

= Blek =

Blek is a 2013 puzzle video game for iOS and Android by Kunabi Brother , a team of brothers Denis and Davor Mikan . The player draws a snakelike black line that recurs in pattern and velocity across the screen to remove colored dots and avoid black dots . It is minimalist in design , features excerpts of Erin Gee , and takes inspiration from Golan Levin , the Bauhaus , and Japanese calligraphy . The brothers designed the game as a touchscreen adaptation to classic game Snake and worked on the game for over six months . It was released in December 2013 for iPad , and was later released for other iOS devices and Android .

The game received positive reviews , and critics praised the game 's degree of unrestricted play . The game reached the top of the Apple App Store charts several months after its release . It received a 2014 Apple Design Award , and has sold over one million copies .

= = Gameplay = =

Blek is a puzzle game in which the player draws a " snake @-@ like " black line on the screen that is recorded and played back like a pattern , recurring repeatedly across the screen . The object is to draw a line that it will remove colored dot targets when it repeats across the screen without hitting a black dot . Lines that travel off the top or bottom of the screen reset the level , while lines that travel off the left or right of the screen reflect back towards the dots . Aside from repeating the player 's drawn pattern , the stroke mimics the player 's pace in drawing the stroke . The game begins with no prompt or tutorial other than to use a finger on the screen and experiment . The first puzzles are " on open , white canvasses " where the player can solve the simple puzzles " by accident " . The 80 levels progress in difficulty and require more complex solutions . Added elements include a " chain reaction " dot that launches other dots when struck . Its sound consists of a " whoosh " that accompanies the traveling stroke , a " chime " when colored dots are hit , and a human " disappointed grumble " when black dots are hit , resetting the level . The game is depicted in flat , plain colors , with no pause feature and no option menu other than Game Center achievements . Players navigate between puzzles using three small onscreen icons . There are no in @-@ app purchases or in @-@ game advertisements .

= = Development = =

Blek was built for iOS by brothers Denis and Davor Mikan . While both had coding experience , neither were game developers by trade . This was their first game together as Kunabi Brother . Denis had published short stories and a novel , and Davor released music on a Crónica Electrónica . Davor previously made Flash games and developed the idea for Blek from this experience . He approached Denis about converting the video game Snake for touchscreens , and Denis returned with the idea of " a line representing an idea that springs to life after it has been drawn " . This thought was likely inspired by the calligraphy and ink drawings in a book by Japanese poet Matsuo Basho that Denis was reading . They had several prototypes by mid @-@ 2013 , when Davor joined an Parisian artist in residence program , where he felt he was treated differently when he introduced himself as a game developer instead of as a musician . This experience invigorated his interest in the game medium and led to the brothers ' push to finish the game over the next six months .

The Austrian brothers ' main influences were Golan Levin 's 1998 interactive Yellowtail and Wassily Kandinsky 's Point and Line to Plane book , from his time teaching at the Bauhaus . The sound design uses excerpts from Erin Gee 's " Yamaguchi Mouthpiece I " , and their game design influences include Thatgamecompany and Patrick Smith of Vectorpark and Windosill , though they felt that other games did not singularly influence Blek 's design . They were interested in video games as toys and " as meaningful experiences " . The game was written in the Unity game engine and tested by the developers ' friends . Since the core game mechanics were set , their feedback pertained to the level design . As their primary interests were in a " unification of art , craft , and technology " , the game had no public relations or marketing campaign and its creators expressed

little interest in the app 's business and marketing , though they did share the game directly with media outlets .

Blek was released for iPad in December 2013 , and an iPhone and iPod Touch version followed on January 7 , 2014 . Four months after the release , they reinvested their earnings from the game into marketing . After a few YouTube campaigns , Blek was listed in Apple 's App Store lists . An Android version was released in July . Kunabi Brother are not planning a sequel , though they intend to further " experiment with touchscreens " .

= = Reception = =

Blek received " generally favorable reviews " , according to video game review score aggregator Metacritic . Though the game first released in December 2013 to little fanfare , critics " widely praised " the game , and it became popular in April 2014 . It appeared in the top ten paid App Store games chart in April , reached the top by May , and was listed into June . Blek received a 2014 Apple Design Award and was featured in their Indie Game Showcase . While it had sold 30 @,@ 000 copies by February 2014 , upon being featured in the App Store , it sold 500 @,@ 000 copies by May , and over a million copies by June . Edge compared its aesthetic to iOS puzzle game Hundreds . Reviewers praised the game for the amount of freedom it affords its players .

Edge called Blek " a thing of elegant , intuitive beauty " . They compared it to a " modernist , freeform , touchscreen " Snake , albeit much calmer , and described Blek as less a puzzle game than " pure intuition " and " an act of freeform creation " that privileged the process of experimentation over the goal of solving puzzles . The magazine wrote that the trial and error , muddling process of refining one 's stroke led to delightful discoveries that turned " maddening " complex prospects into " natural " solutions . In a piece for Polygon , Rod Green compared Blek to Tetris and Threes ! as a " simple premise , beautifully executed " that lends towards imitation , and added that the game would be harder to " clone " than the others due to its handmade levels . Kotaku 's Mike Fahey called it " the most brilliant iPad game " he played in 2013 .

Christian Donlan of Eurogamer wrote that the game is personal . He compared its core mechanics to handwriting and doodling , noting that the recurring stroke also captures the player 's " speed and hesitancy " . Donlan wrote that the game is " lots of kinds of puzzle games " as the player may read negative spacing or try to predict the motion of a reflected stroke , and compared the later stages to mazes or minefields . Shaun Musgrave of TouchArcade noted that the game 's difficulty increases around level 20 , where player precision is required , and considered this part a low point . He felt that the small margin of error in later levels lent towards frustration . Jared Nelson of the same website wrote that the game was uniquely suited for the touchscreen .