Game Pitch Document

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Title: Balatro

Genre: Poker deck-building roguelike

Style: 2D, pixel art with hallucinating, psychedelic visuals

Platform: PC, Console (Switch, PS5, Xbox), Mobile (Android, iOS)

Market: Fans of card, rogue-like and strategy games

Elevator Pitch: Balatro is a hypnotically satisfying deck-builder where you play illegal poker hands, discover game-changing jokers, and trigger adrenaline-pumping, outrageous combos.

The Pitch

Introduction

Balatro is a rogue-like poker game where each round is shaped by unique card combinations and strategic use of jokers, creating endless possibilities. The psychedelic visuals and immersive sounds pull players into a hallucinatory experience, making every game a captivating journey filled with unexpected twists.

Background

Balatro was inspired by games like Slay the Spire that combine rogue-like mechanics with deck-building. It also draws from the timeless charm of classic card games like poker and solitaire, blending their strategies with new ideas to create a new unique experience.

Setting

Balatro takes place in a surreal, hallucinatory "casino" that blurs the lines between reality and imagination. Players are drawn into a psychedelic world where they compete not against others, but against their own skills and strategies. The goal is to master the art of creating the biggest combos, pushing the limits of your abilities to win.

Features

- **Endless Replayability:** Each round offers a fresh and unpredictable experience, ensuring the game never feels repetitive.
- **Unique Card Combinations:** Players can improve and level up their cards, unlocking even more unique and powerful combinations.
- **Custom Scoring System:** A unique scoring system adds depth and adrenaline, rewards strategic play, and keeps the players on edge.
- **Single-Player Challenge:** Focused on personal improvement and growth, the game emphasizes individual decision-making and mastery over time.
- **Immersive Atmosphere:** Psychedelic visuals and captivating sounds create an engaging and atmospheric experience.
- **Accessibility:** Simple mechanics make the game easy to pick up while offering depth for players seeking a challenge.
- **Strategic:** Thoughtful gameplay rewards planning, adaptability, and creativity.

Genre

Balatro is a poker-inspired rogue-like deck-building game with a unique twist. Players begin with a standard 52-card deck, modifying it by adding, removing, or enhancing cards. However, success lies in strategically acquiring passive abilities, such as Jokers and Vouchers, to build a powerful engine for scoring points. While the game draws from Poker mechanics, focusing on card combinations like Straights or Pairs, it prioritizes strategy over traditional Poker skills.

Platform

Balatro is designed to be versatile and accessible across almost any platform. However, it particularly shines on mobile devices, consoles, and handheld consoles, where haptics can enhance the immersive experience.

Style

The visual style combines a magician-casino theme with pixel art, featuring subtle components that are constantly shifting and moving. This dynamic background creates a psychedelic and hallucinatory atmosphere. Each card can adopt a unique appearance, and each joker is designed with a distinctive style that reflects its individual abilities.

(a)   (b)

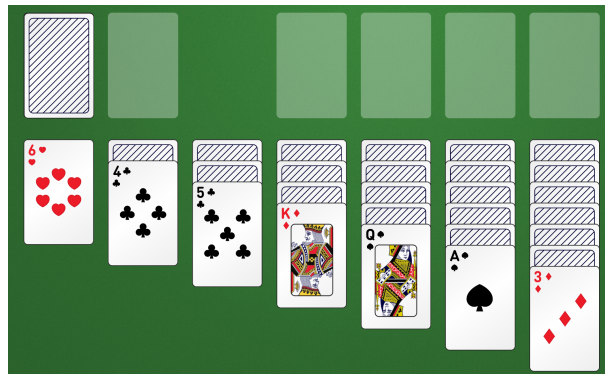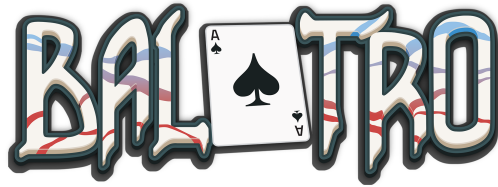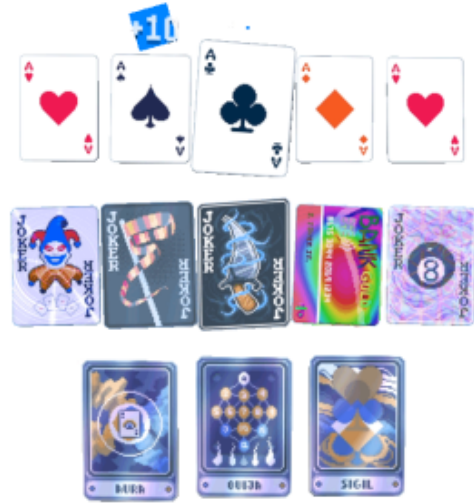Figure 1: Slay the Spire game screenshots. Retrieved from [3].

Figure 2: Classic card game on PC - Solitaire. Retrieved from [4].

(a)   (b)

Figure 3: Balatro logo and card concepts. Retrieved from [1, 2].

References

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[4] Solitaire, O.: Gold Rush Solitaire. [online], 2024.
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