Emotional

Portfolio

Jason

1 Animation: Uncivilized
2 Game: Play Time
3 Game: Death Of The Showman
4 Game: Die Hard
5 Illustrations

Designer



Beijing Normal-Hong Kong Baptist University - BNBU



About Me!

My name is Zhang Leyin. Now you are looking at my portfolio.

Its name is Emotion Trigger. This is because I believe video games and animations allow us to experience the emotions we might just feel once in our lifetime. From the sinking sunset in another planet to the memorable friendship you build with different characters you met in all sort of adventures, this ever changing media has offered me so much joy. That is why I would like to share my passion with you. For me, making these games is the most enjoyable game ever. You never know what is waiting for you the next day you wake up and the things you make do connect people together, even though they may speak different languages.

It helps find your people. It is magic. It is emotional trigger.

Used Assets:
Mocap Series: Parkour-Mocap Motion Studio
sliding animation-Nexaframe Production
Teleportation System（VFX+Blueprints)-Rimaye.Std
Blood Starter VFX Pack -FX Cat UA
Robot 14-cglib team
Cyber Punk Runner-Raka Samudera
Fluid Flux- ImaginaryBlend
Paragon: Wraith -Epic Games
Sci-Fi Skyscrapers Buildings-No Mad Studios
Sci-Fi Spaceship Hangar | Futuristic Industrial Dock Environment Pack -Leartes Studios

1 Uncivilized

Individual Projectt

Time: 2 min

Software: Unreal Engine 5

An adventure story takes place on a distant alien planet.



Uncivilized
化外之民

Click the Bilibili icon to watch



Concept

The animation began with a set of images: the protagonist descending in an elevator, red light flickering across him; soldiers pursuing him from above, blue headlights cutting through smoke. The film has no dialogue — everything is told through image and sound. It follows an assassin in the distant future killing a city's ruler, set in a cold sci-fi tone full of explosions and suspense, but interwoven with dream sequences and "television," an oddly antiquated medium for its era, creating a deliberate confusion. The subject is dark and serious, but what I wanted to convey was rebellion, hope, and passion.

dynamic tension



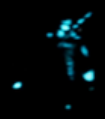
The plot of the short film is mainly inspired by the first trailer released by Assassin's Creed 1, giving me the idea of illustrating a similar assassination.



During the final assassination in many AC franchise games, the target will be brought to an unrealistic realm. In this film, I bring him to a space which is largely inspired by the red room in Twin Peaks.



Movement&Performance



The mirror reflects the assassin running beside his target



The escape of the assassin begins with him running from the bullets, while his shadow is casting on the wall beside him



The assassin glides to avoid hitting the barrier, some particle effects were added beneath him



At the end, he uses a parkour move to escape. The camera rotates dramatically to enhance the movement.

The character moves at high speed throughout — the transition from sliding to leaping off a building conveys his agility and decisiveness as an assassin. If I had to choose one movement to define his personality, it would be standing perfectly still: composed and effortlessly in control**.**



This shot places his target in the center of the frame, surrounded by steam and red glowing light, which makes the audience assume that he is in control of the situation.

replacing





This sequence combines the red room in *Twin Peaks* and the statue of Artemis

Timing&Pacing

The emotional arc rises slowly and peaks at the end — the turning point is when the ruler crosses into the assassin's illusion and the frame suddenly brightens, after which the music takes over. From *there,* I wanted viewers to stop trying to understand the plot and simply immerse themselves. *Shots of the ruler walking atop a high-rise before his death were slowed down to create blur and confusion*; ***a brief pause before the fatal bullet contrasts with the explosion that follows*****, building on earlier cues like the flickering statue, chaotic footsteps, and screen static to produce shock.**







entering the vision









Visual&Technical

Color serves the theme directly: blue represents the ruler's cold, ordered dominance; red represents the danger and unknown of the assassin's illusion, with red and blue light through smoke creating a hazy, immersive look. Editing was the most time-consuming stage, requiring many reshoots; fast cutting and sightline-obscuring camera techniques helped mask transition flaws without sacrificing quality. Technically, Unreal Engine and Level Sequence enabled fast, high-quality real-time rendering, while Tripo generated the goddess statue and Seedance produced the in-scene footage paying homage to *The Twilight Zone*.

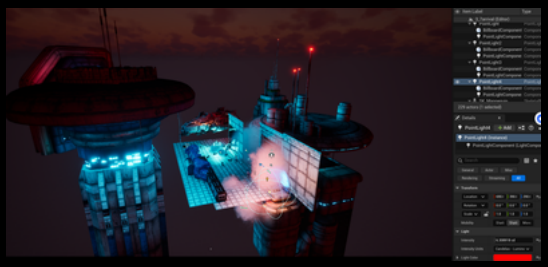




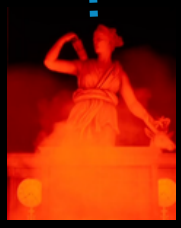


The transition from blue to red represents the appearance of danger



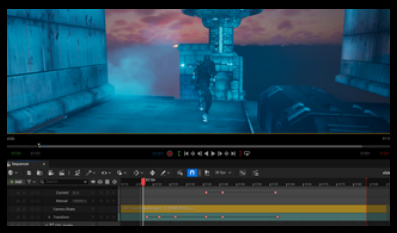


adjusting the light in UE 5





adding camera shake and movement to the final camera cuts



Critical Reflection





If redone, I'd add a segment establishing the ruler's impact on the city's residents, paired with poetic narration to deepen the emotional weight. Compared to my game level design work, this project revealed my reliance on visual impact and musical rhythm over text, favoring symbolic narrative elements instead. Viewers may misread the nature of the illusion or the relationship between the assassin and his target — but that doesn't concern me, as long as they come away with a glimpse of this strange, unsettling world.

Credits
Horror Engine—TansuErgene
Cigar Room Environment—Hane Studios
Twin Peak—David Lynch
Everything In Its Right Place—Radiohead
Dance Of The Dream Man (Inst.)- Angelo Badalamenti

2 Play Time

Individual Projectt

Time: 8 min (Including A Trailer)

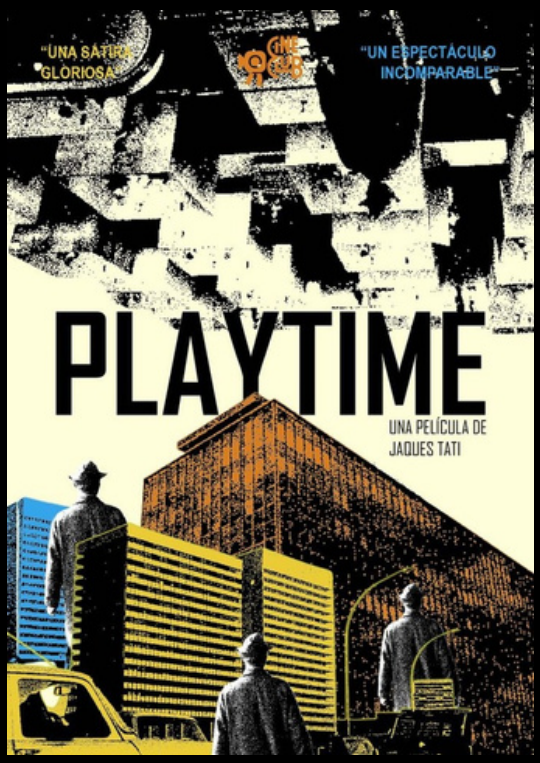
Software: Unreal Engine 5

Leverage interactive mechanics between items within the level, allowing players to clear obstacles in their path. Create an expressive environment within a confined space.

.



Click the Bilibili icon to watch the playthrough



The transition of space and time in this film deeply fascinated me, giving me the idea of creating a game with this name. I believe games are supposed to be fun; therefore, PlayTime sounds like a good name.



This game is developed on the UE template Horror Engine. This template provides me with multiple mechanics, giving me lots of insight into designing puzzles.

Idea Generation

The project was inspired by the film Playtime. I wanted to design the game's progression around existing tools, using puzzles and music as the driving mechanics. My criterion for selecting ideas was whether they were interesting and distinctive enough to convey the game's particular atmosphere and emotional tone. The concept went through one major pivot before taking its final form: I originally intended to trace the history of video games, or the history of the medium itself, through the level progression. This proved too complex, so I abandoned it in favor of a more focused, puzzle-and-music-driven experience.



Two Main Mechanics

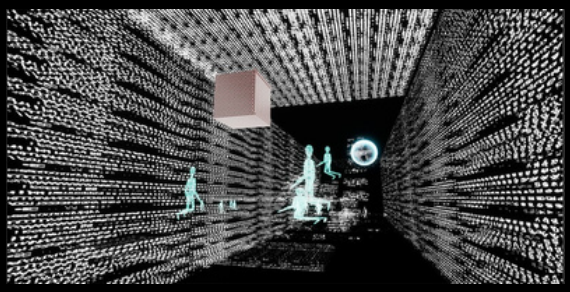
Gather the information through hearing different ambient sounds throughout the levels

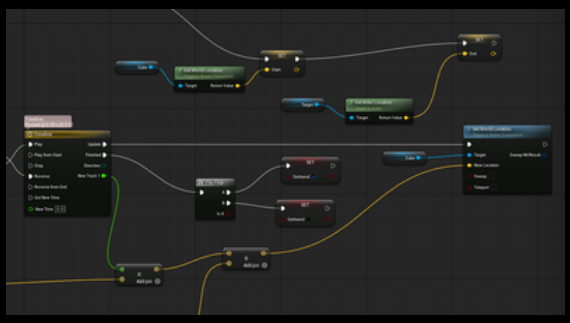


Testing the abilities of different items by clicking on them

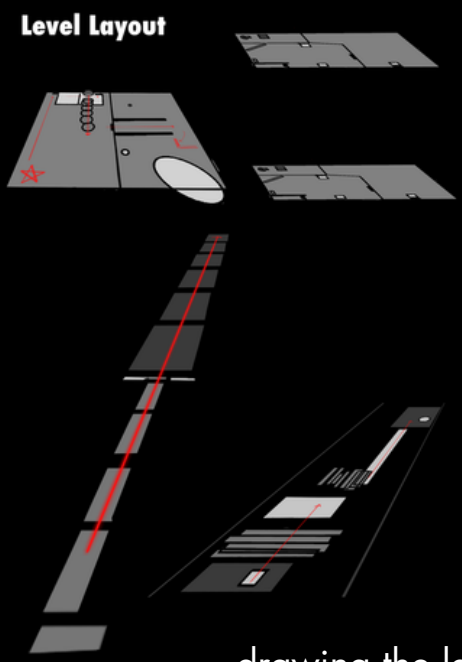
Management

The stage most prone to delay in my timeline was the conceptual phase, where I sometimes abandoned promising ideas too early. For instance, platforming initially seemed like a dated mechanic, but once I developed it further, I found that the materials and arrangement of the platforms could significantly increase the sense of fun. A concrete example of resolving the tension between perfectionism and deadlines was cutting a planned chase sequence from the level, since it would have disrupted the player's exploratory rhythm and clashed with the game's overall tone.

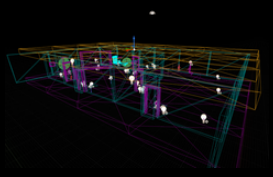




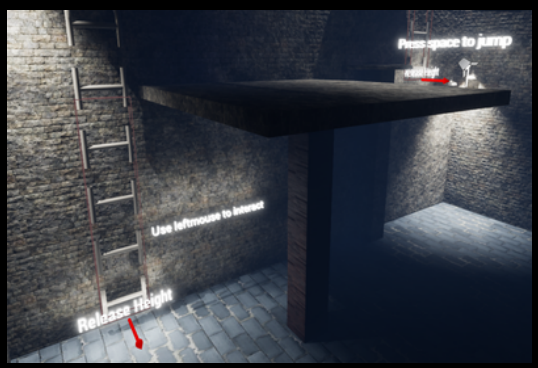
Use Blueprints to control the movement of different platforms



drawing the level layout



The Wireframe Window In UE 5



instructions are placed throughout the first level

Creative Process

My iterative process can be summarized in three stages: the conceptual stage, where I gathered reference images, mood boards, and music; the production stage, where I built a basic white box for the level and then expanded its space and structure on top of the puzzle logic; and the refinement stage, where I designed specific puzzles and paired them with sound design. One playtest revealed that players found the puzzles too difficult to solve, so I lowered the difficulty and made object interactions more intuitive. In balancing personal expression against player readability, I consistently prioritized readability and a smooth path to completion first, treating environmental design and atmosphere-building as secondary considerations.

Becoming An Indie Game In The Future

I believe the target audience for this project, were it brought to market, would be players who enjoy independent games and appreciate distinctive aesthetic styles. Regarding sustainability, I have been adding a complete narrative to the game and strengthening the connections between levels, giving it potential as a standalone product beyond the portfolio context. This new game I have been making is called Writer's Block, by cliking the Play icon below, you can watch the trailer I have made for it.



The future development of this game will largely be inspired by The Stanley Parable. There will be a narrator telling the player what to do but it will be the player's choice whether to obey her.

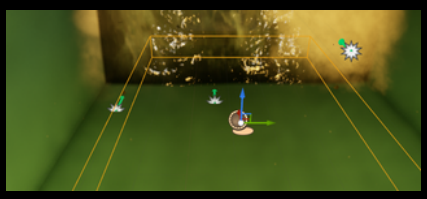
play

118 62 5

THE FEEDBACK OF THIS TRAILER ON LITTLE RED NOTE

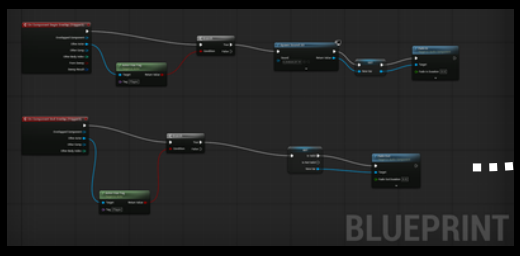


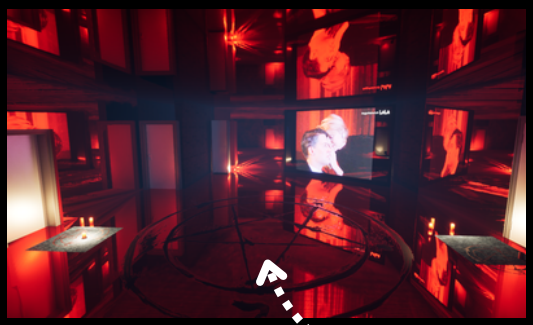
Different styles of music from Radiohead are played throughout the level



Technical Skills

On the technical side, the sound-triggering effect for specific areas was implemented using zone-based triggers, with sound stopping once the player left the area. Because the game has no text, I relied on sound and environment to carry the narrative, working to achieve maximum expressiveness with limited art resources — this was the primary reason for choosing this particular toolchain over alternatives. If I had to summarize the most technically demanding part of this project in one sentence, it would be the level design and sound design.





Candles, red lights, footage from Twin Peak, and mysterious patterns were added to the scene, creating an unrealistic atmosphere.



Used Assets:
AGLS- Jakub W
THE CARNIVAL-[Theme Park/Amusement Park]- Meshingun Studio
[SCANS]- Ruined Crypt- Scans Factory
Apocalypse- Jesper Kyd

3 Death Of The Showman

Individual Projectt

Time: 10 min

Software: Unreal Engine 5

An adventure story takes place on an alien planet.



Click the Bilibili icon to watch the playthrough

Gameplay

Targeting& Actions





Aim at the target then fire with calm and confidence



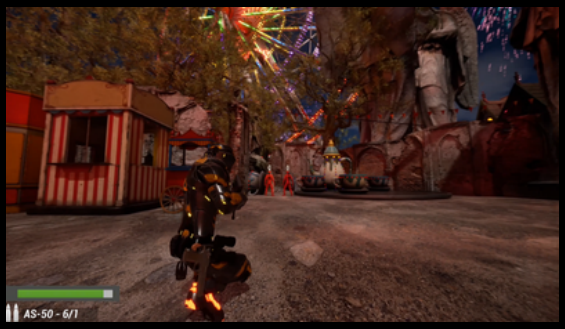
Observation& Decision Making



Confirm the target at the beginning of the level



Notice the locations of enemies, decide whether to fight against them or find another way to sneak in



Collecting Items





Different items are placed throughout the level. Grenades will help elimnate a squad in a short time, while the bandage can heal the player's character

Path Finding





Players have to figure out the best way to approach their target. From sliding down the ropes to jumping from one pillar to another, all roads lead to Rome

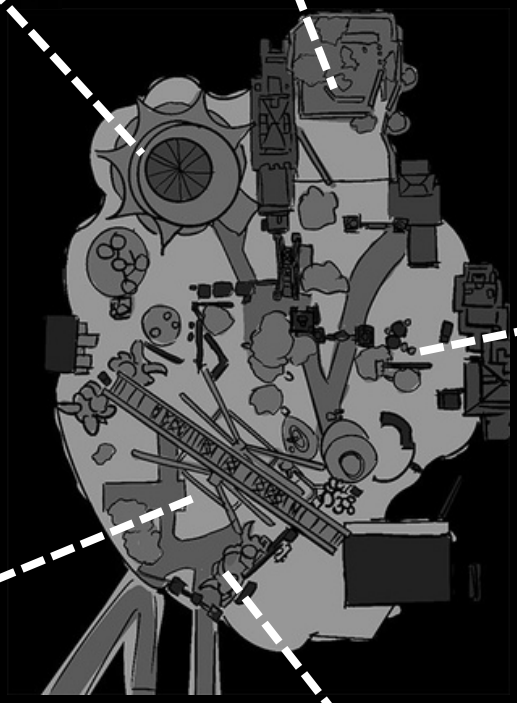
Level Sequence



- Beginning with a ruined graveyard
- Rendering the atmosphere of horror and danger
- Giving the player the space to adjust the setting and control



- The circus served as a small checkpoint for the players
- The first main visual target
- Light up the map





- Player travels across the different platforms by sliding down the ropes
- Add the feeling of adventure
- A fast way to travel to different places



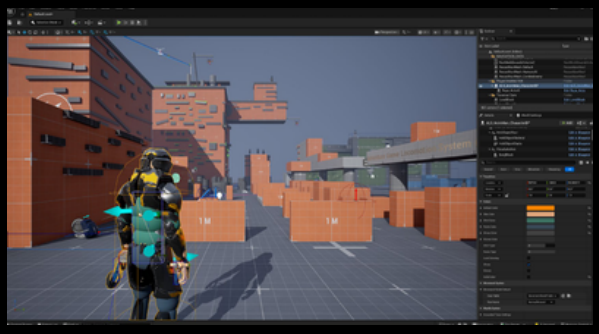
- The Ferris Wheel is the most important visual target throughout the level
- The player gets to climb onto it and assassinate the target
- Match the theme ‘Death of the Showman’
- Guide the player

- The player drives the car to escape
- A chance for the player to catch a breather
- Increase the diversity of interactions



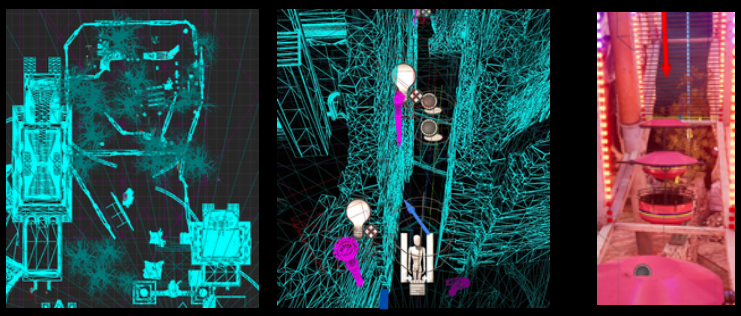
Production Process

1. Preliminary Research (5.15–5.21): Evaluated and abandoned the retro PSX style, shifted focus to adventure games' level-flow analysis, then purchased the AGLS plugin and completed basic feature testing.



replacing the character model,
testing the parkour features





wireframe view of
the ruins entrance



players have to move the rocks to get through the door, or
hide inside moving vehicles to pass the guards

2. Environment Blockout (5.25–5.31): Built three distinct areas — ruins entrance, Ferris wheel, and amusement park — and designed three optional routes (direct assault + sniping from the ferris wheel, grappling hook/zipline bypass, and stealth crawling into sniping position), while iterating repeatedly on AI difficulty, zipline collision bugs, and unclear route guidance.

3. Polish Phase (6.1–6.8): Created an opening title sequence, added trigger-based background music and instructions, introduced moving vehicles as navigation cues, used torches, balloons, and question-mark signs to resolve player disorientation, experimented with the Chaos destruction system, and finally recorded in-game dialogue cutscenes and edited a gameplay demo.





wireframe view and lit view of the whole level

4 Die Hard

Individual Projectt

Used Assets:
Third Person Kit- Marcin Matuszczyk
Cyber Punk Runner- Raka Samudera
Sci-Fi Skyscrapers Buildings- No Mad Studios
Sci-Fi Spaceship Hangar | Futuristic Industrial
Dock Environment Pack- Leartes Studios
AGLS- Jakub W
Voyager 3D Model- NASA
Modern Art Museum Environment- PainterNur
Rain Forest Pack- Kaizen Digital Interactive
Wherever You Go- The Avalanchers

The video game Die Hard contains two levels. In the first level, player enters from outside the building, makes their way in from the first floor, and takes an elevator all the way up to the highest level. Portals and other mechanical devices are used to reach different locations. On the second level, i designed a third-person shooter sequence that progresses from top to bottom, set in a confined indoor environment. Players leverage interactive elements (traps, elevators, cover systems, etc.) within the level to gain tactical high-ground advantages.



Time: 10 min

Software: Unreal Engine 5

Click the Bilibili icon to watch the playthrough

Inspiration





Kill Bill 1

Sifu Level 3 Museum







Dishonored 2: The Clockwork Mansion

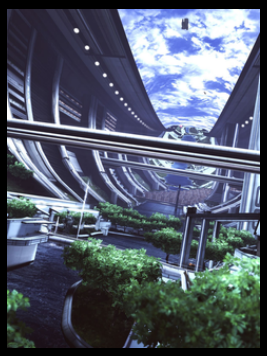
Mass Effect — The Citadel



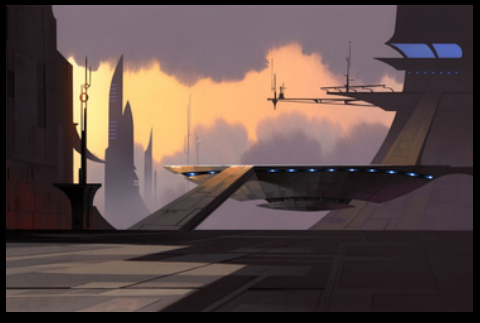
The initial spark for this project came from watching *Kill Bill*, combined with my long-standing appreciation for Brutalist architecture. This led to the idea of building a level in a similar aesthetic style. On top of this, I incorporated science-fiction elements, aiming to challenge myself to enrich and diversify the scene.

Among the scattered ideas I had, I selected the final concept based on three criteria: whether it fit the narrative setting, whether it could fully showcase core level-design elements, and whether it would enhance player immersion.

Star Wars Episode V: The Empire Strikes Back — Cloud City







Level 1

The player arrives at the facility via grappling hook and flying truck, then enters the topmost level of the building.

Floor 4: First Encounter

Scripted Event / Cinematic: First meeting with the Boss — the entrance closes behind the player.

Floor 3: Encounter — Stairs, Battle at the Museum Exhibition Hall

Scripted Event / Cinematic: Walls shift, floors move.

Floor 2: Encounter

Scripted Event / Cinematic: The facilities from Floor 3 shift down to Floor 2 — the player must adapt to the changing environment in time.

Floor 1: Climb Downward — Triggers a Cutscene

Scripted Event / Cinematic: The player encounters the Boss.



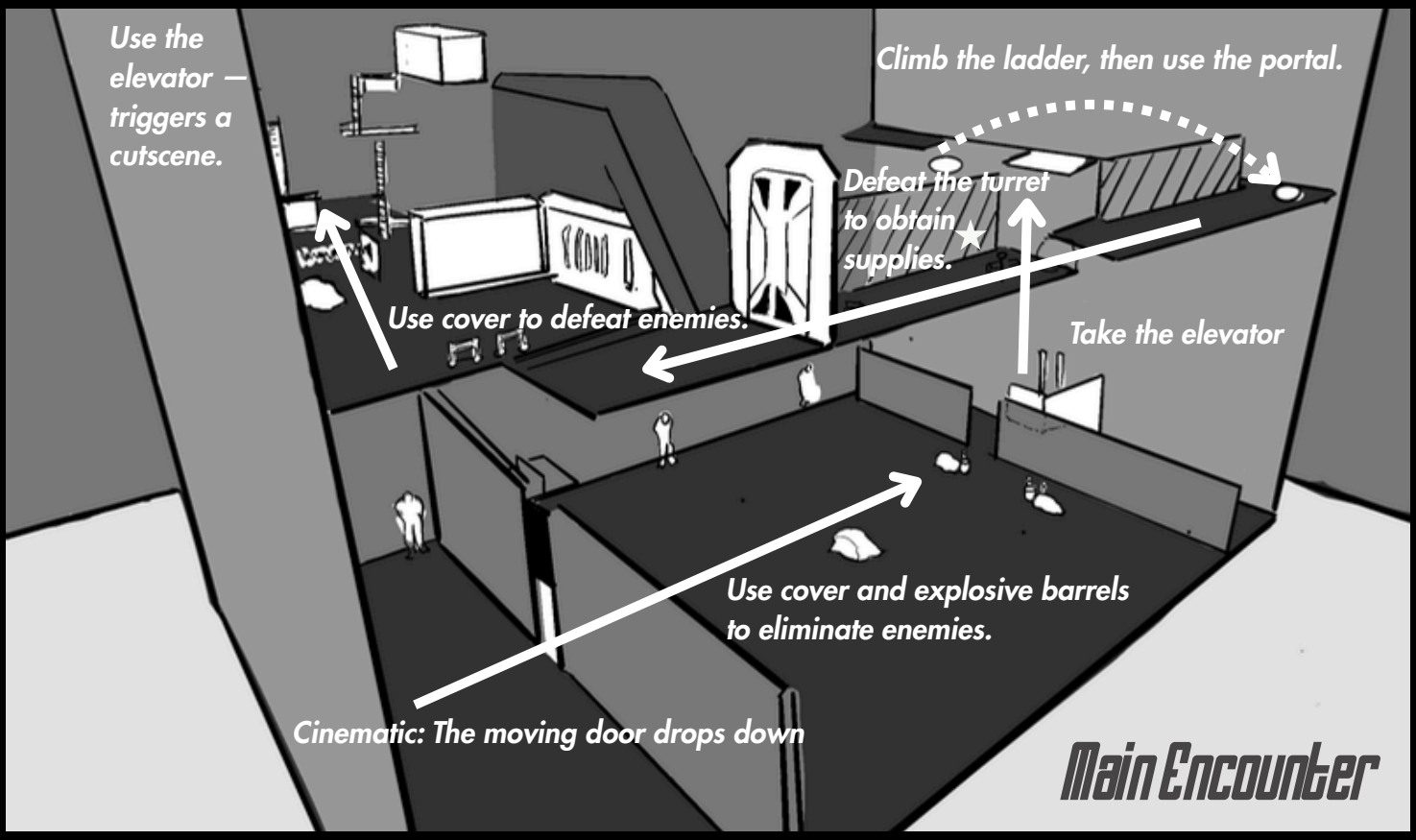
Level 2



Arrive at the level start point. Players get to observe the outside of the building before actually going in.



Defeat the turrets and drones to enter the building interior. Players get to practice their shooting skills.









Cutscene transitions into the Boss fight.

- *Put trigger volume to smoothly transit to the animation*
- *Fog and flying cars were added to create the vibe of Cloud City*
- *Using different camera composition to emphasize the different sizes between player and his enemy*

5 Illustrations



fan art for Dorohedoro



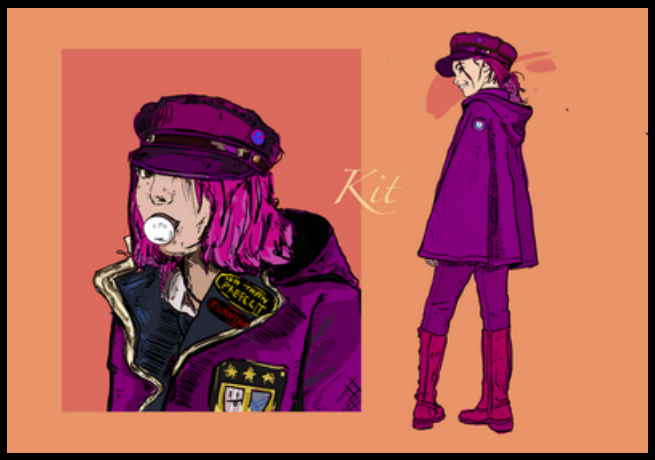
sci-fi character design : Elle



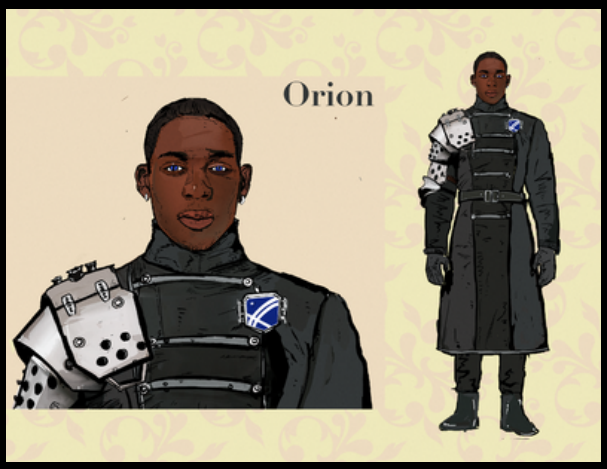
fan art for Dorohedoro



sci-fi character design : Cabbie



sci-fi character design : Kit



sci-fi character design : Orion

Thank You!



Screenshots from *Mass Effect*

"Gamers can feel when developers are passionate about their games. They can smell it like a dog smells fear. Don't be afraid to hold onto your unique vision: just be aware that it may not turn out exactly how you envisioned."

— Scott Rogers, *Level Up!: The Guide to Great Video Game Design*