Iron Brawlers

In this reflection I will be discussing the making of our game Iron Brawlers, what we planned our game to be, responsibilities, what went wrong/right, what the game ended up to be and what I have learned from the development of the game.
I really enjoyed working on this game with my team, even though we didn't manage to publish it yet.

Pitch and pre production planning

Josh and Dante pitch this fighting game where you would knock off the opponent's armor. Each character would have sets of armor that would have different properties which would encourage different fighting styles.
It attracted my attention because the thought of creating a lot of 3Dmodeled armor and/or characters was pretty appealing.

Pete joined Josh and Dante, and had already started some discussion of the game before I joined the team. We had a lot of discussions about what we wanted out of the development of the game and what we thought we could achieve because developing a fighting game is not easy.
Through our discussion we knew we really wanted to focus on an armor system but we wouldn't be able to make it as complex. So we planned on making a fighting game with one or two characters with at least one armor set but with different moves and how they are affected by their armor. We also wanted the fighting to feel good so that was also something we wanted to make sure to achieve which is also vital for a fighting game.
We also decided our roles in the team, I was going to be 3D modeling and doing some research occasionally, Pete wanted to focus on animation, Josh wanted to do the coding, Dante wanted to do character design, texturing and lvl design.

My responsibilities and priorities

My responsibilities were research,3D modeling and retopologizing. When we were discussing what we wanted to do in the team I knew that I wasn’t fit to be the team leader and mostly wanted to know what my tasks were and not put too much on my palate. So I wanted to do something that I would enjoy and that I thought I was good at which is 3D modeling so going into this project I knew that was what I wanted to do. When we were discussing before we started the project the rest of the team asked me what I wanted to get out of this last project and I said that I wanted to 3D modeling and not too much else which they were ok with and I really appreciate it.

First few weeks my task was doing some UI/UX and 3D character modeling research but when Dante was done concepting the first character my priority became

modeling the character. My first priority with the character was getting the base mesh and body modeled before the armor. When the team thought the body was done my priority was to model the armor.
Dante needed some models of a furnace, a house/hutt and some spikes for the playing maps so I modeled them too after his design.
Then I modeled the second character after I got the design and a quick sketch of the head and repeated the same process as the first character starting with the base mesh and then the armor. Because we decided to use the same base body for our second character I focused more on the head of the character and the helmet of the armor for the character.

The Development process

During the development of the game my focus was on 3D modeling specifically the characters, I think for the most part everything went pretty well.
When modeling the first character it was difficult to figure out the right method to use for the different parts of the character. The head of the first character (flowerboy/Sol) was pretty difficult to create because of the petals and fitting it to the semi human like body. The base of the head was pretty easy but the part was difficult figuring out how the petals were going to be attached to his head and how the base of the neck were going to look like so there wasn't a disconnect. I started out making a rim and having the petals coming out behind it but it didn't really fit and made them feel disconnected so I tried different ways for the petals to connect to the face. I ended up having the first row of petals come out around the face and the rest separate going back into the neck stem petals.

The armor of Sol was designed to look like terracotta pot pieces so my job was to translate that into 3D modeled pieces, I also had a bit of design freedom. I started by creating a pot like model and then splitting it into pieces that I thought it would use and then tried to fit it into an armor which was the difficult part. I worked with my team going back and forth on the design and figuring out what would look the best. Because the fist which is a big part of how his attack animations work we spent some time on it trying to work out how it would look the best and I started out small and had to increase the size of it.
I like it when things are streamline combined with wanting things to look perfect creating things sometimes can take longer than it supposed to because I keep redoing things or keep tweaking small things. It is something I struggle with and have throughout the project but did improve on at the end.

Some of the things that I felt like I managed to finish pretty easily were the world assets that Dante wanted which was the hut,furnace and spikes. The shapes for the hutt were pretty simple so it wasn't too hard to model. Except for the window and

how the shadows worked with the model. The furnace was a bit more difficult because of the rectangle brick shapes that protrude out. I made the decision to not make all of them and focused on the silhouette while trying to keep low poly. The spikes were interesting to create because I was trying to make them so it would be easier to UV map and texture. When I finally figured out how to do that I could create a lot of different shapes.

Creating the second character was interesting because it was really different from flowerboy. Creating goblin's base body was easier because we used Sol's base body and just removed his neck base and head to better fit a human body. I started by taking Sol's body into Zbrush to change some features to better match what we wanted for goblin but I had made it too different so Pete couldn't use the same rig and had to use another model. It was still based on sol's body but not as different as I had made it.
Goblin's face was difficult to finish because of the style we're going for and trying to figure out the proportions was interesting. The way Dante had designed the mouth did translate well into 3D and we had figured out another way to make the mouth, we couldn't use the same technique as we did on sol. so we ended up making the mouth a part of the face.

For Goblins armor I started with the helmet because it was the most intricate piece, the difficult part was figuring out how to do the spikes and ended using the same technique as Sol's head. I was worried that I wouldn't be able to finish the armor because the helmet took so long but I did it with the help of my team by handing it off to them to finish.
When I started the rest of the armor I used Sol's armor to go from and changed them to fit Goblin and his fighting style which went pretty well. Goblins armor was designed to be heavier than Sol's so instead of having separate pieces I made it follow around gobins body and also create a bit sharper edges to give him a different feel when it comes to his armor.
When I reached a point where I didn't know what would benefit it I handed the armor over to Dante.

I was also afraid that I wouldn't be good enough to create a good character base, that could be animated, quick enough but my team made sure to encourage me and tell me where I was compared to their expectations which helped a lot. I owe alot to myself when it comes to having confidence in me, encouraging me and helping me when I really needed it.

The Game

I believe we created the game we set out to develop even though we didn't end up launching it. We managed to have a co-op fighting game centered around knocking

the armor off your opponent to win the fight. The player starts the game and gets introduced to the title screen that leads into the character and mapp selection. When the player has chosen a character and map they want to play with/on then get loaded into the game where they will fight to knock the armor off their opponent or knock them off the map. The player either wins/loose rounds until one player wins 3 rounds and wins the game and the players will be taken back to the select screen.

What I have learnt from this experienced

I have learnt and realized so much from developing this game with my team. I have struggled a lot coming out of covid19 lockdown and its after effects on my mental health and other obstacles but being open and letting my team know what I was going through kept an understanding and open communication which helped a lot. In my previous teams before I started this project I took on too much and it backfired which left me feeling like I wasn't good enough and being home without proper workspace didn't help. So coming into this project I held firm on what I knew I could handle and I was lucky to join with Josh, Dante and Pete who have been great team mates and super understanding.
I have really enjoyed the communication that our team has had and I have realized that you can achieve a lot more with a good team that communicates well.

We communicated pretty well throughout the development of the game and helped each other when someone got stuck or wanted to do or try something else. It was a bit difficult to help Josh though because he was doing the coding which I think most of us couldn't help with.
When I was creating anything I kept asking my team for their input so that I didn't focus too much on things that didn’t need fixing which have been a problem for me in the past.

Before I started modeling the characters I researched how to model for animation and how to get the topology so that it hopefully wouldn't lose too much volume when being animated.
During the development I learnt about taking models from Maya to ZBrush and use it to create detail and then take it back into maya as well as quadrawing, it is when you use a tool to draw squares on top of a model. I also learned how to cut the seams for UV mapping and what would be best for texturing when it came to different kinds of models.

I'm glad that I got to experience good team work and a team that was focused on making sure that everyone got to do what they wanted to do for our last assignment. I honestly believe that if we didn’t have the amount of communication, planning, standups, check-ins that we did then we would not have been able to get the game close to what it will be once it gets released.

a. What the game was planned to be.
b. Your responsibilities and priorities.
c. What went wrong during development.
d. What went right during development.
e. What the game ended up being.
f. What you have learned from the experience.