Video games atmosphere

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But first let’s have an example
Ms. Atmosphere. Who is she?
atmosphere

/ˈætmosfer/  
noun

1. the envelope of gases surrounding the earth or another planet.
   "part of the sun's energy is absorbed by the earth's atmosphere"
   Panašūs: air aerosphere airspace sky the heavens the firmament

2. the pervading tone or mood of a place, situation, or creative work.
   "the hotel has won commendations for its friendly, welcoming atmosphere"
   Panašūs: ambience aura climate air mood feel feeling
THE MAN WHO SPOKE SNAKISH

“Marvelous in all senses of the word.”
—Le Monde

ANDRIS KVRĀHK
Atmosphere in different forms of media

- Book had great world building, emotional story, great characters, interesting meaning.
Atmosphere in different forms of media

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- TV show had great cinematography, amazing score, amazing story, shocking twists, suspense, interesting characters, relatability, realism.
Atmosphere in different forms of media

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- TV show had great cinematography, amazing score, amazing story, shocking twists, suspense, interesting characters, relatability, realnes.
- Anime had consistent style, bizarre story, interesting fights and camp.
What did atmosphere did to me?

- Made me more interested in the story they were trying to tell.
What did atmosphere did to me?

- Made me more interested in the story they were trying to tell.
- Made me invested in their fictional world and characters.
What did atmosphere did to me?

- Made me more interested in the story they were trying to tell.
- Made me invested in their fictional world and characters.
- Made a lasting impression.
THEY MADE ME FEEL THINGS BRO!!!
Amnesia: the dark descent
Amnesia: the dark descent

- How character breathes when he is scared.
Amnesia: the dark descent

● How character breathes when he is scared.
● Castle design.
Amnesia: the dark descent

- How character breathes when he is scared.
- Castle design.
- Blood and gore.
Amnesia: the dark descent
● How character breathes when he is scared.
● Castle design.
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● Echoing screams.
Amnesia: the dark descent

- How character breathes when he is scared.
- Castle design.
- Blood and gore.
- Echoing screams.
- The story
Amnesia: the dark descent

- How character breathes when he is scared.
- Castle design.
- Blood and gore.
- Echoing screams.
- The story
- Monster design.
Amnesia: the dark descent
- How character breathes when he is scared.
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- The story
- Monster design.
- Audio queues.
Amnesia: the dark descent
- How character breathes when he is scared.
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- Dark places and lighting.
Amnesia: the dark descent
● How character breathes when he is scared.
● Castle design.
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● Dark places and lighting.
● Health and sanity meter.
Amnesia: the dark descent

- How character breathes when he is scared.
- Castle design.
- Blood and gore.
- Echoing screams.
- The story
- Monster design.
- Audio queues.
- Dark places and lighting.
- Health and sanity meter.
- Movement speed.
Amnesia: the dark descent
- How character breathes when he is scared.
- Castle design.
- Blood and gore.
- Echoing screams.
- The story
- Monster design.
- Audio queues.
- Dark places and lighting.
- Health and sanity meter.
- Movement speed.
- Puzzles.
Building blocks of atmosphere in video games media

- Visual design
Building blocks of atmosphere in video games media

- Visual design
- Audio design
Building blocks of atmosphere in video games media

- Visual design
- Audio design
- Gameplay
Building blocks of atmosphere in video games media

- Visual design
- Audio design
- Gameplay
- World building
Building blocks of atmosphere in video games media

- Visual design
- Audio design
- Gameplay
- World building
- Story
Building blocks of atmosphere in video games media

- Visual design
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Building blocks of atmosphere in video games media

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Building blocks of atmosphere in video games media

- Visual design
- Audio design
- Gameplay
- World building
- Story
O.K. I have all of the basic building blocks in my game. Is my game atmospheric?

NO!!!

Now you have Garry’s mod.
Theme tone atmosphere

- **Theme:** Central idea of the work
- **Tone:** Author's attitude towards the theme
- **Atmosphere:** Tone + Theme

Greg Kasavin: Supergiant Games
Properties of Atmospheric video games

- Tonal Cohesion
Properties of Atmospheric video games

- Tonal Cohesion
- Internal consistency
Properties of Atmospheric video games

- Tonal Cohesion
- Internal consistency
- Specific detail
Oxygen not included example
Cool… Why is it important?
Why atmosphere is important?

- Increases immersion. Mitigates dissonance.
Why atmosphere is important?

- Increases immersion. Mitigates dissonance.
- Creates its own identity.

Greg Kasavin: Supergiant Games
It’s own identity
It’s own identity
It’s own identity
Why atmosphere is important?

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- Lasting impression.
Why atmosphere is important?

- Increases immersion. Mitigates dissonance.
- Creates its own identity.
- Lasting impression.
- Developers ideas are more clear.
Ideas and themes
Why atmosphere is important?

- Increases immersion. Mitigates dissonance.
- Creates its own identity.
- Lasting impression.
- Makes it easier to express developers ideas.
- Elevates experience, conceals less favorable parts.
Sometimes theme can carry gameplay
Why atmosphere is important?

- Increases immersion. Mitigates dissonance.
- Creates its own identity.
- Lasting impression.
- Makes it easier to express developers ideas.
- Elevates experience, conceals less favorable parts.
- Cult status and fandoms.

Greg Kasavin: Supergiant Games
How to put it in to practice?
Research and inspiration

- Cram your head.
- Read something you normally wouldn't read.
- Attend a lecture.
- Play a game preferably a bad one.
- Play a different game
- Follow your passion.

(Scott Rogers: Level up! a guide to video game design.)
Audio vs Video

Good vs. Bad Audio in Videos
Importance of good audio design

Source: Game Atmosphere: Effects of Audiovisual Thematic Cohesion on Player Experience and Psychophysiology
https://doi.org/10.1145/3410404.3414245
Consistency and cohesion

- Decide on theme and tone as early as possible.
- Use every means possible to reinforce your theme.
- The sooner you have settled on a theme, the easier things will be for you, because you will have an easy method of deciding if something belongs in your game or not: if it reinforces your theme, it stays, but if not, it goes. (Jesse Schell: The art of game design)
Accuracy and Precision

- Accurate, Precise
- Accurate, Not Precise
- Not Accurate, Precise
- Not Accurate, Not Precise

Thoughts:
- Tonal Cohesion
- Internal consistency
- Specific detail
Accuracy vs Precision

Wowser!

Hella.
Gameplay vs story

Designers at game developers conferences all around the world face off against each other one group yelling “BIOSHOCK” while another side shouts – “DOOM”. Silly designers. They are both right and wrong.

(Scott Rogers: Level up! a guide to video game design.)
Story way of writing a story

- Hero's journey

![Hero's Journey Diagram](image_url)
Hero's Journey

RETURN

SEPARATION

Known World

Unknown World

INITIATION

Master of Two Worlds
Refusal to Return
Road Back
Temptation
Battle with the Brother
Death of the Mentor
Ordeal

Call to Refusal of Call
Supernatural Aid/Mentor
Crossing the Threshold
New Allies and Enemies

Ring of Trials
Story way of writing a story

- Hero's journey
- Three act structure
The Three Act Structure

Act I
- Introduction
- Plot point

Act II
- Rising action
- Stakes get high
- Plot point
- Crisis

Act III
- Failing Action

Setup
Confrontation
Resolution
Story way of writing a story

- Hero's journey
- Three act structure
- Four act story.
THE FOUR ACT STRUCTURE

Act 1
- The Hook
- The Inciting Event

Act 2
- The Key Event
- The First Plot Point
- The Reaction
- The Midpoint
- The First Pinch Point

Act 3
- The Second Pinch Point
- The Action
- The Third Plot Point

Act 4
- The Climax
- The Climactic Moment
- The Resolution

THE NOVEL SMITHY
Story way of writing a story

- Hero's journey
- Three act structure
- Four act story.
- Something new?
If gameplay is the meat of the game, then story should be the salt: just enough will add flavour, but too much can ruin everything and kill you. (Scott Rogers: Level up! a guide to video game design.)

**Gameplay first, story should follow it.** *(most of the time)*
Characters

- Character silhouette technique.
Characters

- Character silhouette technique.
- Basic shape character language.
TECHNIQUE: Circles are organic and natural shapes. Round out edges and add curves to evoke a warm and welcoming feeling.
**TIP:** Triangles are sharp. Exaggerating the size and length of these shapes can heighten fear and transform how menacing the character is.
**Squares**

**TIP:** Square off things like jaws, shoulders, and even hands—they not only feel strong, but can feel difficult to move.
Characters

- Character silhouette technique.
- Basic shape character language.
- Use preconceived characteristics to your advantage.
Characters

- Character silhouette technique.
- Basic shape character language.
- Use preconceived characteristics to your advantage.
- Make them interesting.
Gameplay

\_(_(ツ)_/\_
Gameplay

- Stay consistent.
- Don’t reinvent the wheel.
- Take inspiration.
Thank for sitting through my presentation.

Sources:

- The Art of Game Design (Jesse Schell)
- Level Up! The Guide to Great Video Design
  https://youtu.be/e9H_VJVxAFU
- Game Atmosphere: Effects of Audiovisual Thematic Cohesion on Player Experience and Psychophysiology https://doi.org/10.1145/3410404.3414245