

GAME DESIGN DOCUMENT

***ECHOES OF THE
TEMPLE***

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GAME CONCEPT

The game is a first-person adventure game with exploration and puzzles on the forefront of the experience. The protagonist finds himself in a strange place and time and must solve the mystery of his presence there.

SUMMARY OF THE GAME

- The player arrives in a mysterious ruin in the jungle; the weather is getting bad and there is a giant ruined temple overlooking in the distance.
- While exploring this hub area, the player can enter three areas: the three trials of the Chachapoyas each related to a unique mask that grants powers.
- The player may do each trial in any order that they wish, to reach the end of the game though, each trial must be completed successfully to unlock the final door with the three collected masks.
- The levels and the temple are inspired by Mesoamerican culture while the protagonist is a modern-day man. The juxtaposition of the realistic nature of his exploration with ancient history and spiritualism create a unique world type for the player to explore.

KEY FEATURES

A mix of exploration, navigation challenges and puzzles:

The game incorporates elements of exploration; the player needs to walk around and explore his surroundings to piece out what this strange place is. The player needs to solve navigation challenges to further his exploration goal as well as solve environmental puzzles by way of the trials.

A unique perspective:

The player and the protagonist are alone in this mysterious place; therefore, the narration will mostly be pieced out by the player exploring the world around him as environmental narration will play a key role in selling the world to them. The protagonist will also narrate some elements aloud, providing the player with important information about the character himself and why he thinks he has been sent to this place and what it means to him personally.

A realistic, artistic and believable world:

The game features a realistic aesthetic made possible by using Unreal Engine 5.6, integrating cutting edge technologies to render the vision of the developers to life. Rendering the exploration of the game world for the player engaging throughout. Game feel has been thought of and designed around to convey this realistic look; applying a realistic depth of field effect that simulates the point of focus of the player, physics-based movement and subtle camera lag and head movement affecting the camera to augment this realism.

Three trials with differing core puzzle elements:

In order to reach the end of the game, the player must pass through three trials, each with a different core puzzle element. The trials are based on masks that grant special powers. The Mask of Speed slows the world around the player; the Mask of Spores grants protection to the player and the Mask of Vision grants the player access to the spiritual realm of the temple. Each trial features unique challenges for the player to solve.

KEY FEATURES

Game type

- **Genre:** Adventure, Puzzle
- **Art Style:** Realistic
- **Game Style:** Serious, Puzzle solving, Exploration
- **Game Mode:** First-Person only

Gameplay pillars

- **Exploration:** explore the game world by walking, dashing to reach further area, jumping, interacting with some world elements like levers, avoiding deadly traps.
- **Puzzles:** solve the trials, gain the masks' powers and use those powers to overcome challenges.
- **Narration:** explore the game world to gain insight on environmental storytelling as well as having the player narrate aloud his thoughts and jot down notes and sketches in his notepad.

Target audience:

- 18-35 gamers of the “explorer” archetype of Bartle who like pick up and play games that do not necessitate a lot of time investment to enjoy the experience.
- Players who like exploration in videogames and solving mysteries and puzzles.
- Players who enjoy short but complete and satisfying experiences.

Plot elements:

Explore the temple, find the truth about Bodhi's presence here and find a way to overcome the challenges and move on.

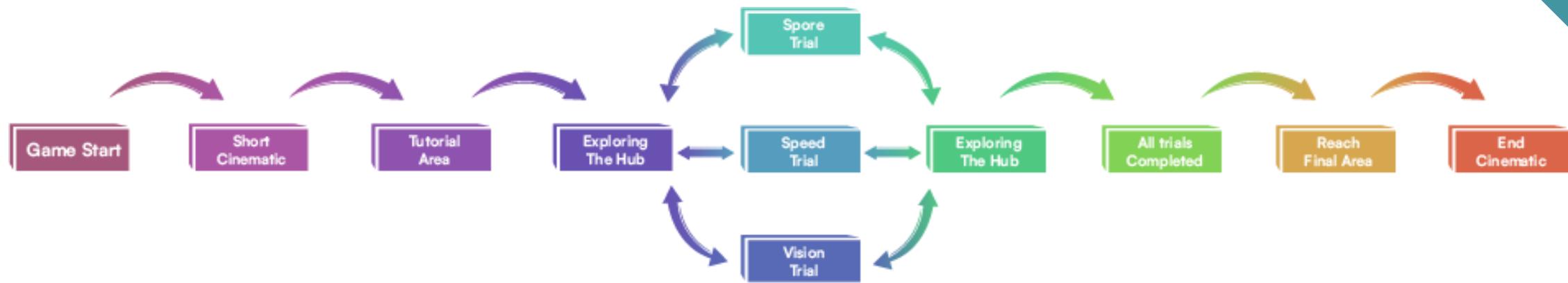
World location:

Somewhere in the amazonian jungles of Peru, during modern times mixed with Mesoamerican spiritualism.

Target platform:

- The game is being primarily developed for PC as the team has the most experience for that platform.
- Core audience for this small indie game is on itch.io and would allow a broader reach for players.
- Console ports could be considered, and the game is being built and designed to be played with a controller as well though the focus is not on those platforms during this development cycle.

GAME FLOW



Core Mechanics

- The player can navigate through the world by **walking, crouching and running** (dash), **jumping, pushing and pulling** objects. Force feedback effects are applied on certain actions while playing with a controller.
- The player can interact with the world to **solve various puzzles** like activating a lever or avoiding a pressure plate that would spring a trap.
- The player will find **masks** that unlock new skills linked to traversal of the environment (a different vision, slowed-down time, protection, etc.) with each mask having a strict cooldown to use the associated power.
- There is no health system in the game, death (fail state) is immediate, and the player respawns a few seconds later in the same room at the latest and nearest checkpoint.
- Movement is grounded in **reality and physics** to convey realism, camera is setup up individually for each mask to have a unique “look” per item versus the main camera. Subtle head-bobbing effects while walk, camera shakes, tilting and depth of field effects are applied to augment realism.
- There is no combat in the game.
- A torch is carried by the player in his off hand to illuminate his path and augment the eerie atmosphere of trespassing on ancient ruins as well as lighting the braziers that act as checkpoints throughout the game.
- A slower approach to exploration is enforced, the player needs to take in the scenery to figure out where to go / what to do to progress and avoid the deadly traps that are everywhere as running around incautiously is a death sentence.

GAME MECHANICS

MASK OF SPORES MECHANICS



Core concept

Most of the spore trial area is filled with strange, mystical spores that make the player hallucinate.

The Mask of Spores renders the player immune to effects of the spore, making elements appear or disappear if they really exist or if they are a construct of the spores' hallucinogenic effects.

Game logic behind this Mask

- The mask can only be worn for 5 seconds at a time.
- Whenever the player is inside the spore zones without the mask; post-processes are applied to the camera to change the field of view, change the saturation and the camera exposure as well as changing the audio component of the game by adding reverb and distortion. Those effects are reverted when the mask is on and protecting the player.
- Collisions are changed on certain objects, and some appear or disappear.
- Certain traps become active or inactive.
- Certain level elements can be interacted with depending if the mask is worn or not.
- Visual effects and cues are applied to help the player figure out what is affected or not by the spores.
- The mask and its effects are only applied in areas where spores affect the player. Otherwise, nothing happens.

MASK OF SPEED MECHANICS



Core concept

The Speed Trial has traps and challenges that are inhumanly fast and cannot be completed without the Mask of Speed.

In order to overcome this trial, the player must wear the Mask of Speed to slow down time for everything except the player.

Game logic behind this Mask

- The mask can only be worn for 8 seconds at a time.
- When worn, time dilation is applied for the game world but not the player.
- Post-process is applied to the camera to change the field of view, color of the lens is changed to purple and distortion and motion blur trails objects to augment the sense of speed at a slowed down state.
- Audio is also slowed for the duration when the mask is worn.
- Niagara effects are applied on moving world elements to augment the slowed down effect.
- In this state, the player can then overcome impossible otherwise challenges.

MASK OF VISION MECHANICS

Core concept

The mask of Vision grants access to the spiritual realm beyond normal human vision. Whenever the mask is worn, the player can see remnants of the past spectrally glowing, hidden passages and remnants of a bygone era.

Game logic behind this Mask

- The mask can only be worn for 10 seconds at a time.
- When worn, the player can see the spiritual realm; hidden decals of ancient symbols giving clues as well as hidden passages and interactable items like levers or stairs, invisible bridges also appear and can be walked over.
- This is achieved by applying a post-process on the camera that applies a fisheye effect to distort the vision of the player and create an ethereal look, secondary materials are applied to certain objects to give them a spiritual like look with bright emissive light, lens color is changed to a teal blue with a heavy dirt lenses effect applied as well as film grain, chromatic aberration and lens flares with higher values than normal.
- When played with a controller and with the mask worn, force feedback effects are applied in accordance to the distance between the player and invisible elements in order to help them find where the closest clue is situated.

GAME SYSTEMS

- The player can save his progress by lighting braziers with his torch providing a closer form of respawning if the death state is triggered.
- In turn, this will light all the torches of the area of the level, providing light in this otherwise dark environment.
- Masks act as keys to unlock the final area and trigger the end game status.
- Puzzles are straightforward and easy to understand and solve, requiring the corresponding mask of the current trial to overcome.
- A notepad serves as a narrative element to the game, and the protagonist uses it to jot down notes and sketches. The player is free to look it up at any time or ignore it if they wish.

GAMEPLAY ELEMENTS

- There is no health system in this game, death is instantaneous, although hindering, the player can respawn at the latest checkpoint and try again.
- Controls are as follow:
 - Movement (W,A,S,D Keys / Left Thumbstick)
 - Jump (Space bar / A-button)
 - Light the torch / put out the torch (F key / Y-button)
 - Use / Interact (E key / X-button)
 - Look around (Mouse / Right Thumbstick)
 - Sprint / Dash (Shift key / RB-Button)
 - Mask of Spore (1 key / D-Pad Left)
 - Mask of Speed (2 key / D-Pad Up)
 - Mask of Vision (3 key / D-Pad Right)
 - Pause Menu (Esc key / Menu Button)
 - Notepad Menu (Tab key / View Button)

CHARACTER

Player character's Name: Bodhi Wallace

Bodhi is the protagonist of the game; he is of English and Nepalese heritage but lives in Canada. He is a jack of all trades who needed some time off and found himself in a mysterious place during a trip through the Peruvian jungle.

Physical traits:

Although the players will never see Bodhi's body in-game aside from this arms as the game is played through the first-person perspective, Bodhi is a well-built man of average size and height, he is right-handed and has been working physical types of jobs, explaining his stamina and ability to jump and run around. He is thirty something.

Psychological traits:

Bodhi is a skeptical man regarding spiritualism, he is also claustrophobic, which plays a big part in the game as he is unable to wear the masks for long periods of time; it is draining mentally for him to do so.

Bodhi is also gifted and curious and likes to draw everything and nothing in his notepad, hoping to capture his feelings and what he's seen during his trip to Peru.

NARRATIVE OVERVIEW

Exposition:

The player is Bodhi Wallace, a young man who suddenly awakens amongst the ruins of a temple in the amazonian jungle of Peru. Along the way, the player will be able to piece together clues (with writing made by Bodhi himself in his journal) that the reason why he's been sent is because he needed adventure in his life. Because of his sudden amnesia, he has no other choice than to explore this place.

Rising action:

Inside this huge temple, front and center is a staircase going up to three empty pedestals. On the ground floor lies three doors with moving platforms that each lead to their respective trials with a hint of what is to come. Glowing mushrooms, ethereal manifestations and some pieces of the wall glitching.

Climax:

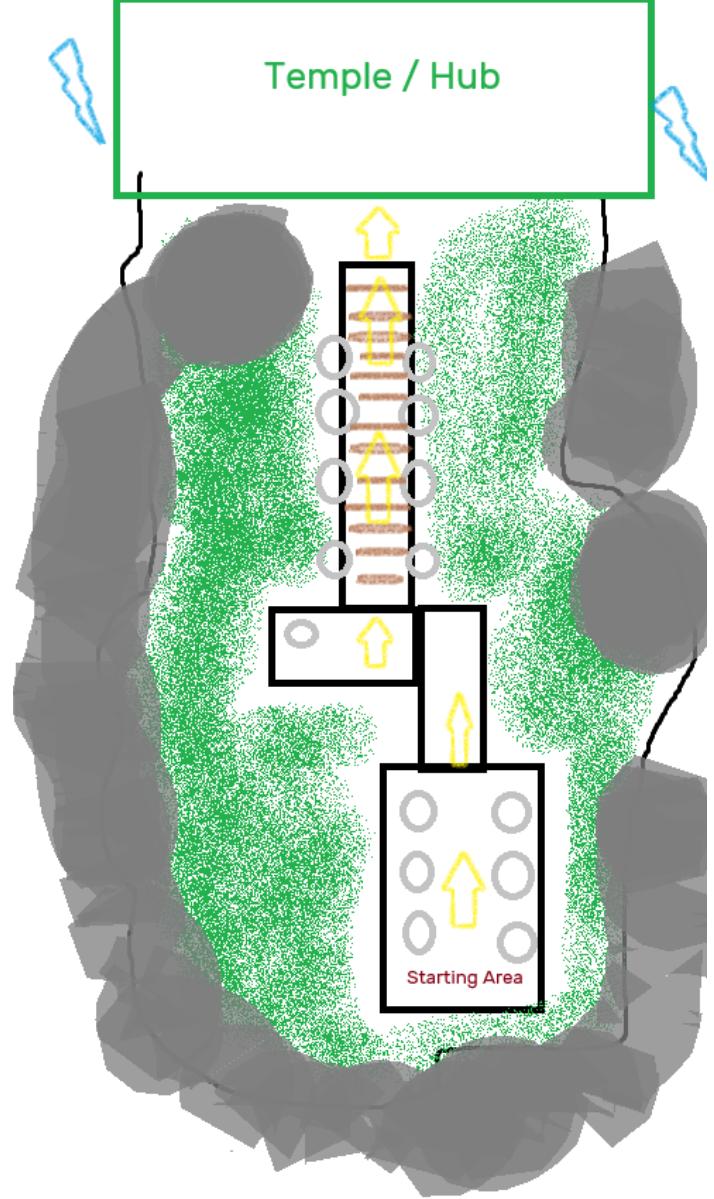
The player can freely explore and choose any of the trials as they see fit. One of the trials asks of the player to protect themselves from hallucinogenic spores that alters reality. Another necessitates that they attune themselves to the numerous traps and synchronize with their speed. The third trial necessitate that the player sees and finds the unseen of the spiritual realm.

Falling action / Resolution:

When the player has overcome the three trials and has obtained the masks, he may return upstairs to put them on the pedestals. A door opens on the wall leading to a moving platform that will bring them to the top of the temple where the player will realize, lies numerous other temples to be explored and overcome. This is only the beginning of Bodhi's adventure.

LEVELS OVERVIEW

- The game is composed of **five** interconnecting levels
- The Tutorial area; the jungle and the ruins of an ancient civilization
- That area leads to the “Hub” area of the greater temple
- From the Hub area the following levels are accessible:
 - The Trial of the Spores
 - The Trial of Speed
 - The Trial of Vision
- Above the central Hub area is the end goal, the final door that will end the game with a “win state”



Level 1

The Outdoors

The player spawns and starts in this area, he is left to explore on his own but there is ultimately only one path leading to the Temple / Hub area. It is a passive tutorial area, the player is left on his own to safely experiment with the controls: moving around, jumping, dashing, etc.

Setting: A dense, rain-soaked jungle at night, lit by flashes of lightning and rumbling thunder.

Objective: Navigate through overgrown ruins and dense foliage to reach the temple's entrance.

Design Notes: Environmental storytelling mirrors the narration: broken pillars and crumbling walls, vine-covered ruins and dynamic weather effects heighten tension and immersion.

Designer's Intent: This level sets the tone for the entire game. The goal is to immerse the player in the world immediately, making them feel as disoriented and vulnerable as our protagonist.



Level 1 - The Outdoors

Setting: The heart of the temple, a vast, open chamber bathed in soft blue light. Towering windows line the walls, casting rays that pierce the dust-filled air.

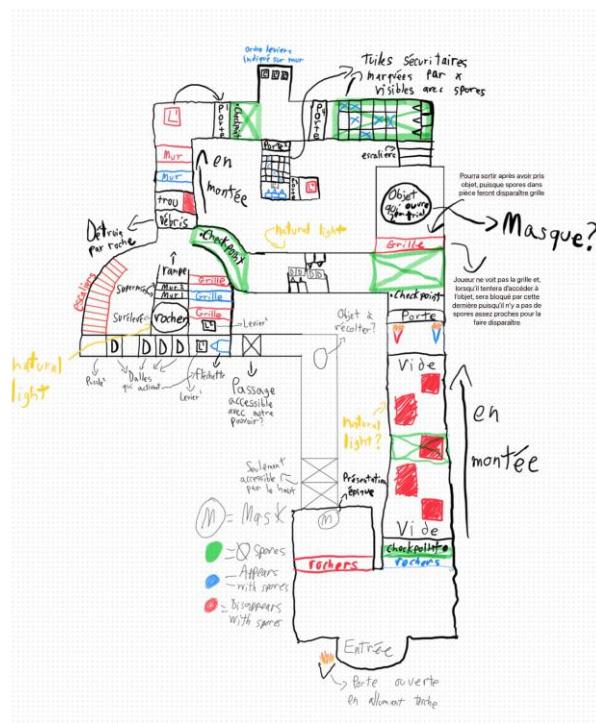
Objective: Explore the central hub and access the three trial chambers.

Design Notes: The player enters to a breathtaking view: shafts of light illuminate the entrance, revealing a grand staircase leading to a shadowy room with three empty pedestals. This final chamber doesn't reveal the ending until all trials are completed and the masks are returned. Architectural scale and lighting are used to evoke awe and mystery, reinforcing the temple's ancient power and the player's smallness within it.

Designer's Intent: The hub delivers instant impact, a "wow" moment that contrasts with the claustrophobic jungle. It's a visual and emotional reset, giving players a sense of scale, purpose, and anticipation for what lies ahead. Each trial is accessible from the beginning, so the player can choose where to start and forge their own story.



Level 2 – The Temple (Hub)



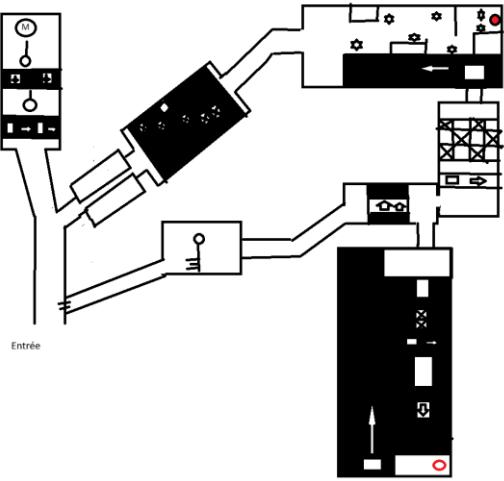
Setting: A damp, humid and dark place within the temple where phosphorescent fungi have taken over the old ruins. Slowly releasing their hallucinogenic spores into the air.

Objective: Find the Mask of Spores to protect yourself from the hallucinogenic effects of the spores and overcome the trial by alternating between what is and what could be.

Design Notes: The player is blocked by two walls, one seems real and the other is not. Beyond one there lies the Mask of Spores, within this chamber, putting it on, reality becomes clearer for the player and hallucinogenic effects wear off temporarily. Giving a taste of what is to come in this section mixing parkour elements with more logic-oriented puzzles.

Designer's Intent: Since this trial has a double logic element where spores can hinder or help the player, clear visual clues are incorporated into the level design to indicate to the player which area contains which type of spores. Since mushrooms usually grow in the dark and avoid light, the whole lighting of the level has been conceived around that fact to convey the sense of eeriness of the mushrooms in the dark glowing with pink emissive light as well as having safe spaces be put in direct natural light.

Level 3 - Spores Trial



Setting: Light slowly reaches this lower level and gives a glimpse of what lies ahead; large pits, active traps and danger lurk at every corner of this trial.

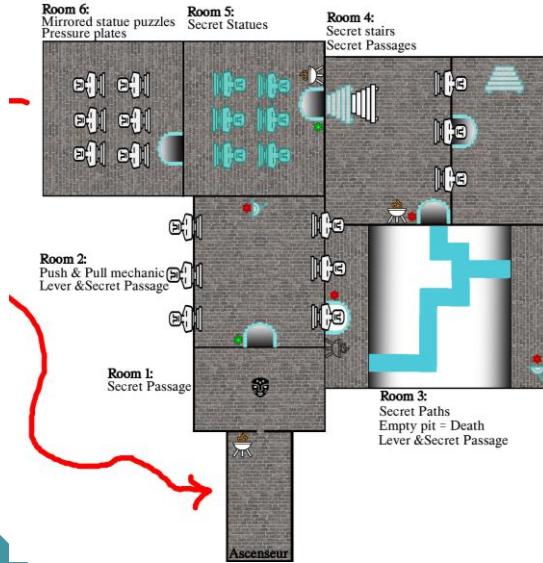
Objective: Find the Mask of Speed and use it to overcome the various rooms filled with deadly traps.

Design Notes: This trial has been designed with the challenge of dexterity in mind and is more akin to a first-person 3D platformer than the other trials. Obstacles are deadly to the player if he does not take his time to analyze the correct path, timing and good usage of the Mask of Speed to overcome them.

Designer's Intent: This trial has been inspired by tough as nail but fair platformers as well as quick reflexes and quick thinking on the part of the player to reach the end goal of the rooms and the overall end of the trial, all while using the Mask of Speed to slow down time (and the traps) to a more manageable speed.

Level 4 – Speed Trial

l'épandant du levier
indépendant
int + Allume toutes les lumières de la section
it appear with mask on
it disappear with mask on



Setting: A dim, echoing wing of the temple where reality bends and secrets hide in plain sight.

Objective: Use the Mask of Vision to uncover hidden paths, symbols, and ghostly architecture.

Design Notes: With the mask worn, the environment transforms, walls dissolve to reveal arched passageways, forgotten symbols glow with meaning, and spectral objects materialize. The entire space takes on a teal hue, reminiscent of ectoplasm and ghostly energy, creating a surreal, otherworldly atmosphere. Puzzles rely on perception: players must put on the mask to reveal clues, align symbols, and navigate illusions.

Designer's Intent: This trial explores the theme of insight and hidden truth. The goal is for players to feel like they're peeling back layers of reality, uncovering the temple's forgotten history through spectral vision. It's eerie, mysterious, and deeply immersive, rewarding curiosity and observation over brute force. Throughout the trial, visual details reveal the contrast between past and present: statues appear fractured and broken in the present, but whole and pristine when viewed through the mask. These shifts in perception invite players to question what's real, what's forgotten, and what's waiting to be uncovered.

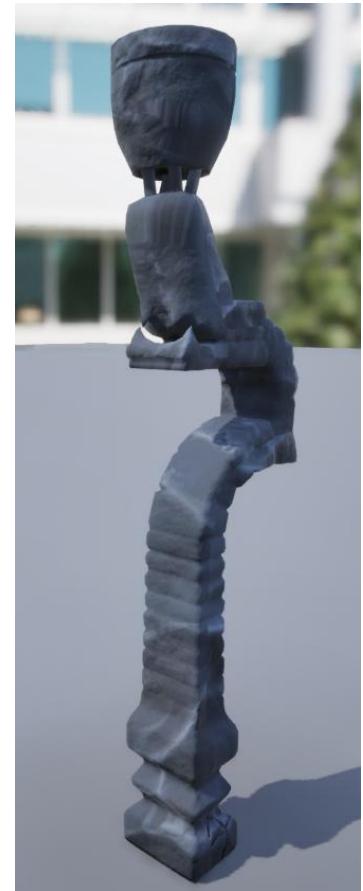
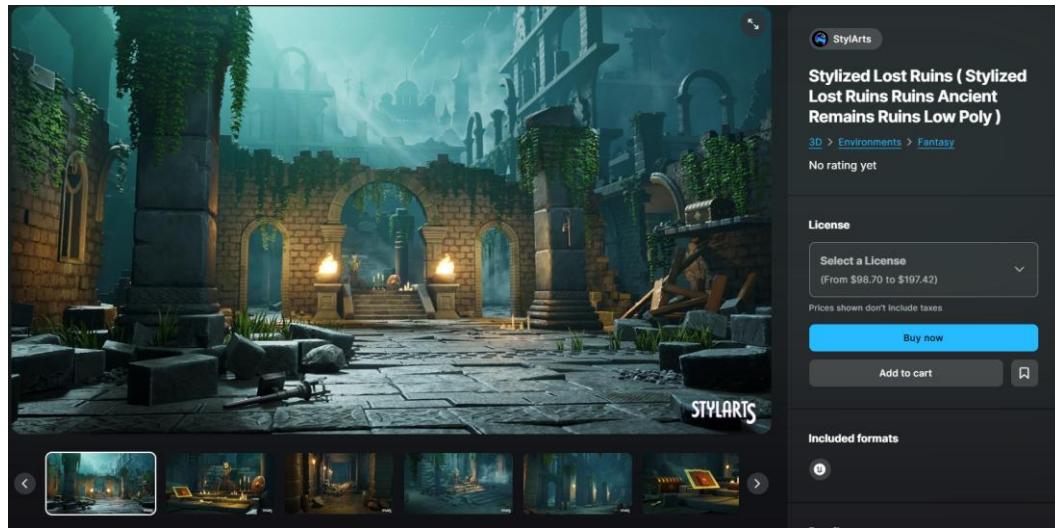
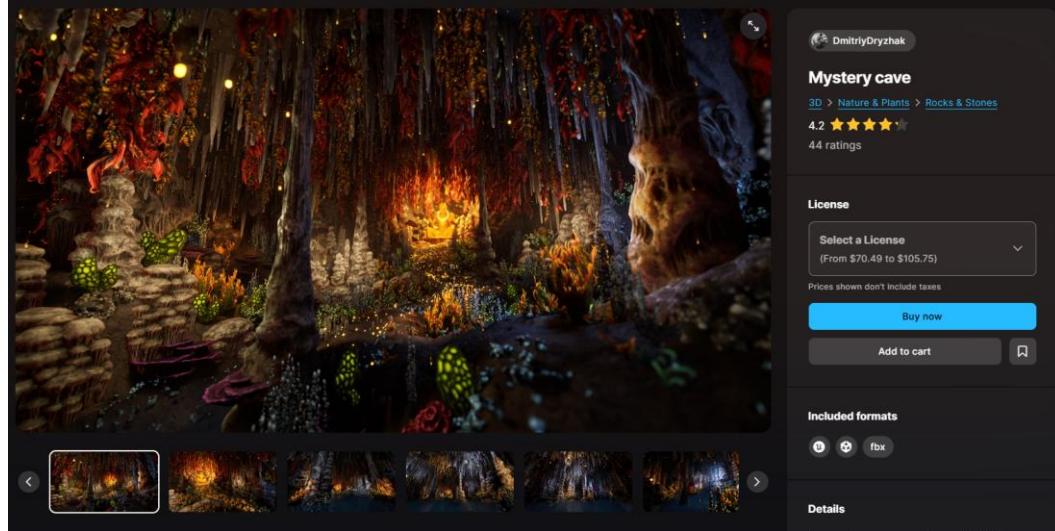
Level 5 – Vision Trial

Level 6 – Upper Hub (End)

Setting: After overcoming the three trials and placing the masks on the pedestal, the weather outside clears, opening a door to an elevator that goes up this time, leading to the roof of the temple. In the distance, the player sees that there are many temples ahead that still need to be overcome.

This is the final scene of the game.

Most assets are sourced online throughout FAB's free content and other sources of paid content purchased by members of the development team like the « Mystery Cave » assets bundle for the Spores Trial and the « Stylized Lost Ruins » assets bundle for the interior of the temple.



Other assets are modeled by members of the team as needed.

ASSETS USED FOR THE LEVELS

UI & MENU DESIGN

1. Overview

Semi-realistic art style inspired by Uncharted, Tomb Raider, and Indiana Jones.

Designed for both PC and console using Unreal Engine 5.6.

Focus on maintaining immersion and minimal on-screen clutter.

User Interface (UI) designed and animated using Photoshop and Unreal Engine tools.

2. Goals

Deliver an intuitive and immersive UI consistent with the temple theme.

Keep the interface minimal to avoid visual distraction during exploration.

Ensure functional and aesthetic consistency between PC and console versions.

Provide responsive, animated feedback for user interactions.

Create all UI assets and button art in Photoshop, animated within Unreal Engine.

3. Visual Direction

Theme: ancient temple stone aesthetic with subtle lighting and texture work.

Color Palette: earthy tones (browns, greens, gold highlights).

Typography: clean and readable, inspired by carved temple inscriptions.

Button Style: stone-carved look with soft glow animation when selected.

Transitions: smooth fades and subtle light animations to maintain immersion.

4. UI Structure

4.1 Main Menu

Buttons: Continue, New Game, Options, Credits, Exit Game.

Stone-carved theme with animated highlights on hover or focus.

Soft golden glow appears on selection to indicate interactivity.

Background: temple ruins with slow camera movement or light fog animation.

4.2 Options Menu

Tabs: Audio, Controls, Graphics, Extras (Collectibles, Gallery, etc.).

Each tab uses consistent layout and smooth fade transitions.

Options organized in collapsible panels for clarity.

UI sound cues confirm tab selection or slider adjustment.

4.3 Pause Menu

Accessible in-game via controller or keyboard shortcut.

Semi-transparent overlay maintains immersion over gameplay.

Buttons: Resume, Options, Quit to Main Menu.

Follows same layout and art direction as Main Menu.

UI & MENU DESIGN

4.4 HUD

Minimal in-game display to prioritize environmental immersion.
Mask indicator showing currently equipped mask.
Mask progress bar showing remaining active time before failsafe triggers.
Interaction prompts appear on hover with subtle animation.
Crosshair or focus reticle designed as a faint engraved circle for precision.

4.5 Credits & Splash Screens

Splash Screen: fade-in/out of studio and engine logos at startup.
Credits: scrolling text using same temple-themed font and materials.
Background: dimly lit temple corridor or carved mural animation.
Consistent transition and sound design across all static screens.

5. Interaction Flow

Supports mouse/keyboard and controller input.
Navigation through D-pad/joystick or mouse hover and click.
Hover states highlight with golden illumination and subtle sound cue.
Confirm and Back buttons have distinct feedback animations.
UI sound design: stone scrape for transitions, soft chime for selections.

6. Technical Implementation

Engine: Unreal Engine 5.6 (UMG Widgets and Blueprints).
Assets: Photoshop PNGs imported into UE5.
Animation: Widget Animations and Blueprints control button effects.
Input Mapping: unified for PC and console (controller navigation grids).
Resolution: native 16:9 with scaling support for 21:9 and consoles.

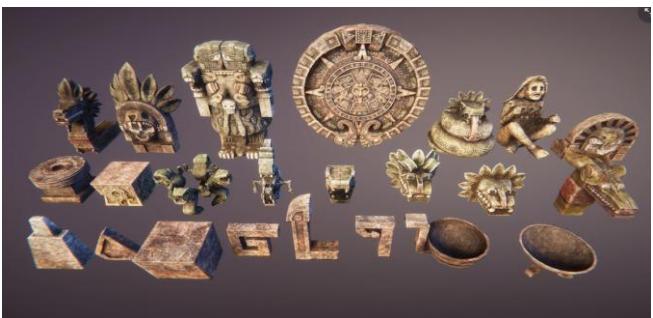
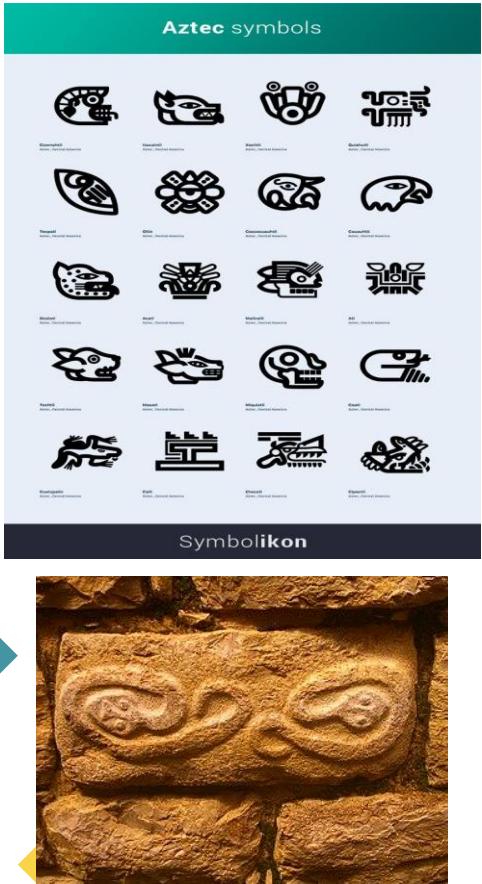
7. Accessibility

High-contrast text and buttons for visibility.
Readable font sizes and clear spacing between UI elements.
Full controller and keyboard navigation support.
Audio feedback for all major interactions.
Settings include volume, brightness, and sensitivity adjustments.

8. References & Moodboard

Inspiration: Uncharted, Tomb Raider, Indiana Jones, and Temple Run.
UI moodboard (if available) includes stone material references, glow accents, and ancient glyph patterns.
All reference material should align with semi-realistic jungle temple tone.

The game has taken inspiration from real Mesoamerican temples and culture in South American jungles as well as some other videogames such as the Uncharted Series, Far Cry Series, Indiana Jones and the Great Circle, The Amnesia Series, Green Hell and The Witness among others.



VISUAL AESTHETIC

SOUND DESIGN & MUSIC

Musical themes and instruments to convey the overall theme:

- Percussion and wind instruments like drums and flute to mimic a Mesoamerican musical style.

Most music and sound used throughout the game will be sourced from royalty free assets online.

Voice over will be used to convey the narration throughout the game as Bodhi will talk to himself aloud.

Sound effects grounded in reality augmenting the spiritual themes:

- Realistic sound FX for the character movement (walking on stone, jumping, etc.)
- Mystical sound cues playing when the masks are worn to sell the idea that the player has tapped into mysterious powers.
- Powerful nature sounds like thunder, echo and reverberation playing outside and inside the temple.

MARKETING

Marketing strategy:

- The game will be marketed via social media (LinkedIn, Instagram, Youtube, Reddit) and throughout all the development teams' portfolio and website.
- The game will also have its own itch.io page and will be free to download and keep.
- Having a free to play game of this size and length is a good way to showcase the team's work to a wider public.

Goals and KPI:

- Reach 100 downloads on itch.io.
- Reach 100 views on Youtube for the trailer of the game
- Showcase a playable build of the game to the public during the December 5th 2025 event at Collège Lasalle.
- Have one influencer try out the game and talk about it online to gain traction and boost downloads of the game.

DEVELOPMENT

Development challenges:

- Working on a short schedule of roughly 2 months
- Creating models and animating the hero for his actions
- Outsourcing efficient and accurate sounds and music free of royalty
- Learning to work together as a team for the first time on a project

October

Ideation
Setup of the project
Sketching of levels + Grey boxing
Designing mechanics
Programming mechanics + basic features
Early menu prototype

November

Finalizing levels
Integrating animations, models, textures and early sounds
Integrating the UI
7th nov. Having a playable version of the game
Play testing the game

December

Play testing the game further
Polishing the game mechanics
Polishing the levels
Programming of sounds, music and integrating animations
Finish the intro and ending cinematics and integrating it in the game
Bug fixing
Marketing of the game
Compile and release the game

DEVELOPMENT TEAM

Miguel Alberto Gonzalez Aboytes	Modeling, Music Designer
Ariel Bélanger	Project Manager, Animator, Texture Artist, Narrative Designer, Modeling
Achraf Bouhaloufa	Modeling (Outsourced)
Justin Dedelis-Deslandes	Level Designer, Game Designer, VFX Artist
Émile Gélinas	Programmer, Project IT
Denis-Gabriel Labonté	Level Designer, Narrative Designer
Hans-Frédéric Lefort	UI Designer
Ruben Mukambilwa Kilosho	Game Designer, Sound Designer
Laurent Richard	Level Designer, Marketing
Coco Rufiange	Level Designer (Lead), Game Designer, Texture Artist
Alamo St-Jean	Game Designer (Lead), Programmer, Marketing, VFX Artist
Gabriel Truchon	Programmer, Marketing
Katia Zenava	Morale support, animation advisor, rigging (Outsourced)

THANK YOU, ENJOY OUR GAME!

By: *Classe Méthodologie – Automne 2025*