Partnership: A Prototype

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Investigative Question

Explore how to indirectly control an object by manipulating the environment to move the object to a goal.

Process

Brainstorming how to investigate led me to the idea of having two objects that are essentially one player object. One object (vessel) cannot be controlled and has physics. The other object (ghost) has no physics, is controlled, and can interact with the environment.

The first challenge was having the player feeling that these objects are connected. A visible tether between the objects was added to symbolize and show the connection. A leash range that the ghost cannot move past was added to the tether to make the connection feel more tangible.

The player now had a feeling that these objects were connected, but the ghost had no way to affect the vessel. Obstacles were developed that stopped the vessel from advancing and the ghost could control. This gives the ghost more power, but that power is taken away when the vessel passes the obstacle.

The final challenge is to make the ghost and vessel feel equal in control and importance. This would be done by level design to emphasis how each object works.

Reflection

The final prototype had the player control a ghost, manipulating the environment to move the vessel to an end goal. The vessel is helpless and completely obeys the laws of physics, but has no restriction on movement. The ghost does not have physics and can move around, but can only move within a leash radius around the vessel. The two objects make up the whole player and one need the other to move towards the goal. The vessel needs the ghost to interact the environment and the ghost needs the vessel to move through the physical space. From this a symbiosis is found.

In this exploration of the question, I found it interesting that the physical player and the players actions were split from one another. It is as if the players conscious decisions were separated from the physical object. Throughout this development I was asking more questions about to how to make the two objects feel connected. I originally had the ghost untethered from the vessel and this just felt that the player was only the ghost, and the vessel was just an object in the environment. Having the visible tether and the leash range, told and showed the player that they were in fact connected.

For future exploration I would like to develop more obstacles that explore different ways the partnership can be tested and therefore making more interesting and diverse puzzle design.