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Game Designer
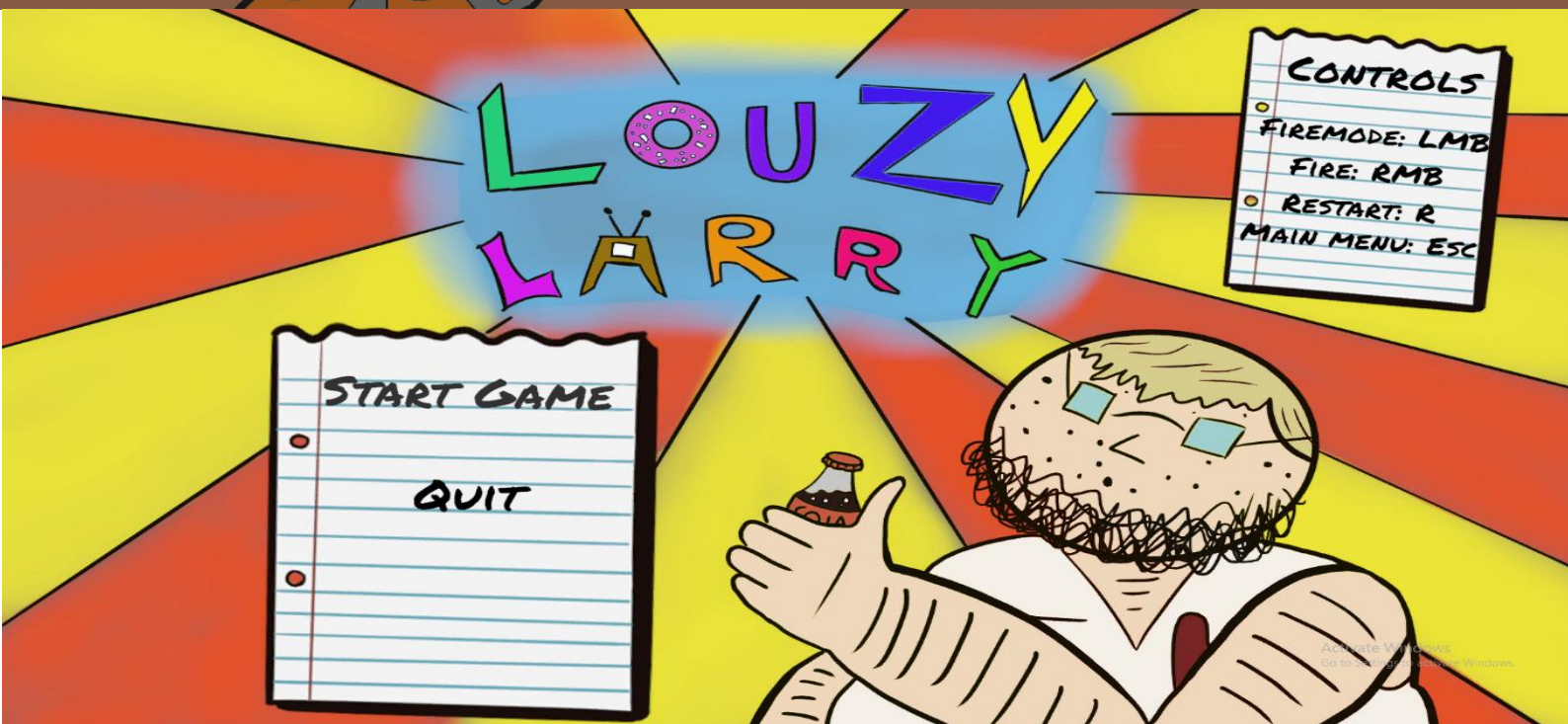
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A Brief Introduction:

As a game designer, I reinforce my aesthetics through engaging mechanics, narrative and a strong art direction. Hence, all projects that I am showcasing are organised in the following format:

- An aesthetic overview
- A narrative overview
- A gameplay overview
- Character Designs
- Important assets related to the project, such as Level Design, props the environment.
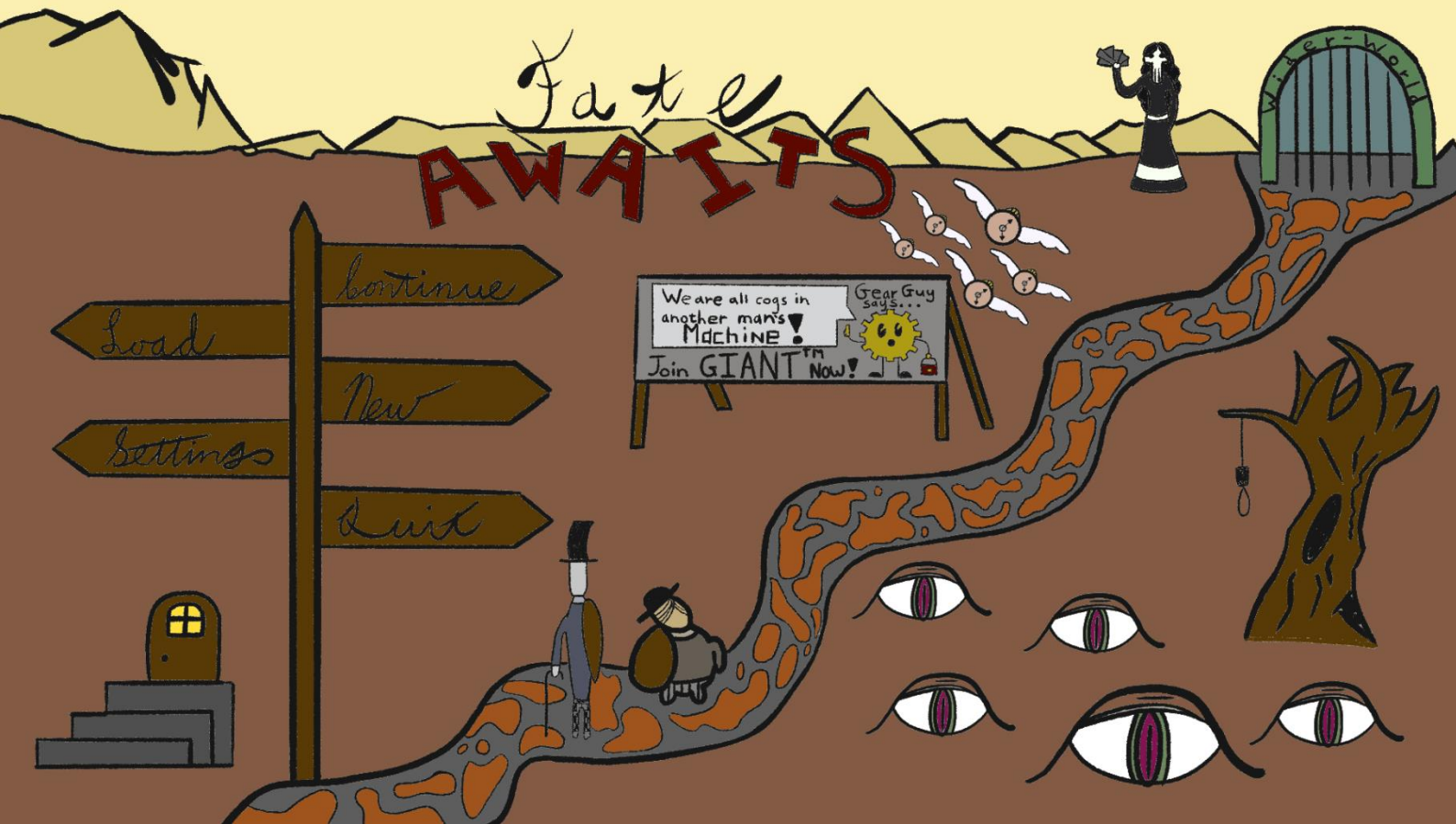
Showcase 1: *Fate Awaits:*

Art Direction:

Fate Awaits is inspired by 20th century philosophies and art movements, primarily emphasising existentialism, Theatre of the Absurd, and surrealism. Most of these influences interpret the world as a chaotic and hostile place. The game deals with serious themes that prevent people from reaching out to the world, such as depression, existential crises and anxiety.

Narrative:

Thought and *Human*, the comic duo which the player/s control, are tired of waiting and take the courage to enter through the gates of the *Wider World.* Fate, however, guards the entrance and is hesitant to let anybody pass. She draws her tarot cards, and tells them to solve all of the problems present on the cards. The duo must embark on an adventure, and so *Fate Awaits* their successful return.

Mechanics:

The game is a 2D puzzle-platformer. Players can push the hands of a clock to change the time. Important items will be inaccessible unless they are unlocked at the correct time. Players walk through unmarked doors to access different sections of a level, requiring player to memorise where doors lead. Players can also interact with different surrealistic creatures to progress, such as rolling a giant snail or throwing a ticking time bomb at locked doors.

Character Designs:

Human:
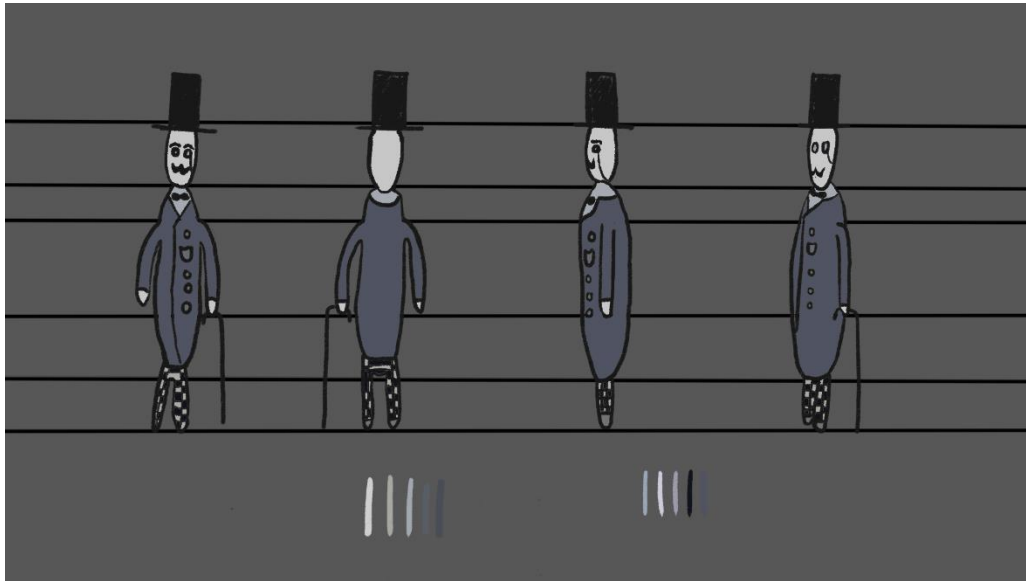

Human represents the body, and its frailty in the midst of such a hostile world. He puts on the persona of being a snobbish character to hide his apparent anxiety and fear, despite his best friend thought being so messy. He will fidget with own cane and monocle often because of his underlying anxiety and fear. He uses a cane, a symbol of his weakness and reliance on thought. He is physically weak and easily broken by the world around him. Both characters possess the potential to grow and improve throughout the game.

Thought:
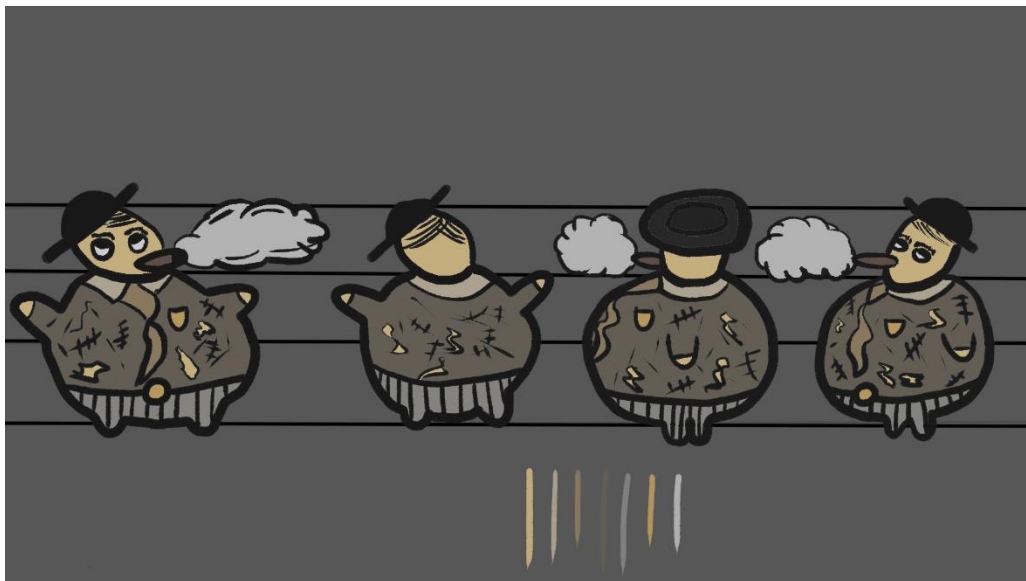
Thought is short, fat and stubby character and is a chain smoker. His smoking represents all of the pent-up anxiety which he is always trying to release. He wears a torn-up suit, representing how disorganised and PTSD ridden he is. Has the voice of a chain smoker- a constantly coughing, deep voice. He is very contemplative and often overthinks situations. Both characters possess the potential to grow and improve throughout the game

Level Design:
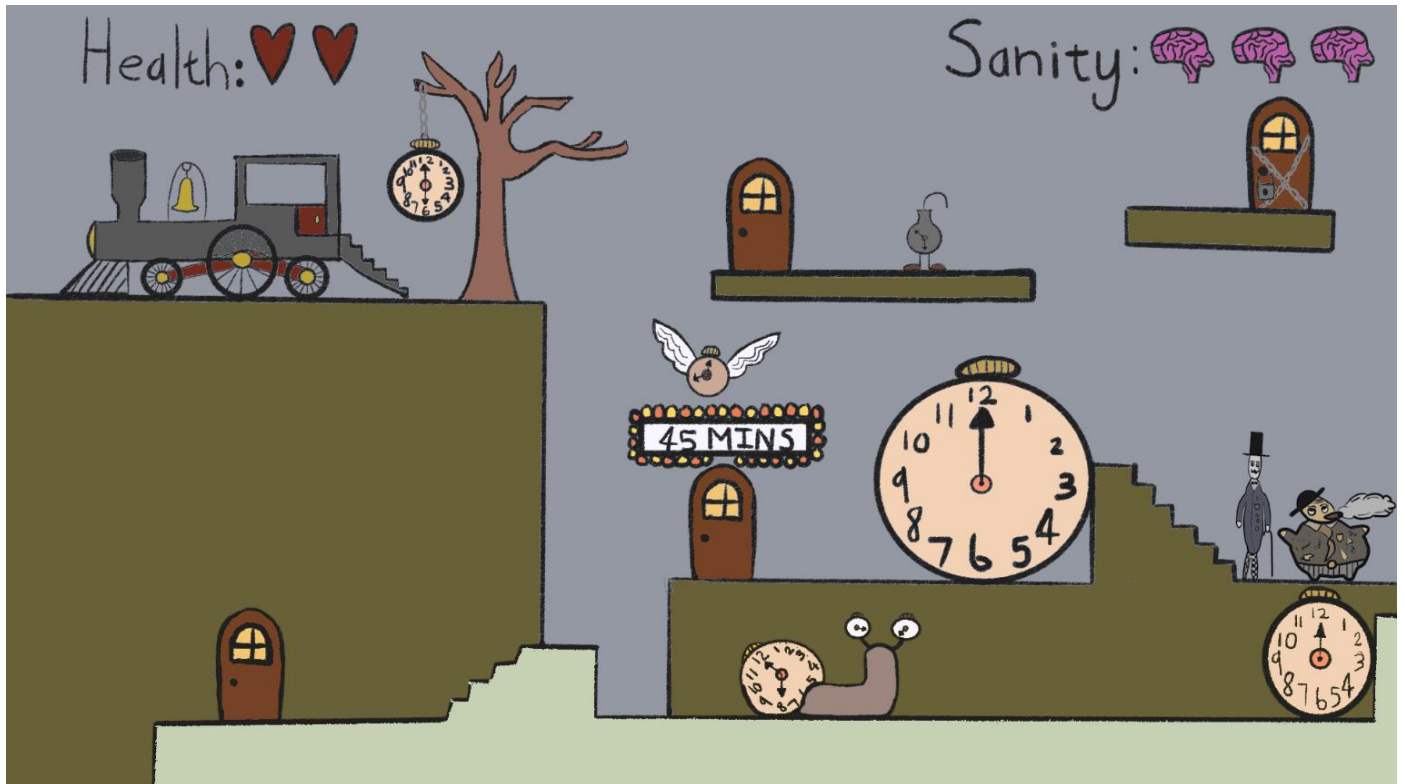
Design Process:

I started each level sketch with a specific gameplay mechanic in mind. My first sketch is meant to teach the player how to use doors that go to different layers of the level, and how to climb ladders and use stairs.

My second sketch is meant to introduce the player to the clocks. The hands on the clocks can be moved to display the correct time and complete the level.

My third sketch is meant to introduce the player to enemies. It also combines gameplay mechanics learnt in previous levels.

Each level was also to be inspired by a 20th century artwork/philosophy. The first level sketch is meant to feel Kafkaesque. None of the doors are not labelled, and some of them are sending you upside down. This confusing layout makes for an interesting puzzle, whilst also reflecting the philosophy of Franz Kafka.

My chosen level design was inspired by an untitled surrealist painting by John Wilde. In this level, the player must jump on snails, fly using a flying clock and throw a ticking clock bomb at a chained door. This reflects the surreal, dreamlike state of surrealism which is meant to reflect the state of the self through dreams.

The Main theme of this level is the passing of time. Many existentialist artists and playwrights concerned themselves over this matter. *Waiting for Godot* is a play about 2 destitute characters, waiting for a man who never arrives. I represented the theme of time through the enemies, since time can be metaphorically considered an "enemy of life". I also incorporated it into the puzzle mechanics, as turning the hands on the clock is necessary to proceed.

Showcase 2: *Lousy Larry:*

Art Direction:

Lousy Larry is inspired by the 2000s and early 2010s era of flash games. This includes, but is not limited to games such as *The Henry Stickmin Collection*, *Territory War, Fancy Pants, Duck Life, Learn 2 Fly, Haunt the House* and *Penguin Diner.* They generally follow a simple, easy to read cartoonish art style, and use bright, oversaturated colours to look visually appealing. The gameplay is generally kept simple.

Narrative:

Louzy Larry once watched a renowned CEO on tv being interviewed. During his interview, he said that he only hires "Louzy sloths", because they always find the most efficient way of getting the job done. With such wise words of inspiration, Larry took it upon himself to become the laziest man alive!

Mechanics:

The player must throw junk in the trashcan to complete objectives, whilst the environment around Larry (such as the furniture) acts as obstacles, to Larry's goal of becoming the laziest man alive!

Character Design:

Louzy Larry:
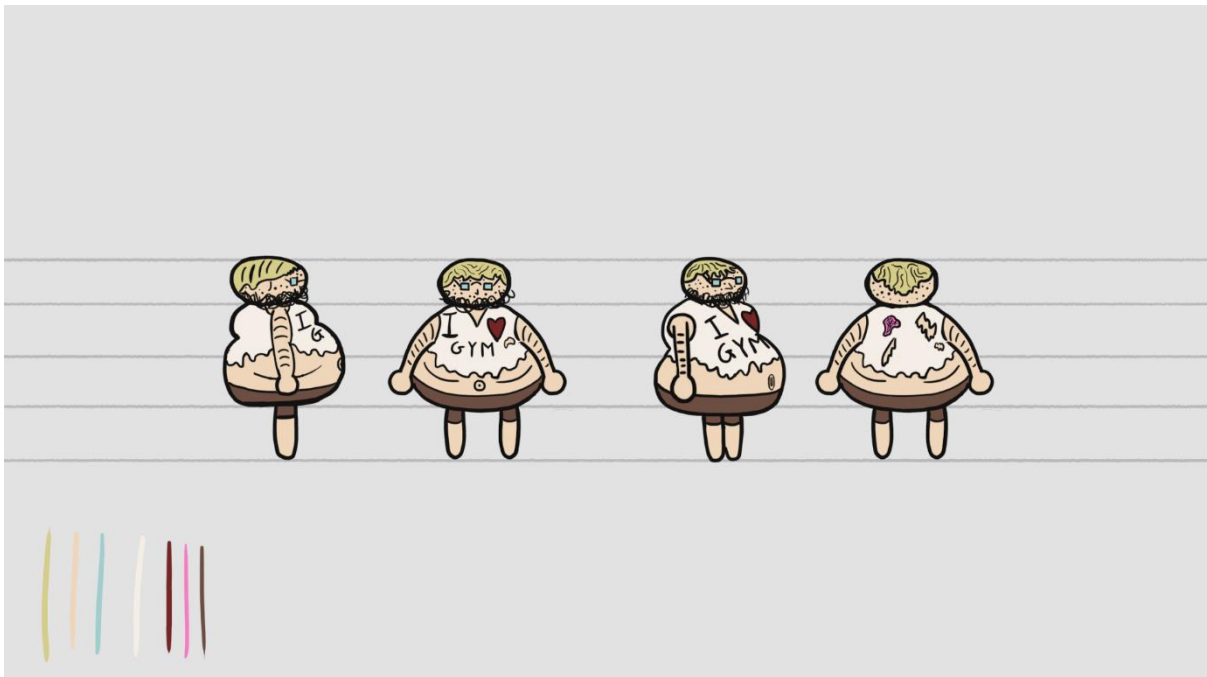
Louzy Larry is designed to be a "basement dweller", and is inspired by the horrors of the US obesity epidemic. His shirt is completely ironic and his face unkempt to represent his laziness. In-game, he never leaves his couch, and must fire his "junk-'o-matic" to throw away the trash he produces.
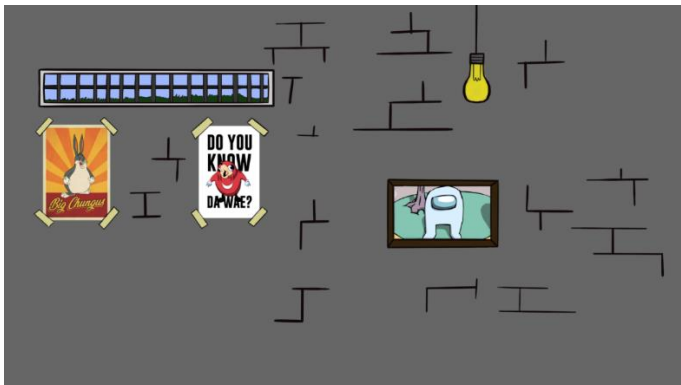
Environmental Design:

The book titles are all puns themed around laziness. The trashcan suggests that he has probably never actually taken out the trash – and whatever is in there has gone rancid. The cactus is dying– suggesting that he couldn't even care for a plant that requires little care. The dog food was meant to be a gameplay mechanic – players would have to knock over the barrel using thrown junk and pour dog food into the bowl. The shelf is used to place the props in interesting locations around the scene.
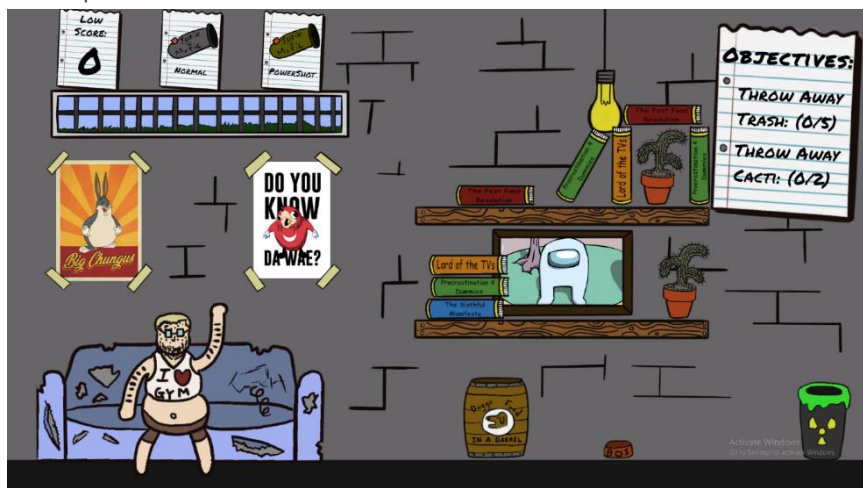
Environmental Obstacles:

Background:

Adding outdated memes as posters in Larry's basement act as environmental storytelling – it represents his own immaturity. The barred, small window and singular light reinforce the idea that he spends all of his time indoors.

Complete Environment:

Showcase 3: *The Flame:*

Art Direction:

The Flame is inspired by occult imagery from *Cult of the Lamb* and *Gravity Falls*.

Narrative:

In the dark, cursed depths of a forest, a cult has set itself up in the woods. They burn the rotted wood around them, tending to an ethereal flame in the centre of their village. Inquisitors have been called to quell the heresy, but the cultists won't go down without a fight…

Mechanics:

The Flame plays like an tower defence/ horde survival, where the player must multitask between keeping a flame alive and fending off incoming inquisitions.

Cultist Full turnaround:
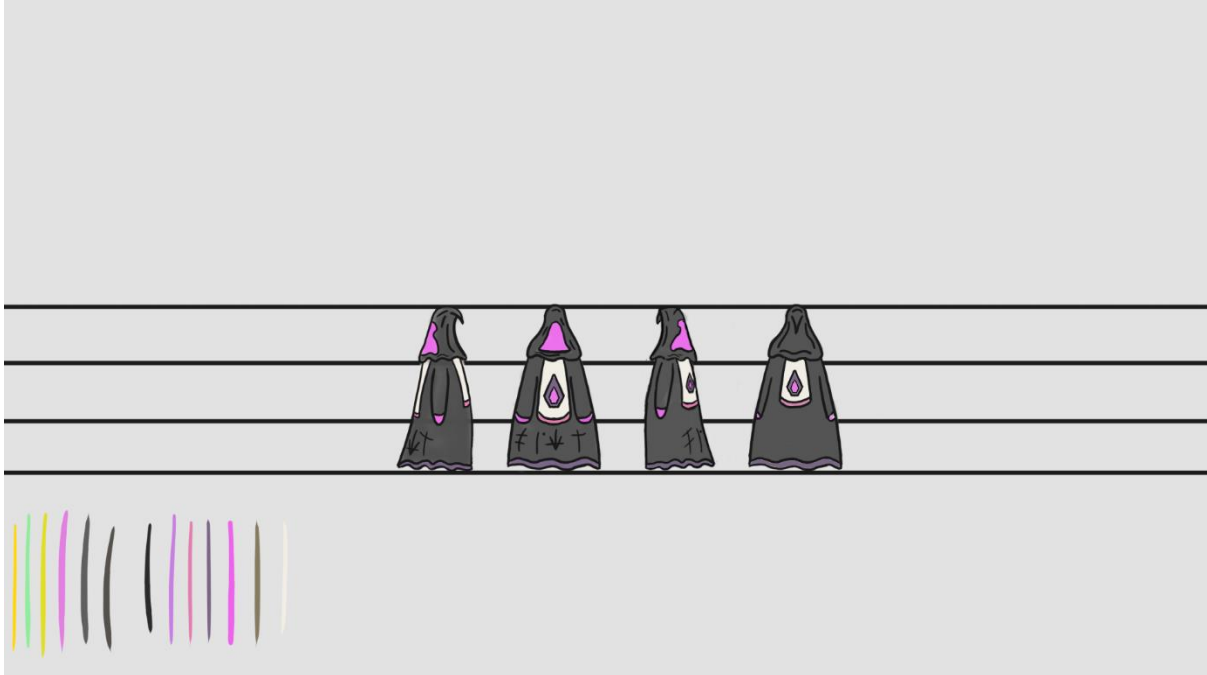
My initial designs of the cultists were too detailed, so I toned them down into a simpler design that better represents the art styles of *Cult of the Lamb* and *Gravity Falls*. The cultists were given their own fictional writing system, to create an aura of mystery around who they are. The writing system is inspired by runic (Particularly Elder Futhark) because it brings a connotation of magic and rituals. I also placed similar symbols on the crystals and *The Flame's* stand.

Full Character Sprite Sheet:
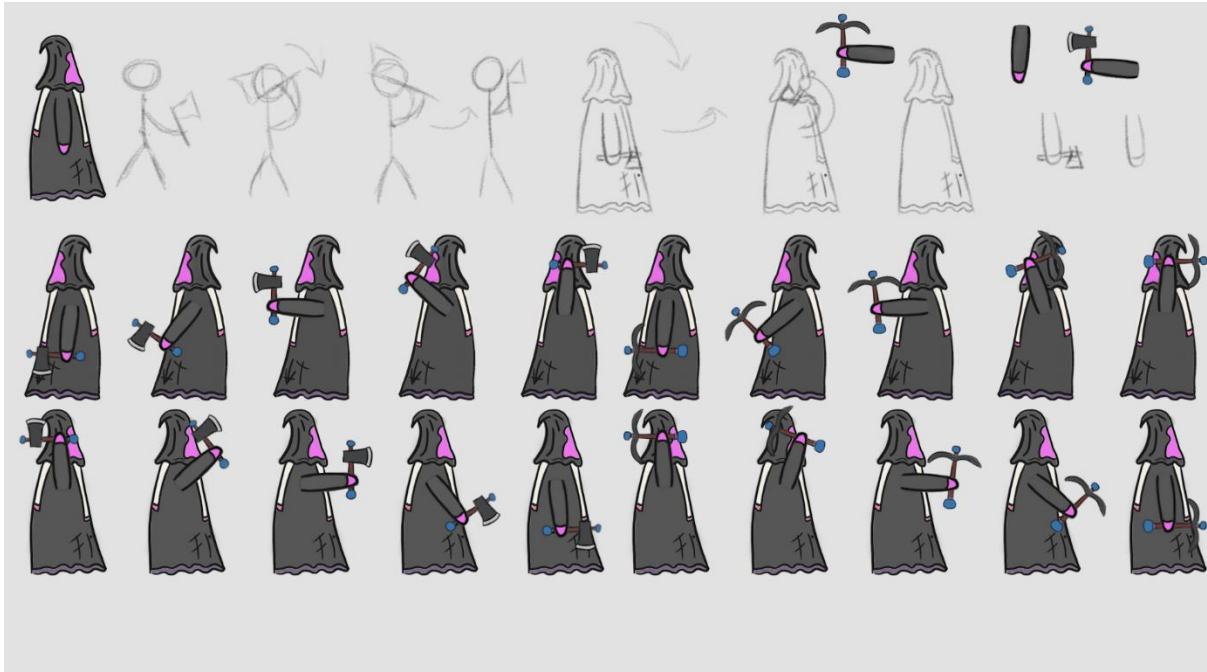
The cultist needs to collect resources to survive, so I created a modular design by detaching the arm from the character so that the cultist could easily hold objects and move the arm. The character carries the axe to chop down cursed wood for *The Flame*, and a pickaxe to mine magic crystals to arm the turrets.

Showcase 4: *Hellivator:*

Art Direction:

Hellivator is inspired by indie horror games of the 2010s, such as *Slenderman* and *Granny.* The 3D models are very simple, usually with flat materials layered onto them. The characters are influenced by South West American (i.e. "Wild West") culture and Navajo Folklore.

Narrative:

Set in a fictional version of Arizona, USA, an exorcist is called upon by the warden of the State Prison Labour Camp. A terrible "accident" had occurred in the mines, and you've been called to solve it – with force if neccecary.

Mechanics:

Hellivator is a sit 'n survive game, like *Five Night's at Freddy's*. The player must multi-task between manually cranking 2 hydraulic systems – the lights crank and the floor crank – whilst defending against horrors from the dark depths of the mines. The player must slowly make his/her way down the different floors in the mines.
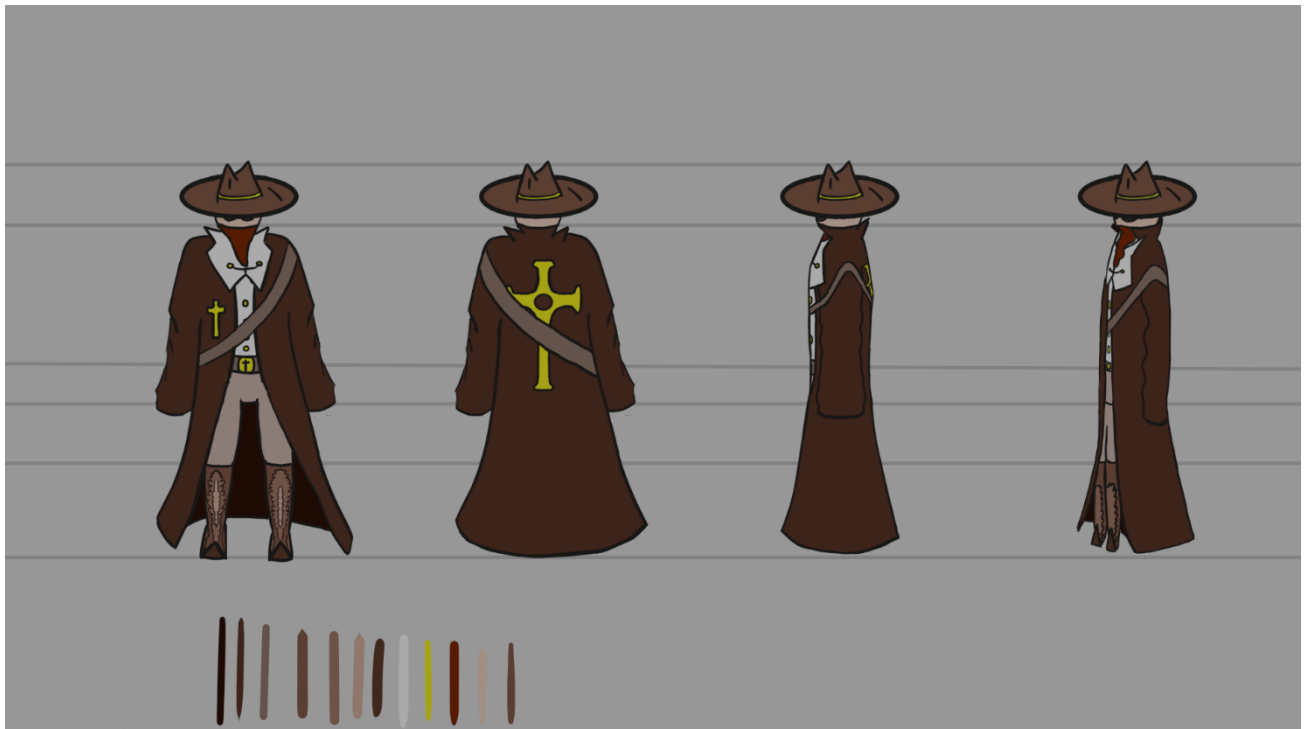
The game is set in the Arizona, which is deep into the South West US. I thought that it would be appropriate to give him a classic cowboy's outfit, but with some Christian symbolism and a trench coat to replace the priest's vestments.

The exorcist needed a way to descend further into the depths of the mines, so I created old hydraulic canisters that need to be manually cranked. The canister has a transparent glass material so that the player can peer into the murky water held within and check how far he/she is too completing the floor or keeping the lights on. I was originally inspired by the scream canisters from monsters Inc, but the canisters quickly took on their own unique form to better fit the style of the game better.

Spooky Doors:

The elevator needed windows to peer into the mineshafts beyond, so I created a simple design for metallic walls with windows. I was inspired by solitary confinement doors, which enhances the atmosphere of claustrophobia in the game.

Plans for Expanding the Portfolio:

- Include additional animations via links.
- Create sections showcasing my design process in art software like Krita and Blender.
- Expand my possible art styles by creating pixel art.
- Show progression in terms of skill
- Improve design of the document itself to be more visually appealing.

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