Blood Reaver individual post-mortem

**Successes:**

* **Due to the close-knit nature of the team, It was extremely easy to work effectively with all my teammates and there were almost no major disputes or conflicts within the art team. When there were minor disagreements they were settled by having relevant discussions to resolve the issue. Most of the time the disagreements were between the vision of the game and the technical limitations of unity. One example of this was the original lighting of the scene using 2 directional lights to achieve the moon look that the designers wanted. Having 2 directional lights in the scene was unnecessary so we had a conversation about the effect that the designers were looking for and compromises we could make to maintain a clean lighting setup.**
* **Having a 4 person art team allowed me to focus heavily on environmental art and I feel like I personally have made some of my best work to date in Blood Reaver. I am personally proud of all of the cathedral and despite seeing where improvements can be made I am really pleased with how it turned out**
* **Having Euan on the team was really great from an artistic standpoint because he was great in giving useful feedback that really brought the cathedral to life.**
* **Blood Reaver being the first time I had worked on such a large map taught me loads of valuable lessons in using modular assets to create large spaces and forced me to stop overthinking many areas of the pipeline. I have traditionally been quite stubborn in my use of modular assets, internally being quite anal about everything perfectly lining up and using only the modular pieces I have made but I found that with that mentality, setting out an entire map using those modular pieces is extremely time consuming and can produce a repetitive look. Towards the latter half of production (as I was making the interior spaces) I began to see ways of improving the workflow by being less picky with how I place my modular pieces, leading to more visually interesting spaces and faster workflow. Euan’s feedback was also instrumental to these improvements.**

**Weaknesses:**

* **Due to the massive scope of the environment in this project a lot of my time was spent working as hard as I could getting everything done which meant that I didn’t have a whole lot of time left over to properly fulfil my role as lead artist. There were some technical issues with the production that I would have liked to be able to iron out and properly teach the team about. Namely the channel packed texture preset for substance painter which had issues with the ambient occlusion channel which would have been nice to show everyone in the team how to work around properly. I think me stepping up more to the lead artist role would have also kept the team to more consistent file management and technical requirements which sort of went out of the window as the project went on. It would have also taken some work off Euan’s back as he would only need to discuss changes with me that I could relay to the rest of the art team. Ultimately, due to how close we all are this wasn’t a particularly huge issue.**
* **The level greybox that was made by the designers wasn’t made to real world scale which made it very challenging to get a proper sense of scale in the level. Even in the final build the scale feels too large with the size of the cathedral relative to the player perspective. Early on in the production I should have been more vocal about the issue so that asset creation down the line was less of a headache.**
* **I also should have made more documentation about importing props and assets into the game engine so that everyone knew how to set assets up for performance and light baking. Currently there was lots of time spent going through every asset and setting it to cast shadows, generate lightmap UVs and contribute to global illumination.**

**Things to do differently:**

* **In the future I think it would be a good idea to have artists work with designers early in the greyboxing stage so that the map design can properly accommodate for correct scale and optimisation techniques like occlusion culling.**
* **I would also like to be more proactive in preproduction when writing documentation so that I can properly set out technical specifications. In this production it was challenging because I couldn’t foresee what would be a problem later on but I can use that knowledge in the future to make more in depth decisions about how assets should be made.**
* **In a similar way, I would like to step up more as a lead artist if I got the opportunity so that people stick to technical limitations and organisation standards in long productions. I would also like to improve my ability to divide tasks among a team so that everyone knows what they can be doing at any given time and that workload is evenly spread. That said, I feel like the artist workload in Blood Reaver was pretty even but that was a result of everyone else in the team being proactive and easy to work with as opposed to good leadership on my part.**

**Overall reflection:**

Overall I am extremely proud of Blood Reaver and my contributions to the game. I feel like I developed my skills as an environment artist immensely and have identified areas that I can still improve on to bring my art to the next level. Everyone in the team was amazing to work with and I would work with any one of them again in a heartbeat. Despite the scope of the project being quite large for the given time frame I feel like everyone came together as a team to produce a final product we are all extremely proud of.