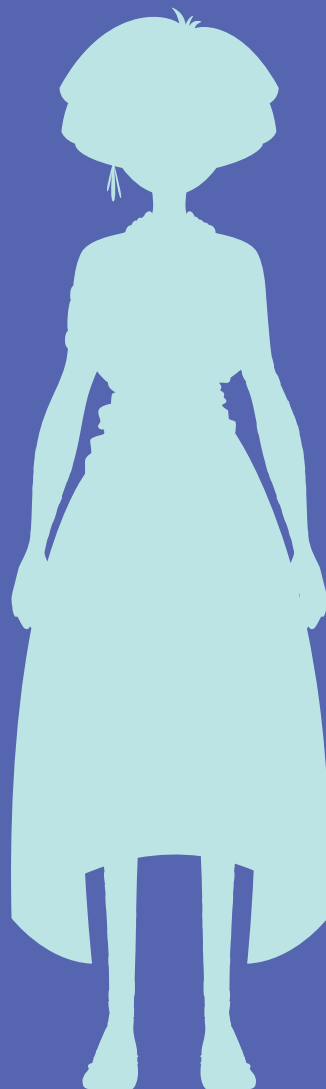


MAJESTY CHAMPION CHRISTIAN

SOLAS



CONTENT

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Abzû, a relaxing arthouse game by Giant Squid Studio

INTRODUCTION

Imagine you are in an unfamiliar setting. Suddenly, your body tenses, your nerves are on edge, and you feel overwhelmed by your surroundings. Your heart begins to race at unimaginable speeds. You struggle to breathe, but you're left hyperventilating as your airways close, and your chest tightens. Realizing your dilemma, you have the urge to call for help, seek a familiar face, or runaway. A sense of doom washes over you, clouding your mind with thoughts loneliness and isolation. You try to calm yourself as the panic crawls through your skin and takes over every function in your body, rendering you helpless and afraid in its wake.

When I was 15, I experienced my first panic attack, which began an onslaught of stress-

induced anxiety attacks. I suffered through these attacks until I found the perfect solutions to relieve my stress: jamming to my favorite tunes, daydreaming, illustrating and most importantly playing videogames. The first game I fell in love with was an arthouse game that calmed me with its awe-inspiring game design and emotional atmospheric gameplay. I was taken to another world that I could interact and emotionally connect with, investing all my time in focus in its hour long narrative. The experience left me wanting more varieties particular to this niche genre within a niche market. Inspired, I began thinking: wouldn't it be wonderful if there was a form of escapism that combined these different coping mechanisms?

THESIS STATEMENT

This project involved the marketing and branding of *SOLAS*, a multiplatform virtual reality arthouse game that relieves stress and anxiety through immersive visuals, and therapeutic music. This was accomplished through extensive research into, videogames,

art and music therapy, virtual reality, a target market, competition, similar coping devices, branding, and design. The final result included a logo and brand identity, game design, collateral, package design, advertising, and web design.

THESIS

methodology

Descriptive research, a method of data collection and analyzation associated with qualitative research that describes an occurrence, was conducted to gather a multitude of resources to further understand the gaming industry and artistic therapy. These sources included published works on videogames and art, game design and development, branding and design, color theory, as well as art therapy and its relation to digital media. Newspaper, online articles and academic journals concerning art therapy and video games were analyzed as well.

Observations, interviews with specialists and art therapists, and surveys with the target market and professional reports identifying videogame trends provided further insight on the various subjects. Proper application of these concepts developed through descriptive research allowed the multiplatform game to improve its market penetration, and appeal to a variety of consumers. Based on the research, the sources provided detailed background information, target market demographics, marketing and promotion solutions, and design considerations.

Books

The following books defined and clarified the history of anxiety: *Anxiety: A Short History* by Dr. Allan V. Horwitz, a professor of Sociology in the Department of Sociology and Institute for Health, Health Care Policy, and Aging Research at Rutgers University; *Angst: Origins of Anxiety and Depression* by Jeffery P. Kahn M.D., a clinical associate professor of Psychiatry at Weill Cornell Medical College; and *Anxiety, Clinical Psychology: A Modular Course* by Stanley Rachman, a psychologist and Professor Emeritus of the Department of Psychology at the University of British Columbia.

The following books provided information, methods, and research on the applications of art therapy: *The Art Therapy Sourcebook* by Cathy A. Malchiodi, a licensed art therapist, and counselor on the board of directors of the American Art Therapy Association (AATA); *Digital Art Therapy: Material, Methods, and Applications* edited by Rick L. Garner, a Professor of Art Education at Kennesaw State University; and *Arts in Health: Designing and Researching Interventions* by Dr. Daisy Fancourt, a Senior Research Associate/ Wellcome Research Fellow in the Psychobiology Group in the Department of Behavioral Science and Health at University College London with a PhD in Psychoneuroimmunology.

The following books presented insight on whether video games function as art: *The Art of Videogames* by Grant Tavinor, a lecturer in Philosophy at Lincoln University whose research focuses on the relationship between videogames and art; *Videogames and Art* edited by Grethe Mitchell, a writer/researcher with an interest in videogames and its relationship to other cultural elements, and Andy Clarke, who is an independent researcher and internet strategy consultant; *Works of Games: On the Aesthetics of Games and Art* by John Sharp, a game designer, graphic designer, art historian and Associate Professor of Games and Learning in the School of Art, Media and Technology at Parsons The New School for Design; and *Game Design Essentials* by Briar Lee Mitchell, the owner of Star

Mountains Studios, a successful game company, and teacher at the Art Institute teaching game art, animation, and VFX techniques.

The following books focused on the fundamentals and process of game design, development, and the industry: *Fundamentals of Game Development* by Heather Maxwell Chandler, a veteran game producer, and founder of Media Sunshine Inc., and Rafael Chandler, who has written several videogames; *Level Up: The Guide to Great Video Game Design* by Scott Rogers, the game designer of Pac-Man World and other well-known games; *Game Design* by Bob Bates, an active game designer, producer, and industry consultant; *Understanding Video Games: The Essential Introduction* by Simon Egenfeldt-Nielsen, Jonas Heide Smith, and Susana Pajares Tosca, who are members of the Center of Computer Games Research at IT University of Copenhagen; *Game Design: Theory & Practice* 2nd Edition by Richard Rouse III, a game designer/developer and the Design Director at Surreal Software, a Midway House Entertainment studio; and *A Casual Revolution: Reinventing Video Games and Their Players* by Jesper Juul, a videogame theorist and developer, described the reinvention of videogames in response to the rise of the casual gamer.

Flow and the Foundations of Positive Psychology: The Collected works of Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi explored thirty years of Csikszentmihalyi's on three areas of study: attention, flow and psychology. The Hungarian psychologist defined the role of attention in creating "experiences" or "flow," a psychological concept he coined in his study as a highly focused state of mind achieved during play and leisure. Also known for his work in the study of creativity and happiness, Csikszentmihalyi is the Distinguished Professor of Psychology and Management at Claremont Graduate University, and the former head of the Department of Psychology at the University of Chicago, and of the Department of Sociology



Books were consulted for research.

and Anthropology at Lake Forest College.

Lovemarks: The Future Beyond Brands by Kevin Roberts provided details on a new marketing concept that replaces branding while focusing on the emotions created by the product/service through mystery, sensuality, and intimacy, but most importantly love. Roberts is a world-renowned businessman consultant, the former CEO Worldwide of Ideas Company Saatchi & Saatchi, and Professor of Sustainable Enterprise. *Designing Brand Identity* by Alina Wheeler, a branding consultant, author and expert on the subject, offered a guide to the fundamentals, process and practices on building and execution of a successful brand.

Thinking with Type: A Critical Guide for Designers, Writers, Editors, & Students, written by Ellen Lupton described the history and

rules of typography, and the solutions to break them. Lupton is a writer, public-minded critic, design educator and director of the Graphic Design MFA program at Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA). *Typographic Design: Form and Communication* by Rob Carter uncovered the aspects to designing with type, typography in media and motion, and case studies. Carter taught typography and graphic design at Virginia Commonwealth University and wrote typographic related subjects.

Color Harmony 2: A Guide to Creative Color Combinations by Bride M. Whelan, presented the use of color and color combinations to evoke particular feelings. Whelan teaches courses on color theory at Parsons School of Design in New York city, and is the author of the Color Harmony series.

Articles

“A History of Anxiety: from Hippocrates to DSM” by Marc-Antoine Crocq, MD, a French Physician whose research focuses on mental health, explored the vast history of anxiety beginning in ancient Greece to the 21st century.

“Study finds art therapy effective in treating anxiety disorders” published by Anxiety.org reviewed a study and the history of art therapy and its applications in treating anxiety. Anxiety.org is a team partnered with experienced therapists and clinicians committed to making mental health information accessible to the public.

“Videogames and Therapy: A Narrative Review of Recent Publication and Application to Treatment” by Gilbert E. Franco described how therapists can integrate videogames as a source of therapy. Franco obtained his M.A. in Marriage and Family Therapy, and his Ph.D. in Industrial and Organizational Psychology, and works as a clinical director at the McAlister Institute.

“Can Video Games be Therapeutic?” written by Carolyn Mehlomakulu, LMFT, ATR an art

therapist and psychotherapist, explores the possibilities of integrating videogames in therapy, and how they improve social and cognitive skills.

The following articles provided by Jashley Boatwright described the relationship between digital media and art therapy: “Renewing the Debate: Digital Technology in Art Therapy and the Creative Process” by Brian D. Austin MPS, an art therapist, and the founder and Executive Director of The Animation Project (TAP), a program that explored a new form of therapy through animation and digital art technology; “Will Art Therapy Cross the Digital Culture Divide?” by Dr. Lynn Kapitan, ATR-BC, an art therapist, and professor and director of the Professional Doctorate in Art Therapy, School of Arts & Design at Mount Mary University; and “Empowering Creativity with Computer-assisted Art Therapy: An introduction to Available Programs and Techniques” by Carol McLeod MS, ATR-BC, an art therapist who had pioneered the use of computers and technology in art therapy.

“Take Two Games and Call Me in Morning: The Age of Digital Medicine” written by Neal Robison, evaluated the therapeutic treatments of virtual reality and its potential to access the healthcare market. Robison is a senior analyst at Moor Insights and Strategy, who covers gaming content and gaming services.

“Gaming’s Health Benefits” by Allison Van Dusen, a health and fitness journalist for Forbes, describes the benefits gaming on pain distraction, visual acuity and surgical skills.

“How Video Games Can Help with Depression and Anxiety” by Kendall Ashley, expressed how particular game genres and themes helped depression and anxiety. An avid gamer, Ashley is a freelance writer and an editor at Penguin Random House.

“Researchers Explore Mental Health Benefits of Video Games” by Shankar Vedantam, a Washington Post Staff Writer, explained the research studies of conducted for PopCap, a mobile game company, to explore the

benefits of videogames on mental health.

“Manipulating Attention to Non-emotional Distractors Influences State Anxiety: A Proof-of-Concept Study in low and High-Anxious College Students,” a study conducted by Jason S. Moser, Tim P. Moran, and Andrew B. Leber, explored the effects of completed video game-like exercises that involved identifying shapes on anxious college-age students. Moser is the Associate Professor of Clinical Psychology; Moran is currently the Associate Staff Scientist and Cognitive Psychologist at the Emory University School of Medicine; and Dr. Andrew Leber is the Cognitive Assistant Professor in the Department of Psychology at The Ohio State University.

“Science-backed Brain Game Eases Distraction, Anxiety” published on Science Daily, a resource for the latest scientific research news, summarized the Moser, Moran and Leber’s study and provided additional reflection of the experiment.

“Art House Video Games” written by Chris Schilling, a freelance videogame journalist, elaborated on the idea of videogames as a work of art.

Written by Scott Steinberg, “Who Says Video Games Aren’t Art?” provided insight on how game aesthetics create an experience for players. Steinberg is a leading analyst and strategist hailed as the top technology and game industry authority.

“Game Art: (This is not) A Manifesto, (This is) A Disclaimer” by Matteo Bittanti explored and clarified the debate about video games as an art medium and how it differentiated from game art. Bittanti currently teaches Media Studies at IULM University and directs the M.A. program in Game Design; his research focuses on the social, cultural and theoretical aspects of emerging technologies and their effects on the arts, visual culture and communication.

The following articles listed tips for marketing indie games: “Marketing Your Indie Games on a Zero-Dollar Budget” by Nathan Lovato,



Abzû, official screenshot

a game design expert at GameAnalytics, and founder and game design instructor at GDquest; “Marketing Your Indie Game: The Single Most Important Thing to Learn” by Robert DellaFave, the Game Designer and Project Manager of Divergent Games; and “The Basic Marketing Plan for Indie Games” by Jusso Hietalahti, a game producer and owner of an online multiplayer games company Polycount Productions.

The following articles explained the symbolism of circles: “Circle Symbols – What Do They Mean?” by Dixie Allan, a freelance graphic designer, and former professor at the Savannah College of Art and University of South Carolina; “What Does A Circle Mean?” by Leah Dimurlo, an author on SunSigns.org and a specialist in symbols; “What is Yin Yang?” by Zachary Brand, an author on SunSigns.org; and both “Circle Symbol Meaning” and “Yin Yang Symbols and Their Meaning” by Avia Venefica. Venefica is an author of several published articles concerning esoteric wisdom and on symbolic topics, with an undergraduate degree with a focus in art and anthropology.



Journey from thatgamecompany, artwork by O-I-i-v-i on deviantart

Interviews

An interview with Dr. Amanda Allison provided information related to art therapy and the effects of therapy on stress and/or anxiety. Dr. Allison is an associate professor and coordinator of Art Education at Texas Christian University (TCU), focused on therapeutic art, disability and art advocacy. Another interview with Jashley Boatwright, LPC, ATR-BC, a local Art Therapist at the Art Station and Adjunct Professor at TCU, also provided further insight into the field of art therapy and its relationship to digital media. Sample questions asked during the interviews are located in Appendix A.

Surveys

A survey of 21 people was conducted in order to discover whether the participants played video games, specific marketing techniques that motivated to play video games, and which specific game genres/elements helped them relax. The survey was a standard Likert scale survey and is included in Appendix B.

Observations

Observations were conducted by playing video games, watching others play video games, and analyzing specific game elements to study the effects of gaming and effective game design. A phenomenological diary was recorded while playing video games, taking note of specific game elements that helped with relaxation and escapism.



THESIS

research results

Results of the research led to valuable information related to the history of gaming, advertising and promotion commonly used in the industry, the specific target market for this business model, and design considerations for creating brand, collateral, and advertising.

Background Information

Apparently, many people are nervous or sad. Today, it is quite commonplace to experience anxiety, an uneasy emotional response to uncertain situations tending to be pervasive and persistent (Horwitz 4, 14, 118; Kahn 1; Rachman 3). “The Greeks defined anxiety broadly as ‘the expectation of evil’” (Horwitz 20). The term derives from the Indo-Germanic root, *angh*, meaning tightness or constriction especially in the chest or throat, and the Latin substantive *angor* and cognate word *angustus* meaning narrow. (Crocq 321; Horwitz 5; Rachman 7). According to Allan Horwitz, conceptions of anxiety and its disorders date back to the fifth or fourth centuries BCE, that were later defined and treated as medical conditions in the 19th century (Crocq 319; Horwitz 13, 19). Still undiscovered at the time, Classical Greek studies compared natural human behavior between bravery and cowardice; however, recent studies distinguish anxiety from fear (Horwitz 20; Rachman 3).

**ONCE WE ENTER
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ABOUT THE HAND’S ROLE
IN CREATIVITY.”**

Aristotle (384–322 BCE), a Greek philosopher, emphasized how fear and anxiety originate from threatening situations: “Let fear, then, be a kind of pain or disturbance resulting from the imagination of impending danger, either

destructive or painful.... For that is what danger is—the proximity of the frightening.” (Horwitz 20). Though, research also shows that anxiety stems from melancholia or unhappiness as well, and intense or ongoing unhappiness reveals there is more going on than a bad situation (Horwitz 24; Kahn 1). “...[A]nxiety has become an aspect of commercial culture, with consumers expecting that it can be allayed through drug treatments. During the 1950s and 1960s, however, drugs were viewed as aids in coping with normal concerns of everyday life” (Horwitz 142). The intense distress of anxiety also drives its victims to seek out more empathetic companions, new solutions and perspectives, or better circumstances, such as coping mechanisms which vary far and wide from creative endeavors to “drowning one’s sorrows” to therapy; this includes art therapy and music therapy (Anxiety.org; Fancourt 34; Horwitz 184-185; Kahn 8).

According to Dr. Allison, art therapists use art processes to counter their clients’ predicaments, and during therapy sessions, appropriate music is used to help create feelings of relaxation. Herophilus, an Alexandrian physician, found a relationship between the pulse and different music and poetic rhythms, inferring that the heart could align with the rhythm to become more relaxed (Allison; Fancourt 8). Research by Boethius, an early sixth century philosopher, “[...] discussed new-Platonic theories that harmonic vibrations were a microcosmic reflection of the vibrations of the Universe; [...] and] explored the ethos doctrine that suggested that the different modes in music had specific properties that could influence...[which] could lead to changes in health” (Fancourt 9). Both listening to and making music affects blood pressure and heart rate variability and acts as effective medication in reducing anxiety (Fancourt 34, 318).

Research and studies show that multiple range of art forms, including music, have affected psychological stress and anxiety, as well as acted as powerful regulators of emotions

(Fancourt 35, 36). Dating back to the 1940s, art therapy has been a solution for anxiety and panic disorders (Anxiety.org). “Art chronicles and conveys a wide range of emotions, from profound joy to the deepest sorrow, from triumph to trauma. In this sense, art has served as a way of understanding, making sense, and clarifying inner experiences without words” (Malchiodi 2). Due to its expressive nature, art therapy is defined by its performative participation, exploration of one’s inner experience, and emotional release (Malchiodi 3-4, 14). “It helps express fear, anxiety, and other stressful emotions...” (Malchiodi 16). According to Franco, “[...]Individuals who play videogames can interact with virtual worlds, resulting in emotional and intellectual connections that have therapeutic implications in the hands of a skilled and informed therapist” and that research suggests that videogames are a viable option for psychotherapy (1).

Though with the future of apps, augmented and virtual reality, videogaming and other digital manifestations continually coming out, progressing, and exponentially changing the world, Garner implies that artists, educators and art-therapists will lean in this direction (10). The medium allows them to gain meaningful insight about their clients’ beliefs, tastes, and values (Franco 2). “Today, it is apparent that people who grow up playing video and computer games have few problems making the transition between dimensional and computer art activities. [...] Crayons are no longer the most accessible gateway to visual expression for our children. Young people learn at an early age to manipulate images on a screen with a joy-stick or mouse while playing video and computer games. Their participation in these games becomes a communication: They choose characters, weapons, and strategies to fit certain personalities which express their fears and fantasy reactions to their environment” (McLeod 201, 202).

A gap exists between digital media and the

art therapy field, and few therapists use this medium despite societies reception to today’s technology (Allison). While others argue about the applications of digital media in therapy, there is also a continual debate on whether videogames are considered art. New emerging research, however, shows that videogaming can be considered a performative art piece conducted within a virtual space through immersive and virtual environment technologies; and evidence now connects gaming with both art and therapy (Garner 192-193). According to McLeod, the unconventionality of using the computer [and gaming console] in therapy helps break barriers in working with adolescents and other reluctant anti-social clients, and virtual reality allows for therapeutic interactivity within an artificial environment that stimulates dimensional space (201, 204). Computer-assisted therapy and videogames provide a window of opportunities for enhancing a client’s creative experiences; sessions can be done without the need for an array of art materials and cleanup afterwards in the comfort of the client’s own



Lost Tracks by students from The Animation Workshop, official artwork

home or safely in the office (McLeod 204).

Gaming is all around us. A game is a form of play for diversion or amusement that has rules, has a win and/or lose condition(s), requires at least one player, and has an end goal (Merriam-Webster; B. L. Mitchell 1; New Oxford American Dictionary; Rogers 9). From board games to cards, and sports to videogames, it has become a form of human social interaction, pleasure, personal solitude, and distraction. Even the early Egyptians and Sumerians enjoyed games, indicating gaming has been around as long as recorded history (B. L. Mitchell 10). Video games date back to the 1940s and 1950s when a groups of college students and employees of military facilities decided to use code to develop interactive games on very large computers (Rogers 10). In the 1970s rendered by vector graphics or raster graphics, arcade games began to make an appearance leading the way for the future of digital games, took the world by storm, and have become mainstream (B. L. Mitchell 20; Rogers 10-11; Schilling).

From arcade to console to handheld, gaming has evolved over time and game genres became more varied. Even the type of videogames separated into two categories: hardcore and casual. Coined in 1998, Scott Kim, a puzzle designer, stated “The point is that people play different types of games for different reasons. Expert gamers [synonym for players] play for longer term rewards of competition and rankings, whereas casual gamers play for the shorter-term rewards of beauty and distraction” (Juul 27). This rise in demographic stems from the widespread of personal computers (PCs), the first videogame players who played as children are now adults with little time on their hands, and the economics of videogame development (147-8).

Video games compete most directly with the music and movie industries for the consumer’s time and money, but the business models are different, and serious games are starting to distinguish themselves in the market (Egenfeldt-Nielsen et al. 16) “According to Hudson Square Research, game-sale revenue surpassed that of films in the United States in 2005 and became a global phenomenon in 2008, exceeding film sales.” Games also accompany movies and vice versa, i.e. Doom, the Resident Evil franchise. Videogame companies compete with one another with new game releases, franchises, and genres. “In the United States, the game business is concentrated in California, with strong communities in Washington and Texas” though other companies occupy other areas across the states (Bates 257). Due to the cost of the market, indie game developers struggle to enter the competition (Egenfeldt-Nielsen et al. 20); niche genres such

as serious games are also limited to word of mouth and an online presence.

Serious games, designed for reasons other than entertainment, include advergames, art games, social message games, training, productivity games, etc. (Rogers 499).

Art games, or arthouse games, are forms of stylized or abstracted entertainment that modeled ideas and concepts, or metaphors, and emphasized visuals and storytelling over gameplay (Rogers 499, Tavinor 51). According to Egenfeldt-Nielsen et al., games affect our moods and behavior, and act as a form of communication media—they can communicate ideas and values and make us feel a range of emotions (35). Bryan Raudenbush, an associate professor of Psychology at Wheeling Jesuit University, suggests games

produce a dramatic level of distraction and likens games to that of meditating; “one study by psychologists at the University of Rochester found that players actually derive a sense of achievement, freedom, and social connectedness from games” (Dusen). Play acts as performance, allowing the player to interact with a game to facilitate immersion unknown in other media. (Egenfeldt-Nielsen et al. 45, Mitchell & Clark 17).



Overwatch Guerrilla Marketing Strategy

Unfortunately, despite the creative immersive capabilities of videogames, the medium has been widely debated as a form of popular art—separate from game art which includes graphics and visual art. According to Henry Jenkins, a professor of comparative media studies, “Games represent a new lively art, one as appropriate for the digital age as those earlier media were for the machine age. They open up new aesthetic experiences and transform the computer screen into a realm of experimentation and innovation that is broadly accessible. And games have been embraced by a public that has otherwise been unimpressed by much of what passes for digital arts” (Bittanti 7, Egenfeldt-Nielsen et al. 43).

He continues that videogames are an art form in its infancy, but some games with advanced aesthetics suggest the form can

provoke strong emotions (Egenfeldt-Nielsen et al. 44). Videogames combine the aesthetic grace of the music, painting and sculpture with the depth and gravity of film, literature and stagecraft, and evoke emotions in the player similar to how art evokes emotions in the viewers (Mitchell and Clark 353; Schilling; Steinberg). Recently, game makers have begun to think of games with aesthetic, theoretical, and conceptual intentions traditionally associated with art making; many of thatgamecomapny’s games use these ideas in mind along with cinematic experience (Tavinor 49). “We already have access to personal computers that allow fantasy, projection, symbol, metaphor, and unconscious content to merge. [...] Once we enter the realm where the imagery we see or create on a computer screen is fully integrated with our minds and bodies, we are well beyond anyone’s concerns about the hand’s role in creativity. Precisely because art therapists deal in these realms of fantasy, projection, symbol, metaphor, and unconscious content (irrespective of medium and of touch), [they] are well positioned to contribute something of value to societal debates about the relationship between machines and creativity” (Austin 85).

With this also in mind, many games have incorporated various types of gameplay and genres that help people who struggle with mental disorders, mental illnesses, depression and anxiety (Ashley). Puzzles for instance, forces the player to focus on one task, greatly reducing outside distraction and ultimately anxiety and stress (Ashley). Dr. Carmen Russoniello, LRT, LPC, BCB, is the current President of the Association for Applied Psychophysiology and Biofeedback with psychophysiological research focused on videogames, mood and stress. He states that “Playing certain video games offers just enough mental challenge to keep [...] alert and stressed individuals...] occupied while putting them into a state of relative mindlessness” (Vedantam). While most games aren’t intentionally made to treat or help these conditions, there are many games that are intentionally meant to

help reduce stress and anxiety. Owen Harris, a game developer in Ireland, developed a game about breathing called Deep that incorporated the use of Oculus Rift, a virtual reality headset, that leads the player into breathing exercises as they experience an underwater world that responded to their breaths to produce feelings of calm and relaxation (Ashley).

Moser's research demonstrates the possibilities of how minimalistic game design that specifically targets distraction helps people stay focused and feel less anxious (ScienceDaily). For those with social anxiety, online games allow them to build friendships and trust, and to be more expressive, and social by providing a safe environment (Ashley; Mehlomakulu). While others view videogames as a negative distraction or a "mindless" activity, games actually require a number of important skills such as hand-eye coordination, planning, strategy, problem-solving, evaluating, spatial reasoning and decision making (Mehlomakulu). Through these activities, gamers enter a "mindless" state, or according to Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, they reached a state of flow due to how the manageable action or challenge of the activity utilized their skills (xx). "Optimal experiences are made possible by an unusually intense concentration of attention on a limited stimulus field [...] in such a state the rest of the world is cut off, shut off, forgotten. [...] The optimal functioning of the flow experience would occur when the stimulus field provides stimulation that is objectively measurable or attractive, while anxiety-producing experiences would be produced by stimuli that are objectively aversive or unpleasant" (7).

Csikszentmihalyi continues that the flow experience occurs when a person is actively engaged in some form of interaction—physical, mental, emotional or intellectual— or skills within an environment (137). This is accomplished through creativity, play, games or other common forms of play activity or structured experience—which he considers kinds of flow (137). With this in mind, videogames have the potential

to help relieve stress and anxiety by providing manageable tasks. Today, this has recently been accomplished through the new wave of casual games that target a larger demographic through their feasible unique gameplay, emotional storytelling and beautiful visuals. According to Russoniello, "Certain games allow people to fall into a rhythm [or flow] where they can play without either effort or boredom" (Vedantam). Game developers, especially mobile developers, have paid close attention to the untapped market of casual gamers by providing games that help



Small Sample of Universal Demographic

them unintentionally reach this state of flow, thus expanding the functioning and genre of videogames as a possible therapeutic medium.

Target Market

Based on observations and research, the target audience for arthouse videogames includes all genders (male, female and other) from the ages of 18–35, who are interested in casual gaming. Juul notes from a 1974 article, that videogames have a "very nearly universal" appeal; "Never before has an amusement game been so widely

accepted by all ages. Everyone from teenagers to senior citizens [can] enjoy the challenge that [videogames have to] offer" (26). Though, based on today's demographics/societal conventions, videogames appear to be mostly targeted towards boys. According to the ESA's "Essential Facts" in 2017, women age 18 and older (31%) represent a greater portion of the game-playing population than boys under 18 (18%), with the average gamer being 35 years old (4, 7).

With the rise of casual gaming, a new type of player has emerged: casual players, who have played a few videogames, prefer shorter play sessions, dislikes difficult games, have a preference for positive and pleasant fictions (Juul 8, 29; Rogers 35). Casual players play games for leisure, a fun diversion, and to relax, without devoting a large amount of time to playing (Juul 62, B. L. Mitchell 35). These gamers utilize gaming as coping mechanisms for stress, anxiety and depression, and play occasionally for relief. According to Scott Rogers, "Gamers want good games.... Time Schafer, the designer of Psychonauts and Brütal Legend, says that all good games provide wish fulfillment" (35).

Casual gamers base their gaming on five casual design principles:

1. "First [they] see or hear about a game's fiction on the web, via the game's packaging, or from another source [such as screenshots or a logo];
2. Then [they] learn to play the game, depending on its usability [ease of use];
3. Next [they] try to match the game with the time [they] have available, depending on its required time investment and its interruptibility [allows gamers to play in brief bursts];
4. Then [they] continue to play the game if it has the right level of difficulty;
5. And finally, [they] continue playing if [they] like the content, the graphics, and the general juiciness (positive feedback) of the game" (Juul 30, 50).

Quality of graphics, price, interesting story/

premise, online gameplay capacity, etc, also factors into the audience's decision to purchase videogames (ESA "Essential Facts" 14).

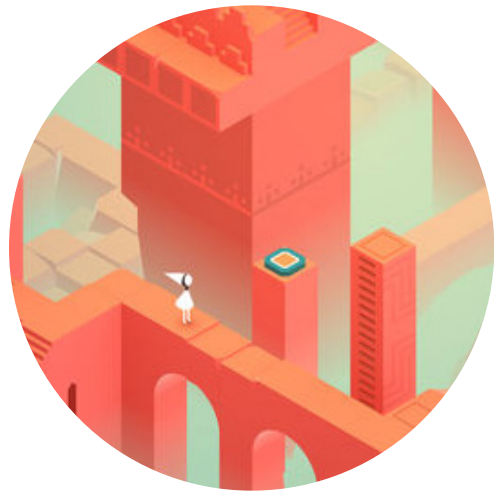
The target market also included non-gamers or therapy clients who find natural dimensional media limiting (McLeod 201), and professional art therapists looking for therapeutic digital or electronic mediums. Casual gamers buy games based on entertainment and visuals; however,

**ANXIETY ALSO
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AND PERSPECTIVES, OR BETTER
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COPING MECHANISMS.**

survey results suggest if games are used as therapeutic coping mechanisms, gamers and non-gamers will buy an arthouse game based on its therapeutic applications and minimalistic game design. According to Lynn Kapitan, "The artistic and technological tools of the age are creating a growing demand for art therapists who can interact not only with new media but also with the values and pathologies of an emerging techno-culture (50). She continues that the impact of computer gaming [and/or gaming] on social behavior should be of particular interest to art therapists (51). McLeod also adds that today's computer-minded demographic/population enjoy exploring the creative possibilities of their electronic and digital devices, and they can be a great addition to the therapeutic environment (204).

With considerations to the target market, the tone of voice for a casual art game is

usually calming, relaxing, atmospheric, and visually immersive. “[T]he game must be easily accessible and can’t have any of the common barriers to purchase, such as graphic violence, sex or foul language” (Bates 242). Games similar to *Journey* by thatgamecompany and *Abzû* by Giant Squid, portray elements of emotional, metaphorical storytelling and visuals to communicate and produce emotional and relaxing responses out of gamers.



Monument Valley, one of the most relaxing ios game apps

Marketing and Promotion

Branding

Today, in order to convey or simplify metaphorical concepts in the narrative, many indie/serious games use minimalistic game design branding. Branding helps identify a product or service; it defines who and what a brand is and builds customer awareness. “Brands were developed to create differences for products that were in danger of becoming as hard to tell apart as chunks of gravel. They are also a proven way for companies to capture and exploit their innovations” (Roberts 30). According to Alina Wheeler, brands have three primary functions: navigation, reassurance and engagement (2). Connecting emotionally with customers helps brands become irreplaceable and is the

foundation of a company’s marketing moves (Roberts 34, Wheeler 2). With the versatility and possibility of art and videogames, the medium can easily connect to the audience’s emotions, beginning with brand identity before players even play the game.

Brand identity appeals to the senses through tangibles to fuel recognition, make big ideas and meaning accessible, and boosts differentiation (Wheeler 4). According to Hans-U Allemann, “[t]he best identity designers understand how to communicate effectively through the use of signs and symbols, a keen sense of form and letterforms, and the history of design” (148). Videogame branding encompasses the overall design of the game and the design elements that come with it. The branding must reflect the experience, genre and attitudes in all aspects of the game itself, while also appealing and reflecting the demographic of the consumer. “A brand or a franchise also represents safety to a game company executive. It means risk reduction (Bates 135).”

Based on observations and research, videogame franchises are built off of the game’s characters. According to Wheeler, “A character trademark embodies brand attributes or values. Characters quickly become the stars of ad campaigns [including game franchises], and the best ones become cultural icons.”

Games such as *Pokémon*, *Mario*, *Sonic*, *Zelda* and *Kirby* have memorable characters that have made an impact on the brand and on the gamers that associate with the game. Players play specific games to play a specific character (Rogers 99). Through these avatars player’s place themselves in the game and accomplish impossible feats in a fantasy world, building upon the games’ immersive qualities. The use of the avatar also helps with social interaction, and through the avatar, players can freely express themselves. Dr. Allison emphasizes that designing an avatar will hopefully help patients take more responsibility for themselves and help how they present themselves in the world.



“It’s me, Mario!”

Customization helps players build a deeper connection with the game, but some players prefer to play licensed characters. However, it is through an avatar or character that players recall their experience in the game, and how a game franchise thrives with new games and concepts.

Collateral

Along with brand identity, a collateral system helps build brand recognition. “By making information accessible [through collateral], a company [communicates the right information and] demonstrates its understanding of customer’s needs and preferences” (Wheeler 172). While games do not particularly invest in a collateral system outside the game company, developing teams produce important documents to help with the production of the game. All games need a game design document (GDD). The GDD defines everything within the game; it is the blueprint of the game (B. L. Mitchell 56, Rogers 67). [It...] consists of text, illustrations, mockups, concept drawings and other details, such as lists of objects and sounds in games (Egenfeldt-Nielsen et al. 24). With the completion of the GDD, the technical design document (TDD) and art bible are written to further define the production of the game (Rogers 85).

These documents act as branding guidelines for the game for the developing team.

Collateral also extends into T-shirts, caps, and tchotchke, or trinkets, which are sold at conventions for game promotion, and in stores that reflect the brand or incorporate specific game elements as brand recognition (Bates 243). Similarly, music albums evoke the brand of the game and are usually bought before some players play the game or after playing the game based on the games media presence—for instance in trailers and TV spots—and popularity.

Along with these items, trailers are the single most important pieces of collateral to get consumers excited to play a game (DellaFave). They should be short, capture the viewer’s attention, have great music and sound effects, beautiful visuals and game footage, reviews and quotes from professionals, and a call to action (Lovato). Trailers portray the overall gameplay of the game while briefly introducing its characters and implying its narrative without sharing too much. Much of a game’s advertising and success rides on the advertising of the trailer, though other methods of advertising also help promote videogames.

Advertising

The videogame industry essentially makes money by selling directly to consumers through retail outlets, downloads, and subscriptions, mobile applications, social networking games, or by advertising (Egenfeldt-Nielsen et al. 17; ESA “Industry Facts;” Hietalahti). While TV and print advertisements remain as popular approaches, new forms of advertising have taken advantage over other media, such as viral marketing, reviews and endorsements, beta testing, conferences, and an online web presence (Michell 244-248). “The most lucrative market for casual games right now is the downloadable market,” which takes up 74% of the sales market (Bates 73; ESA 14). Today’s trends suggest most consumers use portals, such as Steam, for downloadable content. According to B. L. Michell, portal sites

primarily offer a variety of casual games (238).

Public Relations (PR) target trade magazines, websites, newspapers, radio and television through reviews, previews, feature coverage, and magazine covers (Bates 239). They use demos, videos, concept art, interviews with the development team, and screenshots to accomplish cultivating relationships to promote the game (240). Alongside PR, the marketing group develops an image for the videogame in relation to the original high concept, incorporating the message into the various materials developed, such as magazine ads, sell sheets to web banners and TV spots (241).

Guerrilla marketing for games includes in-store promotions through interactive demos, storefront pyramids and store flyers for increased marketing coverage (243). Demos are typically for but not limited to journalists, buyers, trade show audiences, the general public and internal company groups (246). Gaming conventions and events are great places for marketing; handing out flyers, CDs and other knickknacks or having a game booth, create an opportunity to connect with other developers, and most importantly potential gamers (DellaFave). It produces a chance to humanize the brand, the game and to receive feedback (DellaFave).

Web Design and Social Media

Based on observations and survey results, consumers prefer to hear about games through their friends/peers, who recommend games to them to play, the internet and social media. An online/web presence is essential for a videogame because it allows potential buys to learn more about or buy the game online. It allows the consumer to evaluate the videogame through

screenshots, trailers, reviews and more. Web layouts vary, however utilize minimalistic design that conveys the experience of the game. Social media has become prevalent in today's modern society, providing an easy medium of advertising. As indie games serve a niche market, indie developers frequently use social media as their primary method to market their brand. According to DellaFave, Twitter affords the easiest access to potential fans, members of the press and other developers. Overall it is important to stay current on all online accounts (Facebook, Instagram, website, etc.) (DellaFave). Amanda Wheeler states that "[s]ocial media has become the fastest growing budget in the marketing arsenal...} and through the medium "consumers have become active participants in the brand-building process" (76).

**CERTAIN GAMES
ALLOW PEOPLE TO FALL
INTO A RHYTHM, OR FLOW,
WHERE THEY CAN PLAY
WITHOUT EITHER EFFORT
OR BOREDOM.**

Design Considerations

Numerous factors of design were utilized when creating the branding for a therapeutic videogame, including color, imagery, logo design, typography, and simplicity.

When designing a video game, colors vary within the spectrum from bright fun colors to muted tints and shades; however, "[c]olor is used to evoke emotion and express personality" (Wheeler 154). Games usually base their colors on the setting or genre of the game with the branding built around the setting. According to Bride M. Whelan, "[i]n any stressful environment, combining grayed or lightened tints of blue will produce a calming and restful effect" (94) and "...the lightest tints of the blue-green family will increase the feeling and message of tranquility" (82).

Based on observations, imagery varies between game visuals such as trailers and screenshots, players playing the game or existing in the game world, or real-world applications that relate to the subject matter of the games. The setting of the game takes color theory

and the game's themes into consideration to produce appropriate visuals. This helps produce a fantasy for the player to experience.

Branding identity begins with a logo, the image of a business. Observations reveal that videogame logos usually are designed as stylized film titles or simple typography (logotypes), and logo symbols based on brand recognition. Ellen Lupton suggests logotypes create a distinctive language that lives in various circumstances that can be more understandable than a symbol (68). The best wordmarks or logotypes utilize a legible word or words with idiosyncratic font characteristics and may incorporate abstract or pictorial elements (Wheeler 56).

Typography outside of the logo needs to be simple and legible. Wheeler emphasizes typography as the core building block for an effective identity or branding program (158). "Fonts can be used to convey feeling when you only have words to play with..." and no more than two fonts should be used within a game interface and documentation (Rogers 67).

Similar principles of design applied to typography also apply to game design. According to Steve Meretzky, a game designer and current Creative Content Director at worldwinner.com, "Clean, simple, intuitive interface design is important in any game, but is particularly crucial in casual games where the players want to be up and playing very quickly, where players flee at the tiniest frustration, and where players even more loath than hardcore gamers to read rules" (Bates 73). Scott Rogers also stresses that the HUD (heads-up display), the screen overlay that communicates information to the player (181) appear clean and simple. This can also be said about the brands overall design.

Simple design even applies to the Game Design Document. "[T]here is no official format for any [...] game design documents," (Rogers 68) however it is important that the document communicates to the player through text and illustrations, game developing team and publishing partners (Chandler & Chandler 17).



THESIS

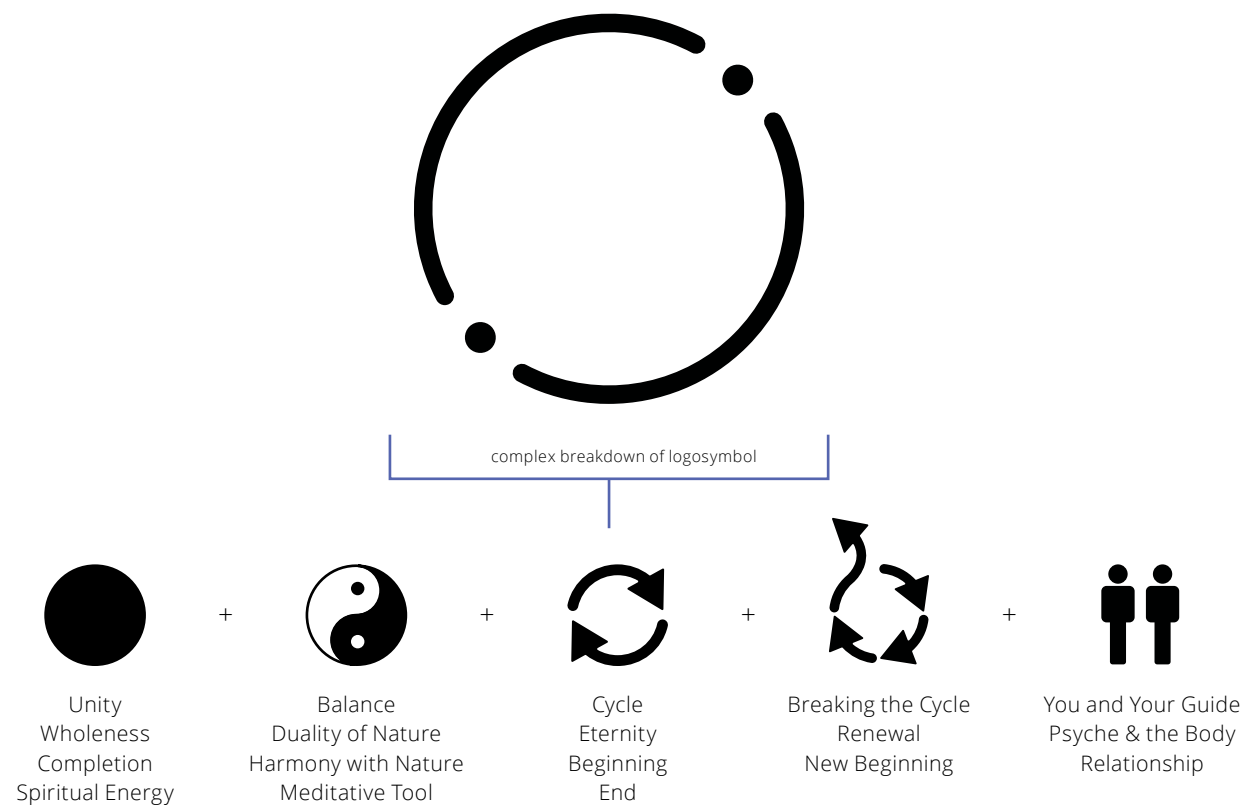
actions taken

Based on the results of the research, the data confirmed that there is a growing market for indie games that provide relaxation and a growing need for digital mediums in art therapy in response to the growing presence of digital media. This information aided in the development of design projects for the branding and promotion of a therapeutic arthouse game. Through the actions taken, the game will provide a different approach taken on the videogame medium within the art game genre based on therapy and its beneficial applications on mental health.

Naming

Naming is an essential facet of the branding process, especially for a videogame. Not only does the name define the themes within the game, it encompasses the overall identity. According to Alina Wheeler, “[t]he right name is timeless, tireless, easy to say and remember...,” meaningful, visual and distinctive (26-27). With this in mind, the name SOLAS was developed for the indie game. Derived from the Latin terms, *sōlor*, *solari* or *solaci*, meaning “to give

solace, comfort or consolation”, SOLAS is stylized with an s, referring to its Old French translation: joy, pleasure and enjoyment (Oxford Latin Dictionary, “Sōlor,” Wiktionary). The stylization also addresses the rule of odds to give the name balance and harmony. The name conveys game’s purpose and application while illustrating the concept of relaxation and enjoyment through the digital medium.



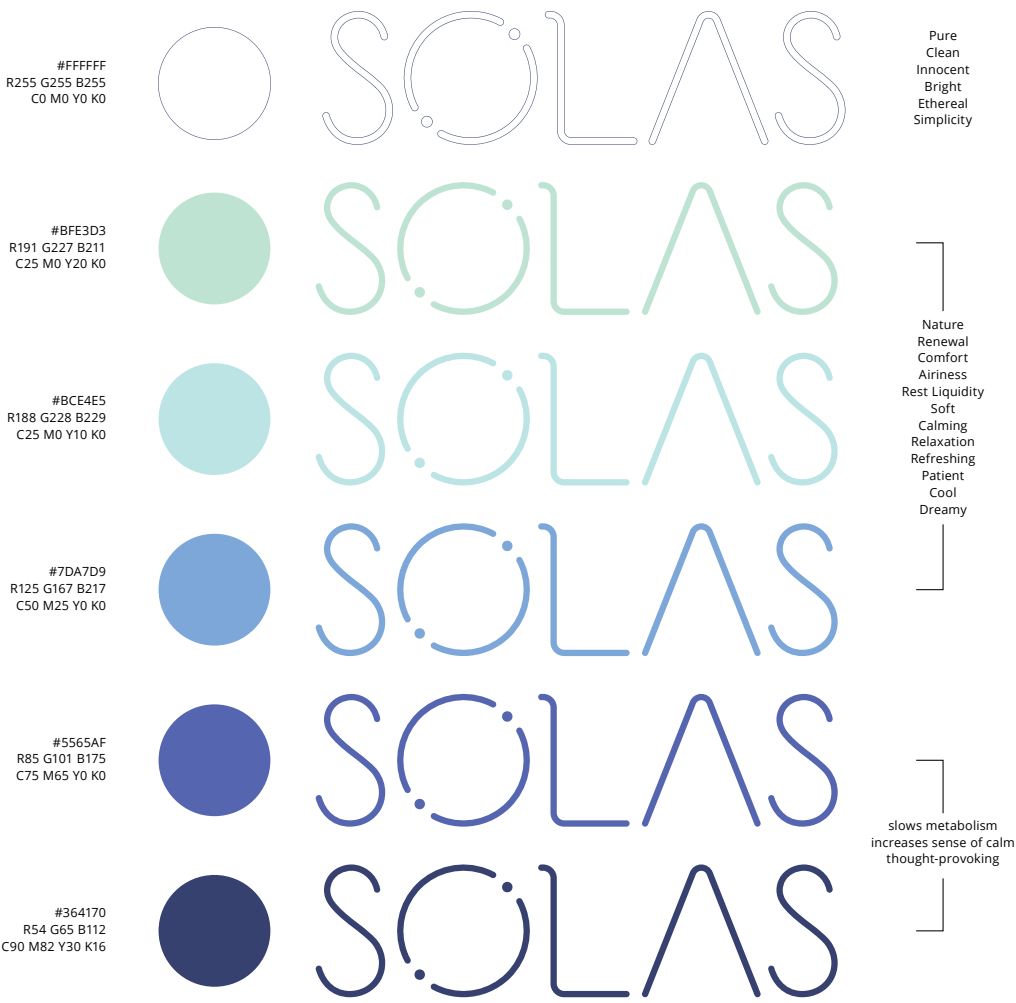
Brand Identity

An abstract circular logo symbol was created for SOLAS as part of the brand identity. According to Alina Wheeler, “[a]bstract marks are especially effective for service-based and technology companies [...]” (62). The circle was divided into two curvilinear lines connected by two free floating dots. The dots represent the player and their guide, and the lines connect the two to

form the implied shape of the circle. The shape represents unity, wholeness, cycles, movement, completion and eternity (Allan; Dimurlo; Venefica). Though the disconnection acts as a deconstruction of the yin yang symbol—it denotes balance (Venefica)—and symbolizes the broken cycle of creation, the rise and fall of civilization and renewal addressed in the game.

The logo symbol was then applied to a logotype or wordmark. Inspired by similar business models, the logo utilizes simple hand rendered geometric typography for legibility and easy recognition. The logo alludes to the organic nature of the environment with open spaces and rounded organic forms. It also implies at the game’s therapeutic applications with a thin line weight, and clean design. A flat design was chosen to emphasize the concept and reflect the minimalist art style of the game without overcrowding the brand with unnecessary detailed elements that would remove its relaxation aspect.

Another important aspect of brand identity is color scheme. Based color theory and psychology research and observations, SOLAS’ cool blue hues increase one’s sense of calm, comfort and relaxation. The colors are fresh and invigorating while representing the core values and therapeutic applications of the game. The monochromatic color scheme suggests flow, harmony and fluidity, accompanied with a soft pastel green to refer to nature, and white for its clean application and contrast against the other colors. The cool colors combined with the rounded form of the logotype accentuates the softness and calmness of the brand.



FUTURA PT Heading

LIGHT
Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee Ff Gg Hh Ii Jj Kk Ll Mm Nn Oo Pp Qq Rr Ss Tt Uu Vv Ww Xx Yy Zz

BOOK
Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee Ff Gg Hh Ii Jj Kk Ll Mm Nn Oo Pp Qq Rr Ss Tt Uu Vv Ww Xx Yy Zz

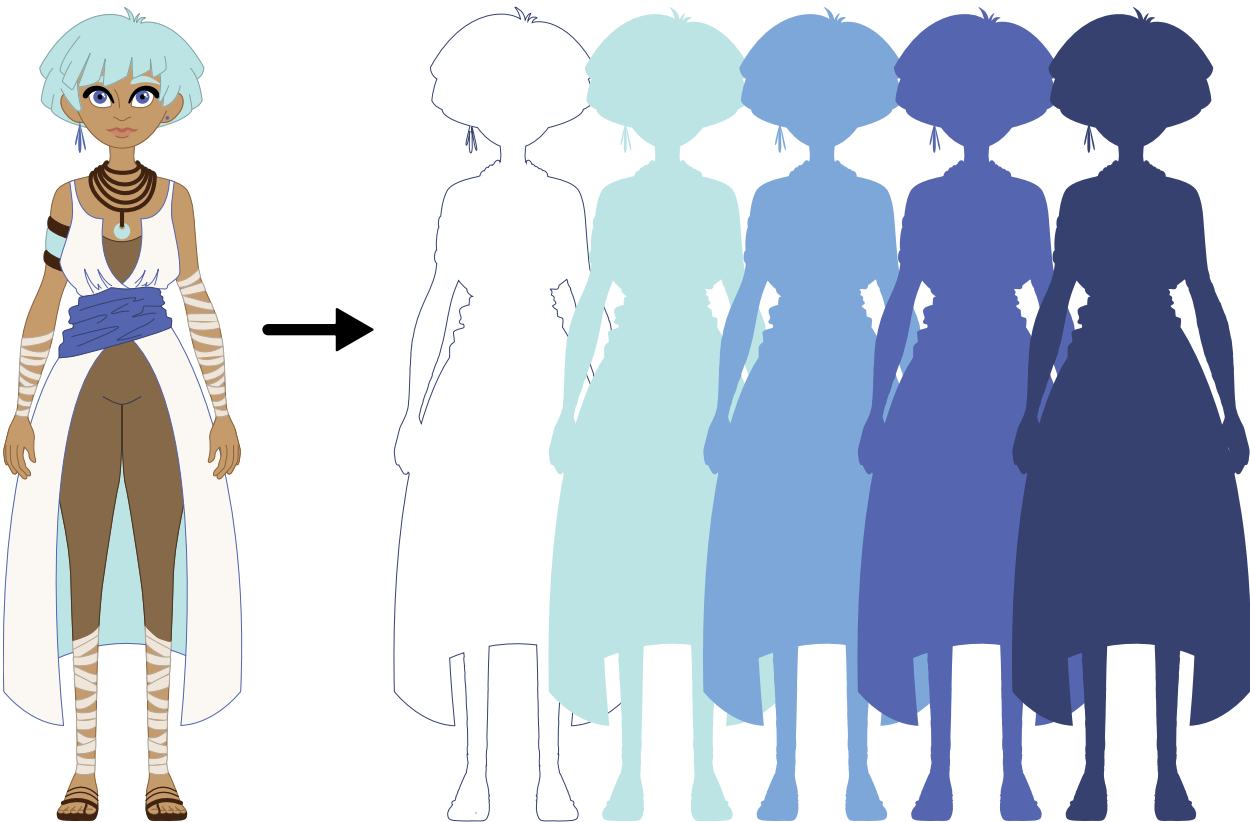
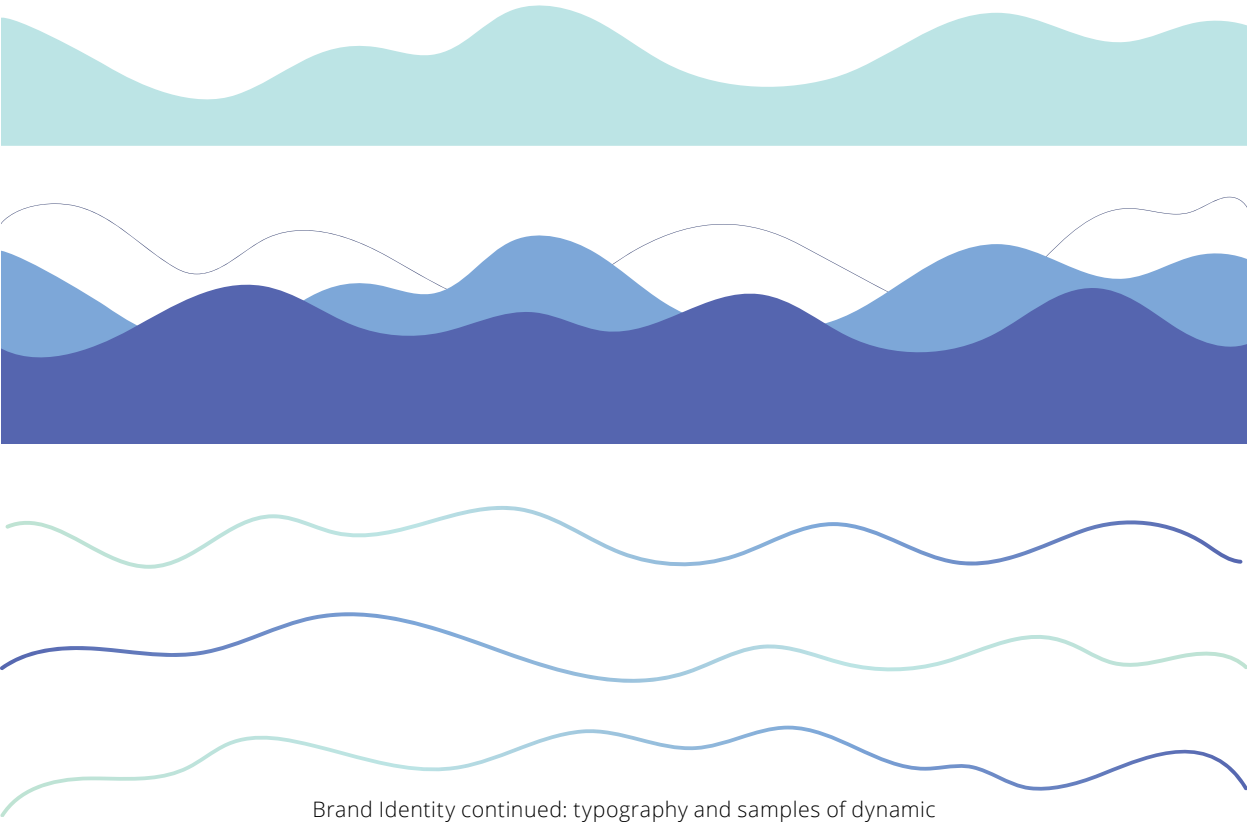
EXTRA BOLD
Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee Ff Gg Hh Ii Jj Kk Ll Mm Nn Oo Pp Qq Rr Ss Tt Uu Vv Ww Xx Yy Zz

OPEN SANS Body Text

LIGHT
Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee Ff Gg Hh Ii Jj Kk Ll Mm Nn Oo Pp Qq Rr Ss Tt Uu Vv Ww Xx Yy Zz

REGULAR
Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee Ff Gg Hh Ii Jj Kk Ll Mm Nn Oo Pp Qq Rr Ss Tt Uu Vv Ww Xx Yy Zz

BOLD
Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee Ff Gg Hh Ii Jj Kk Ll Mm Nn Oo Pp Qq Rr Ss Tt Uu Vv Ww Xx Yy Zz



Psykē, character design and silhouettes

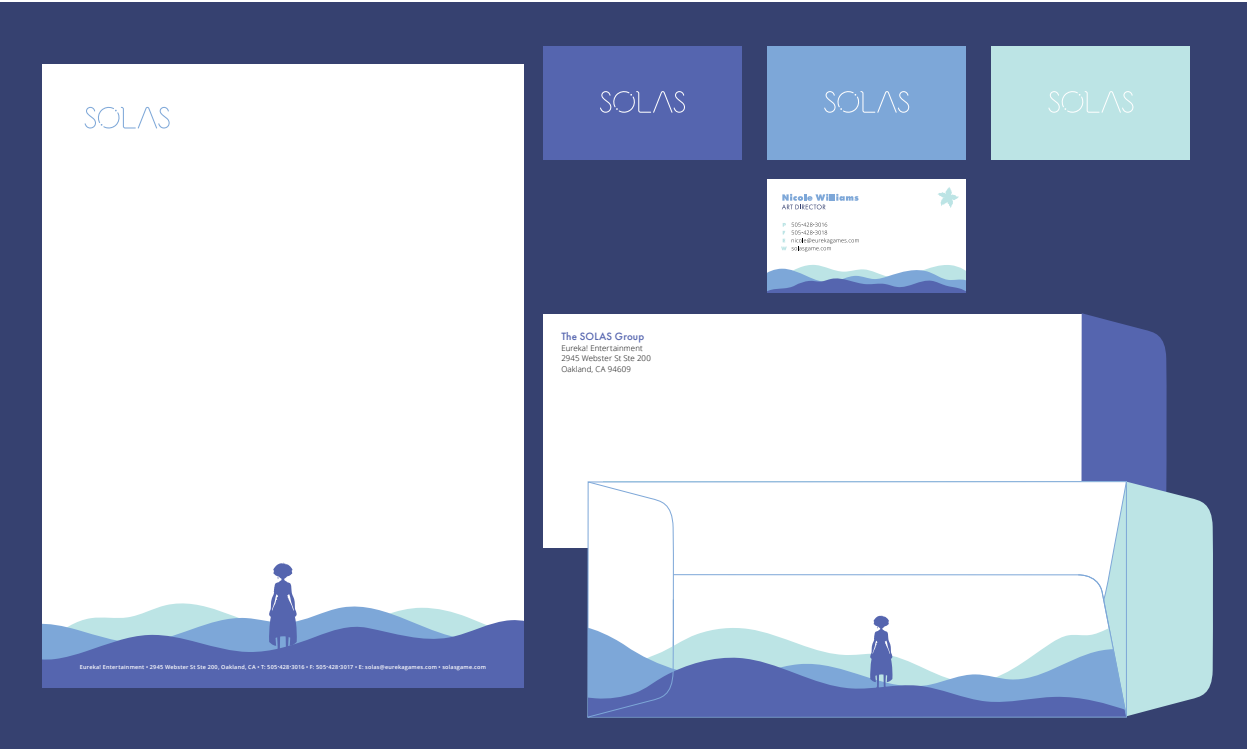
When choosing a type family for *SOLAS*, the typography had to be reminiscent of the logotype: legible, clean and simple. Rob Carter states that “san serifs are generally simpler in form than serif typefaces and scripts, [...] and achieve a clearer visual presence on the web” (139). Open Sans was chosen as the primary typeface body text based on its neutral, legible, friendly appearance. Futura PT, originally designed by Paul Renner in 1927, was also chosen as the secondary typeface to be used as display text based on its calm geometric forms that immortalize the logo, especially its “perfectly round Os” (Lupton 26-27). *SOLAS* also utilizes a dynamic mark which symbolizes the state of flow achieved when playing the game and aligning with the calming rhythmic sounds of a heartbeat. When layered, these marks create a hilly horizon with atmospheric perspective to represent the topography of the landscape as well as provide dimension within the brand.

A character, one of the premade avatars, was designed and named to become the primary image of the brand. When coming up with a character, shapes help define their personality; for instance, circles make a character feel friendly (Rogers 94). Referring back to the logo, circles and rounded shapes were used to produce a friendly, relatable character. To complement the simplicity brand, the character design was simplified to a recognizable silhouette. The character was then named Psykē, which derives from the Greek ψυχή *psukhē* and Latin *psychē* meaning “breath of life,” “the human soul, mind, spirit or personality” (Merriam-Webster; New Oxford American Dictionary; Wiktionary). A series of icons (see page 32) were developed as an extension of the brand, exploring different motifs within the game.

Collateral

Extending *SOLAS'* brand, a stationery package was created for business transactions to give credibility to the brand. The letterheads and corresponding envelopes were styled with the dynamic marks and character as distinguishing marks. Business cards included multiple color and icon options with the designated employee's contact information, position within the company, the game's web address, and company's location on the front, and the game's logo on the back.

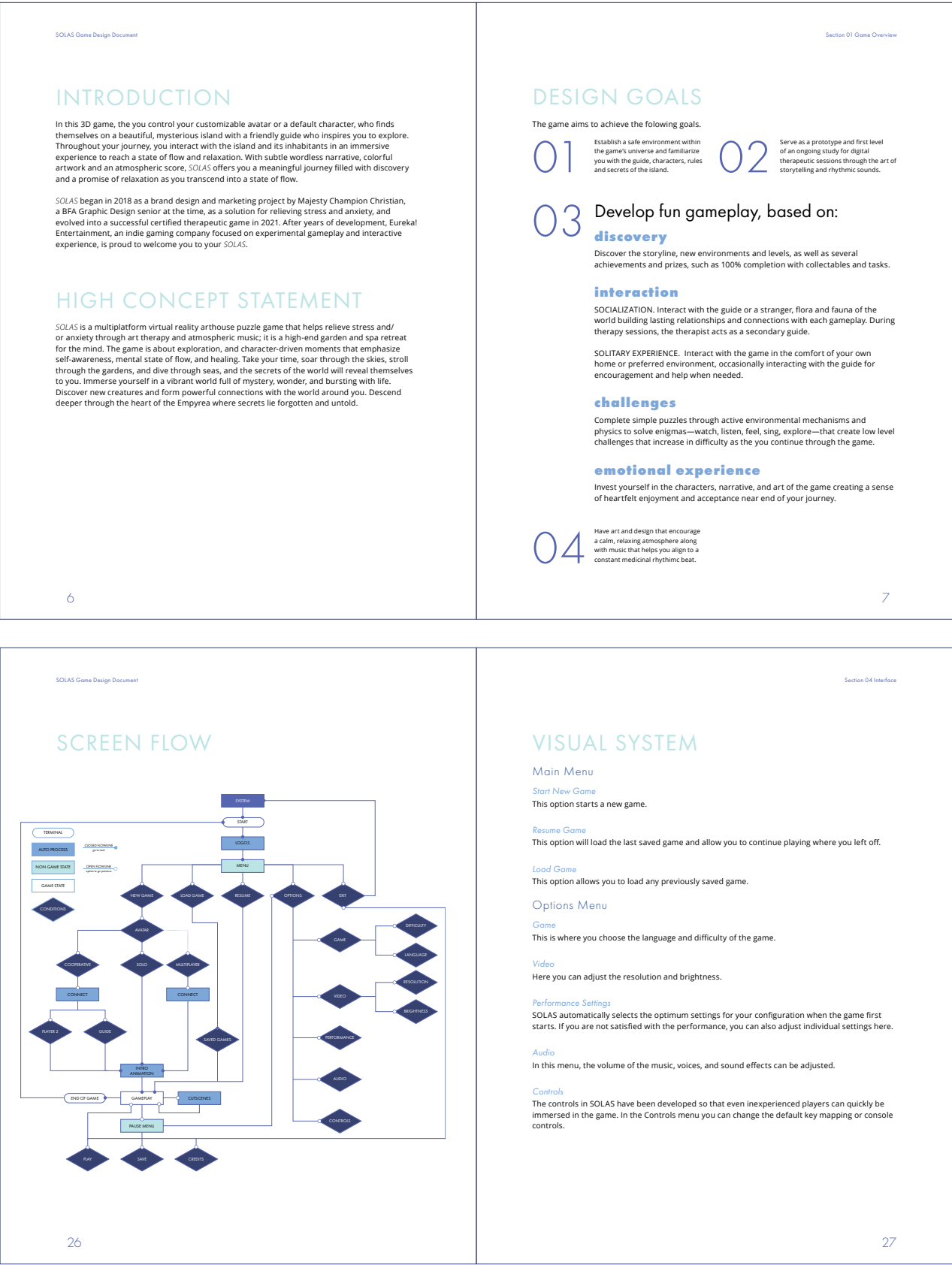
A Game Design Document (GDD) was also developed for the future production of the game and to provide readers with additional information on how the game functions, its narrative, interface, and special features.



Stationery Package: Letterhead, Business Cards and Policy Envelope



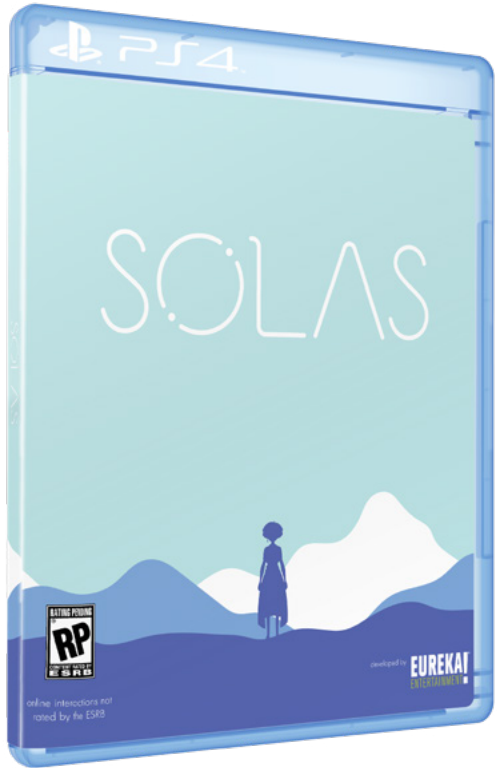
Icons, Left to right: Zen Flower, Key, Blueberry Kodiak, Pan Flute, Beast



GDD Sample Pages

Package Design

Packaging became an essential component of branding a videogame; these are brands that people trust enough to take into their homes (Wheeler 180). Despite the rise in digital downloads across online platforms, there exists a market of consumers who prefer to buy the physical disk from retail stores such as GameStop, Target and Walmart. Some consumers feel more comfortable buying the disk in case they were to ever lose the digital file; it creates a sense of security and ease. A PlayStation box cover was then designed utilizing the brand's minimalism to distinguish the game within a retail space.



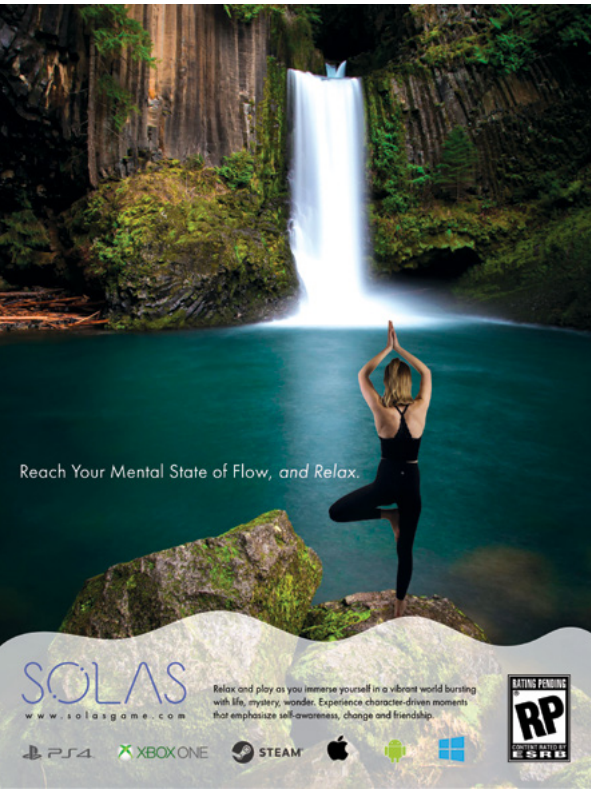
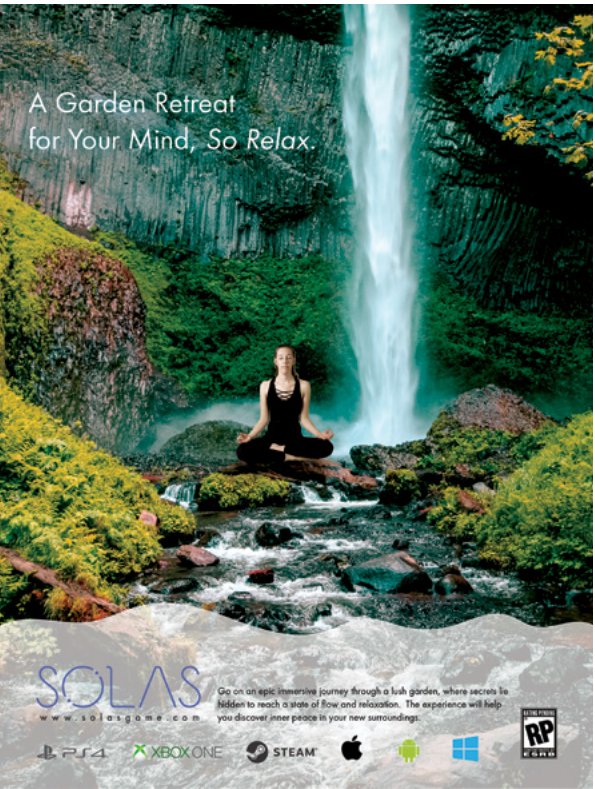
Game Box Disc Design

Advertising

Based on research survey results, SOLAS uses word-of-mouth advertising as a method to market its business. The brand accomplishes this through an extensive online presence, and interactive media that encourages consumers to discover and experience the game. Five print advertisements (ads) were created for the campaign to be published in videogame related magazines, medical journals and other related print subscriptions. These ads feature images of exotic, calm, relaxing landscapes that extend across the entire page, placing the reader within the space. Two ads contain a human figure performing recognizable yoga poses to accentuate the meditative qualities of not only the landscape, but the game as well. Headlines act as call to actions, instructing the reader to interact with the space and prompting them to “relax.”

Guerrilla marketing, influenced by street chalk art, incorporated similar imagery onto the street and buildings, playing with perspective and optical illusion to encourage consumers to immerse themselves in another world. A storyboard was drawn out for the trailer(s), depicting sneak peaks of the emotional narrative and vastness of the open world.







Gurreilla Marketing for SOLAS with a call to action, applicable for instagram posts

Online Presence

A responsive website, portal page, and social media were created for SOLAS' to complement its call-to-action, and word-of-mouth advertising. Consumers and potential gamers will visit the website to learn more about the game. In addition, therapists would also learn how to contribute to the project to improve its therapeutic applications. The website includes a landing page, about page and blog. The landing page exposes the viewers with trailers, concept art, reviews, access to social media and email subscription. The about page explains SOLAS' mission, values, and unique features of the game. The blog highlights more exclusive information about the game, its developers and its development to keep its customers in-the-know and up to date with its latest production.

In addition to the website, a Steam portal page was accounted for to promote the game's online presence and feature additional information on its gameplay. Steam is a popular entertainment platform and gaming community that allows its audience to buy and download PC, Mac and Linux games. It provides easy access to the game, its downloadable content, and exclusive digital files when available. Social media plays a huge part in promoting the game; platforms such as Twitter and Instagram connect the audience to the game and its production, developing more collaboration between the consumer and the developers. As an interactive element, SOLAS uses social media to update its audience with new downloads, content and surprises in the game to promote relaxation and extended play, as well as upcoming events.

SOLAS : Storyboard

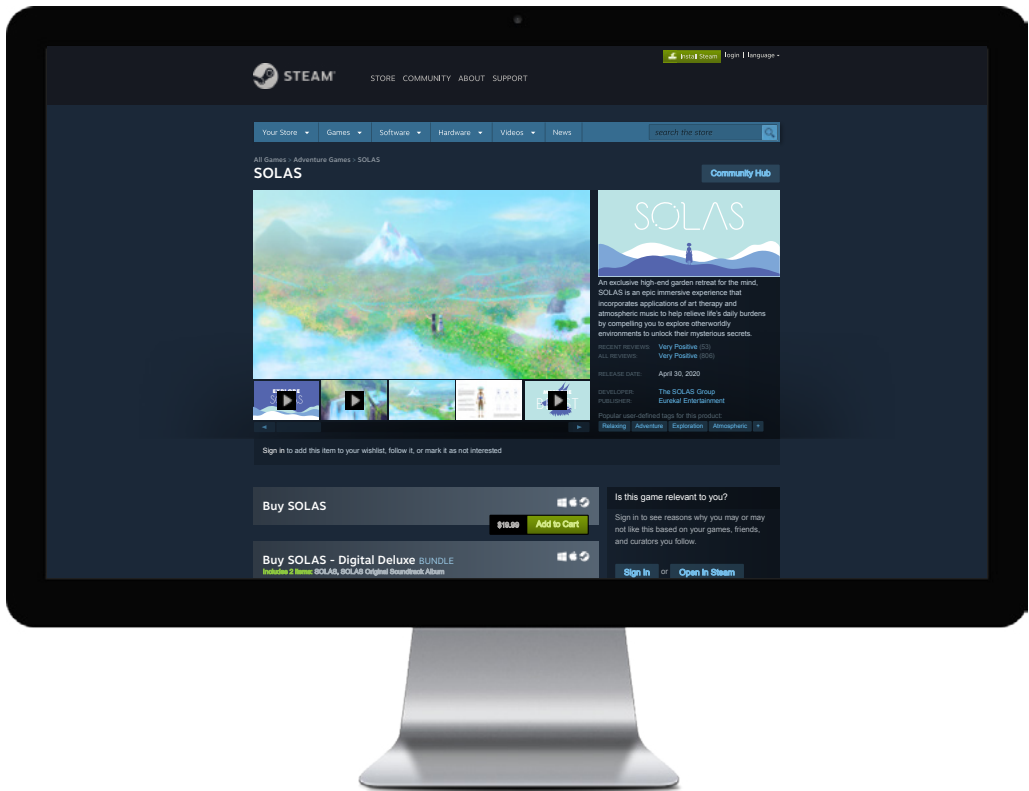


Description

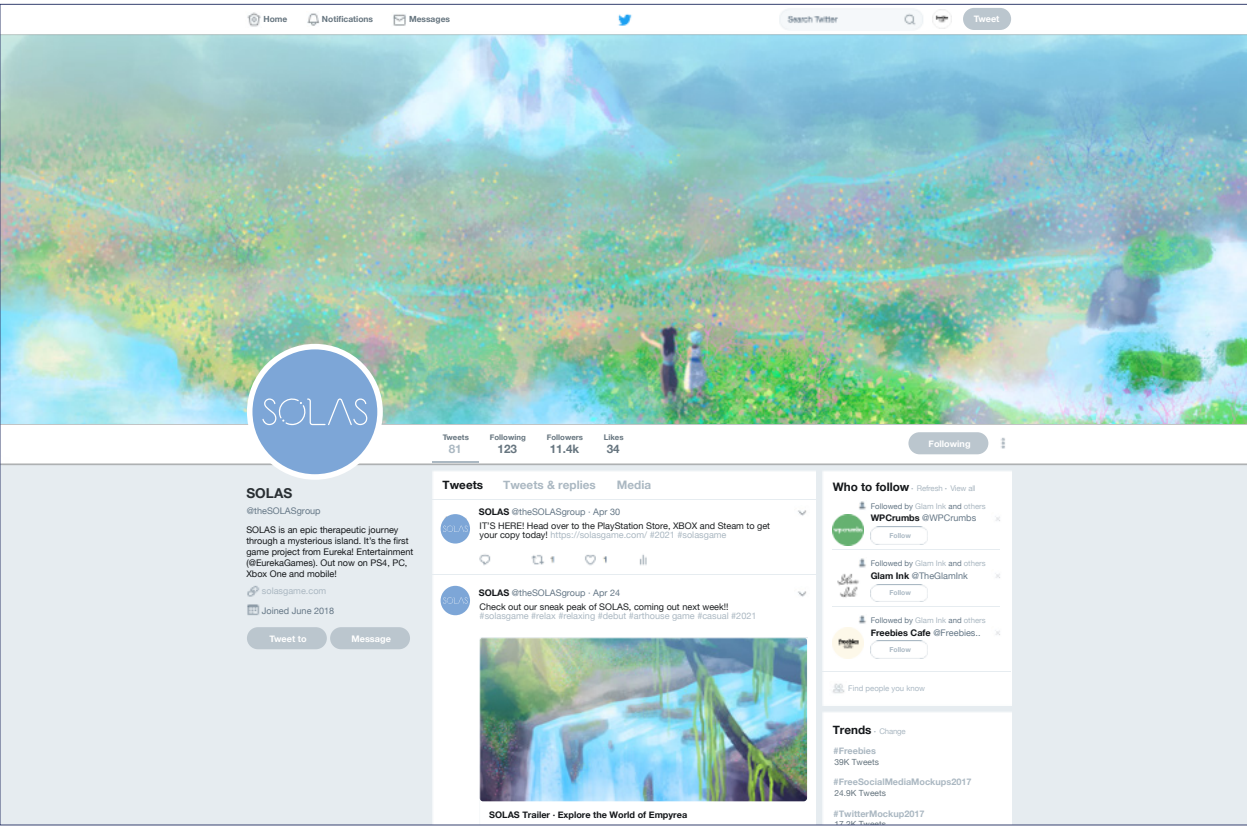
A one-minute trailer that depicts the world of SOLAS, its unique features, and prompts the viewer to experience the game in the near future.



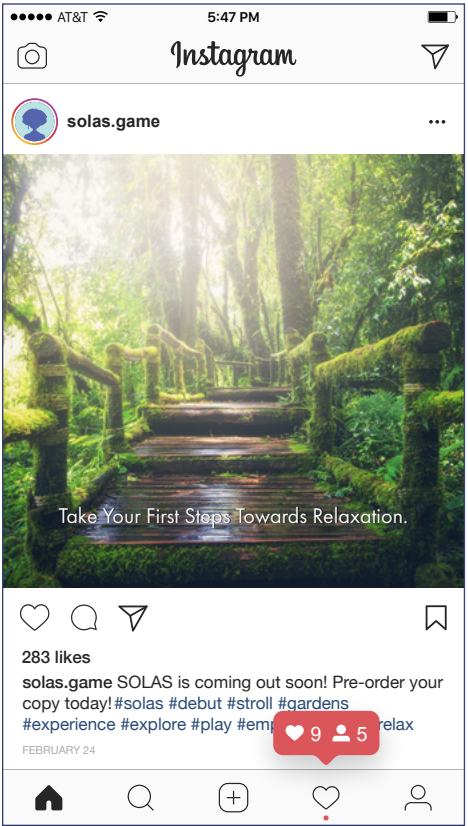
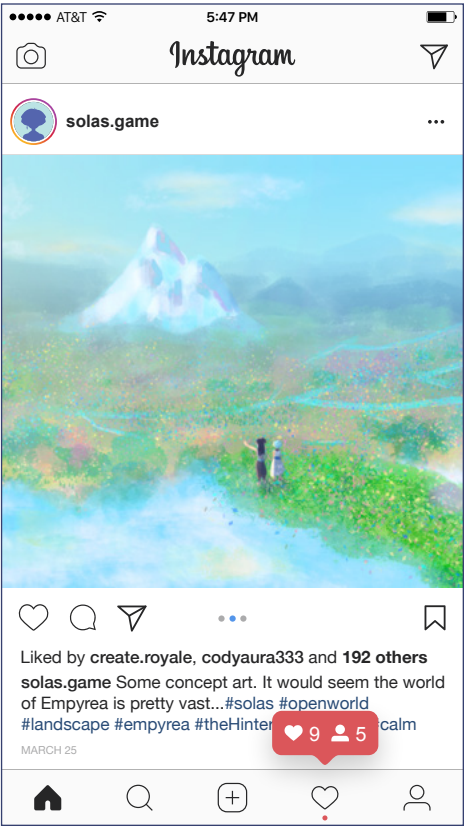
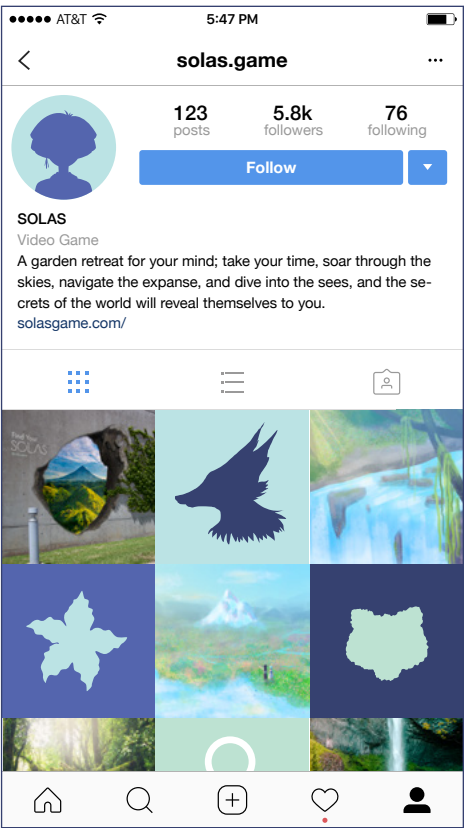
Responsive Website Design



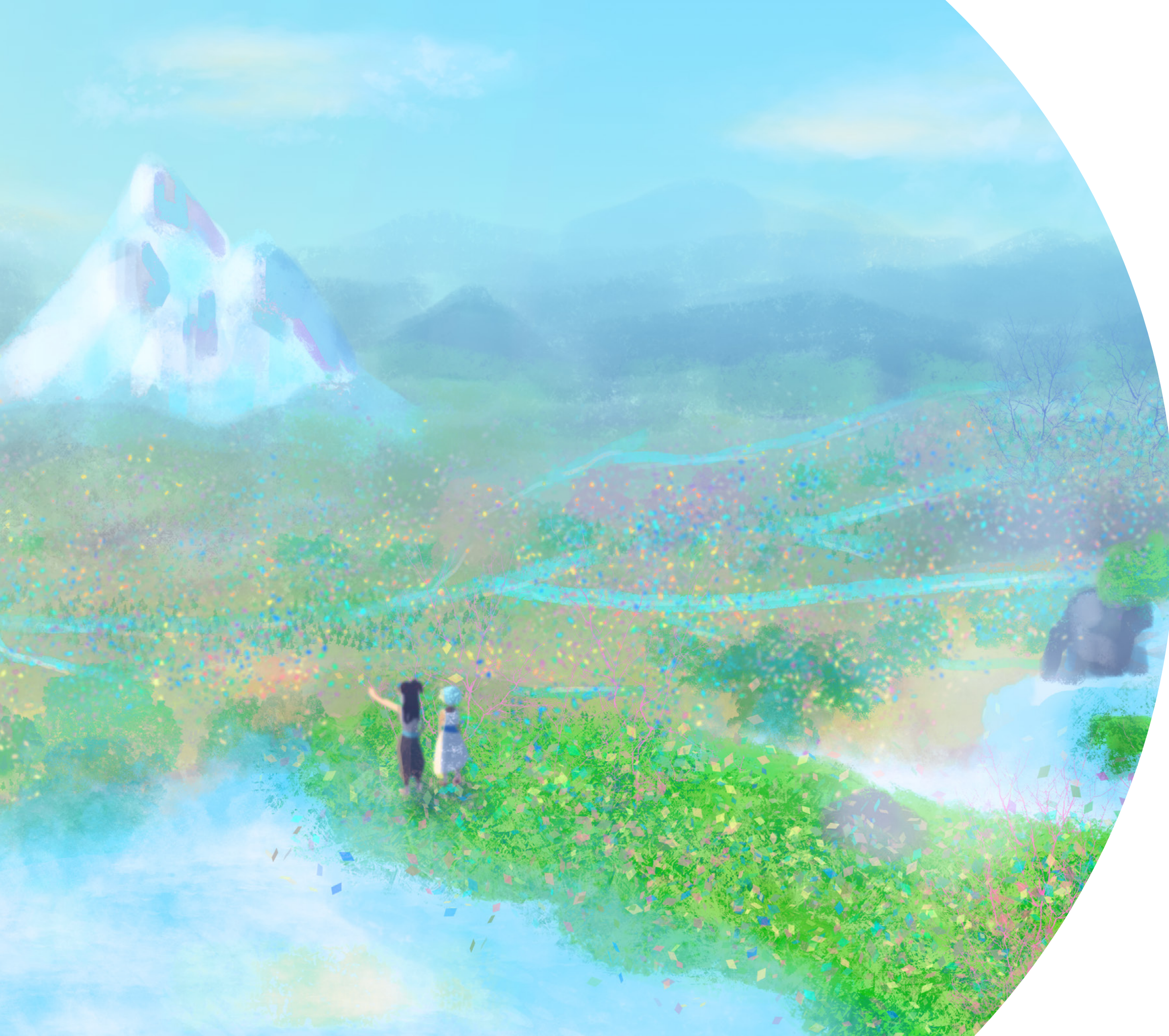
Steam Portal Page



Twitter Page



Instagram Profile and Posts



Promotional Products

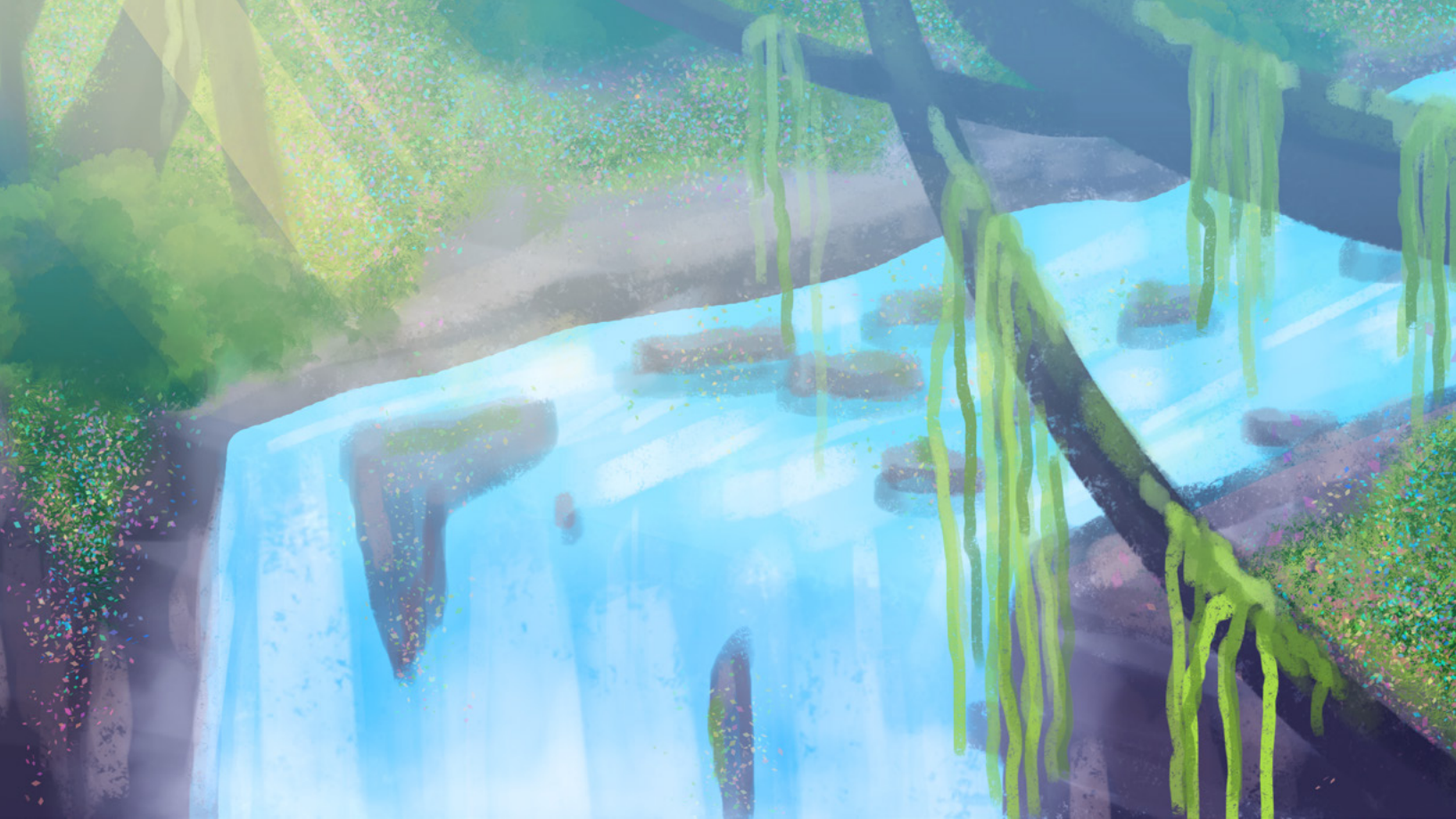
Creating promotional products would be available for sale or as free giveaways during conventions and events as a way for customers to keep a part of *SOLAS* with them outside of the game. This includes t-shirts, concept art and music. Each promotional product will reflect the brand identity of *SOLAS* and will be a way for the business to advertise the game through relatable approaches. Concept art was developed, and the imagery was used throughout the brand when necessary to determine the game’s hypothetical look and feel. Designs ranged from character designs to fauna and possible environments within the game.

In collaboration with Cody Ruman, a novice video game music composer and *SOLAS*’ official music composer, a couple of music samples were also developed to reflect the brand and overall experience of *SOLAS*. Wheeler explains that computer game sound effects heighten the adventure, trigger an emotional response, and intensify the experience of a brand (161). The tracks use soothing atmospheric sounds and rhythms to accomplish this. Along with the branded music, digital music album covers were designed to be displayed on radio stations such as Pandora or Spotify, in downloadable music stores such as iTunes, and in video services such as YouTube to relate the tracks to the game.

Signage

Posters were developed to display in retail stores and conventions for extended promotion and in the event that the game is developed, additional posters utilizing the game’s art would serve as collector’s items.

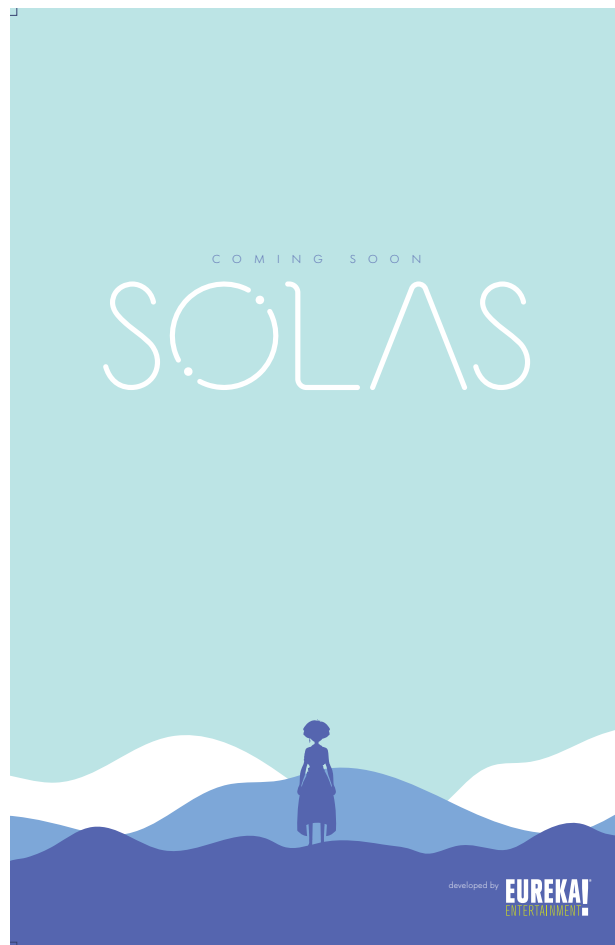
Overlooking Empyrea from the top of Arulea Falls



T-shirt



Music Album Covers



Top: Deep in the Idyllian Underbush; Bottom: Posters for Retail

CONCLUSION

While developing the marketing and branding for *SOLAS*, I learned a substantial amount of information about a niche product within a growing entertainment market, and the growing need for digital media practices in therapy. My goal evolved from wanting to brand and create a new coping mechanism to a videogame that used applied therapeutic sciences and design thinking to help relieve stress and anxiety as an art medium. Once I became aware of the debates about videogames as art, and the use digital media in art therapy, I began to notice the adaptability of videogames as a new expressive trending medium within mainstream society, now coined casual gamers. This growing community changed the function of videogames in the modern age, opening the doors to new game genres that appealed to their gaming preferences for leisure. Therefore, I discovered that incorporating the consumers, developers and specialists as active participants in the brand and development of the game could lead to a genre of games specifically for healing and rehabilitation purposes with the increasing influence of virtual reality.

Designing a professional minimalistic videogame brand, I experienced the failures and successes of creating a believable brand not quite in development. Videogame branding usually comes after the development of the game for the purposes of marketing, however I

skipped years of game production development for the sake of promoting a product some years before its time. I struggled due to the lack of significant materials, resources and knowledge, but I worked my way around this hurdle to successfully create a simple brand that communicated the potential of the game's overall purpose and function despite its overall complexity. As a niche product, producing the design for *SOLAS* required a new vocabulary and approach to build a successful marketing and advertising solution through brand extensions and collateral.

Through my research and design execution, I believe games are a form of art that need to be explored as such to expand its capabilities, especially in the field of therapy. If games can create emotional responses, produce distraction, and create relaxation through flow, imagine the possibilities if research and science were applied to make it a true therapeutic application. Videogames have the potential to be more than what they seem; they are forms of art, interaction, play, and a flexible medium that brings fantasies to life. If this is true, couldn't we develop a new coping mechanism to combat stress and anxiety? I say, "that the sky is the limit and the possibilities are endless," especially in a videogame.



The Legend of Zelda: Breath of the Wild, the newest installment of the Zelda franchise by Nintendo

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APPENDIX A

The following questions summarize the general topics discussed during the interviews conducted with Dr. Amanda Allison and Jashley Boatwright after describing the initial concept of the art game.

1. Do you see a relationship between art therapy and videogames?
2. How could art therapy and videogames come together? What particular methods of art therapy can be applied to a videogame to help relieve stress and anxiety? Or rather, how can stress and anxiety be reduced through videogames?
3. What kind of insight can you give for the concept [SOLAS] from a standpoint in art therapy? What elements of art therapy or attributes can be applied to this concept to make the experience therapeutic for the player?

APPENDIX B

The following questions were asked during a survey conducted via Qualtrics with potential consumers in the Fort Worth area, and beyond.

What is your gender?

- Male
- Female
- Other

How old are you?

- Under 18
- 18-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- 65-74
- 75-84
- 85 or older

On a daily basis, how often do you experience stress and/or anxiety?

- All the time
- Almost all the time
- Sometimes
- A little bit
- Occasionally
- Not at all

To what degree do you play video games?

- All the time
- Almost all the time
- Sometimes
- A little bit
- Occasionally
- Not at All (skip to question 11)

To those of you who do play video games, to what degree would you play video games if it helped relieve your stress and/or anxiety?

- Very Likely
- Likely
- Neutral
- Unlikely
- Very unlikely

How often (approximately) do you currently play video games?

- Daily
- Weekly
- Once a month
- Once every 3 months
- Once every 6 months
- Once a year
- Never

How do you usually get interested in a new game?

- Friends/Peers
- Ads (magazines, newspaper, TV, etc.)
- Internet/Online
- Event/Conventions
- Social media
- Other (please specify)

To what degree do you feel relaxed while playing video games?

- Extremely relaxed
- Very relaxed
- Moderately relaxed
- Slightly relaxed
- Not at all

Which game genres relax you? Check all that apply.

- Action
- Adventure
- Arcade
- Fighting
- Horror
- Logic
- Mobile
- Music
- Online
- Platform
- Puzzle
- Racing
- Role-playing (RPGs)
- Shooter
- Simulation
- Sports
- Strategy/Tactics
- 3D Gaming
- Other (please specify)

When you play games, how important are the following game elements? Please rank the following in order of importance (1 being the most important, and 9 the least important)

- Gameplay/playability
- Story/Themes/Narrative
- Graphics/Visuals
- Characters/Character Development
- Environment/World Design/Setting
- Atmosphere/Immersion/Feel
- Music
- Character customization
- Other (please specify if applicable)

(End of survey for those who play video games)

To those of you who don't play video games, how likely would you play video games if it helped relieve your stress and/or anxiety?

- Very Likely
- Likely
- Neutral
- Unlikely
- Very unlikely

How often would you play a video game if it helped relieve your stress and/or anxiety?

- Daily
- Weekly
- Once a month
- Once every 3 months
- Once every 6 months
- Once a year
- Never

How would you like to get interested in a new game?

- Friends/Peers
- Ads (magazines, newspaper, TV, etc.)
- Internet/Online
- Event/Conventions
- Social media
- Other (please specify)

Which game genres would possibly relax you? Check all that apply.

- Action
- Adventure
- Arcade
- Fighting
- Horror
- Logic
- Mobile
- Music
- Online
- Platform
- Puzzle
- Racing
- Role-playing (RPGs)
- Shooter
- Simulation
- Sports
- Strategy/Tactics
- 3D Gaming
- Other (please specify)

If you were to play a video game, how important are the following game elements? Please rank the following in order of importance (1 being the most important, and 9 being the least important).

- Gameplay/playability
- Story/Themes/Narrative
- Graphics/Visuals
- Characters/Character Development
- Environment/World Design/Setting
- Atmosphere/Immersion/Feel
- Music
- Character customization
- Other (please specify if applicable)

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