

Title: Production Diary

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Module: Creative Practice 3 (M5X01568)

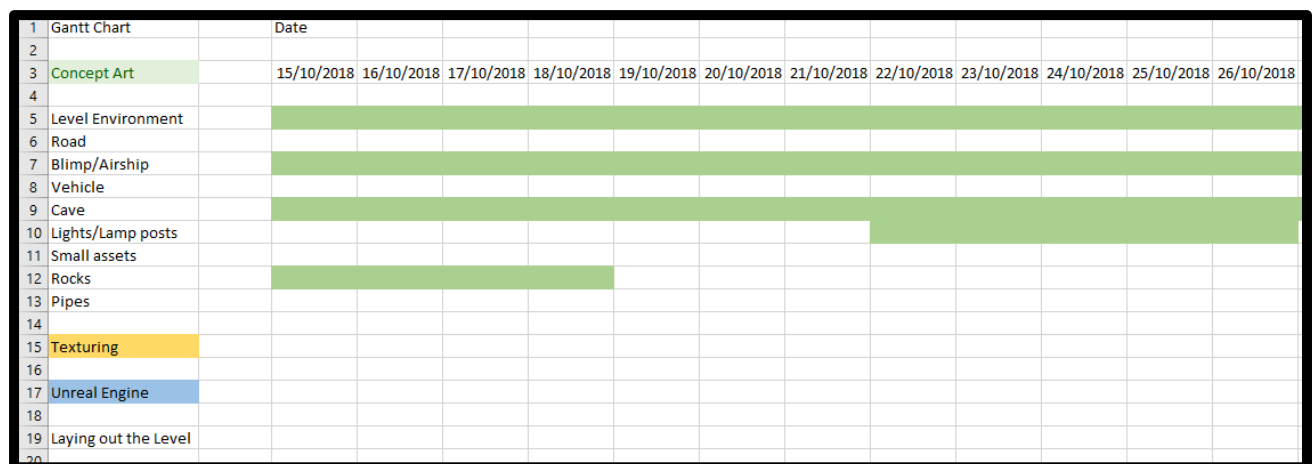
Introduction

The following document is a diary showing the progress of my productivity in the current semester, my task and role is to help my fellow colleges/friends in my class to work on a racing game, whether it may be drawing, designing, modelling, etc, however this will be answered within this document. The plan is to have a completed or semi completed block-out of the racing game level I will be tasked to be working on, I will be using many skills such as communication and teamwork to get the work done.

October 3 - 4 weeks

As a class, we started to prioritize roles and separate people into groups based on what level they would like to work on, as well as splitting people off into the skills they have so that each group would have a well-rounded set of skills to complete each level. My main skill set is concept art however I would also like to delve into the Unreal engine as I do enjoy blocking out map areas as well as designing them.

I made a Gantt Chart to help with my time management as well as when to set myself goals and deadlines for completing concept work and/or giving support and feedback to the group, mainly to the modeller as he will be bringing my concepts and ideas to life.



I decided to work on the Steampunk/industrial level and we as a group started to make a priority list of what assets need to be concepted and blocked out with the most detail, the list can be seen below, this list will be updated overtime as things are expected to change:

Industrial District: asset list

Blimp

Pipes (modular) U

Manholes U

Neon Signs (Advertisement/Hazards) U

Factories/Smokestacks

Lava

Lights (lamps/spotlights) U

Forklift/Crane

Road

Catwalks

Portal

Vehicles

Rocks

Bins U

Power Lines U

Steam Vents

Buildings

The colours represent how important an asset is and which ones we should prioritize first, red being the most important, amber being second most important, and then green meaning the least important.

I waited for our level designer to complete a first draft of our level before designing any small assets, however in this time I did some research based on the theme so that when I do start the concept art for them, I would get the style correct as well as what I would be drawing. I did some google image research into industrial areas and partly into steampunk cities as well, I wasn't too sure yet whether we were going to go heavily steampunk with this level, but either way, industrial was a must to look into, I came across images which included large smoke stacks as well as industrial piping and steel works.

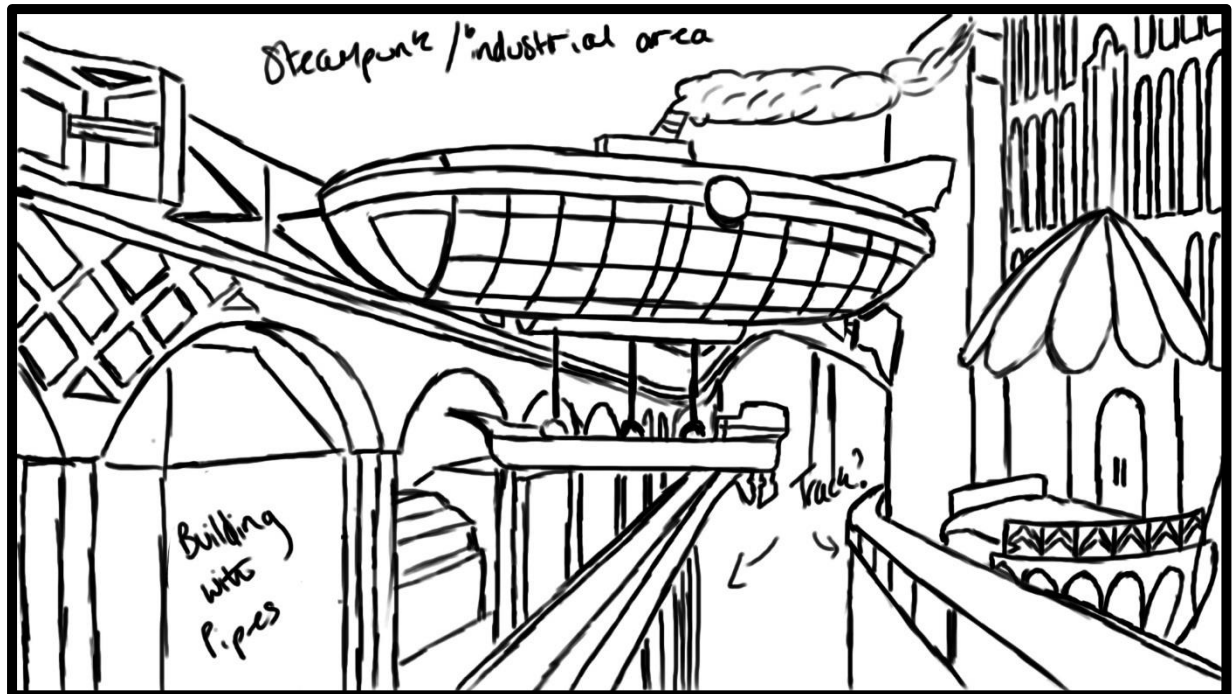
Meanwhile I told our modeller to start modelling small assets as well as basic versions of the large assets such as the blimp and car so that when we get a clear better idea of how the map will be laid out, we will be able to block it out within the engine. Also having basic blocked out models gives us as a group a great visual representation of the size and scale of our map, and it'll allow us to query whether we will need to increase the size of our map by scaling up the models or by adding more assets to the map.

I had a talk with our modeller about the assets that he had done so far, they seemed to be fitting well into how our level is thought out to be, however I did provide him some extra advice and tips towards how he can improve on them, I found them to be too simplistic and said to add more faces and edge loops to make them seem more unique and built with some character.

Also, during these 3-4 weeks, as a class we discussed what should be the main mechanics for the game, pressing A will move you left on a keyboard and if the user has a handheld controller, if they move the analogue stick right, the vehicle will move right as well, until they stop pushing right. That was the basis of these few weeks, talking about core key mechanics for our game, would they be practical for our game as a whole and would it be possible to place it in our game so that it wouldn't feel poorly designed and hard to play.

5th -11th Nov

Due to illness I was not able to attend lectures this week, missing out on valuable time working on the project and talking with my team, however I did keep in contact with them making sure that things were in track and if there were any issues they should ask me for some advice.



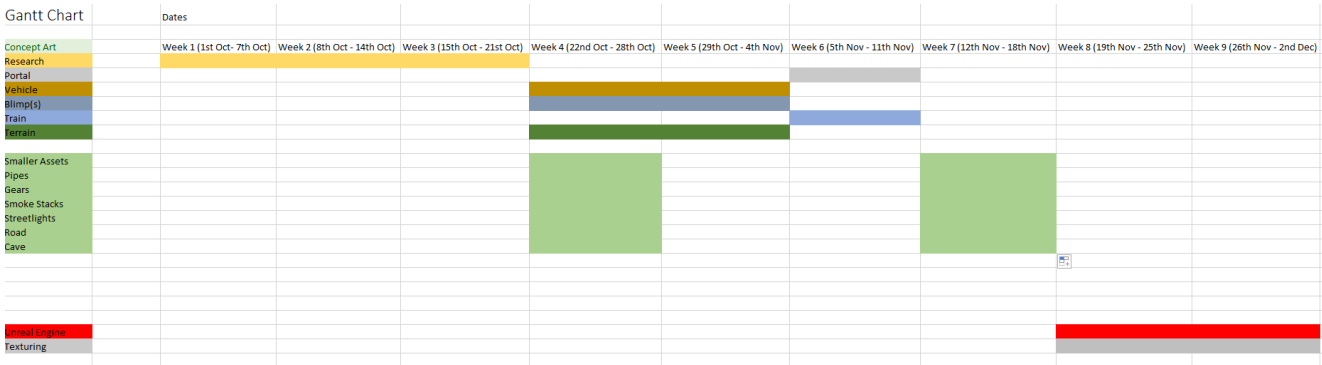
I started to do basic concepts of how the map would look like, however the images I used to help me concept were copyrighted so I now must redo most of my drawings. This was a blow in my productivity in the team, however I know now what I should and shouldn't do, and this mistake should now not affect my work in this project and future projects.

Not all of the drawings I did were wrong, only the ones I did via photoshop and traced, however there were a small few which I kept for example the final area of the map, the lava area which in the map, is the power plant, I was aiming to post a black and white version as well as a coloured version of the section, however when I saved the coloured version, I did it over the black and white one, completely erasing it, this is something I have to improve on as now I would have to redraw the who area again, the image can be seen below:



During my free time I played around with Unreal engine tinkering around with how assets are moved within the engine and how certain lighting works as well, this was doing to working on a Halloween project one of our lectures decided to give to us, I started to block out the Halloween map, using different assets and textures.

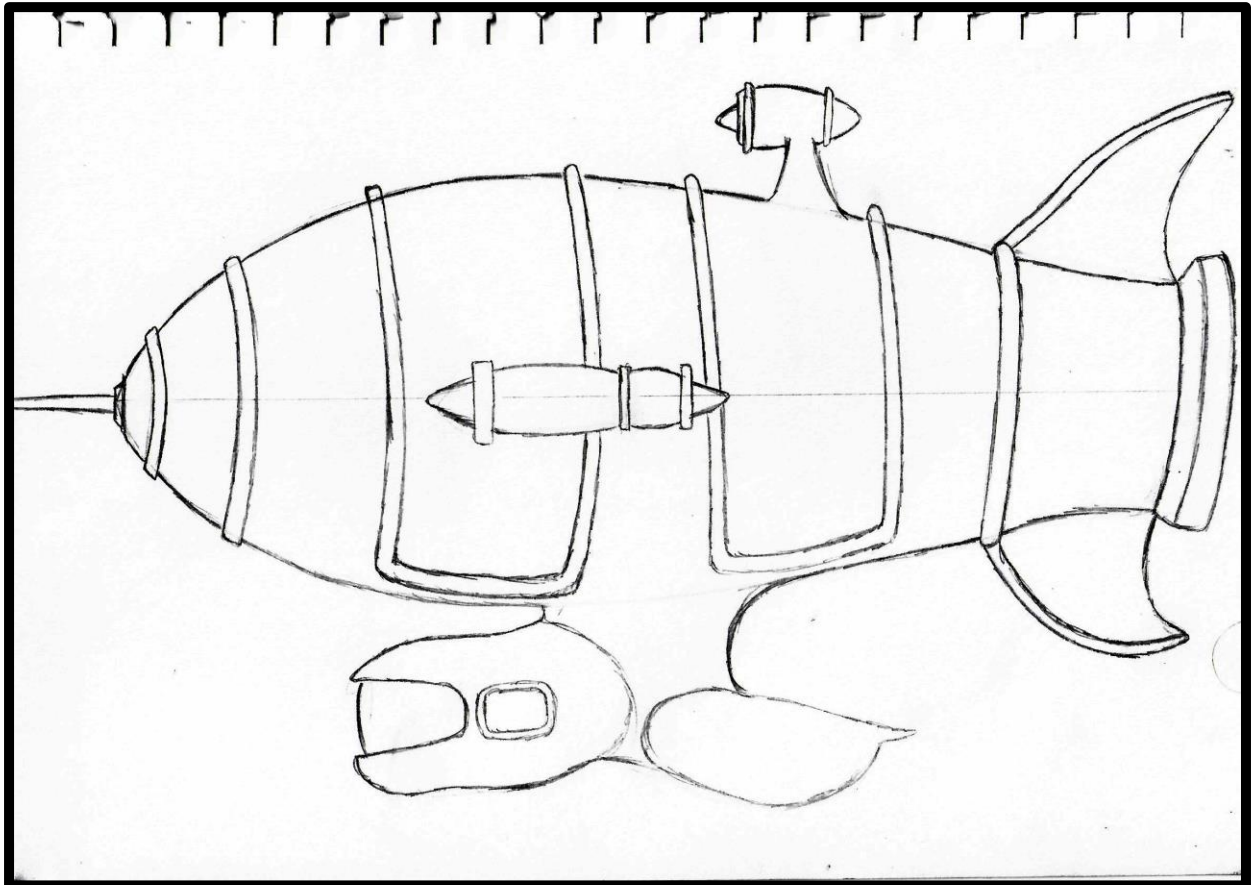
Looking back over my Gantt Chart, I now need to change it due to the sudden error of my previous drawings, also in doing so I found out that texturing is not needed for the models, so that relieves my time to do more research as well as helping the team get the level completed, the new Gantt chart can be found below:



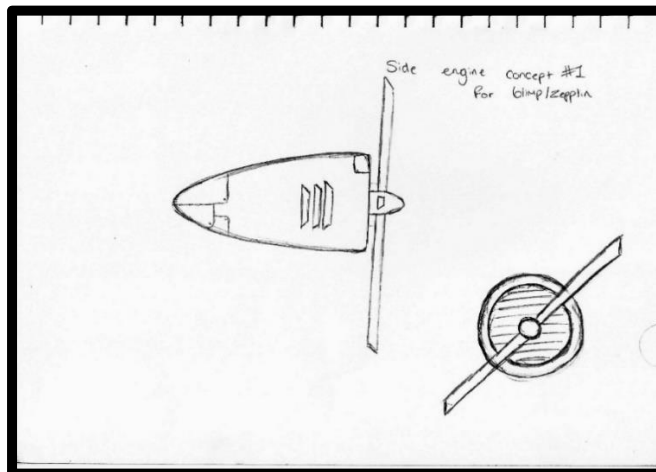
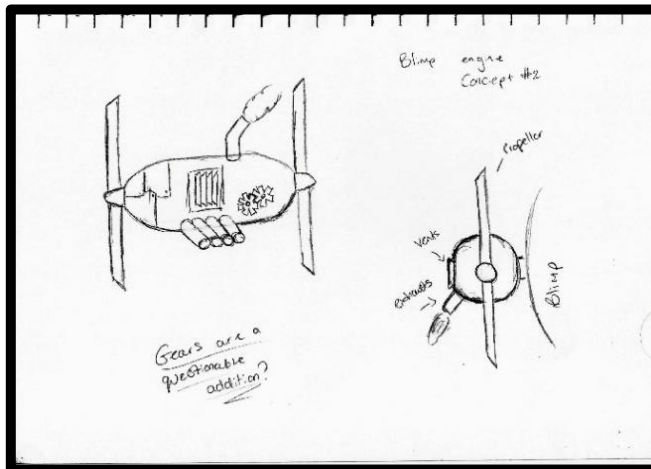
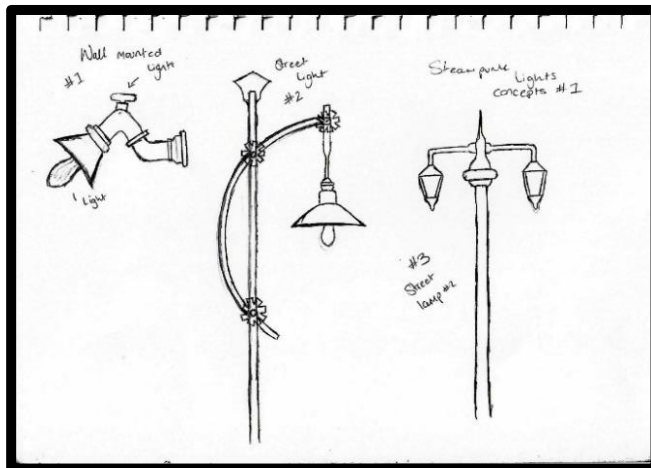
The new Gantt chart I have also improved due to the previous one being poorly designed and managed by myself, the new design includes colour coordination to each individual

task, so that now help me know what needs to be done on what week, I also shortened down the scale of the chart to weekly based, rather than daily based as the document was becoming too long and lengthy to understand.

I drew a basic concept of our blimp which has been modelled already, to get a clear better view of the whole model and see where I can add any improvements or tweak the model as a whole, I also kept on looking back at the model for reference, I came to the conclusion that the side engines on the blimp looked rather bland and dull, so I planned to start conceptualising new ideas and models for that.



I've started to concept some simple street lights and side engines for our blimp, I looked at many references for inspiration towards the design and I am keeping notes of where I am getting said images from, so that if/when I get questioned about the originality of the drawings, I can talk about where I got the ideas from, the art work can be seen below:



12th Nov – 18th Nov

Had a class discussion about the game GDD and who is doing what section of it and what section entails us to do. I chose to do the modes of the game and the environmental aspect of the level, there was no other choice as many of the topics had been already picked.

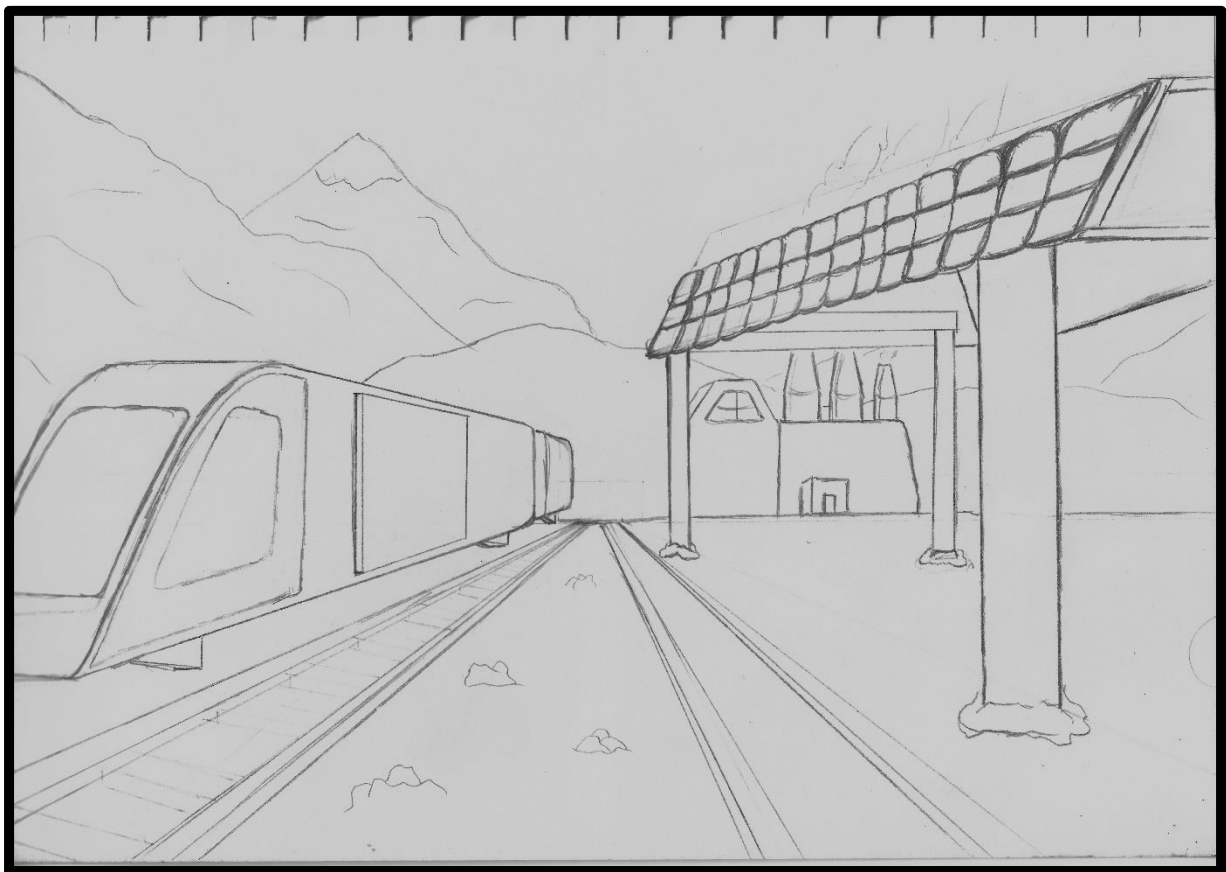
From doing extra research into these sections, the mode section entitles me to write about essentially the different game modes which the player will be able to play in the video

game, for example, Multiplayer; the player shall be given the option to play local multiplayer, whether it be over a LAN network or having the game split screen. Another mode would be Time trial; the player would have to finish the level under a specific time limit, and finally Story mode, where the player would race through each track in sequence to what the story is scripted.

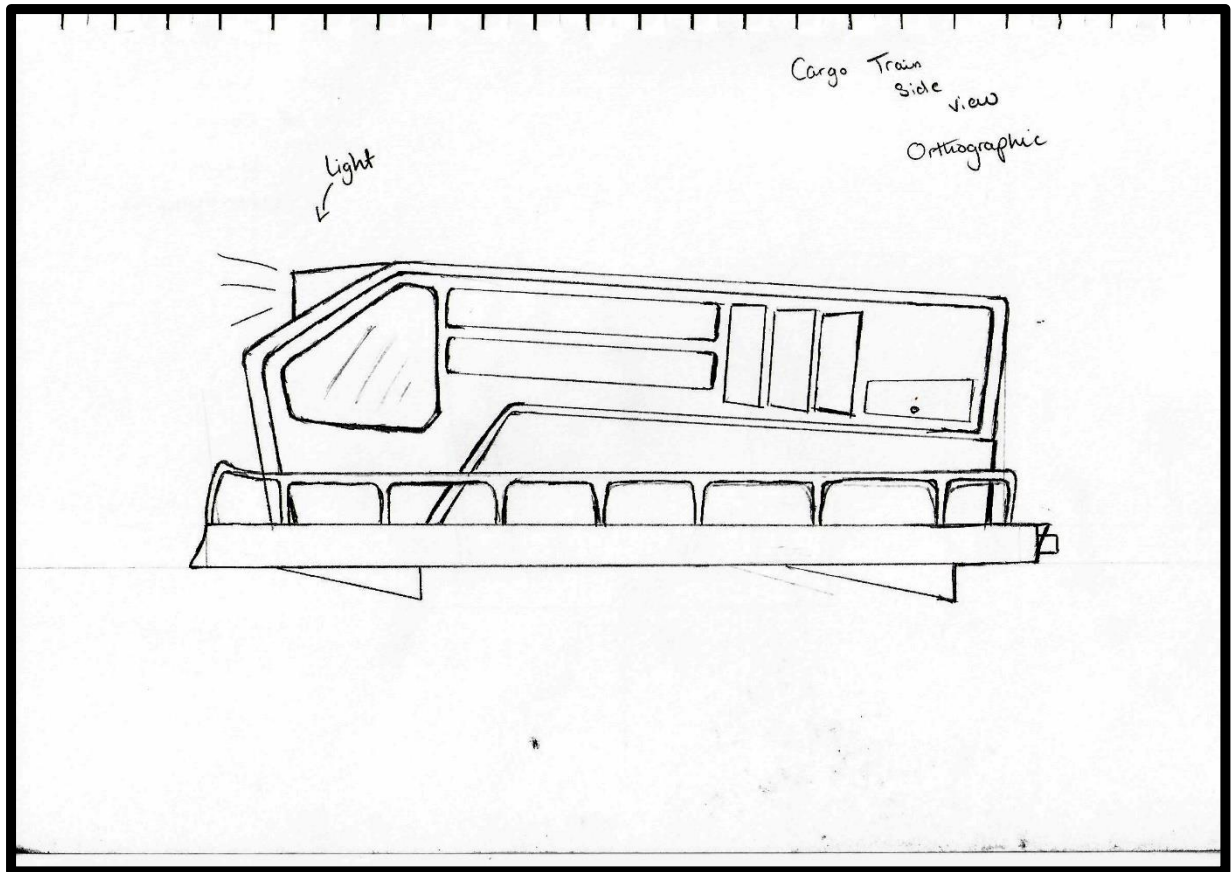
My other section is Environment, this section is me talking about what each environment is like with each level and are there any specific features or areas that would stand out or would react when the player drives past for example.

19th Nov – 25th Nov

I worked on the concept art for the trainyard for our level, as we as a team found out our level was too short for a race track and had to improve on the quantity. The start of the concept was good, however getting the proportions correct was a hassle during the start.

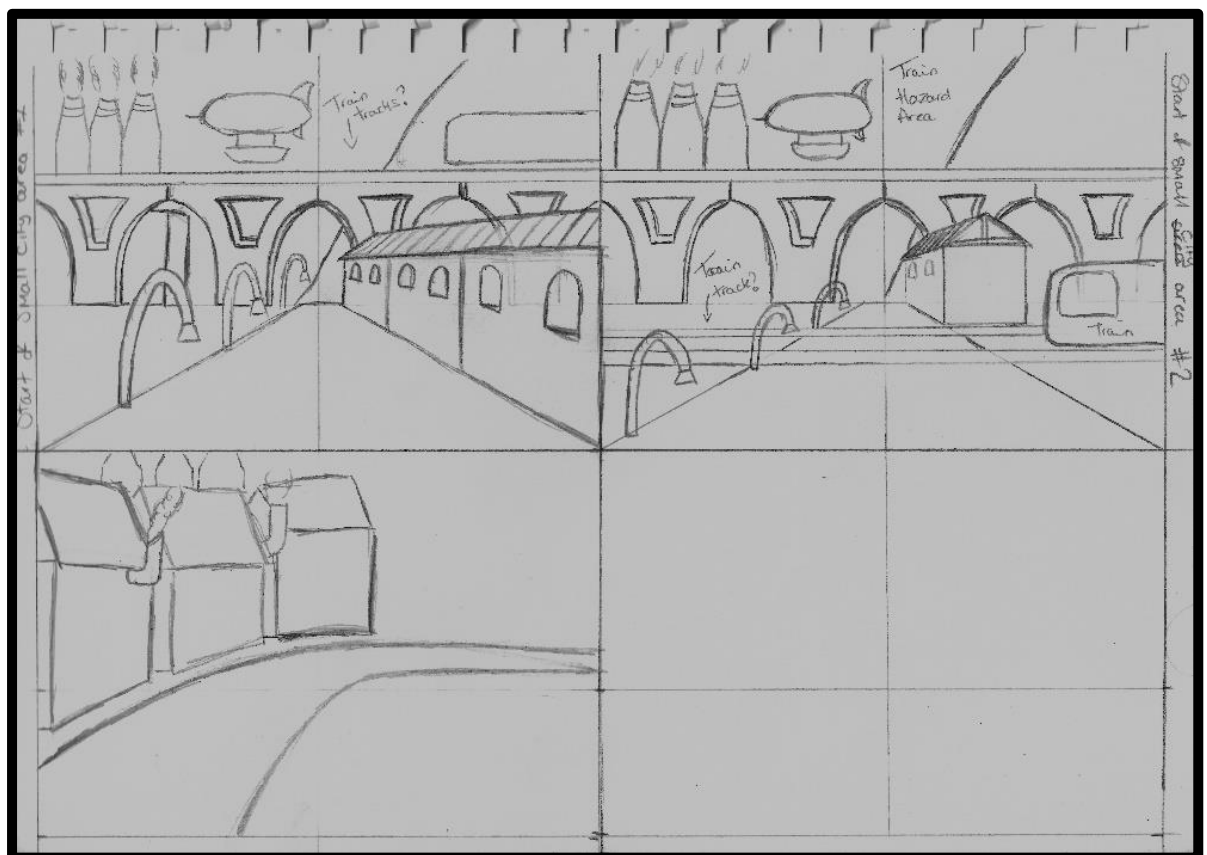
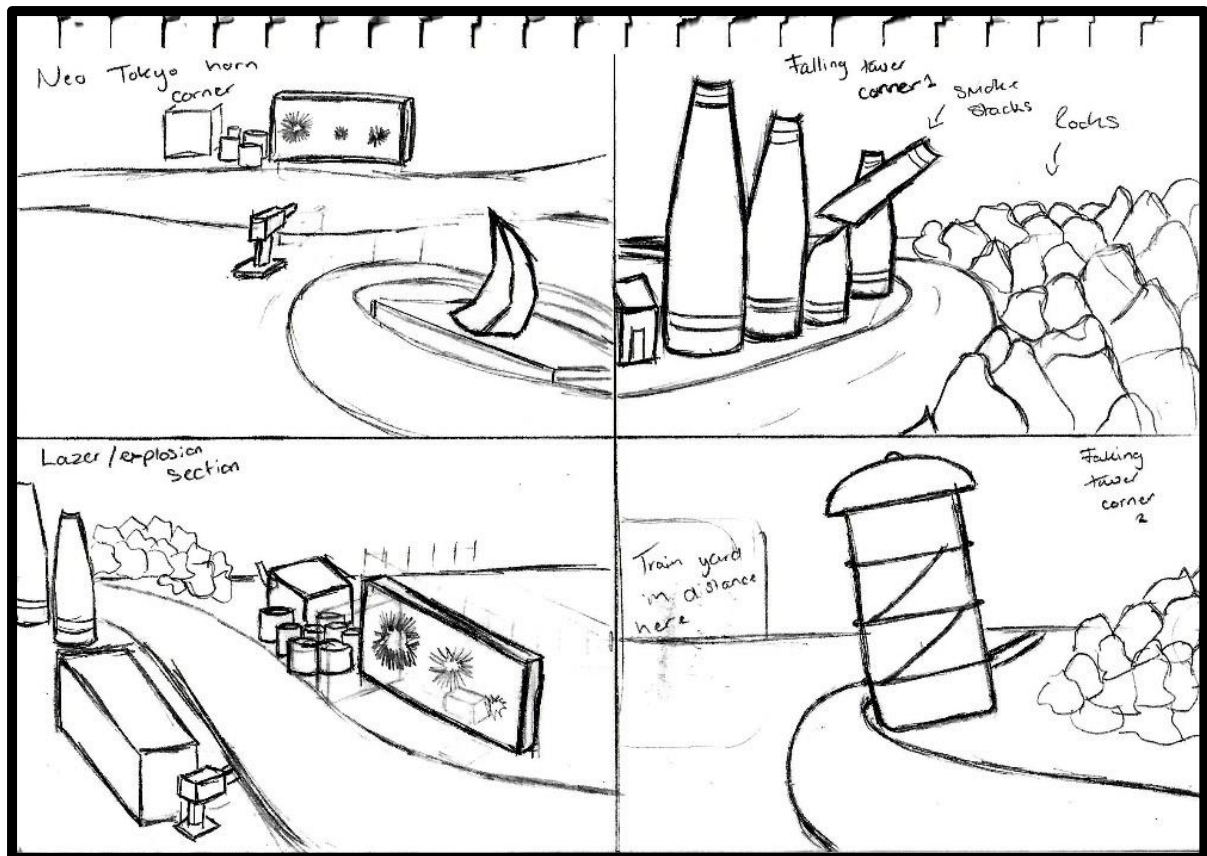


When doing the train yard, I talked to my team about the style of the train, I researched and looked for references to help with my design of the few iterations of trains we would like in our train yard, I found some interesting designs while browsing the internet, mainly using google images, some searches I did were useful, however I stuck with the idea of the area being gravely and rocky.



I started to design an orthographic for one of the train models while our modeller started doing a basic model of another train for now, when I finish the orthographic, our modeller can update the current design he has with my design, but also keeping the old model too, this is so we have different iterations and types of trains in this section.

I started to draw out the mecha-arm section to our map today, again using the same proportion/view as the train yard sketch, having the same problem with the proportions as before I was able to complete this small sketch of this section with ease, I added some new small assets to the area to add more character and style, so that when the player would drive through it wouldn't seem bare and lifeless

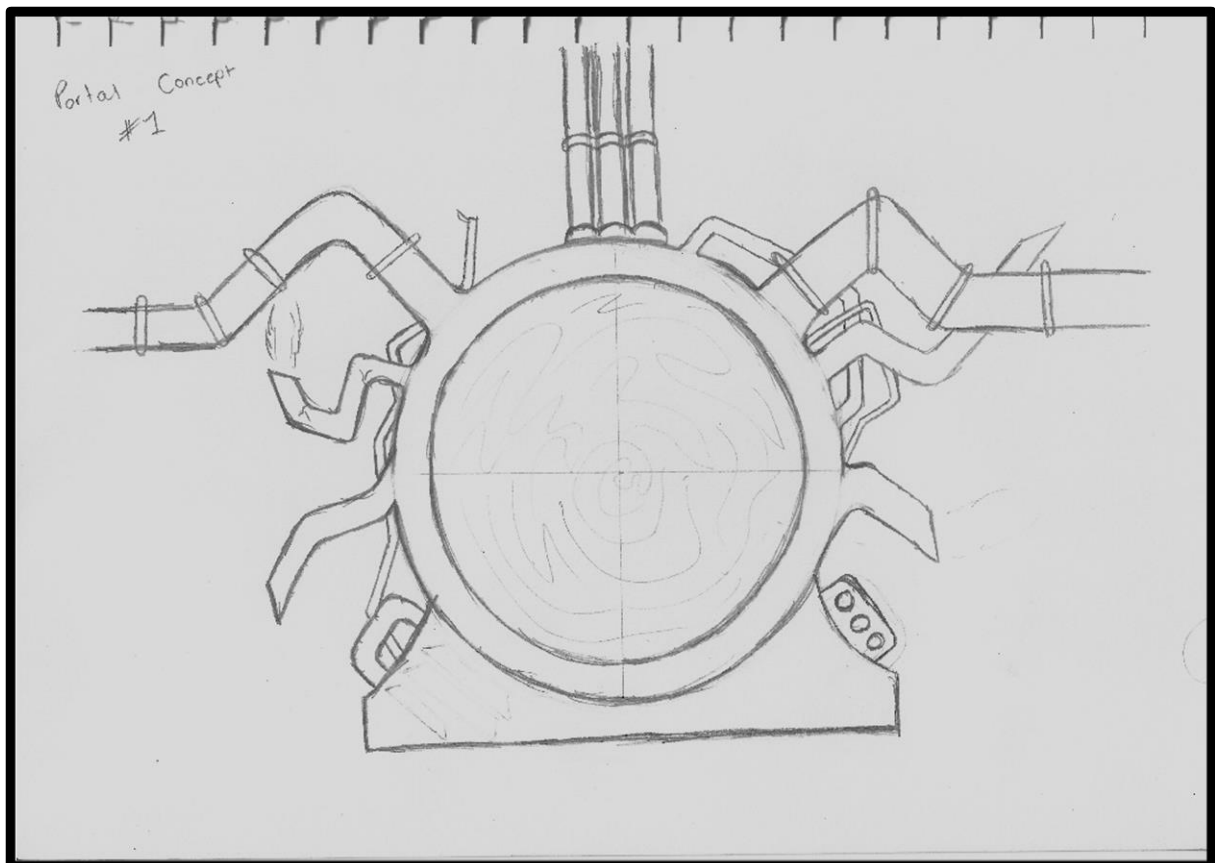


I drew out small concepts/ visual representations of sections of our level so when most of our models are ready, the level designers can place down our assets in the correct places,

however I will be by the level designers during this time so that they do place them right as sometimes an error can occur.

26th Nov – 2nd Dec

I drew out a concept for the portal following our modeller's design he quickly made for the group, which I highly appreciated. I quite liked the design he made in Maya, however I drew out an improved version which, if we have time to, we can implement into our level:



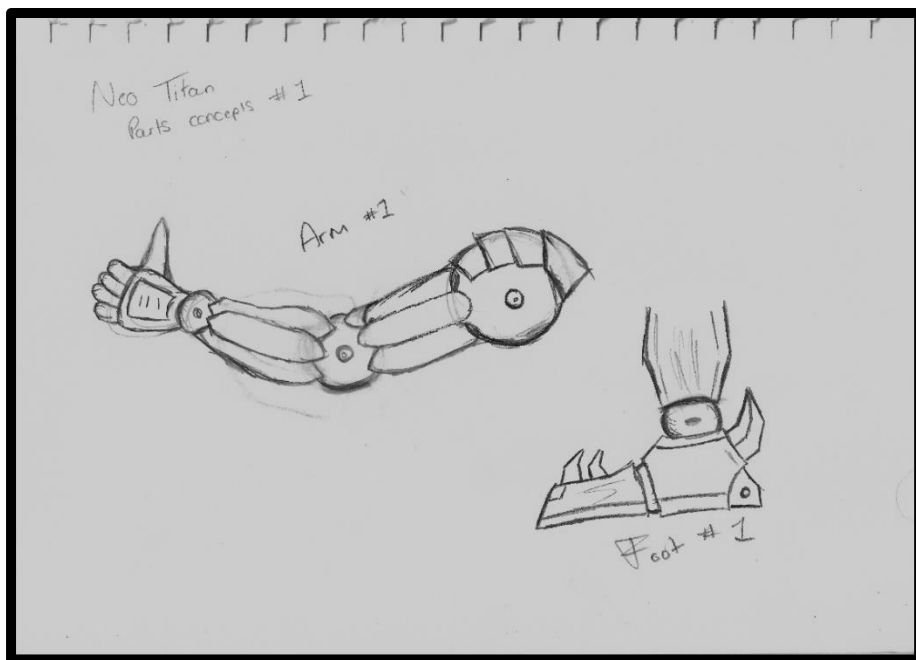
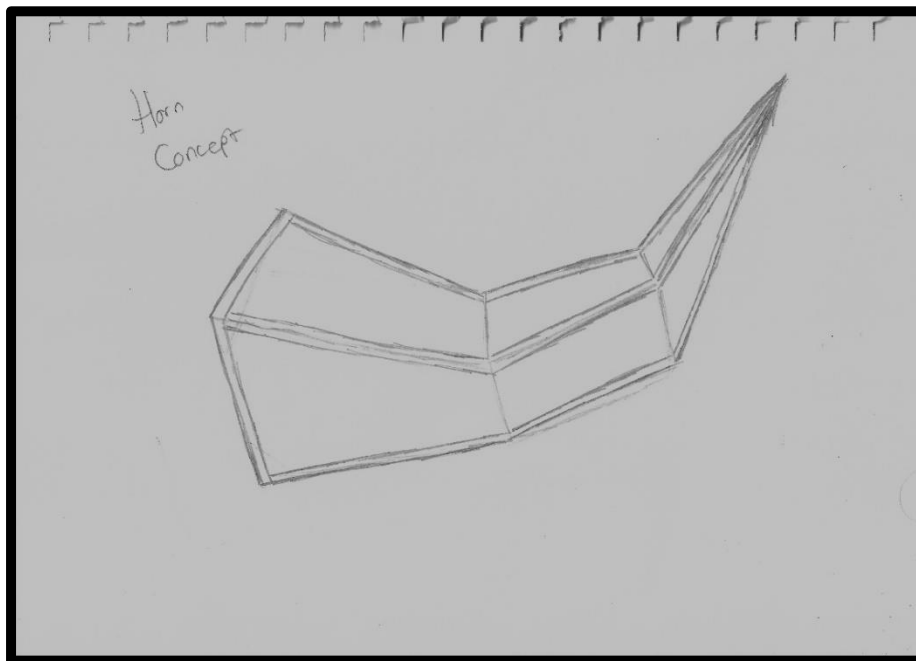
Also, the class had a brief group talk about the GDD and the format we should use and how to form the document once we've all completed our sections, we concluded to looking on the shared google drive we setup for the template for the GDD as guidance for layout and set Next Friday as the deadline to get it done.

I found out that recently that some key models have not been made for our level, i.e. the train tracks for the train to be placed on, as well as some place holder buildings to fill the map. I talked to our modeller to see if he could model these in the limited time we have left.

I worked on drawing small quick concepts for some of the models that will be needed in the level still, I am currently in crunch time meaning I can't afford to take my time drawing these

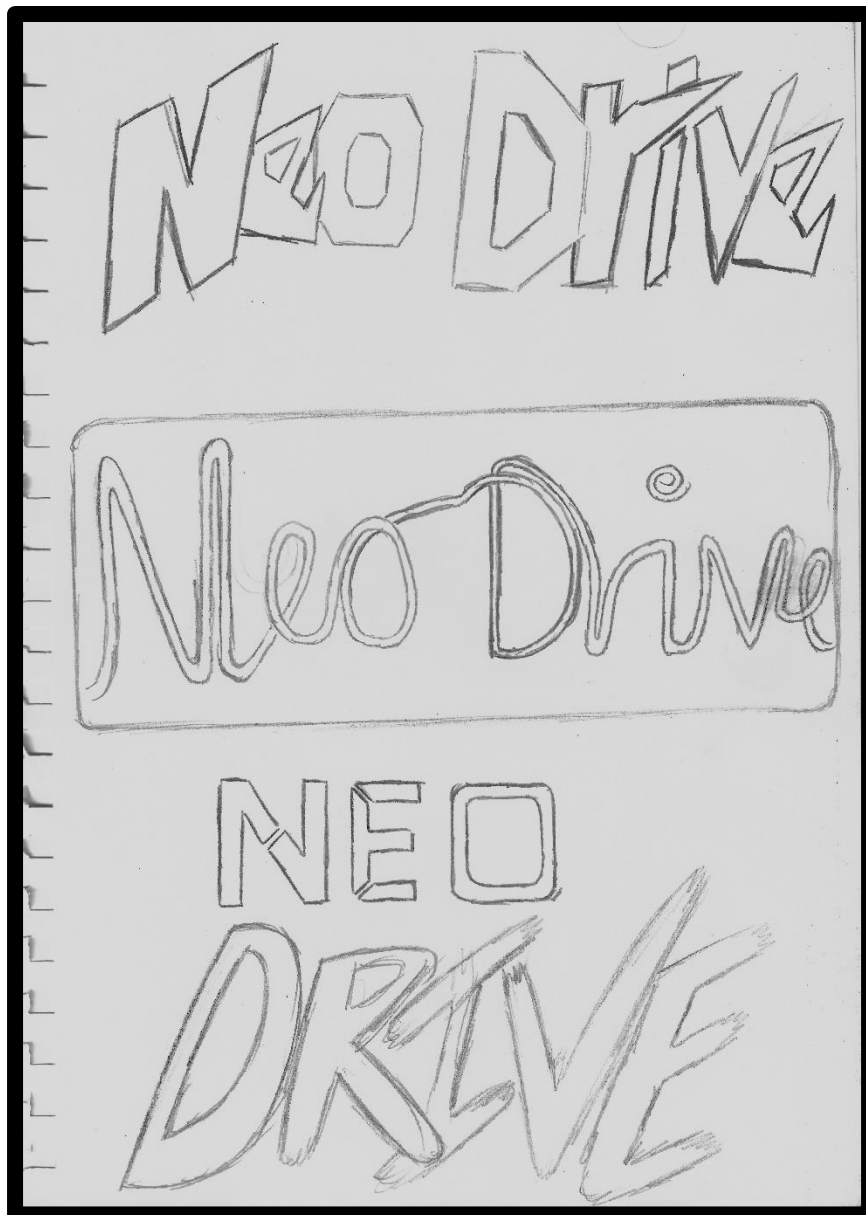
sketches. This is something I will have to improve on next term as it is key to get drawings/concepts done first so that the modeller will have no issues whilst modelling.

The drawings I have done are the robotic horn as well as some mecha limbs for the robot, these are key assets that I forgot to review in the asset list and overlooked until only now, while drawing these I looked at the Neo Tokyo group's concept artist's drawings, mainly at his Robo-dinosaur drawing as I wanted to make the mecha parts look similar to the ones on the Robo-dinosaur, doing this was more tricky than I thought as I didn't want to copy the style and mecha parts completely, wanting to put my own spin and feel to it. In the end I was able to complete the drawings with ease.



I also worked on a concept/design of a comic book for our game in the spare time I was able to find, I believe having this would give the game more character and life, as well as giving the narrative a visual representation to the audience/players of our game. I believe what gives a video game successful is a good story as it tends to grip a persons interest and the player would want to play on to see what happens to this story or person the game may include, good examples of games with remarkable story writing are, Red Dead Redemption 2 and The Witcher franchise, both games I have played and enjoyed fully.

So today I played around with the visual title design looking at references online, one of my friends recommended looking at the game "Total Recall" for their game title text style, so I did and tried to imitate their title design into our own, to see what it would look like, I believe the effect works in a way, especially the second half of the title, the paint font/style used is more appealing and I showed a friend the design and he said it looked more appealing than the first half, which supports my judgement.



I am hoping to have more designs of the comic book ready for my presentation, or visual representations to demonstrate to my friends so that they can give me feedback to what I can do to improve it. I believe more research is needed into how to make a successful comic book, perhaps start looking into popular comic book brands and see how they have done their style, such as Marvel and DC comics.



I worked on the layout of the front page of the comic book, looking at comic books produced by Marvel and DC, I mainly focused on the old classic comics they've produced, rather than the more modern comics they have made. I believe having a more vintage, classic design will make the comic more eye catching and appealing to audiences as it is not common for comics to release in this style today

I also coloured my previous drawings such as the train yard and the portal, solely because I want to practice my colouring skills in photoshop ready for next semester as I've heard that is when the artists peak at their skills. My first proper time colouring in photoshop I found rather challenging getting used to all the different settings and modes you can have your brush as well as the different layers you can add to a piece of work. I found with my progress that I prefer to colour on the tablet as well as photoshop, however I still feel drawing is easier on paper, this is something I must work on as nowadays in the business of video games development, concept artists tend to use drawing tablets for their work. The coloured drawings can be seen below:



Conclusion

To conclude my production diary, I believe the productivity I achieved was adequate to the tasks that needed to be done, however there are a few things I would do differently next time as well as improve on. Such things would be laying out my Gantt chart in an understandable format so that I wouldn't have to reorganize it, as I had to do during the project. Another improvement I can make to do differently next time is colour more of my drawings on a drawing tablet/photoshop as I need to improve my skills if I want to be a successful concept artist in today's video game business.

I will also make sure that all my work is genuine and cannot be copyright claimed, as mentioned before in my production diary I had to get rid of and not use some of my concept art as I essentially traced the image, making it not my own and copying someone else's work. This noticeably isn't allowed, and it was mindless of me to think it was alright to do at the time.

In my production plan (Gantt Chart) I planned to work on Unreal as well as Texture this semester, but due to poor time management skills by myself, I was not able to get to be able to work on these, however this does not stop me from doing it now in my free time over the holidays, I plan to practice Substance Painter over the Christmas break, so when I come back next semester I will have a clearer understanding to texturing models as well as the use of blending and mixing colours together. So, in theory too I will have to improve my time management skills by following my Gantt chart more and updating it frequently as time goes on.

Overall, I believe the progression of the industrial level is going smoothly, no main errors have occurred, and I look forward to keeping on working at this project in the next semester in January.