Practitioner's Statement

SphereBot

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My design brief was to create a concept design for a genus of robot (SphereBot) for Planetary Games new release. This game is a first person shooter, where you are fighting the SphereBots who are trying to wipe out humanity. The target audience for this game would primarily be 15-30 year old males. The client requested a series of parameters be implemented in this design. The robot had to start as a sphere, and gradually unfold as it attacks. The design also had to be presented as a 2D render, a model and an animation, to view how it moves within the context of the game.

The starting point for this design was the detailed examination of different types of existing weaponry and military vehicles (land, sea, and air). Another area of research required me to analyse other concept designer's mech. Designs including John Park, Scott Robertson and Darren Quach. The concept designer that I have been most influenced by is Darren Quach. His understanding of how to make a design appear functional was paramount to the development of my own aesthetic. His weapon designs for the game 'Ratchet and Clank' with their exposed pipes and over the top features, was also valuable in giving my design some personality. This along with his distinctive palette of largely monochromatic areas, accented by fluorescent colours that indicate an energy source, was an ideal starting point for me. Through the careful examination of Quach's aesthetic, my designs are also appropriate for the specified target audience/social context as his designs are aimed at the same target audience as mine.

Ultimately, while my design fits the brief, the robot folds into a sphere, and unfolds to reveal its weapon, it is presented in four different ways, including animation sequences and a model; it was not without its issues. One issue I found was during the development phase when I was trying to give my robot a personality, a problem I ultimately overcame through the generation of multiple options. Some of the other issues that occurred revolved around making the 3D model. The first issue in this respect was that when I first made the model I made it with too many polygons. The graphics cards could not cope, making it impossible to render with the computer on hand. This happened again when I moved the model into the scene for it to be animated. Another issue that I had was when I added flame into the scene I had to decrease the polygon count further, so the graphics card would not run out of memory. When painting the model I found it a challenge to mix the correct colours accurately. I got it as close as possible, but it is much harder to change the colour with paints then on the computer.

I believe that my process was effective from defining the problem, the development of concept sketches in 2D and then finally the production of a 3D model worked really well.