

The game that I chose from the Art Elements assignment was Call of Duty Black Ops Cold War, specifically its Zombies map known as Die Maschine. I recently completed the map's Easter Egg last weekend so describing the map's environment, colors, and usage of the Dark Aether dimension was a fun time. Plus, it was an easy experience as I've been playing Cold War Zombies for the past few months and recalling stuff such as the bright blue flora, the purple aesthetic of the atmosphere wasn't hard at all.

The best part of describing the map was the limitation of never mentioning the game, so I never mentioned aspects such as the Perk Machines, the Megaton and Plague-hounds mini bosses, and the main buildings by the name itself. Describing Nacht via its extensive graffiti, the Projekt Endstation facility through the Particle Accelerator and various bloodstains, and the changes the Dark Aether portal makes to the map gave me the opportunity to flex my storytelling skills. I described the map through how the early rounds usually go in Die Maschine and how its storytelling goes through those rounds.

Die Maschine's storytelling has remnants of the storytelling methods from Sledgehammer Games and Treyarch, the studios who worked on the Cold War game. Sledgehammer focuses on horror, hence the dark lit areas of the map forcing you to use an in-game flashlight to make your way through the Endstation facility. There are corpses inside the facility, blood stains the floors, barriers and walls. Nacht is abandoned, bereft of dead bodies, but serves as the start of a new storyline, just like how it began the entire game mode back in 2008 with World at War.

Meanwhile Treyarch's Easter Eggs tell you a compelling story surrounding the map and a specific character. Going through the Easter Egg, you learn about the people running Endstation through visions within the Dark Aether and by using the machinery of the facility, you bring back a soviet operative named Orlov from his Megaton fate. Orlov helps you destroy the facility that killed him and separated him from his family, bringing an idea of tragedy into the story of Die Maschine and the Dark Aether as a whole.

Overall, this was a fun exercise in storytelling where you have to be vague, not vague enough where people don't know what you're describing, but vague enough where an image of the locations can appear in people's mind. If you're a COD Zombies fan, you can definitely picture Die Maschine by the description of the Dark Aether but to someone who doesn't know about the map, a level where you start out in the real world and you're teleported into a colorful world where everything is upside down, is an intriguing idea to look up and research.