

Analysis of Mechanics

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Title: *Hotline Miami*

Released: *2012*

Author: *Dennaton Games - Jonatan Söderström, Dennis Wedin*

Primary Genre: *Top-Down Shooter*

Secondary Genre: *Action, Arcade, Retro, Puzzle*

Style: *Pixel art, Surreal, 1980s neon Miami, Neo-Noir*

Analysis

The game setting

Hotline Miami is a well received videogame, based on 1980s Miami aesthetics with some Neo-Noir elements that are entangled in it's almost psychedelic, dreamlike and surreal non-linear story. The silent protagonist is ordered by a unknown caller to do some gruesome acts againsts russian mafia in the city. In the process of doing so, he is slowly but surely losing the grip of reality and any remorse for his bloody actions.

Primary and secondary genres reflected in the gameplay

The game itself is practically based of off any old-school top-down action or stealth game. You are walking in a environment where you are not welcome and any suspicion of you being there alerts the guards/enemies around the corner or in the next room and they just charge aimlessly towards you to annihilate you with one hit. But you can arm yourself with any weapon that they drop after you stun or kill them. The game has a "arcade way" of keeping the gameplay fresh and personalised to the player's liking with before-the-level mask selection, which the protagonist can wear. The masks give you certain bonuses or change the gameplay as a whole (e.g. more hp, silent gun, only fists, dark mode, etc) and can be obtained after getting a high enough highscore/grade in each level, which is obtained by a combination of time spend in a level, killing combos, use of weapon and other elements. Some levels in the game have collectable secrets that could be thought of as some sort of puzzle element, that can also unlock new masks. To think of the puzzle genre is also on point considering you are trying to pass the levels without dying, in a certain amount of time and with appropriate tactics and strategies.

So I would say that all the genres work together really well, none of them is detrimental in any way. But in my humble opinion the highscore system is just a bit out of place and is probably serving a different role or idea in the gameplay, because unless you search it up online or try all the options in-game to see what action gets you the highest score, you don't really know how to achieve it. So I'm thinking that it's there just to add to the flashiness, speed and momentum of the action on the screen.

Style of the game

Videogames with top-down camera view are usually made with pixel art, because it's the most convenient and cheapest way of portraying these scenes, it doesn't really make sense to do something realistic, when you are limited by this angle of the camera. Therefore pixel art was the right choice for this project, even better when you know that you want bloody shootouts, where some blood particles are blown, bullets fly around, glass shutters, etc. The "1980s Miami drug infused aesthetic" visuals combined with loud up-beat pop, electro music give the gameplay this unique momentum and pace in which you are encouraged to kill all enemies, but once you complete a level and become the last man standing, the music stops and only some ambient sounds are played to sort of get your feet on the ground again to see what you have done and reflect on your actions, which creates this deeper anti-violence meaning.