

Hiboka - Pitch

Early pitch document of the video game project Hiboka.

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Story Synopsis

In Malagasy folklore, Tromba is the belief that spirits of our dead ancestors live near us in a parallel underworld called Hiboka. Spirits of the dead remain inside Hiboka for eternity either in peace or in despair. Spirits that have strong will can sometimes lurk away from Hiboka temporarily by taking possession of living bodies in our world. If the spirit was kind, there is nothing to fear, but if the spirit was evil, this could lead to harm, murder and even simulated suicide.

In Paris 1942, Alexandre, a teenage boy from a wealthy French family loses his mother and only guardian. Just before dying, she reveals to him a family secret: the discovery by his great grandfather of the entrance to Hiboka and a hint about its location in Madagascar. Unable to properly go through his grief and convinced that he has a chance to see her mother again, Alexandre bribes two Vichy French soldiers during the Battle of Madagascar to escort him safely to this unknown region.

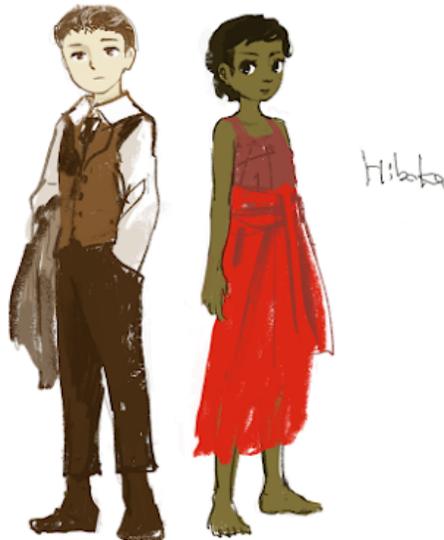
Deep in the woods of Madagascar, the party meet Ramala, Malagasy girl and find shelter in an abandoned mansion. This is far from a usual mansion and their expedition quickly turns into a struggle for survival.



Game Information

Quick summary

Set in Madagascar in 1942, Hiboka is a single-player third-person survival horror game that tells a moving tale of grief, love, and deception. The game is centered around two main playable characters trapped in a lost mansion deep in the woods of Madagascar. Alexandre Leblanc is a wealthy teenage boy grieving the loss of his mother, and Ramala Fifaliana is a Malagasy girl whom Alexandre encounters during his search to find the entrance to Hiboka, the spirit underworld of Malagasy folklore.



Key characteristics

- A beautiful story of intrigue and horror based on folklore from Madagascar.
- A unique real time decision system that affects both main characters through their respective timelines.
- Play as Alexandre and then as Ramala in perfect synchronization in order to uncover the truth behind the Sanatry Mansion.

Main theme

The death of a loved one is a natural process, we eventually need to accept it and embrace what we still have.

Alternatively, the death of a loved one is not accepted; this could bring mental instability, trigger negative emotion such as rage and jealousy and lead to immoral actions.

The direction of the story is based on the choices made by the player that can either lead to the happiness that comes from acceptance of the death of a loved one or the despair and delusion that comes from the refusal.

Recurring concepts

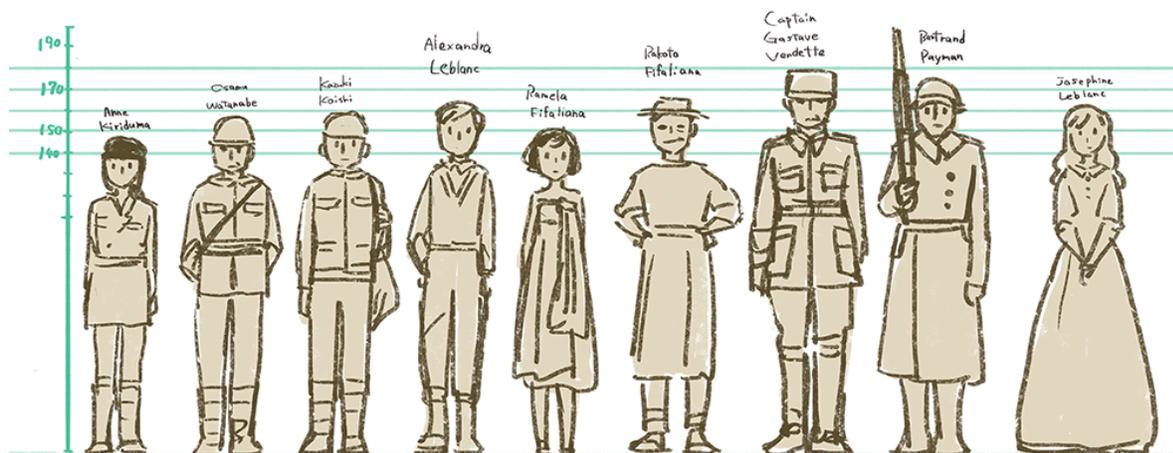
Death, grief, trust, love, friendship.

Genre

Third person survival horror (single player).

Time to complete

3-5 hours



Our target audience

Hiboka's audience can be put in 2 categories; the first one are the gamers that grew up enjoying the gameplay of old-school survival horror games from the Playstation 1 and 2 era, such as Resident Evil, Silent Hill and Fatal Frame. The second category are adults that enjoy unique storytelling and discovering new cultures while consuming media.

Our sale forecast audience

Based on sales data from games with similar budgets, prices and close to our genre, we forecast sales of around 1 million CAD in a conservative scenario and 3 millions CAD in an ideal scenario.

The games we focused on were:

- Remothered: Tormented Fathers
- Tormented Souls
- DreadOut 2

Data was taken from Steam Spy and Video Game Chartz.

Timeline

We are currently at the pre-production stage of our game. We now have a working prototype that showcases about 20 minutes of gameplay. All the functionality is present; missing are the final user interface elements, some sounds and animations.

Our production plan for Hiboka is to finish this small polished section of the game (vertical slice). This will enable us to showcase the game's potential early, and consequently help us build a following and seek funding. Once the vertical slice is done, we will enter the full production phase.

Gameplay

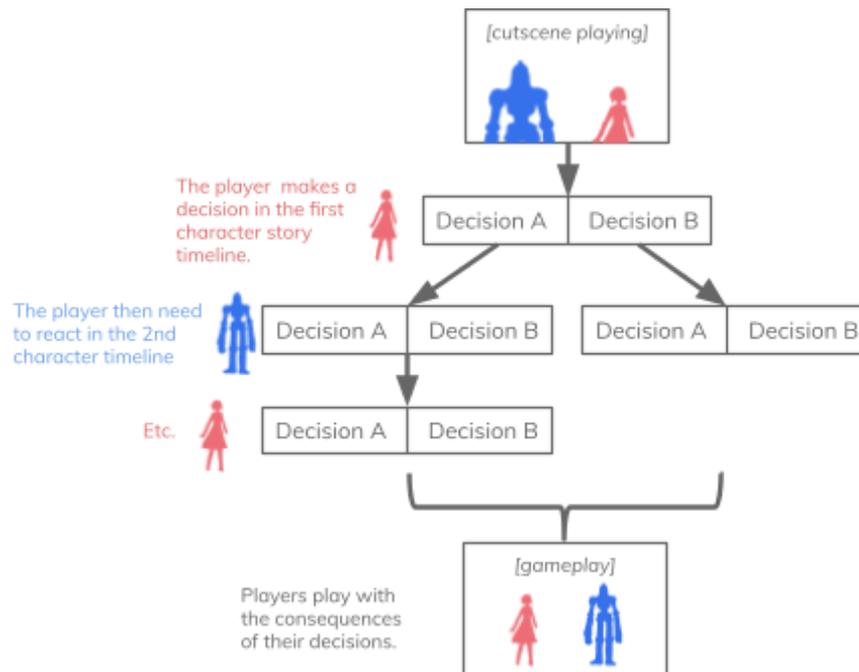
The player will first play through the story as Alexandre and then replay the events from Ramala's perspective. Making decisions as Alexandre will affect the outcome of the playthrough of Ramala. Finishing both character's stories will unlock the final chapter and the conclusion. The game features 3 gameplay pillars:

- Third person action (combat, exploration, item management)
- Puzzle solving
- Meaningful decisions in synchronization across timelines.

Interactive cutscenes

At some key moments, the player will be able to make decisions within a limited amount of time that affect the flow of the story and the gameplay that follows.

What makes this system interesting is that decisions made in the first character's timeline will affect the second character's timeline. When the player plays as the second character, they will have to react from another point of view. Playing as the second character will also allow the player to discover information about the story that would otherwise be hidden.



Art Direction

The art direction is centered around an horrific yet beautiful setting done with a hand-painted style to give it a pleasing look despite the horrific theme. Most of the colors will stay cold to give a secluded feel, and some warm colors will be used in areas that are considered safe for the player.

Built by a French engineer, the Sanatry Mansion takes architectural influence from the French Renaissance and Romanesque era while being adapted to the malagasy landfield. Each room inside the Sanatry mansion feels unique and memorable. This is to improve player navigation and also give the game a unique aesthetic.

Here are some early screenshots (several props are missing):











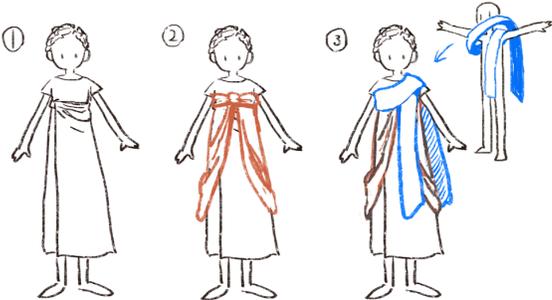
Character Concept Art:

Ramala Fifaliana

Skin	Eyes	Sandals	Hairpin
●●	●●●	●●	●●●
Hair	Clothes	Knife	
●●●	●●●●	●●●	



hide a knife in her Brest



Alexandre Leblanc

Skin 	Eyes 	Boots 	Belt 	Pistol 	Ring of death
Hair 	Clothes 	Holster 	Knife 	Pocket watch 	





Titan



climb a tree



- Body
- Eyes
- Bandana

Texture of his bandana is same as Ramala's shawl.

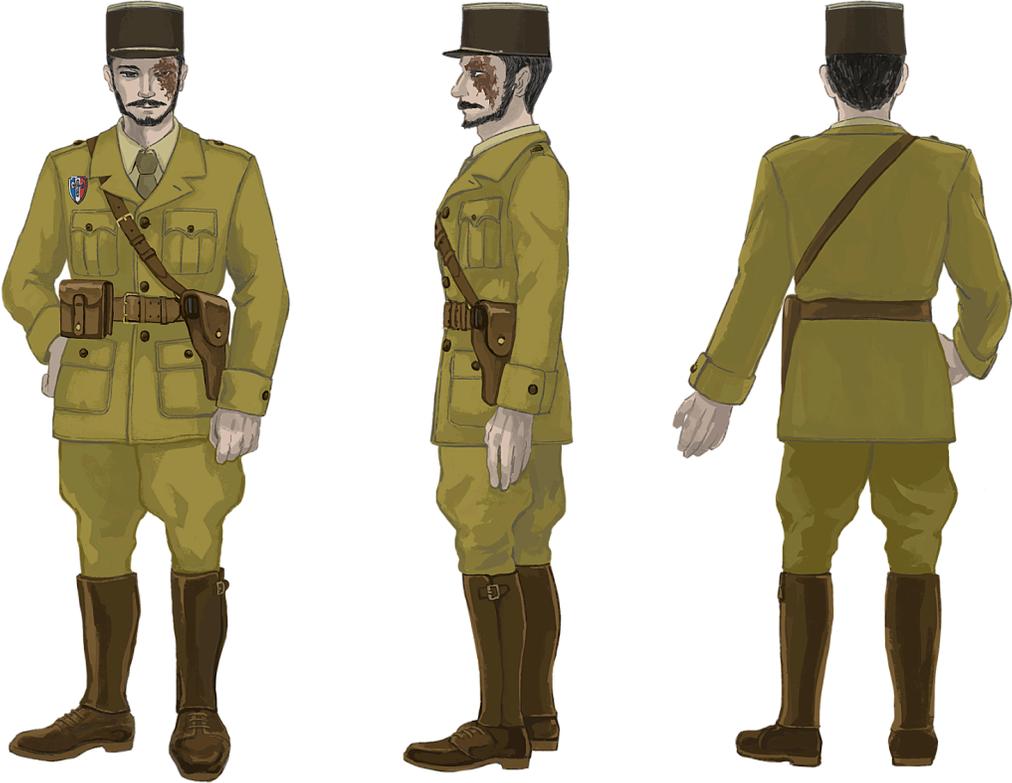
Valerie



- Skin
- Glasses
- Eyes
- Cloth
- Hair
- Boots



Captain Gustave Vendette



- | | |
|------|-----|
| Skin | ●●● |
| Hair | ●●● |
| Cap | ●●● |

Eyes	●●●
Clothes	●●●
Pouch	●●●

Boots	●●●
Holster	●●●
Badge	●●●

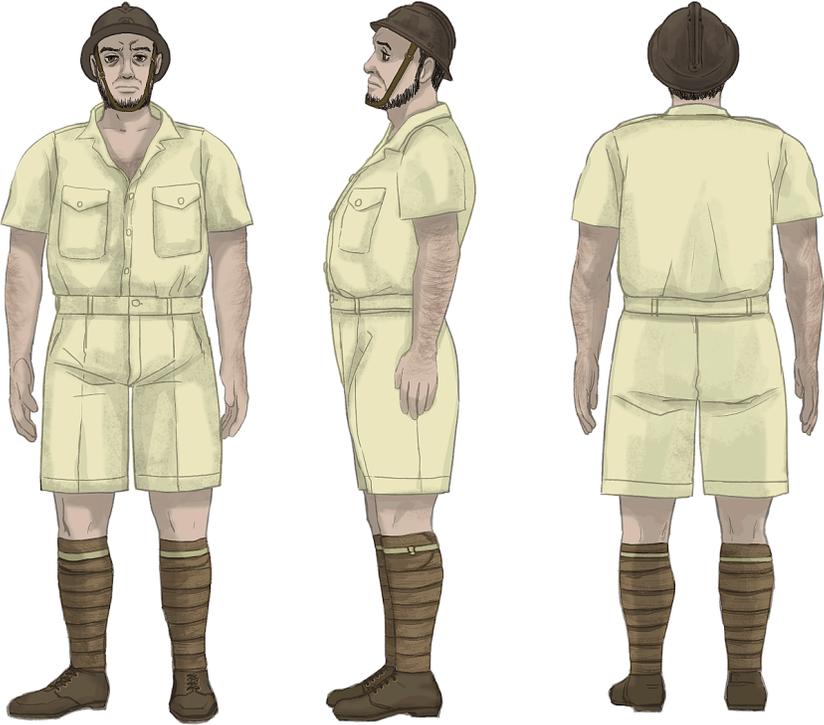
Belt	●●●
Pistol	●●●



Bertrand



- Skin
 - ● ●
- Eyes
 - ●
- Hair
 - ●
- Helmet
 - ● ● ● ● ●
- Cloth
 - ● ●
- Belt, pouch
 - ● ● ● ● ●
- Bag
 - ● ● ● ● ●
- Machine gun
 - ● ● ● ● ●
- Boots
 - ● ● ● ● ●



Rakoto



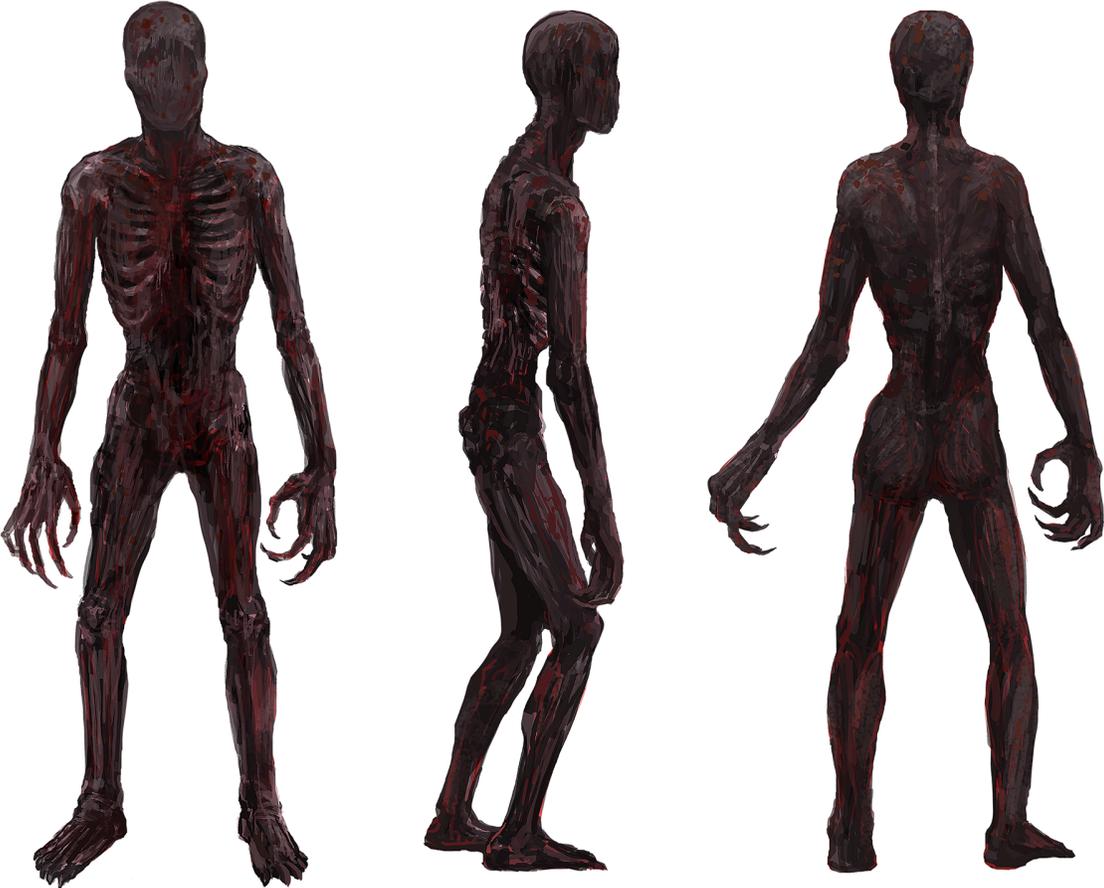
Koba



Valiha



Kinoly 



The Flying Carpets Team

The main team is composed of game designer and founder [Salim Larochelle](#) (full-time) and illustrator [Ayaka Nakamura](#) (part-time) who both worked together on a first indie game called [The Girl and the Robot](#) that was released on Steam in 2016 and then on PS4 and Wii U in 2017.

In 2019, they made a second game called [The Girl and the Robot - The Card Game](#), a board game funded with the help of Kickstarter backers.

It is worth mentioning that Salim's mother is from Madagascar and so the story and folklore of Hiboka has significant meaning to him.

