THE ART OF

DESPERADOS III




DESPERADOS III

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR INTEREST IN THE ART OF DESPERADOS III.

Creating this game has been quite the journey for all of us here at Mimimi Games. Imyself really love art books, so I am very happy this book exists to give you a little insight into the process of developing the art style, mood and assets for Desperados III. Before you start browsing through the wonderful concepts, let me tell you a little about this journey and our thoughts while finding the look for this game.

While designing Shadow Tactics: Blades of the Shogun – the game we made before Desperados III – we always saw it as an "offspring" of Commandos and Desperados, meaning it should look and feel like something fans of those older games would appreciate, but also be clearly recognizable as a Mimimi game, infused with our style and soul. It should also be something fresh and unique. At that time, our Art Department was only four people, and included animation, UI and visual effects. We couldn't pull off the realism of Commandos, so we decided on a more stylized and manageable look for Shadow Tactics. Since it was a new franchise, we were free to create our own style and vision, while always keeping in mind what made Commandos unique and what would please the many fans of the genre. For us, it was the amount of detail, the large maps, with every pixel inviting you to explore and discover new things at every corner, as well as the sheer diversity of levels, each with its own unique look and feel.

With Desperados III, our approach to style was a bit different. Improving and growing skills is something everyone at Mimimi strives for. We learned new tools so we could improve graphical quality and target the style of the older Desperados titles, which had more realistic features and detail than Shadow Tactics. The experience made with Shadow Tactics helped us realize what we should change and improve in order to deliver a more complex and detailed style. The Art Department grew, and with newly developed skills and new, highly talented artists, we were ready to create a modern Desperados that would meet the expectations of fans and also ourselves.

The other thing that was different from Shadow Tactics was that we were now working with a franchise that included multiple previous titles and established franchise lore. Fans would want to see certain things in a new Desperados game, and as fans of the original games ourselves, it was clear we wanted to deliver a worthy new entry into the franchise. Our goal was to achieve a style that would look and feel like a modern Desperados game should, a style that fans could immediately immerse themselves in and feel like they're playing "their" Desperados, but that would also feel fresh enough to attract new players to the game. And of course, it should still have the Mimimi touch. It's something we try to add to all our games. That special something that makes you say "That looks like a Mimimi game!"

So, we analyzed the older titles and tried to narrow down what made them stand out visually between screenshots of other games. We developed a style guide for Desperados III, based on the pillars of its predecessors, and added our own special touch to the mix. Then, we developed a visual prototype by recreating one of the levels from the original game. We asked ourselves: What elements are needed to form the world of Desperados? What needs to be modernized? How can we express ourselves to give it the Mimimi touch? We mixed realistic elements with some hand-painted strokes, experimented with lighting to create unique moods for each level, added worn materials to most assets and found the right locations to get that typical western feel. Little by little, the style, the graphics, the levels and the game itself came to life. We made adjustments and improvements to the very end, until we could finally say
"This is our Desperados!"



Now, you might ask: What is the Mimimi touch? Sometimes I am not sure whether we know ourselves, but it always comes through during development. We gather round regularly to look at the game and give feedback. Some phrases are repeated constantly, like "Add more color, everything is brown and grey. I want to see color!" or "We need more life, there has to be more movement like dust in the air and flags in the wind!" I strongly believe that if we ever were to develop a horror game, it would be colorful and full of life, and it would still give you goosebumps. Since The Last Tinker: City of Colors, we wanted to create worlds that are lively and interesting to look at and play, worlds you can immerse yourself in and that give you that urge to explore. Even when we design a map with a raging battle, players should always be welcome to look around and find all the little details. And of course, there is a big portion of Mimimi love!

We love what we do, and we hope you can feel that too while you are playing.

Creating our very own Desperados while still retaining the feel of the originals was a real challenge. Unfortunately, this book cannot show you the entire journey, just glimpses of it. You get to enjoy the beautiful highlights of our ride. Everyone at Mimimi put their heart and soul into making this game. We pushed ourselves, always trying to improve and create the best thing we can. In the end, it is up to you to decide whether you like the style or not. I for one am super proud of what we have accomplished. I am happy and thankful for a team that puts so much effort and love into their work and that supports each other in every situation.

So while you're having fun looking through this book, we're off to create a new style for our next game: Codename Süßkartoffel! See you in the next art book!





CHAPTER I

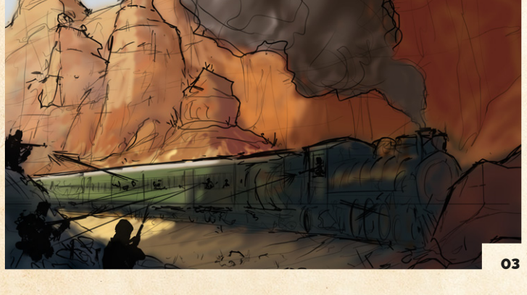
THE DOCTOR & THE BRIDE



01



02



03



04

01
Mood Level of „Train"

02
Scribble (Outlines) of the „Train" mood

03
Finding the color scheme of the scenery

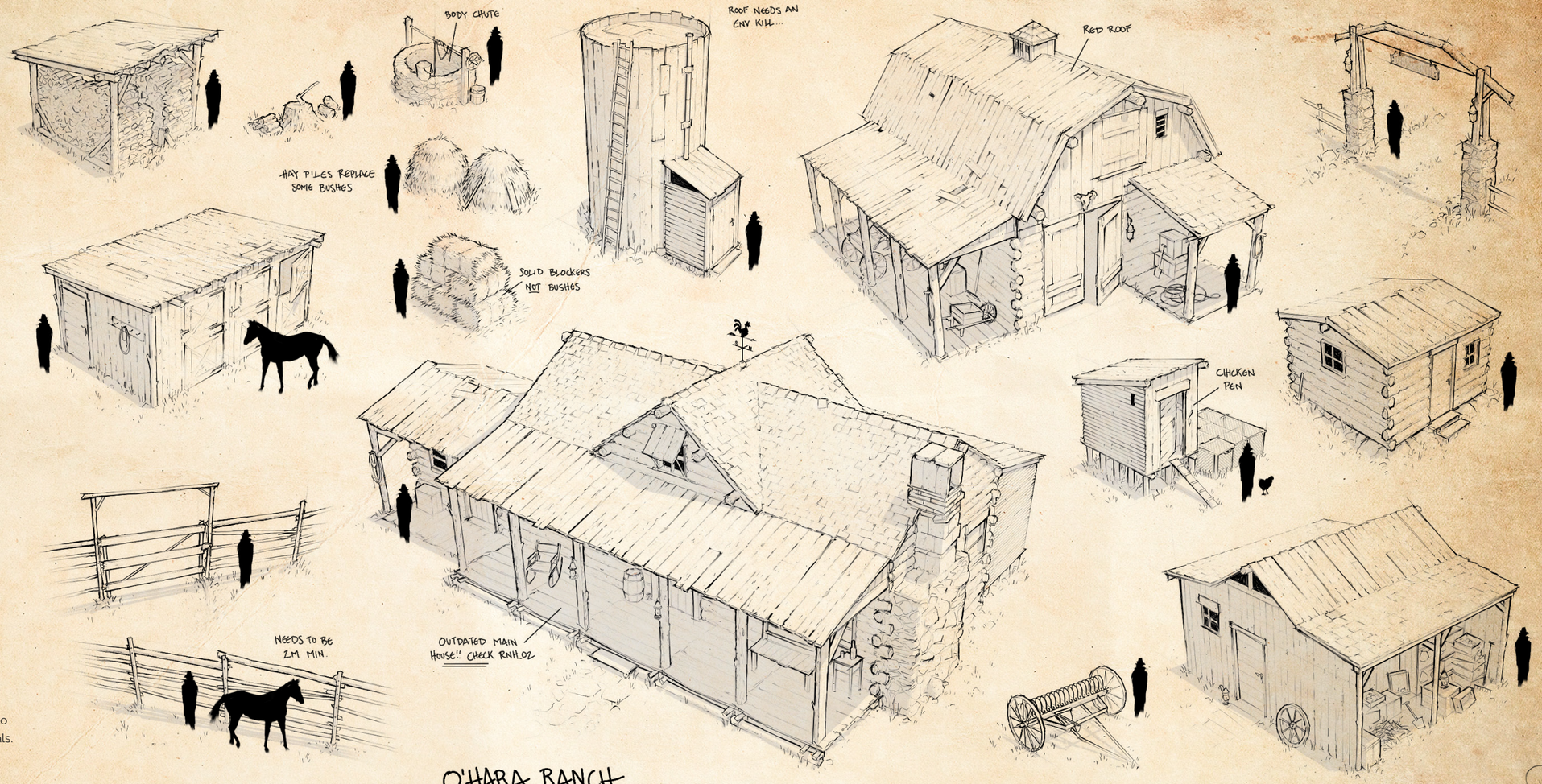
04
Adding Details to the outlined draft



O'HARA RANCH

This small Colorado family ranch is home not only to Kate and her uncle, but also a variety of farm animals.

The rustic, hand-crafted buildings include living quarters as well as stables, pens and storage for farming equipment and fodder.

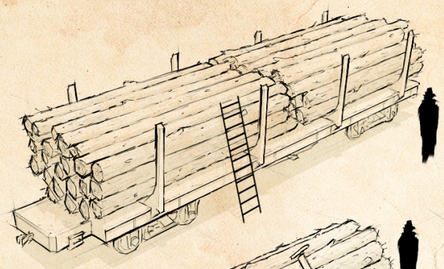


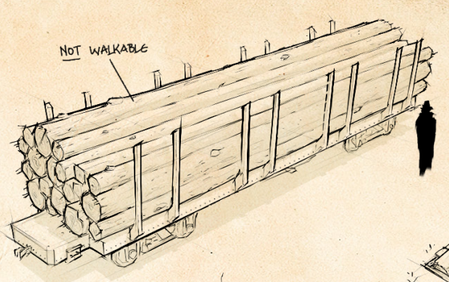


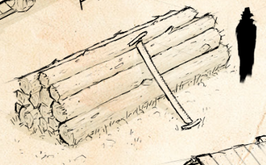
RANCH MOOD
To enhance the feeling of imminent danger as DeVitt's hired raiders attack the ranch, we knew a stormy atmosphere at night would suit this level perfectly.

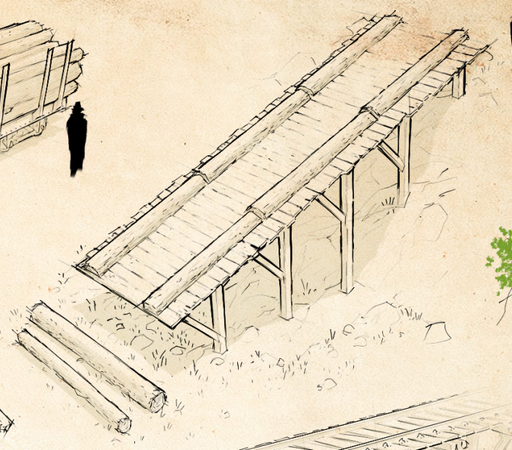




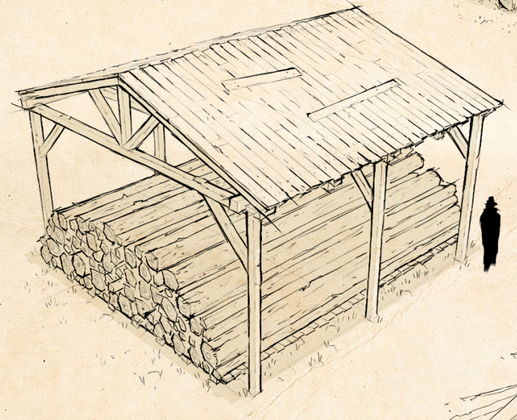


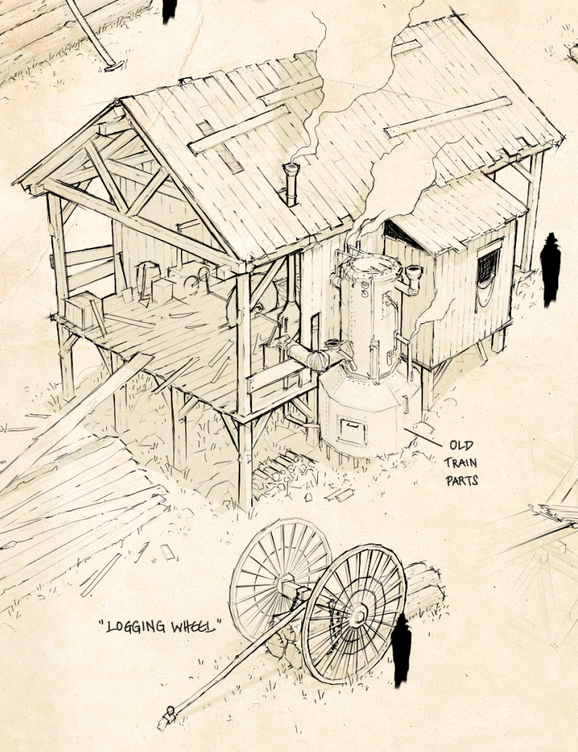




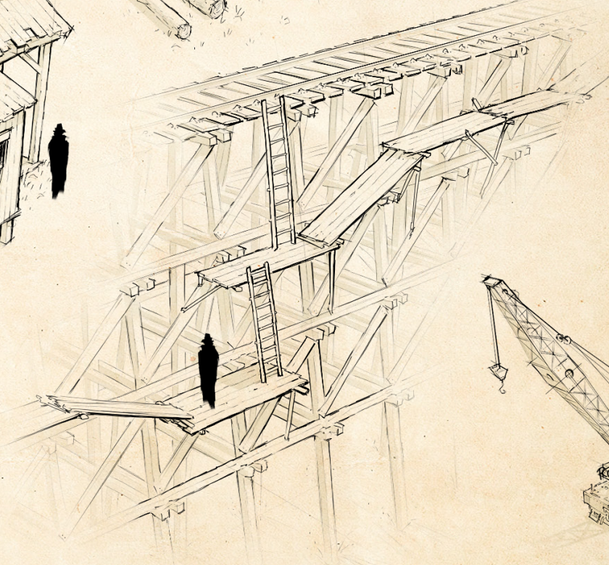


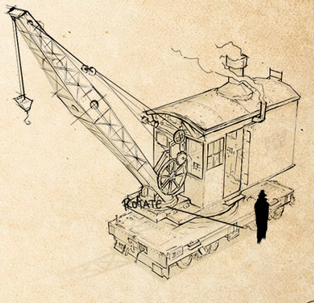












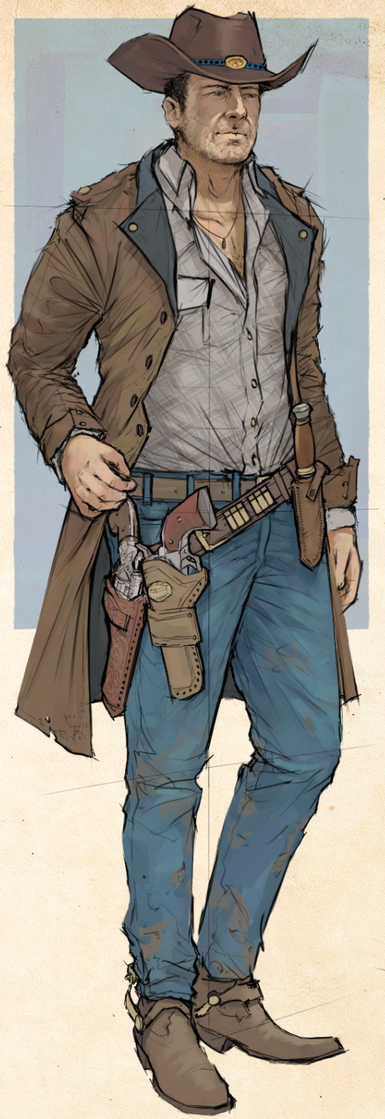
SAWMILL

EAGLE FALLS

The big railroad bridge, the 'trestle', is one of the largest single asset models in the entire game and has undergone countless reiterations concerning its shape and size.

Many wooden buildings are located in these mountains, crafted directly from the local pine wood that has been cut and prepared by the large coal-powered sawmill in the center of the level.







JOHN COOPER

John Cooper is the protagonist of the Desperados franchise, a classic western hero, a tough as nails gunslinger and man of few words. In Desperados III, we wanted to explore Cooper's origins and find out what made him the man he is in the original game.













KATE O' HARA

Another mainstay in Desperados, Kate uses her charm and ingenuity to lure unsuspecting guards to their doom. This time around, we wanted to show a younger, less experienced Kate, and the events that made her who she is.



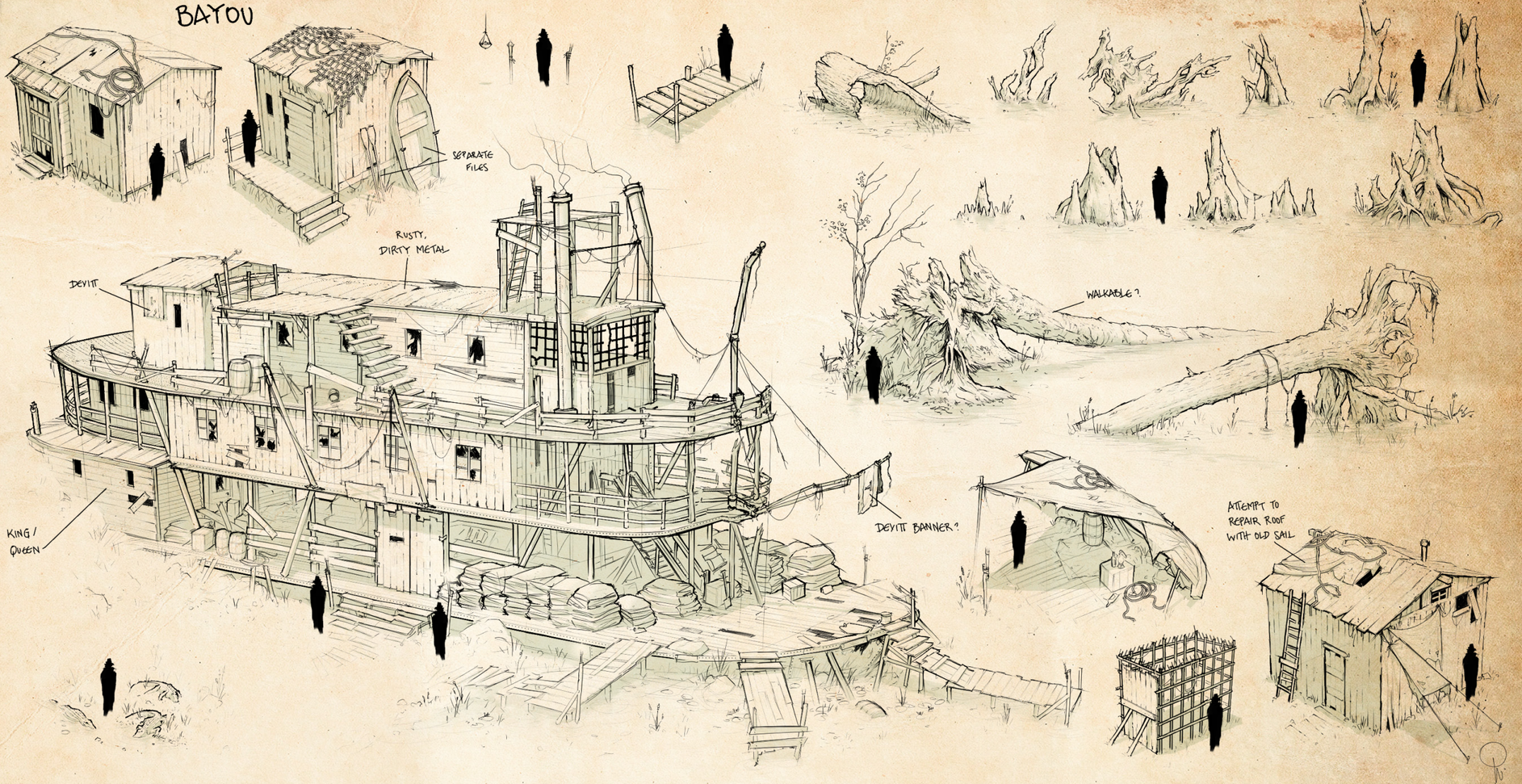







CHAPTER II
THE MARSHAL & THE WITCH





QUEEN'S NEST

One of the more creative and fictitious missions is set in a bandit base in the depths of the Louisiana bayou. The encampment consists of abandoned fishing huts and stranded boats, taken by the enemy for accommodation.

The 'River Queen' was originally meant to double as a fully accessible steamboat by the docks of New Orleans, with indoor segments and enemy setups.



01



02



03



04

01
Mood Level of „Town"

02
Scribble (Outlines) of the „Town" mood

03
Finding the color scheme of the scenery

04
Adding Details to the outlined draft





ARTHUR "DOC" MCCOY

Doc is well known to Desperados fans, so this time around, we wanted to show him in his glory days. He's the specialist, the man who has a tool for every problem, whether it be bleeding wounds, locked doors or guards in hard to reach places.







NEW ORLEANS

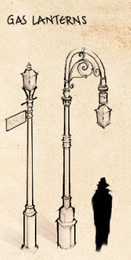
In direct contrast to the more 'classical' western locales, the colorful streets of New Orleans represent the stark disparity between the old and the new age of America.

The architecture is geometric and primarily made of smooth cobblestone and painted walls. The efforts of creating these almost entirely unique assets pay off as we visit New Orleans twice, each time with vastly different lighting and atmosphere.

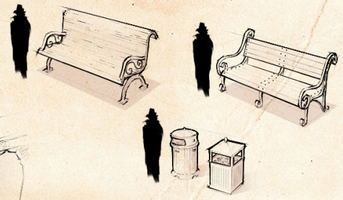


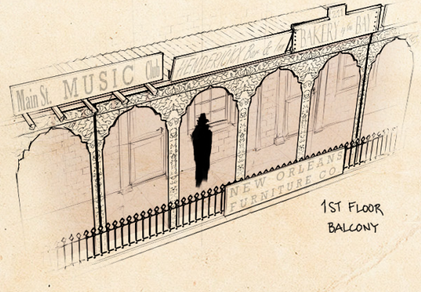


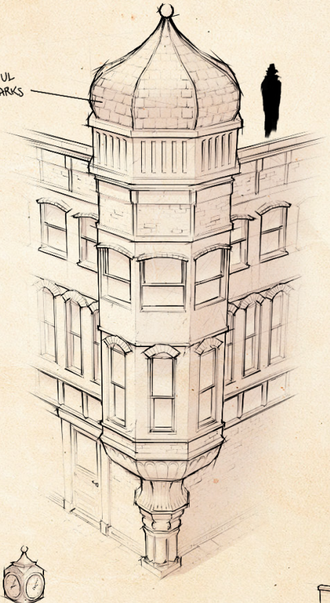


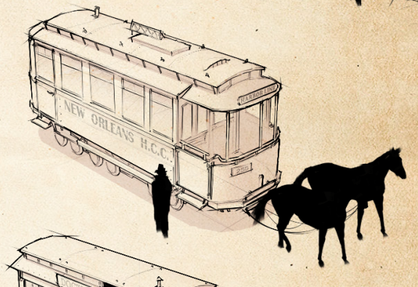




























N. ORLEANS





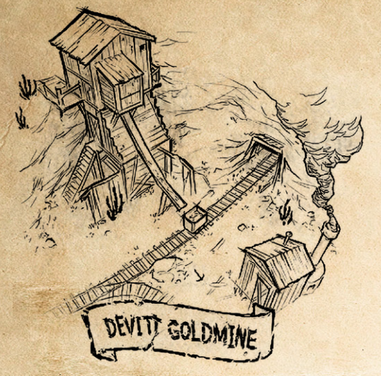
ISABELLE MOREAU

Isabelle was a very risky character for us. The Voodoo witch from New Orleans went through many iterations, and everything from her age to her personality was adjusted numerous times before we felt comfortable with the result.





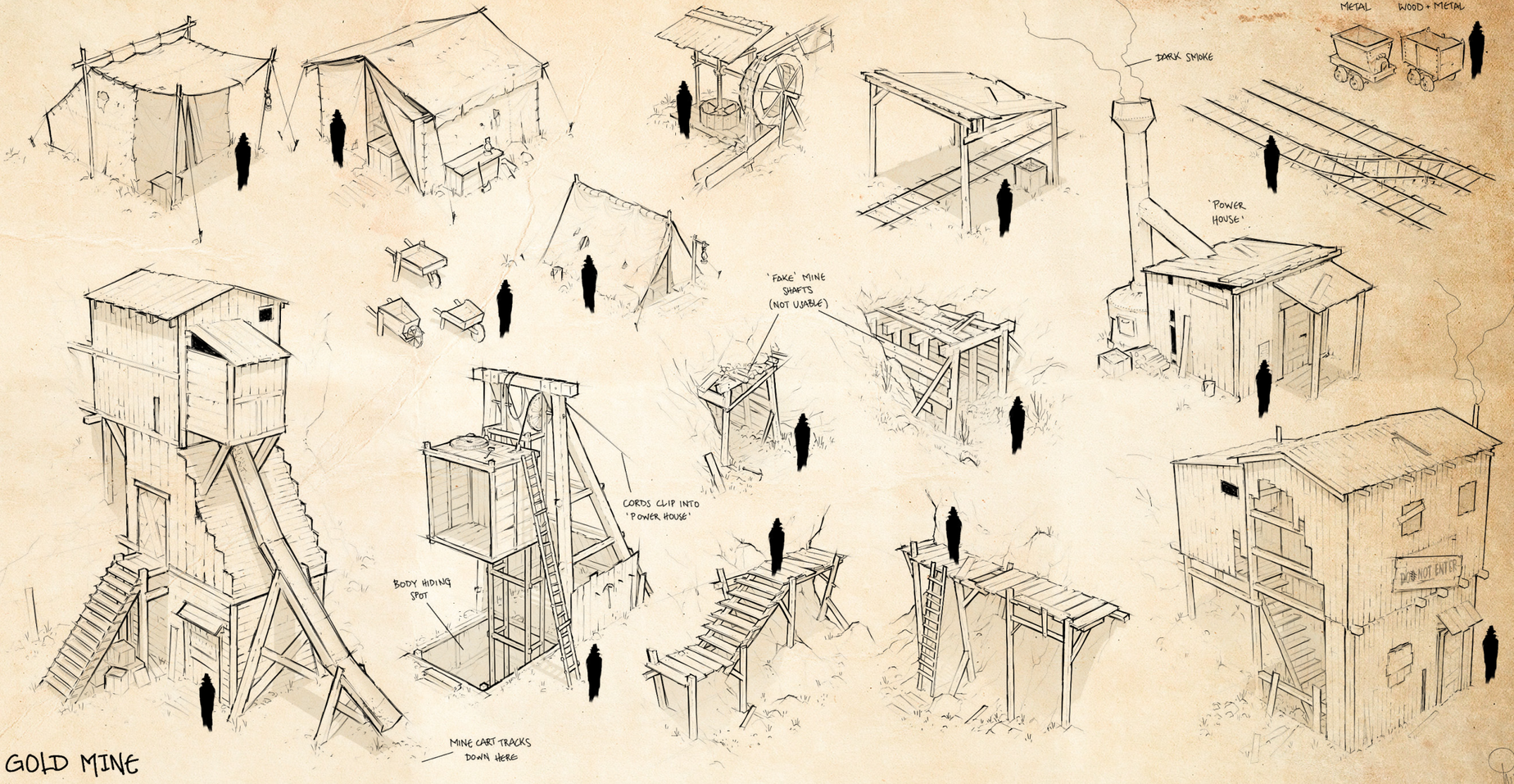

CHAPTER III
THE TRAPPER & THE KID



DEVITT GOLDMINE

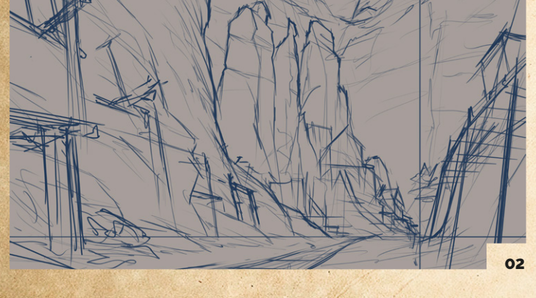
Any great western story is incomplete without a goldmine scenario in the blazing hot canyons.

During early iterations, the final segment of this mission was originally the interior of a mountain, with narrow mining tunnels and excavation sites. The player would then blow up a boulder using the minecart in order to escape.





01



02



03



04

01
Mood Level of „Mine"

02
Scribble (Outlines) of the „Mine" mood

03
Finding the color scheme of the scenery

04
Adding Details to the outlined draft







HECTOR MENDOZA

Hector is the strongman of the group, the guy who likes a good fight and is fun to work with, even if he's a little slow sometimes. His signature weapon is the huge bear trap he carries on his back, which he has nicknamed "Bianca".







HACIENDA MOOD
As one of the wealthiest people in the country, DeVitt resides in an elaborate hacienda close to the Mexican border. The property is characterized by beautiful marble structures and lush, flamboyant gardens.

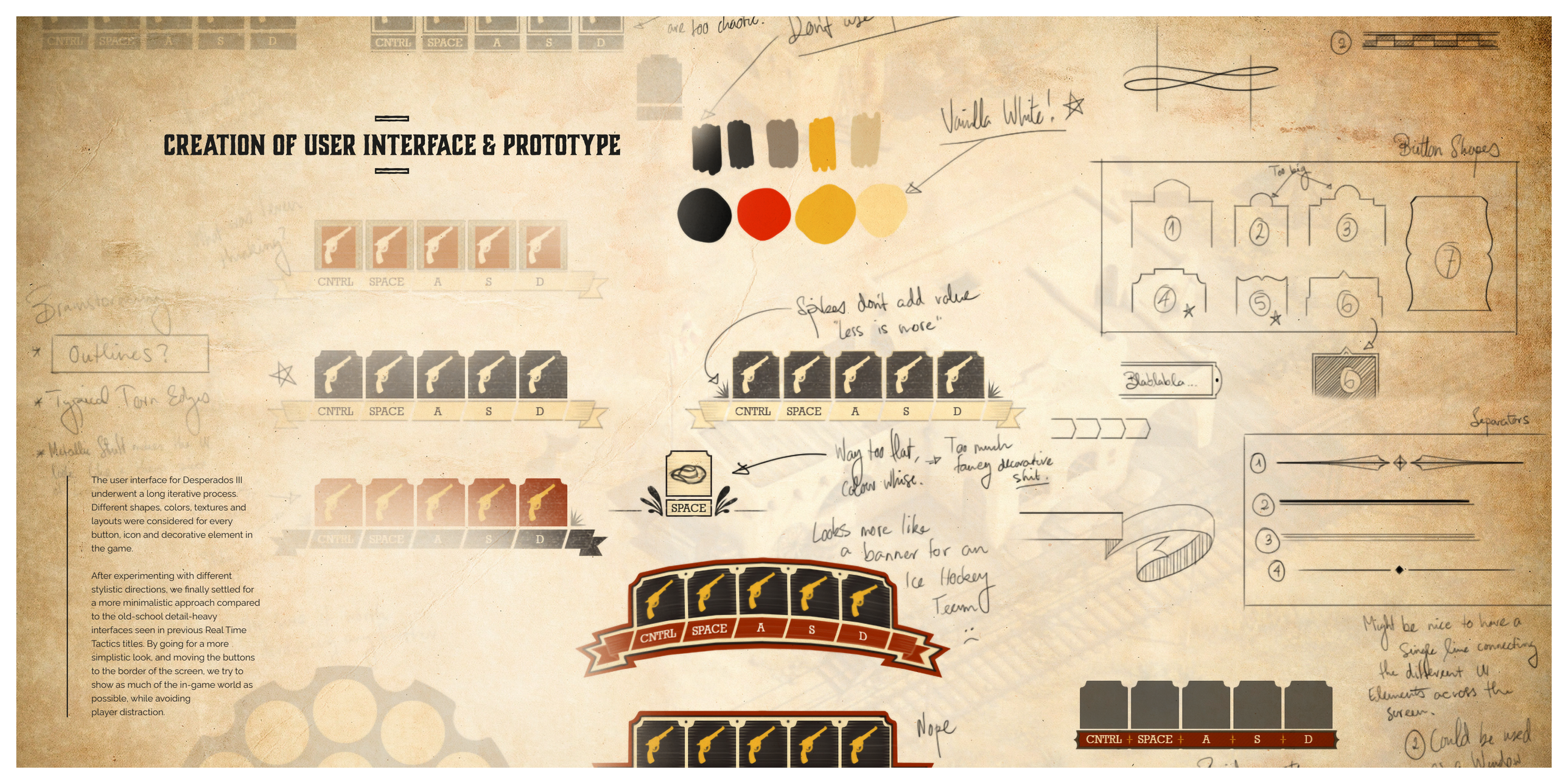
There used to be a private chapel and graveyard for DeVitt and his family members, but we decided it distracted from his purely self-centered personality. The chapel model was moved to the final level during development.


MAKING OF

CREATION OF USER INTERFACE & PROTOTYPE

The user interface for Desperados III underwent a long iterative process. Different shapes, colors, textures and layouts were considered for every button, icon and decorative element in the game.

After experimenting with different stylistic directions, we finally settled for a more minimalistic approach compared to the old-school detail-heavy interfaces seen in previous Real Time Tactics titles. By going for a more simplistic look, and moving the buttons to the border of the screen, we try to show as much of the in-game world as possible, while avoiding player distraction.





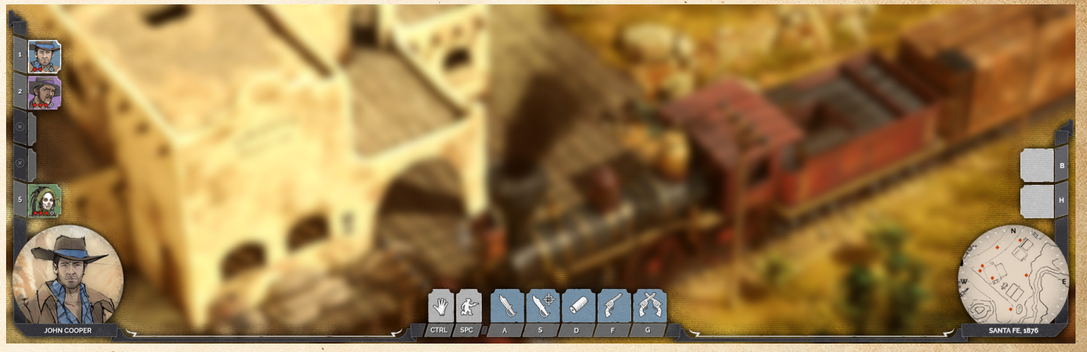
DESPERADOS: WANTED DEAD OR ALIVE (2001)



DESPERADOS III
FIRST PROTOTYPE (2017)







SOUND & AUDIO



01

Hello there, my name is Filippo Beck Peccoz. I'm the Audio Director and composer for Desperados 3 and I'm very happy to be telling you some in-depth stories from our studios on these pages.

First, meet our core audio team, in true dynamic duo fashion: Philipp Sellier, Foley Artist and Sound Designer, and myself.

Of course, audio work comprises many more people, from our music mixer Jonathan Feurich, the musicians playing in the soundtrack to the many voice actors (in several languages), and let's never forget the coders, game/level designers and artists who help bring the (sometimes rather crazy) audio ideas to life!

After working on Mimimi's previous title "Shadow Tactics" we set out with a challenge for ourselves: elevate the audio in terms of scope, detail, and content. We could build upon the experience within the genre and address specific points that were dear to us.

That we did – I am thrilled to present our work to you and hope you will enjoy it!

Medieval Instruments and Synths in a Western?!

As a composer, working on a Western had always been a fantasy of mine. On the other hand, I've always wondered how things would pan out, since this genre seems to have a very defined set of sonorities. They shifted over the years, but it seems everyone has a specific sound in mind that just screams "This is a Western!".

So working in this genre meant diving into a challenging world of expectations/clichés, desire to try out something different but remain true to this vibe we all really want from the genre, and balancing it all within a modern stealth tactics game. We included what we lovingly call "Hat Tips" to the great music done in this genre over the years.

So many composers come to mind right now, but if I had to pick two massive influences for D3, I'd mention maestro Ennio Morricone (of course!) and Marco Beltrami.



02



03

01
Philipp Sellier and Filippo Beck Peccoz

02
Hurdy Gurdy, check. Very old piano: check

03
This 12 String saw a lot of action during the recording of the soundtrack



Studio



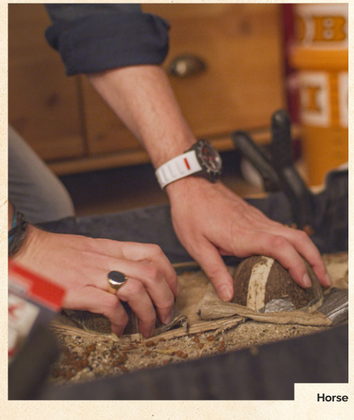
Foley Isabelle



Gun



Foley Hector



Horse

I'm glad I've been able to sneak some unorthodox instruments and sounds into the music...from a Hurdy Gurdy to several synth lines.

The Old and the New: shifting between linear and dynamic tracks

This genre is defined by really big maps, which keep the player busy for a long time. They often last for over an hour! Naturally, we needed a lot of content, but also smart ways of shuffling the music to keep the player engaged and immersed. The foundation of this system is two separate species of songs:

1) "Dynamic" Linear Tracks

Each level features one or more songs that play in a traditional, loop-based fashion.

To give these songs more flexibility, we decided to feature variations throughout the levels.

The main instruments might be different, or the arrangement might shift.

This way, the player recognizes the loop, but also listens to an evolving piece of music as the level continues to unfold.

2) Stealth Tracks

This is the most adaptive part of the music and an integral part of the in-game musical experience. At certain points in the game, we switch from the linear tracks mentioned above to a system based on instrumental layers.

They can play in a preset combination or in a "controlled random" fashion in an area where it's not certain how long the player will take to complete it.

Compared to Shadow Tactics, which featured 5 "sets" of Stealth Tracks, Desperados 3 includes a custom set for almost each level in the game. This helped me convey the identity of the level more and keep the player rooted into the "personality" of each level.

3) Stingers: one instrument for each character

While stealth tracks are playing, the characters' actions are being commented by short musical phrases, which emphasize their personality. I'll leave it to you to find out each character's instrument...

The Sound

All sound effects and ambiences have been produced by Philipp Sellier and implemented by the two of us. We've spent a lot of time directly in the Unity Engine, tweaking the sounds to get everything just right.

It has been possible to add the correct reverb to indoor ambiences and for the maps in general, boosting immersion and quality of the sounds a lot. Footsteps sounds alone are in the thousands, which should give you an idea of just how many audio assets are included in the whole game!

Here are some pics taken in the early beginnings when Philipp started to shape the characters' acoustic footprint, showing the basic elements used for each character. In actual fact they've been a live saver when it came to redoing some of the recordings after a 2 years' time :-)

The Cutscenes

To tell the story of Desperados 3 at its best, about an hour of cut-scenes are included in the game – which meant we effectively were scoring a small film along with producing the rest of the audio for the game!

It's a very different beast than working for in-game-assets , and a welcome diversion. The cut-scenes were worked on in a completely linear, film-like fashion: all footsteps and foleys you hear were performed by Philipp, for example, and the music is custom-scored to picture.



COVER ARTWORK







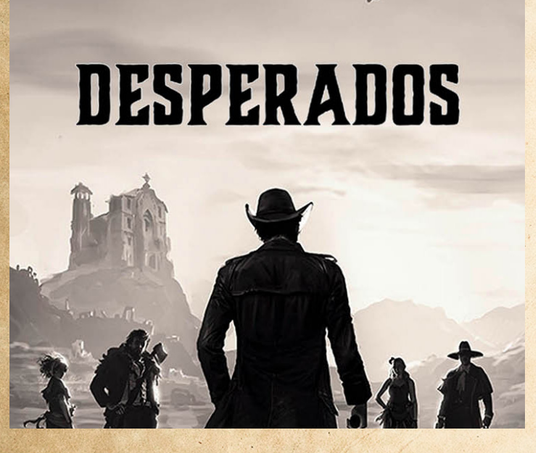




LOGO DESIGN


DESPERADOS


DESPERADOS


DESPERADOS


DESPERADOS


DESPERADOS III

CUT SCENES









ANNOUNCEMENT TRAILER



















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