

01 - Game Design Document

What is Violet Sun?

Violet Sun is a cooperative, roguelike, character based first-person shooter. It should be fully voice acted, colourful, fluid and highly replayable.

Players take the role of *Contractors*, a set of diverse playable characters employed by [The Megacorp](#) to clear out a series of planets of dangerous pests and monsters.

Players collect upgrades to their character's kit throughout a run, and persistent upgrades give a small boost of power to Contractors between runs.

There should be an over-arching narrative, and relationships between characters is a central element of the game.



Somewhere between the comic-booky, action packed Roboquest...



and the grand adventure of Star Wars.

Design Pillars: What is central to the experience?

Design pillars keep us focused on what we want to deliver to an audience. For the purposes of this project, I've selected some of the fourteen forms of fun as a framework for us to make design choices around.

👉 [The Fourteen Forms of Fun >](#)

They say there are 14 different forms of 'fun' that any activity can target. They are:

- Beauty
- Immersion
- Intellectual Problem Solving
- Competition
- Social Interaction
- Comedy
- Thrill of Danger
- Physical Activity
- Love
- Creation
- Power

- Discovery
- Advancement and Completion
- Application of an Ability

Power	Discovery	Application of an Ability
There should be a definite sense of power growth throughout a run as players collect more upgrades and the Contractor gets stronger. The strength and number of enemies increasing (and the player keeping up) should provide a thrill.	Content should be substantial enough for a player to get excited about receiving. Collection and unlocking of new upgrades, meeting new contractors and having their relationships develop should keep a player engaged for many hours.	Each single upgrade should be interesting enough to change or meaningfully contribute to a playstyle. Mastering these playstyles, contractors and abilities, as well as general skill at the game, should drive a player's enjoyment.

Audience & Market

The game is designed to be played cooperatively via Steam. There will be significant depth of gameplay, but not complexity. It will cater to casual, recreational gamers who may not be able to play video games frequently, as well as roguelike enthusiasts.

Core Gameplay

As a roguelike/lite, the gameplay will be divided between administration (loadout customisation and menus) and, more primarily, *runs*.

A standard run should last for up to 40 minutes, although the players would be able to choose to play longer.

Each playable contractor will have a set of abilities to use and will collect modifications to upgrade them throughout a run. The difficulty increases as the crew stay longer on each planet, but they can choose to move on at certain checkpoints.

Controls

Violet Sun will have familiar first person shooter controls, with heavy use of the mouse and WASD keys. Players will be able to sprint, jump, shoot, hit, swing, dash, explode, pray, snipe, reload, and hurl objects in accordance with their player abilities.

Console support is desirable but not intended at this time.

Gameplay Balance & Pacing

The gameplay should be quite fast paced, but not to the degree of dipping into the boomer shooter genre. Somewhere between COD zombies and Ultrakill (and maybe even Roboquest) is our sweet spot. 40 minute runs will be practical and substantial, and the difficulty should ramp up *across runs* as well as in them.

As a cooperative game, balance should prioritise diversity in a team's gameplay so each player can bring something unique to the table. Nerfs should only be handed out in the event of a stale, unfun meta. Difficulty can be tuned iteratively with playtest feedback.



Character Designs

Characters should be very visually distinct, with hidden faces for modelling/animating practicality. Some light colour coding and intentional silhouettes is essential to making them feel unique and fun. The first-person view of each contractor takes precedence over the third, as it will be one of the two primary ways that characterisation is expressed to the player (alongside voice acted dialogue).

They will have a light-hearted and stylised aesthetic, but not too cartoonish.



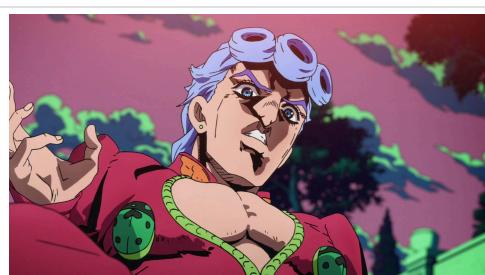
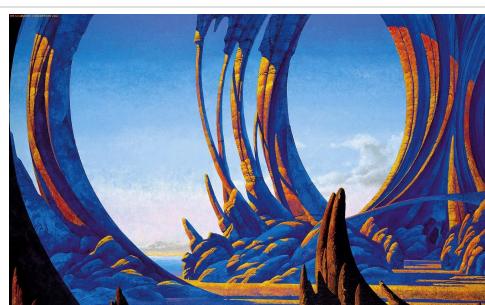
Ensis (*ignore the cake*)



Payday

Setting & World

Exploration of the world will be a driving force of fun for the game, so it's quite important that it remains immersive. The world should use colour palettes that are unfamiliar to players, but still visually appealing, with creative flora setting the tone of the world. Planets should be distinct and diverse, with a cohesive bond between the planets and the monsters that call it home.



Tone & Aesthetics

See above for images of the scale, weirdness and colour scheme we're going for. The system should feel deeply alien, and the tone/aesthetics should work with that goal. Grandiose 60s sci-fi should be a strong influence, alongside a touch of comic media.

The shader for the 3D models in the game will have a thin black outline to give the comic book effect and stand the player models out against their vibrant surroundings.



Violet Sun work in progress showcasing gentle outlines and colour contrast



Screenshot from Spectre Divide showcasing the intended first person artstyle

Narrative

The narrative should be solid, but not central to the project. Initially the narrative elements should seem insignificant as the players fall into the "extermination" role, but should develop into something substantial as the relationships with the characters deepen and they make various discoveries.

The theme of uncovering uncomfortable truths should underpin the narrative choices of the game, interspersed throughout lighthearted interpersonal character dialogue.

Business Model

Violet Sun will operate on a premium Indie product business model with a buy-it-once monetisation system. It will be priced at \$15 AUD at launch whilst in alpha, and bump up to \$25 AUD at full release.

This places it below titles of similar scale, listed below:

- Risk of Rain 2
- Gunfire Reborn
- Hades
- Slay the Spire
- Roboquest

Roboquest and Gunfire Reborn are the two closest comparisons to Violet Sun, but the intention is to differentiate in art style, music, depth of narrative, immersion and gameplay.