Etiquette

Lukas McNamara, s3328423

On the surface, Etiquette looks similar to chess. However, each game, the rules are randomly generated, with the players left in the dark as to what they are. They must figure out the rules through trial and error and learn from their opponent's mistakes as well as their own.

In person, the game would be played with an additional player acting as referee and rules creator. Digitally, this role is performed by program itself. The rules are generated before the game starts and no new ones are created throughout. The players begin knowing no rules and must guess by moving their pieces. If they make a wrong move, that piece is destroyed. There are four piece types, and rules are shared within a type.

Pieces can destroy other pieces by landing on them, like in chess, and the goal of the game is to be the only one left with pieces (whether this is through capture or breaking the rules is up to how bad the players are)

Inspiration

Etiquette is mostly a mishmash of chess and The Chairman's Game (Also known as Mao).

The basic mechanics, of moving various types of pieces on a checked board, was taken from chess. It's a widespread mechanic that most people understand which lets the players focus on the more unique mechanic of unknown rules, which was inspired by Mao.

I toyed with the idea of players being able to create rules, like in Mao, and the other player had to figure them out, but with both players on one screen, secret information is difficult.

Rule generation

Basic movement : Pieces can move straight, diagonal or both. They have a minimum and maximum movement range, though the minimum is often 0. The finished game would toggle jumping, but in the prototype all pieces can jump.

Restriction rules : Each piece has 0-4 restriction rules, with the generation skewing toward lower numbers.

- The piece can't go within 1-2 squares of a certain piece type
- The piece can't take a certain type of piece
- The piece can't move on turns that are a multiple of x (always odd)
- The piece can't go on row x
- The piece can't go on column x
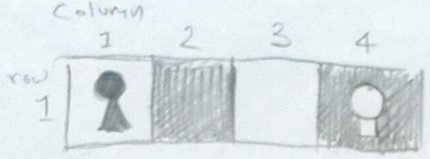
With a human referee, the generated rules are limitless and are done by the referee themselves rather than with dice or cards. They can also choose different board and piece configurations. They are encouraged to be creative and unexpected to keep the players guessing. If continued, the digital version will have an option for a third player to referee (which would have been much easier to make come to think of it)

The win condition is always to be the last one standing, since win conditions only happen once and can't be learnt through trial and error. Since there are so many possibilities, it's advised that players take notes.
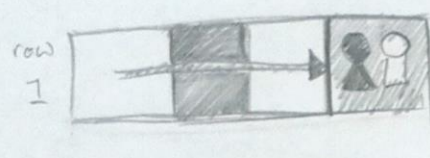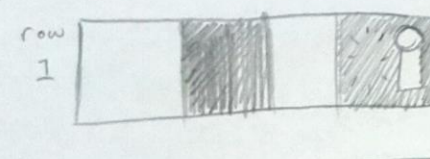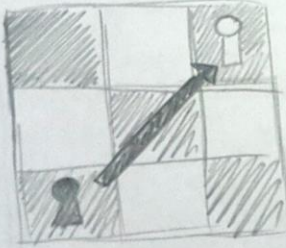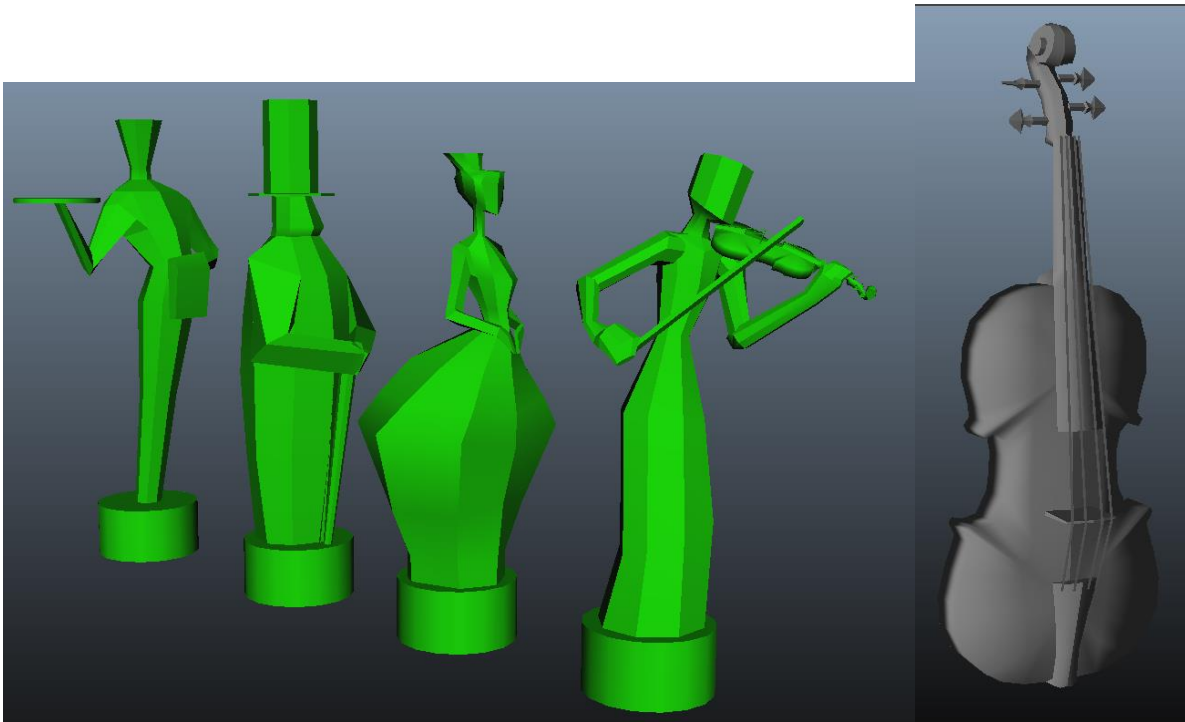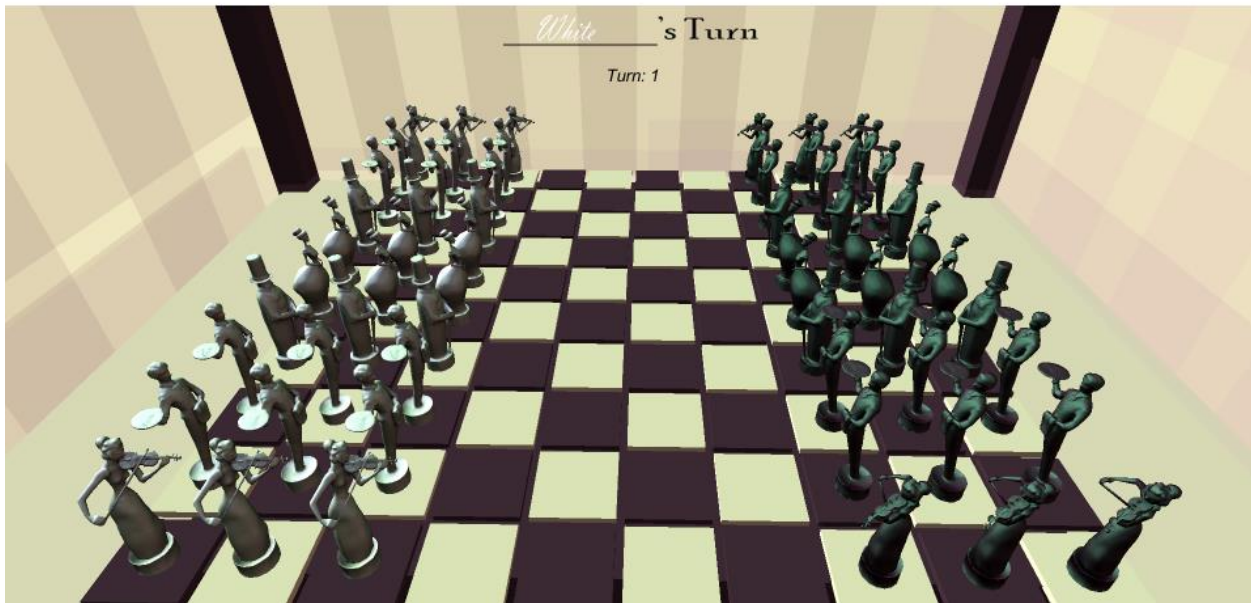
Base mesh in Maya to get the proportions and silhouettes right. Used instead of 2D concepts.

Sculpted details in Zbrush. Since they didn't have to animate, the in-game versions were made with decimation master, coming to about 2.5k tris each.

The pieces are based off types of people who would appear at a ball: footman, gentleman, musician and lady.

http://dl.dropbox.com/u/38360493/etiquette1/etiquette1.html