

why make games?

Lessons from 'Frostpunk' and 'This
War Of Mine'

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11 bit studios

1.

background

11 bit studios way
meaningful games

MEANINGFUL GAMES

emotions that breed thoughts

values that we find important to communicate

fresh experiences that extend the game language

close to life message, insightful and clear

MEANINGFUL GAMES

*„at war, not everyone is a soldier”
„war always happens at somebody's doorstep”*

*„society survival”
„the last city must survive”*

2.

why & how - our games

THIS WAR OF MINE



THIS WAR OF MINE

SO...

why this war of mine?

THIS WAR OF MINE - WHY

we **love to make games**

we were **innovative** from start

we **scrapped&failed** the early “shelter” attempt

and **couldn't settle with mediocre**

we **needed emotions**

we had **luck and open minds**

we understood the **huge importance** and huge risk

and just **followed the alluring scent**

it was a game **we could smartly make**

it had **message easy to understand** but hard to deliver

THIS WAR OF MINE

it had value

THIS WAR OF MINE

how this war of mine?

THIS WAR OF MINE

no preconceptions

meaningful games from design and art
perspective are an open, unexplored ocean

innovation = constant R&D

THIS WAR OF MINE

mood as the key

bond between
art and gameplay

from the beginning

3 top values from tests

THIS
WAR
OF
MINE



THIS WAR OF MINE - DESIGN

twom **design**

research & what it gave us
player path & decisions
consequences of design choices
why all of that?

research & what it gave us?

better understanding of the reality
facts that defined our war-torn world
vision of the narrative build upon small stories

facts about the world

Food & medicine quickly depleted

*Constant shelling
during daytime*

Breaking the City Spirits

Exhanging not selling

SNIPERS

Civilians active at night

City is CUT OFF

NO TAP WATER

NO WOOD DURING COLD

No Electricity

*Chopping trees, furniture,
burning books*



Mister, can you help our mum?

THIS WAR OF MINE

player path and decisions

player is free to choose his path

he makes decisions and must face the consequences

the world has it's morality

he is not judged by us, but receives feedback

END DAY

 +19°C

Grandpa, why do people kill other people?

THIS WAR OF MINE - DESIGN

consequences of design choices

How initial guidelines affected some design rules

THIS WAR OF MINE - DESIGN

“people like us”

no level up

no rpg like inventory

sometimes useless skills - “good at maths”

personal believes & psychological traits

able to suffer trauma

easy to be killed, easy to kill

THIS WAR OF MINE - DESIGN

“real life stories”

many times the player is the intruder

there might be no quest or treasure

we do not design workarounds

gore and violence is not a way to build emotions

death is a valid ending

why all of that ?

To make a game that will allow the player
experience war as a civilian ...
... rather than **win the game**

THIS WAR OF MINE -ART

art way in twom

mood!!!

create a distinctive visual character

keep your game true to message

make it smart so it's doable

a. “novel” style

emphasis

sketchy / “drawn realism”

camera

inspirations

Fuck the War

THIS WAR OF MINE





„novel” - inspirations

one of style inspirations by A-ha / „Take on me”

NO
BALL
GAMES



„novel” - inspirations
one of style inspirations - by Banksy



WELCOME
TO
SARAJEVO

„novel” - inspirations

one of war signs & graffiti inspirations - by unknown photographer

b. “true” approach

no makeup & setup, natural as it can be
free will taken very seriously
3D low poly, “dirty” scans, “almost” real



“dirty” scans

kinnect scanned dev team and people we met every day

THIS
WAR
OF
MINE





me



our accountant



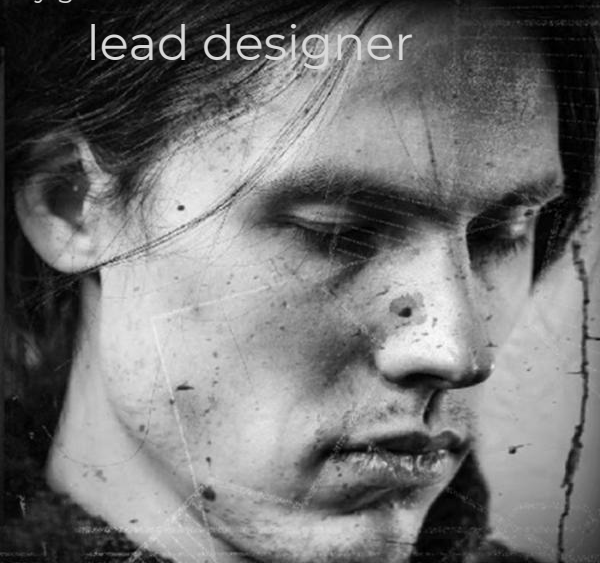
security guard at our office



team artist's wife



one of team artists

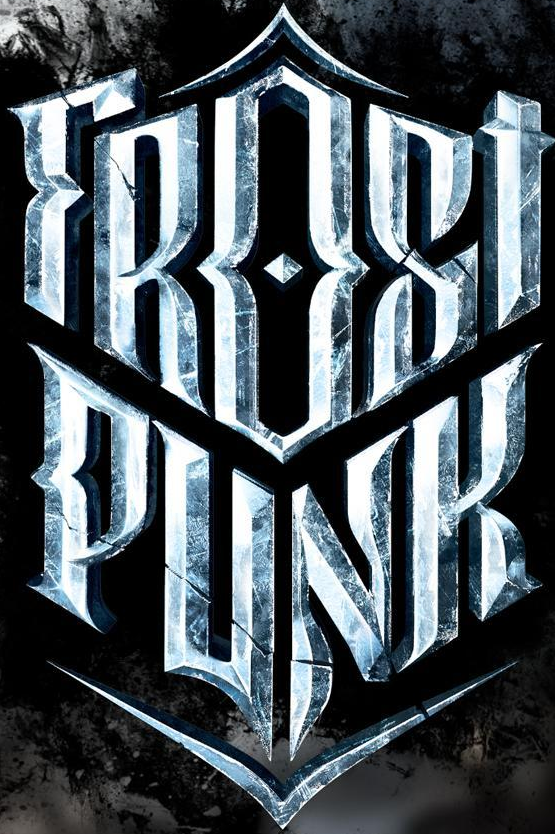


lead designer

THIS WAR OF MINE

we delivered the message

“civilians at war”



why frostpunk?

FROSTPUNK

we were tired of serious games

wanted to do “gamers game” in new genre for us

but no “message” sucked - so we couldn't :(

we just **fell in love with meaningful games** concept for 11 bits - we evolved as a company

we found the message and set the mood - adaptation / society survival

FROSTPUNK

again - it was **a game we could smartly make**

grow the studio & teams experience in new fields

again - it was a game that had elements **easy to understand by everyone - cold**

we had much more **conscious marketing team** that could level up our next idea

how frostpunk?

slides about design and art approach to this game

FROSTPUNK

mood is the key

mood as a bond between
art and gameplay



FROSTPUNK - DESIGN

frostpunk **design**

getting the game defined
shaping the society
conscious approach

(re)defining the game

why we scrapped the first proto?

what we were looking for & what we found?

some rough plans & proto to start with

we were looking for:

strong emotions

sense of involvement & purpose

meaningful subject to talk about

FROSTPUNK - DESIGN

we looked for

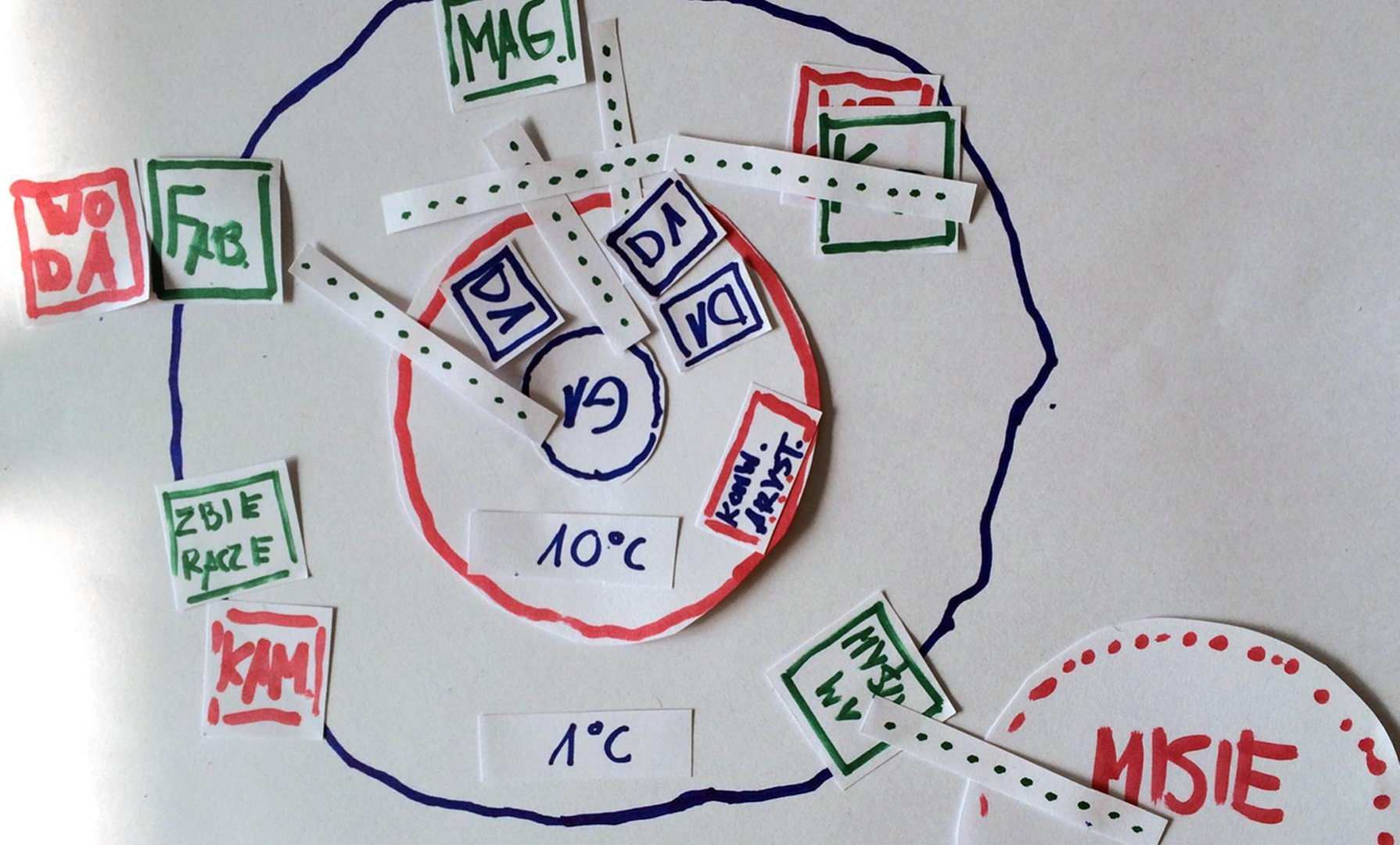
strong emotions
sense of involvement
meaningful subject

we defined

extreme winter
last city
tough people
survival
adaptation
society as the subject
decisions with consequences
how much we will sacrifice to survive?

just a few more steps to start

what key systems will be in game?
some high level paper proto to play



shaping the society

key question : “how much are we willing to sacrifice
to survive?”

shaping the society

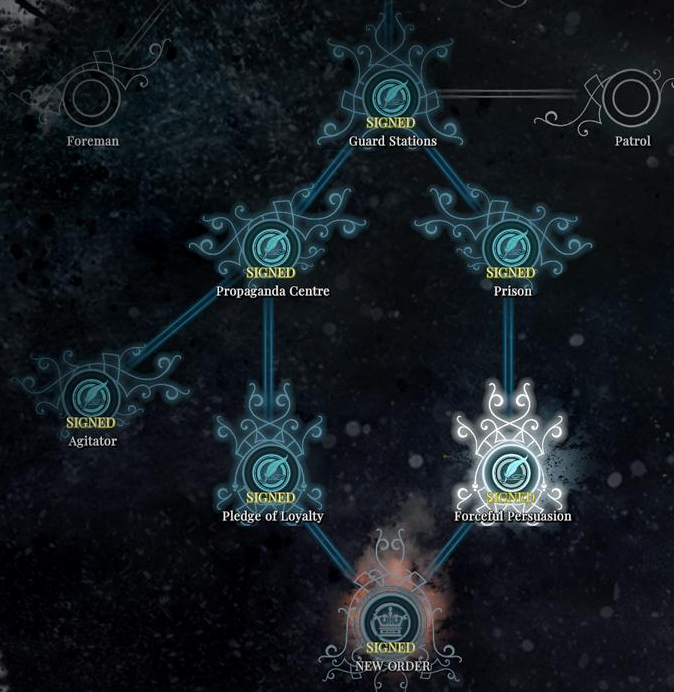
the trees of adaptation, order & faith
not only the big decisions counts
how the society changes with your rule

GO BACK

Purpose

Book of Laws

Morning Gathering



CLOSE



Forceful Persuasion

Explaining to inmates the enormity of their wrongdoings in a more direct manner will return them to the society faster.

SIGNED

After introducing this law, another one can be passed after 1d 21h

- NEW ABILITY: Forceful Persuasion (Prison)
- reduces the time prisoners spend in Prison
- prisoners may get hurt or killed
- discontent will rise



shaping the society

not signing a law that push the “system” further is a
valid decision to be made.

FROSTPUNK - DESIGN

shaping the society

It matters not only what law you sign but also
whether you use them or abuse them



The Londoners Prey on Discontent

An agitated crowd

A member of the Londoners is stirring up a restless crowd. He's scaring people into joining the exodus to London! Their discontent with the situation in our city makes his visions of doom all the more believable.

I WILL HANDLE THIS MY WAY

SEND SOMEONE TO REASON WITH HIM

DISPERSE THE CROWD

shaping the society

the social concepts that you introduced may start living their own life as the society adapts them.

20



Pledge of Loyalty

Woman assaulted

Sir, a woman was assaulted by her neighbour, who accused her of informing on him. She hasn't signed the Pledge of Loyalty yet. We've detained the assailant.

IMPRISON HIM

LET HIM GO, THE PRISON IS FULL

22

THE LOYALTY

Inspect the Loyalty, inspect the city, inspect the city

6

SEARCH FOR THE CITY

Find another witness

62/200

conscious approach

hard subjects - how to talk about them
months of polishing the message
the end quote

An aerial, high-angle shot of a desolate, snowy landscape. In the center, a complex of industrial structures, possibly a power plant or refinery, is engulfed in flames and smoke. The fire is bright orange and red, contrasting sharply with the dark, cold environment. Several large, dark, rectangular structures are visible, some with glowing lights. To the left, a long, narrow structure, possibly a conveyor belt or a road, extends into the distance. To the right, a large, dark, rectangular structure is visible, also with some glowing lights. The overall atmosphere is one of industrial decay and environmental devastation.

AND IN THE FIGHT FOR SURVIVAL
WE CROSSED THE LINE

art way in frost

mood

understand your game

design a distinctive visual character

keep your game near defined adjectives

separate realisation to layers to make it doable and close to message

a. “adjectives”

strict, short key concept + guidelines

ART “ADJECTIVES”

cold

*southern pole / ice age era area / cataclysm is coming...
danger / bad weather / survival*

city

from small outpost to living city with satellites

steampunk

mechanical constructions / steam / smoke / core generator / heroes / vehicles

serious game

serious look / serious & mature city survival in frostpunk world

living, moral society

expeditions

victorian era

(not a must)

buildings / characters / city center around generator

aaa strategy / sim game

PRODUCT GUIDELINES

PRODUCT

TITLE

unique, distinctive, containing game's USP

INDUSTRIAL (working title)

POSITIONING

[AAA, mid-core, indie]

mid-core/hard-core

PRICING / DISTRIBUTION

[\$ & platform(s)]

Steam

SYNOPSIS

City-builder/survival osadzony w świecie, w którym nastąpił arktyczny kataklizm. Rozgrywka polega na odbudowie/rozwoju metropolii i społeczeństwem oraz eksploracji nowych terenów. W tym celu poszukiwania surowców i sposobów przeżycia. Ostatecznym celem jest odbudowa i adaptacja miasta i społeczeństwa do nadciągającego kataklizmu. Wspiera się z konwencji zarówno city-builderów (Sim-City, Tropico), jak i survival games (This War of Mine).

FROSTPUNK - ART

b.understanding

the cold





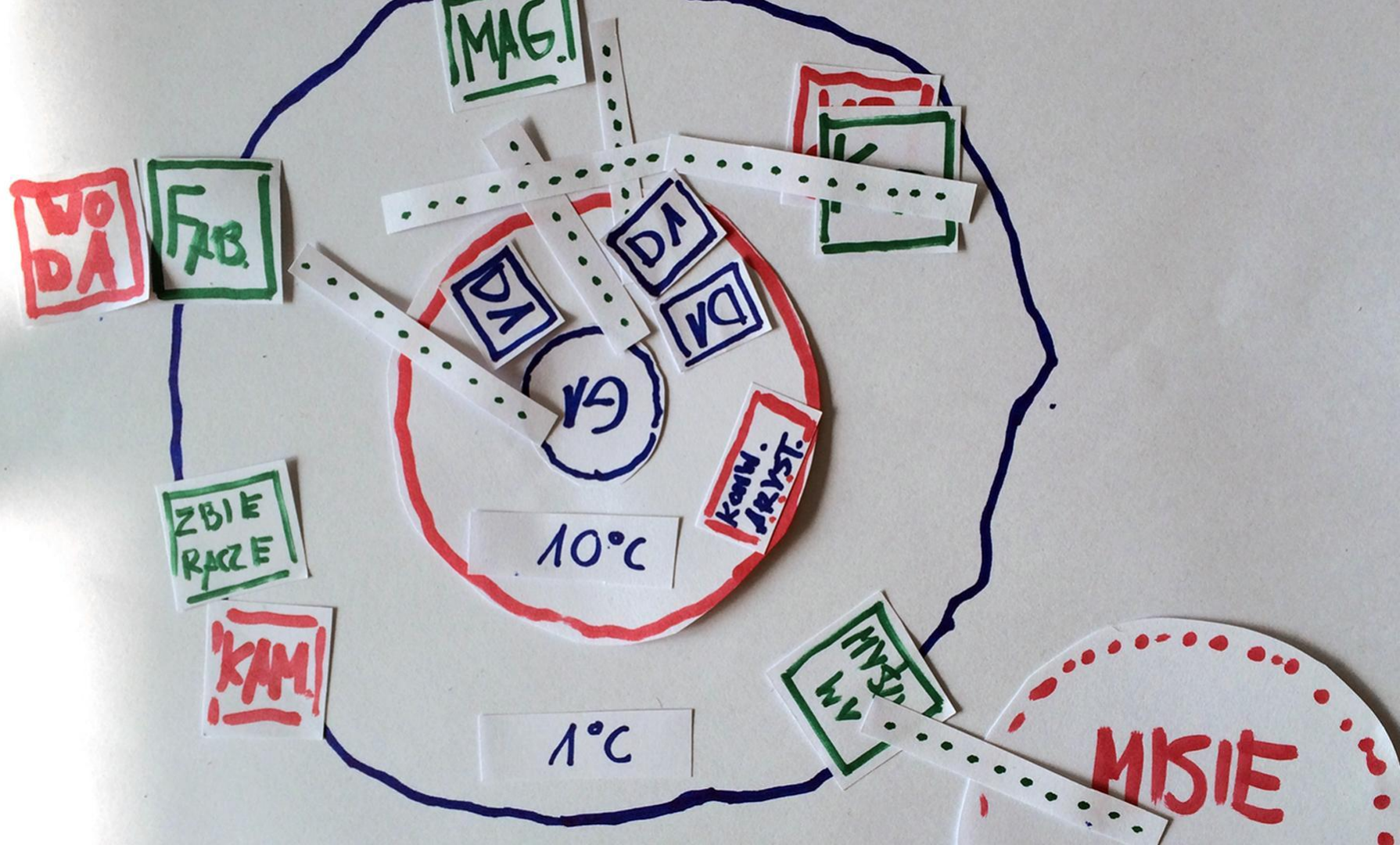
b.visual landmark

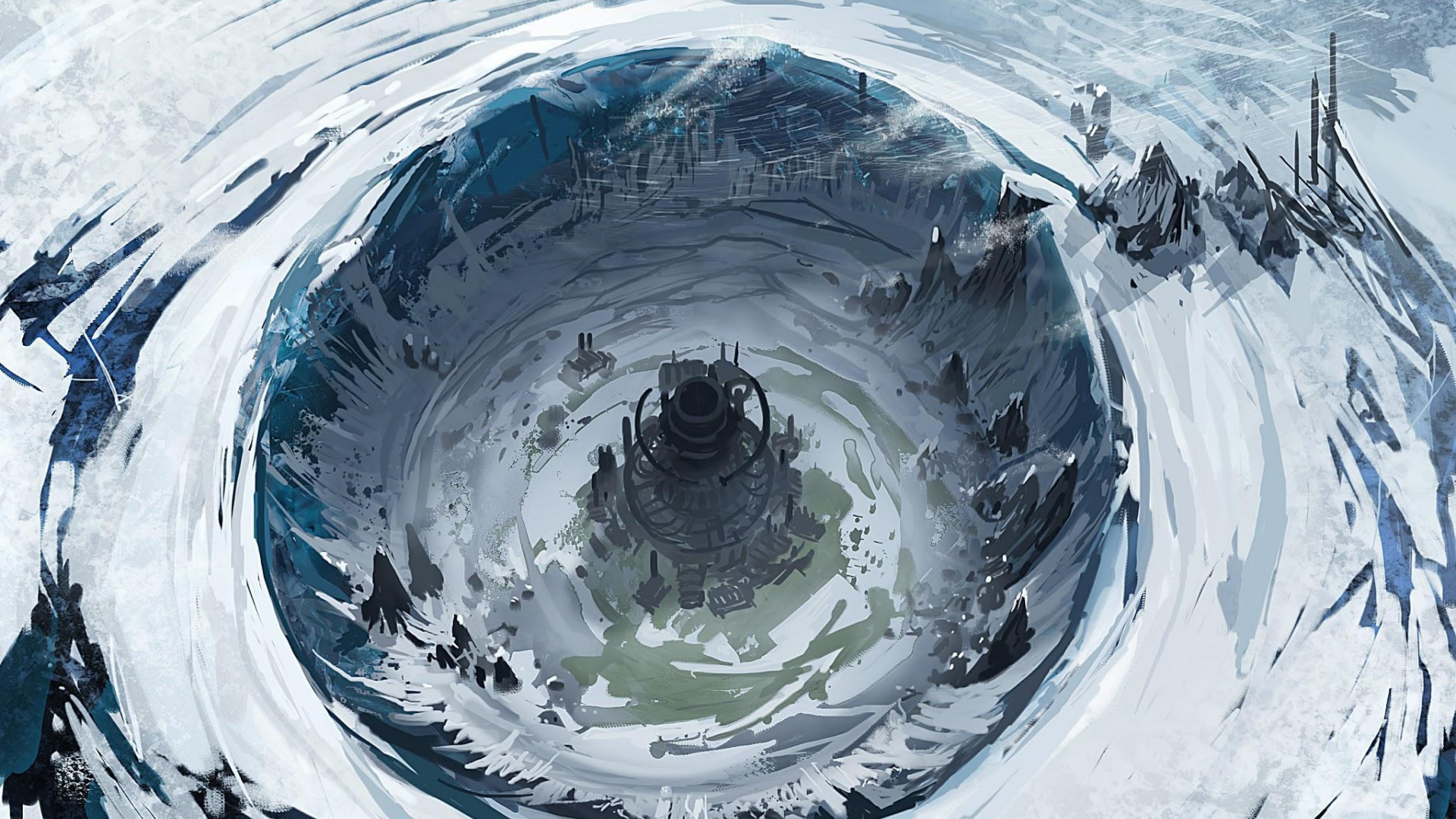
HOLE

defined borders and scales

art direction keypoint - recognition and immersion

natural to game design mechanics





POPULATION

TOTAL: 70

SICK: 28 (8 gravely ill)

HUNGRY: 13

HOMELESS: 1

UNASSIGNED: 1

Coal: about 8 days

Ice: 100

Materials: 24

Steam Cores: 3

Raw Food: 0

Rations: 9

Heat Zone: +0.0°C
Outside: -30.0°C



08:31 Day 4
Work time



People

Resources

Food

Tech


Tent


House


Medical Post


Infirmary


Beacon





6649 2017 2028 00000
WORK TIME 15:08

-50°C

DAY 22 23 24 25 26
01291 01715





13h 06m



DISCONTENT

OBEDIENCE



FROSTPUNK - ART

3 LAYERS

3 ASPECTS

FROSTPUNK

layer 1

city view

is for

**building, management
and world changes**

art realization

**cold, steampunk
city scale, art systems**





Wood crates depleted!

809 192 000 000 000 0



WORK TIME 08:39

20

DAY 3



EFFICIENCY: 0%
GUARD STATION

ON
OFF

24h



Inoperative

GENERAL

WORKFORCE

WORKFORCE

0/3

Workers

NONE -1

0

+1 MAX

0 available

Engineers

NONE -1

0

+1 MAX

15 available

7

DISCONTENT
HOPE



30 / 80



WEATHER CHANGES

HOPE AND DISCONTENT

851 198 0000 0055 0000

REST TIME 02:12

-30°

DAY 4 5 6 7 8

EMERGENCY SHIFT

This facility will work constantly for the next 24 hours.



Stanley Finch
Work, work, nothing but work till I die... I know the tune all too well.



Jack Boston
Twenty four hours on the job? Insane. But that's our lot...

80 10
🍴 +

DISCONTENT

HOPE



EFFICIENCY: 80%

WORKSHOP

24h

In operation

GENERAL **WORKFORCE**

Beacon
about 4 hours
 ABORT

Allows us to build the Beacon, deploy Scouts who survey the wilderness and maintain communication with them.

WORKFORCE

4/5

Engineers -1 4 +1 MAX 11 available



56 / 80



24h
Functioning

GENERAL INTEL WORKERS

WORKFORCE

10/10
Engineers NONE -1 10 1 MAX 76 available

PASSIVE EFFECTS

Propaganda Center delivers news to people's homes every day, increasing hope.



DISCONTENT
HOPE



124 / 578

FROSTPUNK - ART

layer 2

decisions & rules


is for

society & problems

art realization

dark, snow&coal

ui heavy, big scale



Protest

Facing starvation

Captain, a **crowd** has gathered to complain **angrily** about the **hunger**. Many of them haven't eaten in a long time.

WE HAVE TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT.

I'll have to feed everyone in 3 days and stockpile a decent amount of food.

LET'S TRY TO SORT IT OUT

Q QUEST

WE CAN DO EVEN BETTER.

Q QUEST

MAYBE LATER

Q QUEST

GO BACK

Adaptation

Book of Laws

Hard work rigor

SIGNED
Emergency shift

Fighting arena

Child labour -
safe jobs

Child shelters

Medic helpers

SIGNED
Cemetery

Ceremonial
funeralsOrgan
transplantationRadical
treatment

Sustain Life

Food additives

rewarding



Child labour - safe jobs

There's not enough hands to do all the work. We shall allow children to be employed in safe places, like cookhouses or hothouses.

SIGN

After introducing this law, another one can be passed after 0d 12h

- ◊ **PASSIVE EFFECT:** children can be employed in safe jobs
- ◊ signing will slightly decrease hope

FROSTPUNK - ART

layer 3
map

is for
exploration & story

art realization
snow, epic, scale



Crash Site

That's where our expedition got dispersed when our vehicles crashed during a snowstorm. We found some of our precious supplies that we have left behind.



Scouting area will give:

60

180



4h 28m



10h 20m



WAITING

Weather Station

A tall building with some peculiar devices on the roof. It's most likely a weather station set up by the scientists from Winterhome.



Send Scouts here to learn more about this place.

SURVIVORS

- ☐ Build a Workshop (0 / 1)
- ☒ Build the Beacon (2 / 1)
- ☐ Rescue survivors (0 / 20)

FROSTPUNK - ART

we delivered the message

society survival

3.

new “why’s”

NEW “WHY’S”

so.. why make games?

for fresh experiences

and creating “own” roads

for creating joy and happiness

for player’s fulfillment

to think and talk about life

and transfer real life experiences

for money, job, love and for hell of a fun!

plus much much more...

NEW “WHY’S”

one example - **following an idea of**

responsible

development

NEW “WHY’S”

movies vs **books** vs **games**

NEW “WHY’S”

they all
fight for one time

user's time

NEW “WHY’S”

nintendo of america president:

***“i compete for time,
not against Xbox,
PlayStation”***

NEW “WHY’S”

games

would explore **all genres,**
values, experiences

to fill different user's
time

NEW “WHY’S”

GAMES
MIGHT BE NEW
BOOKS

NEW “WHY’S”

games

would explore **all genres,**
values, experiences

to fill different user's
time

NEW “WHY’S”

GAMES
MIGHT BE NEW
SCHOOL
READINGS

NEW “WHY’S”

The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn

Analects

To Kill a Mockingbird

War and Peace

Romeo and Juliet

Lord of the Rings

Animal Farm

NEW "WHY'S"

Gone Home?

love & acceptance

Minecraft?

creativity

The Last of Us?

„no hero” reality

Papers, please?

dilemmas

Spec Ops: The Line?

morality

Brothers: A Tale of Two Sons?

hard

truth

NEW “WHY’S”

your kids will play your games

what will they learn?

will it be meaningful to them?

will there be a part with a value?

NEW “WHY’S”

**would you like your kids to play
your games ?**

NEW “WHY’S”

and so...

NEW “WHY’S”


**think of your own “why”
it’s still just the beginning**

remember your audience is huge, and so is the
responsibility

NEW “WHY’S”

and ...

MAKE
YOUR
MARK

A large, bold red exclamation mark graphic is positioned to the right of the text. It consists of a thick vertical stem and a triangular head, both rendered in a solid red color.