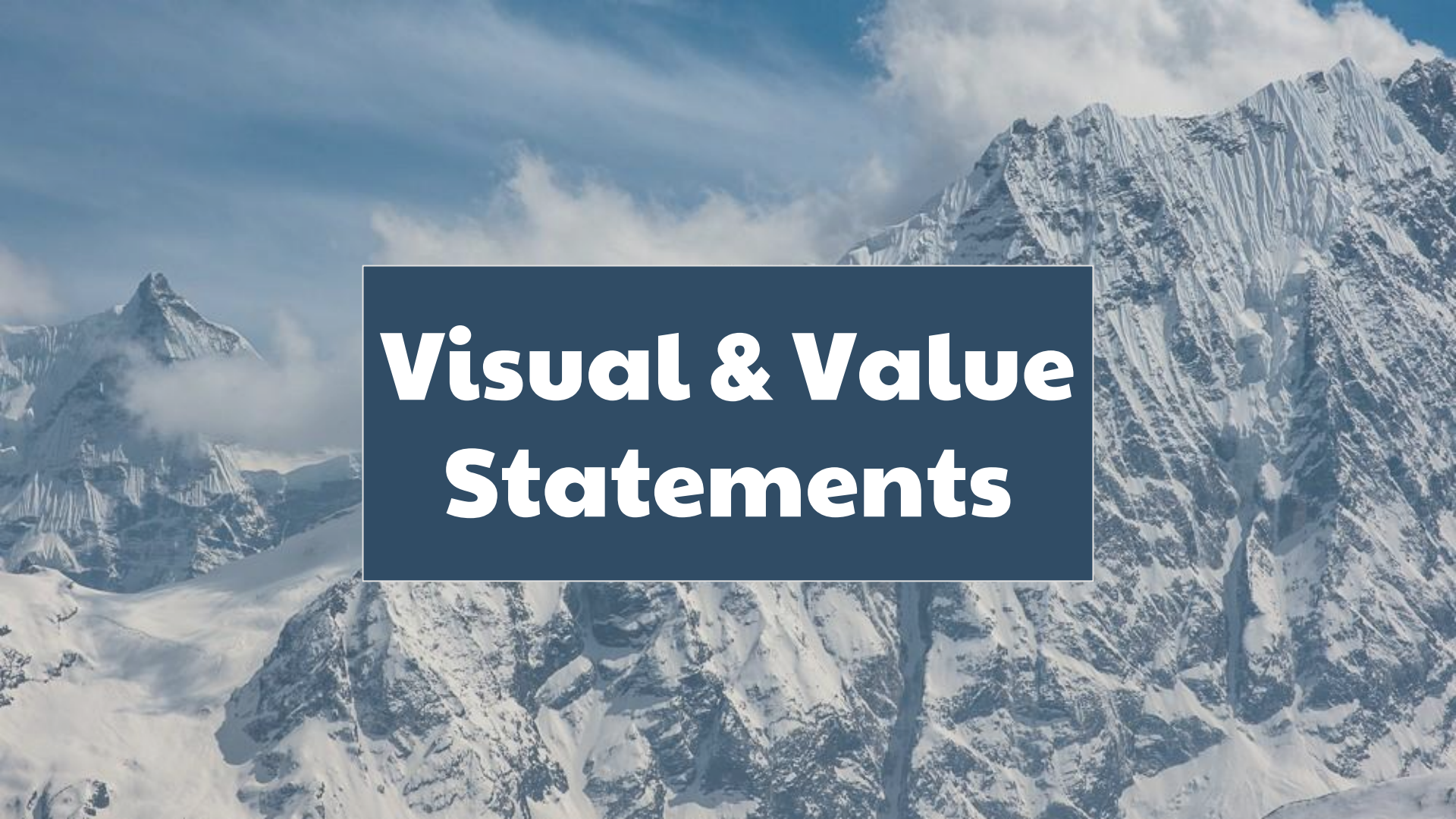
Sherpa Life

Art Document & Style Guide

By: Kylie O'Keefe

Christine


I want a refund!
Can we see a blue sheep?
I want red berries.
Where's the Himalayan mona!?
I'm tired!
I really want to see a pine tree!
Just 1 more hour...


Visual & Value
Statements

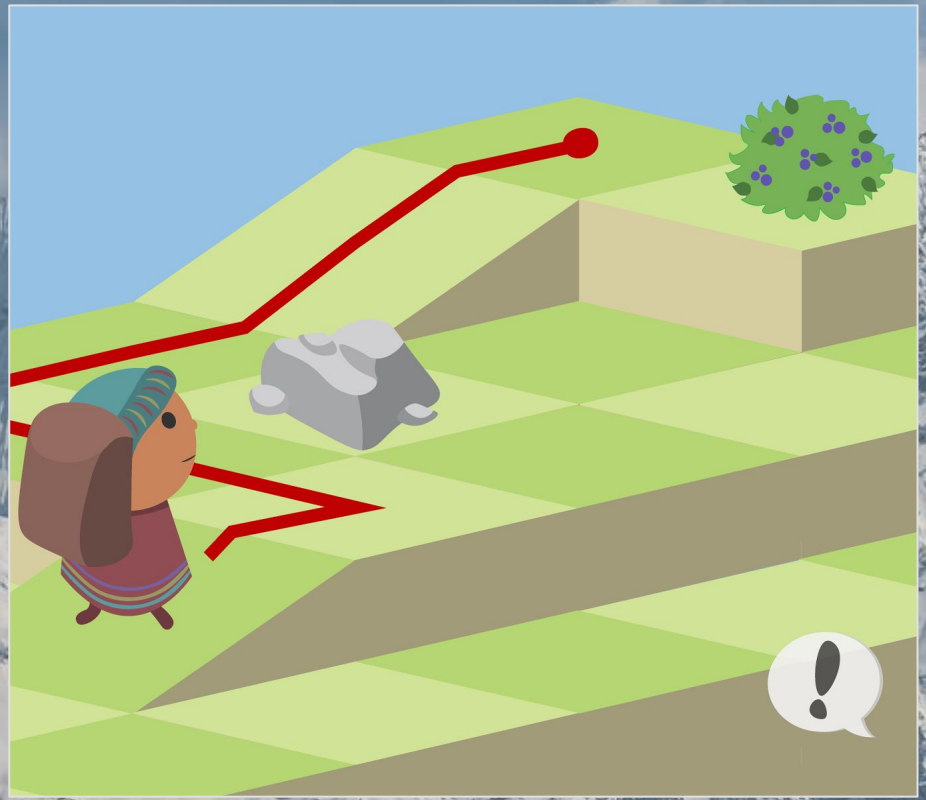
Art Direction

- Basis in Reality
- Isometric
- Simple Shapes
- Simple Colours
- Round, Bubbly Characters
- Soft, Naturalistic Colours
- Saturated UI & Objectives

Basis in Reality

As an educational game, it's really important to us as developers that the art supports the learning. Designs of objectives and the environment are based on the actual plants, wildlife, and ecosystems found on the Himalayas.

Isometric Design

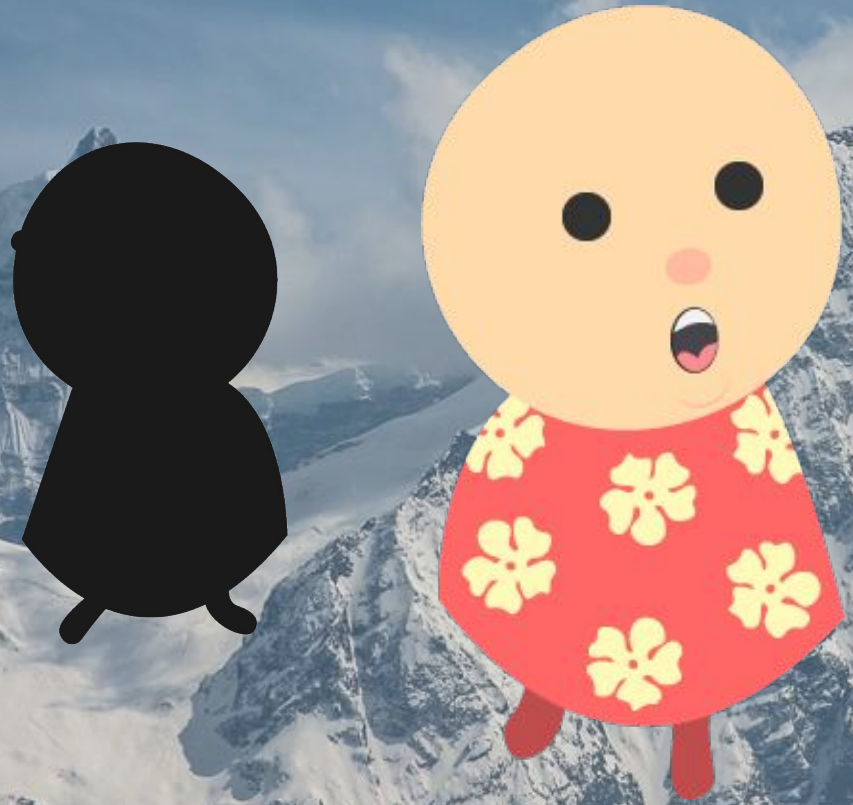


We chose to create our game in isometric perspective because we really wanted the player to feel that they were exploring both the side to side and up the mountain. Isometric perspective gives the illusion of moving around in a 3D world.

Simple Shapes & Colours

Sherpa Life is primarily about observation - art is a large part of the game. We decided that going for a minimalist style with simple shapes & colours will streamline the creation process so we could focus on filling the maps a variety of objectives.

Round Bubbly Characters

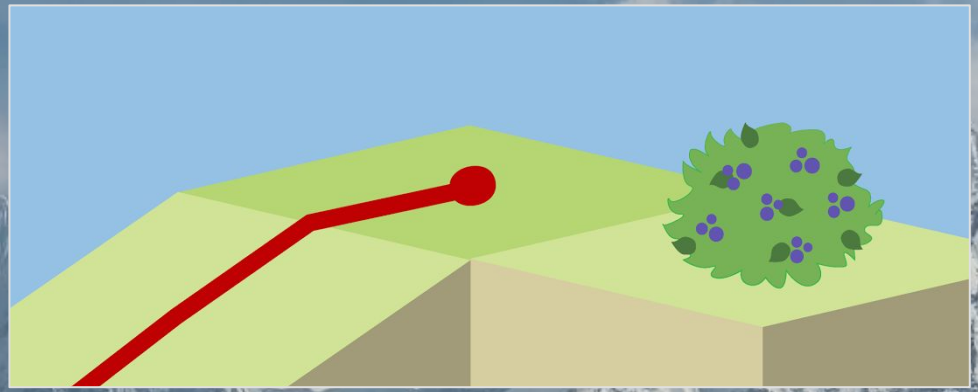


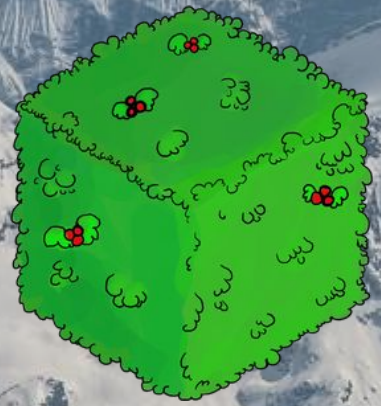
The round, bubbly aesthetic will make characters more appealing to young kids. They are simple with 1-2 colours & a “theme” to easily recognize who each character is. This will also streamline the creation of “skins” for in-app purchases.

Soft, Naturalistic Colors

Due to the educational tones of the game, it's especially important that the colour scheme helps set the scene and support the story. Because we're aiming for a younger audience, we went with softer colors which are easier on the eyes.

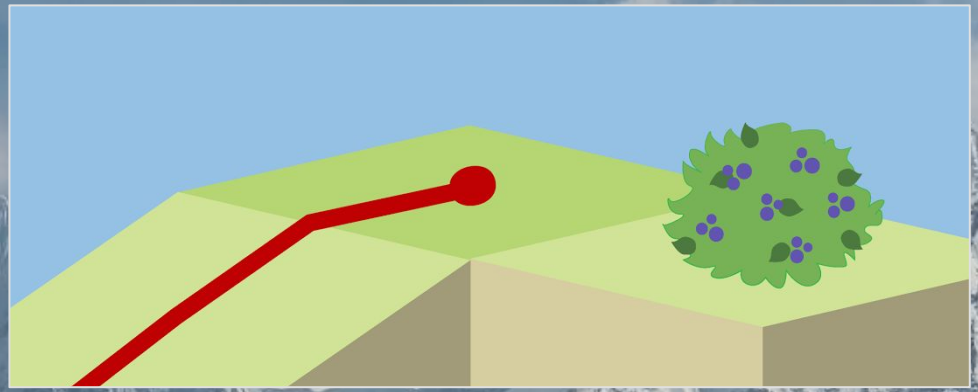
Saturated UI & Objectives

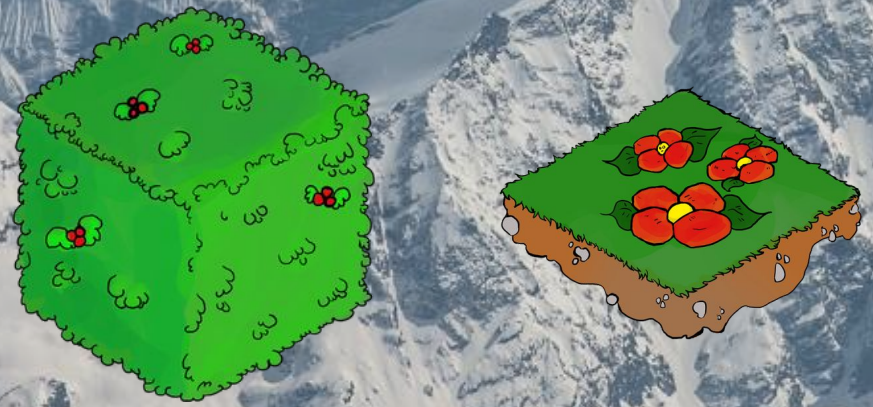




Important gameplay elements such as objectives and pathfinding are more saturated than the environment. The brighter colours stand out and draw attention to the parts of the game the player needs to pay attention to.

Saturated UI & Objectives



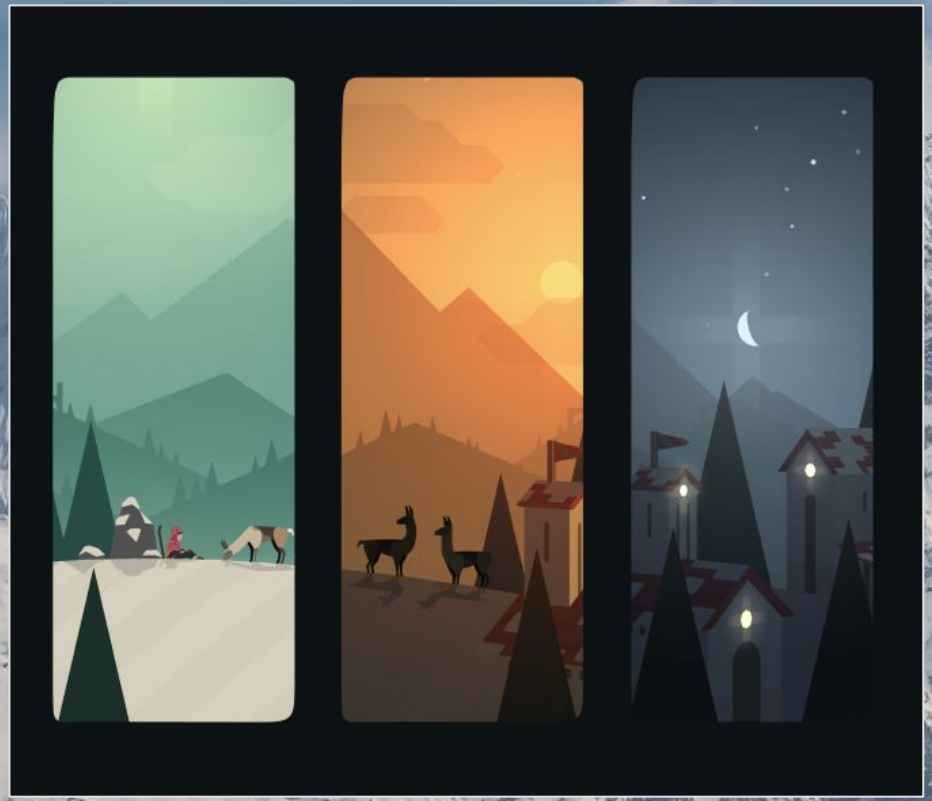


The main strategy of the game relies on creating efficient paths to objectives and to the top of the map. The bright red line, which contrasts against the more muted background, makes it easy for the player to see what path they are taking.


Inspiration

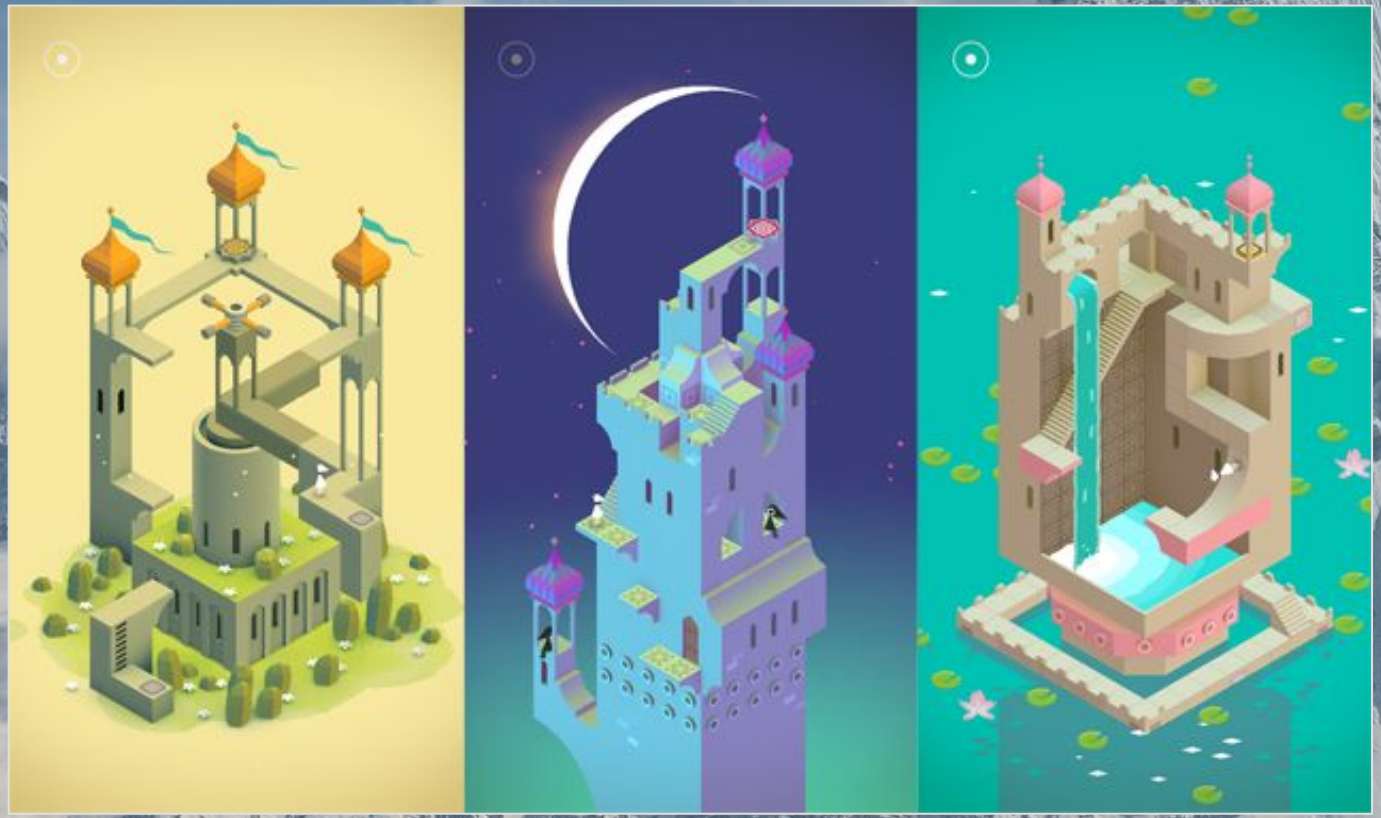
Alto's Adventure

Alto's Adventure



Alto's Adventure is our primary inspiration for colour palette. We also like the simple shapes with flat colours and little shading. It's art style is also critically acclaimed, receiving an IGF honorable mention for Excellence in Visual Art.

Monument Valley



Monument Valley

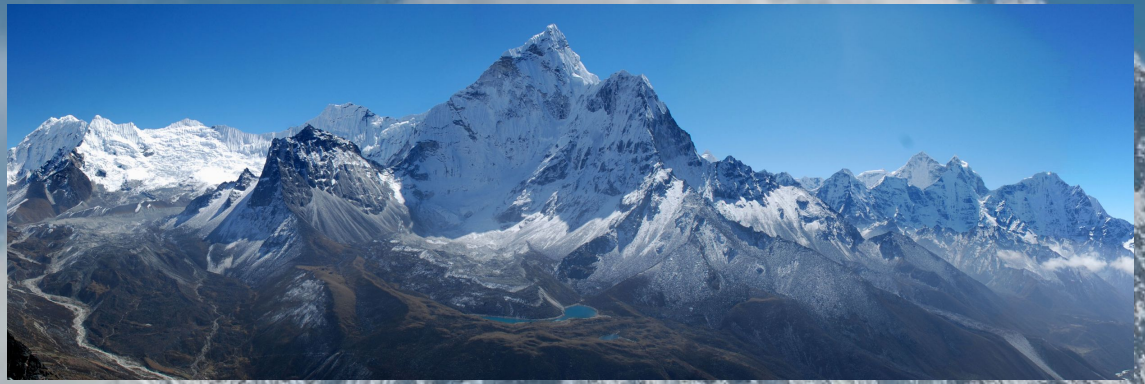
Monument Valley is also in isometric perspective, which gives us ideas on navigating the map and level layout. It's shading is very simple, with each side of the cubes a different shade. This game has several won awards for its art direction and visuals.

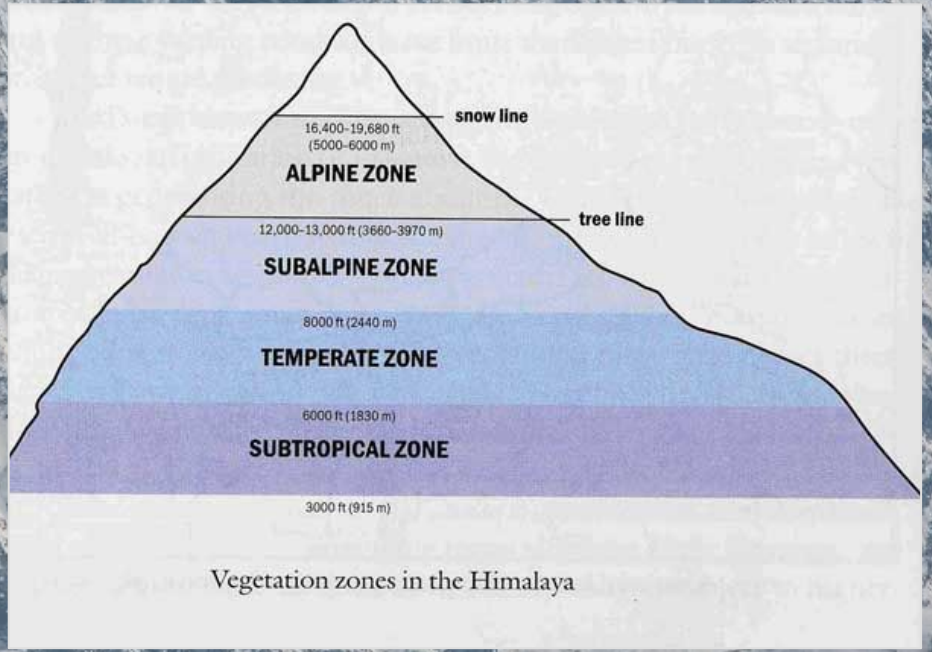
Alphabear

Alphabear

Alphabear's characters are varied and unique - easily identifiable despite all having the same or similar silhouettes. Alphabear continues with the theme of flat colours and basic shapes as well. Alphabear is a popular mobile game.

Himalayas





Vegetation zones in the Himalaya

Himalayas

Environment and Objective design are based off of the real-life environment and culture surrounding the Himalayas. Earlier levels will be foothills and smaller treks, gradually progressing to larger and taller maps where ice and snow are more prevalent.

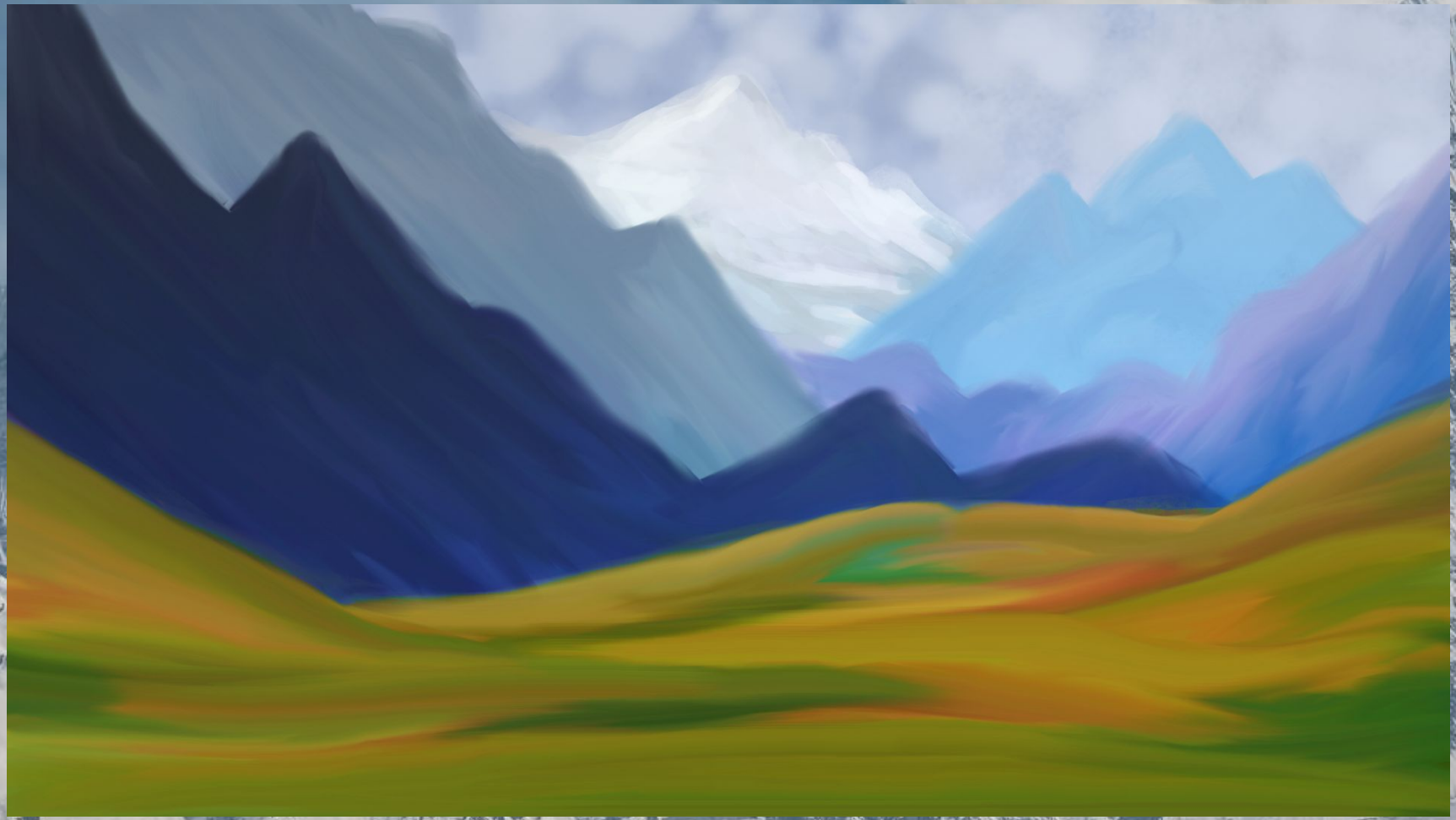

Concept Art

Christine


I want a refund!
Can we see a blue sheep?
I want red berries.
Where's the Himalayan mona!?
I'm tired!
I really want to see a pine tree!
Just 1 more hour...

Christine

Kylie



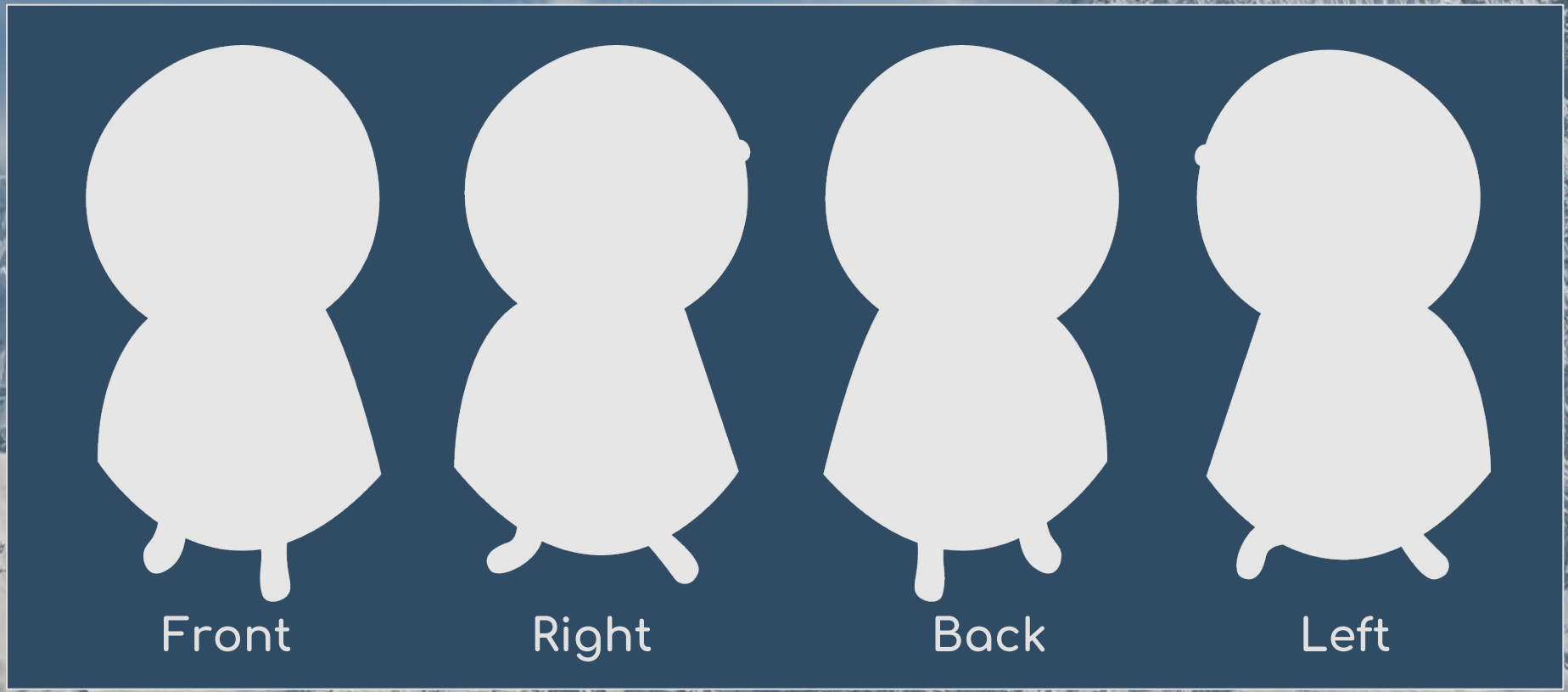
Kylie

Kirby

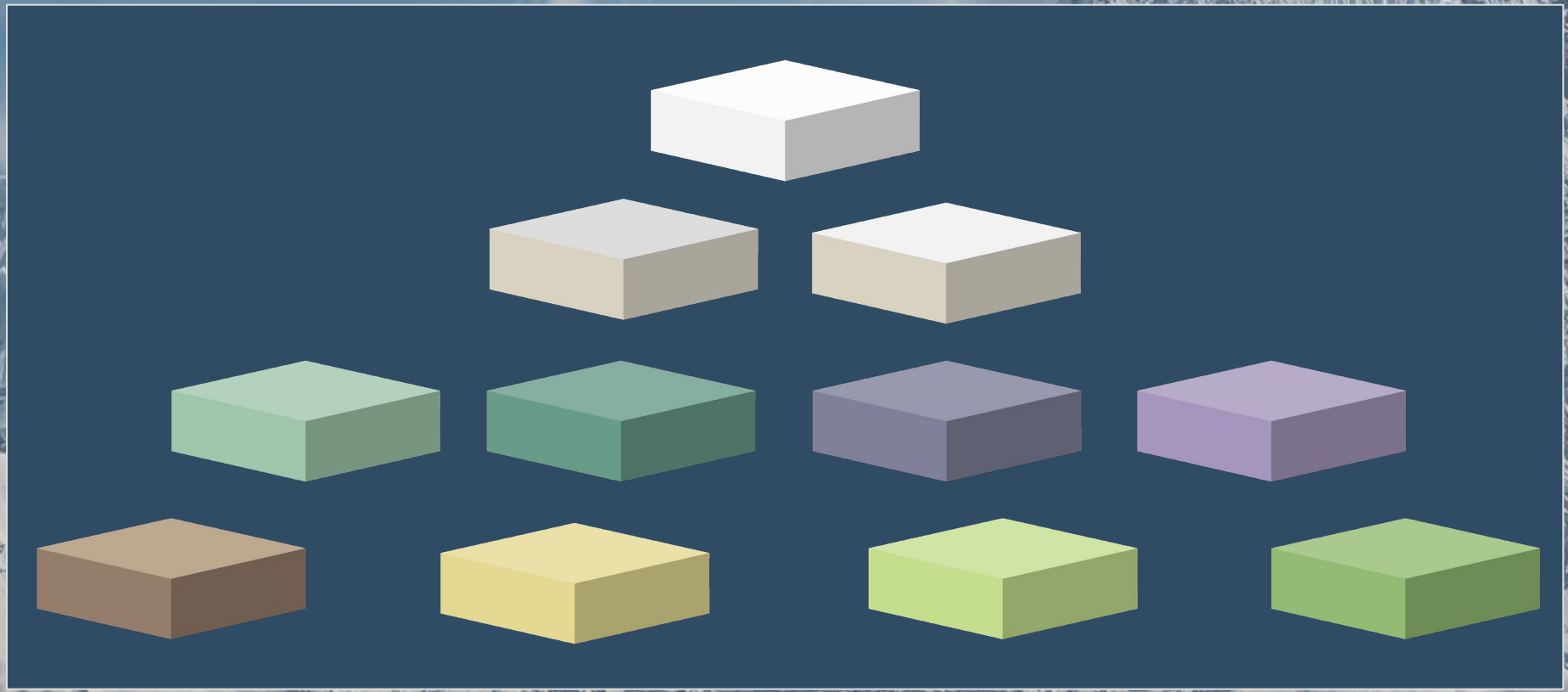
Kirby

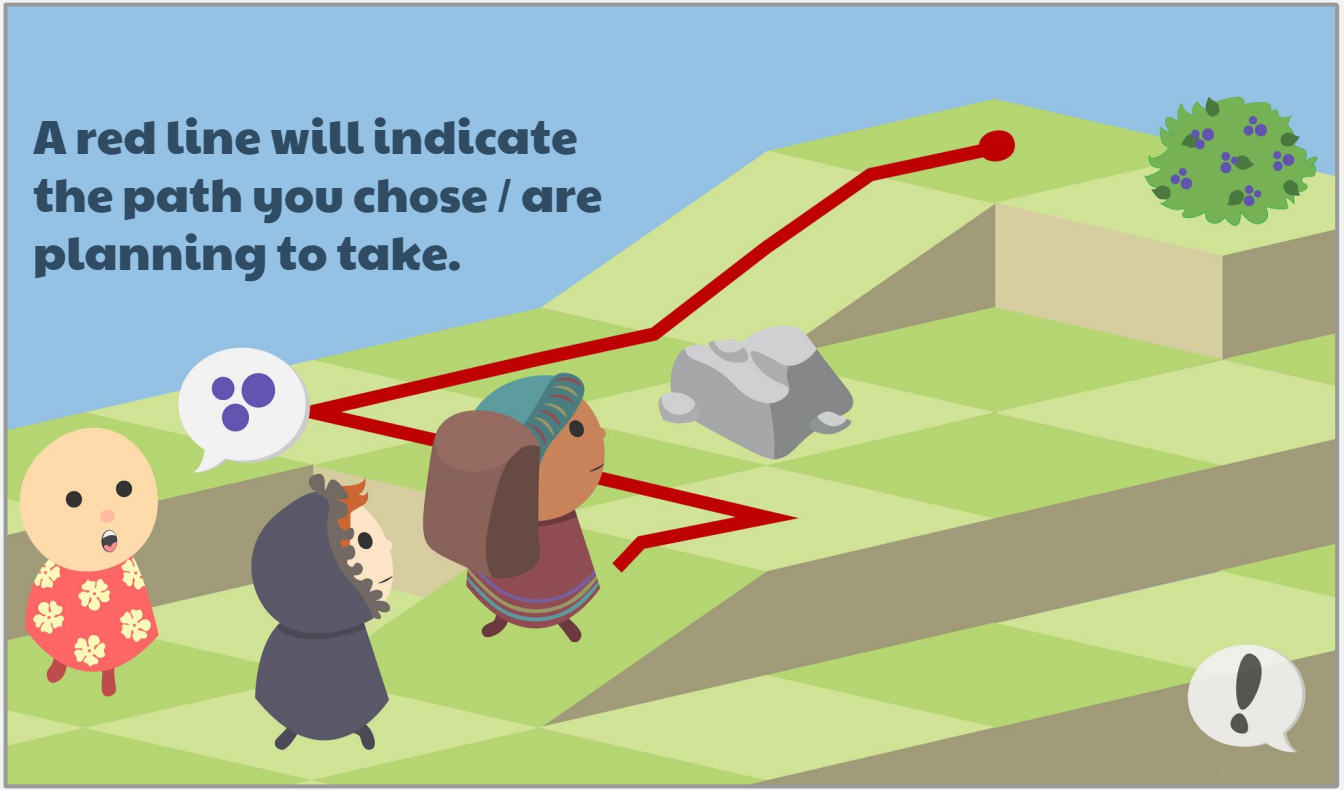

Style Guide

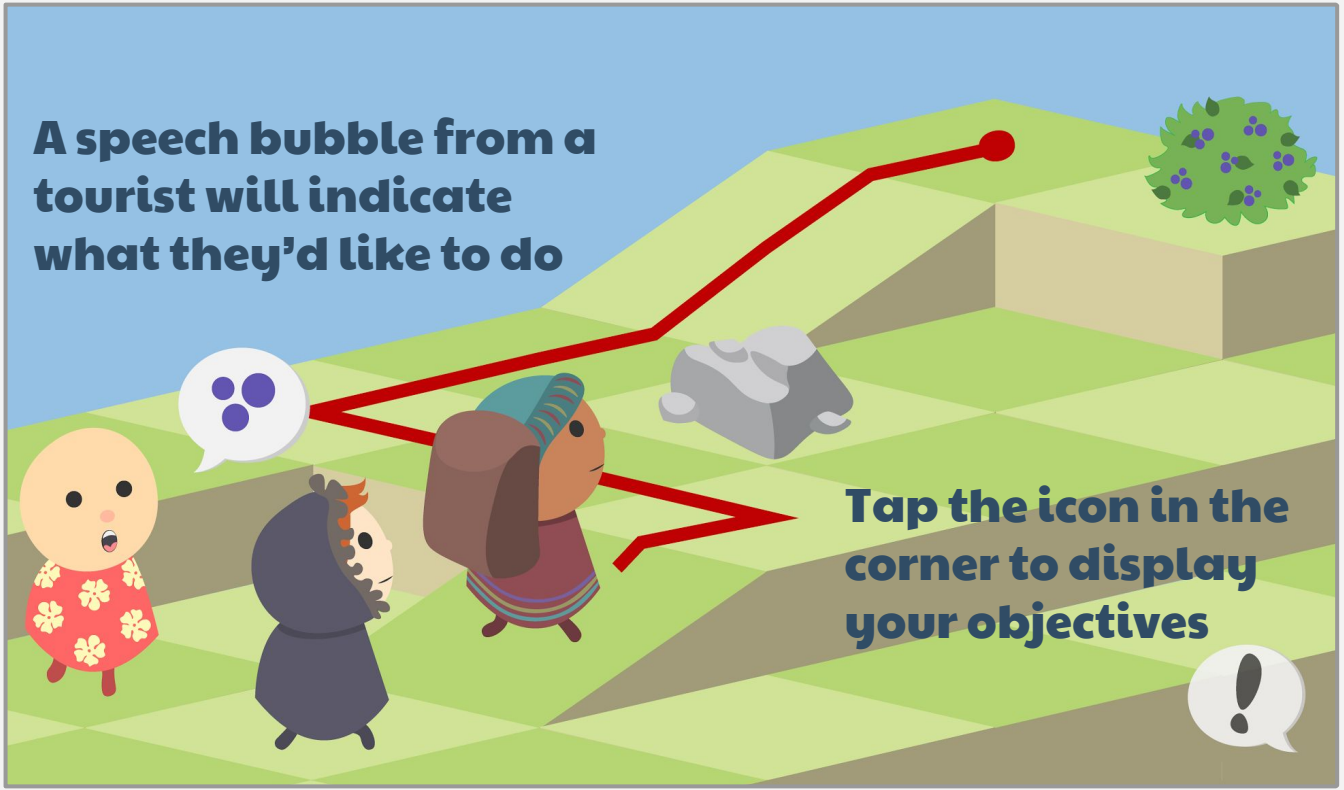
Basic Character Silhouette

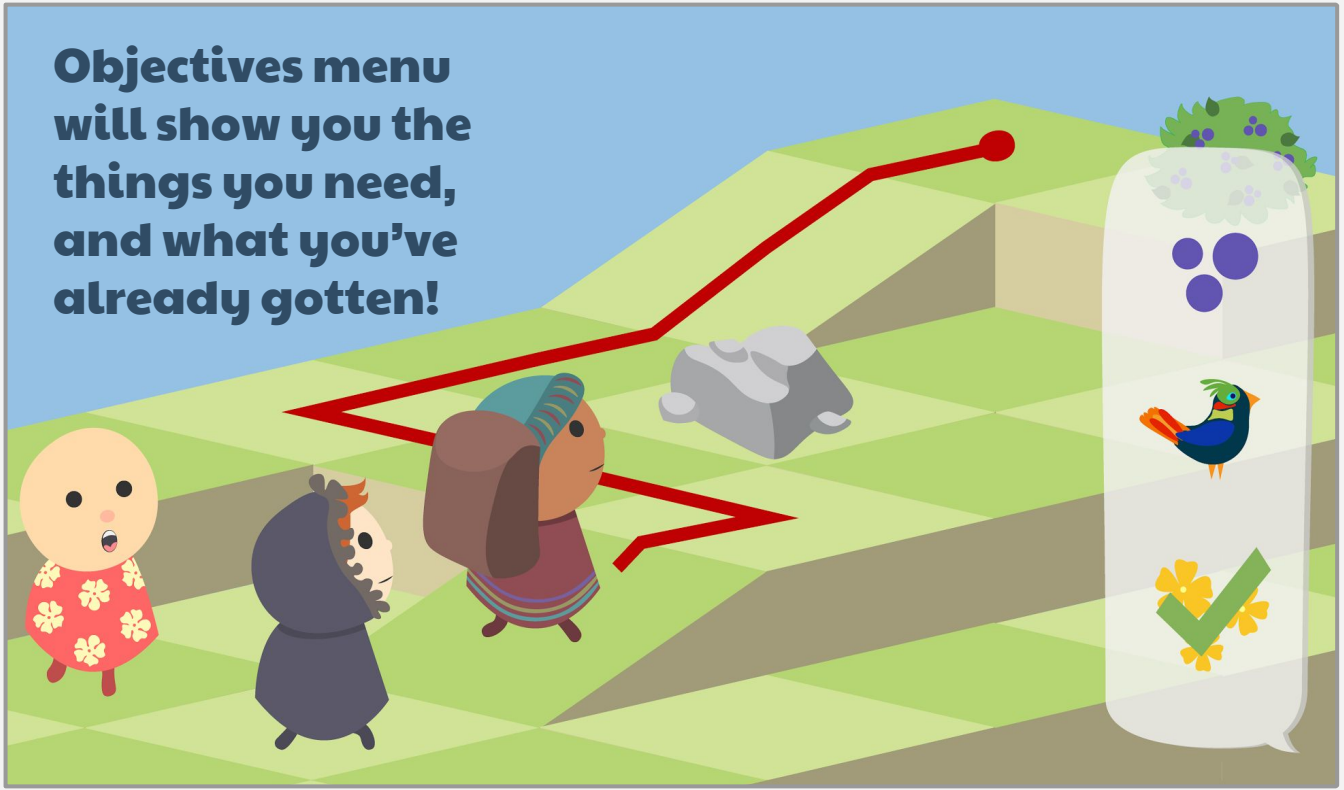


Environment: Tiles




A red line will indicate the path you chose / are planning to take.


A speech bubble from a tourist will indicate what they'd like to do
Tap the icon in the corner to display your objectives


Objectives menu will show you the things you need, and what you've already gotten!


From far away, objectives will be gray. Get close enough and you'll reveal the exact type!


Pipeline

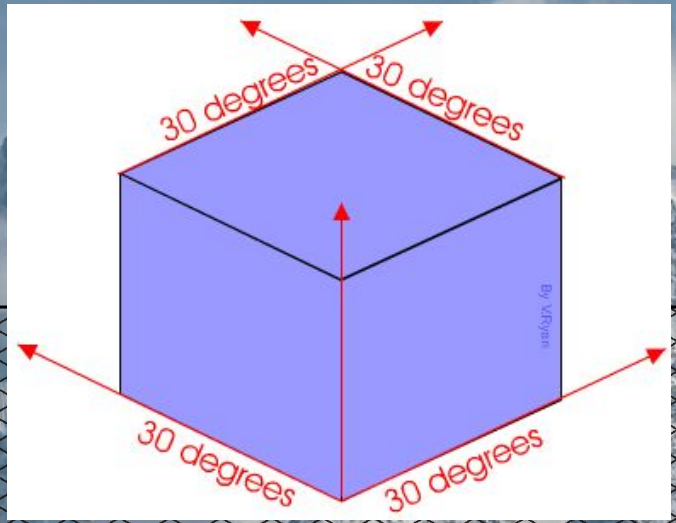
1. Art Direction & Style

Brainstorming and gathering artistic inspiration is done in collaboration with the Designers. Once a consensus has been made on art direction, Kylie will be primarily responsible for creating a style guide and maintaining cohesion.

2. Concept Art

Kirby, Christine, and Kylie are all responsible for creating concept art. At this point, the main idea is more important than sticking to a certain style. Kirby will focus more on characters, Kylie on UI and environment, and Christine on the feel and context.

(Note on Perspective)



All assets will be created using an isometric grid and a 30 degree drawing angle. This is extremely important due to the 3D nature of the environment. Assets will be tested in the engine multiple times to ensure the integrity of the art remains intact.

3. Simplify

Simplify the character concepts to their core ideas. The basic character silhouette (create in Adobe Illustrator) will be used as a template. Colors of shapes will be changed and accessories can be added to give each character their distinctive look.

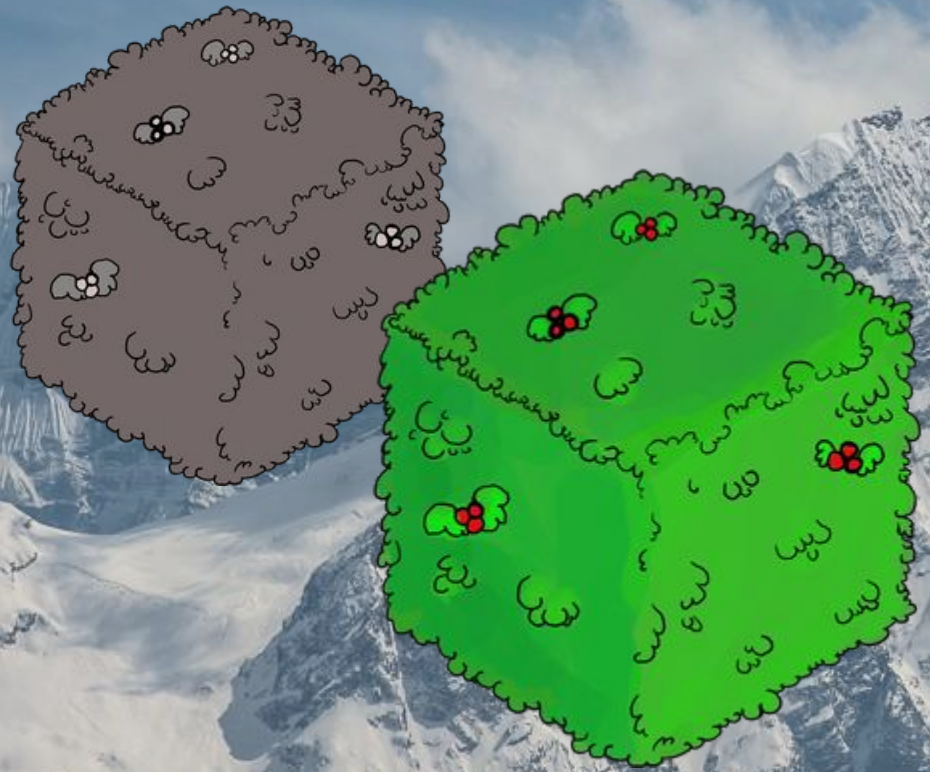
4. Character Sprites & Animation

Character sprites will be exported from Illustrator at the size of one tile (1000px by 1000px) using the asset exporter. They will then be imported into Adobe Animate. Animation will be simple - focusing on leg movement and slight bounces when walking.

4. Character Sprites & Animation

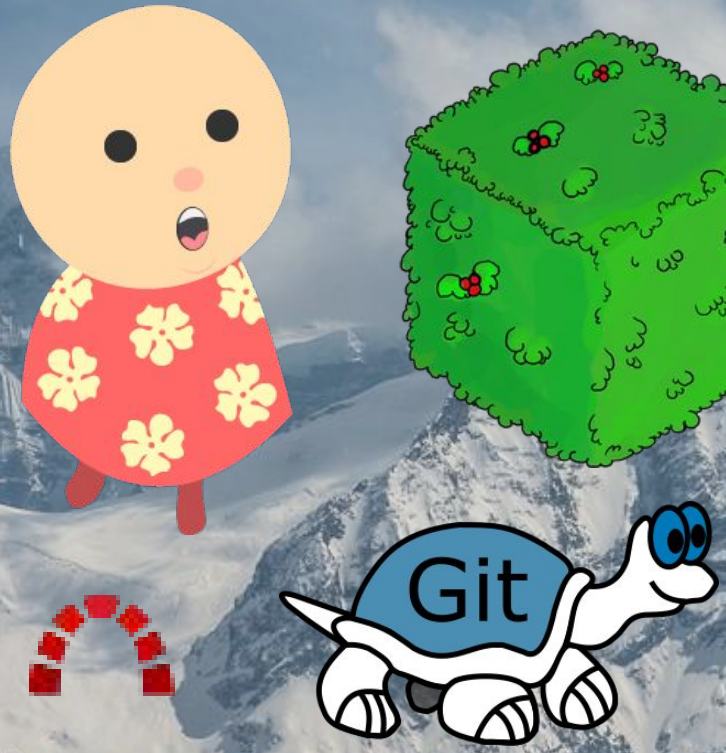
These simple animations will be done through motion tweening. Once animations are polished, a sprite sheet will be exported from Animate with the naming convention: sprite_name (e.g. sprite_tourist_hipster, or sprite_player_basic)

5. Objectives



Assets for the objectives will be created in grayscale. A colorization layer will then be applied to create a copy of the asset in a different colour. They will then be exported as .pngs with the naming convention: sprite_name (e.g. sprite_objective_berry)

6. Upload Assets

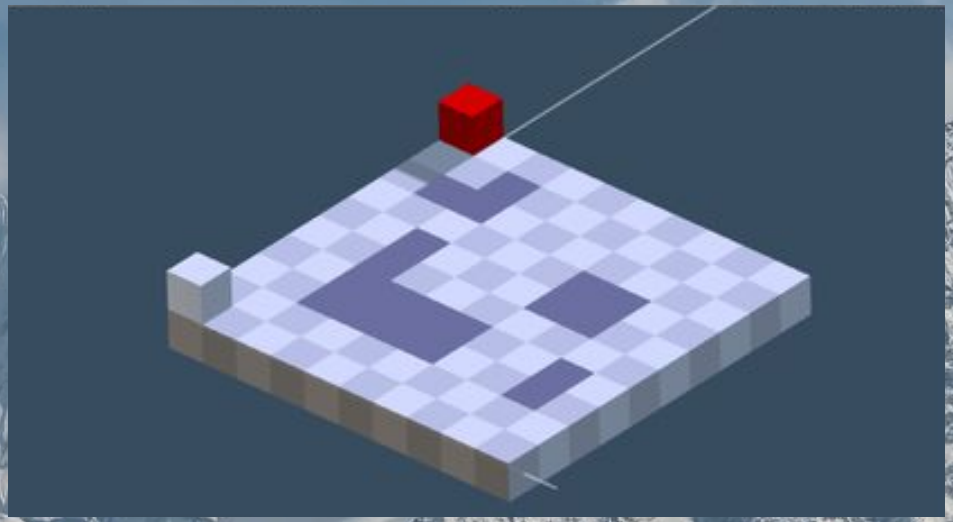


All assets will be committed to the repository and saved to the organized asset folder. Notify the team via discord when you add new assets to the repository. Assets are then downloaded and implemented by the programmer.

6. Game Board Tiles

The game board is created in unity with basic, 3D cubes by the designer and programmer. A copy of the build will be used to test the color palette. Then colour values for each material (grass, snow, etc.) are decided and passed onto the programmer.

7. Integration & Iteration



Designers and Programmers will work together to place tiles, objectives, obstacles, etc. in Unity to adhere to level design. Artists will receive feedback, and assets will be iterated on to make sure the perspective looks good in game.