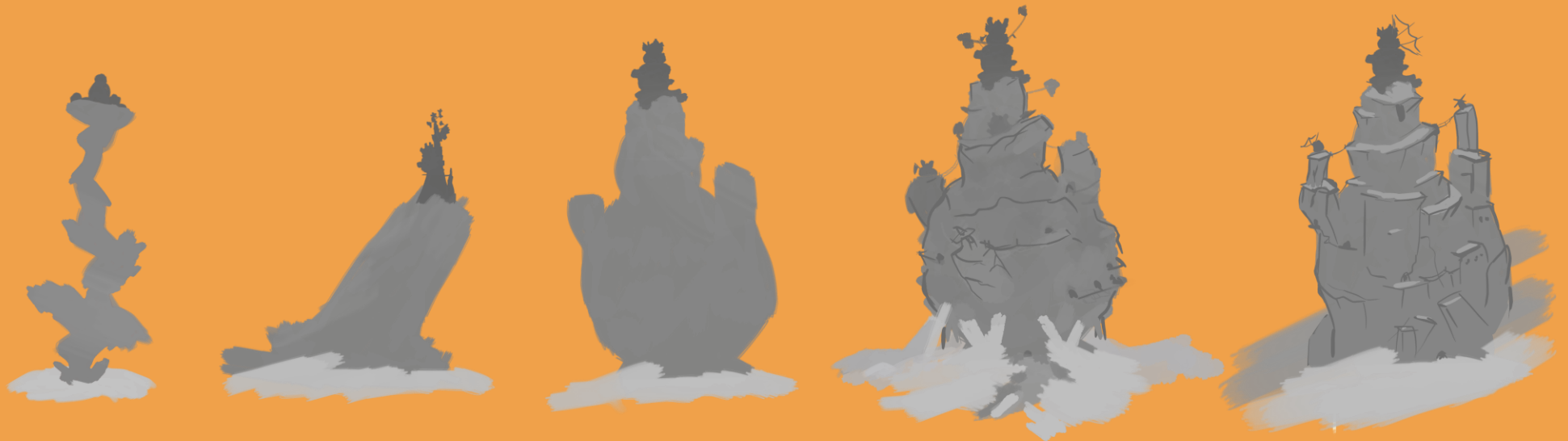




Loose Juice

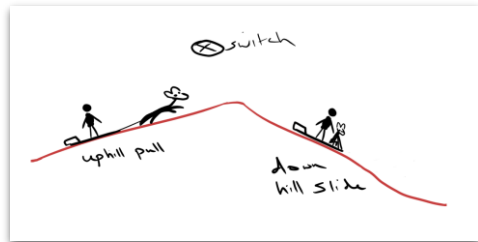
Level Design



Ideation, Design and Prototyping

EARLY IDEATION

Our teams first idea was to create a game where you were pulled on a sled through a desert by a spirit dog, chasing after a floating city. We soon realised the dog somewhat limited the gameplay and the concept didn't fit the brief very well. My early gameplay sketches:



I thought more about how we could fit the idea of running out juice better which was our brief. We moved onto just the hoverboard and the idea of climbing, using a grapple and gravity manipulation. Exploring a surreal terrain where you need to reach more flowers in time or the gravity sticking powered off.

This hoverboard idea fit the brief well, but we decided we wanted to lean into creating a more collaborative game. The team came up with the idea of transporting juice on the hoverboard alongside a friend and the goal was to not spill any of it while trying to reach the top of the ancient city. This fit the brief perfectly and we all felt excited to work on it, so we went with this idea going forwards. Our artist's early sketch:

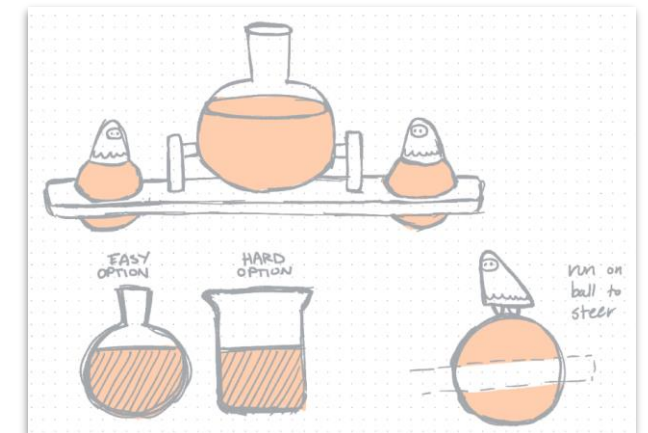


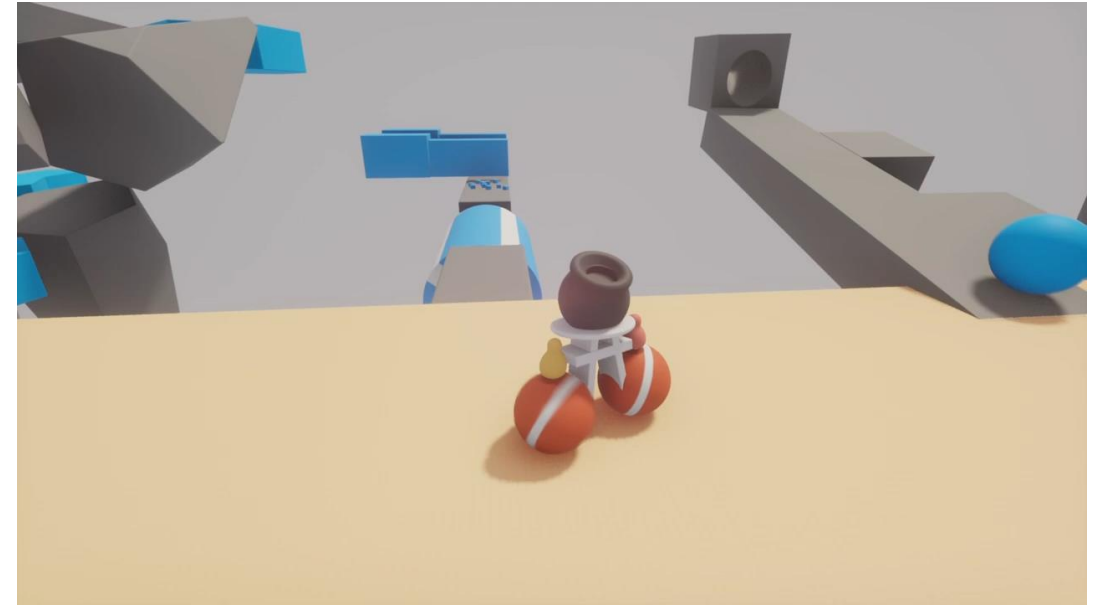
Figure Above: Vehicle Concept by Duncan, R (Team Artist, 2026)

Ideation, Design and Prototyping

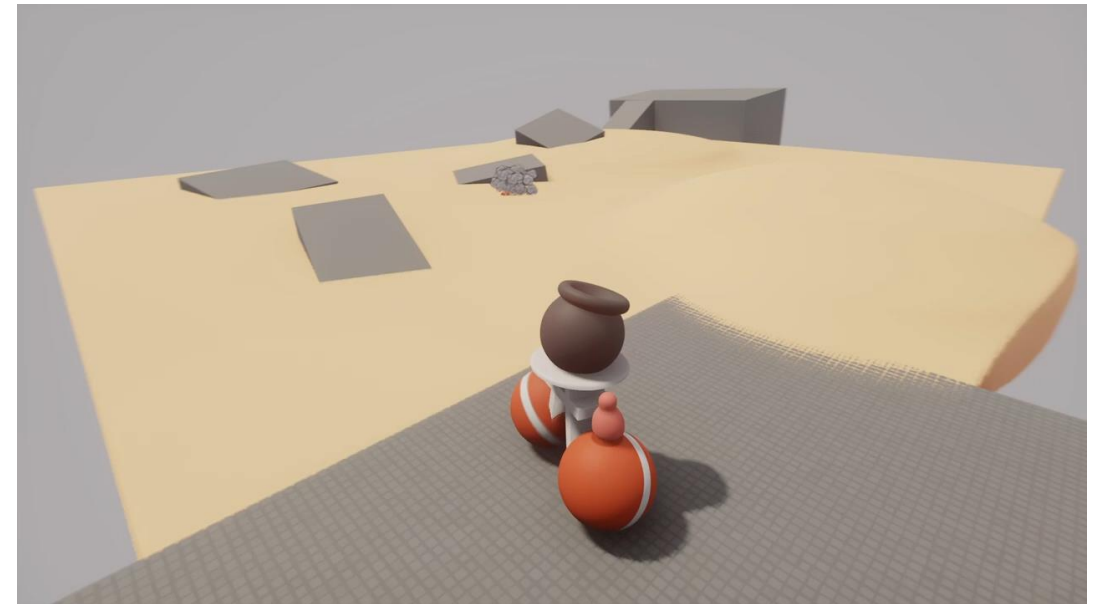
OBSTACLE DESIGN

Here I was exploring what obstacles would work well and feel challenging. I tried to create them to be as versatile as possible so that the artists would only need to create a few obstacle assets, but we could still create lots of exciting scenarios by stringing them together in different ways.

I experimented with the idea of creating a sand worm creature that you must rush past onto rocks to evade. It was fun and challenging, but ultimately, we decided to cut it early to help with the scope of the game. Though I had designed it to reduce scope on artists by making the worm a static model animated through code. It required other work from artists, audio, level design and programming that ultimately, we wanted to prioritise elsewhere.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UP1NCVLgotg>



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hClCRtf9pEE>

Level Design

EXPLORATION

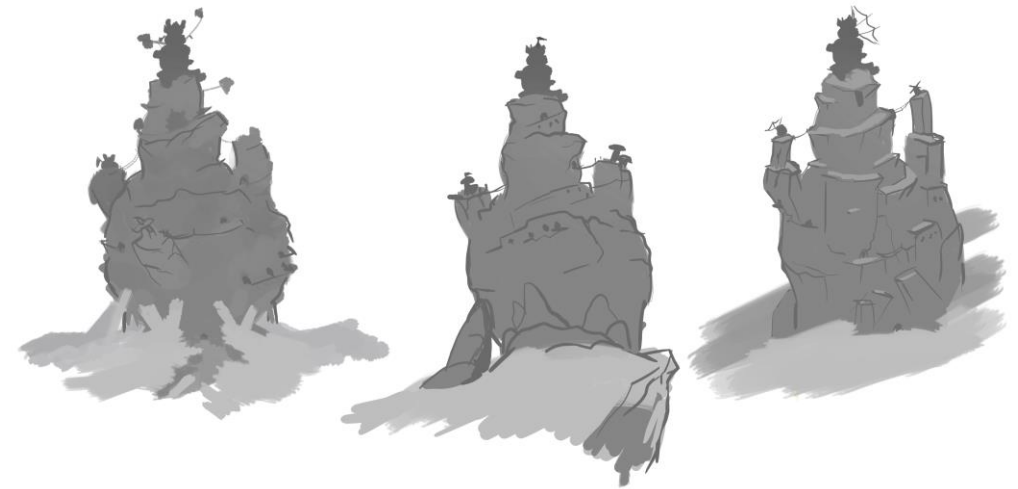
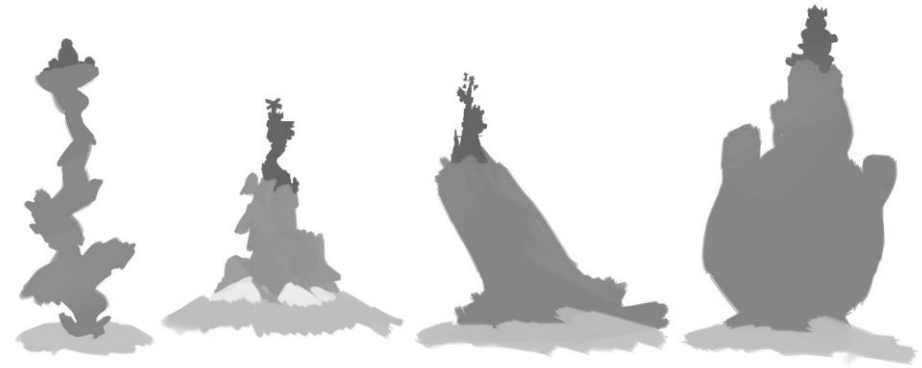
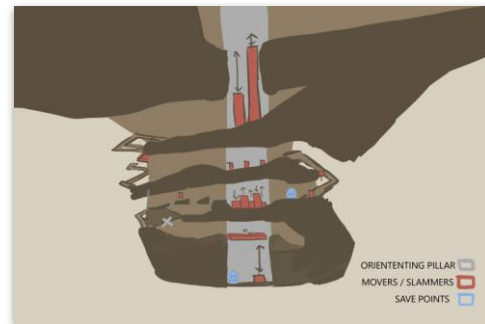
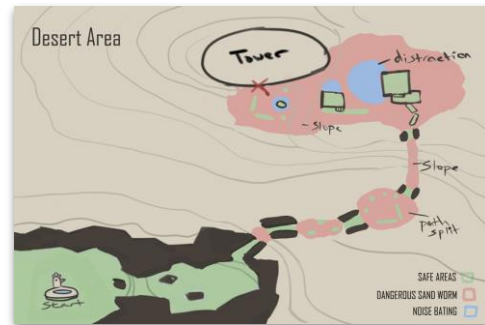
I created an initial level concept: Inspired by the world building of our artists I looked at coral reefs and desert hoodoos, which are small skinny canyon rocks.

I developed a level layout through floor plans to help communicate with the team.

This was split into three areas.

- The Desert
- Temple Caverns
- Floating Islands

Due to scope creep we decided to cut the desert area along with the worm obstacle seen in the floor plan and the floating islands were simplified into a temple area.



Here I decided to simplify the shape, thought about how to create a memorable level through shape and facilitate a difficulty curve. I achieved this by using a circular shape and making the level get steeper as the player progressed. We agreed the level would be split into 3 different areas but simplified it from the previous areas into desert, caves and temple.

Level Design

RESEARCH

I researched imagery and concepts for the for the level early on.

I used Miro to communicate back and forth together with artists and gather inspiration and get feedback on my ideas from them to make sure they felt they were feasible and in the direction, they wanted to take it artistically.

Here we looked at inspiration for each part of the level that we had. We split it into desert, caves and sky area (which later became the temple area.)

I think this early research massively helped everyone get on same page and help the artists better figure out the assets and ideas they'd need to explore. It also helped me with the kind of architectural shapes and general layout of the blockout.



Level Design

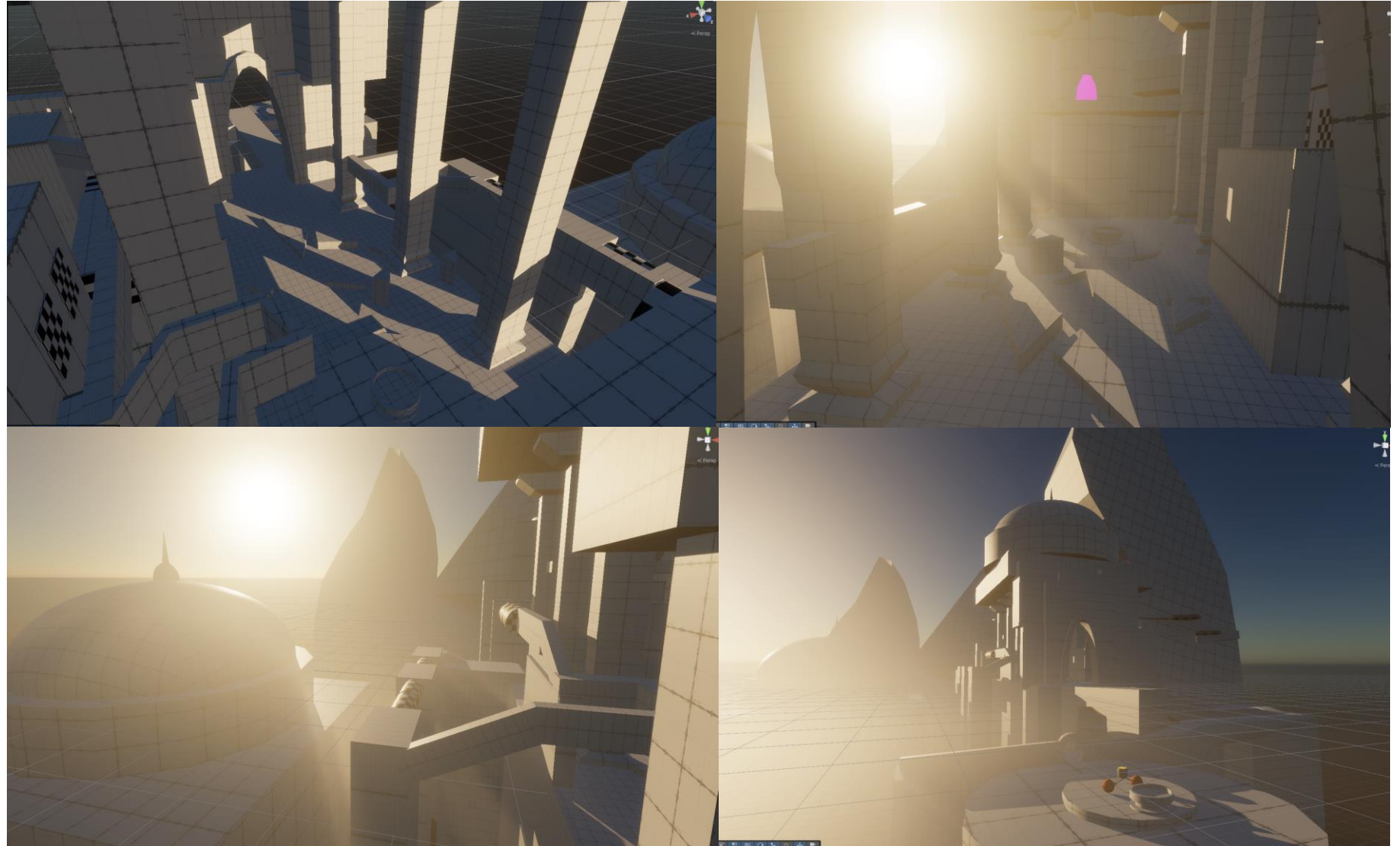
PLAY PARTY BLOCKOUT

After the basic gameplay was implemented, we had our first play party. So, I blocked out a temple for the first play party.

Here we wanted to test the gameplay to see if people found it fun and learn from play testers.

I used a variety of obstacles from my prototype that the programmers had rebuilt in unity to test the players skills. I noticed that players really enjoyed how difficult the game was.

We learned that too many balance beams caused the player to give up due to it being too difficult at the end. These were reduced in the next block outs. Overall players really enjoyed it, and we began refining the game from here.



Level Design

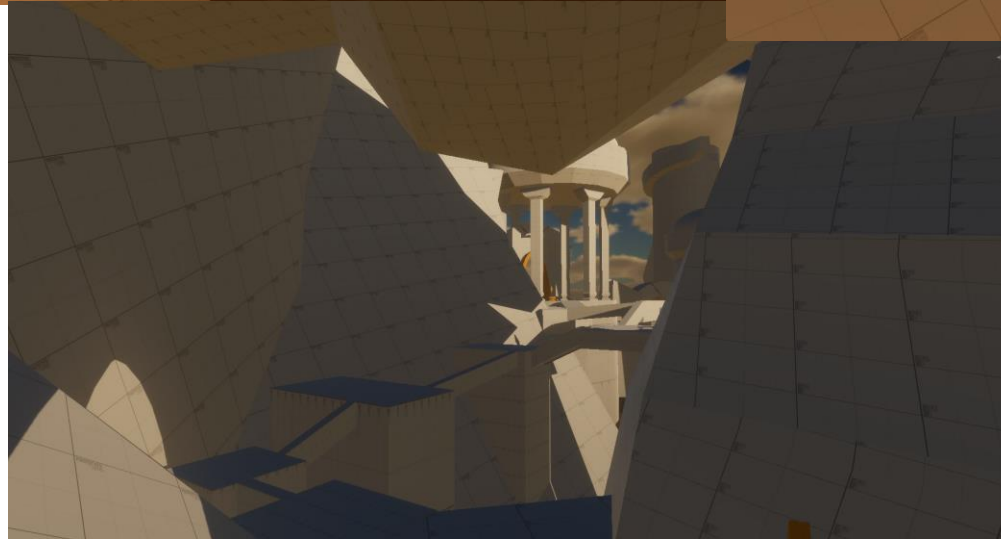
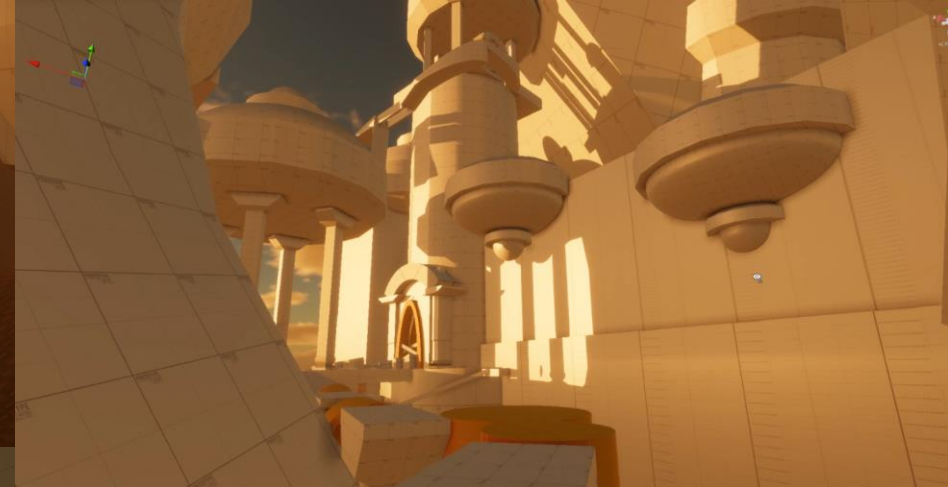
BLOCKOUT EXPLORATION

Some of the feedback I received from artists was that they wanted to lean more into the of their artistic inspirations. This was to make the game more aesthetic. Some of the aspects they wanted to capture were the grandeur and scale of the world.

Here I explored trying to create that feeling through the block out using large architecture shapes and big open spaces to contrast against the player.

I think while these did capture the grand feeling we wanted to create, and the artists really liked it, the level now lacked enough challenge. It was less fun because it was too empty.

This was okay though because the purpose of the blockmesh is to experiment and be able to make changes quickly. We agreed to try to fill the space with more obstacles and revisit the play party temple that players found more challenging.



Level Design

BLOCKOUT DEVELOPMENT

Here I focused mainly on creating compelling obstacles with less focus on aesthetics to create a more challenging experience.

The first one was an onboarding obstacle. Here the player is forced to align their wheels with the balance beams to cross it. The planks above help communicate to the player orientation they need to take to succeed.

I developed a few new obstacles. Then I took the best elements from the play party and improved the flow of them and incorporated them into the block out.

Because we were getting close to end of Sprint 4 and other members on team needed to decorate and place audio in level I was happy to call a cut off for the blockmesh, finalise it and start refining.

Team members raised concerns that the level wasn't exciting enough still. They said it lacked surprises and need more obstacle variation.



Level Design

OBSTACLE EXPERIMENTATION

Because the team felt so strongly on it to help improve the level I implemented more of the obstacles we had decided to leave out earlier on because of scope.

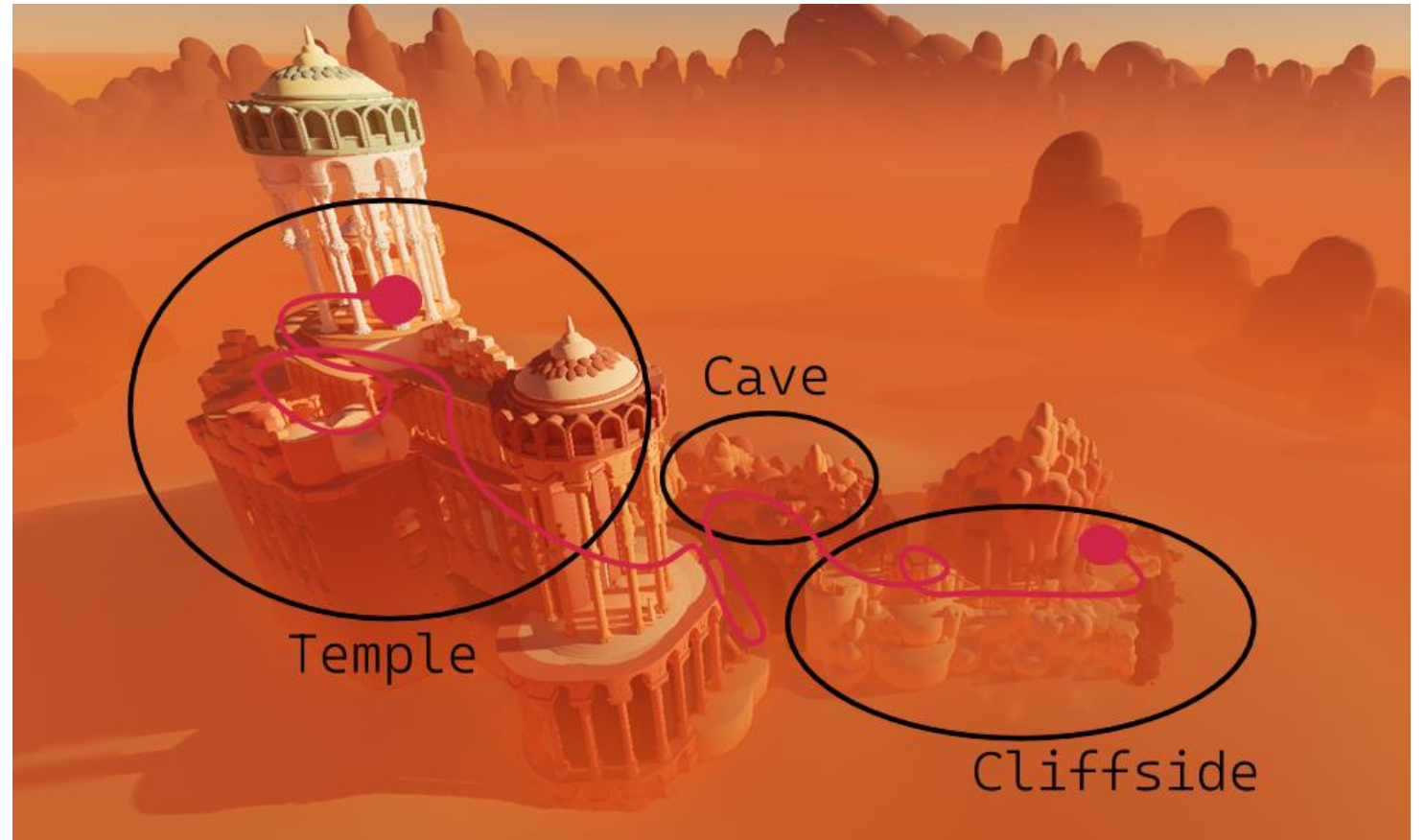
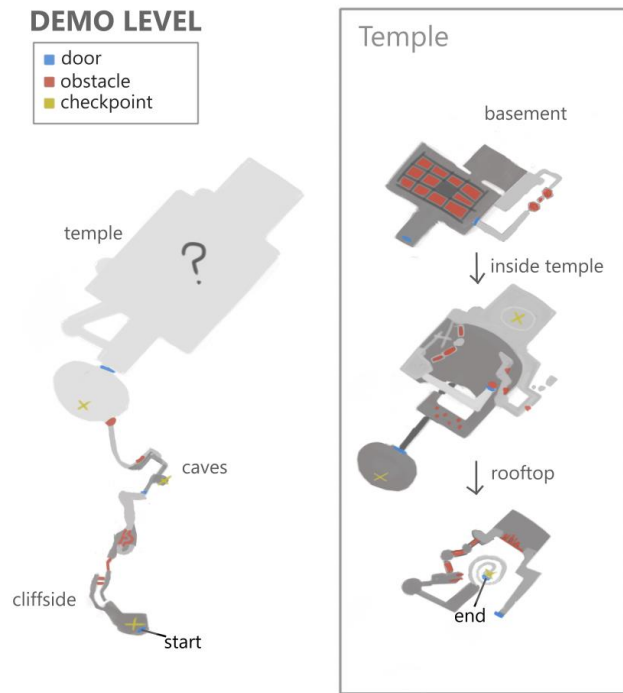
The team also made 10 new obstacles/scenarios they wanted me to include in the level. We created ideas for traps like the boulder falling we left out from earlier and surprising scenarios like pillars falling while on them. I quickly built and implemented the new obstacles over the week in unity using the programmers' tools. I created an obstacle playground. This included all the old obstacles and all the new ones. Team members were each given it for playtesting and we all agreed on which obstacles were being added to the new level iteration. We found the obstacles more engaging and had the surprises we were looking for in the game.



Level Design

FLOOR PLAN

A floor plan was created to help plan out the final blackout. You can see the final pathway, through the finished level, on the right.



Level Design

FINAL DESERT AND CAVE BLOCKOUTS

This shows the final desert area which is the starting area and onboards the player with simple balance beams then ramps up in difficulty.

Then a small cave section introduces the first checkpoint, and the pressure plates mechanic. The cramped small scale helps contrast against the grandeur of the temple



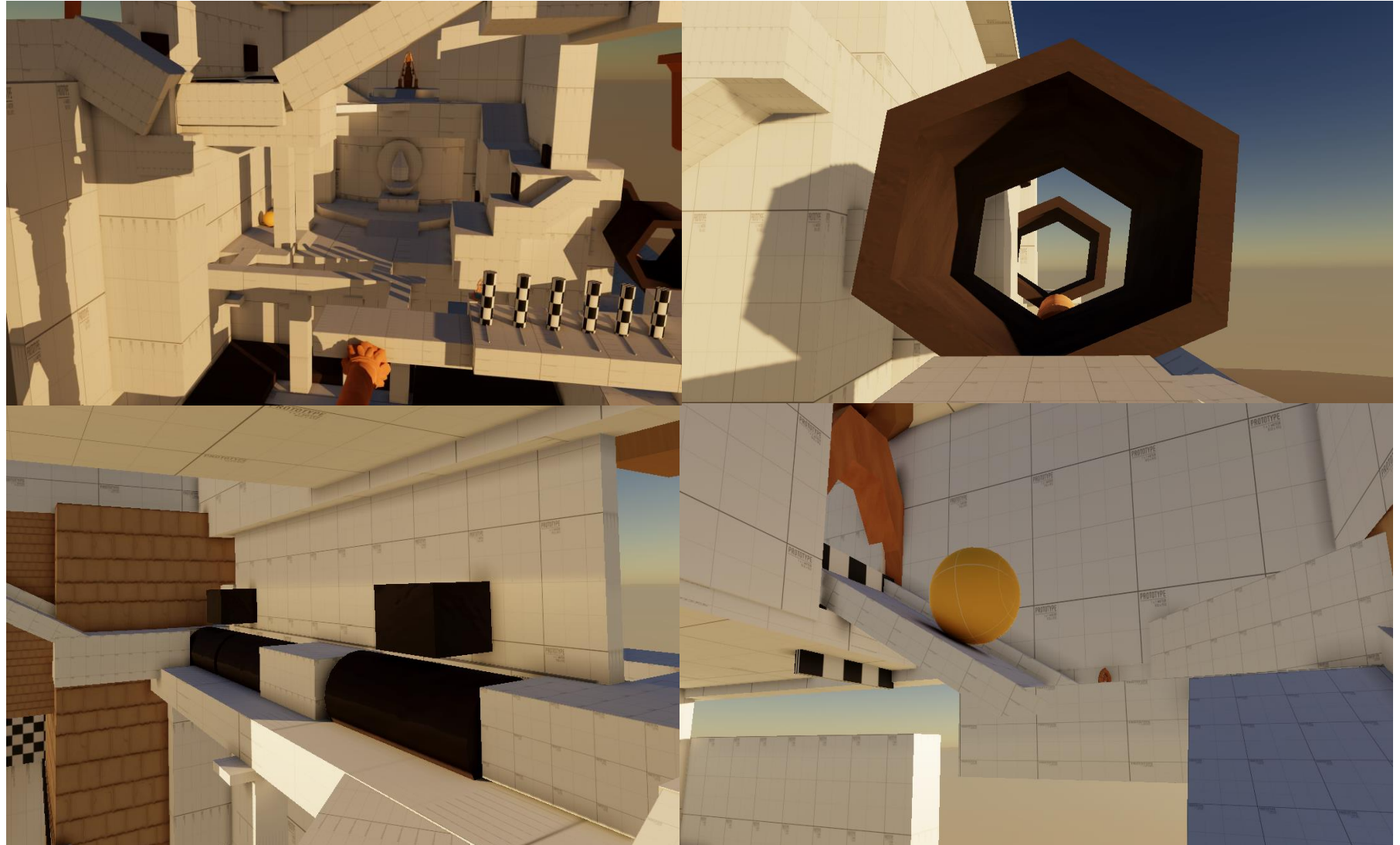
Level Design

FINAL TEMPLE BLOCKOUTS

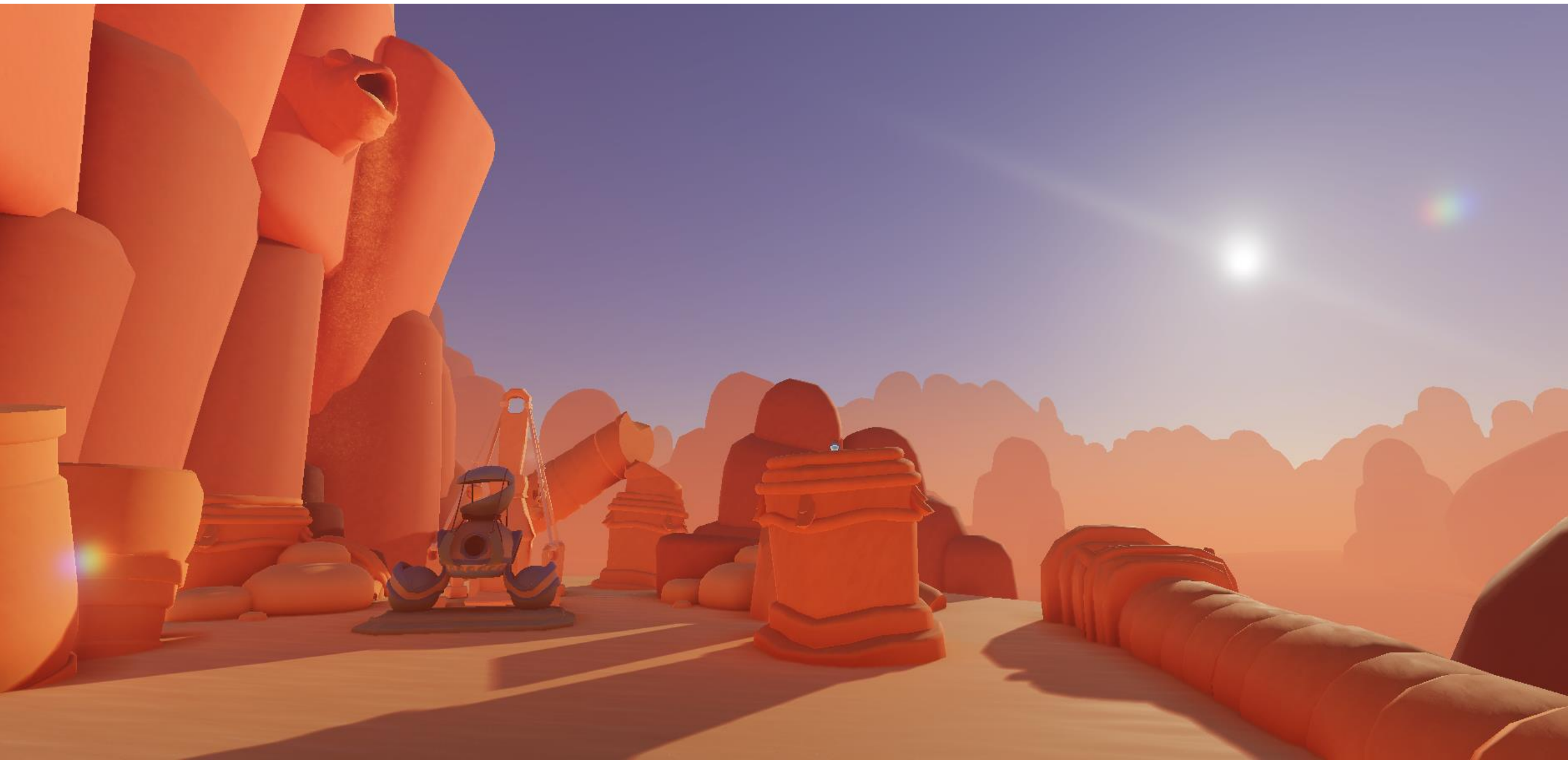
Here the temple section with the new obstacles. A beam surprises the player and drops them down into a floor of risers as they try to cross over it. Then a series of fast paced obstacles and traps keep the temple challenging and action packed.

They make it to another checkpoint which was designed to give player breathing room after this series of obstacles.

Finally, pusher traps and a final boulder trap at the end of the temple results in players having to flee and backtrack to avoid being knocked off. Finally, they curve round up to the end.



RENDERS



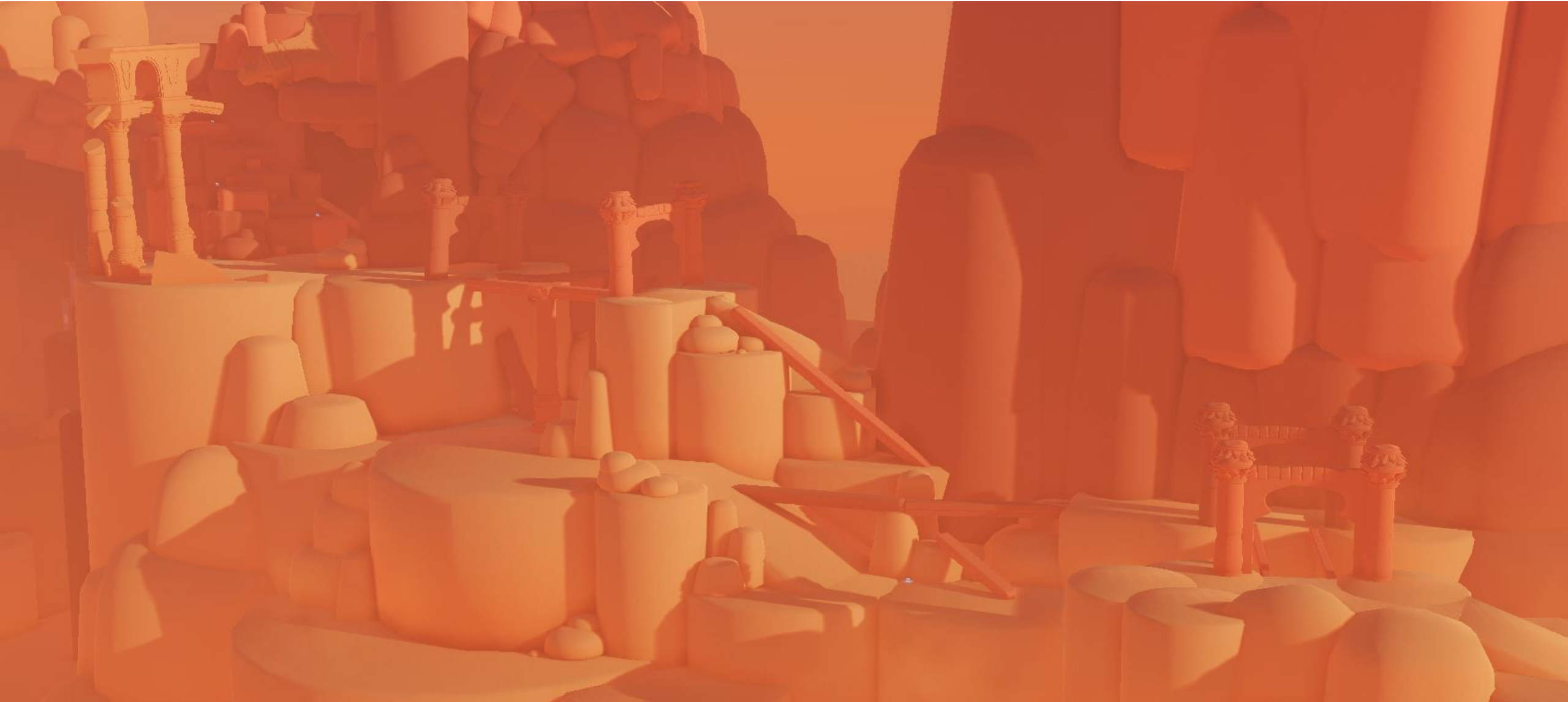
Level Design

FINAL RENDERS

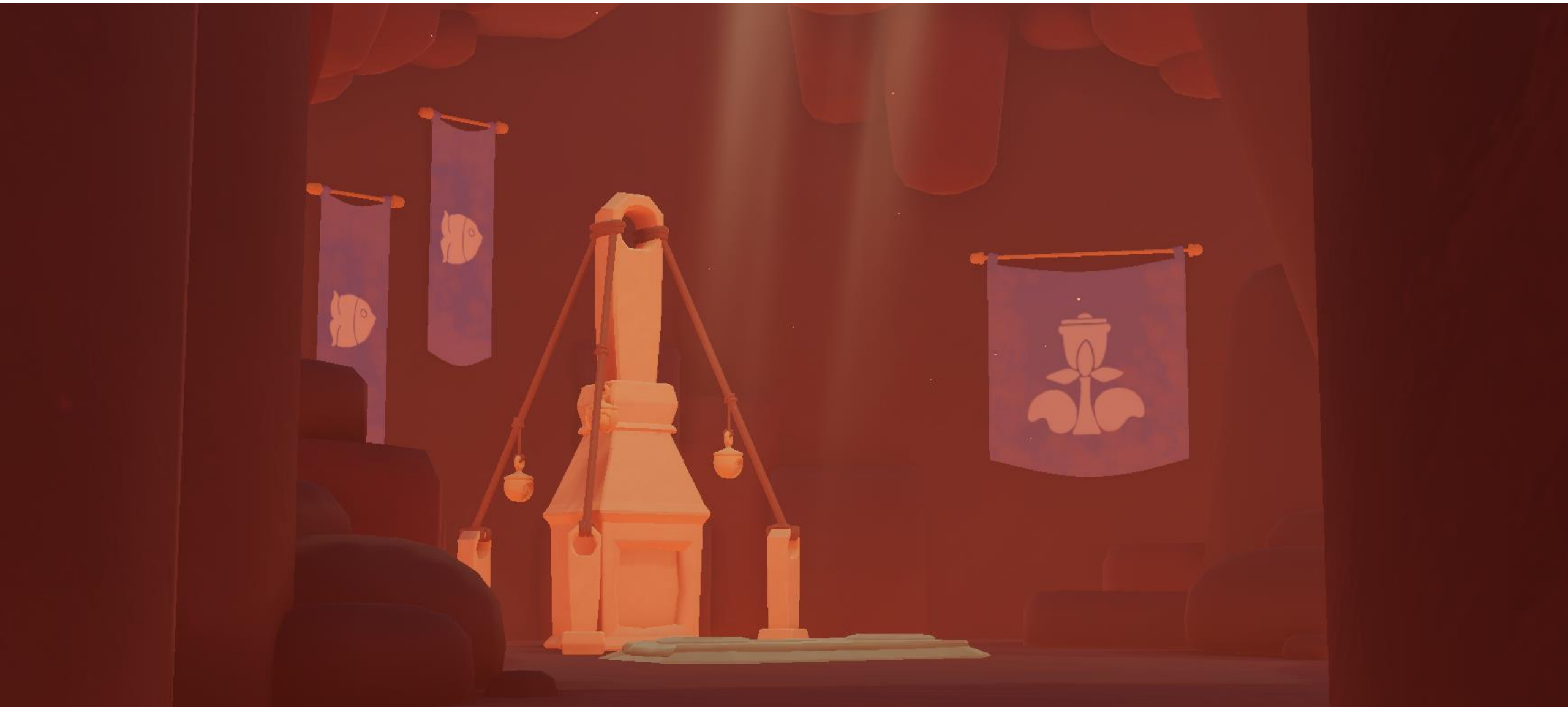


Level Design

FINAL RENDERS



RENDERS



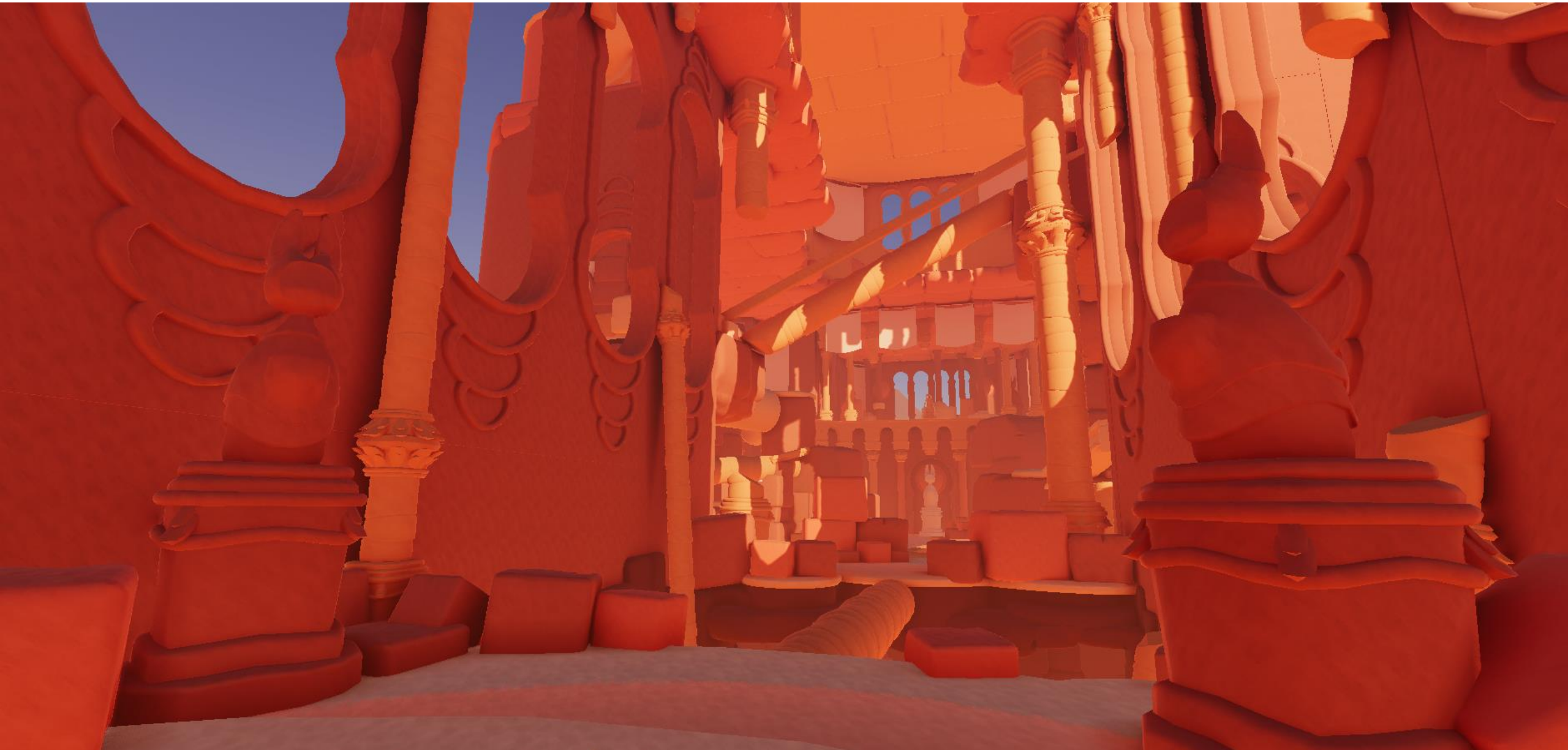
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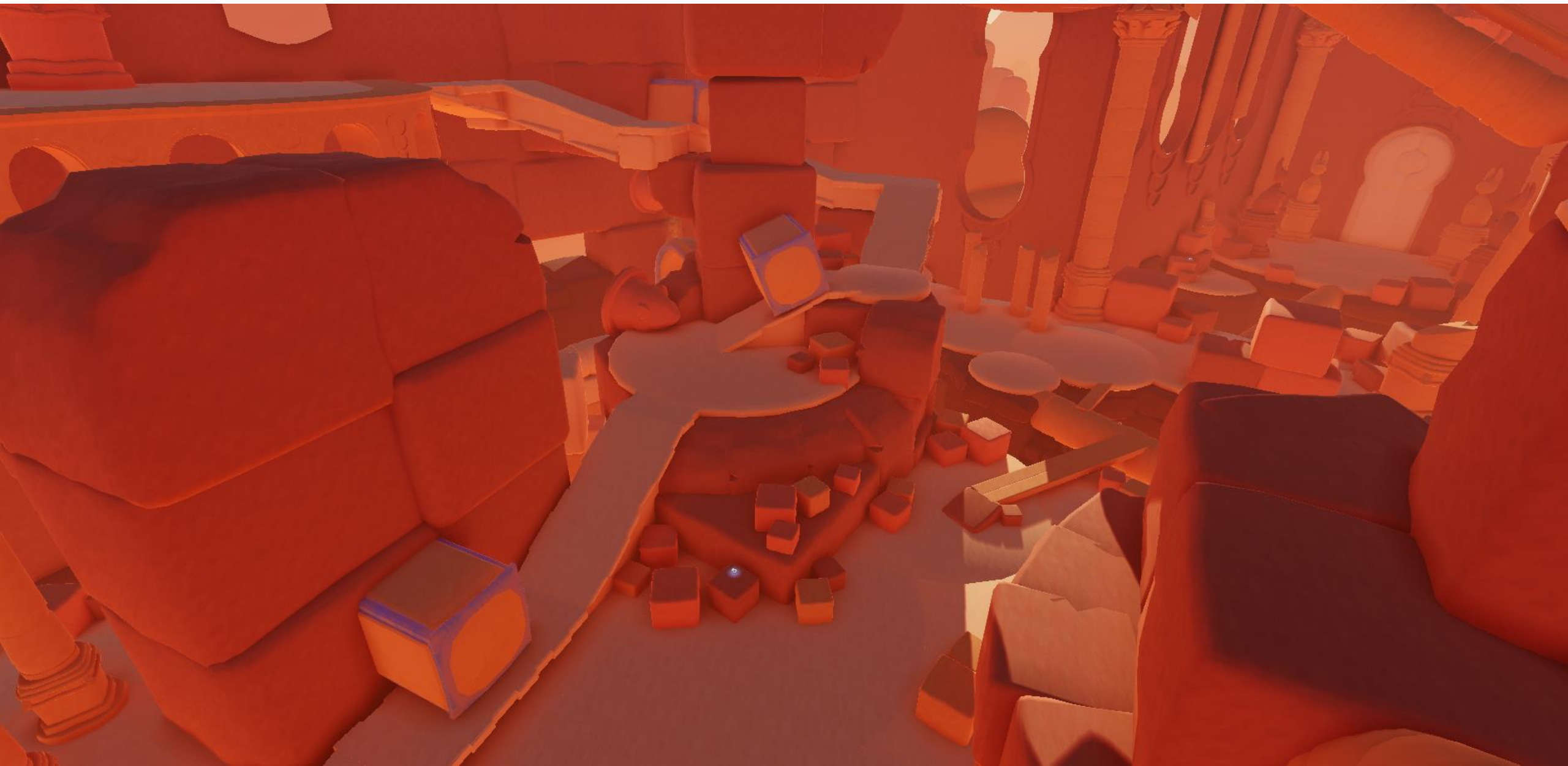
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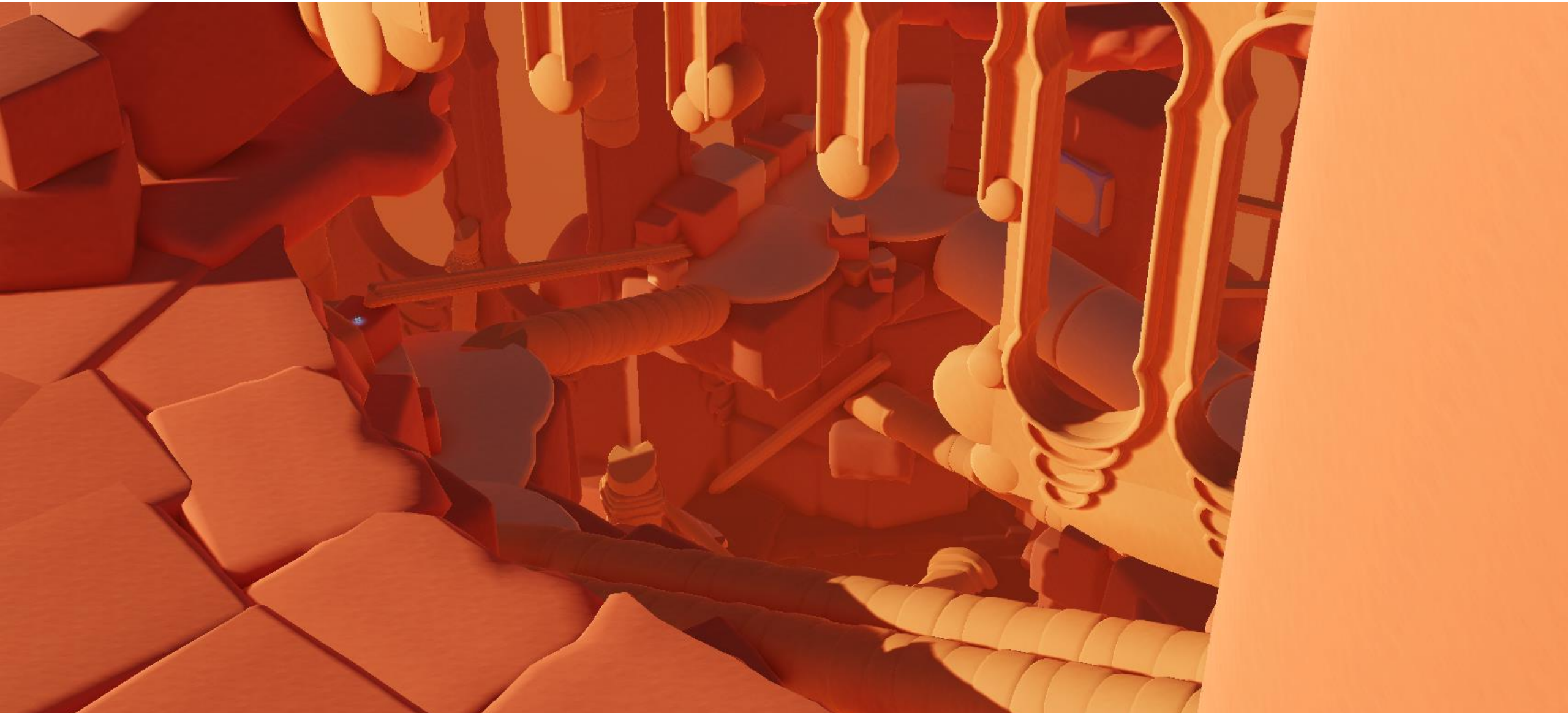
Level Design

FINAL RENDERS



Level Design

FINAL RENDERS



Level Design



Level Design

FINAL RENDERS



Loose
Juice

Not Gameplay