

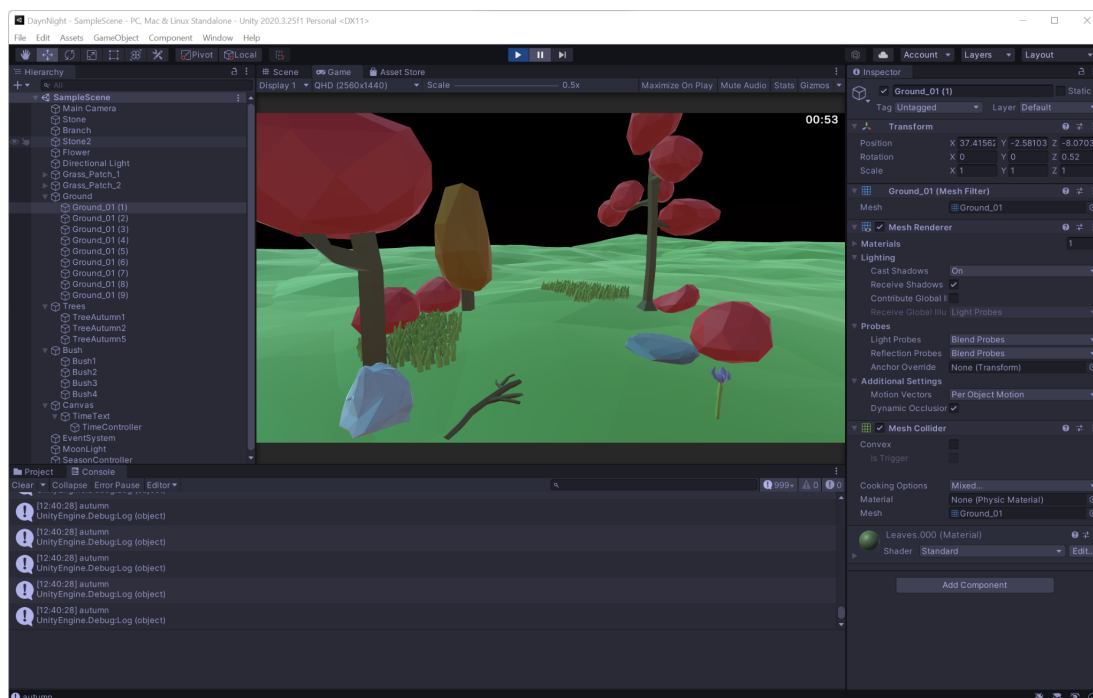
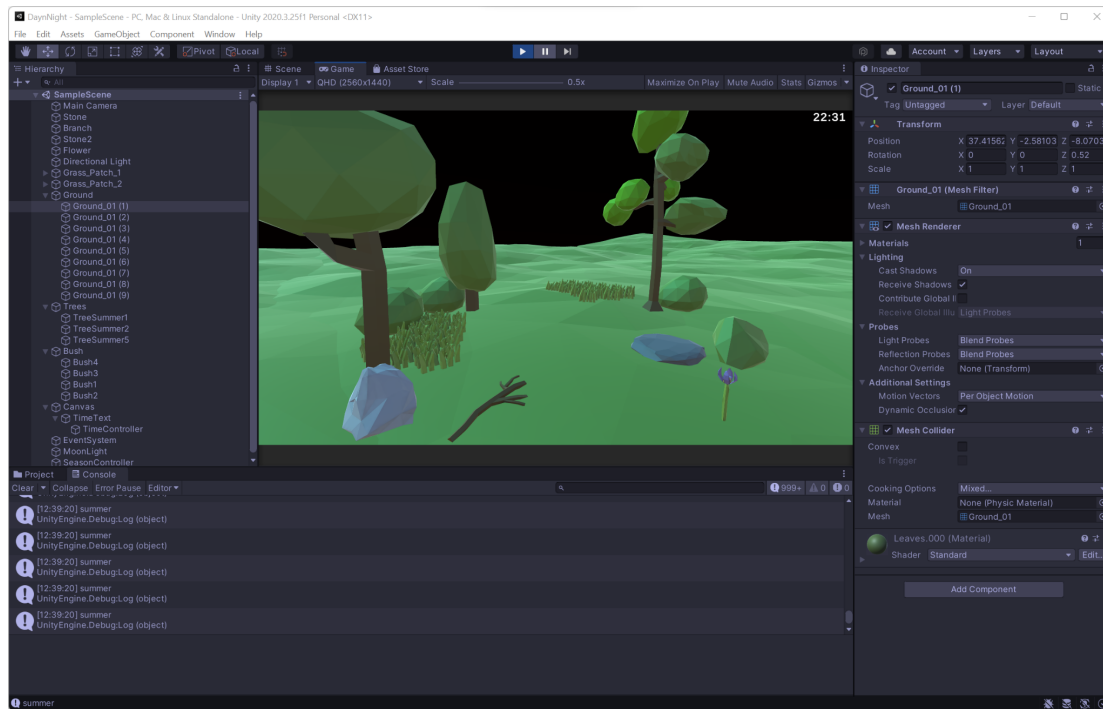
For this week's prototype, I wanted to work on something that expressed the theme of 'change'. When working with unity, we have such immense power to change variables, conditions, and game objects. I decided to portray a scene of a forest with a day and night and seasonal cycle. I wanted to examine the feelings evoked from a user when immersed in a world which embodies these concepts of change and cycles.



I set up a small scene and, and downloaded an asset pack which contained a variety of prefabs of objects for each of the 4 seasons.

First order of business was working on the day night cycle. This was mostly done with the help of the tutorial below. It involved establishing a 24 hour clock, which I would display on the top right corner of the screen. I then mapped the time onto a bunch of variables which controlled the angle of the sun's directional light, angle of the moon's directional light, their ambient color depending on the time, the curve which transitions from one of the light's gradient colors to the other, as well as the sun's intensity. I multiplied the passing of time with the timeMultiplier variable which would be increased or decreased depending on the player input of holding the left or right arrow keys down. This added an element of interactivity to the prototype.

Once this was done I started working on the seasonal cycles. What I first needed to do was find a way to tell my script each time a day cycle had passed. This was and still is a big challenge. I found that the only two components that could signify a day passing was the time and angle of sun. However, because of the speed at which the days and nights go by due to the timeMultiplier variable I use, it's hard to find a consistent way to map angle or



I needed to change the ground material for each season, but did not have the time to learn how to do that with code. Furthermore, I would use the same code template for each changing of season, but when it got to changing the season from autumn to winter, I ran into a bug which made absolutely no sense. I would use var to save the returned data of each Instantiate, however in the autumnToWinter function, I was getting an error saying that a gameObject needed to be returned instead. Due to this bug it's not possible to go from winter back to Spring, meaning that my attempt seasonal cycle was an L.

Super disappointed not to have a working prototype after all the time I put in, but that's just the nature of learning Unity. Running into a problem which absolutely makes no sense is super frustrating too, but c'est la Unity.

Questions

Yes, this game is unfinished. I couldn't figure out how to change the ground material, and I ran into a bug which made no sense when the season changes from autumn to winter, so the experience kind of finishes there instead of being a cycle like it's supposed to :(.

Regardless, for these questions I'm going to ask you guys to do a short creative exercise to help me out. I want you to imagine that you are walking through a forest like this one where the days and nights are passing in a matter of seconds, and a new season is blossoming and then ending after a few of these short 'days' and 'nights'.

What feelings and emotions are being evoked inside you?

Why is this happening? What rationale or logic would you prescribe to something like this happening in a forest?

Does this make you think of anything else? Any songs, movies or ideas which you are able to relate to this phenomenon?

Ok thanks for doing something that weird and abstract. Now I just wanted to ask for the prototype itself

4. Do you have any ideas of how I could make it feel like a smoother experience? The transition between seasons is really sudden.

5. If this was a video game level, which sound effects and background music would you use?

Update after playtests

I was initially worried that asking my playtesters abstract answers and advice for an idea which had not even fully formed in my head would not lead to me receiving any useful feedback. This absolutely was not the case. I really enjoyed hearing how varied everyone's responses were to the questions I had asked.

Some enjoyed the idea for the sense of peace, wonder, and serenity they could imagine a final version providing for the player. On the other hand, Jacob, who playtested the game live, said he could imagine the user being made to feel a sense of stress and urgency by having to achieve something in a race against a fast ticking clock.

I did get the impression that a game built solely around such an idea/mechanic would not be enjoyable for players. It was always meant to be part of a greater game. But even for that to be the case, the idea and code needs to be fleshed out a heck of a lot more. Waiting so many days just to see objects change was not very exciting for anyone. If I was able to somehow animate the transition it would sell my idea a lot better.

I am worried about how long it took me to achieve something so simple and unexciting. Working on this has made me a lot more wary in regards to how ambitious I can and should be for my final game.