

CONCEPT DOCUMENT

GAME: *MIRAGE*



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Trello Board

<https://trello.com/b/8BvymEwv/group-5>

Miro Board

https://miro.com/app/board/uXjVKg-swoE=

Concept Document

Document Editions Log.....	3
Quick Facts:	3
Overview:	3
Player Experience:	4
-visual experience.....	4
-play scene	5
a) The collision between geometric shapes	5
b) The perfect timing of click	6
c) The plot twist.....	7
-Audio experience.....	8
a) The tone of musical scale (Recorded from a piano)	8
b) The sound of block shattering.....	8
c) The sound of a block precisely landing into place.	8
Gameplay:	9
-Core gameplay	9
a) Flow Chart	9
b) Description.....	9
-Main Attributes	10
a) Precise Control.....	10
b) Puzzle:	10
c) Repeated Failure	10
Controls:	10
-Input device:.....	10
-Player action:	10
Game Aesthetics:.....	11
-Visual Style.....	11
-Click Design	11
MDA Analysis:	11
Develop Progress.....	12
Playtest	13
Playthrough Video.....	13

Document Editions Log

Edition	Date	Author(s)	Description
1.0	9/29/2024	Tejaswini	Document created, the whole frame created
1.1	9/30/2024	Tejaswini	Revise and add game play part, add player experiences, add

Quick Facts:

-Name: Mirage

-Genre: puzzle

-Platform: PC

-Audience: This game is suitable for teenagers or adults who already possess basic cognitive abilities and aesthetic standards.

-Game Synopsis: This is a game related to obsessive-compulsive disorder, where players who click to drop blocks and experience the torment of repeatedly seeking "perfection" but almost never being able to attain it.

Overview:

Mirage begins with a simple tutorial level. In this level, players will notice a rectangular block with a missing section, and a floating cube in mid-air that matches the size of the missing part. When the player clicks the cube, it begins to rotate and slowly descend, gradually

approaching the empty section. However, just as the cube is about to fit perfectly into the gap, the game transitions to the next level.

The player will then enter a series of levels, each with simple mechanics: clicking to rearrange blocks placed in various ways, bringing order to the chaos. However, different factors will prevent the player from achieving a perfect solution. After repeated failures, players will feel intense frustration and longing, and may even blame the designer for creating an impossible level. Yet, when the player steps out of their usual mindset, they will discover a simple yet elusive solution. This realization reveals that their previous failures stemmed from an excessive pursuit of straightforward success, reflecting the emotional theme of our game: **longing**.

The game is similar to the arcade games one would play to win plush toys, where the chances of winning are very slim. It is also similar to the games parents buy children to teach them how to place different shapes into the correct hole to teach children how to identify shapes.

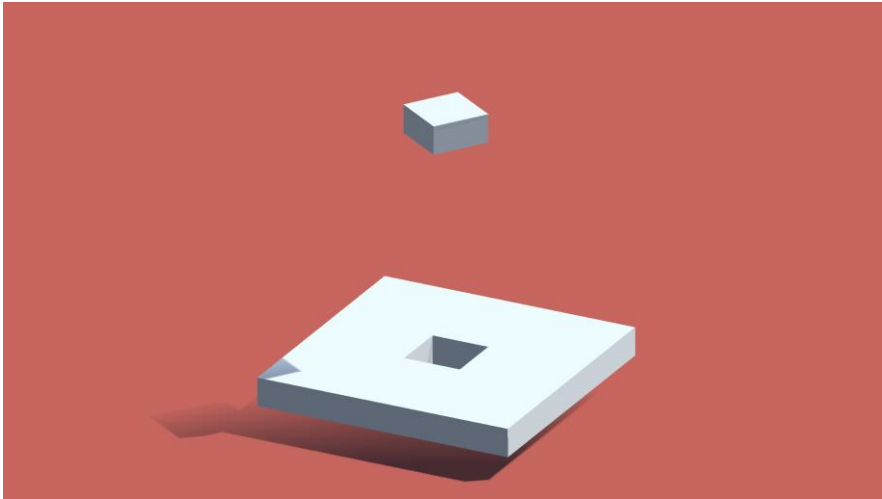
Player Experience:

-visual experience

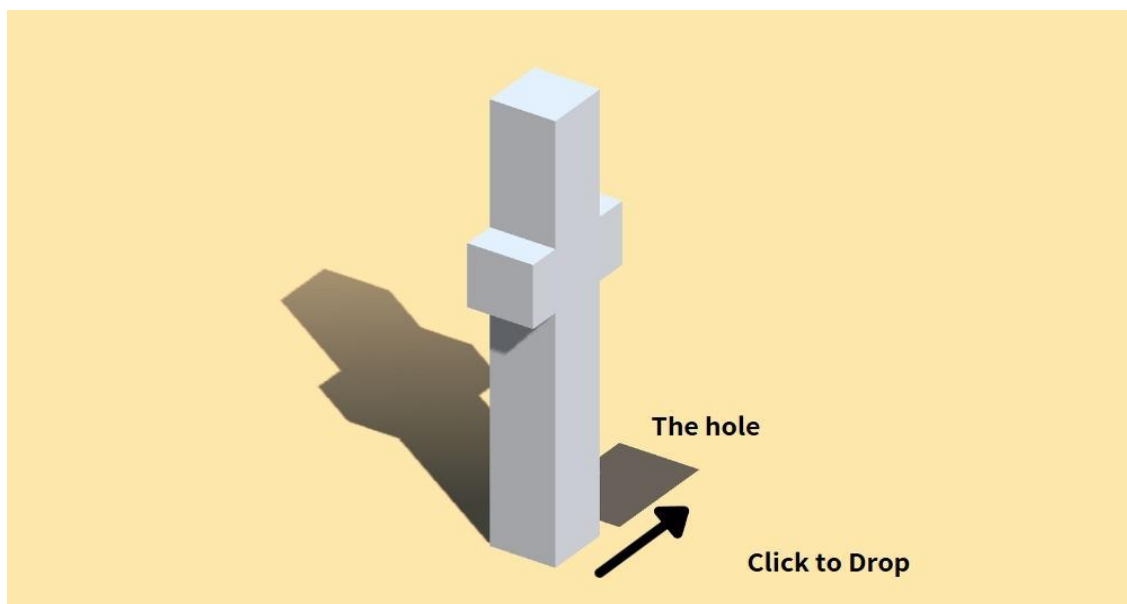
The game looks like a abstract geometry puzzle game where white blocks and pure color background makes the whole scene looking like a lab or imaginary space.

-play scene

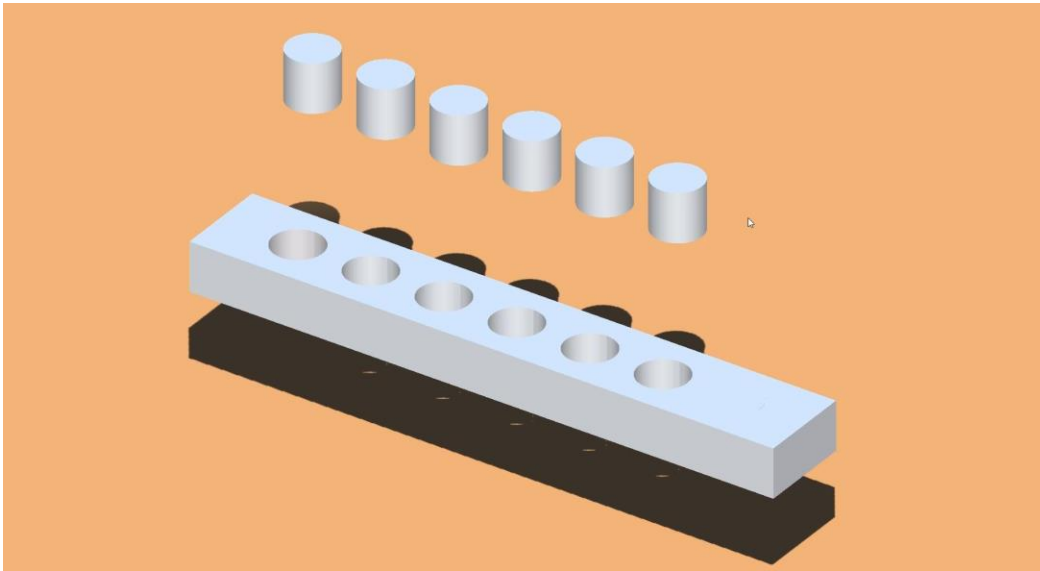
a) The collision between geometric shapes



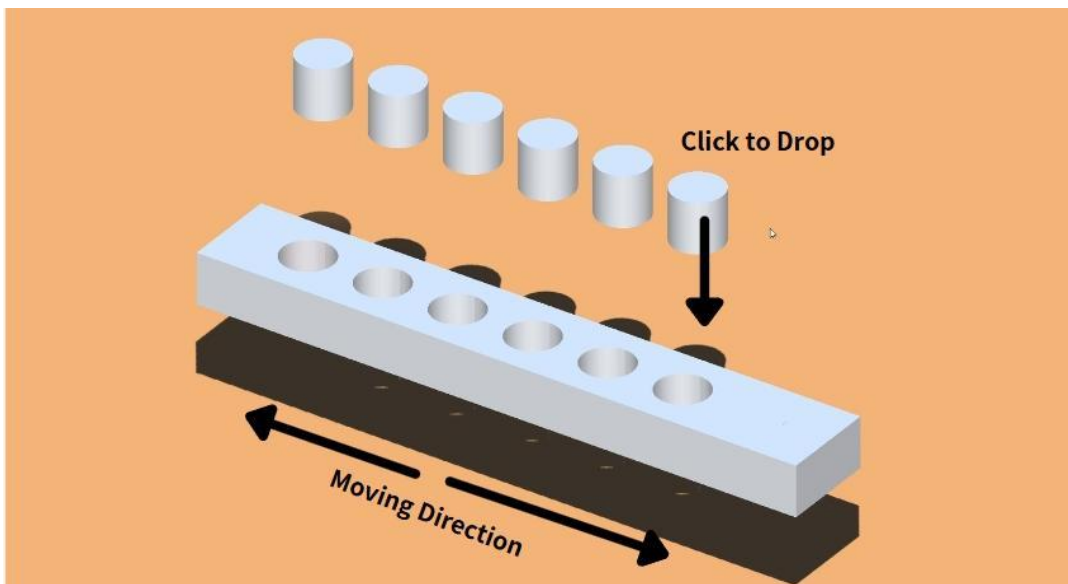
When a player begins for the first time, they are welcomed by a screen with an air-bouncing square and a platform on the ground with a hole in it. There is a message written on top, which writes, “Tap Square.” Once the player taps the square, the square slowly descends and falls perfectly into the hole, but not exactly the place. Also, in the second level, when the blocks fall, there will be realistic physical collision effects between them, enhancing the player's sensitivity to spatial relationships.



b) The perfect timing of click

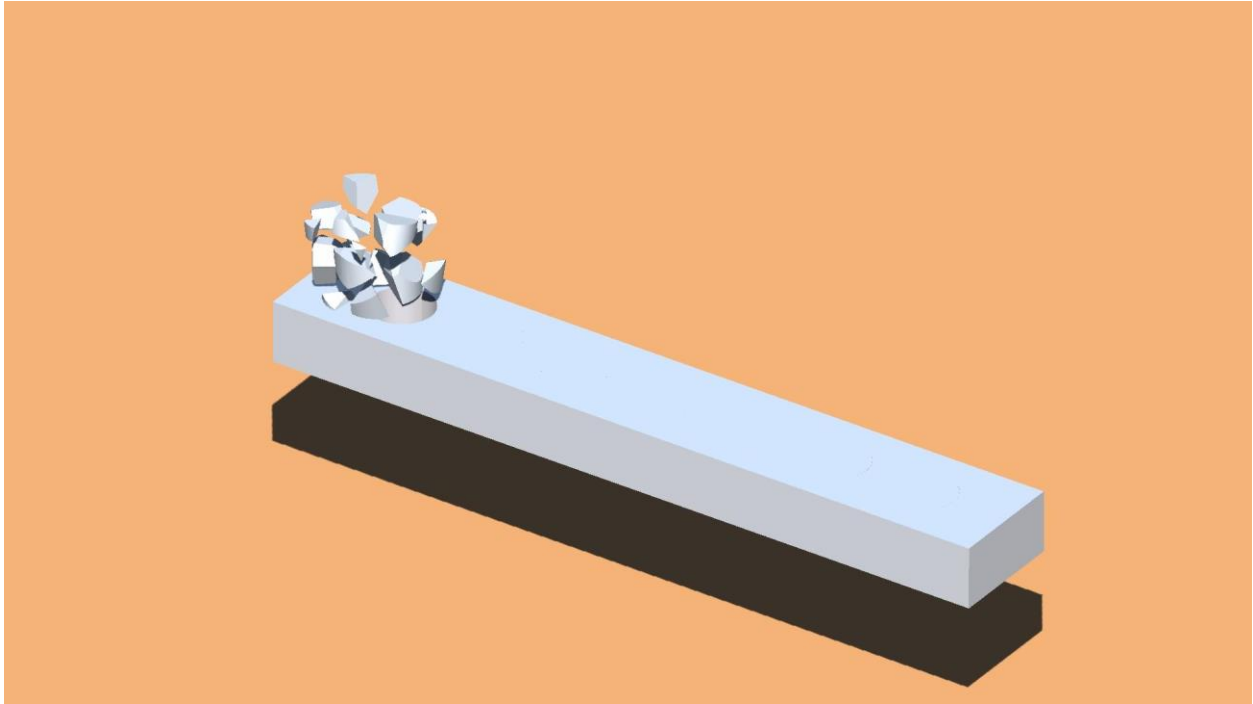


In this level, the player will see a moving platform with holes, each corresponding to a cylinder above it. The player needs to click the cylinders in sequence, making them fall into the correct holes. If the player clicks too early or too late, the cylinder will fail to drop into the correct hole. If the player fails at any point, they must restart from the first cylinder. This process forces the player to focus on timing their clicks and carefully observing the movement.

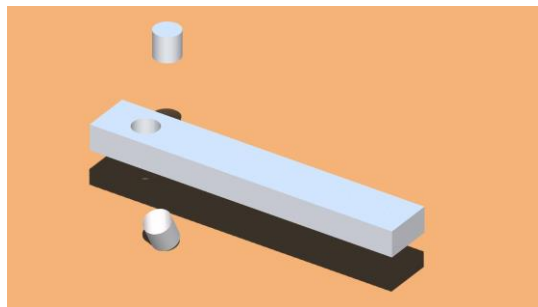


c) The plot twist

When the player finally reaches the last cylinder, he finds the cylinder crashed into pieces even if he gets the right timing. This is the "surprise" we have planned for the players. While experiencing the intense frustration of unattainable success, they are forced to ponder why the last cylinder cannot be inserted.



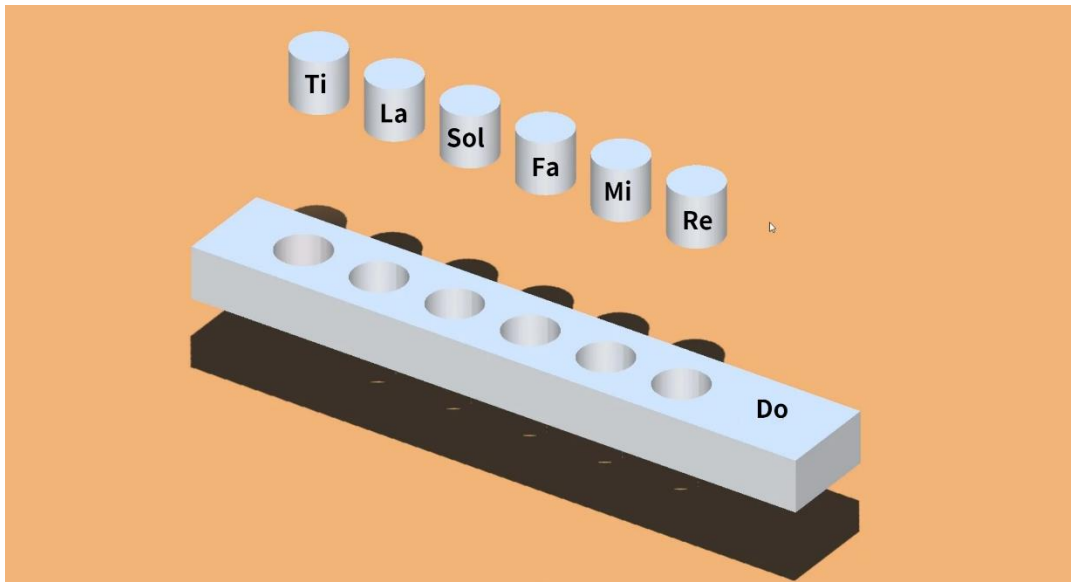
***Spoiler Warning: The trick is about the last hole. The last hole is actually already occupied by a cylinder. The player must click in advance to kick out the existing cylinder, allowing them to complete the final placement of the new cylinder. If the player observes the shadow of each cylinder, he'll find the little difference of the last hole with others.**



-Audio experience

a) The tone of musical scale (Recorded from a piano)

Players will hear “do”, “re”, “mi” tones when clicking the cylinders in the correct sequence. This sound is used as an instruction for players to click in the right order.



b) The sound of block shattering

This sound is a part of emotion when players’ heart shattered in the last cylinder falling.

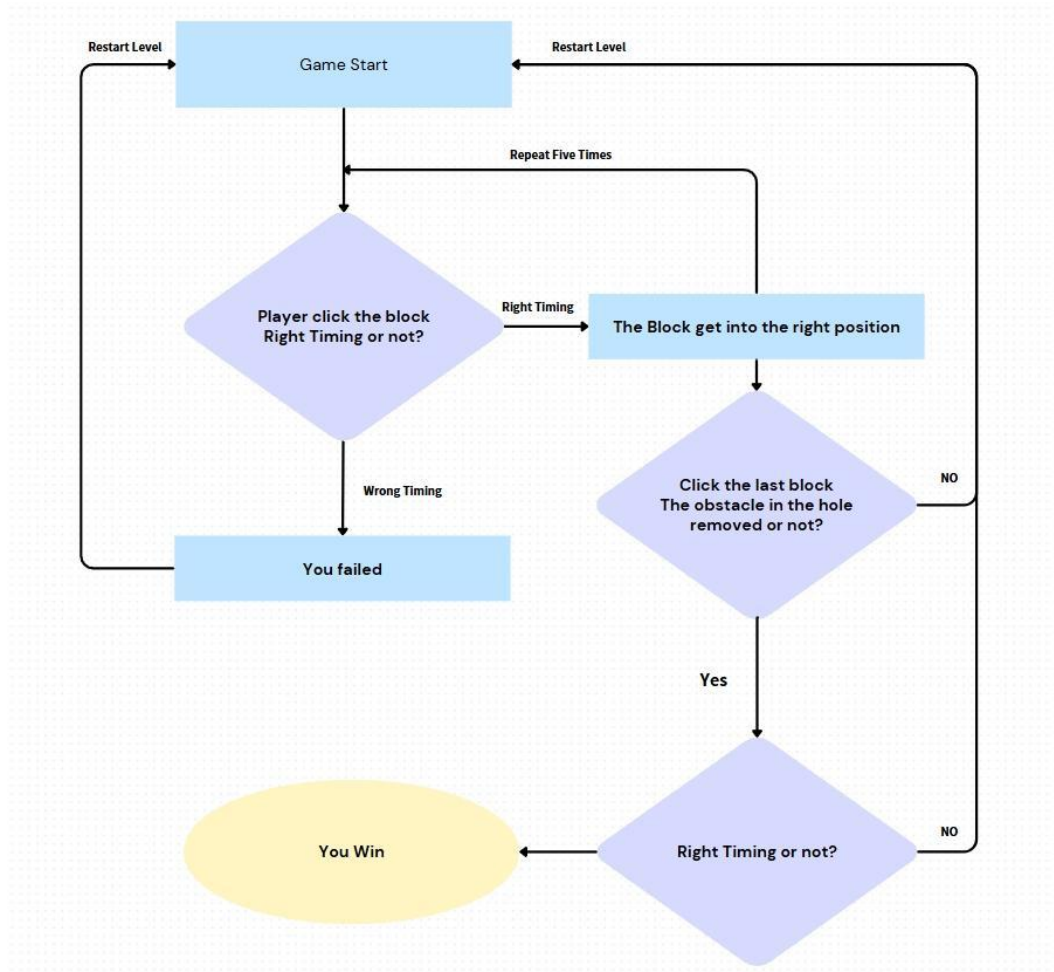
c) The sound of a block precisely landing into place.

This sound is used to strengthen players’ pursuit for perfection.

Gameplay:

-Core gameplay

a) Flow Chart



b) Description

The core experience of the game revolves around the pursuit of perfection and the burden that comes with it. Even when dealing with abstract geometric shapes devoid of specific meaning, people have an innate aesthetic drive: the desire for order. We leverage this instinct to evoke an intense longing for the goal in players, while setting up as many obstacles as possible

throughout the process. These obstacles are intertwined with the player's habitual thinking, creating a unique puzzle-solving mechanism.

-Main Attributes

a) Precise Control

To win, players have to do their best in clicking the right cylinder at the right time.

b) Puzzle:

This game is about "mirage", so the puzzle is related to the shadow and illusion.

c) Repeated Failure

Players are expected to failure multiple times before they succeed, because whichever cylinder goes wrong, they'll need to restart from the first one. This means a big price for failure.

Controls:

-Input device:

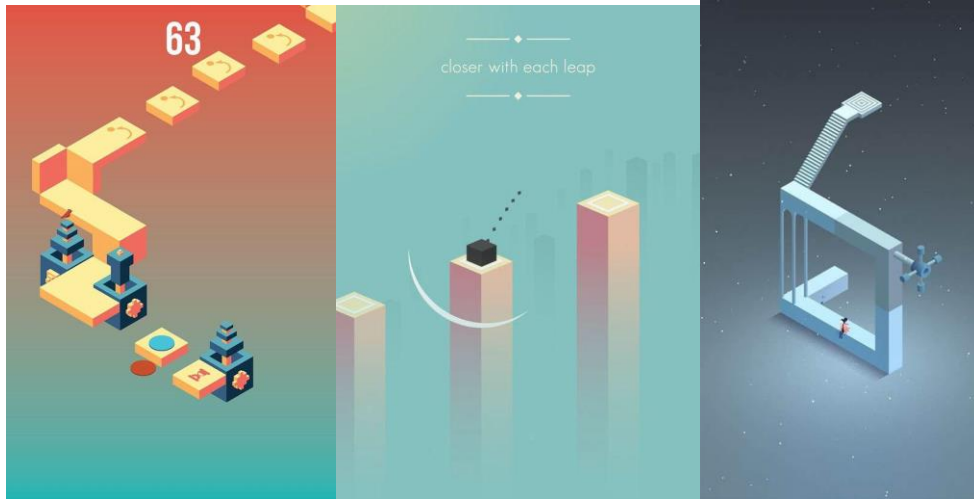
Players interact with the blocks by clicking the left mouse button.

-Player action:

The only main action for players is push. Regardless of different levels, players can only move the blocks by pushing them in a physically realistic manner, guiding them in the specified direction.

Game Aesthetics:

-Visual Style



For the game's visual style, we drew inspiration from the geometric design of *Monument Valley* and further simplified it. We aimed for the art style to be as detached from reality as possible, allowing players to use their own experiences and imagination while playing. As a result, we adopted a minimalist art style and fixed the camera angle at a 45-degree orthogonal perspective. We had some inspiration from Jenga and Speed Stacking, where the purpose is to keep the frame or build a frame as steadily or sometimes quickly as possible.

-Click Design

When the Player's cursor hovers over the block he's choosing, the block will turn to another color, which indicates that this block is ready to be selected.

MDA Analysis:

Aesthetics	Dynamics	Mechanics
Longing (in the sense of	When players failed to put the	The cylinder will fit in the

seeking visual perfection but failed)	cylinder in the right position, the cylinder	hole perfectly while bounced when failed.
Timing Catching (in the sense of a moving platform to aim at)	The platform which should hold cylinders are moving and players have to find the right timing to click.	The timing range is about $\pm 0.15s$.
Surprise (in the sense of the final hole trick)	The platform which should hold cylinders are moving and players have to find the right timing to click.	Before the player clicks the hidden cylinder out, the game will always fail.

Develop Progress

The design concept of this game comes from videos circulating on short video platforms related to "OCD" (obsessive-compulsive disorder). These videos depict scenes from everyday life, presenting states of imperfection and incompleteness to the audience, creating a strong sense of longing for something unattainable. This desire stems from our natural pursuit of perfection and our preference for self-validation. We enjoy the repeated confirmation of familiar logic and comfortable states, which brings a sense of satisfaction. We found this longing for comfort aligns well with our emotional theme, so we decided to create a game that explores the idea of "pursuing perfection but ultimately failing."

In designing the overall style of the game, we stripped away the narrative elements related to real-life scenarios seen in the videos. This decision was made because we realized that due to different cultural backgrounds, some OCD videos require specific contexts for the emotion of "longing" to be felt. This goes against our goal of creating a game that can be universally understood. Therefore, we adopted purely geometric shapes and a minimalist style, which also made it easier for us to generate our own art assets. When designing the levels, we

started with a single-hole prototype to test our idea. Fortunately, the prototype was successful—most players experienced a strong sense of longing after playing. However, it also exposed several issues. The first issue was that the game's objective wasn't clear enough. Although there was only one interactive object on the screen, it also meant that the core elements of a game—objective and challenge—were missing. The second issue was that since the player could never successfully fit the missing block into the gap, the game lacked a clear win/lose condition. The first issue was resolved quickly, but the second one posed a significant challenge: if the player could eventually succeed, how would that still embody the idea of longing? To address the second issue, we introduced puzzle elements into the game. Puzzles create win/lose conditions while ensuring that before finding the correct answer, the player is inevitably in a state of "longing." The puzzle-solving process itself is also a "pursuit of perfection." Even when the player solves the puzzle, the torment experienced during the process means that even solving the puzzle no longer feels like a "perfect success." The player remains in a state of "longing for something unattainable."

Playtest

a) Problem Discovered

- The sound effect of perfectly fitting is not clear.
- The difficulty is not enough for every player

b) Solution

- Reload sound effects
- Shorten the moving speed of the platform

Playthrough Video

[Mirage \(youtube.com\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mirage)