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## Abandoned spaces

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ABANDONED SPACES

BY  
ANTHONY TATE

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF DESIGN, COLLEGE OF COMPUTING AND  
DIGITAL MEDIA OF DEPAUL UNIVERSITY IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE  
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE  
OF  
MASTER OF FINE ARTS IN GAME DESIGN

DEPAUL UNIVERSITY  
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College of Computing and Digital Media

## MFA Thesis Verification Form

This thesis has been read and approved by the thesis committee below according to the requirements of the School of Design graduate program and DePaul University.

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Title of dissertation: Abandoned Spaces

Date of Dissertation Defense: 3/10/ 2021

Michael DeAndra, Chair (Name printed not signed)

Allen Turner (Name printed not signed)

Caleb Foss (Name printed not signed)

\* A copy of this form has been signed, but may only be viewed after submission and approval of FERPA request letter.

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## **ABSTRACT**

The goal of this project is to show how color can display an emotional connection to the environment. How colors can be portrayed to human emotions without telling the audience. As well as having the audience imagining what kind of economy that used to be in the environment. The objective is to create a game that will tell a story from the environment and how colors are used to help tell a story of the environment. This thesis project is a game that attempts to show how colors can be related to emotions.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I want to give a special thanks to Michael DeAnda who took the time of his day to help me build this project. Michael has been a great help throughout the whole semester in the process of the project. I also wanted to thank Caleb Foss and Allen Turner for participating and providing feedback on the playtesting of the project. Finally, I want to thank all of the graduate students in the MFA program for participating and providing feedback throughout the whole process of the project. Lastly, I would like to thank DePaul University and the College of Computing and Digital Media for providing a safe, fun, and enlightening atmosphere throughout the years I spent as a graduate student at DePaul University.

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## CHAPTER 1

### **Description of Game**

Abandoned Spaces is a single-player first-person puzzle game. The target audience is casual gamers or students that are interested in environmental storytelling games. The goal of the game is to explore and clean out the building for potential buyers. As the player, you play as a house cleaner removing any trash or broken parts of the building into the container. The building has been vacant for at least a couple of months due to the previous tenants unable to pay their rent.

#### **Game Narrative:**

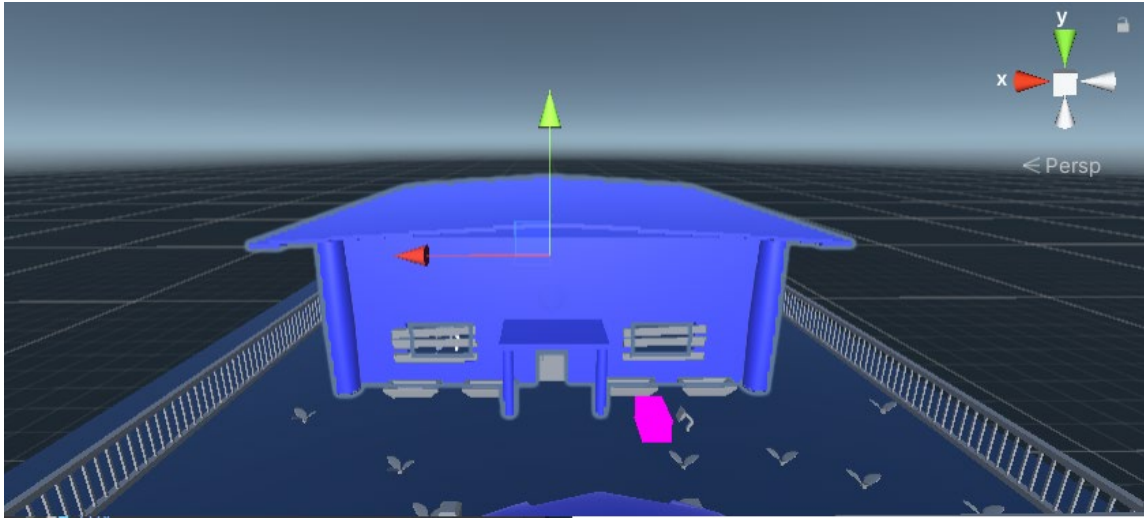
Through a series of object-based puzzles, players uncover the story of a low-class family that was unable to pay rent. The mother is trying to do the best for her son. However, she is always working late hours and struggles to raise a child of a single parent. The son is always home alone after school to an empty house. His father passed away at a young age and was born without siblings. The son also lacks friends nor doesn't have an idea of how to make friends.

#### **Puzzles prototypes & Designing Emotion**

When designing the puzzle, I want the visual aesthetics to show how the color blue can show sadness. My idea focuses on the visual aesthetic of the interactable objects. Players will pick up items that are personal to the previous family. These ideas were my perspective in showing color displaying sadness. Outside proportion, there will be a dead flower soaking in the rain. The player must locate and bring an umbrella to the soaked plant. When the player completes this action, a key will spawn into the level. Another puzzle idea is destroying items to



receive a goal. The players will use a sledgehammer to shatter a glass case. In the glass case is a light switch that unlocks a key to the next room.



## CHAPTER 2

### **Statement of Intent**

The goal of my thesis project is to show environmental storytelling. I explore how colors can relate to human emotions without telling the audience. My objective is to create a game that tells a story through colors, the environment, and puzzle design. Also, giving the audience thought of the living conditions of a low-income family. My game takes place in a house that used to belong to a low-income family because I wanted the game to show the experience of how a single mother lives. More specifically of how these types of families first start. From a parent starting from the bottom and working their way to a better life.

To convey emotion through the game, I focused on color theory and puzzle design. I want the players to feel what sadness is shown in games. Exploration in games can help teach players new mechanics and can potentially tell a story. Play can make them feel invested and may want to continue to understand the meaning of the game.

As for color theory, a specific color palette can set the mood of the game. Also, choosing that color palette can potentially generate emotions for the whole game. *Be more specific here, you focused on sadness, but you haven't really gone into how you develop that in the game. It's time to unpack that.*

## CHAPTER 3

### Link to the Game and Inputs

**WebGL Unity:**

<https://play.unity.com/mg/other/abandoned-spaces>

**DropBox:**

**Mac Build:**

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/j9zf26kh0ubwflh/FinalMacSub.app%20%282%29.zip?dl=0>

**Window Build:**

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/63nz22ggkmret2w/FinalWindowsSub.zip?dl=0>

**Controls:**

WASD: Movement

Mouse: to Scroll Camera

Left Mouse Click-Hold: Pickup Objects

Space: Jump

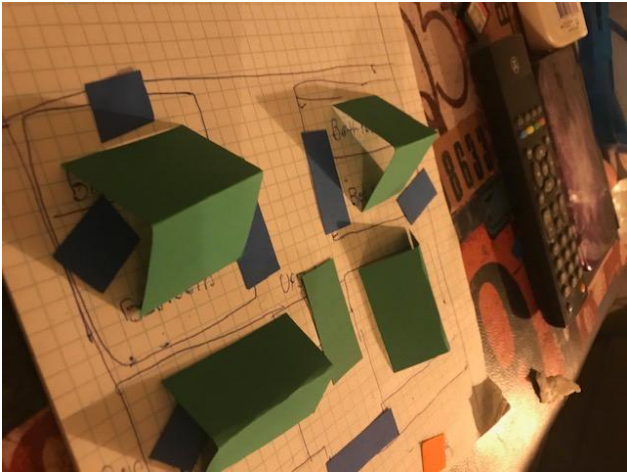
R key: To Restart Game



## APPENDIX 1

### Supporting Materials

**Paper Prototype image:**

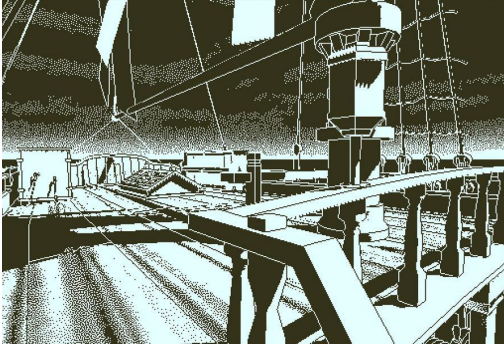


**Malkowski, Jennifer, and TreaAndrea M. Russworm. *Gaming Representation : Race, Gender, and Sexuality in Video Games*. Indiana University Press, 2017. EBSCOhost, [search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=1576850&site=ehost-live&scope=site](https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=1576850&site=ehost-live&scope=site).**

- This article explores the gaming industrial complex of gender, sexuality, race, and the ludic imagination in the twenty-first century. Heavy Rain is one of the examples that is used in this book. Particularly a character type called the femme fatale. The noir femme fatale offers an especially promising template that sexualized enough to a presumed hetero-male audience its presumed desire for women in games. The femme fatale also excludes the strength and complexity of the character that many payers would care about. Madison, the character of Heavy Rain, can hold a button of three to four options that she is thinking about during a scene. By allowing the player access to the enigmatic femme Fatales' thoughts is a promising accompaniment to making her a playable character. This idea can strengthen her bonds with the player and give her a more in-depth life in the game.

## REFERENCES/INSPIRATION

Return of the Obra - 3D design of the level



This game is about an 1802 fictional merchant ship, Obra Dinn, that is set out from London for the Orient with over 200 tons of trade goods. However, the merchant ship never reached the rendezvous point at the Cape of Good Hope for six months. This issue causes the merchant ship to be lost at sea. In the morning, Obra Dinn arrived on the port at Falmouth with no crew onboard the ship. As the player, your main objective is to figure out what happens to the crew onboard the Obra Dinn. The player is an insurance investigator that is given a logbook of all the crew members. The logbook is filled with details of the event that happens on the ship. The player is also given a stopwatch called the Memento Mortem. This watch will allow the player to listen to audio logs of the deceased crew members. The style of the game is a monochromatic dithering style that mimics the style of the old home computer. The reason why I like this design is that I found it very interesting that a designer/artist goes with an old-school computer-looking graphic. I felt that it gives off a nostalgic look to the game for the gamers that understand how graphics were back in the 1900s. Again, my idea of applying the color theory is manipulating both the color of the environment and lighting. The goal is to portray a specific emotion and have the player feel that emotion when exploring the world

**Inside (video game)**

Inside is a puzzle-platformer that doesn't have any dialogue. As the player, you play as a small boy with no ability to combat. You can only jump, run, and swim. No tutorials to even explain the controls/rules of the game. You are just launched into the world with no idea what is going on. While the boy explores these areas, he uses a mind-control helmet to control lifeless grey bodies, that are controlled by an organization controlling the vans and dogs. The boy eventually comes across an underwater siren-like creature that attaches a device to him, allowing him to breathe underwater. The story is told by the visuals such as the dusty factory, the laboratory spaces, and the city full of brainwashed zombies. The world shows that the economy has fallen apart and no sense of freedom. Most of the people are either working for an unknown corporation or brainwash to work for them. The atmosphere is very dark and moody. Colors are used to portray sadness or dread themes. Finally, the ending of the game is a mystery. Players can theorize what happens in their experience. Some players believe that you were controlled by the scientist while others believe you were controlled by some unknown entity.

**Limbo (video game)**

Limbo is another puzzle platformer that is similar to "Inside". However, the theme of the game is a black and white tone with lighting, film grain effects, and ambient sounds. These concepts were used to portray an eerie atmosphere that is part of the horror genre. The environment starts as a forest filled with creatures or people trying to kill the player. As the player continues, he or she discovers a crumbling city environment, which shows the world used to have a civilization.