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SCAD **ITGM Major**

The Savannah College of Art and Design offers a BA, BFA*, MA, and MFA in Interactive Design and Game Development in the Savannah and Atlanta campuses, as well as through eLearning.

This program has been lauded by the Princeton Review and Animation Career Review.

SCAD students have access to superpowered tech including AR/VR labs, and win various honors in gaming competitions such as the Blizzard Entertainment Student Art Contest, E3 College Game Competition, Intel University Games Showcase, The Rookies, and have created critically acclaimed games featured in Game Informer, Wired magazine, and others.

From participation in professional conferences to collaborations with digital media giants, SCAD students capitalize on their passion for interactive design. Many alumni find work after graduating in more than 50 acclaimed studios such as Epic Games, Zenimax Studios (Bethesda, id Software), Riot, Gearbox, Hi-Rez, Bioware, Blizzard, Insomniac, Bungie, and 343 industries.

SCAD
The University for Creative Careers®

*BFA not available through eLearning

Recruitment

The SCAD ITGM major offers multiple opportunities for students to collaborate with one another and create inspiring games. Studio classes see many completed group projects accepted to the top national and international competitions and SCAD participates and rewards' students involvement in the Global Game Jam.

In order to explore new avenues to develop this collaborative content, the SCAD ITGM department organized a two-quarter (20 weeks) collaborative class, under the supervision of two professors: Jack Mamais as acting Producer and Cyril Guichard as acting Creative Director on the project.

" The SCAD ITGM major offers multiple opportunities for students to collaborate with one another and create inspiring games."

While all students were invited to apply, the selection of the enrolled students was made on interview and portfolio review, following the recruitment philosophy of a mid-size Independent studio. Students followed the Agile method and the main milestones for the project were aligned with the two weeks sprints.

A team of 39 students was then broken down into four specialty teams:

- Core to handle coding and in-engine implementation of gameplay and technical assets
- Integration to create art assets and implement them in-engine
- Research and Development to spearhead art direction research and look development
- Support to be responsible for game design, overseeing the Agile/Scrum process and provide support and guidance to the other teams



Professor Jack Mamais
Executive Producer



Professor Cyril Guichard
Creative Director

The **Team**



Vincent Aliquo
Lead Programmer



Mackenzie Blackgoat
Lead Character Artist



Tiffanni Blevins
Lead Animator/Rigger



Ben Brook
Lead Gameplay Designer



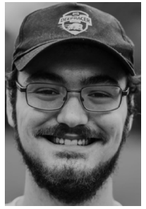
Rodney Burton
Environment Artist



Nathaniel Cartwright
Narrative Designer



Phillip Corrado
Narrative Designer



Dixon Dubow
Environment Artist



Kellan Dwyer
Environment Artist



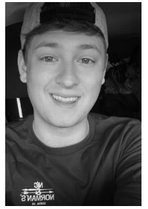
Sanda Gavriliuc
Concept Artist



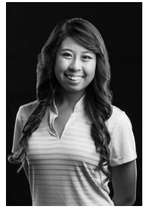
Bernardo Gullo
Environment Artist



Rachel Howard
Technical Artist



Tyler Klimek
Environment Artist



Mercedes Khumnark
Environment Artist



Nick Levene
Lead Environment Artist



Michael Mauro
Character Artist



Maxwell Mecimore
Technical Artist



Santiago Medrano
Environment Artist



Brice Morgan
Concept Artist



Julia Myers
UX



Julia Nguyen
Lead Concept Artist



Holly Owens
Concept Artist



Stephanie Owens
Environment Artist



Oscar Painvin
AI Programmer



Collin Peck
Sound Designer



Anushay Qureshi
Character Artist



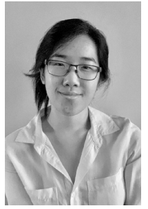
Mike Relleva
Environment Artist



Gianna Rockwell
Environment Artist



Zach St. Amand
Concept Artist



Sammy Suen
Lead Concept Artist



Zachary Taylor
Lead VFX Artist



Megan Tkac
UX/UR



Gabriel Tobias
Lead Programmer



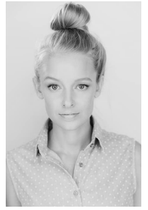
Taan Tuchinda
Character Artist



Courtney Vogel
Environment Artist



John Washington
Lead Systems Designer



Kelly Washington
Voice Actor



Amanda Wood
Environment Artist

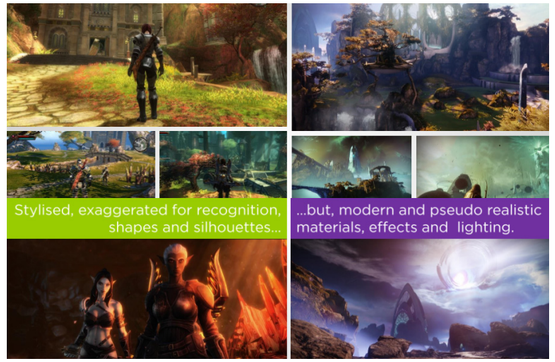


Kuan Xue
Character Programmer

Early Pitches

In order to decide on the nature of the project, the class was broken down in teams of two tasked with providing an elevator pitch and an art vision with one prompt: a family-friendly game that would tackle important human issues.

From the 15+ presentations, we narrowed it down to a handful, and ultimately, the adventures of the young girl, Zoelie, and her quest to cope with the departure of her older sister was chosen as our class project.



A 3rd person adventure/management game set in a high fantasy world, about inclusivity, and how diversity and transculturalism strengthens civilizations. Players are a realm guardian tasked with repelling invaders, only to realize some are fleeing a threat that would menace all realms.

The story is about the Sandman. He wields two umbrellas: one gives dreams the other gives nightmares. He is madly in love with the Moon. He confesses his love for her, but she explains she is in love with the Sun. Enraged by the rejection, the Sandman blocks out the sky, and everyone is shrouded in darkness. In his frustration he gives everyone nightmares and hides away in the terrors. The Moon and Sun must fight their way through the nightmares in order to stop the Sandman.



CHOSEN PITCH

A child protagonist leaves home to go on an adventure, but his overactive imagination causes the world to become extraordinary. The farther away from home he gets, the scarier the fantasies become.

COVID-19 Impact

In March 2020, almost the entire world entered into a lockdown due to COVID-19. Like the majority of other universities in the United States, SCAD decided that the Spring quarter would be held exclusively online. Most students traveled back home, sometimes to other continents, and the faculty transferred on-ground classes to virtual classes.

In a sense, we were lucky that the Zoelie project was already running on Perforce, and a discord server had been created to host most communications about the project. While we lost the convenience of face-to-face meetings, we could still work as a team across different national and international time zones. Scrum meetings were still held daily, and the whole class met on teleconference at least twice a week.

“In that respect, Zoelie is a testament to the grit of SCAD students and their ability to overcome adversity, even when the odds are stacked against them.”



Chapter 1 | Pre Production

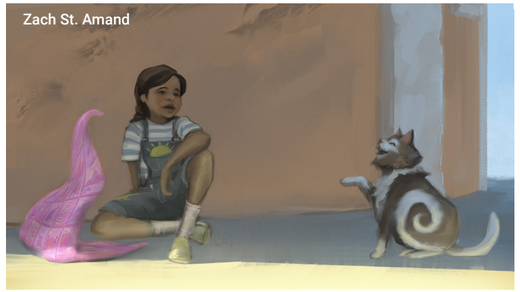


Brice Morgan

Narrative

In the opening of the game, we are introduced to our titular character Zoelie as she confronts her older sister Sofia about moving away. To Zoelie, Sofia is the center of her world, and the idea of her leaving is unconscionable, and being unable to change her mind leaves her emotionally wrecked. It's at this moment of emotional vulnerability that her imagination begins to run wild and pulls her into the throes of adventure. Giving a passing cat a voice and personality of a friend she desperately needs and life to the quilt that represents the sister she's clinging on to.


Zach St. Amand


Zach St. Amand

As the game begins, we step into the shoes of Zoelie at her lowest point, feeling abandoned by her sister, only for her imagination to spark and set her on her journey. This is fueled by her fateful interaction with a fluffy talking cat she would later name Chonkers.

Her journey through town is centered around the fast friendship developing between the two, first her chasing after him, and followed up by finding a rather fancy fish for him to feast on. The rapport between the two builds as Chonkers goes from hesitant acquaintance to firm ally in finding Zoelie a way to reach her sister once again. This brings them from Zoelie's home all the way to the church roof, where they meet a new partner in the form of Chonker's old friend Patty, and set the stage for the next leg of the journey at the beach.

In contrast to the narrow streets and alleys of the first level, the second level is set on the blue canvas of the sea and sky.

By this point in her journey, Zoélie has begun to master her imagination as a powerful tool. Upon arriving on the sandy beach, Zoélie's close companion Chonkers is swept away by a group of disgruntled hermit crabs. She must now not only find her sister, but also save her friend.

This new challenge forces her to take to the seas on the back of giant sea turtles in search of the glistering shells required to bargain for Chonkers' freedom. These trials will take her to multiple tropical islands, culminating a climb to the summit of an active volcano.

After collecting all the requisite shells, Zoélie is able to return to the beach and free Chonkers from his crustacean captors. With her friend liberated, she is free to finish her journey and find her sister at the lighthouse that overlooks the beach and town, and her adventure along the way


Zach St. Amand


Zach St. Amand

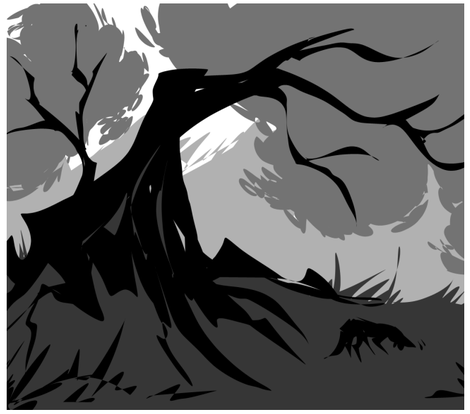
Early **Concepts**

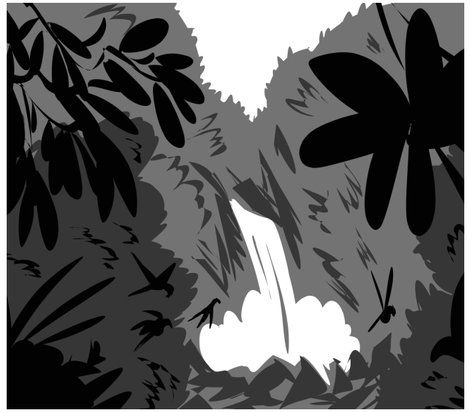






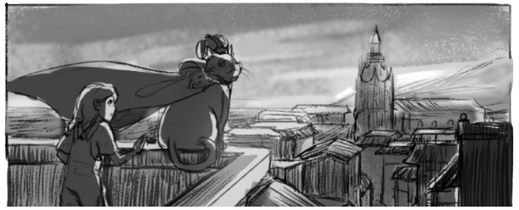


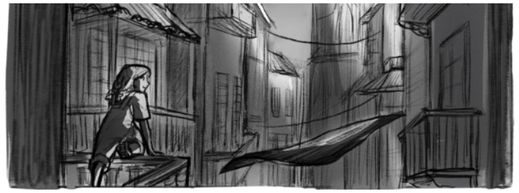




The development of Zoelie has gone through many changes since its original inception, but at its core it has remained a game focused on a child's vivid imagination come to life, and a strong bond between siblings. Taking the original premise and fitting it into the narrative led to many suggestions and ideas on just how to bring the girl and her world to life.

The original premise was set in the perspective of a younger sibling whose parents are too busy to pay much attention to them; their older sibling was instead the one to pay more attention to them and acted as a guiding figure that encouraged the player's creativity. The starting point of the game was to be when Zoe, still unnamed at this point, decides to set off on an epic adventure to find her older sibling. It is this adventure that takes her through her hometown and surrounding locations that juggle between reality and the child's overactive imagination.







As time went by and we began to narrow down our design, the biggest thing we wanted to make sure the standalone feature was how the girl's overactive imagination would affect gameplay and the environment around her. It was decided early on into development that the game would take place in a South American town, drawing inspiration from Buenos Aires' La Boca neighborhood and many little seaside towns that dotted the coast.



Originally, we wanted our protagonist to be a shy, young girl, with her older sister making her feel more confident. This was changed however, and Zoe is far more outgoing in the final version of the game.

The sister also originally played a much larger role in the story, as one of our first ideas was having her act as a guide. The gameplay was based around the child's fear of the unknown and dislike of change. Her imagination would turn dark and scary depending on who or what was around her, and we wanted the main character to fight against manifestations of her own fear.

Although a far different idea, the gameplay was mostly the same, with a focus on puzzles and traversal, but also including combat. In the end, we decided against it and went with an overall friendlier tone.

With the first version of our GDD, we had a focus on several themes. We wanted to focus on the relationship between the two sisters to be the central journey. We also wanted to play around with the idea of creating a world inside your head and the power of a child's imagination, whether good or bad.

Another one of our original ideas was discerning the imagination from reality. We wanted to show that it was okay for someone to get lost in their imaginations and show a sense of escape, while also showing that there is still magic in the real world.



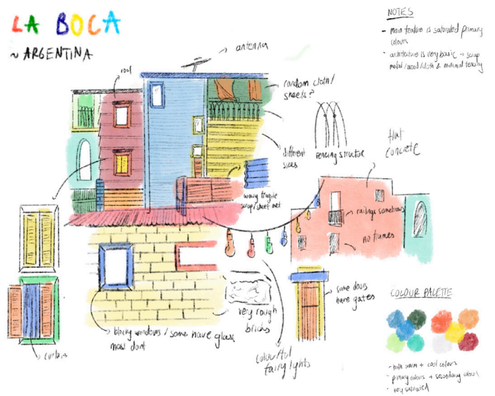

Chapter 2 | Environments
Sanda Gavriliuc

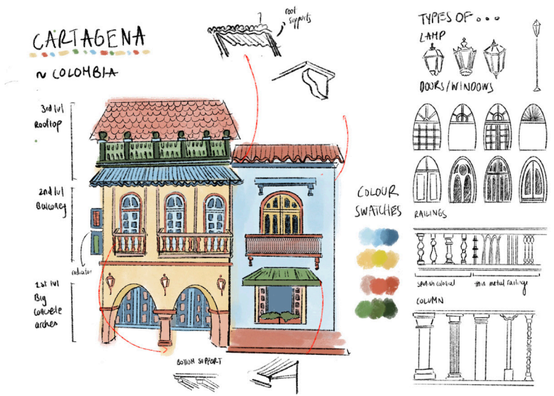
City Concepts

In the middle of an idealized Latin America, Zoelie's small coastal town is the vibrant theater of her adventures. The town's sun-drenched colors and lively sounds invite her to explore and she will soon let her imagination carry her away.









City Key Art









Beautiful **Corner**











Vehicles





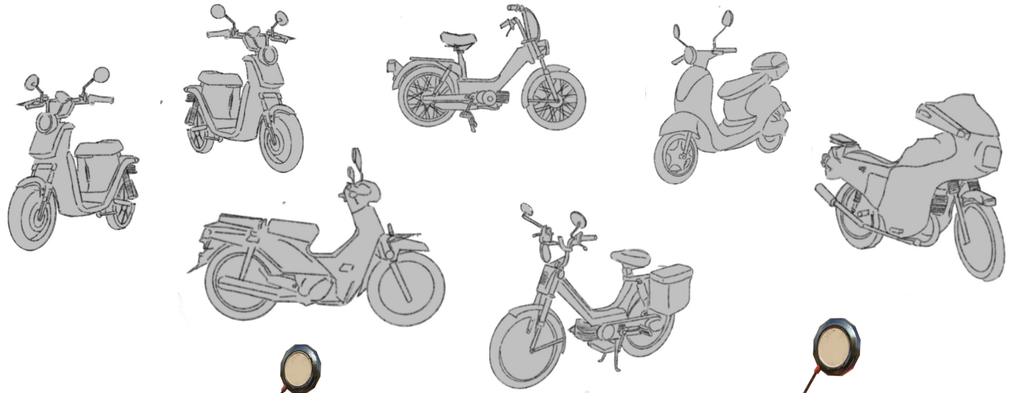








Mopeds





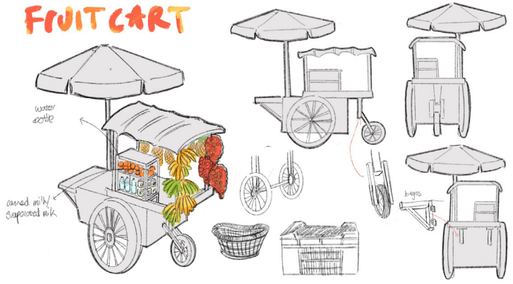
Carts











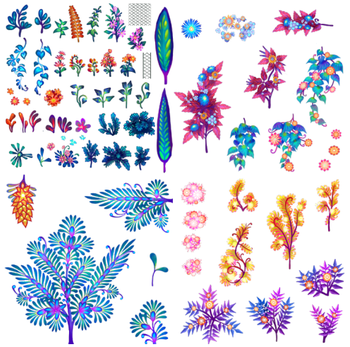
Foliage













City **Assets**



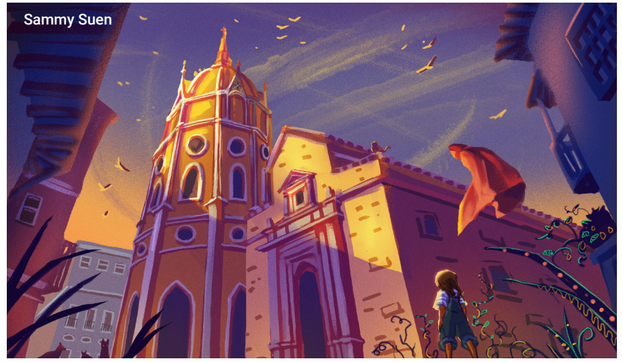


Church **Concepts**


Zach St. Amand

Towering over the quiet town, the imposing Spanish mission style church will allow Zoelie and Chonkers the cat to get a lay-of-the-land and find her sister. Is this the end of an adventure, or the beginning of a new one, with new friends to meet?




Sammy Suen


Sammy Suen

Church **Final**



Final City **Environment**









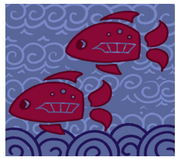


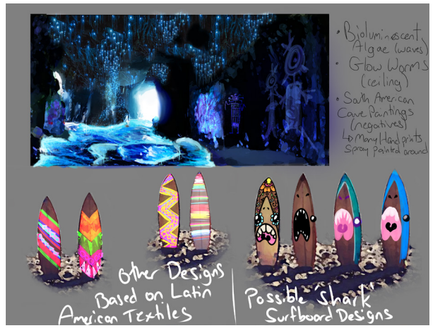
Beach **Concepts**

Zoelie's odyssey will take her to the nearby beach and through many small exotic islands.

Moving towards the lighthouse -- her beacon of hope -- she will discover the strange denizens of sand bars and of the blue glittering sea and **her uncanny ability to make new friends** will pave the way towards the happy conclusion of her adventure.

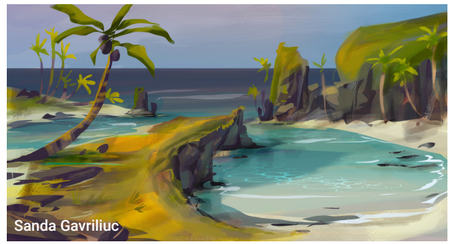












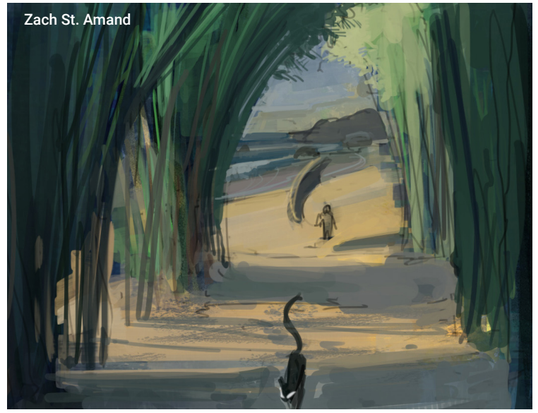


Beach **Key Art**











Beach **Blockout**

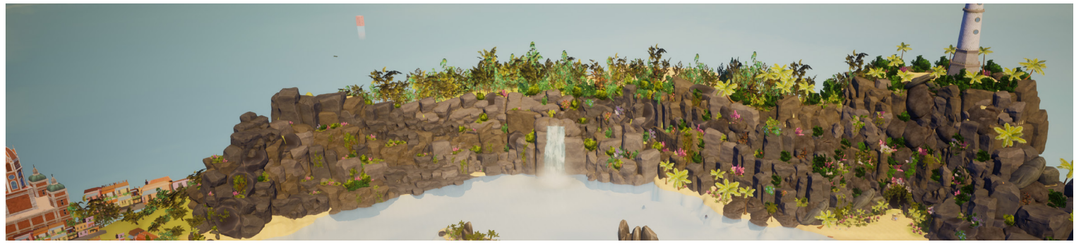




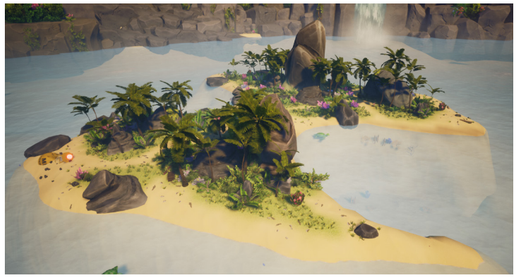


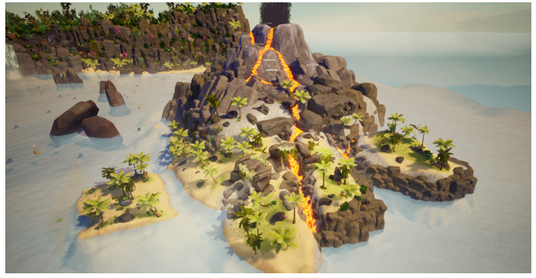


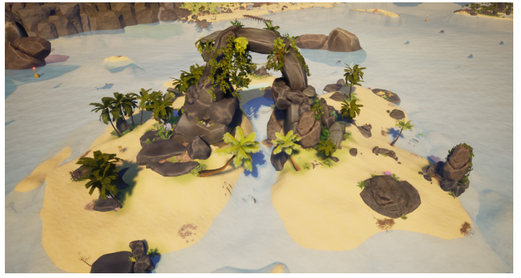












Beach **Beautiful Corner**









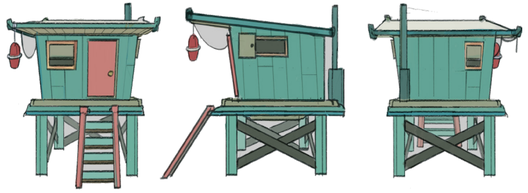


Shack


Note the pink under the white
inside is the tank
The Concept: the box that makes up the structure is like a giant fish tank
Outside is the tank
The animals will animate & swim
pattern on the stairs
wraps around


Doodles
inspo
goofy cross eye















Beach **Assets**





Final Beach **Environment**











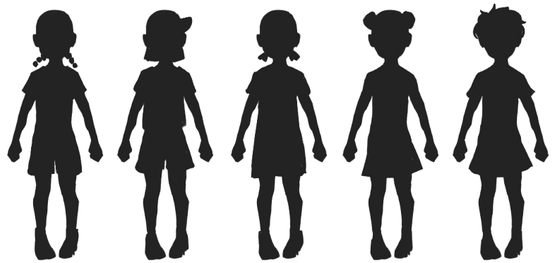


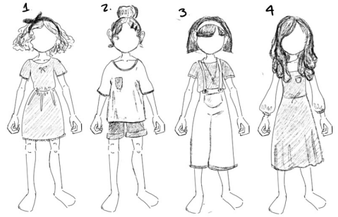
Chapter 3 | Characters & Creatures

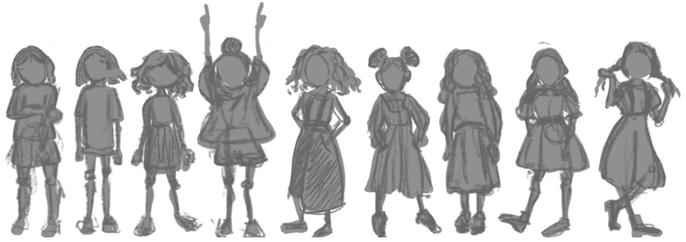
Zach St. Amand

Zoelie **Concepts**

Spirited and adventurous, Zoélie is a young girl overflowing with imagination. When her older sister Sofia leaves in a hurry, Zoélie is distraught at the loss of her best friend. She jumps at the opportunity to find her when it is presented to her, and she goes on a wild journey, climbing to great heights and crossing dangerous waters in order to be reunited with her dearest sister.



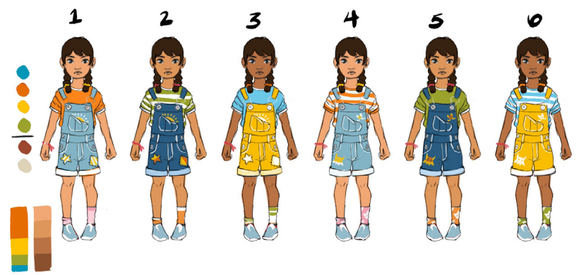














Zoelie **Model**









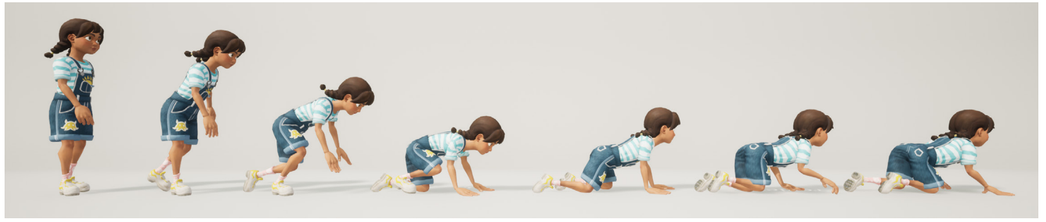




Animations









A regal and rotund stray cat, Chonkers is quick on his feet and knows the streets well. Typically aloof, Chonkers has a soft spot for those in need of assistance, willing to brave enemy infested sands to help his friends. Though somewhat resentful of his recently acquired name, deep down he appreciates that Zoélie took the time to give him one.









The stylish pelican Patty is a no-nonsense bird who's been around the world a couple of times. She may not be the best at showing it, but Patty cares about her friends and knows how to help them whenever they're in a pinch. Her gruff exterior hides a matronly love that means she'll look out for the ones close to her no matter what.



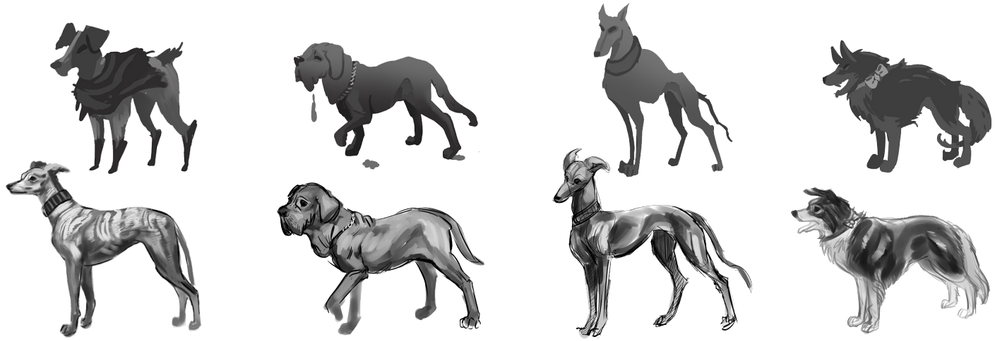














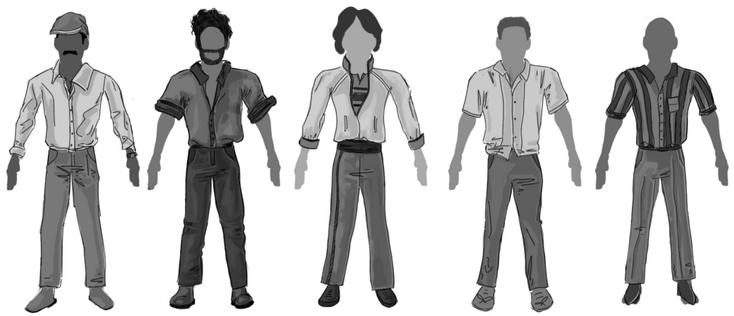




For the cats and dogs, we researched different breeds that are from South America. There were originally meant to be different breeds in game, but due to time constraints, we narrowed it down to one breed for each species.

In game, each enemy uses the same models but with a variety of different colors. Chonkers was an exception since he was special.

















Chapter 4 | Game Design

Game Design **Pillars**

The Development team decided we wanted the game to take place in an area not really used by other games. We chose South America, specifically the Buenos Aires area. After studying the local customs and mythology, we came up with a ton of concepts and interesting potential games.

The core idea of the imagination of the child being central to the game was the only constraint we held on to during this process. We learned that family is very important to the people of South America, particularly the bond between siblings.

At that point Zoelie, the heroine of our story, was born. We needed a mechanic that would **act as a catalyst for activating the fantasy world** and that led us to creating the character Sueno, her magic quilt that could transform and help her realize and transverse a world right out of her imagination. Using these concepts, the real design work kicked in.

We prototyped and played with many mechanics that the quilt would possess and narrowed that down to the following concepts: Sueno, which means Dream in Spanish, would t**ransform the environment as it moved through it.** Initially, the Quilt was going to be wrapped around Zoelies waist, but we found that making it fly and hover near the character was much more visually interesting.

As the Quilt moves through the level, it reveals a more magical place filled with beautiful designs and animated graffiti. It actually brings its imaginary world with it and magical grass grows wherever it moves.





The next step was to brainstorm what mechanics the quilt would possess, and a massive list was generated of cool ideas. Eventually, the list was narrowed down to a specific set of abilities we felt would be interesting and fun for potential players.

At this time, we also decided that the game would be for everyone and not contain combat which made the design challenge even harder. The mechanics we eventually developed were Sueno, when directed by Zoelie, could transform itself into multiple entities that would aid her in her journey through the world.

It could **distract** any foes by knocking over trashcans, become a **bridge** that could cross distances, or a **rope** that allowed her to climb inaccessible areas.

It could also **blend** into the environment and act as a makeshift **trampoline** that allowed Zoelie to jump super high. It could even become a **parachute** or hang-glider that would allow her to soar through the air.

It could **scare away** smaller animals like scary stray cats or birds and also become a **sail** that allows Zoelie to ride giant sea turtles like a wind surfer.

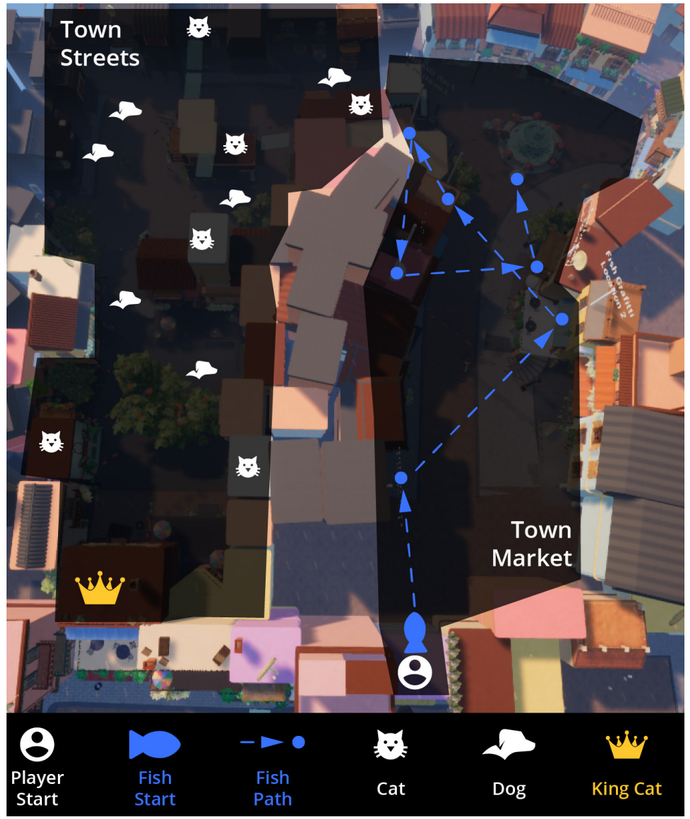




Level 1 Puzzle Design

One of the most exciting design aspects of Zoelie was her ability to move through a complex environment. The Quilt, Sueno, allowed her to climb to vertical areas as a rope, cross open expanses by forming a bridge and float down from higher areas as a parachute/hangglider. This means the design team had to carefully plan, by building detailed greybox levels that conformed to the metrics of the Player character.

Zoelie also had several other movement sets including crawling (which allowed her to go under obstacles), jumping (which allowed her to take short hops across smaller open gaps) and sneaking, which allows her to get close to the people in the level and listen to their conversations. While a lot of these conversations were created to provide color to the level a few of them actually provided Zoelie with hidden hints and tidbits about upcoming puzzles.



Zoé begins by gliding down to the initial rooftop where she will start at. From there the player should see the fish on the rooftop swim away to its first hiding spot in the area. The fish will move in a way that indicates its next location where Zoé will need to find it.

The fish graffiti puzzle was created to take advantage of Suenos' ability to transform the environment. First, it was designed to enhance her surroundings by transforming the buildings and props into amazing glowing designs and images. We wanted to take this concept even further by having the graffiti around the level animated as her Quilt passed near it.

To take it an even further level, we made one particular graffiti image actually come to life and lead Zoelie to a hidden fish, which allows her to bribe her friend, Chonkers the cat, into helping her find her missing sister. The puzzle was designed to lead the character through some of the more interesting spots in the plaza level.

As Zoelie brought Sueno to the fish, it would swim away, even through the air, in attempt to escape her. Finally, she is able to chase it down and reach the fountain which enables her to grab the fish.





Level 2 **Puzzle Design**

The beach level was a very interesting design challenge. Our goal was to create three unique islands that offered Zoelie a cool variety of puzzles and challenges. The catalyst for journeying through these levels were three shells that our heroine has to retrieve in order to save her friend Chonkers, who has been taken hostage by the massive King Fiddler Crab.





WINDSURFING RACE

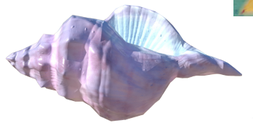
The first island has a large fiddler crab who challenges Zoelie to a race, using one of the turtles as a wind surfboard. To make it interesting, we added a time element (buoys that she needs to reach before they stop blinking) and lots of sharks that attempt to stop her.



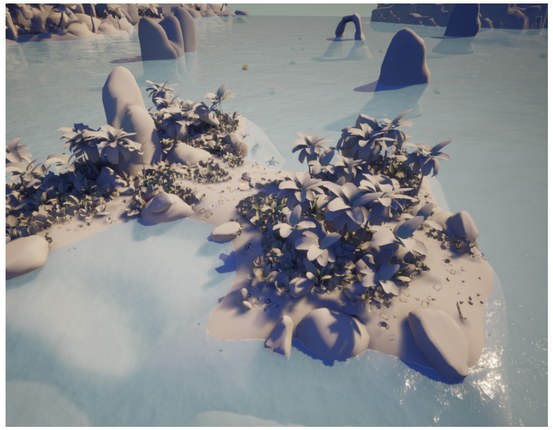


SHELL COLLECTION & CRABS

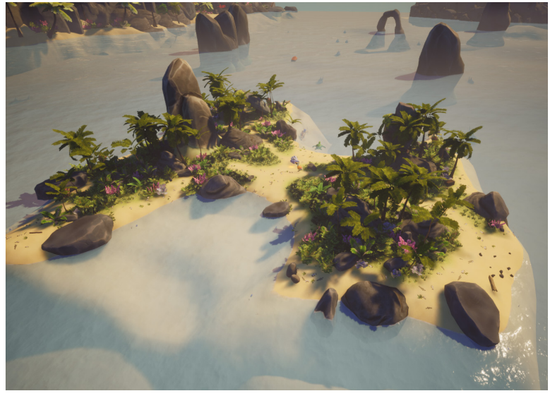
The second Island, dubbed Treasure Island, has the shell hidden in a secret grove. Zoelie has to explore the island and use Suenos' ability to reveal hidden items including a treasure map that leads Zoelie to the top of a large arch. After climbing the arch, another map is revealed that shows the hidden location of the elusive shell.

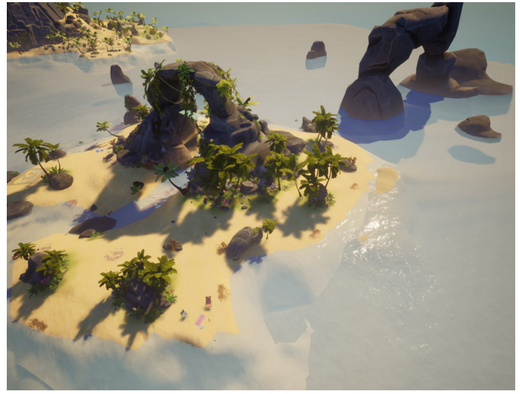














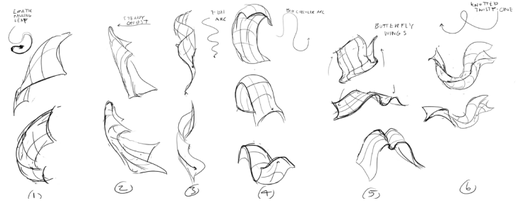

Better luck next time!
Try to avoid the crabs.
Loading...



Chapter 5 | Technical Art

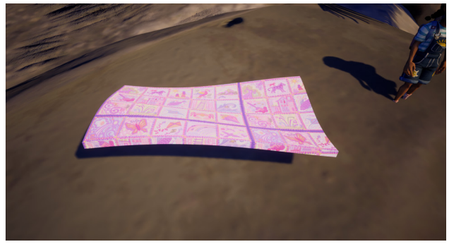
Quilt

















Imagination vs Reality

Our design philosophy for the technical art and visual effects stemmed heavily from the mechanics since the beginning. Our first big hurdle was the transition between the imaginary world and reality. We created a system that allowed the quilt to “paint” the world with the imaginary textures, causing Zoelie to be able to see things she wouldn’t otherwise have been able to. This system became heavily tied to the core mechanics.

This idea carried over the visual effects as well. We leaned heavily into the graffiti art style for all of the effects. Everything from the turtle wake to the volcano smoke stemmed from original concept art and graffiti. Mechanics were at the core of these effects through the whole process, and really helps them shine.















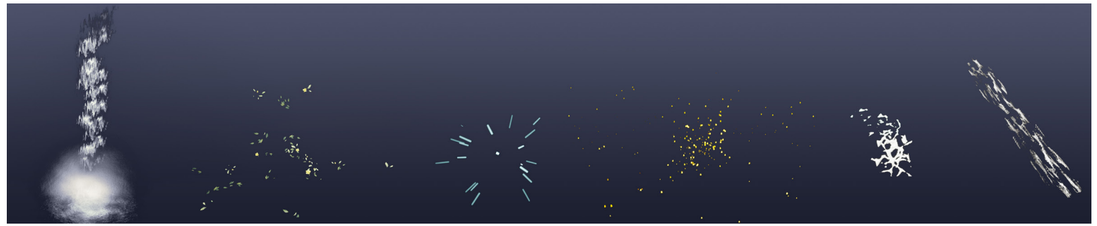


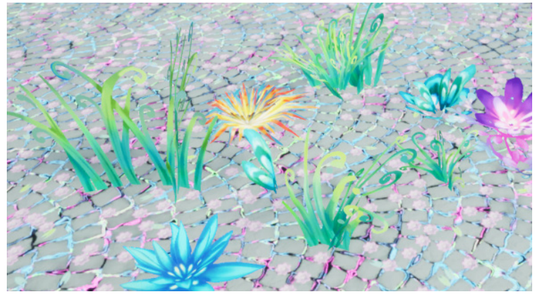


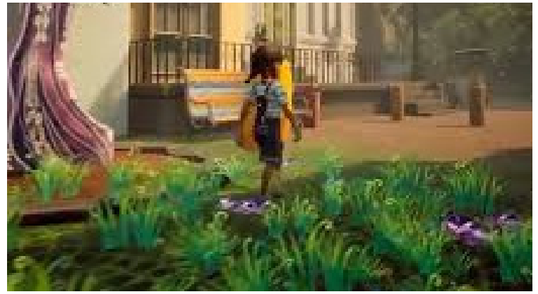




Particle **Effects**















Chapter 6 | Marketing

Zach St. Amand

ZOËLIE

Zoëlie



Trailer















