

MY LIMINAL GAME:

# ROOM 6

*An Independent Game Development Journey*

Ava Daniels  
Independent Project



Character Design

Hero

guardian - has a large sharp silhouette but with nice nature.

faceless? nameless?

look up take inspo - book

look inspiration from my own old character design

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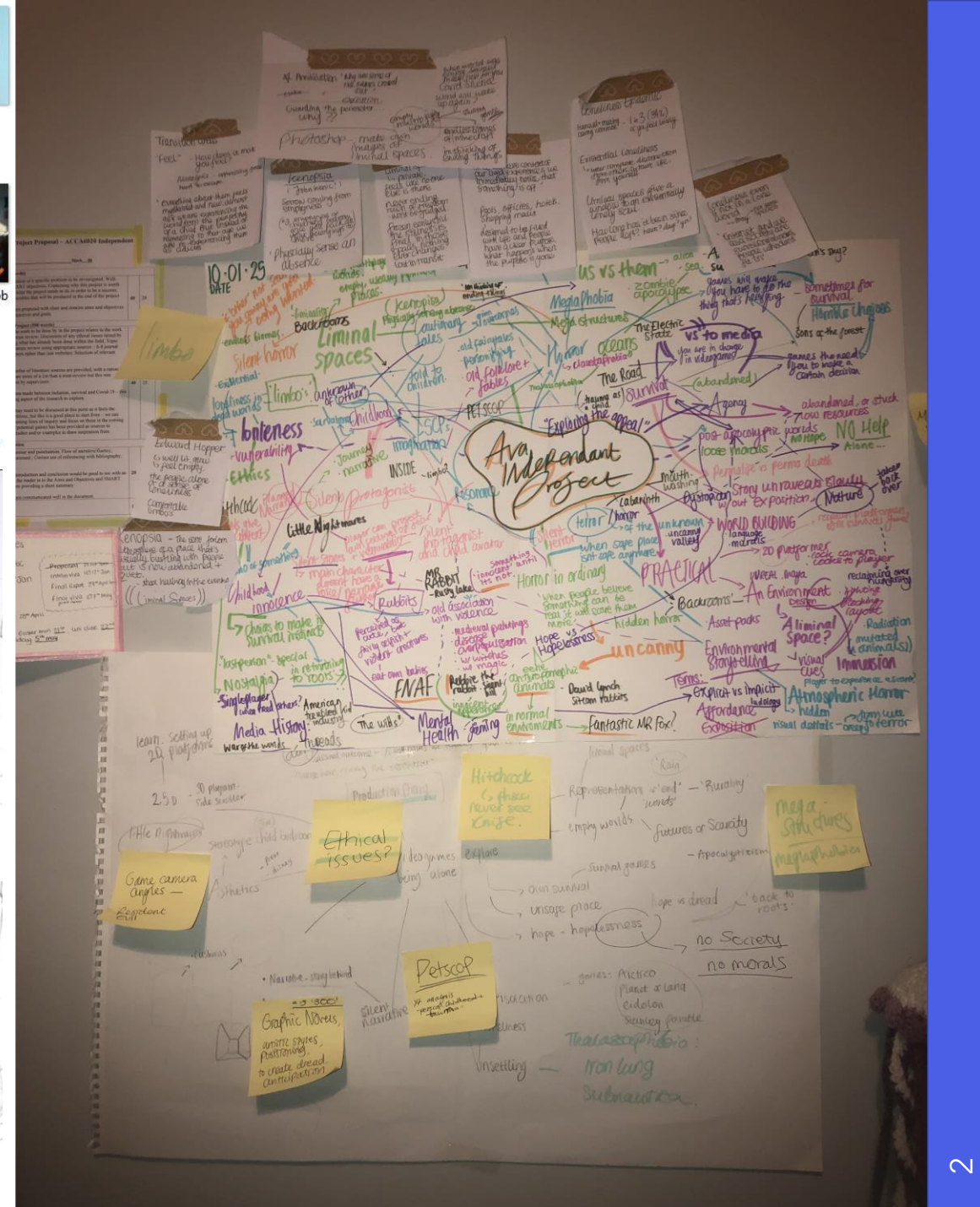
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Player is a drawing the girl made of herself.  
The girl's 'ghost' is stuck somewhere in the room

Tutorials for controls – pop up on screen then added to controls in settings



# RESOURCES

## Horror games and anxiety



EGX ✓  
17.6K subscribers

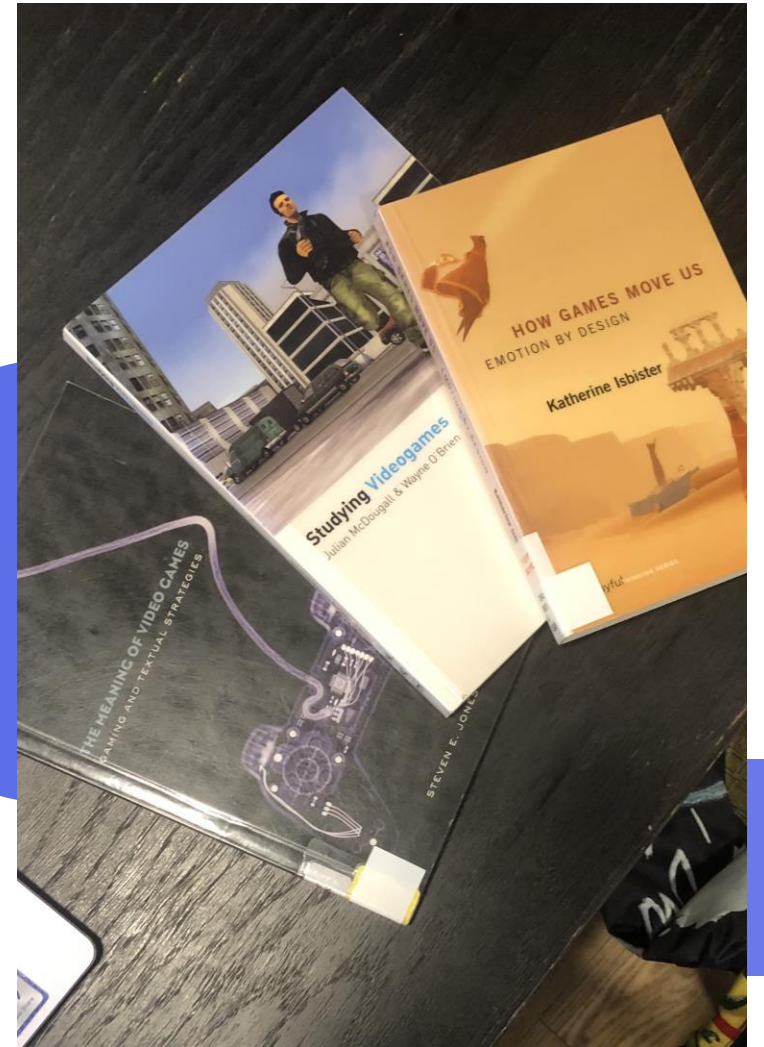
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<https://www.reddit.com/r/LiminalSpace/>

[1] K. Isbister, *How Games Move Us: Emotion by Design*.  
Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2016.

[2] J. McDonald and W. O'Brien, *Studying Videogames*.  
London: Routledge, 2018.

[3] S. Egenfeldt-Nielsen, J. H. Smith and S. P. Tosca,  
*Understanding Video Games: The Essential Introduction*,  
3rd ed. New York: Routledge, 2016. (Assumed title for  
“*The Meaning of Videogames*” – let me know if this is  
wrong)

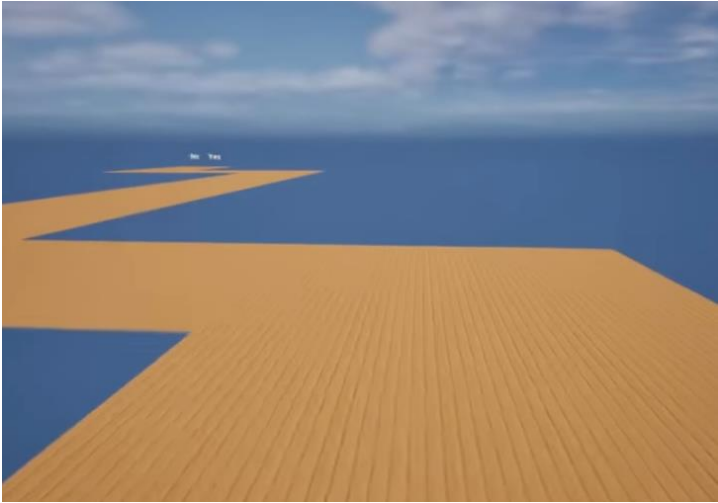
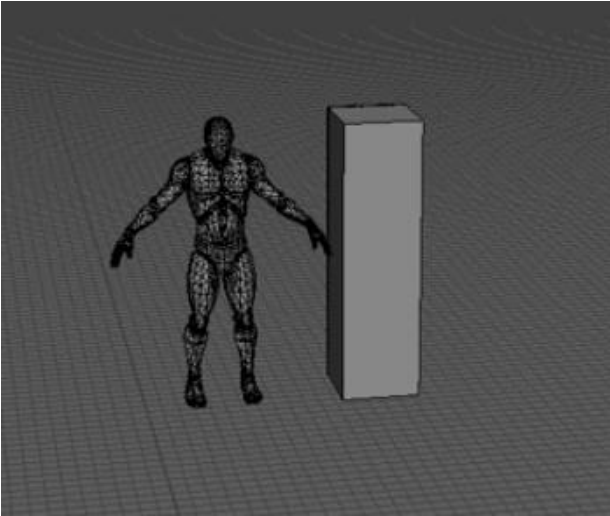
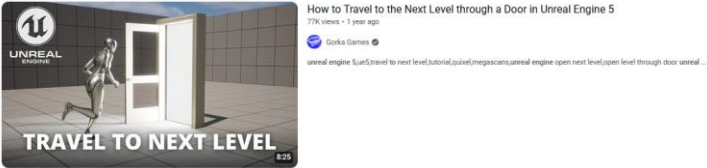
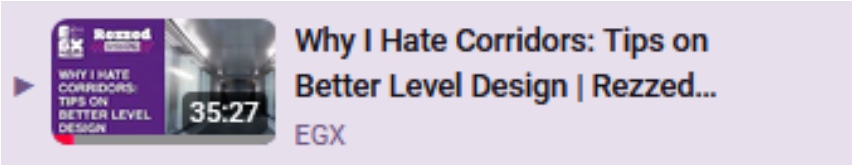
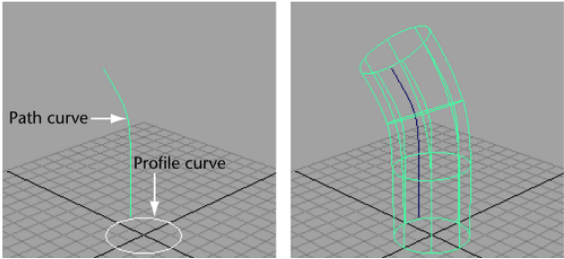


### Sweep a profile curve along a path curve

The Extrude action creates a surface by sweeping a cross-section (or “profile”) curve normal 3D curves, surface isoparms or edges, trim edges, or curves-on-surface. The however, you can create caps at each end using Surfaces > Planar.

#### To extrude a profile curve along a path curve

1. Select the profile curve or curves. Then select the path curve.  
Maya uses the key curve (the last curve you select) as the path.
2. Select Surfaces > Extrude.



# Overview of the game

A first-person, geographically isolated, anomaly detection game

Player trapped in a looping corridor & waiting room

Goal: Spot subtle environmental changes → escape the loop



# GAME PROGRESSION AND MECHANICS

Clear, Simple Goal:

Escape the loop by spotting and reacting to anomalies, by continue onto next room if no anomaly, or turn back if spotted an anomaly

Win Condition:

Spot a certain number of correct anomalies (6 rooms) to break the loop.

Players decide whether to continue or return after each loop.

Fail Condition:

Miss an anomalies or react incorrectly in terms of direction, leading to failure. Game resets player to beginning

Looping Structure:

Reuse the same environment (corridor + waiting room), but make slight, eerie changes each time.

Changes could include reversed signs, missing objects, unusual sounds, or new entities appearing.

# WHAT WAS I AIMING FOR?

- Use Maya, Photoshop and Substance painter
- Learn Unreal Engine 5 more

## Immersive Atmosphere:

Use dynamic lighting, soundscapes, and environmental storytelling to create an eerie, nostalgic ambiance using Unreal Engine 5.

## Player's Sense of Scale:

Large, open spaces make players feel small, while claustrophobic areas create unease through shifting scale.

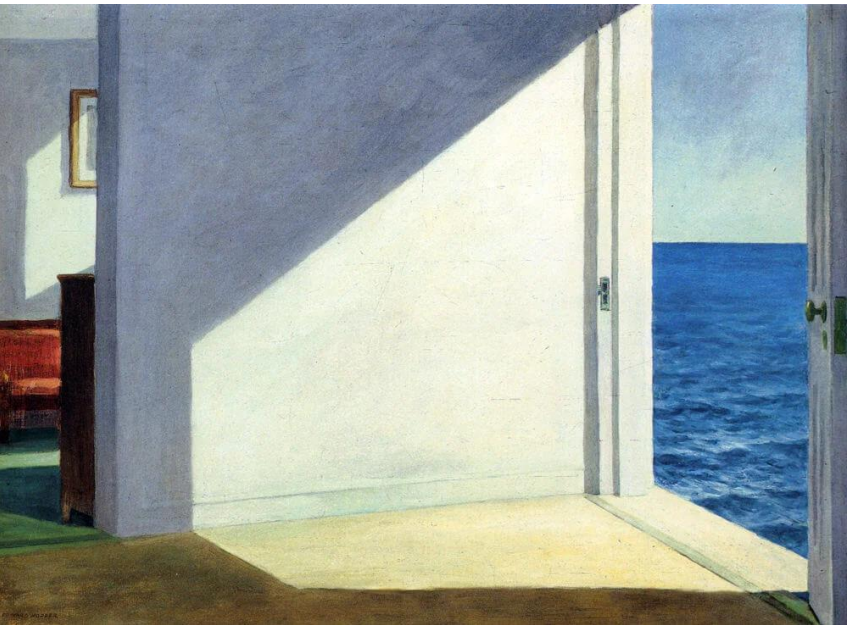
## Emotional Design:

Convey sadness through nostalgic elements (old toys, abandoned spaces) and evoke the "ghost of humanity" with signs of life left behind (e.g., furniture, graffiti), but no people.

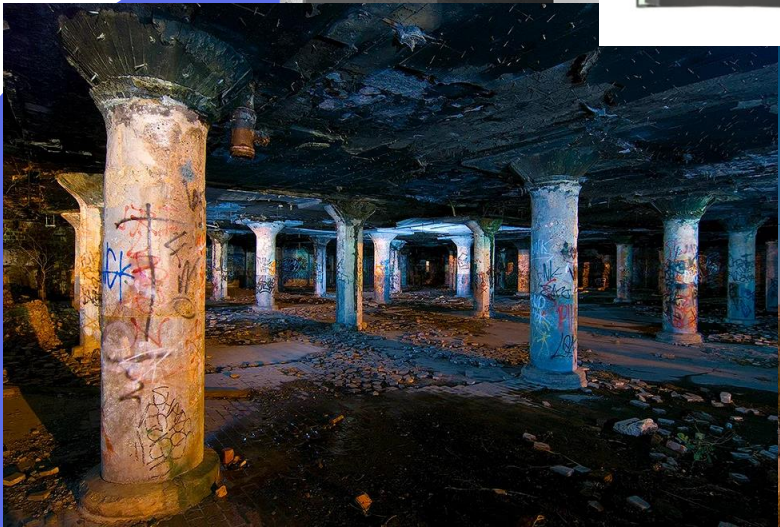
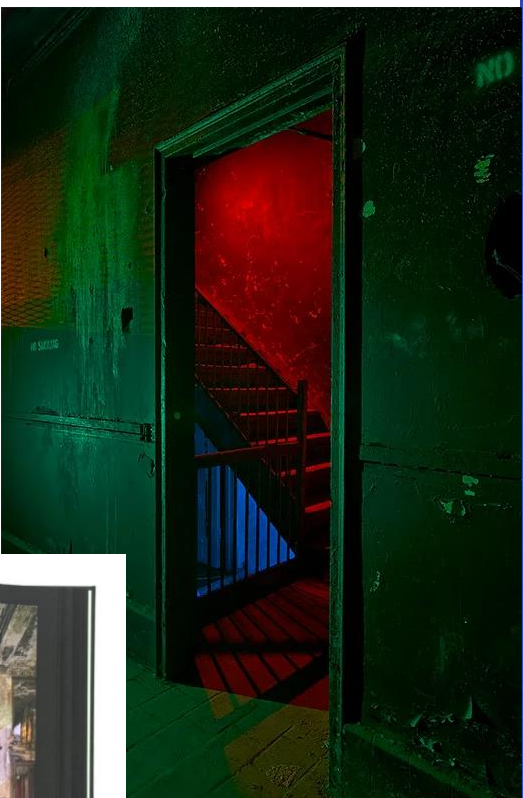
## No Traditional Tutorials:

Environmental cues guide players naturally, maintaining immersion and teaching navigation without interrupting the flow.

# Artistic Inspirations



[8] E. Hopper, Rooms by the Sea [Painting], 1951. [Online]. Available: <https://www.edwardhopper.net/rooms-by-the-sea.jsp>



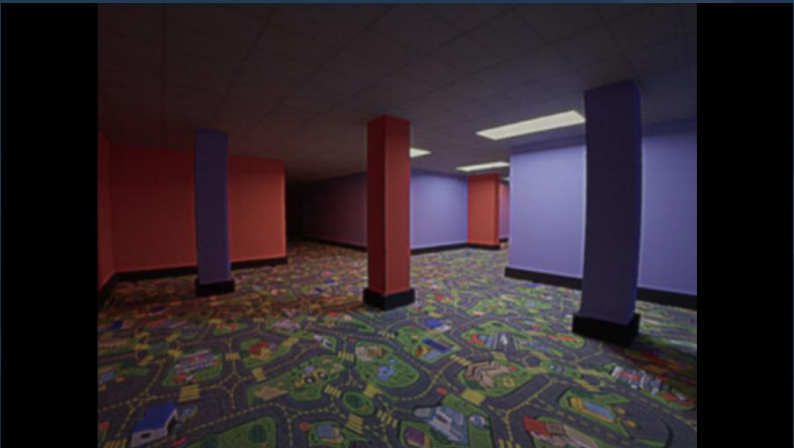
# OWN PHOTOGRAPHY





Backrooms: Found Footage

Community Hub



Backrooms: Found Footage is a single-player horror game where you are the main character trying to survive the Backrooms. Curiosity wins and you decide to explore this weird place that you got trapped in. What could go wrong?

RECENT REVIEWS: [Very Positive](#) (14)

ALL REVIEWS: [Very Positive](#) (170)

RELEASE DATE: 25 Oct, 2024

DEVELOPER: [HNStudios](#)

PUBLISHER: [HNStudios](#)

Popular user-defined tags for this product:

[Adventure](#) [Exploration](#) [3D](#) [First-Person](#) [Dark](#) +



The Complex: Found Footage

Community Hub



Experience the liminal world of the backrooms through a VHS camera, immersing into a mysterious story and wandering the dream-like structures... Might there be something following you?

RECENT REVIEWS: [Very Positive](#) (76)

ALL REVIEWS: [Very Positive](#) (8,910)

RELEASE DATE: 18 Aug, 2022

DEVELOPER: [pgWave](#)

PUBLISHER: [pgWave](#)

Popular user-defined tags for this product:

[Horror](#) [Psychological Horror](#) [Multiplayer](#) [Realistic](#) +





# **RESEARCH & PLANNING**

GAME MECHANICS, ART STYLE, PLAYER  
PSYCHOLOGY, ETC.

“Games that create tension between expected and actual outcomes heighten engagement.” – Jesse Schell, The Art of Game Design

“Horror is best delivered through suggestion rather than revelation.”

– Mark J.P. Wolf, Building Imaginary Worlds

“The environment tells the story not through plot, but through presence.”

– Henry Jenkins, Narrative Architecture

“Loops allow repetition without boredom if each return adds variation.”

– Miguel Sicart, Play Matters

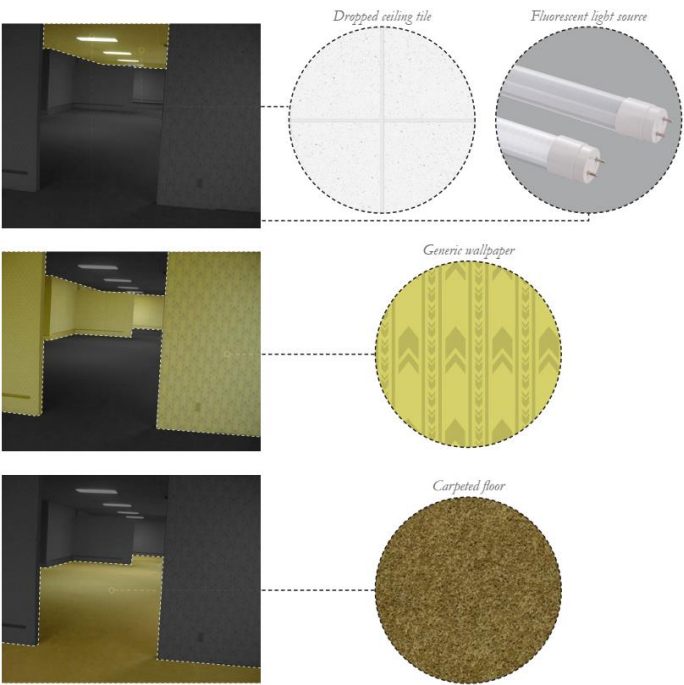
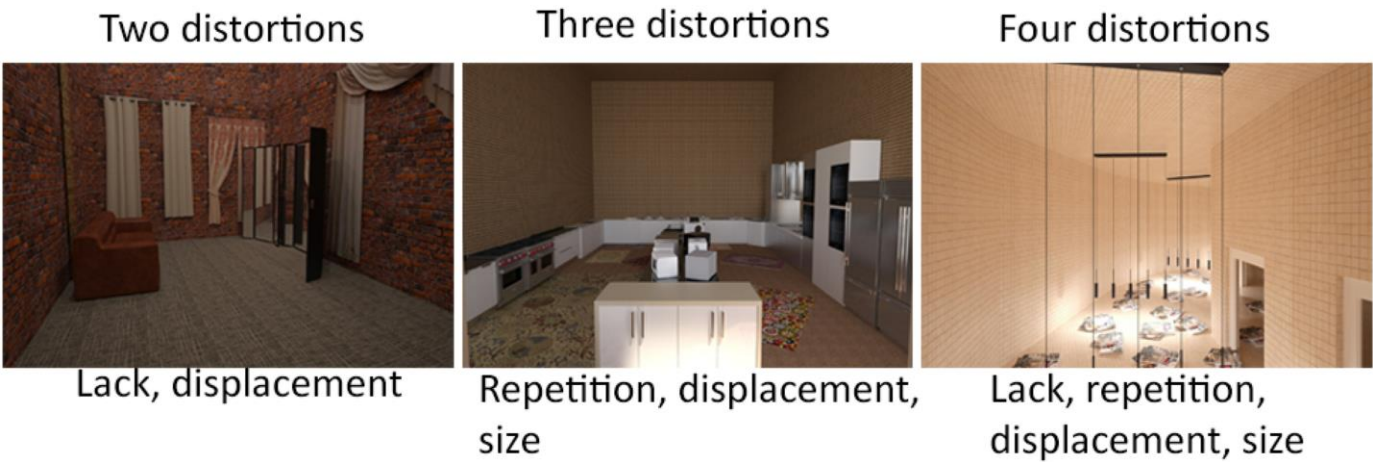
<https://meghanplaysgames.home.blog/2021/09/30/the-silent-storytelling-of-journey/>

In the game Journey:

- unsettling when cool environments as the character is warm.
- Complementary colours used to attract the viewers to important items
- Colours appear more intense than closely related

# DESIGN PRINCIPLES PREVIOUSLY KNOWN

- Avoid player frustration – world needs to feel consistent
- Players learn the limits of the game space
- Immersion is expected
- Players want clear goals, feedback, and a sense of progress
- Players expect logic – corridors, rooms, doors, can subvert expectations to build tension (e.g. looping hallway) The loop structure = a form of progression, even with no traditional levels
- Pattern recognition – players train themselves to spot differences, which causes discomfort and tension.
- Cognitive dissonance – environment feels familiar but slightly “off”
- Spatial narrative – story implied by layout, lighting, and repetition
- Emergent fear – tension builds over time through unease, not jumpscare, Anomalies are the perfect tool
- Minimal UI – visual storytelling over direct instructions

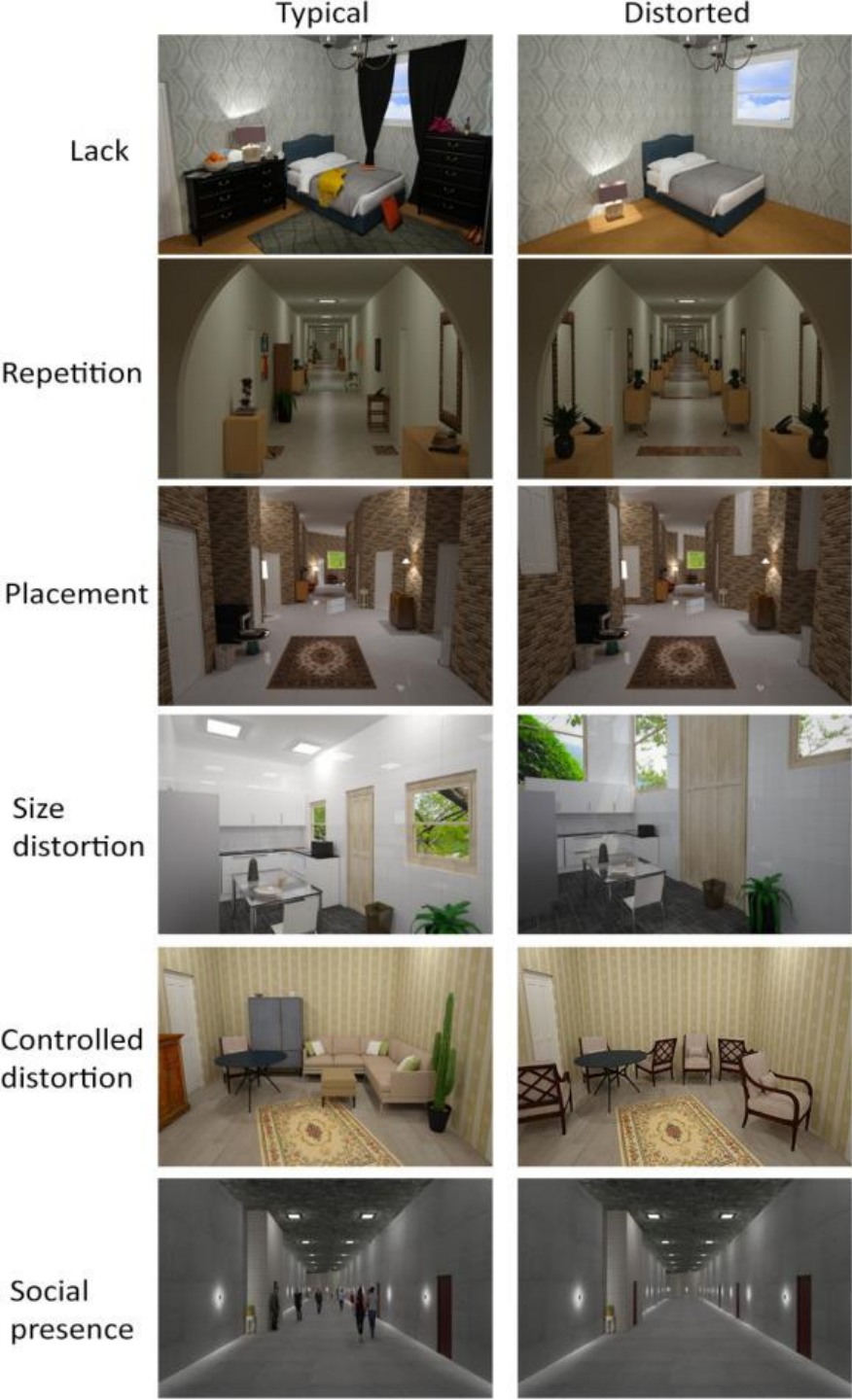


material selection

The material selection found within the architectural typologies of liminal space should evoke feelings of familiarity, atemporality and blandness. These can be achieved through the use of generic tiles as reflective surfaces (in the case of pools and public schools), generic wallpaper repeated ad nauseam (in the case of domestic and professional settings, such as hotels, suburban single-family houses, offices), dropped tile ceilings with humming neon lights (in the case of public settings, such as hotels, offices, schools), generic vinyl siding (in the case of suburban single-family houses), vibrant color patterns (in the case of movie theatres, pools and public schools), among other selections. The blandness of materials within liminal space is indicative of an architectural production of efficiency, cheapness and uniformity, which increases the ability of the space to disassociate itself from any regional, temporal or cultural context.

We can see these notions coming into play once we take a look at the Backrooms' material selection within the picture (Fig. 15). Clearly identifiable elements in the ceiling are generic ceiling tiles and neon lights, typical of a cheaply designed office building. The walls, thin and likely single-studded, are uniformly covered in a yellow wallpaper, with a brown wall trim situated about a foot off the floor. The floor itself is covered by a monochrome brownish-yellow carpet. There are a few electrical devices, such as a wall outlet on the bottom right side of the picture and what appears to be a smoke alarm on the ceiling, behind the wall. As Umberto Eco denotes through semiotics, while the primary function of these materials is to provide a finished appearance to the interior, the ideology of the function is one of genericness, mundanity and repeatability.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Gabriele Aronzi, *A Semiotic Framework for the Analysis of Virtual Architecture in Digital Games*, Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University, Suzhou, China, Springer Nature Switzerland AG, 2022, p. 462.



# PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Original Full idea:

Bedroom that you transition to the others from:

Childcare centre

Outside Bus-stop

School hallway, and maybe bathroom

Refocused on 1 core loop for:

Time constraints

Visual & mechanical polish

Better UX testing of core gameplay

Future expansion planned based on original vision

## Research

liminal spaces  
isolation  
Adolescence  
loneliness  
Transition areas  
The backrooms  
Anxiety  
Games

## Moodboards

for assets, as Child's Centre  
Floor and wall patterns  
abandoned textures

## Audio, see whole page...

- researching
- planning
- recording
- editing
- implementing

## Doctor's waiting room

### 3D models

textures  
liminal | abandoned

- Walls
- led lights
- short sofa
- long sofa
- other sofa
- reception wall
- reception desk
- side tables
- reception computer
- noticeboard
- notices
- posters
- magazines
- kids books
- kids games
- chairs
- tv screen
- football table

## School hallway

### 3D models

textures  
liminal | abandoned

- Walls
- led lights
- doors
- noticeboard
- notices
- wet floor sign
- fire safety sign
- fire extinguisher
- posters
- vending machine

### + bathroom?

- Walls
- cubicles
- toilets
- counter
- sink
- mirror
- taps
- posters

## Bus stop

### 3D models

textures  
liminal | abandoned

- Road
- pavement
- shelter x2
- seating
- sign posts
- benches
- light posts
- timetable
- drain grate

## Child's Centre

### 3D models

textures  
liminal | abandoned

- Walls
- Windows
- double doors
- room doors
- play pen fences
- kids toys
- wooden bikes
- tricycle
- Ball pit
- balls x
- buggy cars
- house frame
- soft mats
- soft cubes
- slide
- kids books
- chairs
- sofas
- bean bags

## Bedroom

### 3D models

textures  
liminal | abandoned

- Walls
- Window
- Window frame
- door
- Bed
- pillow
- bed duvet
- bed blanket
- cushions
- Bedside table
- bedside lamp
- alarm clock
- teddies
- wall light
- ceiling light
- bookcase
- books
- Ornaments
- Wardrobe door
- Clothes (on hangers)
- Lava lamp
- Bean bag
- desk/vanity
- chair
- pictures + frames
- curtains
- curtain rail

- door drape
- Picture board
- Comics/magazines
- mirror
- Chest of drawers
- storage unit
- CDs, CD case
- small stool
- stationary:
  - pot of pens
  - leaves
  - school books
- Toys
  - toys
  - penguin ramp

- Ukelele
- Animal rug (sheep)
- stickers
- wall decor
- drawings

# DESIGN FRAMEWORK – GAME PLAN, NOT JUST GAMEPLAY

- Core design decisions (mechanics, genre, aesthetic)
- Show diagrams, wireframes, paper prototypes, mood boards
- Planning tools you used (Gantt chart, Trello, Notion, etc.)

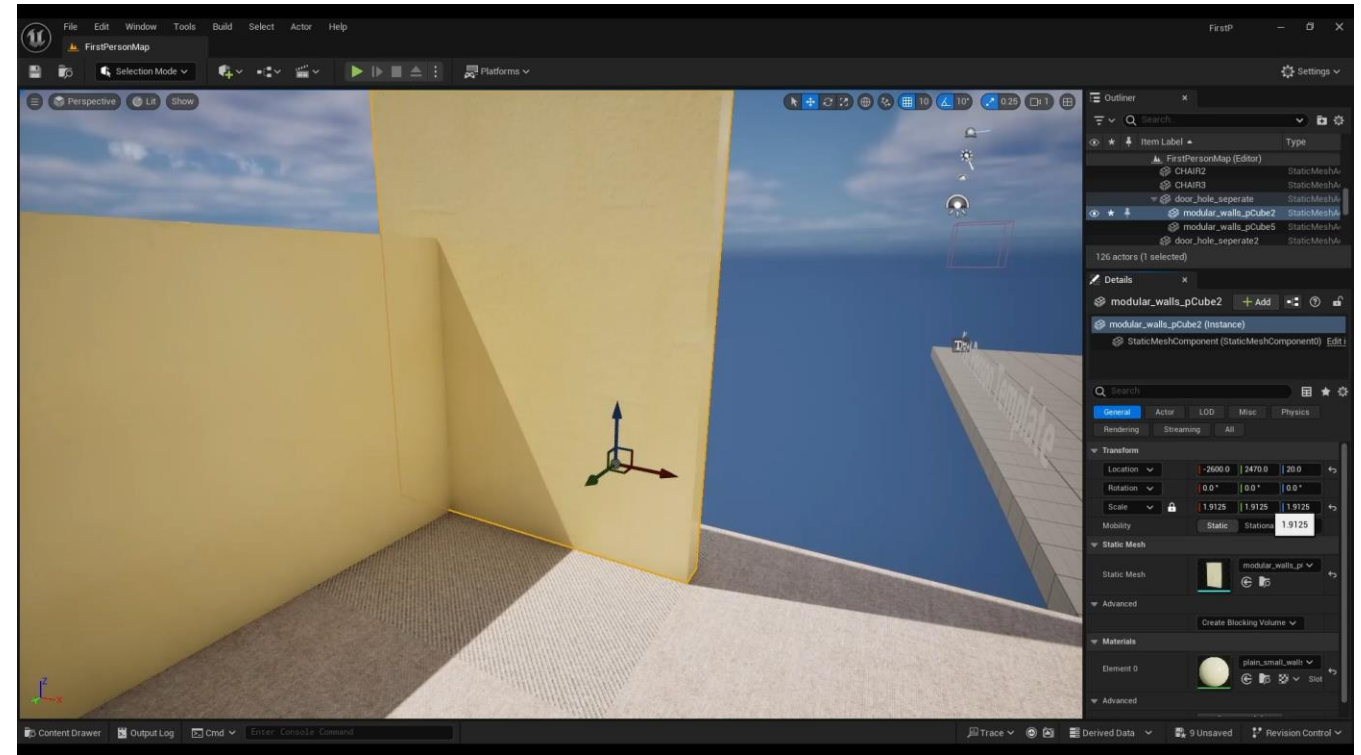
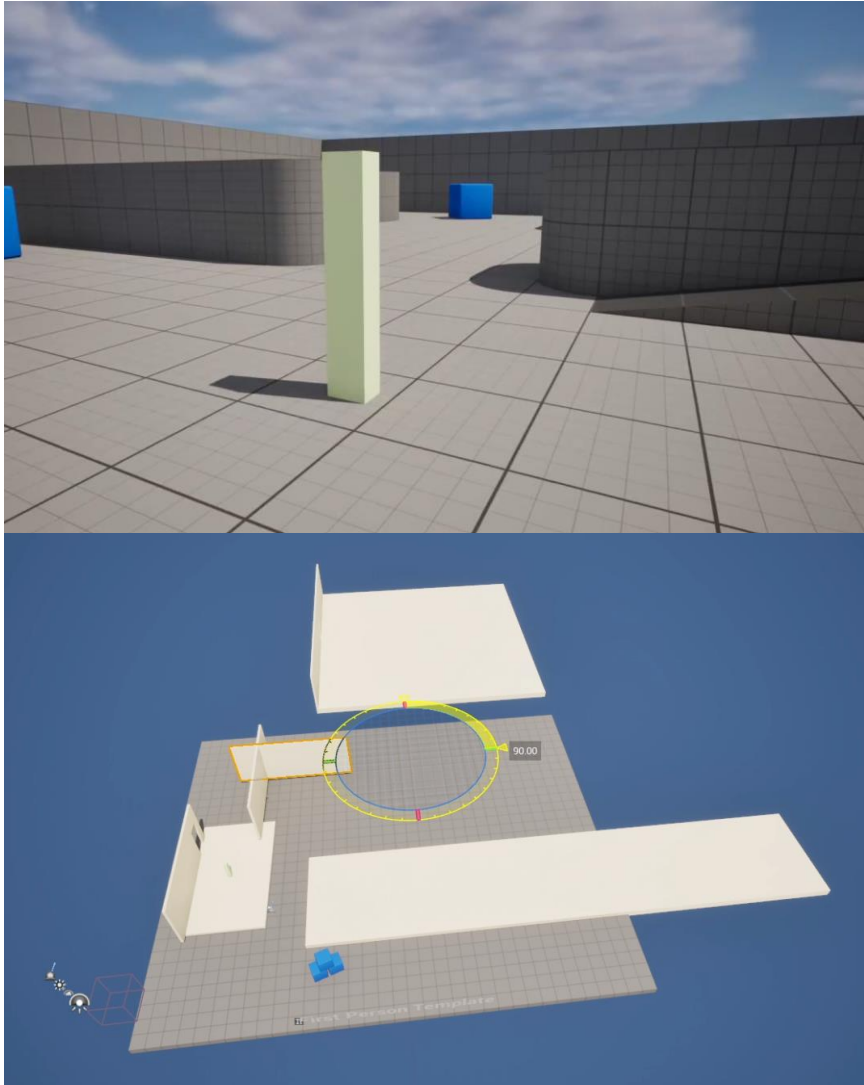
Ties to: *Knowledge & Understanding, Practical Skills*

- Corridor + waiting room loops
- Anomalies appear in each loop:
  - Missing objects
  - Distorted audio
  - Reversed signs
  - Unnatural NPCs

All Images from the r/ Liminal Space Reddit Page [ -in order of left to right, down]



# DEVELOPMENT PROCESS



# PLANNING, MODULAR



spaceist

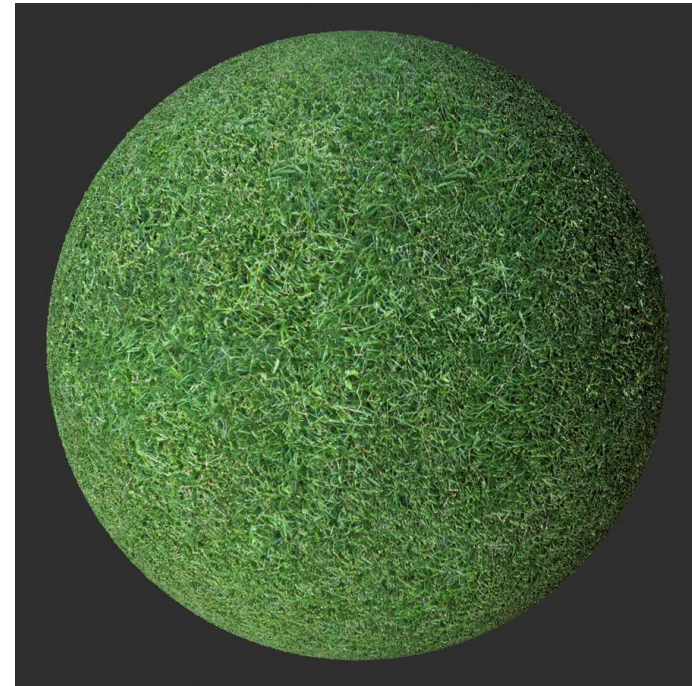
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[https://www.reddit.com/r/nostalgia/comments/157vsv6/in\\_the\\_doctors\\_office\\_waiting\\_room/](https://www.reddit.com/r/nostalgia/comments/157vsv6/in_the_doctors_office_waiting_room/)

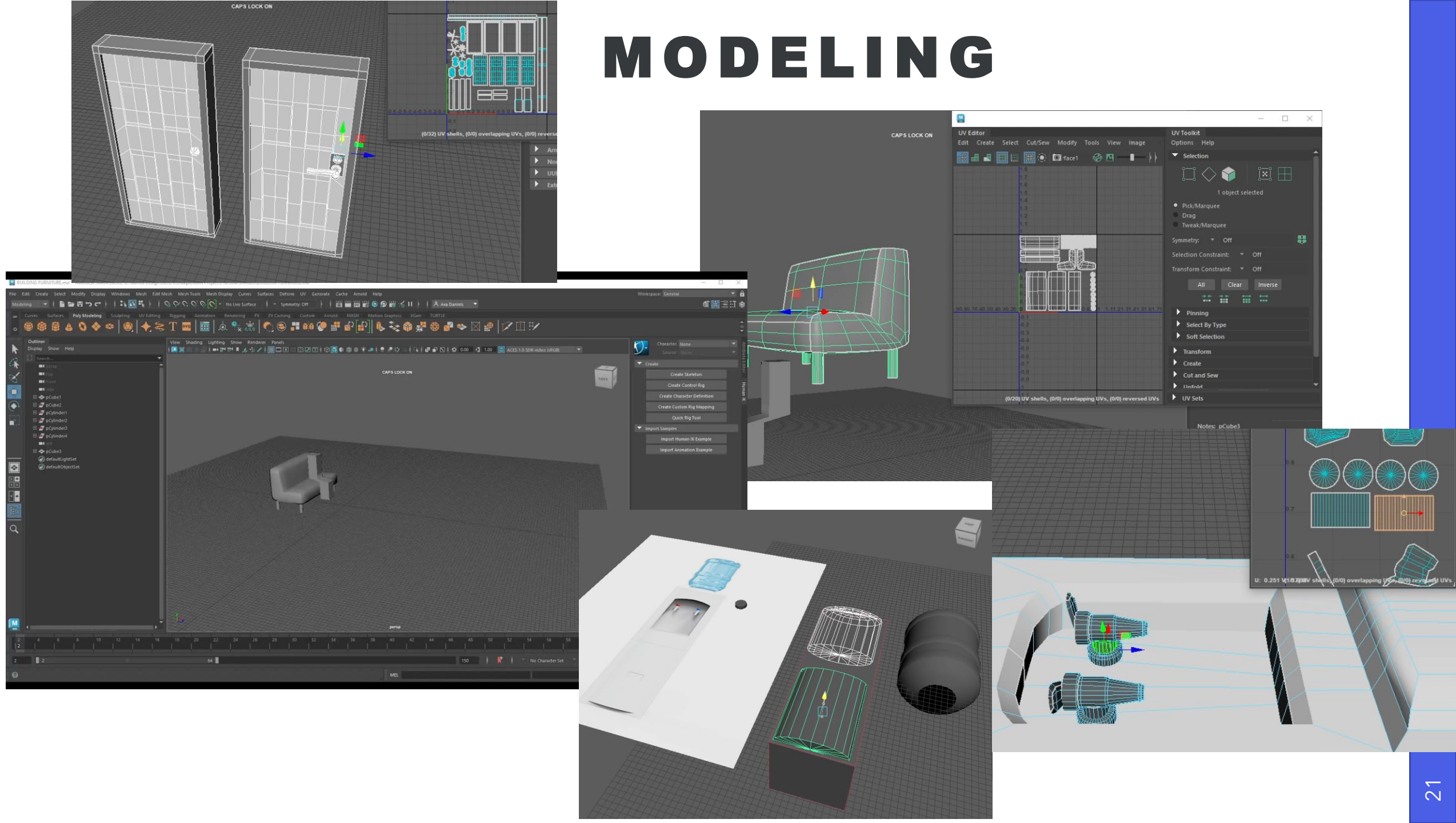
<https://freepbr.com/product/grass-1-pbr-material/>

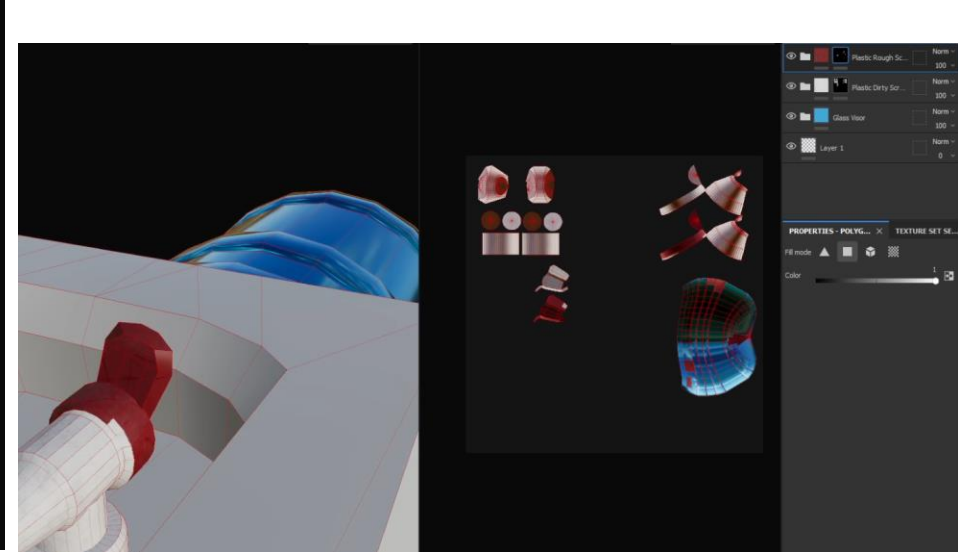
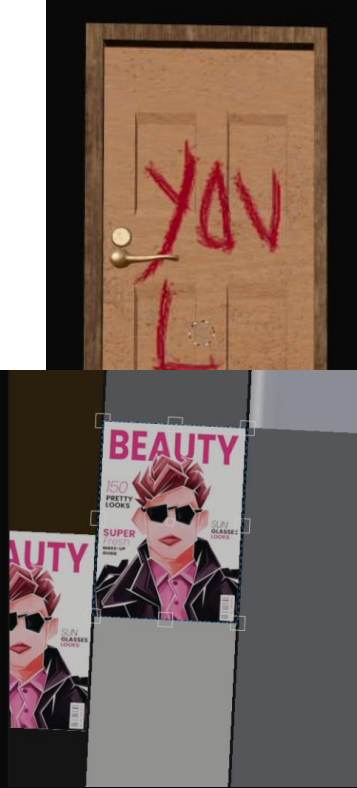
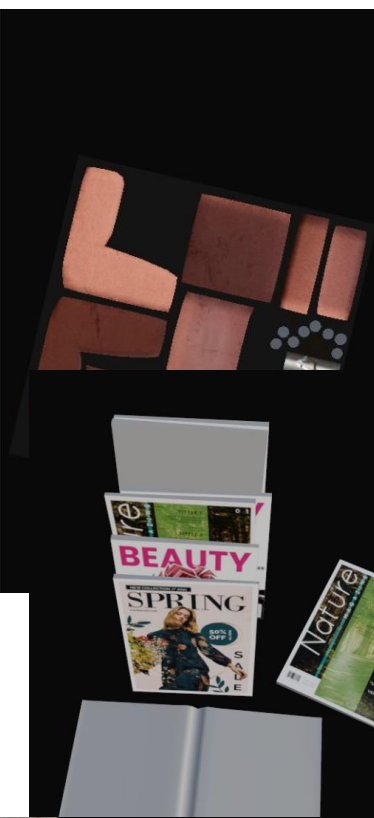
Magazines from:

[https://www.freepik.com/search?format=search&img=1&last\\_filter=img&last\\_value=1&query=](https://www.freepik.com/search?format=search&img=1&last_filter=img&last_value=1&query=)

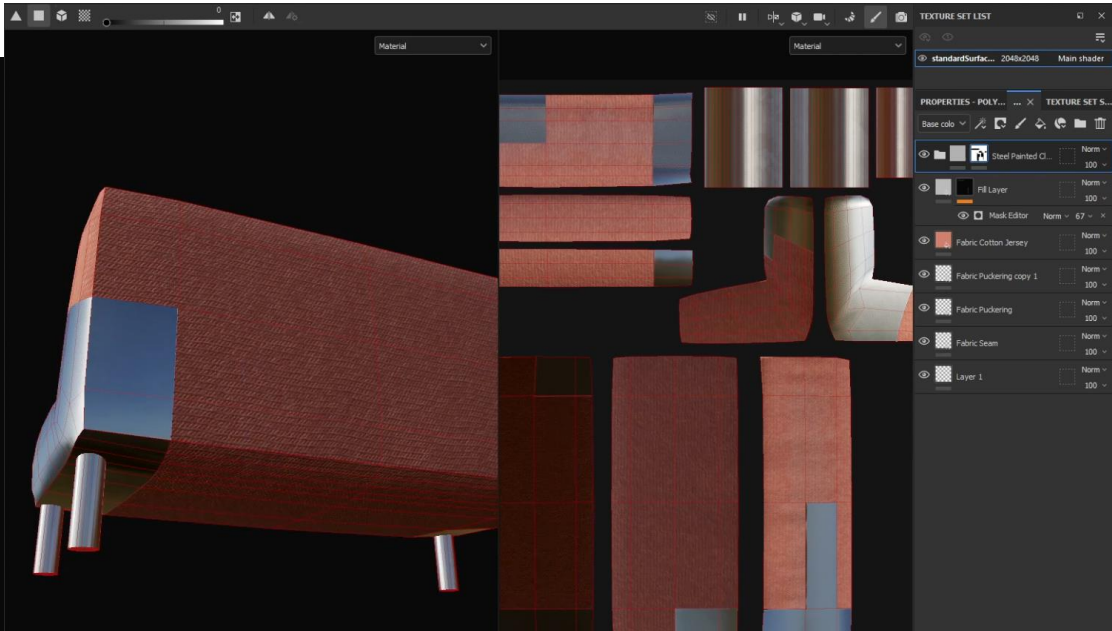


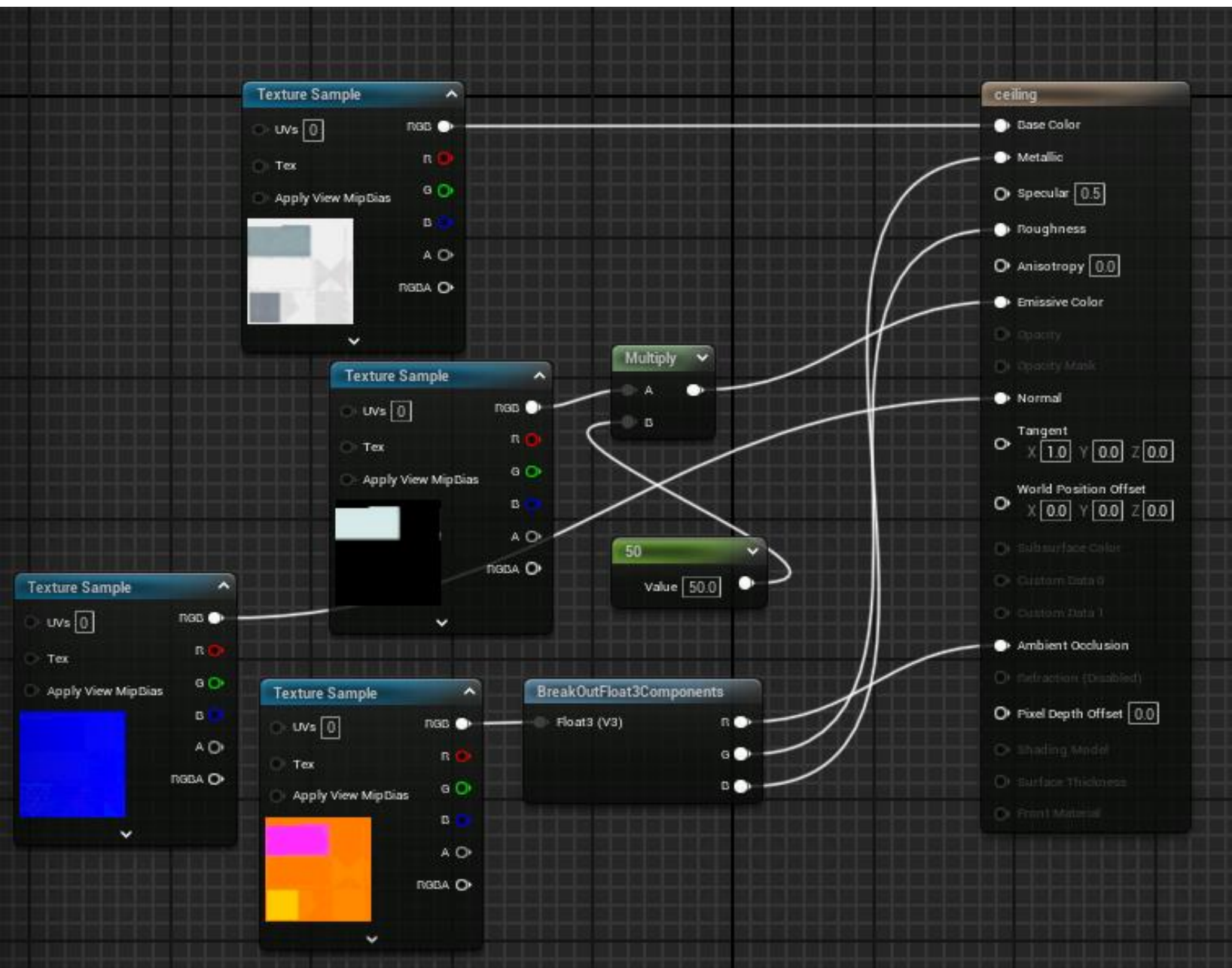
# MODELING





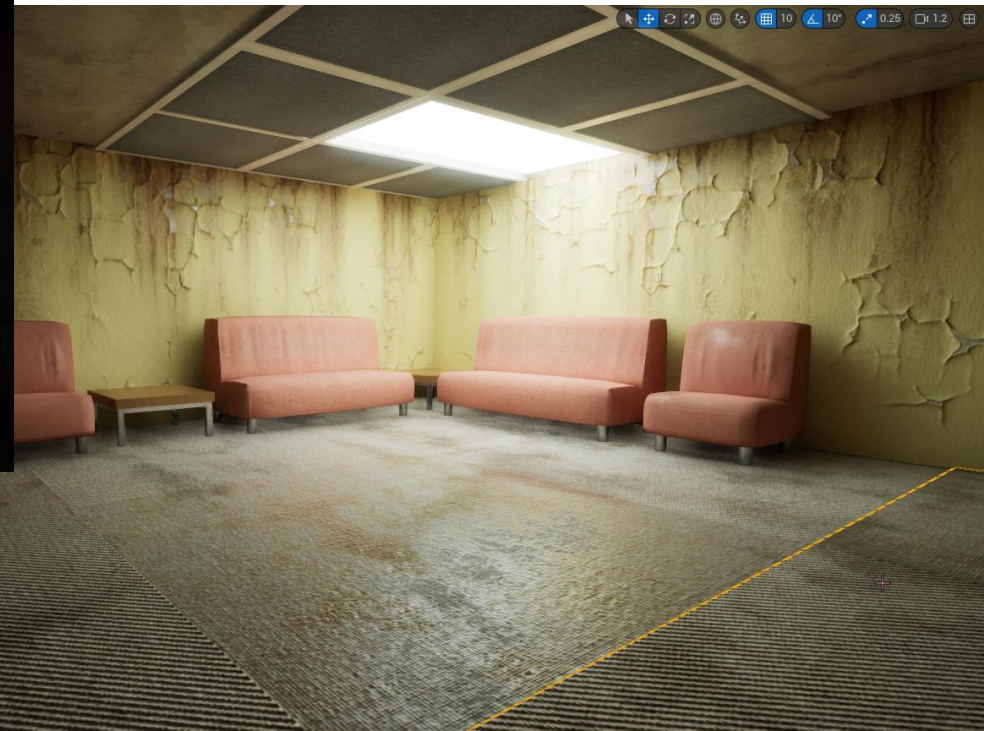
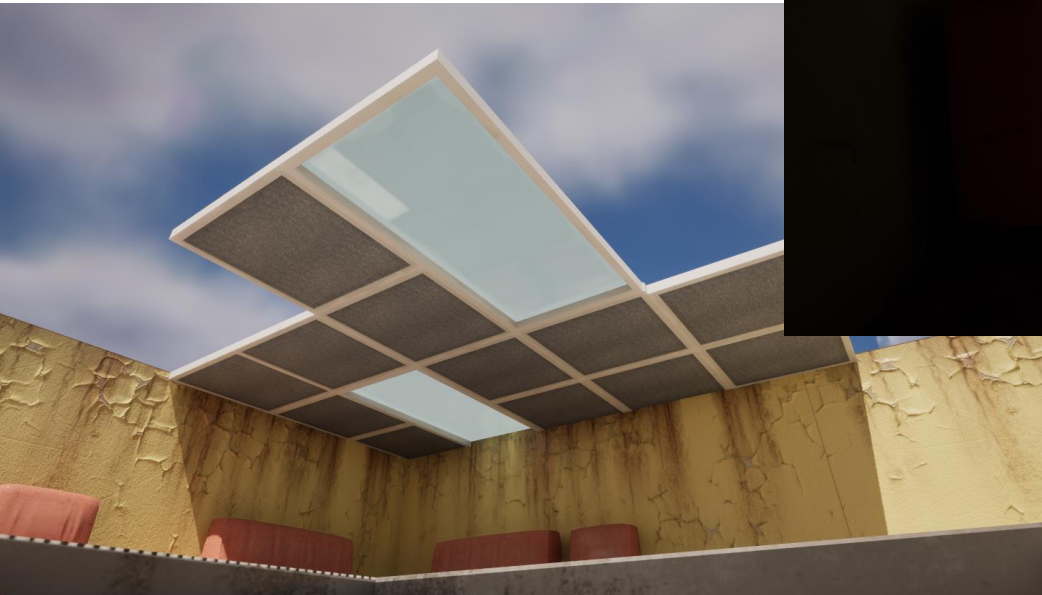
# TEXTURING



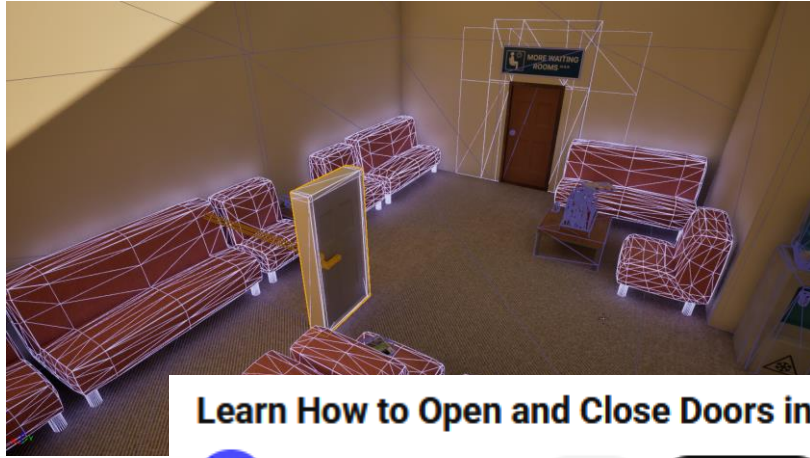


# PLUGGIN' IN

# PROTOTYPING



# MAKING THE OPENING DOORS



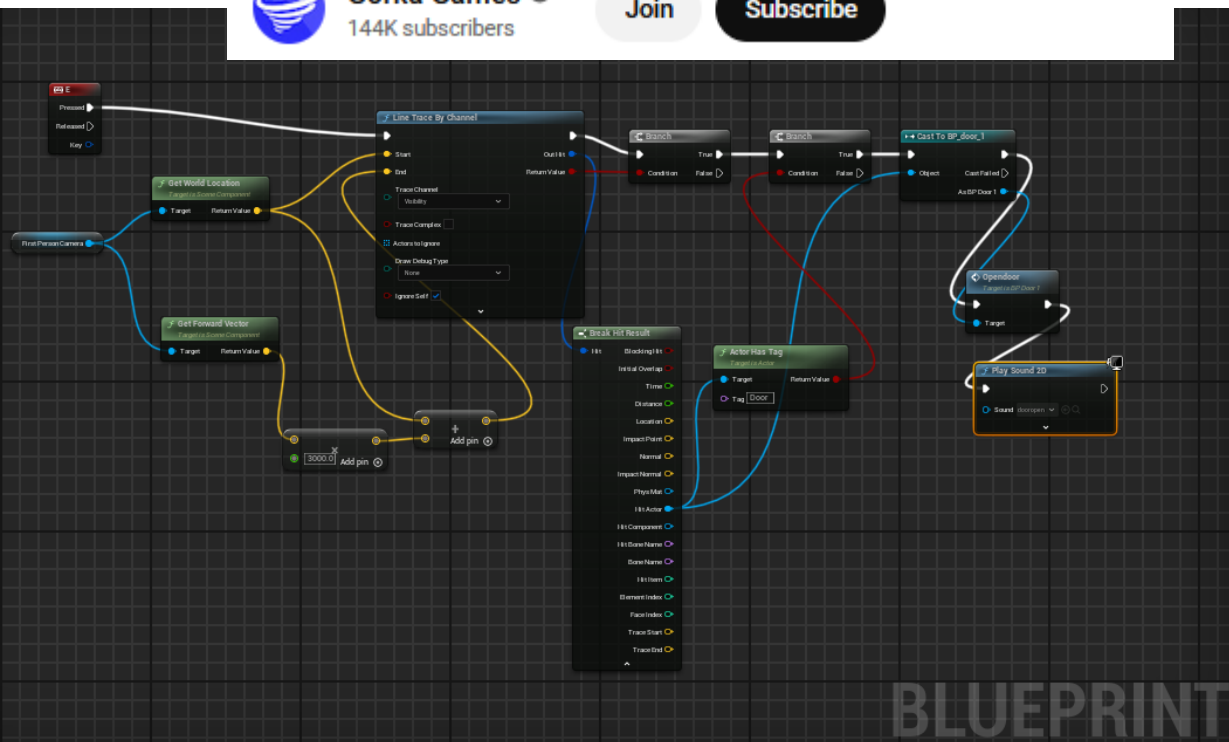
Learn How to Open and Close Doors in Unreal Engine 5



Gorka Games  
144K subscribers

Join

Subscribe



Learnt new thing: alt - c shows collision in the gameport

Had to mess around with collision for a while, creating custom presets.

And aswell adding a new actor before my door to create a new hinge point.

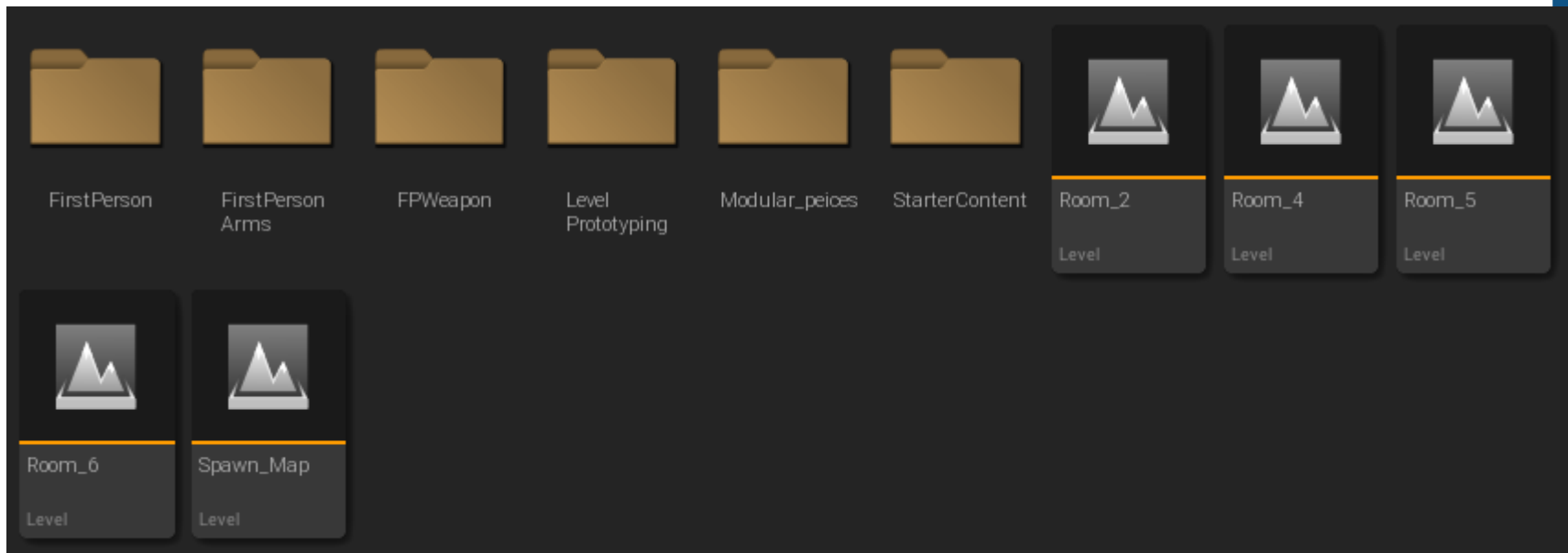
The door was rotating too wide, as the pivot in maya wasn't on the model anymore.

From the tutorial the red trace lines were still visible. With trial an error realised I could change the 'draw debug type' to none. Now I am not needing it

However, I do think the reach (number) is too high, you can open door from too far away

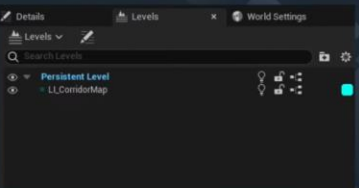
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O7vmp73ue4Y#>

# I DECIDED TO MAKE EACH ITERATION A DIFFERENT LEVEL



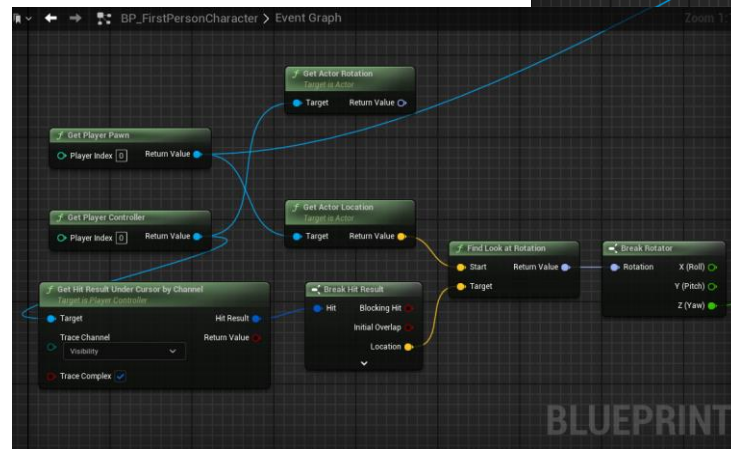
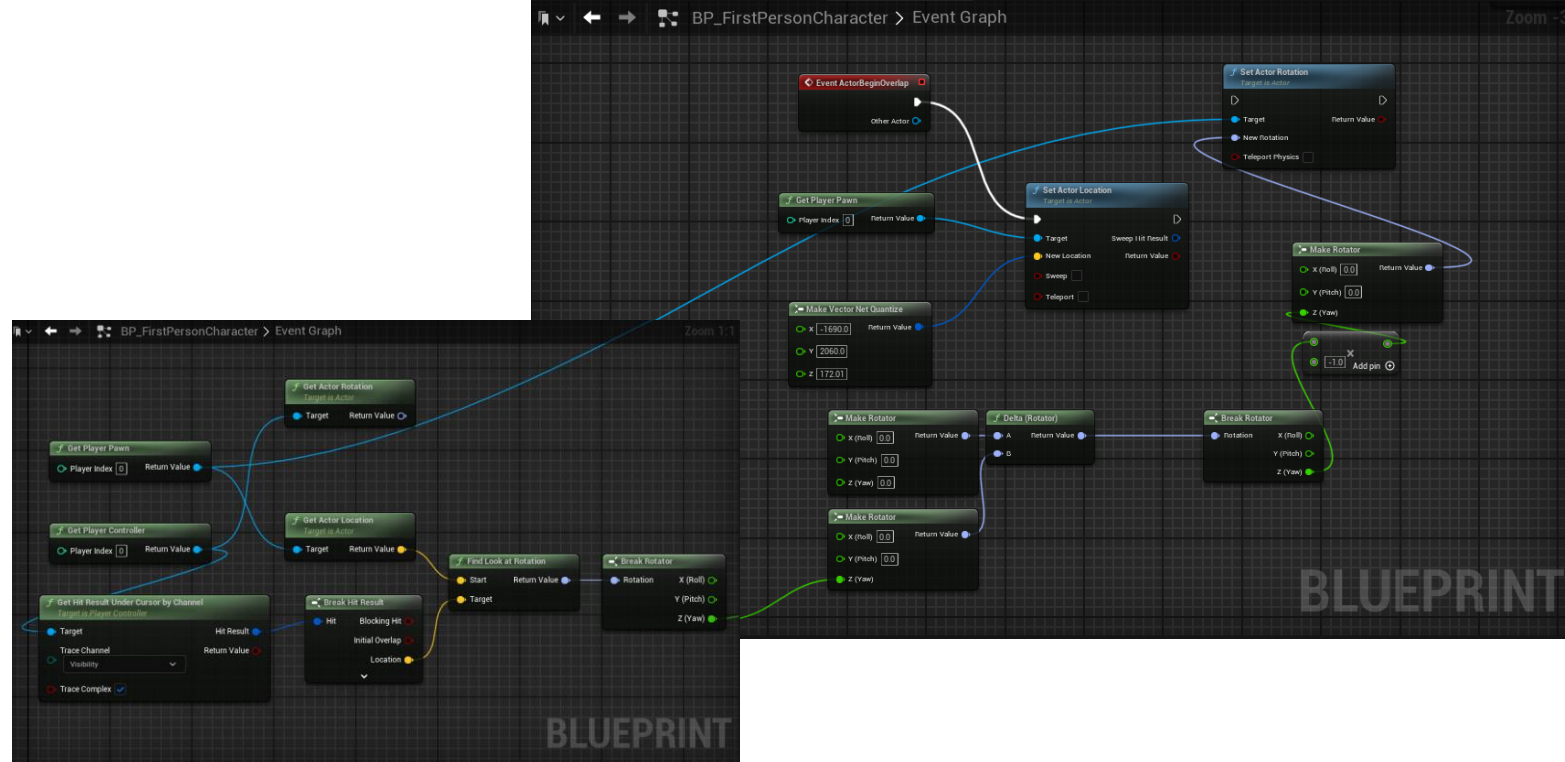
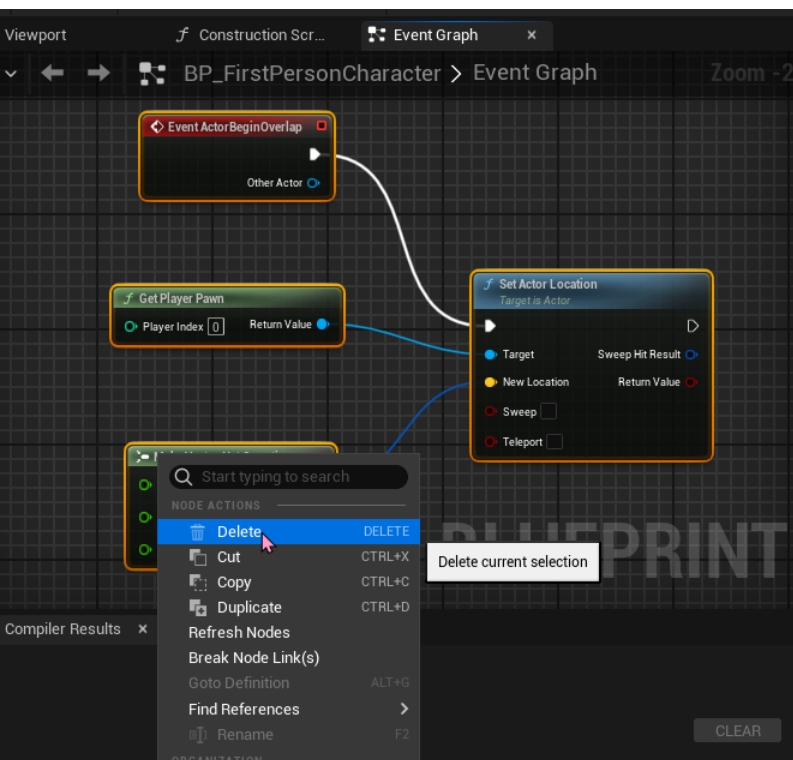
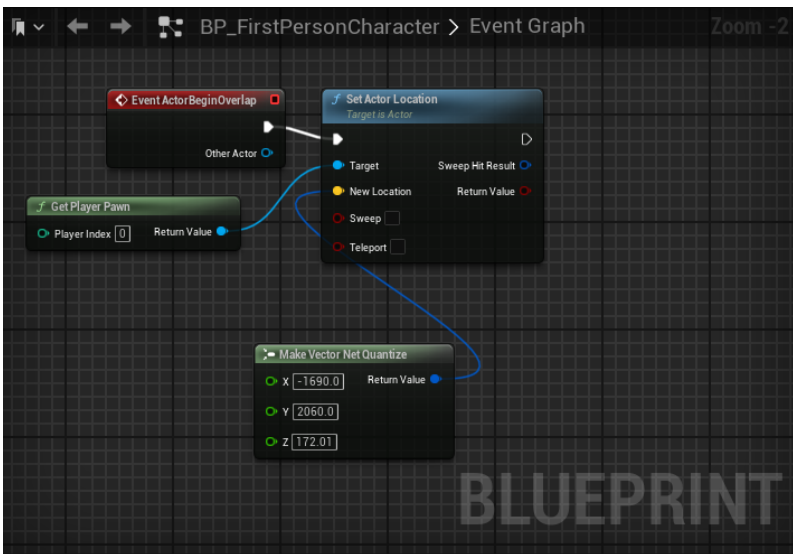
### Level Instance

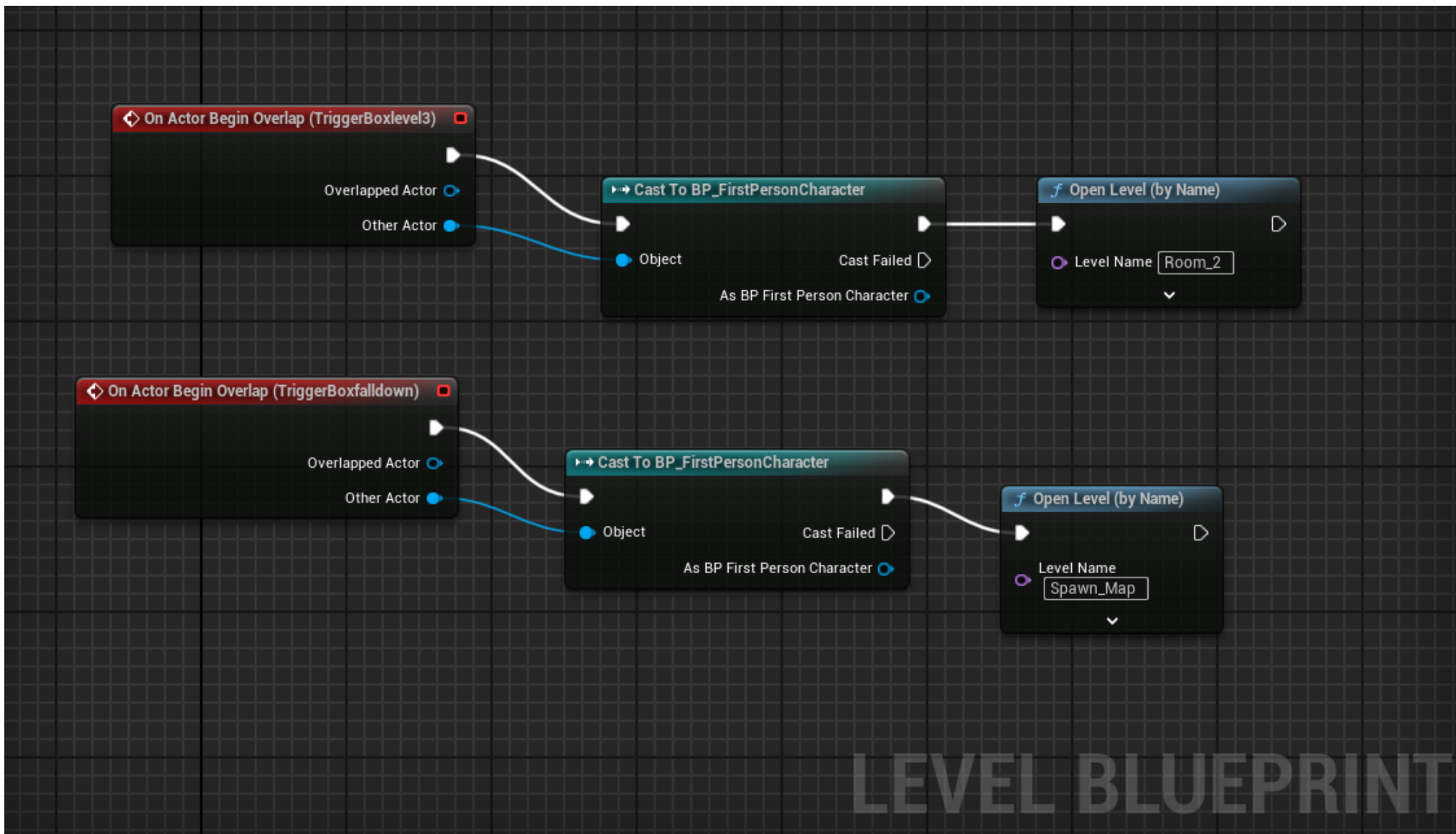
- Level Instances are how Unreal handles streaming of levels during gameplay.
- For level instances to work, they have to be set in the Persistent Level and tie them to streaming volumes or other loading mechanisms, but this instances are static.

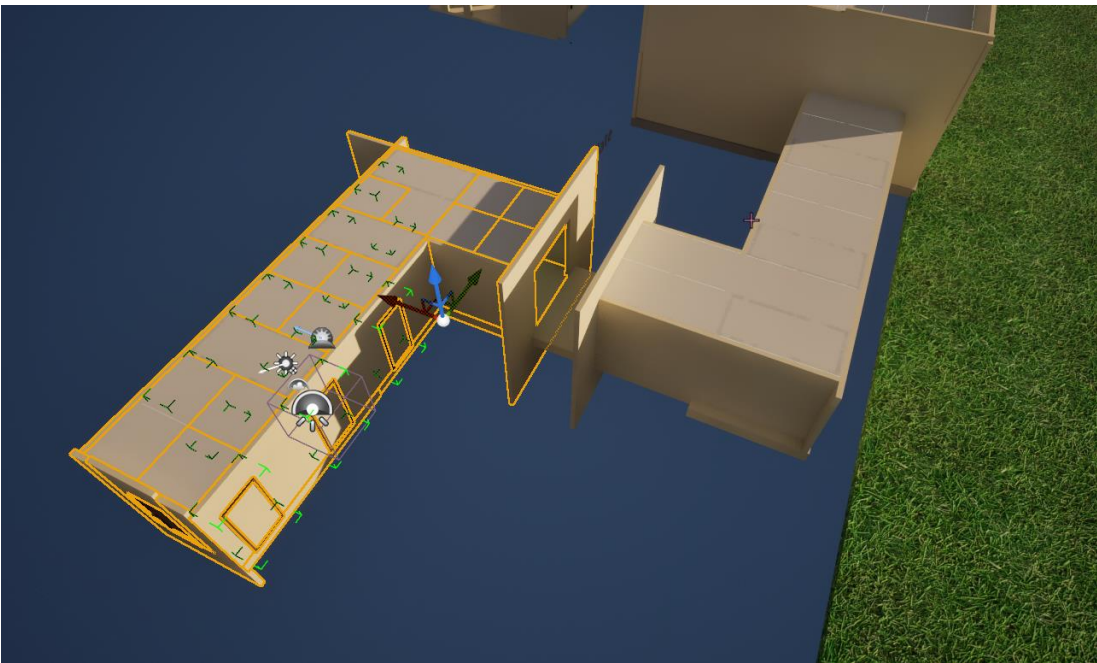




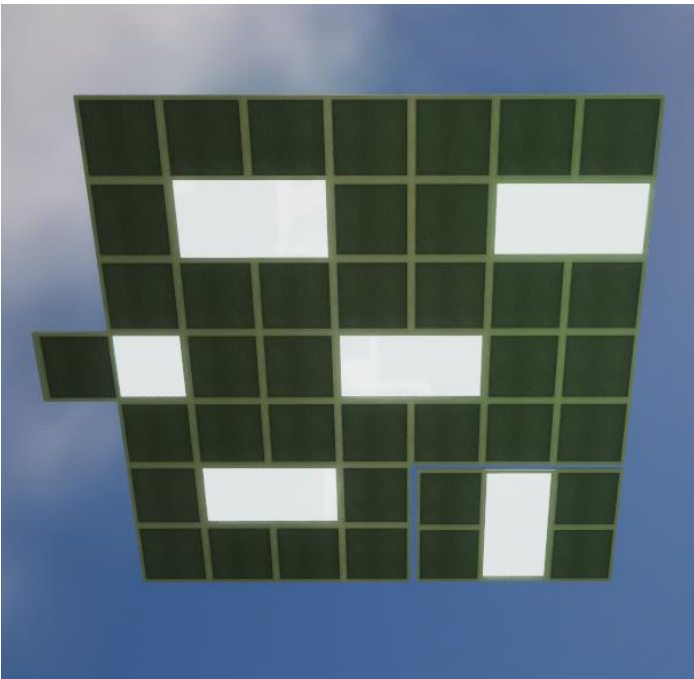
|                                                                                       |                |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|
|     | WAITING ROOM 1 |
|    | WAITING ROOM 2 |
|    | WAITING ROOM 3 |
|    | WAITING ROOM 4 |
|   | WAITING ROOM 5 |
|  | WAITING ROOM 6 |

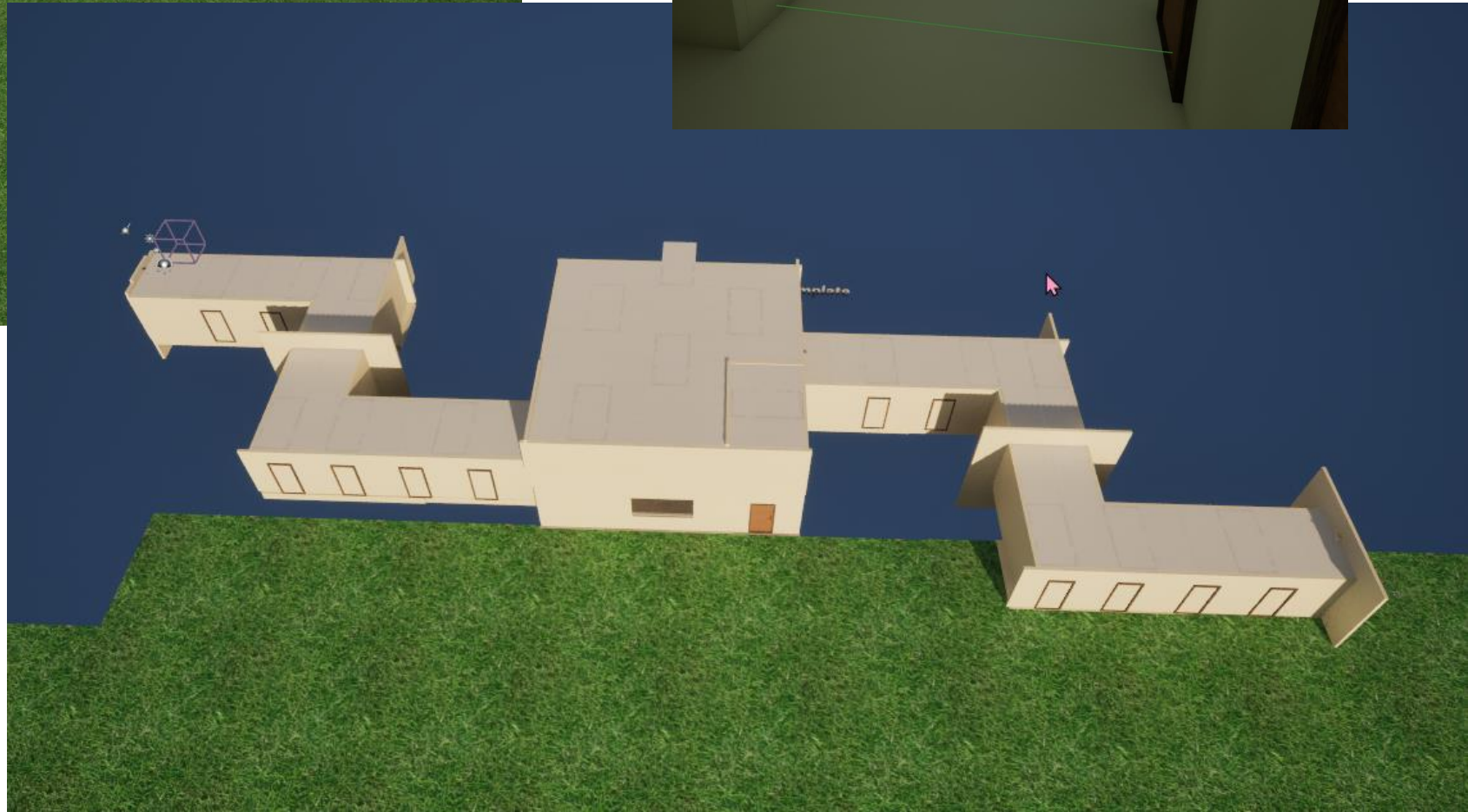
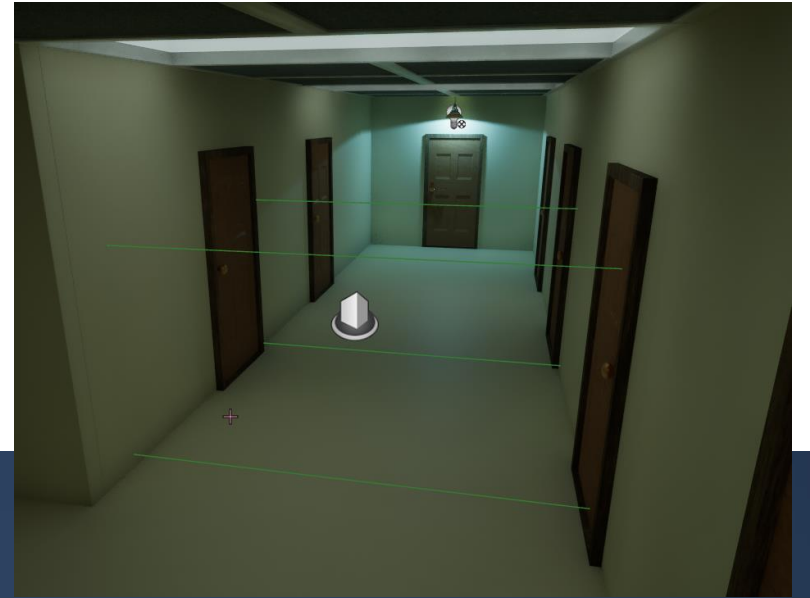






# BUILDING THE LEVEL ITERATIONS





# IDEAS FOR DIFFERENT ANOMALIES

Type

Example

**Visual**

Object disappears / wrong texture / rotated painting

**Spatial**

Corridor is longer/shorter than before

**Audio**

Muffled talking / reversed audio plays

**NPC**

A person sitting who wasn't there before

**Lighting**

Lights flicker, color changes subtly

**Text**

Signs or posters change (e.g., now say "RUN")

**Environmental**

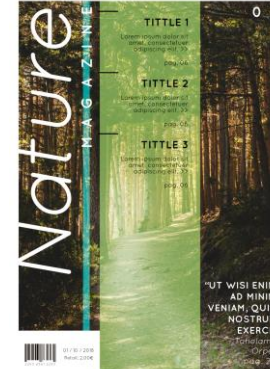
Clock moving backwards, shadow with no source

# VISUALS



WAITING  
ROOM

<https://www.safetysign.com/products/43827/waiting-room-sign>



MORE WAITING  
ROOMS ^^^



MORE ROOMS  
WAITING ^^^

NOTICE

PATIENTS TO  
GO TO WAITING  
ROOM 6

NOTICE

- LOOK FOR ANOMALIES
- IF YOU SEE AN ANOMALY, TURN BACK
- DO NOT CONTINUE TO NEXT ROOM IF THERE IS AN ANOMALY
- STAY SAFE

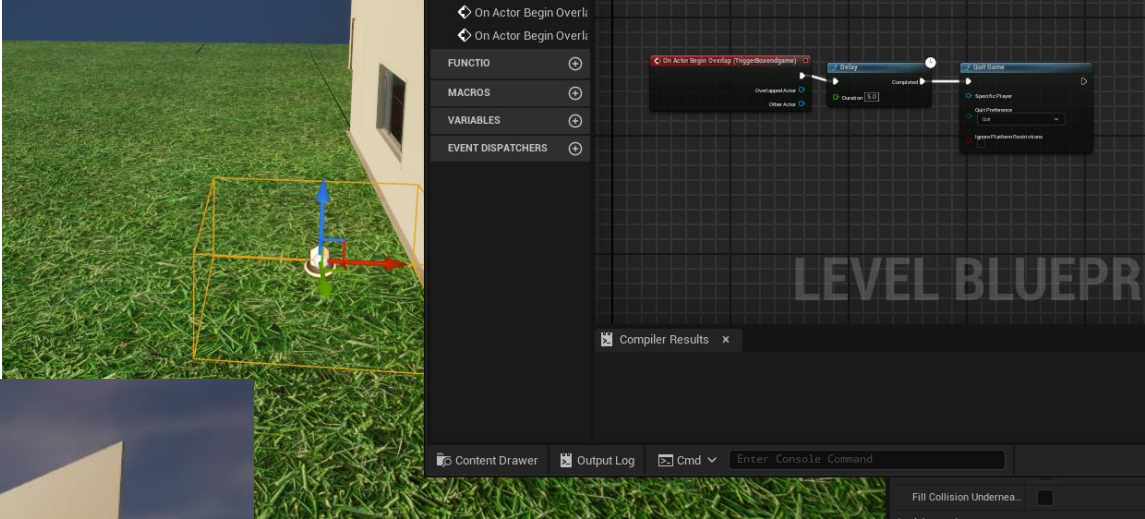
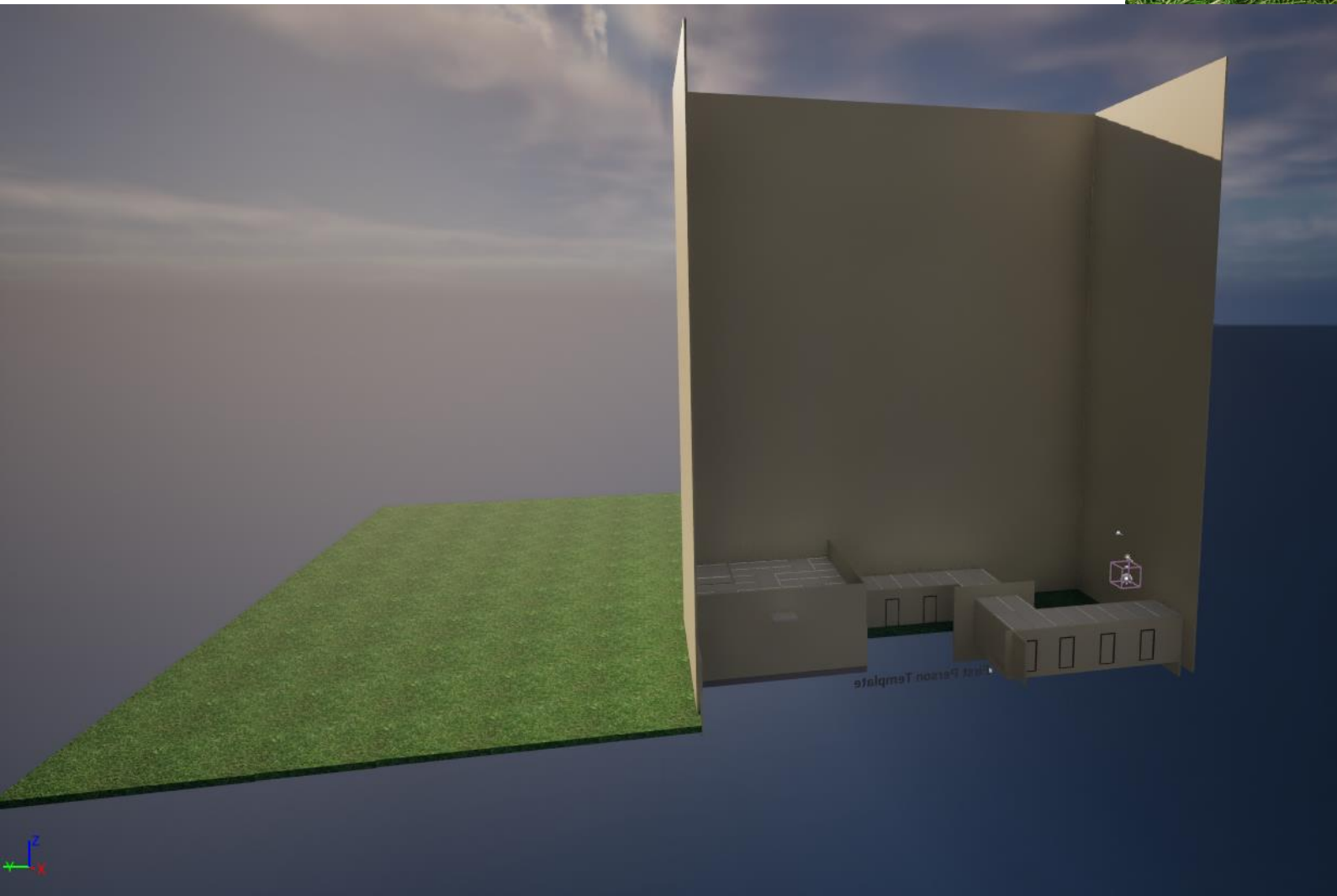
NOTICE

YOU ESCAPED  
THE LOOP!

THANKYOU FOR PLAYING!

GAME BY:  
AVA DANIELS

# EXTRA DETAILS



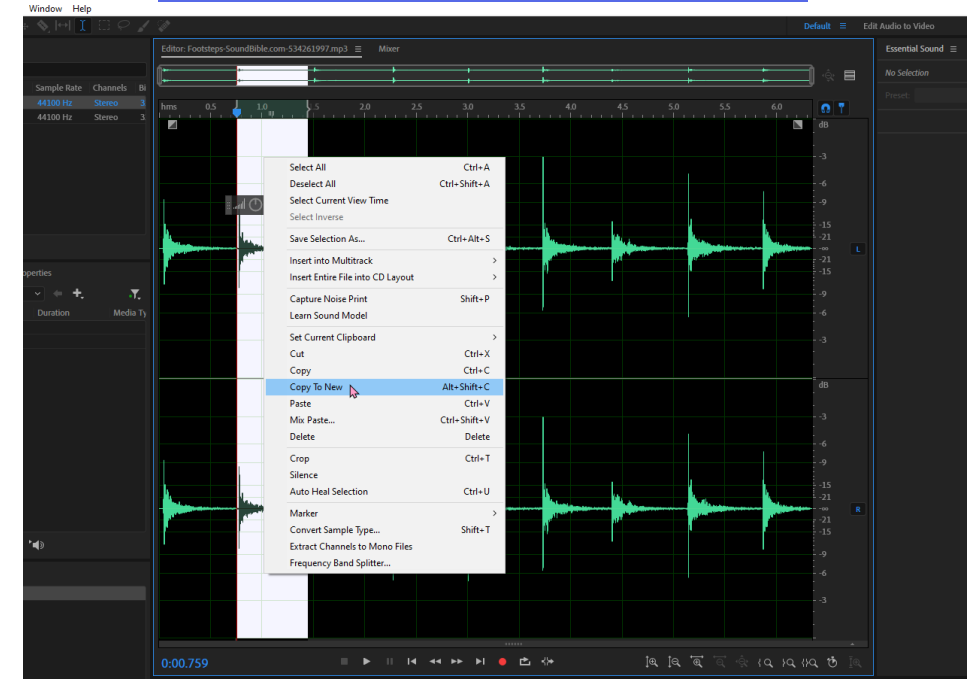
# AUDIO

research,  
Recording  
Editing  
Implementing

Light cue is from unreal starter pack, vol'd down.  
Static radio sound from :

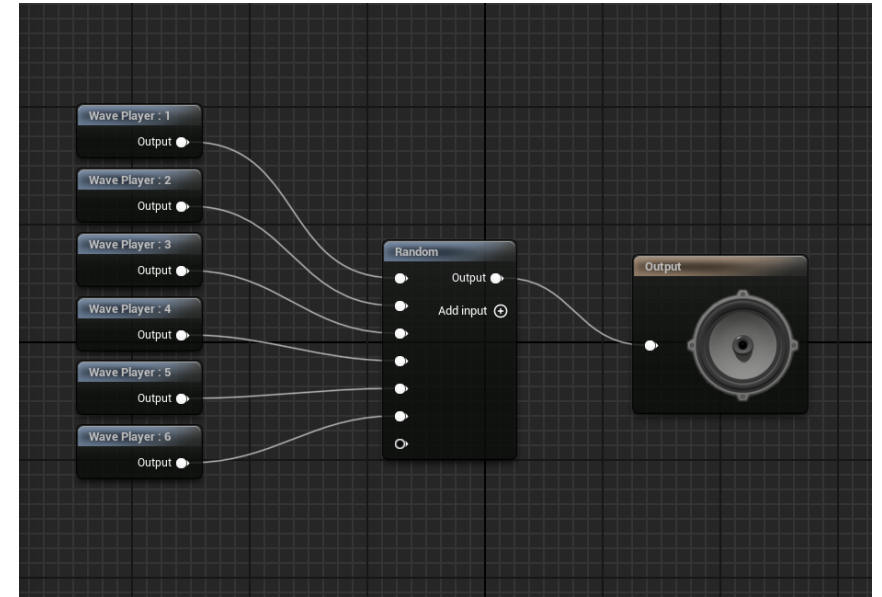
<https://soundbible.com/2099-AM-Radio-Tuning.html>  
<https://soundbible.com/911-Footsteps.html>  
<https://soundbible.com/900-Door-Close.html>

Used adobe audition to cut up the original sound

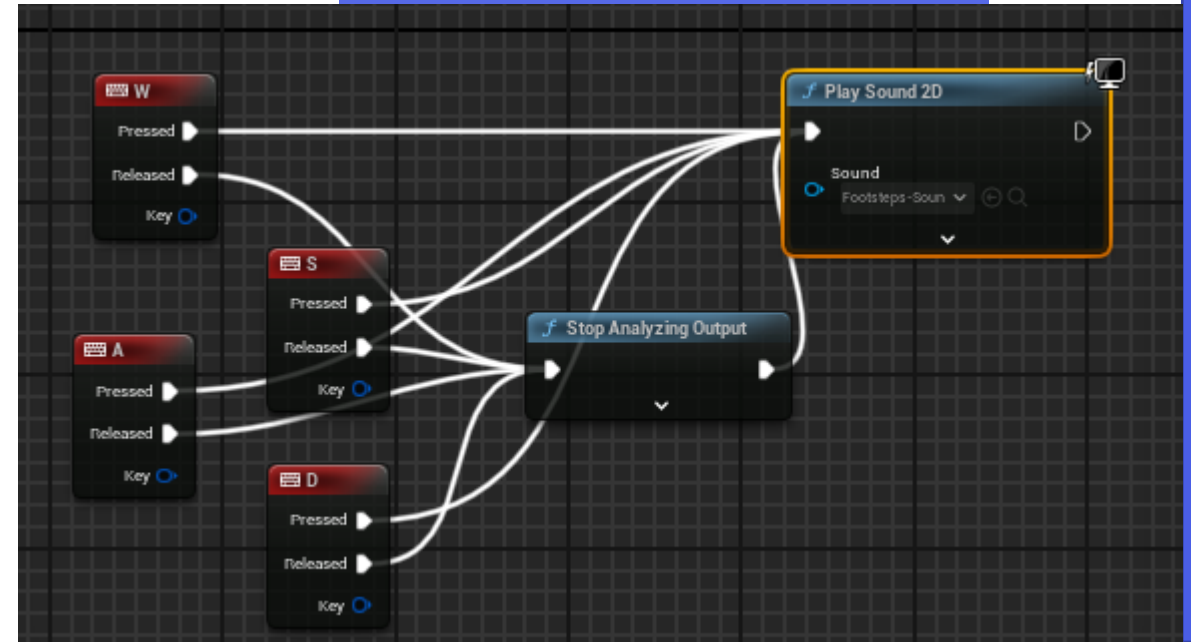
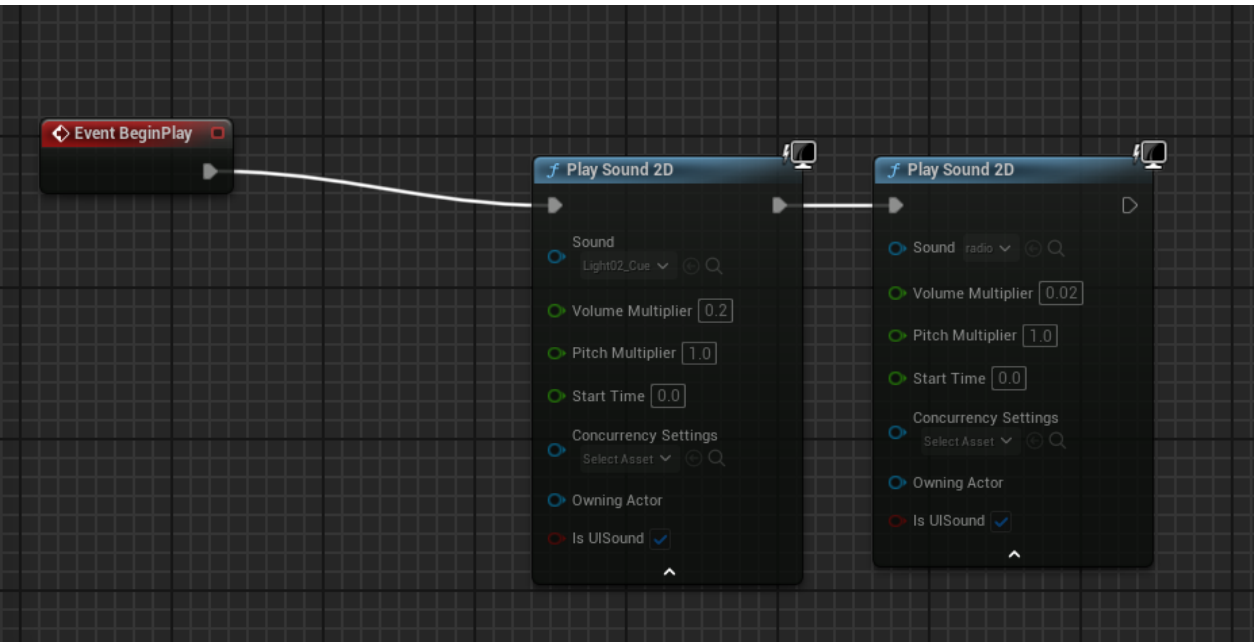


# AUDIO

Each separate step as  
its own audio cue, set  
to play at random

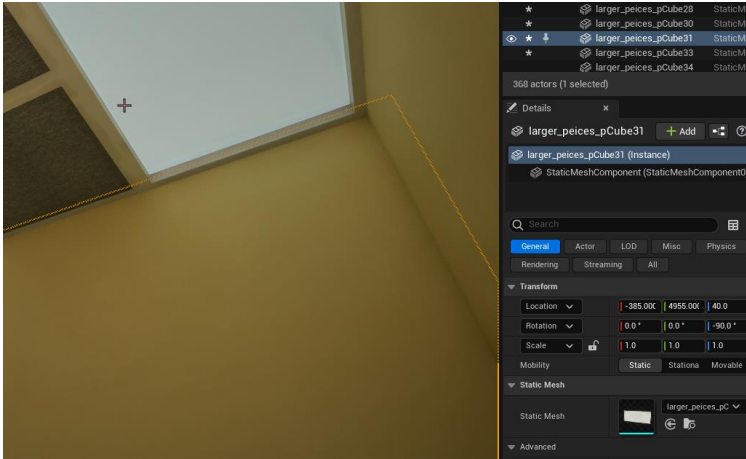


Light cue is from unreal starter pack, vol'd down.  
Static radio sound from :



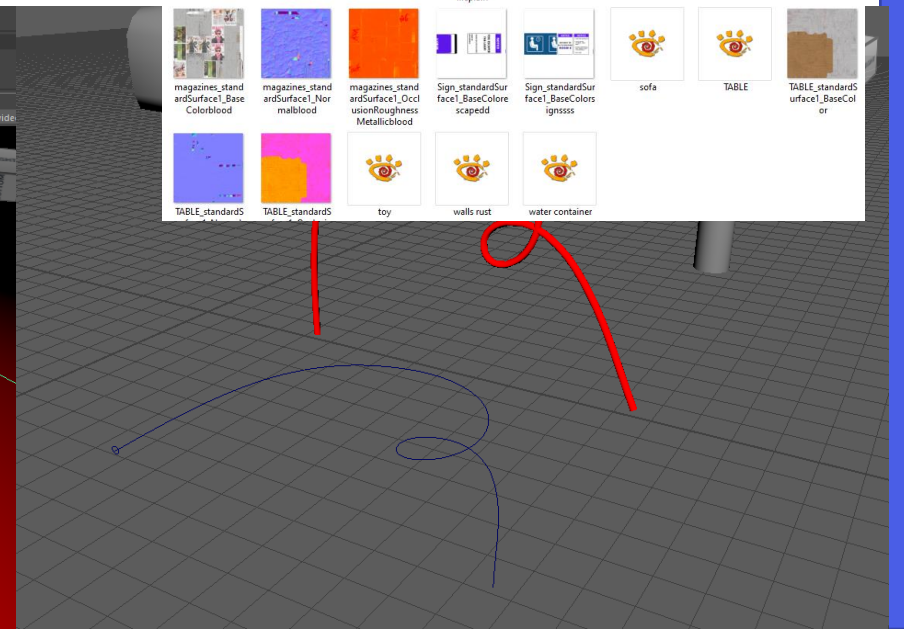
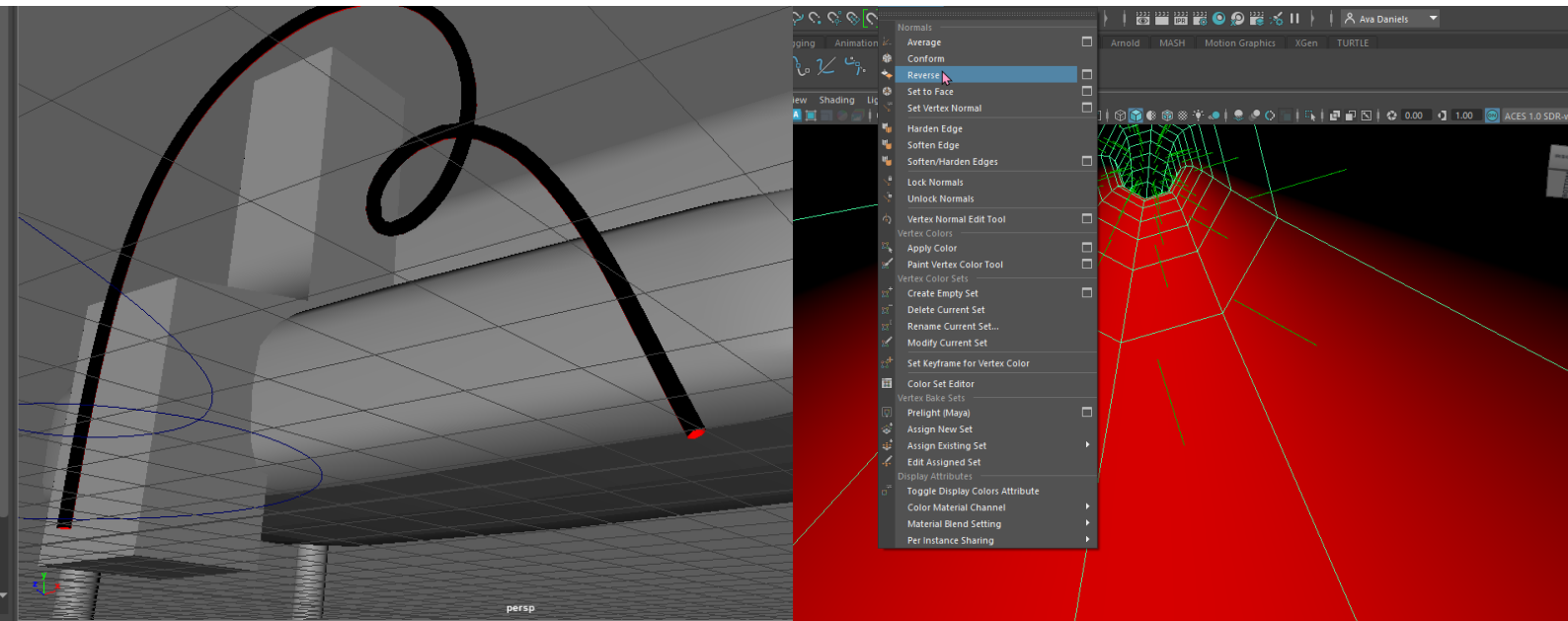
# Duplicating

# CHALLENGES



## Packing my project:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=emOsoyHSmA&t=224s>



# WHAT WENT WELL/ WHAT DIDN'T

- Avoid player frustration – world needs to feel consistent
- Players learn the limits of the game space
- Immersion is expected
- Players want clear goals, feedback, and a sense of progress
- Players expect logic – corridors, rooms, doors
- I can subvert expectations to build tension (e.g. looping hallway)
- Pattern recognition – players train themselves to spot differences, which causes discomfort and tension.
- Cognitive dissonance – environment feels familiar but slightly “off”
- Spatial narrative – story implied by layout, lighting, and repetition
- The loop structure = a form of progression, even with no traditional levels
- Emergent fear – tension builds over time through unease, not jumpscare, Anomalies are the perfect tool
- Minimal UI – visual storytelling over direct instructions

**NOTICE**

**PATIENTS TO  
GO TO WAITING  
ROOM 6**

**NOTICE**

- LOOK FOR ANOMALIES
- IF YOU SEE AN ANOMALY, TURN BACK
- DO NOT CONTINUE TO NEXT ROOM IF THERE IS AN ANOMALY
- STAY SAFE





 WAITING ROOM 1

 MORE WAITING ROOMS

BEAUTY  
100% BEAUTY  
SPRING

MAGAZINE









 WAITING ROOM 3

 MORE ROOMS  
WAITING \*\*\*

BEAUTY  
2011  
BEAUTYTV  
SPRING

BEAUTYTV  
SPRING

 WAITING ROOM 5



# TESTING AND PLAYER FEEDBACK



Neither bugged out or found and glitch

Both pointed out the annoyance of the glitch seam  
had to give slight direction to both.

'the seam... (if fixed) you wouldn't even realise you have gone into a different level' 'would keep guessing.. Seam indicates you have changed levels'

'would take a while to clock on'

# TESTING - GAMER



Tried all doors of corridor  
Was expecting a jump-scare (throughout and at end)  
later on said he liked that he was waiting for one,  
strafed the corners  
Made thought of backrooms

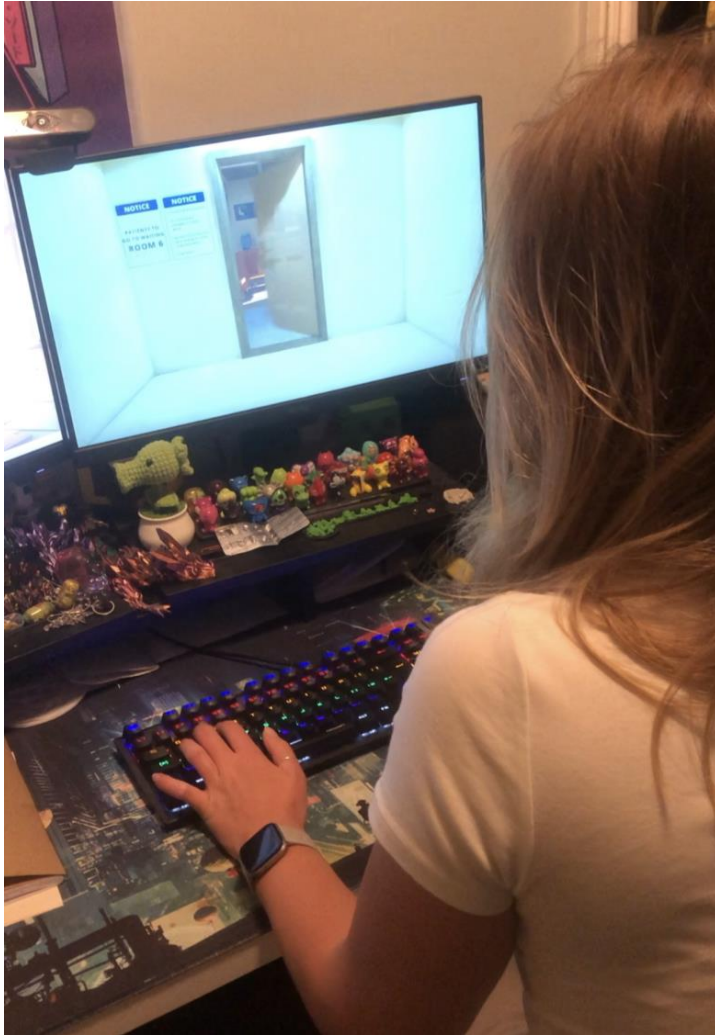
'how old am I meant to be I am so small'  
'used to love those as a kid'  
'I was so focused on the magazines,.. I liked that there was  
distractions'

'would be cool if when you went on carpet it would be different  
(softer)'  
'I like the sound of this (lights), it's authentic'

Didn't even enter large anomaly room  
'whole time I was terrified something was going to jump out at me'

missed small anomaly, restarted game  
Thought Room 6 at first was an anomaly room

# TESTING – NON GAMER



Was given context, that there's no jumpscares

'I like the attention to detail'

'I don't like the noise, it's a bit loud' 'would be okay if more continuous'  
Started debating if toys were in right spot

Noticed the lower light in small anomaly room

Didn't understand purpose as much,  
where the game decided if you did something right or wrong.

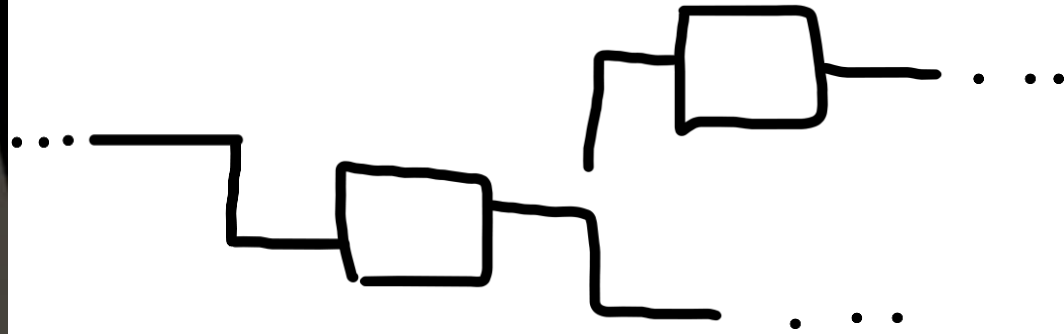
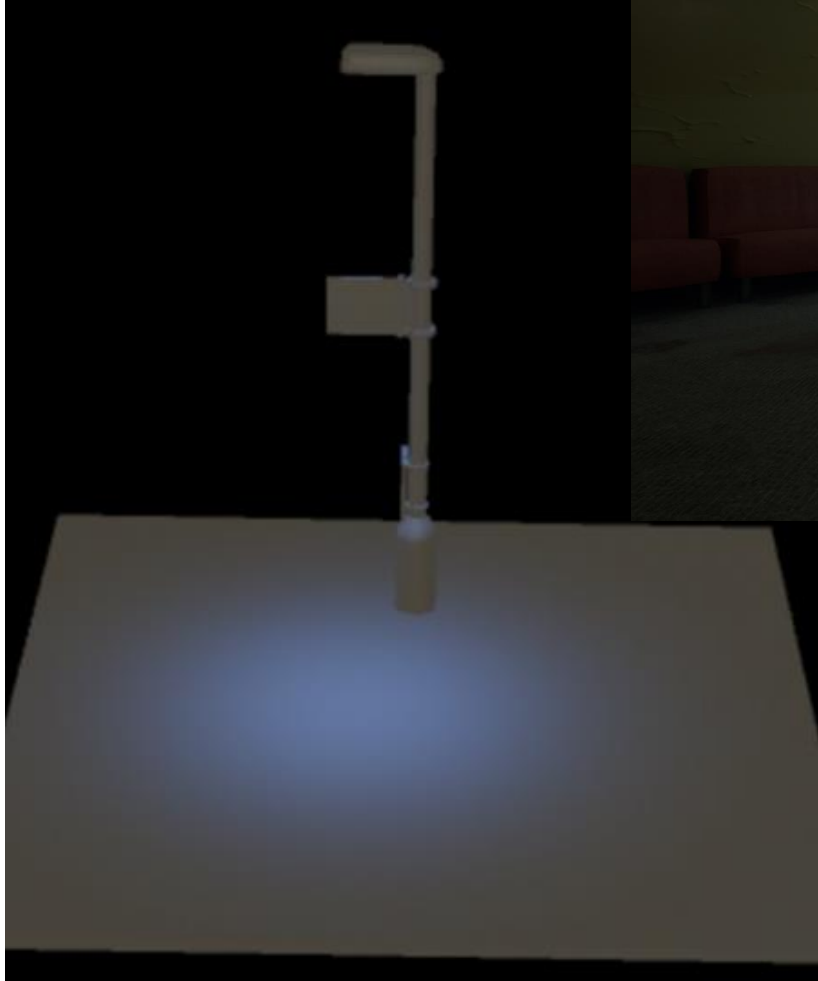
Explained to full idea halfway through

Large anomaly room, floating beads:

'that's a bit creepy though. If there's was jump-scares that would be fun' 'I like the textures, looks realistic'

And Key E direction to Girl.

Got jumped by end cut, wanted to look at the outside more



A view through a window of a green field under a cloudy sky. The window frame is dark, and the view outside shows a vast green field under a sky with scattered white and grey clouds. The text is overlaid on the center of the image.

**THANKYOU FOR LISTENING**  
**ANY QUESTIONS?**

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- [18] YouTube, *Teleport Between Levels*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yuQVIRdjBSE>
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<https://forums.unrealengine.com/t/set-player-rotation-after-teleport/295265>

<https://forums.unrealengine.com/t/how-do-i-add-footsteps-sounds-to-my-character-in-this-specific-scenario/479352/10>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yuQVIRdjBSE>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O7vmp73ue4Y#>

<https://forums.unrealengine.com/t/how-to-create-teleport-between-two-levels/343399>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BZ29dA2Y8bE>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nSDIGj0Pqbg>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KUwnBb-Kvgw>

<https://forums.unrealengine.com/t/load-new-level-from-box-trigger/346368>

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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LY7Qusfp7jE>

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ss9cHmZ\\_Psk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ss9cHmZ_Psk)

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A53GL\\_5PuaM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A53GL_5PuaM)

<https://forums.unrealengine.com/t/play-stop-audio-on-key-press-release/412055/4>

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2

[https://www.reddit.com/r/LiminalSpace/comments/1j2q4kt/abandoned\\_parts\\_of\\_a\\_dead\\_mall/](https://www.reddit.com/r/LiminalSpace/comments/1j2q4kt/abandoned_parts_of_a_dead_mall/)

3 <https://www.reddit.com/r/LiminalSpace/comments/1j1hrs6/waiting/>

4

[https://www.reddit.com/r/LiminalSpace/comments/1j2q6wn/a\\_friends\\_place\\_images\\_are\\_raw\\_no\\_effects/](https://www.reddit.com/r/LiminalSpace/comments/1j2q6wn/a_friends_place_images_are_raw_no_effects/)

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