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Jet of Blood

Elizabeth S. Goins
Rochester Institute of Technology, esggsh@rit.edu

Andy Head
awhgla@rit.edu

Thomas Davis
Rochester Institute of Technology, tmdgla@rit.edu

Jet of Blood VR:
First Playable Demo

Elizabeth Goins*
Rochester Institute of Technology

Andy Head
Rochester Institute of Technology

Mason Hayes
Rochester Institute of Technology

ABSTRACT:

A VR staging of Anonin Artaud's 1925 surrealist play, Jet of Blood. The project experiments with virtual reality as a means to reimagine performance and frame the player, the audience, as actor. Ideas from Artaud's philosophy such as the Theatre of Cruelty are incorporated along with spatial storytelling and game design. The project also seeks to expand accessibility to deaf and hard of hearing audiences through use of particle and text effects to visually express audio and sound.

To support an experiemental VR staging of Antonin Artaud's 1925 surrealist play, *Jet of Blood*. This project seeks to explore new ideas of performance that situate the audience, ie player, as an actor. We have taken a number of ideas expressed in Artaud's writings to inform the design of the VR play. In particular, we leverage the visceral nature inherent to VR to build on Artaud's Theatre of Cruelty, ideas of audience centrality, symbolism, audio and visual spectacle. Additionally, the project experiments with visual methods to bring the experience to life for d/Deaf and hard of hearing through animation and particle effects that express the audio content.

The player experiences *Jet of Blood VR* through interaction, movement through space (scenes), audio/visual effects, video, motion capture animation, NPCs and dialog. Sometimes the player interacts with the dialog delivery, for example by answering phones, and at others they play the part of a character. The goal is to shake the player's senses thus creating an experience of a world that is more visceral and intense than the "real" life we know.

We have followed the original play fairly closely, focusing on interpreting the environments and player interaction to express some of the play's larger themes: cycles of decay, destruction, and creation. To that end, the game environments are rich and filled with objects chosen to convey meaning symbollically to support the themes of each scene.

PLAYER EXPERIENCE

Jet of Blood VR introduces an obscure surrealist play to a general audience as well as the d/Deaf and hard-of- hearing player. The expected benefits will be to the general public, we hope to create a visceral experience that opens connections between the video game community and performance. Additionally, the methods and hybrid, asynchronous approach will serve as a model for game design and digital performance.

Sound in the game adds to the player experience but d/Deaf and hard of hearing will be able to play as audio cues have been visualized: fonts and subtitles are animated in the game world; objects that have audio cues also have visual cues that interpret the audio; particle effects are use along with sound to create spectacle, many particle effects are connected to elements of the music and move accordingly; haptics are also used in the handsets.
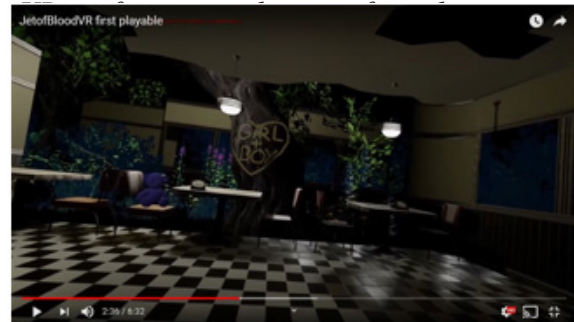
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Fig. 1. Young Love, Scene 1, Jet of Blood VR