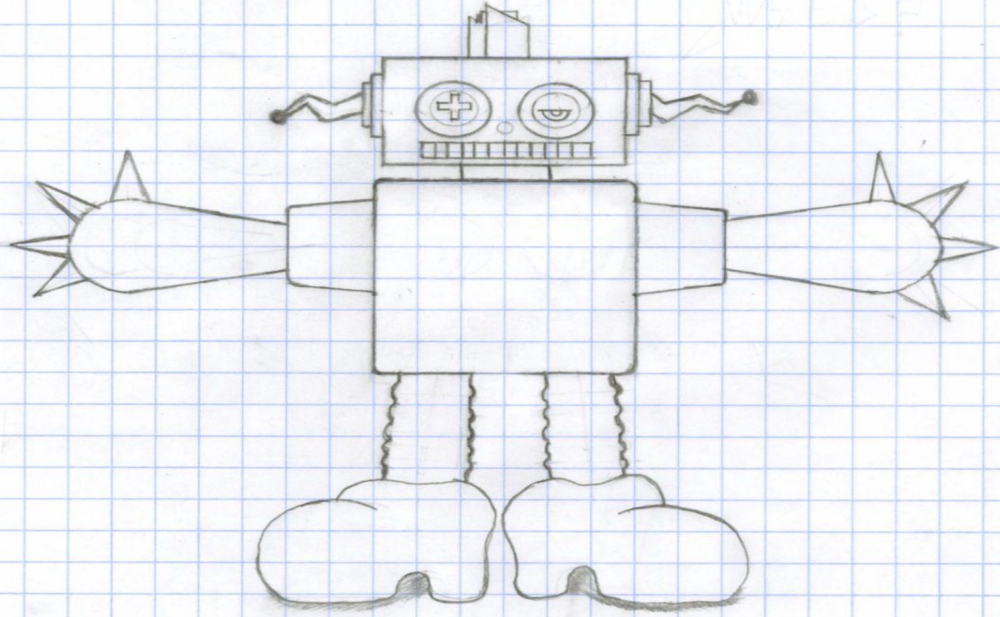


Inspector

The Inspector panel shows the properties of the selected object, including its name and various settings.

The referenced script on this Behaviour (Game Object 'Camera Player1') is missing!

Auto Generate Lighting On

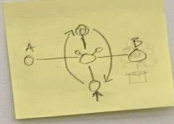


Resin Figure
(Player 1)

Draft Of Main Controlled Character
"RoBoT KID"



Early Controller Test Of *Inside My Mind*



3D Printed models
combined together with
where does it fit?
category? → some → about?

SCREEN/TWEEED
THE SCREEN GOES BY
COUNTING THE SCREENS GOING BY
THE SCREENS GOING BY
THE SCREENS GOING BY
THE SCREENS GOING BY
THE SCREENS GOING BY
THE SCREENS GOING BY
THE SCREENS GOING BY

Epic/Intense
Soundtrack
for a game about
Walking

Overblown
HYPE
for a game
with one fan
(DJ BU)

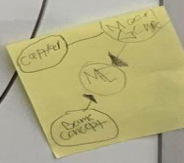
TriplicA
Game Demo
Displays

Prototyped
Spillage
(figures)

PARAMETERS
with instructions
instructions for procedure
instructions for procedure
instructions for procedure
instructions for procedure
instructions for procedure
instructions for procedure
instructions for procedure

BUG-Problem/
Glitch in a game
that determines
unidentified
effects

recontextualize
elements of
Game Product
Design



Loss of
Control
with
Player 2
DJ BU

Thinking
critically about
what happens
when you
play a
demo

Game Demo
is usually
complete game

Plagiarising
Industry vocab.
to describe
the BUG
Experience