

Critical Reflective Analysis

During the course of this module the main positive thing that stood out to me was the group's atmosphere. It felt a lot more like we were working together as a team because we each had our specific roles in the team based on our individual skills and interests. So because of this I was able to focus purely on my responsibilities in the group and the work flowed nicely.

The communication between us all was good as well, in the beginning of the project, during class time we were able to come together in group discussions to brainstorm and make notes about the game. We also set up communication on Discord and had a group on Microsoft Teams which meant that I could share progress updates and look at other people's work and also share notes made during meetings, because it was all in one shared place it was easy to keep things organised.

In the beginning, when I first came up with potential game ideas, I found that me and another classmate could merge our ideas together as it was quite similar so we worked together as a pair for the first couple weeks when we were making our pitch presentations.

Doing this was helpful as it meant that presenting the idea to the rest of my peers was easier and the workload was spread out between the two of us. Because of this it meant we were able to expand the game idea more thoroughly which led to us being able to explain our idea better to the rest of the group.

My main role in the group was to do character and environment designs and to create a 3d model of the playable character.

With the character designs at the start I wasn't sure what direction to go in but after a group discussion about level design/map layout it was mentioned that there would be left over machinery (floodlights, generators, mining equipment etc.) so with that information I knew that I would be doing a character with modern clothing instead of a different time period. I looked at various reference images so that I could see what work clothing was worn and made my first selection of designs for the team to look at. From this we discussed as a group what designs would and wouldn't work and they gave me feedback.

Then I repeated the same thing making a second phase of designs using what was mentioned in the feedback session and I tried to add enough variety to the designs so that it gave the rest of the team enough to choose from.

Then the same thing happened again where we discussed about how the player could pick up equipment and that they would be able to look down and see what they have on their person. They also liked the more blue colours over the oranges and yellow colour schemes as it fit in with the mood of the horror game and having a bright, warm colour like that could give too much unnecessary attention.

In the next iteration of character designs I made a more finalised mock up of what the character would look like. Because of the mechanic of being able to pick up equipment I made two versions of the character both with and without all the tools on them, this way I could show the two different ways the character would look.

I found that having this back and forth with the team was really helpful for me because I could have clear direction on what direction to take the character designs and it meant I could make changes based on what my team members liked and disliked about certain aspects of its design. It also gave me more experience in getting more comfortable showing groups of people my work making iterations of work based from feedback I was receiving.



When doing the environment concept art it was suggested to me that to speed up my process I should start implementing the technique of photobashing into my work. Doing this helped greatly in letting me produce environment designs quicker compared to if I didn't, on top of that it helped convey the realistic visual style of the game.

To help me learn how to photobash effectively I watched a couple videos of other artists using it in their work, this way I could learn more about how to use this technique more effectively and what tricks they used such as masking and layer effects.

In the earlier environment concepts, the game idea was still being fleshed out, to help I did both an exterior and interior shot, one of the entrance to the mine and the other an idea of what the start up point could be.

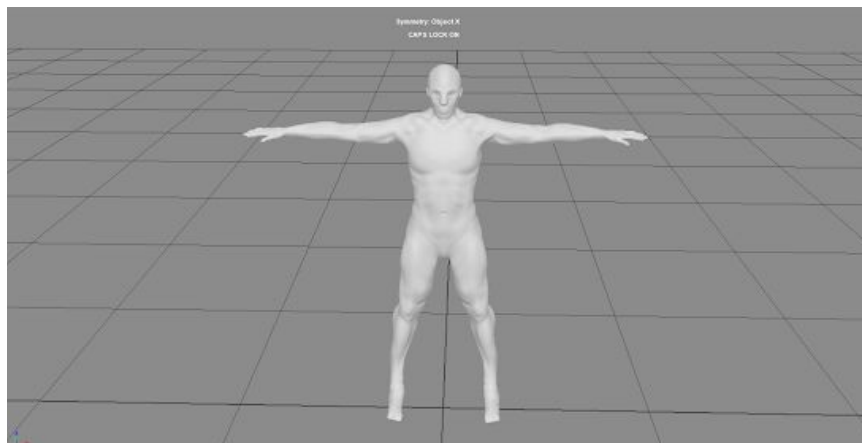
As we started to expand the game idea more I made another interior scene trying to get closer to what the mood of the game is, I wanted to make it look more like a natural mining system and also experimented with the idea of having writing on the wall as a type of warning for the player to see within the game level. I also put in a light source of a group of candles to see if we wanted to add in areas of lighting but it was decided that there wouldn't be any visual light sources throughout the map.

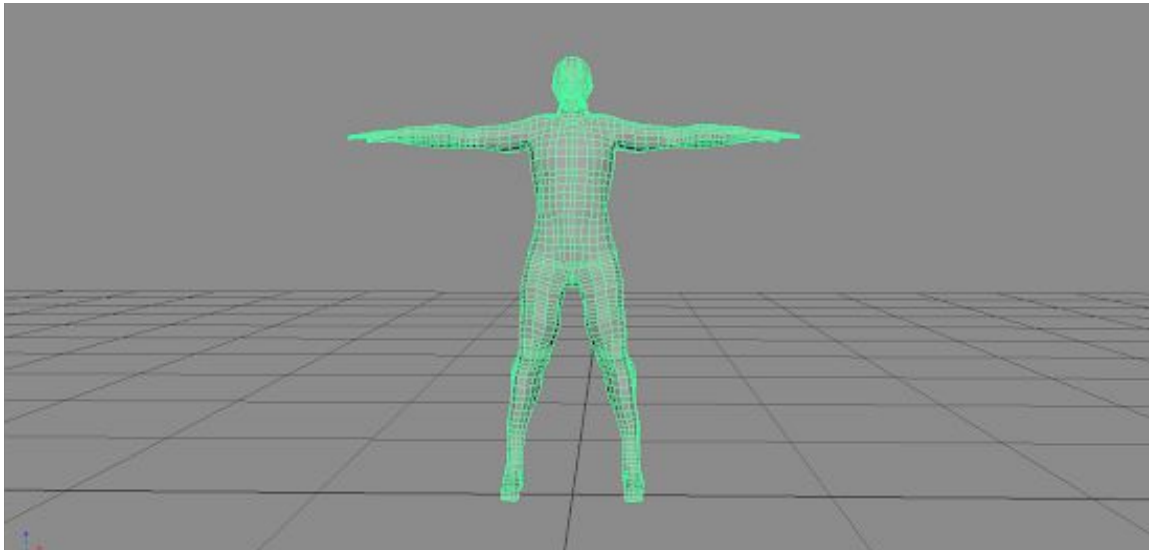


For the 3D model it was decided early on that we wanted the player to be able to look down and see their body and legs instead of just floating hands, so that if you were injured you could see yourself limping or if you wanted to check how many stones you have left you could look down and see for yourself instead of it being displayed on the HUD. This meant that I would have to model the entire character's body so that we could achieve this.

I started out the modeling process by using the HumanIK skeleton from Maya to make a point of reference for myself so that I could keep accurate proportions. Another reason was because the other 3D modelers making the environment assets were using the skeleton as a sense of scale so by using that I could make sure that everything was scaled accordingly.

In Zbrush I then began modeling the character, starting with just basic forms splitting each section of geometry into different layers and then going in and adding anatomical detail to it. I decided to work in a high poly mesh to start off with so that I wasn't having to fight against the geometry to work in the forms. I then exported it back into Maya and using the Quad Draw Tool retopologized the model so that it would run smoother in game while trying to form it around human anatomy; that way when animated it would hopefully deform better.





In conclusion the main positives of this overall project was the dynamics between group members, getting consistent feedback on my designs and being able to work on my particular interests and skills.. Some of the negatives and what I could of done better though is that I should have started modeling the 3D character a lot sooner as I was only able to complete the base body of the character without any clothing or details to it. I should have started during the earlier phases of my 2d character design as I knew what the body type was going to be early on, and if I had done that I might of had more time to bring the model to a more finalised stage. I also think that overall I could have done more work in general, especially more environment designs as that could have been useful for the rest of the team to see and to also give a better idea of the overall mood we have for this game. The things I've learned and improved on however is overall how faster I am at producing work and also I was able to learn new techniques and tools in both 2D and 3D.

Word Count: 1368