

An illustration of two hands, one on the left and one on the right, holding a rectangular sign with a scalloped edge. The hands are rendered in a sketchy, textured style. The background is a dark red curtain with a patterned border.

FIREBALL STUDIOS



PRESENTS

ART BIBLE

NO STRINGS

ATTACHED

Overview

No Strings Attached is a $\frac{3}{4}$ camera view fighting game, starring marionette puppets and presented on a stage.

The aim of the game is simple, take out your opponent to win the round. The first to win 3 rounds wins the game.

The combat system is simple and primarily physics driven. The controls aim to emulate a marionette crossbar, giving the player the feeling of pulling strings to control the puppet, with actions such as punching and parrying.

The strings holding up the puppet's limbs snap as they lose health, causing loss of control over that limb. When the string holding up the head snaps, the player loses and the puppet still standing is declared the winner of that round.

The aesthetics of the game explore an 1800's theatre feeling with a darker undertone represented through the lighting and vintage elements to the game's art style.

Gameplay Mockup



✓ General Theme

✓ Layered Backdrop

✗ Characters too small

✗ Washed out lighting

✗ Incorrect Angles

✗ Visible hand and crossbar

Visual Style: Mood & Themes

Childlike themes, with a dark undertone. Fun but macabre.

Key Points:

- Gloomy and Atmospheric
- Grimy and faded
- Vintage Handcrafted Aesthetic

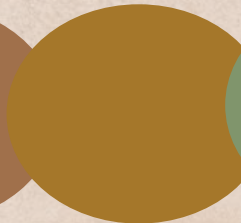
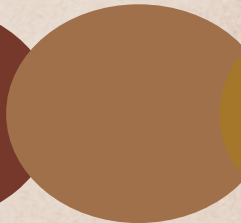
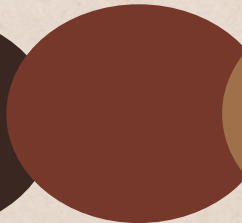
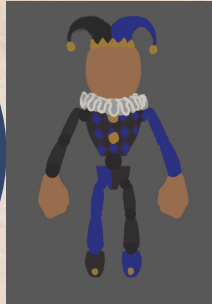
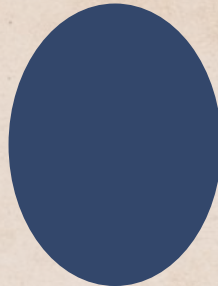


Visual Style: Colour Palette

Childlike themes, with a dark undertone. Fun but macabre.

Key Points:

- Muted Primary Colours
- Blue and red differentiating players
- Brown and Sepia tones



Visual Style: Art Style

Stylized Low Poly

Handmade appearance with heavy inspiration from games like Puppeteer, Little Big Planet, A Jugglers Tale, and the film Coraline.

- Simple shapes
- Low poly
- Detailed PBR and hand-painted textures



✗ Bright saturated colours

✓ Visible wooden border on props



✓ Simple models, detailed textures



Character: Inspiration and Reference

Stylized Anthropomorphic Puppet with cartoon proportions.

- Hand Carved/Handmade appearance
- Cute but uncanny
- Stylized proportions
- Distinct silhouette



Character: Inspiration and Reference

Specific inspiration drawn from Sato Sakuma, a Japanese artist who makes puppets

Their style has a childlike feel and extreme proportions which complement the slapstick element to the game.

The hand carved and painted look compliments the vintage and 'handmade' aesthetics of the game.

- Exaggerated proportions with a focus on the head and hands
- Anthropomorphic
- Distinct silhouette
- Hand carved and painted

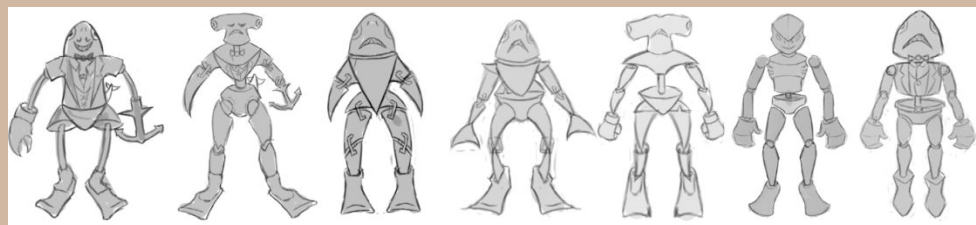


Character: Concepts



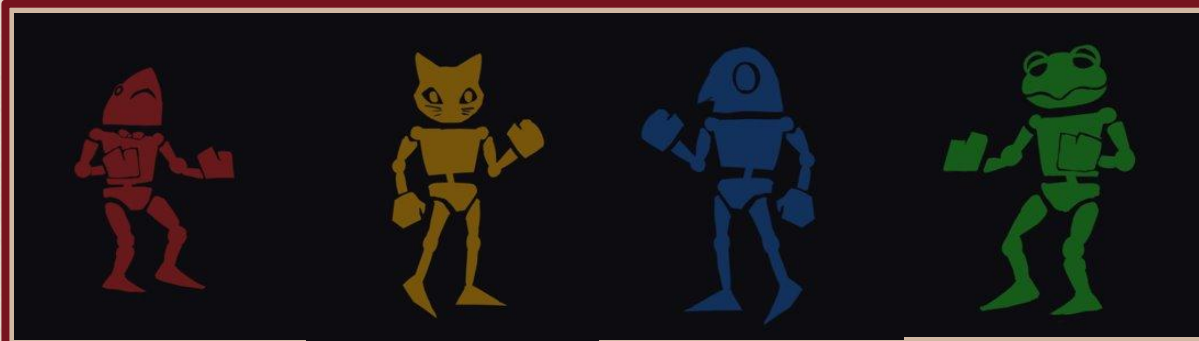
X
Unclear, Clunky silhouette
Small details, won't be readable

✓
Simple outfit designs
Frog and duck head shapes are nicely distinct



X
Cluttered, unreadable
Too many small details
Unclear silhouette

✓
Exploring different shapes
Interesting hand designs



X
Proportions still not pushed enough, not readable

✓
Clear silhouette
Distinct head designs

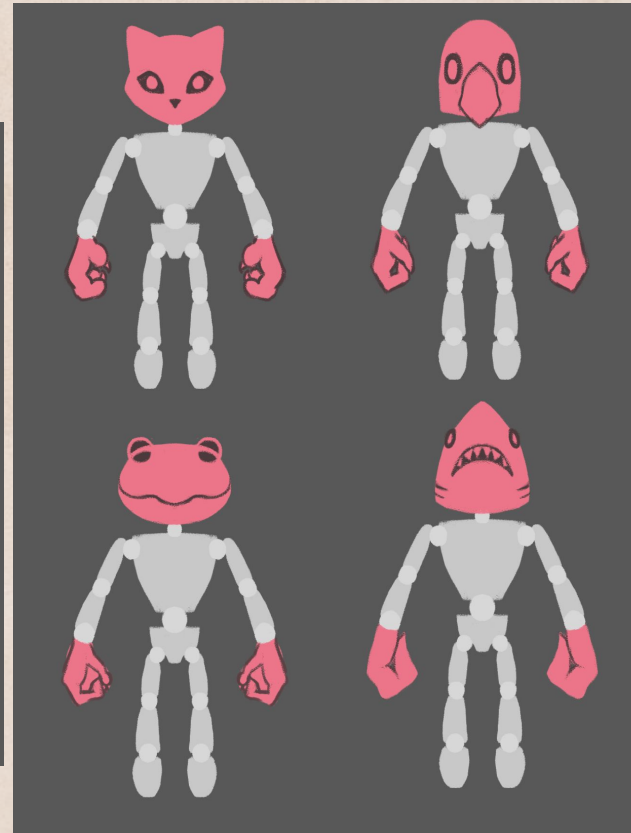
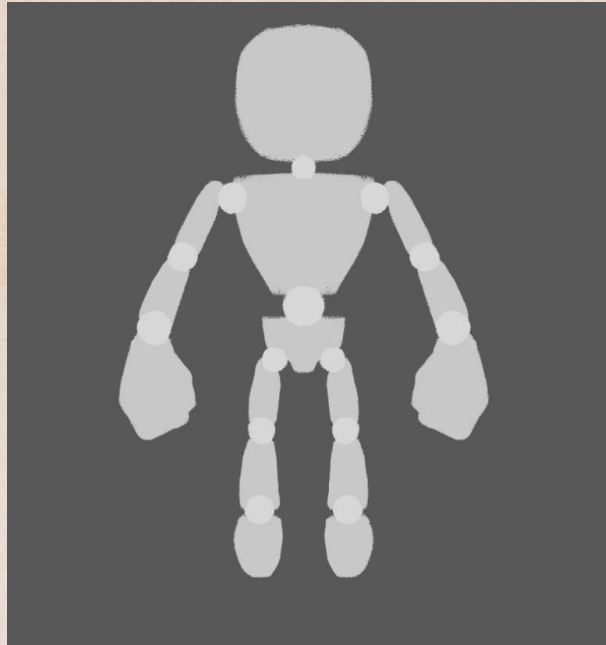
Character: Body

[Colours are just for visual clarity, not a representation of actual colour scheme]

Stylized Puppet Body,
cartoon proportions.

- Large head
- Long arms
- Large hands/fists
- Top heavy, angular chest

Base Body with different
heads and hands.



Character: Shape Language



Character: Costume

Simple, readable costumes

- Different textures on the base body
- Hats and neckwear are separate meshes
- Simple colour scheme

Main accent colour changes whether you are player 1 or player 2, making characters easy to tell apart



Character: Textures; Wood

Stylized wooden look

- 'Whittled' look
- Visible woodgrain
- Visible wear and rubbing on raised edges
- Worn varnished look but without too much shine or tint
- Dirt and grunge in cracks and indents



Character: Textures; Paint

Paint Look

- Stylized wear and tear
- Cracking, rubbing off, mainly raised edges
- Grime and discolouration
- Visible cracks



Character: Texture Test



Chiseled Wood Normal Map :

<https://3dtextures.me/2021/08/18/wood-chiseled-001/>

Character: Painted Style

Painterly style taking inspiration from victorian era illustrations

- Painterly style
- Low Contrast
- Soft shading
- Semi-visible brushstrokes
- 'Fake' painted highlights and shadows



Environment and Props: Inspiration and Reference

Victorian-era paper theatre inspired theatre.

- Elaborate Frame
- Classic red curtains
- Textures and props can be switched out
- Wooden 'handmade' sliding and destructible props



Environment and Props: Inspiration and Reference

Ship and ocean set and props

- Classic layered wave sliding props
- Handmade appearance, visible wood around the edges of props



Environment and Props: Concepts

X
Stage isn't clear
Grey doesn't fit
colour scheme
Doesn't represent
scale or camera
angle



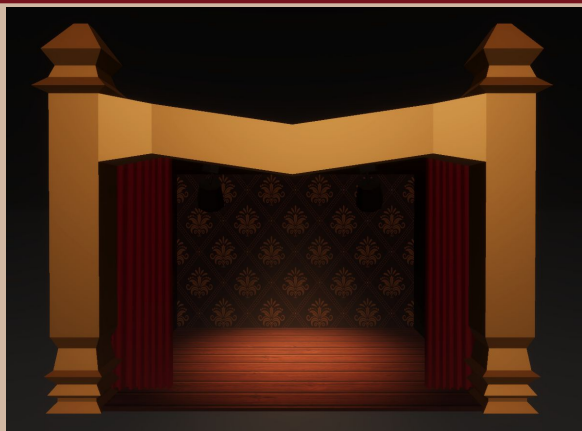
✓
Detailing on
frame
Theatre-esc
curtains

X
Layering isn't
clear
Scale is off
Lacking smaller
props



✓
Communicates
mood well
Nicer visually
with the large
waves on the
sides

X
Frame is too
blank
Wrong camera
angle



✓
Nice overall shape
Good scale
Patterned
background

X
Doesn't
communicate well
that the ground is
part of a ship
Props lacking
visible wood



✓
Shows concept
clearly
Correct camera
angle
Stylized props

Environment: Textures; Wood

Stylized wooden look

- Plywood look
- Visible woodgrain
- Visible wear and rubbing on corners and raised areas of grain
- 'Fraying' or splintering edges
- Dirt and grunge in cracks and indents



Environment: Textures; Paint

Paint Look

- Stylized wear and tear
- Cracking, rubbing off on corners and woodgrain
- Grime and discolouration
- Visible cracks



Lighting and Atmosphere: Inspiration and Reference

Gloomy atmosphere with warm tones

- Warm overhead theatre lights
- Character Spotlights
- Dust effect



Lighting and Atmosphere: Mockup



Lights

Light	Type	Description	Light Layer	Shadow Layer
Reflection Probe	Reflection Probe	Set's the reflections for the game scene	N/A	N/A
Frame Light	Spotlight	Lights up stage frame	Frame	Synced
Front Light	Spotlight	Lights up front props	Front Props	Synced
Backdrop Light	Spotlight	Lights up the backdrop	Everything	Synced
Overhead Light	Spotlight	Main light of the game scene	Everything	Synced
Player Spotlights	Spotlight	Coloured spotlight which follows the player (Unlit)	Floor	Everything
Player Shadow Light	Directional Light	Brightens player shadows	Puppet	Synced
Menu Select Lights	Spotlight	Light which shows selected menu option	Everything	Synced
Player Customisation Lights	Spotlight	Light which shows selected customisation option	Everything	Synced

Light Layers

Light Layer	Name	Attached Meshes
Light Layer 0	Everything	Everything
Light Layer 1	Floor	Ground
Light Layer 2	Puppet	Puppet/Player Mesh
Light Layer 3	Frame	Stage Frame. Frame Walls
Light Layer 4	Front Props	Small Waves Front, Front Railing, Ground

UI Inspiration and reference

Inspired by victorian era gilding and circus advertisements, and the elaborate frames on paper theatres.

- Swirling patterns
- Brass and gold
- Leaf motifs



UI Storyboard

Title: No Strings Attached

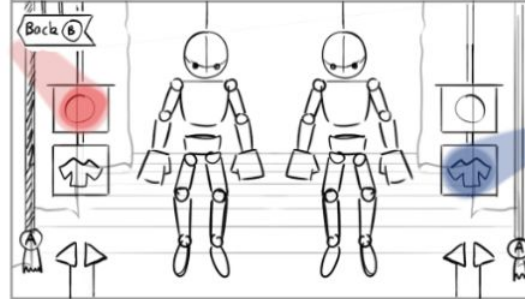
Page: 1

1 Main Menu Screen



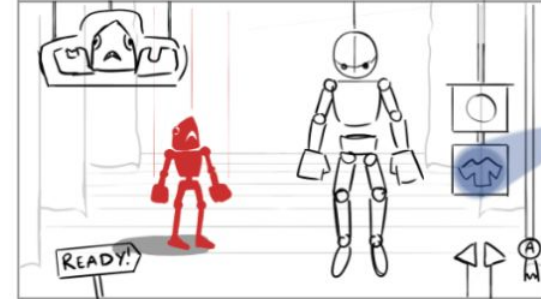
The game opens with the Main Menu screen, which includes the game title. The player can press "Start" to move into customising their characters, "Settings" to bring up an options menu for changing settings such as game volume, or "Exit" to close the game.

2 Character Customisation Screen | 1



Selecting "Start", the curtains open and the camera zooms into the stage. Each player's puppet drops in front of the camera as well as signs and arrows. A spotlight indicates which piece of the puppet is being changed and arrows cycle through the customisations. Players press a rope to finish customisation. Pressing "Back" returns players to the main menu.

3 Character Customisation Screen | 2



Once a player finishes customising, their puppet is pulled up off camera, and is then dropped into the stage. Players who haven't finished remain in the foreground. The finished player moves in the background and can play with the controls. Once both players have finished customising, a "Ready" button appears under each player. Game starts when both players are ready.

- 'Diagetic' UI, all 3D elements that exist in the scene
- Wooden signs with text and images
- Stage is background for title screen and customisation

UI Concepts

Health is represented through a wooden sign hanging from the corner of the screen.

The 'tighter' the string the less health left.

- Hands emulating a puppeteers hands
- Victorian era inspired gilding and patterning



UI Concepts

Wood instead of cardboard

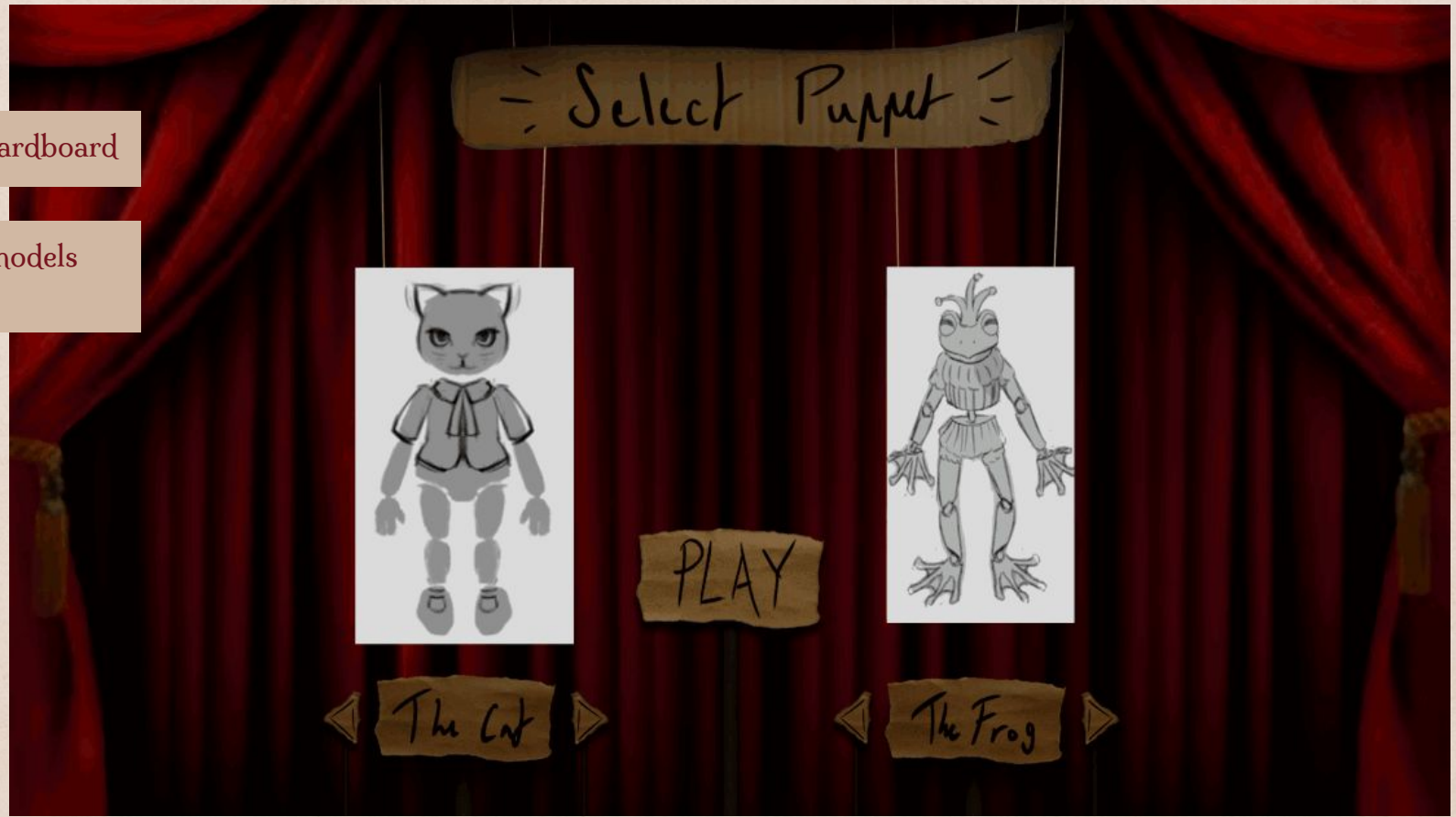
Background is the theatre with curtains closed, not a flat image



UI Concepts

Wood instead of cardboard

Actual character models
not images



Technical Details

Pipeline

Maya - Substance Painter - Unity

[Low to low bake]

Description	Max poly count	Texture size
Stage	2000	2048
Props	1000	1024
Character	5000	2048

Technical Details: Modelling Style

Chunky low poly modeling

- Clean and manageable topology
- Sticking to quads and considering UV seams when modelling or retoping



Technical Details: Naming Conventions

Using PascalCase

Use PascalCase when naming your assets. PascalCase is the practice of writing compound words or phrases such that the first letter of each concatenated word is capitalized. Using this system makes separate words easily identifiable.

Good examples:

BlackColor

TimeUTC

RedCat

ComputerRAMSize

Bad examples:

blackColor

Time UTC (Notice the space between Time and UTC, this is wrong)

Redcat

ComputerRAMsize

File Names

The names in the asset list and the file names should match up. The asset list contains the correct prefix (see next slide) and file type. For texture files, it should match the name listed in the asset list but with the addition of the correct suffix, relating to which map the file contains (see next slide). Any new assets created not listed in the asset list should be saved using the same naming conventions as the already existing assets.

Asset List

Technical Details: Naming Conventions

File Name Prefixes

Description	Prefix
3D files. Static Meshes. No joints or animation data.	SM_
3D files that contain skeletons, joint, or rigs	SK_
Texture	T_
Material	M_
Animation clip/animation sequence	A_

Texture File Suffixes

Description	Suffix
Colour map (diffuse or albedo)	_C
Normal map	_N
Transparency or opacity map	_T
Roughness map	_R
Emissive map	_E
Metalness map	_M