

Game 3400 - Team 2 Final Document

Design Problem:

“How do you diegetically or semi-diegetically get players to visit or revisit optional content?”

Pattern Selection:

- Asymmetrical Level Navigation (Guidance, Movement, Mechanics, Navigation)
 - Strong Centers
 - The level navigation is entirely based on the players equipment or abilities and is accessible at all times.
 - Boundaries
 - Levels have clearly different areas that require different methods to traverse.
 - Good Shape
 - The entire movement system/abilities can be broken down into specifically different skills/moves.
 - Deep Interlock
 - The traversal is often based on a combination of the abilities and equipment.
 - Roughness
 - Places where specifically
- X Marks The Spot: (Cues, Guidance, Motivation, Narrative, Navigation, Progression, Puzzle)
 - Levels of Scale
 - Collectibles often exist *within* other secret areas/optional areas.
 - Positive Space
 - All items and collectibles should (when used well) add to the player/character.
 - Not Separateness
 - Parts of a treasure hunt are generally modeled and made to look like the surrounding areas, so unless the player knows to go looking for a certain rock or tree stump, they wouldn't know that the treasure was there at all, as it blends smoothly into the area around it
- Blue's Clues: (Puzzles, Problem-Solving, Exploration, Learning, Tutorial)
 - Levels of Scale
 - Challenges often exist within puzzles, and those puzzles exist within larger barriers.
 - Strong Centers
 - Blue's Clues is based upon one central objective towards which all actions move to.
 - Good Shape
 - Each piece of the puzzle should fit neatly and lead to another piece towards the ultimate goal.
 - Echoes
 - Often puzzles will have repeating themes between them, and players will utilize the same methodologies or strategies to beat one puzzle as they will for the next puzzle

- One Person's Trash: (Collectable, Item, Book, Audio Log, Narrative, Information, Metagames, Inventory)
 - Alternating Repetition
 - Players may go through a stretch of gameplay that leads up to a note or environmental storytelling, followed by another stretch of gameplay, and so on
 - Positive Space
 - Collectibles/lore pickups should always be additive to the player's experience/narrative.
 - Good Shape
 - Lore and other collectibles should fit together to build larger stories and arcs.
- Ooh Shiny!: (Items, Visuals, Information, Communication, Puzzle)
 - Contrast
 - The object you're looking for sticks out in the environment
 - Positive Space
 - The placement of the object within the space is meaningful
 - Inner calm
 - The item itself is very clear and obvious as to what its intended use to the player is, as it looks distinctly like what it is meant to do for the player
 - Boundaries
 - Items will have a glow or outstanding color to them to indicate to the player that they are apart from the non interactable environment
- Build-Your-Own-Game: (Objective, Creativity, Power, Gameplay)
 - Strong Centers
 - Regardless of how you change your playstyle, the same foundation of the game is always there (clicking to harvest materials and craft in Minecraft, the monastery and strategic battles in Fire Emblem: Three Houses)
 - Alternating Repetition
 - Creation is alternated between other forms of gameplay, be it resource farming, combat, puzzling, etc.
 - Graded Variation
 - Creation increasingly scales upon itself as you slowly unlock new and better equipment/abilities.

We think the best way to create gameplay that motivates the player to scour the level beyond their main objective is through the careful implementation of A) long and short term resource management and B) collectible items.

- Levels of Scale
 - Our searchable areas exist within other searchable areas e.g. house > room > dresser > drawer.
- Strong Centers
 - The player almost always has only two tools, the specterscope and the flashlight which can be used towards different ends but use the same basic actions (e.g revealing ectoplasm and scaring a ghost is still "shooting" with the camera.)
- Boundaries

- Pretty clearly delineated rooms being separate from other rooms, separated by doorways and walls
- Alternating Repetition
 - The scarcity of resources means the players have to switch between searching for different resources.
- Positive Space
 - Any interactable items will provide something to the player. If it doesn't provide anything it's not interactable.
- Good Shape
 - We deliberately avoid good shape to disturb and make the player uncomfortable; this space is the *opposite* of the Nameless Quality.
- Local Symmetry
 - There is intentionally a lack of local symmetry, as something like that wouldn't generally be found in a house or room layout. However, if we did intend to utilize it, it could be done in such a way that intentionally freaks the player out from the unnaturalness of the perfect symmetry in an old run down house
- Deep Interlock
 - Rooms make up an overall layout for the house, and create an overall tight and coherent environment for the player to explore
- Contrast
 - The transitions between areas deliberately create different moods. For example, the wide-openness of the living room compared to the narrow hallway, compared to the dead-end-ish study.
- Graded Variation
 - The danger and attacks from ghosts become progressively more apparent as the house gets more haunted.
- Roughness
 - The environments and areas that the player explores are haunted, and would look old or worn out from long periods of disuse or abandonment, because it's too spooky for anyone to be there
- Echoes
 - The interactable items in the game are related specifically in how they can be useful to the player e.g. electronics are battery sources.
- The Void
 - The courtyard is ghost-free, and provides a reprieve from the haunt. Alongside that our theoretical "management" phase would be a quiet break from frantic ghost hunting.
- Inner Calm
 - The entire traversal through the house is frantic and without break; you are constantly looking for *something* that will further your goals, there's no additional mechanics.
- Not Separateness

- Every space in the house feels like it belongs to a home; it has a bathroom, a bedroom, an eating area- all things that people would expect in a “house.”

Game Pitch:

The player is a paranormal investigator, sent to check out multiple different haunted venues and solve the mysteries within. The game is played as a rogue-like, with opportunities to upgrade the character or collect vital resources inside each locale. The player navigates the venue with their flashlight and their Specterscope, a special camera that can see things the human eye can't. Each location is procedurally generated as the player explores, creating a layout from a toolbox of several rooms, some with special features (one room may allow the player to heal, for instance, or another may reveal the location of a key piece of evidence).

Resources:

- Money
- Aura
- Stress
- Health
- Film
- Batteries
- Time

Collectibles:

- Items
- Upgrades
- Special Leads

Demo Level:

A one bedroom house with a living room, study, bathroom, kitchen, and a patio. A corridor runs through about half of the house and into the patio. There are case clues highlighted in different ways (X Marks the Spot, One Person's trash) throughout the house except the bathroom and kitchen. The clues reveal the presence of an evil spirit in the TV, and begin to outline a method of exorcising it. The TV progressively tries to take you over until you can complete the ritual; in practice you have a 10 minute time limit. There is a collectible item in the bedroom under the bed that can pacify the TV and give you another two minutes and a special lead in the wall of the study. The ghost of the old woman is also in the house and will periodically become aggressive: it can be pacified with the Specterscope. Film for Specterscope can be found in the study and bedroom. Batteries can be found in the bedroom, kitchen, patio, and living room (they can be taken from devices).



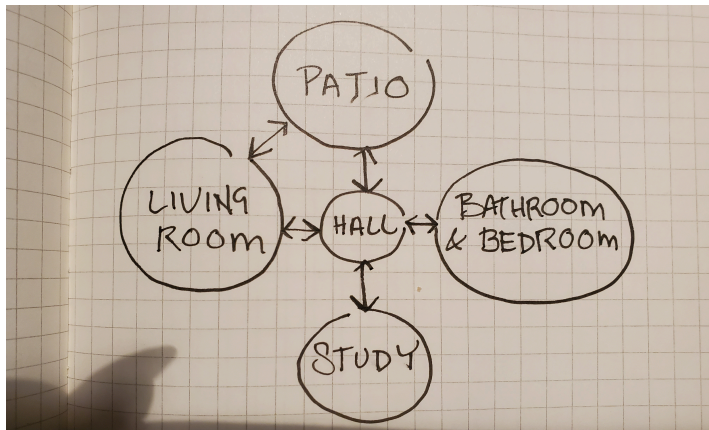
- A - TV AND CABINET
- B - RUG
- C - SOFA
- D - ROCKING CHAIR
- E - COAT HANGER
- F - DRESSER
- G - DINING TABLE
- H - COUNTER
- I - SINK (KITCHEN)
- J - APPLIANCES & DRAWERS
- K - PLANT

- R - DESK
- S - CABINETS & WALLS
- T - PATIO STUFF

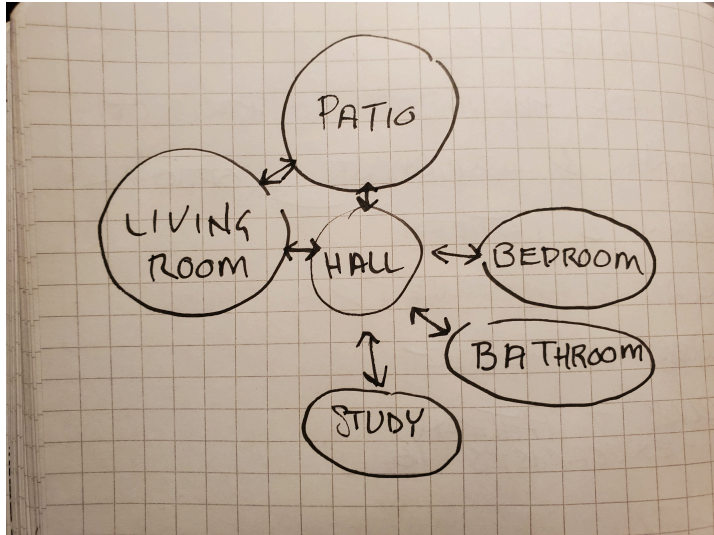
Finished Demo & Plans:

Our final level was implemented based on our floorplan, but with some alterations to accommodate assets and help create more tension. We wanted to focus on the transition between narrow (the hallway), intimate (the rooms), and prospect spaces (the patio). Upon feedback from class we also paid extra attention to the placement of gameplay artifacts and making sure that there was enough to do in each area. We created a molecule diagram to devise what would be a balanced level: we found that the lopsided placement of the small rooms as opposed to the bigger rooms makes them a much more tense area, so we peppered them with items and recurring puzzle elements and added a doorway in between the living room and the patio to make the prospect spaces a safer and more contemplative area.

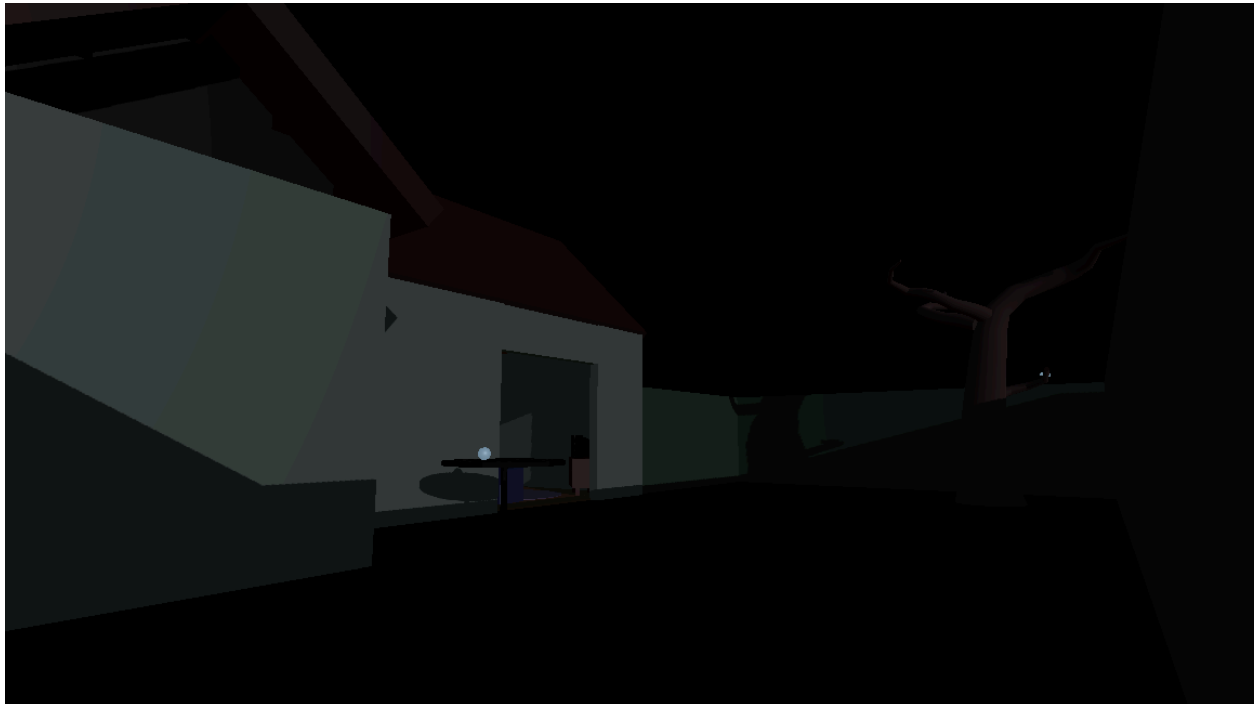
Version 1:

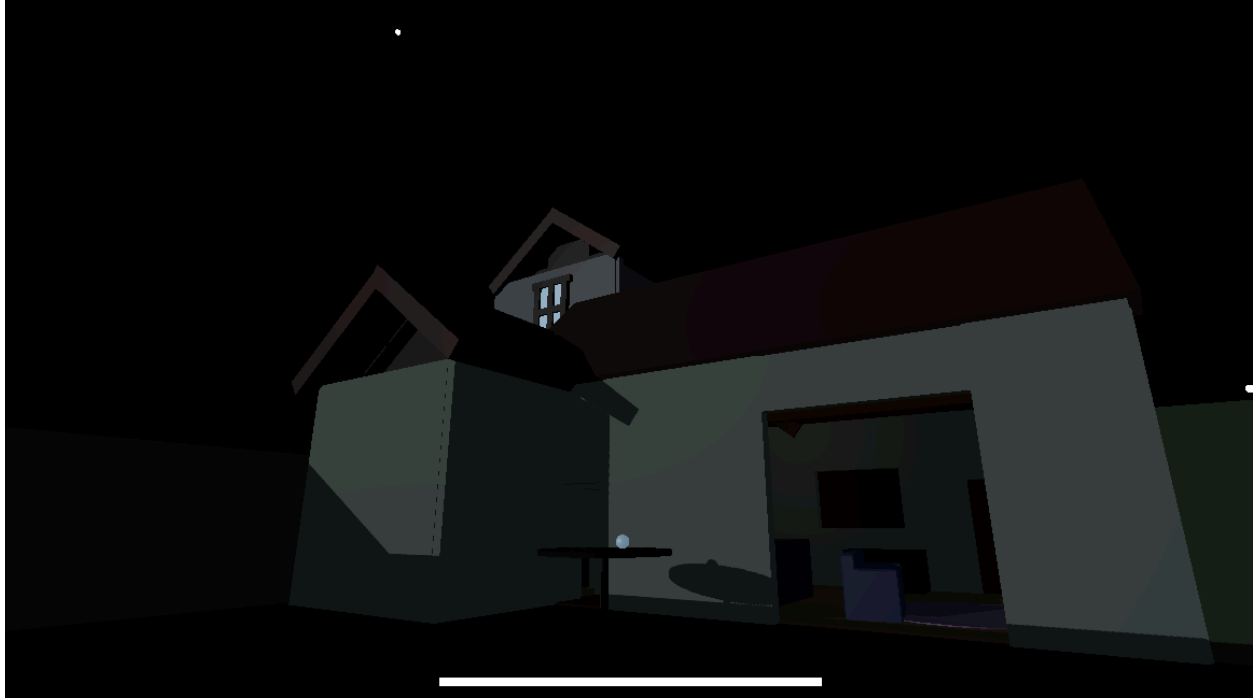


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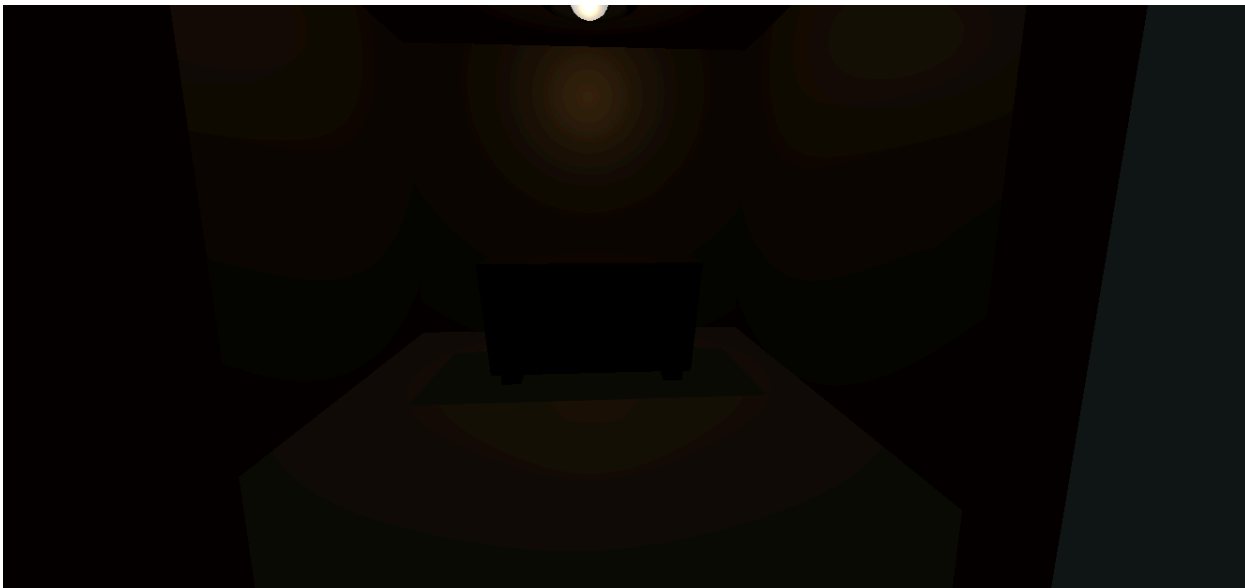


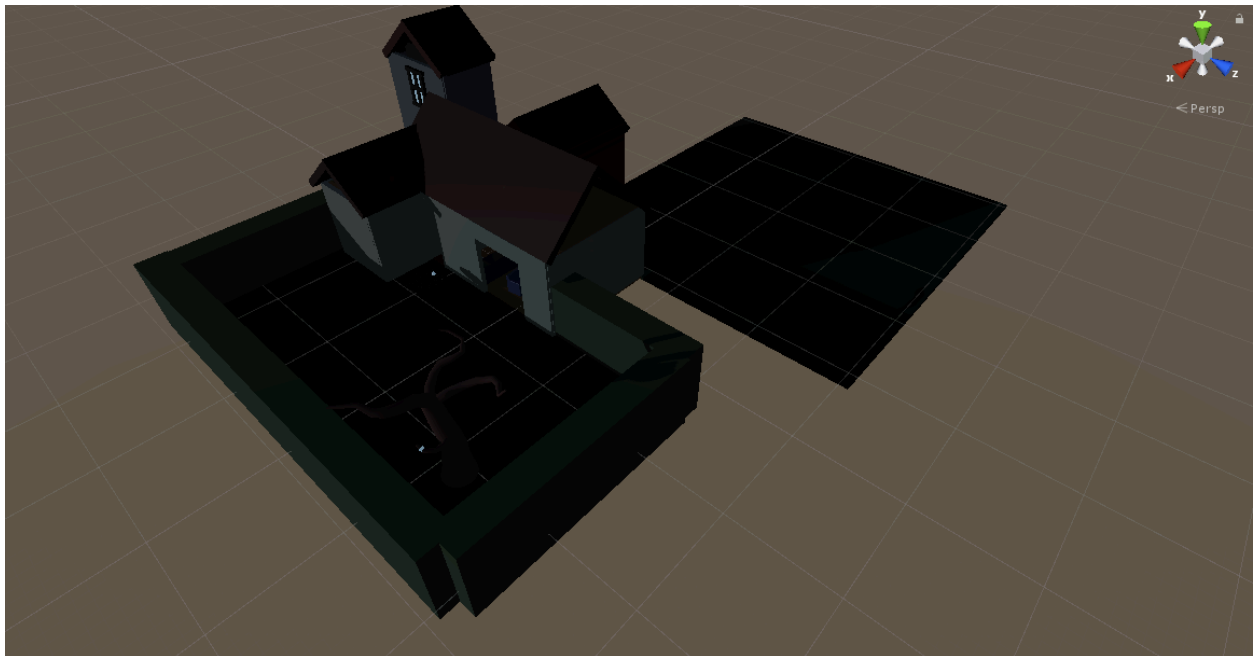
We feel that the finished level ended up transmitting what we wanted in terms of space.











However, feedback indicated that we were failing in the “diegetic and semi-diegetic” criteria: highlighting everything a reflective silver texture was either far, far too obvious or far too obscure and blended in. To correct this, we adapted the function of the Specterscope to act as both a defensive tool and investigative tool using the same rolls of limited film.

The “updated” Specterscope can:

1. Reveal ghostly presences on interactable items and other clues.
2. Scare away a pursuing ghost.

3. Attract a ghost to the players location or aggro a ghost hiding in the room.

In doing so, we think we're making the Specterscop a more valuable tool and reducing the non-diegetic information. At the same time, we're making film more valuable and scarce resources, thus increasing the resource management we think would motivate players to explore.

We also thought that our protagonist could be "well-attuned" to the paranormal, and thus be able to passively hear ghostly echoes that hint towards certain clues or items.