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Changeling: A Single Player VR Mystery

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Cover Page Footnote

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Changeling is a VR narrative mystery game focusing upon immersive experience. It was created by aspiring game developers from the Rochester Institute of Technology to experience professional development. Each semester, different sets of students get to work on the game, with past ones working part time. Using the ideas of magical realism and urban fantasy we see each family member respond to uncertainty through the lens of their hopes and fears.

GAMEPLAY AND AESTHETICS

Changeling is a VR, first-person, mystery built upon the idea of magical realism, the sense of unease and wonder. You play as Aurelia a dream-walker whose gift is the ability to see through the eyes of anyone she touches. You are tasked with helping this particular family figure out what is wrong with their baby, and as you



Fig. 1. Screenshot of opening screen

contact each member you see through the lens of their hopes and fears of what the baby is.

Each family member will have a separate game level tied to their emotional lens. This is revealed both mechanically and aesthetically.

The introduction borrows stylistically from Social Realism, notably Edward Hopper, and sets the tone of a film noire detective aesthetic.



Fig. 2. In game screenshot exterior of family home

The mother's emotional lens is driven by a fear of loss. Mechanically, this is expressed by the drive to capture her loved ones as they drift away from her. Aesthetically, the level is influenced by the notion of dissolution and expressed with watercolor.

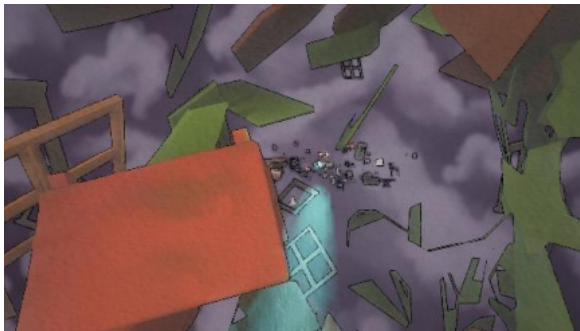


Fig. 3. In game screenshot of the floating objects in the mother's level

CONCLUSION

When Changeling was first conceived, the goal was to exploit how VR can be used for narrative game design. The game is being made to tell an interactive story that the player can experience in real time, and in 360 degrees. Everything from themes, artistic direction, and even audio play an important role for the game as a whole.

Keywords—*VR, XR, Interactive Narrative, Artistic Expression, Game Design, Storytelling, Oculus*