

Shattered

A Poor Man's Bible

Your world is in ruins. You failed in your quest, your confidence is lost, and now, the princess is dead. Despite this, you haven't given up. When your life is turned upside down, you will find the strength to right it again - on a quest to put your world back together.

Prototype Trailer: <http://youtu.be/yLpFsAGrHtA>

The Game

Shattered is a 2D puzzle platformer, in which the player is more in control of the world than they are of themselves. Building on the idea of a world turned upside down, the player is able to rotate the levels, reorienting gravity and affecting objects within the level, as well as themselves. As a character in a broken pane of stained glass, the player must wander through various medieval scenarios, helping their distressed inhabitants by finding shards of glass in order to reconstruct their particular scene. Players will solve puzzles segmented into rooms, each with their own colorful shard, in order to progress and reveal the different stories.

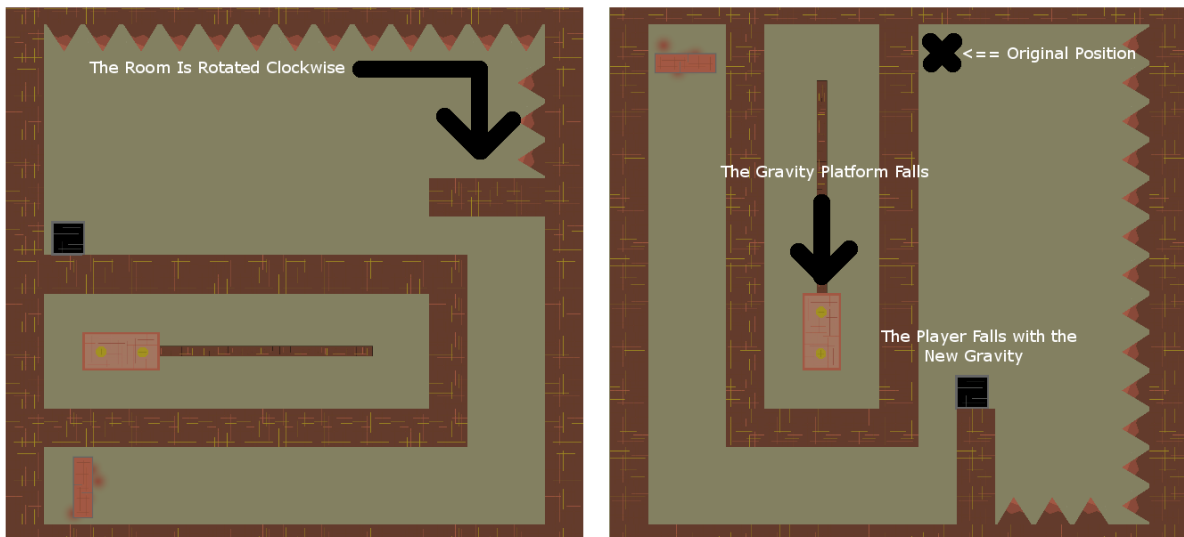
Games often use fairy tale tropes as a means of creating a heroic mold, a story wherein protagonist and antagonist are clearly defined. We intend to subvert this expectation by allowing our protagonist to fail, so that the player can experience a loss of structure in this story - and past that, a sense of discovery. The player will adjust and rotate the level itself as a primary means of navigation, their reshaping of the world standing as a metaphor for this structural degradation and re-evaluation of self.

Gameplay

The player is presented with three overall objectives, ranging from smallest in scope to largest. The immediate goal of the player is to figure out how to solve the current puzzle they are presented with. Their next goal is to traverse the puzzles to find enough glass shards to “finish a scene” - completing whatever story arc they are in. As they progress through puzzles, they uncover more of the story and the circumstances of the world in small chunks. The final goal of the player is to recover the pieces of the lost princess – this is their main overall objective and something that takes the whole game to accomplish.

Main Mechanic (Level Rotation)

The player is able to rotate levels, causing gravity to re-orient and affect the world. The player uses this main mechanic, and its various effects on the world, to manipulate each level and find a solution to each puzzle.



Secondary Mechanics (Currently Implemented)

Spikes - An obstacle to be avoided by the player. Spikes will force the player to make use of timing their level rotations, as well as add a layer of difficulty to the game. Adds a lose condition.

Gravity Platforms - Platforms that are able to move due to the forces of gravity. They travel linearly (either along x or y axis), and when said axis is pointing up and down due to level rotation the platform falls to the lowest part of its track.

Grabbable Platforms - Platforms that the player can interact with by dragging them across the game level along a set path. They are not influenced by gravity.

Secondary Mechanics (Future Ideas)

Darkness - Players are only able to see a short distance around themselves, limiting how far ahead they can plan when solving levels.

Water - Water fills part of the level, and flows to the bottom as dictated by gravity. The player floats on water, requiring them to rotate the level in different ways to bypass parts of the level.

Levers, Switches - Objects in the world the player can interact with. Levers and switches could activate or deactivate some other mechanic (i.e. a switch that deactivates a gravity platform, locking it in place instead of allowing it to fall freely).

Partial Level Rotation - Levels that allow you to rotate a segment of the room independently of the rest of the level.

Story

Narrative

A complex medieval world contained within a pane of stained glass. Everyone's stories exist as they were meant to - the king sits on his throne, the swan drinks from the pond, the knight saves the princess. But when the glass is broken and the princess she was sworn to protect is shattered, the knight - a vivacious hero named Chrys - finds her world turned upside down.

In an effort to set the story straight, Chrys goes on a quest to collect and reunite the shattered pieces of the princess, visiting the distressed inhabitants of the land in order to enlist their help. Their panes of glass have also been shattered, and in exchange for their assistance, she finds their missing pieces and reconstructs their scenes as well.

After collecting all the individual pieces of the princess, Chrys is dismayed to find that her restoration failed; putting the pieces back together cannot save her life. Inspired by the relationships developed with the other characters, she goes on a final quest to spread the pieces throughout the land, giving her body back to the earth and her people. In the final scene, she takes off her helmet and places the princess's crown atop her head in a symbolic gesture of love.

Implementation

Individual levels will be sorted into "scenes" - panes of glass with distinct stories, fragmented in ways that interfere with the lives of their characters. The player will collect a broken shard of the scene in each level, in order to fill the holes and reconstruct the scene. The scene will be displayed at the beginning and end of each group of levels, clearly showing the effect of the player's assistance. A narrator will elaborate on backstory throughout, describing the story progression with a flourish.

Team Goals

While creating *Shattered*, team members will learn a lot about the professional process of game development. As such, we intend to fully immerse the team in a professional setting. We will sell this game as a paid app in the future, so those involved with the project will get some insight into building a game, working with a mobile platform, submitting to game festivals, and even creating a company.

We are open to students of all backgrounds and disciplines, as each can bring their own perspective to the game. This should result in a game that feels complete and multi-faceted by the end of the year, a goal we feel is within scope for the mechanic and design.

Our current team consists of:

- Mathew Schacher - Team Lead, Lead Designer
- Sean Holaday - Lead Producer
- Cooper Surrent - Lead Writer, Usability Coordinator
- Chris Ian - Lead Sound Designer
- Amy DiGiovanni - Engineer
- Rook Fitts - Artist

The design of *Shattered* allows for the game's scope to be easily changed. Our initial goal is to build at least three of the currently unimplemented secondary mechanics, with the option to implement more. Additionally, we hope to include an in-game level editor, for players to build their own levels and share them with friends. Finally, while we aim to build the game for both iOS and Android, we will initially focus on iOS and only continue to Android if it is within scope.

Our current production plan is split into three parts. Initially, over the summer, the team will focus on generating concepts to be implemented in the fall, as the existing game is ported to iOS. During the fall, new mechanics will be introduced as the initial sections of the game are designed, implemented, and fully realized. Spring semester will be polish, with implementing extra features such as an in-game level editor and porting to Android, as well as completing all levels, art, and sound for the remainder of the story.

Tools and Technology

For *Shattered*, we will use Unity's 2D tools as we build the game. By using Unity, many USC students will already know how to use the technology and will therefore be able to learn even more advanced skills instead of just struggling with the basics. We will use Perforce for version control, and P4Connect for easy integration with Unity. For team management, we will make use of product management software such as Rally or Jira. We also plan to make use of communication software such as Slack or Hall. Since we are building *Shattered* for mobile, we will also make use of Apple's TestFlight app for large-scale user testing.

Art and Tone

Visually, while the game takes place in a stained glass world, the art style will be a less realistic version of stained glass, more similar to the image below. While the world will still structurally be based on stained glass, we will provide artists with this more minimalistic feel so that the focus is more on the image and colors, and less on the thick borders that are typical of stained glass. However, more traditional stained glass art will be used in the game. As the player progresses through the game, each piece of stained glass they recover will be in the traditional style. As a result, the scenes that the player puts back together will be displayed as realistic stained glass windows.



In terms of music direction, we envision an eerie, soothing sound similar to that of a [glass harp](#). We hope to convey the emotional state of the knight to the player through sound, as well as themes based around the various scenes you encounter on your quest.