



Light After Death

Judge the Moth by the Beauty of the Candle

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Overview

Light After Death is a 3rd Person Art Game (similar to Flower by thatgamecompany). You play as a moth that is flying towards a big light, guided by smaller ones, while avoiding enemies. The game starts off extremely difficult; you will die almost immediately. But the moth will be reborn and your previous deaths will appear and run in the game world alongside your current playthrough, making the challenge of the game easier.

Genre

Casual Art Adventure

Pitch

A concept wherein the game gets easier after every death, requiring patience and perseverance. The game centers around trial & error, and encourages exploration of the game world to ensure that the level is completed as efficiently as possible.

Core Objectives

Reach the big fire. Do it in as few deaths as possible. Explore!

Player Description

The target audience for our game is casual gamers of any age or gender. Casual gamers will find that Light After Death does not have a steep learning curve, and it does not require them to be committed to playing for long periods of time.

Our game appeals to Richard Bartle's classification of Explorer and Achiever player types. Explorers are able to travel freely through the game's open environment, discovering new and exciting objects without having to worry about it affecting their ability to complete the level. Achiever's will be drawn towards the satisfaction of completing a level in the fewest number of deaths. They'll also be rewarded with unique cosmetic upgrades for their achievements.

Light After Death has a single player versus game, game structure.

The objective of the game falls into the exploration category, but also includes elements of escape, since the player's main goal is to reach the final light at the end.

Procedures

The speed at which the player travels will remain constant and uncontrollable by the player. Players use the WASD keys on the keyboard to control the movement of the moth.

Rules

As they fly towards the big light in the distance, they will have to avoid enemies and obstacles, all the while making sure to stay close to a source of light. We are also thinking about how the player's proximity to light will affect their movement. One idea is that, the closer the player is to the source of light, the stronger the force of gravity is, essentially pulling the player into the light. If they stay in the light for too long, they will die. If players straggle too far away from a light source, their energy levels will fall. We believe that the average playtime for Light After Death will be around 10-15 minutes.

Resources

Once a player's energy level reaches zero, they will die. The main platform the game will run on is PC, but we believe it could also be extended to mobile. To create an even more immersive experience, we could utilize the built-in accelerometer to allow players to control the movement of the moth by rotating and tilting their devices.

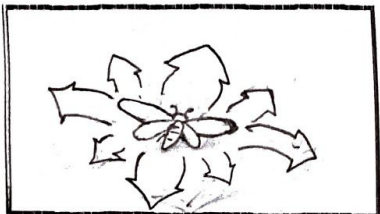
The feature that sets our game apart from other games in this genre is the idea of reincarnation. Multiple trials through a level build upon each other, and affect the gameplay of each. For example, one narrative element that we plan on having is an NPC enemy that will kill the player, ending their first try. This death will always be triggered once the player reaches a certain distance traveled towards the goal. However, on the player's second try, they will see a ghost moth, replicating the first try's movement path exactly as it happened. Thus, once the player reaches the inevitable first death, they will watch the ghost moth be killed, and they can then proceed further into the level. This idea is similar to Mario Kart's *Ghosts* feature, where players race against semi-transparent recordings of previous trials.



(Player moth following the ghost moth's movement path)

Title Moth Game

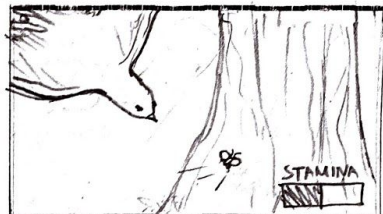
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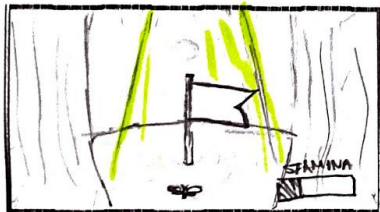
3D movement in all directions
(Player controls the moth's movement)



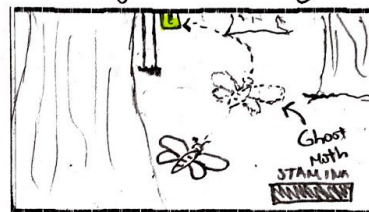
Player should fly towards the
closest light source in order to stay alive



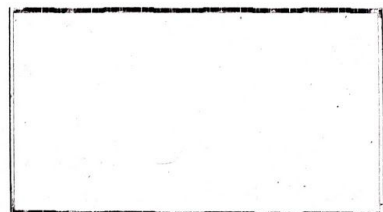
Avoid obstacles and enemies



Once player reaches end point,
player is transported onto the next level



Once player's energy level reaches zero,
player will respawn back to the starting point
with additional ghost moth.

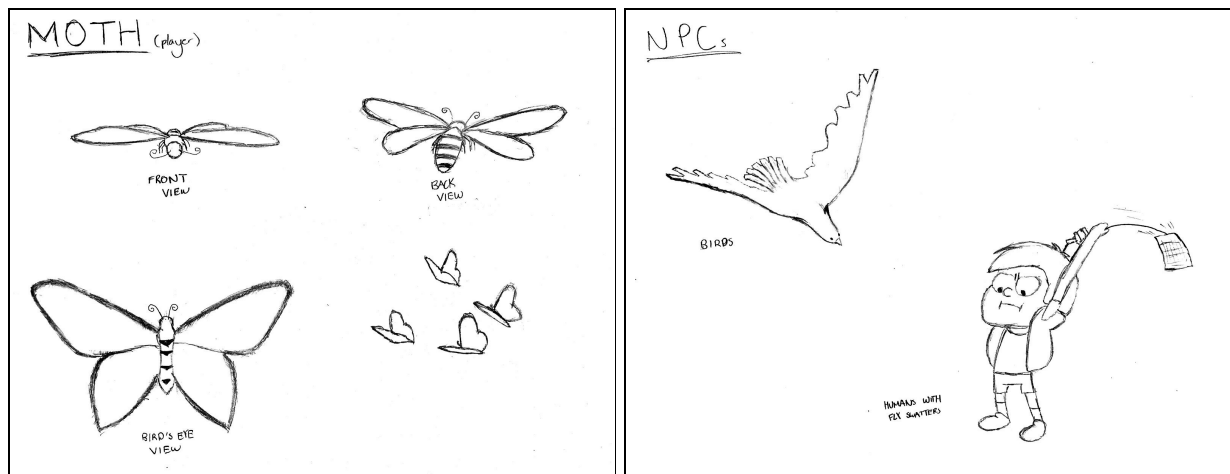


Mechanics, Features, & Assets

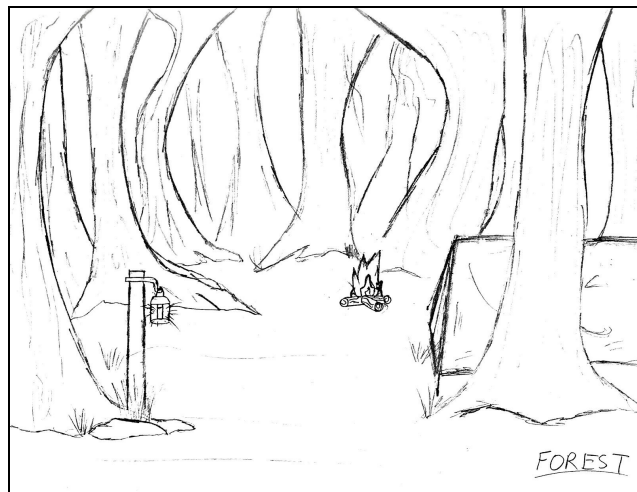
Player Mechanics

The moth's flight movement is a primary mechanic, where the player travels around the game world with a set speed in a third person view. A stamina bar will also be implemented, which replenishes every time the moth is close to a light source and decreases when it's in the dark. In addition, players will experience different gravities depending on the proximity to light. There are no checkpoints, which means that players are encouraged to explore the environment so that they can reach the end point of the level as efficiently as possible. Being near certain items e.g. mothballs will slow down your flight, leaving you susceptible to enemy attacks. There will be NPCs involved such as birds attacking from above and humans trying to swat the moth/s away.

Characters



Game World



The game world takes place near a camping spot located inside a heavily wooded forest.

Artifacts

There will be enemy birds and humans who are all part of the storyline since they'll try to attack you regardless. Each time the player dies, a ghost moth will spawn at the starting point with the sole purpose to reenact the player's movement path that was done previously before its death. They act as a "friend" that will guide the player to the end point and proceed onwards to the next level. Since the ghost moth/s represent the player's past life, the player will not be able to interact with them.

Story

Light After Death explores the idea of reincarnation and sacrifice. Any spiritual meanings derived from the game are open to each player's own interpretation.

Justification of the Design

The game centers around an obstacle course challenge through which the player, as the moth, flies. The precedent for this exists in many games wherein flight is the primary mechanic. The originality of the game is in how, due the difficulty of the obstacle course, the moth will die frequently. Once the player realizes that all of the previous playthroughs affect the current one by distracting enemies, the player can strategize how to die in early playthroughs so that the later ones are increasingly easy and efficient.

Timeline

- **9/18:** Create mood board for aesthetics
- **9/23:** Concept Art
- **9/25:** Storyboard
- **9/25:** Learn Unity Basics
- **9/29:** Complete Game Design Doc
- **10/6:** Implement Base Game mechanics
- **10/11:** Play testing
- **10/14:** Revised Design Doc & Playtesting Report
- **11/06:** Integrated aesthetics into unity game
- **11/13:** Revised Design Doc, Playtesting Report and Prototype 2
- **11/20:** Bug Fixing
- **11/24:** Beta code
- **11/27:** Polishing
- **12/03:** Gold code
- **12/03:** Trailer

Prototyping

As shown in the timeline above, our first prototyping concerns will be around implementing the basic game mechanics so that we can better judge playability and feasibility. The biggest foreseeable development challenge will be recording and replaying the player's moth movements during subsequent plays. Additionally, creating satisfying flying physics for the player's moth will be both a technical challenge and a necessity for a fun game. Due to our pre-existing C# and Javascript programming skills, we have all but settled on Unity as our game engine of choice. The myriad of resources that exist online for Unity will help immensely with both the flying physics and replaying the moth movements.

Game engine: Unity

Version control: GitHub

Challenges & Risks

One of the big design challenges we foresee is communicating the death and rebirth game mechanic to the player. We need the player to learn that death is a necessary part of the game to prevent frustration and allow them to use it to their advantage. This issue will be something to watch out for in playtesting, which will give us a better idea of how seriously we need to treat it. A possible mitigation, however, might be to use different coloured or patterned moths to hint to the player that the other moths on the screen are replays of their previous game.

When it comes to potential risks surrounding the development of Light After Death, we have pretty standard concerns. There's a potential that the game mechanics won't make for a fun game and the experience falls flat. We also have technical concerns surrounding implementing these game mechanics. While we have 2 developers on the team, we don't have a massive amount of Unity experience between us so there will undoubtedly be a learning curve.

While our current plans are to create a 3rd person, 3D flight game, there are alternate ways we could explore our game mechanics using a different perspective. We could implement our game using a top down, birds eye view. A 2.5D, side scrolling view could be another way to implement the same mechanics.

When it comes to next steps, we first want to nail down the aesthetics and style of the game. To achieve this we will compile mood boards including art and precedence similar to what we want in our own game. We will then generate our own concept art

and begin storyboarding. Another step that we want to complete as early as possible is the implementation of the basic functionality in a playable Unity demo so we can assess how enjoying the game is, and re-calibrate if need be.

Summary

Light After Death is an art game that not only encourages players to play past their failure, but also strategize on how to fail effectively for a more efficient victory.

The moth gains life from light, but many of the light sources are too dangerous to get too close. There are many other things trying to harm the moth, and death is certain. But the moth will be reborn and help its future self be successful. A true tale of sacrifice, in pursuit of a better self.