

LMC 2730 Final Project

Name: Rail Transit Line 4 轨道交通四号线

Inspirations

This project is designed to offer a unique, horror-themed interactive experience, drawing on a diverse range of media influences.

It incorporates the artistic and narrative style of "Calendula," as showcased in <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1vJHjHl93tc>, emphasizing the game's interactivity and abstract narrative approach. The project also seeks to capture the enigmatic atmosphere of "Twin Peaks," especially the red room's weird, eerie calmness and its nostalgic atmosphere. Additionally, the storytelling technique of "What Remains of Edith Finch" is a key inspiration, where the story unfolds through first-person exploration, the use of informational props, and cutscenes. Finally, the concept of endless space, in "Silent Hill P.T.," is integrated to for a overall eerie and immersive experience. This blend of influences aims to create an unsettling yet captivating interactive horror environment.

Type of interactivity

The game is a walking simulator, featuring puzzle-solving elements and set in a first-person perspective. The puzzle-solving aspect of the game is simple yet integral to the gameplay narrative. Players will have the ability to interact with various objects, each serving a specific purpose. Some objects, when picked up, will trigger cutscenes (where you can't move, but can turn your head), providing narrative details. Others are designed as puzzle items, such as acquiring a key card to unlock a door. These puzzle items are simple in nature but can enriches the story.

The exploration aspect of the game utilized a infinite loop mechanic. The player will be trapped in 2 carts which head and end are connected. Puzzle needed to be solved in order to break the loop and enter the next area.

Narrative Structure

The narrative of the game is structured around a horror-themed subway setting. The gameplay features an endless subway, with each level is one or two subway carts. As players progress, the narrative unfolds through a combination of stream of consciousness and montage during interactions. This approach, similar to the abstract and abrupt style of gameplay seen in "Calendula," creates an immersive and surreal experience.

The story draws inspiration from the life of Xu Lizhi, a Chinese poet who committed suicide at the age of 24. Xu was a migrant worker on the assembly line at Foxconn, a man of poetic talent and dreams, crushed by the oppressive nature of his work, leading him to a state of despair and ultimately, to leap from a building.

In the game's narrative, after jumping from a building, the protagonist falls into a coma and finds themselves on a subway that carries them towards the afterlife. This subway offers two paths: one leading to a peaceful exit to heaven, symbolizing release, and the other offering a chance to recall memories and awaken from the coma.

The protagonist's experiences mirror those of Xu Lizhi, and the game is peppered with items relating to his life. Family-related items and poems assist in solving puzzles that could lead to awakening, while items representing the bustling city life and the assembly line gravitate towards the heavenly exit. The gameplay experience is designed to be abstract, strange, and unsettling, with cutscenes and items carrying more symbolic than literal meaning. As the player approaches the final cart, where the door to heaven awaits, the atmosphere transitions to one of peace and calm, providing a contrast to the earlier parts of the game.

Interactive Elements

The interactive elements of the game are integral to its narrative and puzzle-solving mechanics. Story items play a crucial role, as touching them triggers montages about protagonist's psyche and experiences. Here are some potential cutscenes that can be added to the game:

1. A Screw: symbolizing the main character's life on the assembly line, marked by a sense of deep depression. Symbolic imagery could include the Terracotta Army or machines, emphasizing the dehumanizing aspect of the labor.
2. A Pair of Shoes: representing the character's attempt at suicide. The scene begins with a view from the top of a building, followed by a symbolic screw falling to the ground.
3. A Train Ticket: a view of the countryside, calm and nostalgic.

There are also puzzle items, essential for breaking the endless loop of the subway:

1. Key Card: (a card used for clocking in at work) Used to open doors within the game.
2. A Letter of Rejection: related to a job application in the field of poetry, reveals crucial information (such as a name, age, birthday, or location) needed to unlock a password.
3. A Pen and Paper: When combined, these items transform into a subway ticket, where is the idea that can help the protagonist to awaken from the coma.

Assets

Here is a list of resources that can be helpful in the development process (not all will be used) with reference to the sources:

- A subway train (done)
- Portal code reference:
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cuQao3hEKfs&t=57s>

- Two rigged characters - male & female (done)
- Broken glass (found)
 - <https://www.cgtrader.com/3d-models/various/various-models/broken-glass-debris-large>
- Wire, cords, power generator pack (found)
 - <https://assetstore.unity.com/packages/3d/environments/industrial/wires-pack-164384>
- Toon Pro: Ultimate Stylized Shading (found)
 - <https://assetstore.unity.com/packages/vfx/shaders/toon-pro-ultimate-stylized-shading-225921>

Minimum Goal

- One endless space, made up of 2-3 subway carts.
- Two story items with two montage cut-scenes.
- One puzzle with two puzzle items.