

VR2 - Level Design

Rens van Aggelen

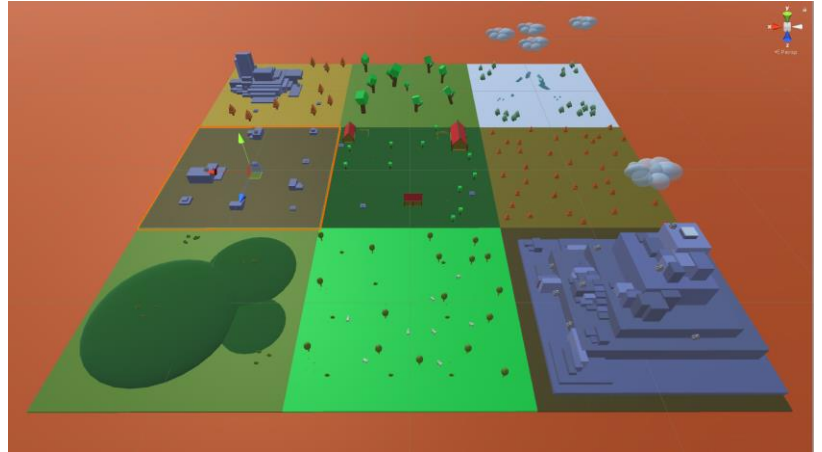
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VR2: Role specific training: Game Designer

Odette Jansen

User Experience:

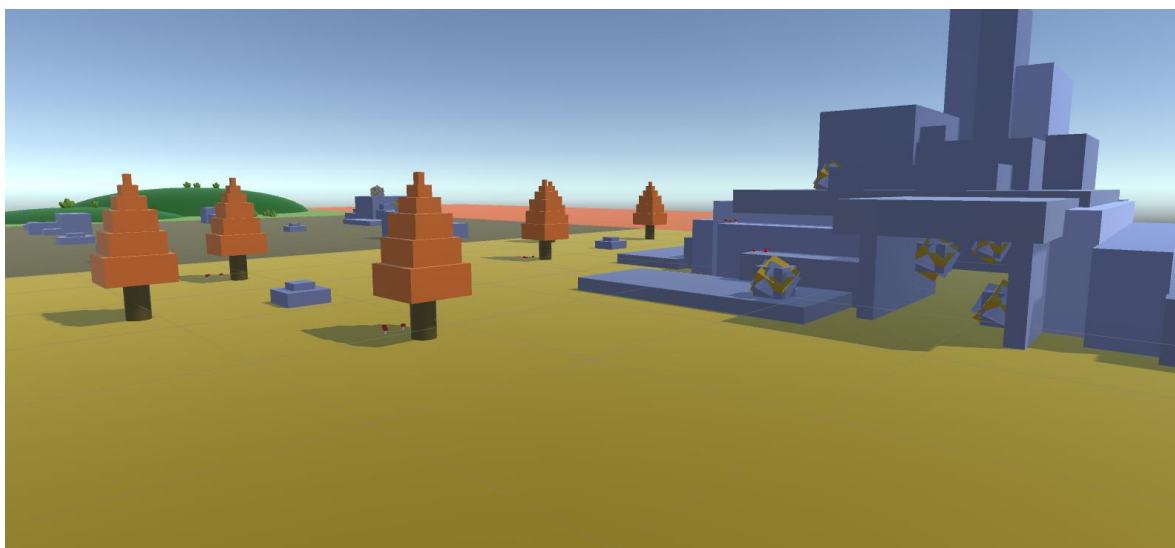
The intended user experience was to spawn the player on one of the 8 grid tiles, surrounding the village. The player can then choose to explore or destroy trees, rocks, or ore when encountered to collect wood, stone, and gold respectively. I want the player to learn and experience what interactions are possible in the level, such as the zombies chasing and damaging the player if he or she dares coming too close.



Sheep will turn tail and run away if the player approaches them. The experience I want to give the player is that they are part of a world, and I want them to feel curious and adventurous. The player also has a great deal of freedom so in part they can choose what their experience is going to be like, if they want to destroy all the destructible objects, or liberate the town from zombies they can do so.

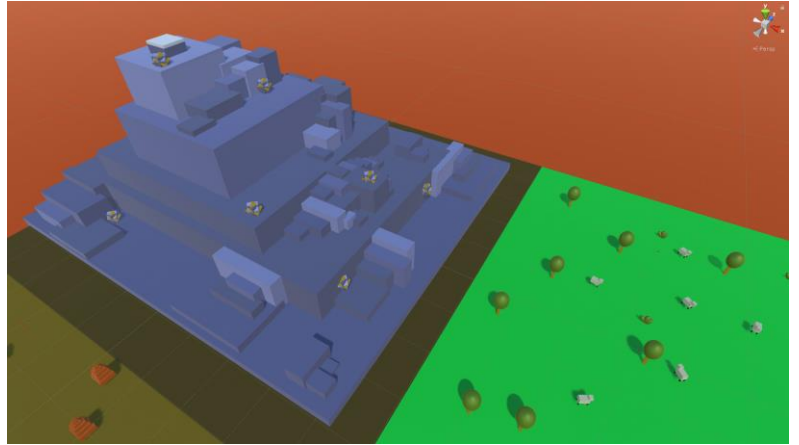
Design Process:

I wanted to create a game where the grids seen in game are placed randomly around the village, as I couldn't program this I designed the scene for the most part to be static. I then experimented with creating low poly assets to populate the tiles. Each tile was designed to give a different feeling and look, to showcase how the final game would look when the tiles are placed randomly. I populated the tiles, and created AI for the enemy creatures to follow the player when the player gets too close. Using the health system attached to the player and enemy creatures, I was able to make some objects destroyable. From there iterated till I was able to drop resources from the destroyed creatures to increase the interactivity within the level.



Level Description:

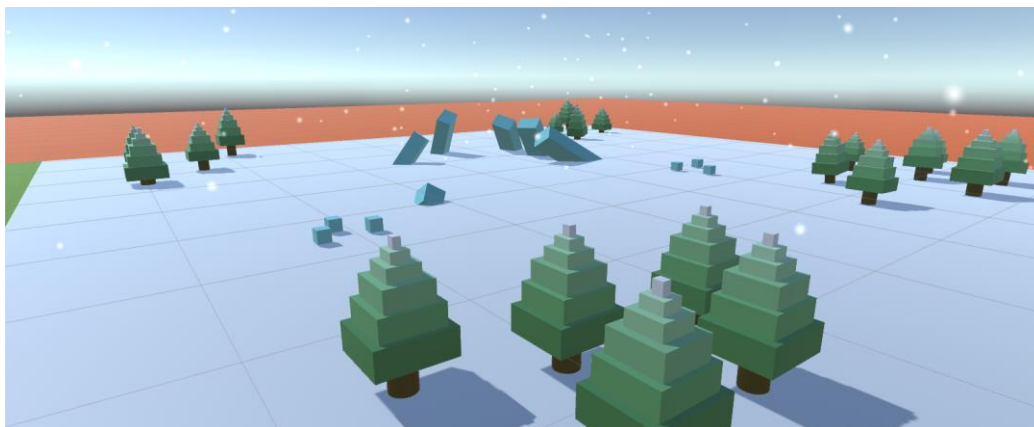
I tried creating unique landmarks per tile to let the player orient themselves by them. As seen in the picture, the red roofs of the houses in the village, a mountain, a cave, forests, hills, and a snow landscape. I wanted to create an open level allowing the player to explore and adventure at their own leisure and therefore didn't apply many chokepoints as a design. However, the cave could be a chokepoint as the player can enter it and get cornered by the zombie's present.



Pacing depends on what the player intends to do, if the player ventures into the middle tile he or she can be chased by zombies which may or not be a difficult situation for the player to address. The level should emphasize exploration and therefore is very open.

From the start, I wanted the emphasis to be on the level design, creating the sense of a large world, and to focus on the code that makes that happen. Therefore, for the art I focused on low polygon assets created in Unity, as that iterates fast. I created all the assets myself, looking either at tutorials or references. To make the level feel more alive and like a world, I looked into creating particle systems to simulate wind, snow, and rain for specific tiles.

The level is specifically designed as an open-world sandbox game where the player set his or her own goals to pursue. Where the player needs to collect resources to build and progress their village. With this in mind some tiles such as the forests don't have focal points per se, as I want the focus to lie on the interactive elements within the elements to make it feel like a living world. The mountain was designed to be focal point because of its size and features many assets to improve its quality with weather effects and mineable ore.



Discussion:

For the future, I would improve the transition between tiles to allow the players to maintain a sense of immersion. Going from one tile to another is rather abrupt in this build. This can be achieved by creating transition tiles.

Furthermore, the tiles are large, if I quarter all the tiles you can rearrange them in different configurations when spawning them, increasing the variance of tiles.

I would improve the flow and pacing of the game by creating more assets which the player can interact, creating more activities for the player to do. Things like crafting, and systems such as hunger and inventories.

I want to make leaving the village feel like a risk and adventure, like you are leaving the relatively safe village to venture forth into the unknown to hunt and gather for resources.

