

# Disassembled Game

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## ABSTRACT

Disassembled is a computer game for all ages. It was built with aspects of mise-en-scène in mind to enhance the gameplay experience and visual aesthetic. Specifically, the team achieved the games' aesthetic qualities by focusing on elements such as light, sound, color, set, and camera as guiding principles. In terms of the gameplay, it was created in the style of an embedded narrative.

## Keywords

Mise-en-scène

Embedded Narrative

Videogames

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Disassembled is a computer game that was created in Unity. It stars a little robot named Rover who crash lands on a foreign planet. As the title suggests, Rover becomes disassembled when he strikes the ground of the unfamiliar territory and his jet pack pieces scatter all over the surface of the clay planet. Rover must search the area and solve a puzzle in order to reassemble his jet pack and escape back into space.

## 2. EMBEDDED NARRATIVE

Disassembled follows an embedded narrative structure. The player is thrust into a world and slowly discovers the story as they collect artifacts and interact with the other character, Larr-E, in the game space. The player is not told right away how they became stranded on the foreign planet, or that the planet is foreign to them at all. This information about the story is made apparent to the player as they soak up the clues provided to them by the game, such as the initial cut scene and their interaction with Larr-E. Following the embedded narrative style of most games, Disassembled effectively contains "two kinds of narratives – one relatively unstructured and controlled by the player as they explore the game space and unlock its secrets; the other pre-structured but embedded within the mise-en-scène awaiting discovery" (Jenkins, 2005).

## 3. MISE-EN-SCÈNE

The mise-en-scène was carefully thought over before the creation of the game. It was important to have an aesthetic in mind to successfully stock the scene with game elements that add to the aesthetic and help develop the story. The goal was for the game to be lighthearted and eclectic, a fun and enchanting kid-friendly space adventure, with just a little hint of dark mystique that is commonly associated with space adventure games. After deciding upon this aesthetic goal, color, lighting, set, and sound elements were used to bring the decided upon mise-en-scène to life.

### 3.1 COLOR

Color was the initial factor that was discussed before game creation because it "evokes definite emotions," and the colors selected for each game piece should go towards crafting emotions of the aesthetic goal, of playfulness and enchanting space adventure (Bordwell, 2003). After creating a mood board of other games and movies that were inspiring, purple seemed to stand out as the color that served the purpose of adding both a mystic and lighthearted feel to the game. Blue-green and orange were selected as Rover's colors because they contrast nicely with purple and add to the playful aesthetic. The colorful crystals and the space flower pigments were also selected with the aesthetic in mind.

### 3.2 SPACE and SET

The set of the game also adds to the mise-en-scène. Just as the color palette is eclectic and spacey, the items scattered around the space are as well. Crystals and space flowers adorn the rocky surface of the planet, giving cheerful life and personality to the otherwise clay orange and lifeless ground. "The arrangement of the mise-en-scène creates the composition of the screen space," so the arrangement of the elements were taken into consideration (Bordwell, 2003). Disassembled takes this notion a step further by using the space not only to add to the mise-en-scène, but also to affect the storyline for the player. For example, the rocky hills of the planet are meant to be a foreboding presence that evokes the feeling of unfamiliarity, and a feeling of

being lost and small. However, it also affects the gameplay because the hills serve as obstacles that must be traversed or circled which makes Rover's pieces more difficult to find, obscuring both the view and the movement of the player.

The puzzle works in the same way, both making the game more lighthearted and gamey while also serving as an obstacle that the player must advance through. It needs to be solved for the player to access one of the jet pack pieces that enables him to fly away.

### 3.3 LIGHTING

The lighting in *Disassembled* adds to the *mise-en-scène*, but in a different way than both the color palette and the set. The lighting gives the game a dark feeling as it is "lowkey illumination," which "creates stronger contrast and sharper, darker shadows" (Bordwell, 2003). The colors might make the game playful, but the lighting adds a dark mystique because of the shadows it creates. It is also what gives the game a more spacey feel. The ambience of the light and the shadows balance out the playfulness of the colors to create the desired mystical aesthetic.

Furthermore, light is used to provide information regarding the gameplay. Each jet piece that needs to be found is lit up to help in its discovery. The other character, Larr-E, is lit up to communicate to the player that it is a game component that should be interacted with. In addition, the crystals in the puzzle are lit up to communicate that the crystals should be investigated. Lastly, the button components of the puzzle light up when rolled over, signaling to the player that they did something meaningful in the game.

### 3.4 CAMERA

The camera used in *Disassembled* is a third person camera that allows for 360-degree rotation around the character, with Rover always at the center of the screen. It is also a "character-relative control scheme" which means that when the player presses the left button the player moves to the left (Nitsche, n.d.). This means that the player can see all sides of the robot, and it also means that when the player gets themselves into a tricky spot and their vision of Rover becomes obscured, the camera can be rotated to allow view of the robot and therefore the possibility of movement away from the hurdle.

This control over the camera and therefore what is seen on the screen means that the player controls the on-screen composition at any moment in time, except for during the cut scenes. Because of this, during game

construction it was very important for the entire space to be carefully thought out so that no matter where the player is at any given moment, the *mise-en-scène* matches and the lighting and the set all make sense and create a visually appealing shot.

### 3.5 SOUND

The last *mise-en-scène* attribute that was given special scrutiny was sound. The sound must be a continuation of the visual aspects of the game, another dimension that immerses the player in the game environment. There has been much research in the realm of sound in video games and how it affects the player's feelings of immersion. It can "create new associations through its haptic recontextualizations" and because humans have mirror neurons, "our emotional and neurophysiological states can be directly affected by what we see or hear," explaining the effect that sound in a game has on the experience (Collins, 2013). In order to extend the visual aesthetic of the game into a similar sonic aesthetic, mystical, spacey, and eclectic sounds were used to mimic the mystical, spacey, and eclectic landscape. To balance out the darkness of the scene, the sound is a bit more playful than the visual components of the game that are made darker by the lighting. This adds to the overall vibe of the game towards the goal of being a nice mixture of dark and spacey while also playful and eclectic.

## 4. CONCLUSION

Color, light, sound, space, and camera movement all influence the gameplay of *Disassembled* and affect the feelings of immersion, and embedded narrative technique is used to add intrigue to the game. The result is an eclectic space adventure that is fun for anyone at any age and that tells a story of exploration and resilience.

## 5. REFERENCES

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