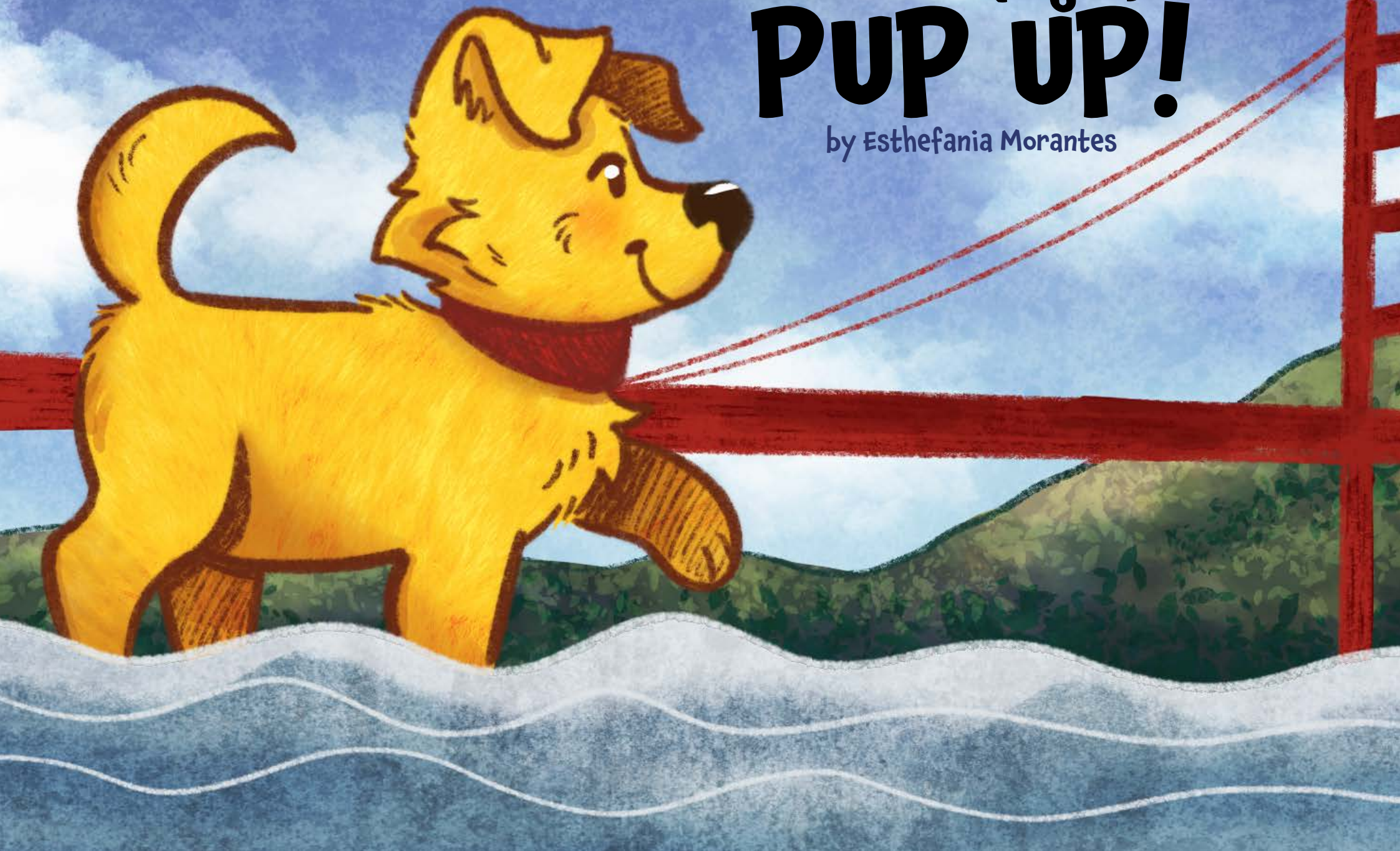


The Making of **PUP UP!**

by Esthefania Morantes







= jump =



oh no!



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Giant puppy interacting
with its friends

Introduction

How can exponential scale increases drive progression and create satisfying chaotic interactions generating animations and dynamic environmental responses?

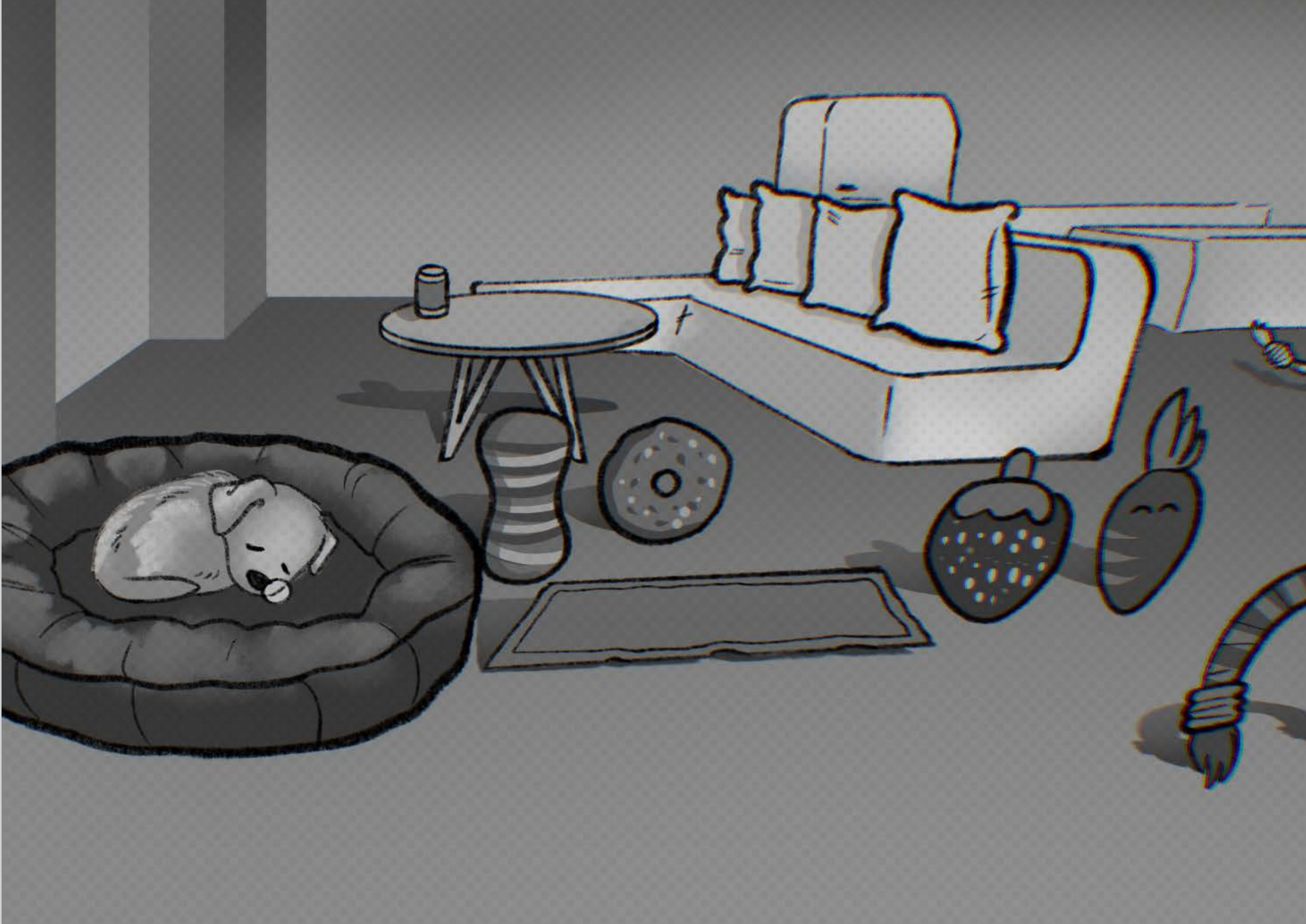
Pup Up! invites you to explore the world as a mischievous puppy who can interact with (pretty much) everything around them. By causing playful chaos and making a mess, you grow in size, unlocking new areas and new ways to mess around. The more you interact the faster you grow, the faster you grow the more dangerous you become to your unsuspecting neighborhood.

While many chaotic sandbox games lean heavily on 3D physics, Pup Up! focuses on a core scaling mechanic driving progression and vibrant, animations and VFX from a 2.5D

perspective. Every interaction should feel satisfying and responsive, with dynamic environmental reactions that visually and audibly reinforce your growing impact.

This approach fills a unique niche in chaotic sandbox games by blending exponential growth with artistic, animated feedback to create an evolving playground where your increasing scale unlocks fresh, chaotic possibilities. The result is a vibrant, ever-changing world where playful destruction and discovery go hand in hand.

Left: Concept Art of the living room objects placement and scale

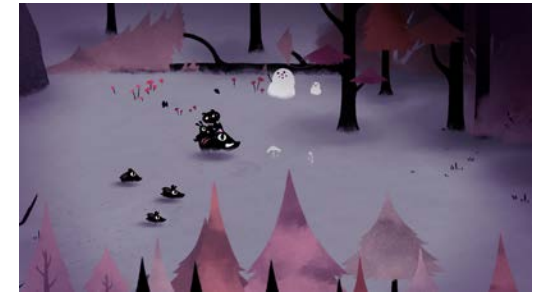
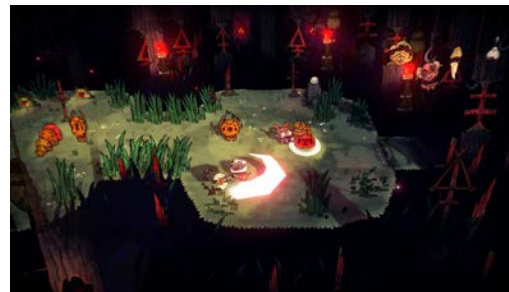


Context

The mechanics of this project draw inspiration from chaotic sandbox games like **Goat Simulator**, **I Am Bread**, and **Octodad**. These titles challenge players with intentionally awkward controls and physics-driven environments that encourage creative chaos and unpredictable outcomes. They emphasize player control and embracing the game's silliness gives them freedom to interact creatively, cause mayhem, and solve unconventional puzzles, blending destruction with humor.

For gameplay progression, Pup Up! is based on scale-based mechanics popularized by **Tasty Planet**, **Agar.io**, **Donut County**, and **Katamari**. Players start small and grow by absorbing or interacting with objects, with growth unlocking new challenges and opportunities. This scaling mechanic drives dynamic, escalating goals and playful chaos, keeping gameplay engaging as the world evolves around the player.

Visually and in animation, the game draws from the satisfying, sense of humor of **Five Minutes to Kill Yourself** and **Untitled Goose Game**, which use expressive 2D aesthetics and lively animations to make interactions feel charming and rewarding. It also takes inspiration from **Cult of the Lamb**, **Koira**, and **Don't Starve**, known for their 2.5D perspectives, distinctive art styles, clear UI, and immersive environments. Cult of the Lamb's pop-up book look, Koira's hand-drawn emotional design, and Don't Starve's sketch-like visuals combine to create lively spaces that support intuitive navigation and a rich player experience.



Left Column: Katamari, Donut County, I am Bread, Cult of the Lamb
Right Column: Koira, Goat Simulator, Untitled Goose Game, Cult of the Lamb



First Row: The Loud House, Second Row: Bojack Horseman,
Third Row: Clifford the Big Red Dog, Fourth Row: Bluey

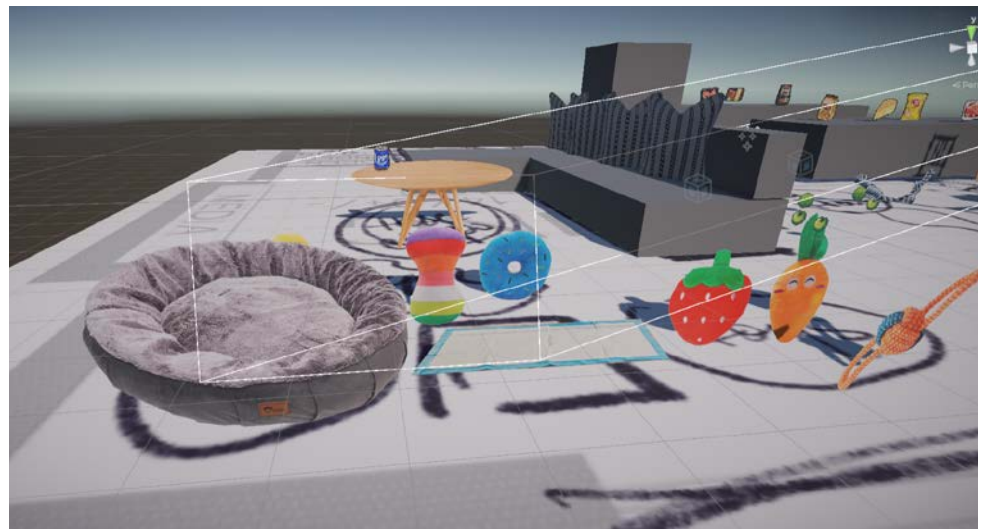
This project's visual direction is deeply inspired by the charming style of *Cult of the Lamb*, noted for its pop-up book aesthetic, expressive character designs, and clean, intuitive UI.

Bojack Horseman influences the project through its use of vivid color palettes and textured overlays that make characters and backgrounds feel alive and distinct. Characters like Mr. Peanutbutter stand out due to bright, saturated colors that enhance their personality, which directly inspired the design of the main protagonist of *Pup Up!*

Clifford the Big Red Dog shapes the game's approach to scale and interaction, showcasing playful size dynamics within a 2D city and maintaining an iconic, readable visual style.

Finally, TV shows like *The Loud House* and *Bluey* inspire the design of backgrounds and environments by employing bold shape language, simplified but authentic scenery, and everyday details that keep the world visually light, playful, and relatable.

Together, these references guide a cohesive 2.5D art style that prioritizes expressive characters, intuitive UI, and immersive environments, all crafted to enhance navigation and storytelling within the game's world.



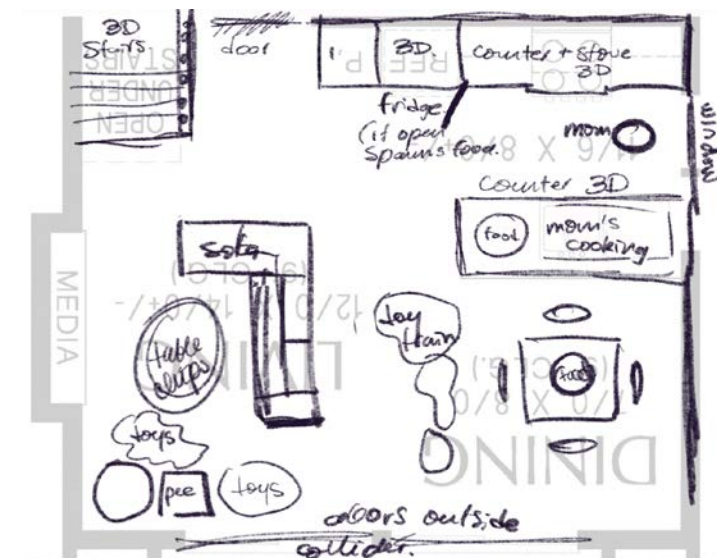
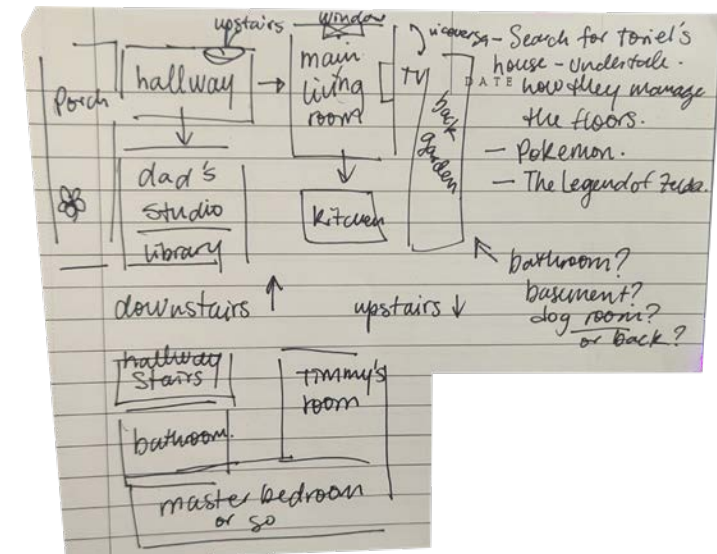
Process of determining the layout and scale of the living room, including arranging furniture as platforms and objects, while considering how the player can interact with them across different difficulty levels.

2.5D Approach

This approach allows the game to take place in a visually three-dimensional space, using 3D collisions which are essential for fast, responsive interactions a typical chaotic sandbox while also allowing to integrate illustrated visual assets and animations, combining the best of both 2D art and 3D functionality.

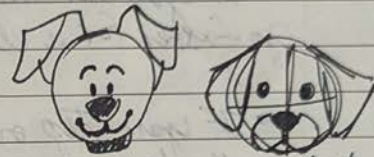
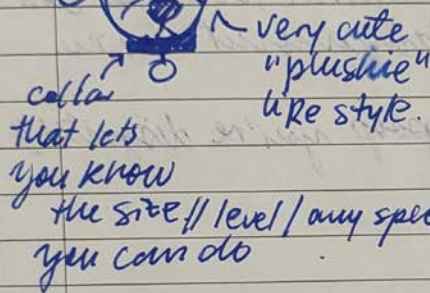
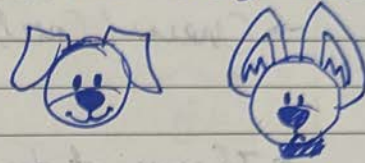
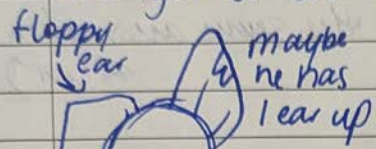
Implementing this in Unity presented challenges, especially in managing colliders. Objects need colliders to be interactable and serve as platforms, but the 2.5D view complicates the player's perception of what counts as a platform or whether they are grounded. Resolving this required a lot of experimentation to define interaction ranges and improve player clarity. Positioning objects relative to the space was also complex. Initially, the floor plan was designed from a top-down view and imported directly, but scaling it disproportionately was necessary to match the 2.5D perspective. This trial and error process was crucial to create a layout that feels visually intuitive, even if not actually proportional.

Overall, this approach balances visual style and gameplay mechanics, tackling technical hurdles to deliver a fluid, engaging experience where scale and interaction feel natural and satisfying.

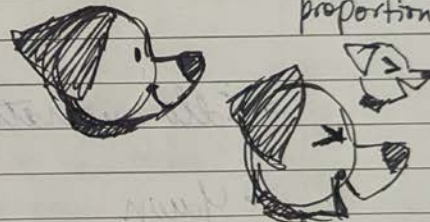
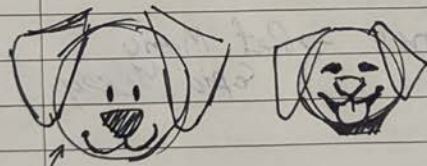


Initial concept and refined floor plans for the living room.

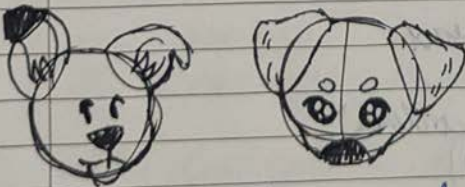
Breed: Mutt - Golden Retriever 186.
maybe a bit brisied from the shelter



i'm not into realistic proportions.



small eyes
big nose / mouth
ears.



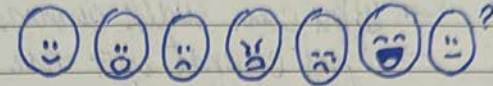
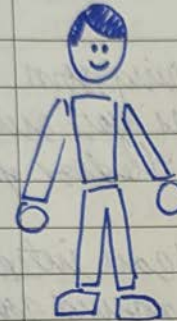
Circles and curves always
Eyes are beans ●●
Plushie oriented.

Essential Actions:

- Pee → Poo
- Run → Jump
- Bite → Drag
- ↳ Eat → Vomit / Gag
- Scratch / Destroy
- Creuch / Hide ??
- BARK!!!
- Run (out of control)
- Puppy eyes / ask for attention.

Typo

People are not the focus, they can be blank like mannequins.



→ They could be made of simple geometrical shapes but have to be VERY EXPRESSIVE, as they are the way for the player to figure out which actions are good/bad.



→ they should talk like Animal Crossing / Cult of the Lamb / Undertale characters because we (the puppy) cannot understand.

→ They should have really distinctive happy/scolding sounds, if they are really mad they could run around for us and reset the level
→ Investigate the Vintaged Goose Game Gardener, how he kicks us out.

→ If they love us they should come close and do a "Petting" animation // we should grow from this.

Typo



Left: Written concepts about character design, the shape of the main character and human sketches and thought process for future reference

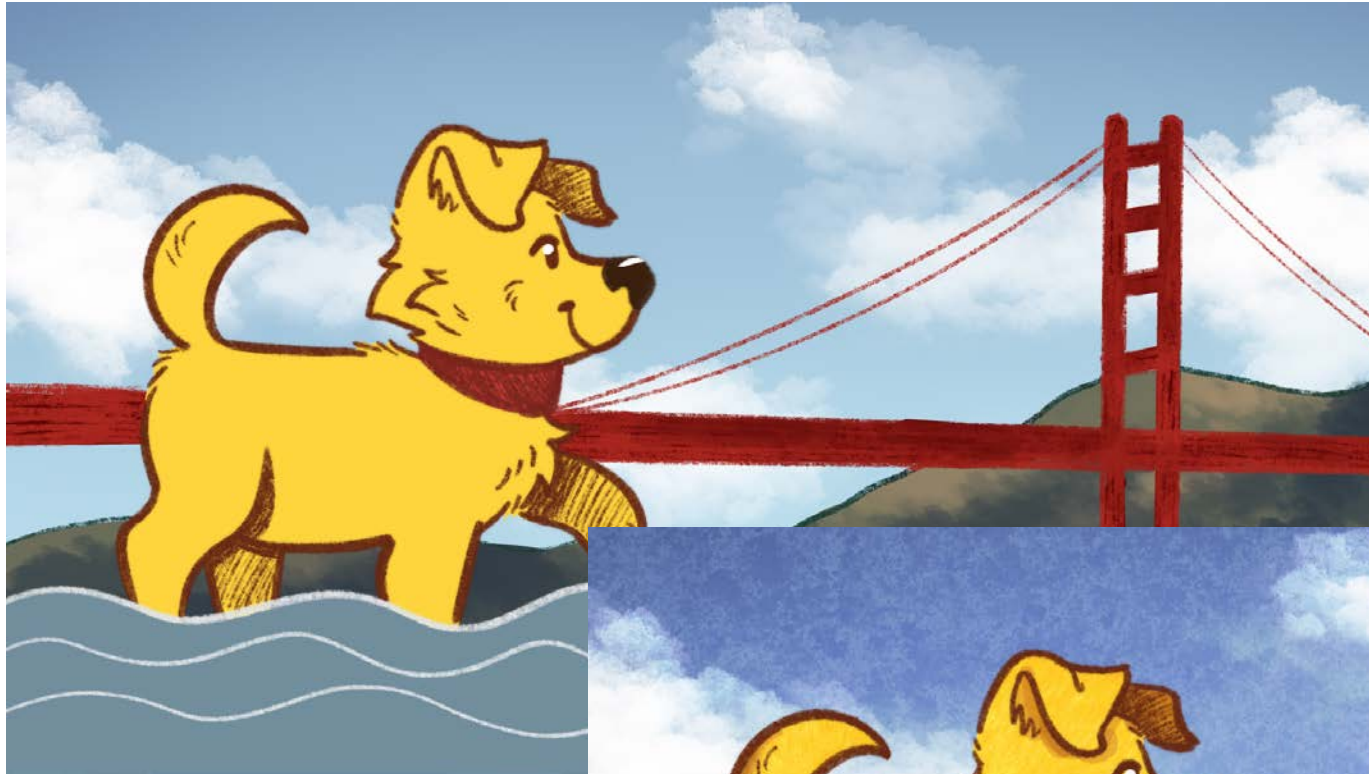
Right: Sketches of a tiny/giant puppy interactions: Playing with a beach ball, licking a human, being the size of a palm, playing with a "stick", crossing the river



Sketches of a giant puppy interactions: Eating treats, sitting on people, reaching for the moon, pooping outside.



Sides: A variety of puppy designs of different breeds. Middle: Main character turnaround



Texture Testing

Textured brushes and overlays were used for a handmade feel, and to separate the layers or material of objects, creating strong contrast between the protagonist and the background





The “interactable” objects are lined while the backdrop is kept unlined and drawn using geometric shapes.





Sketches and process for the props



Props Stages - Normal - Damaged - Almost Destroyed



Props designs

Gameplay

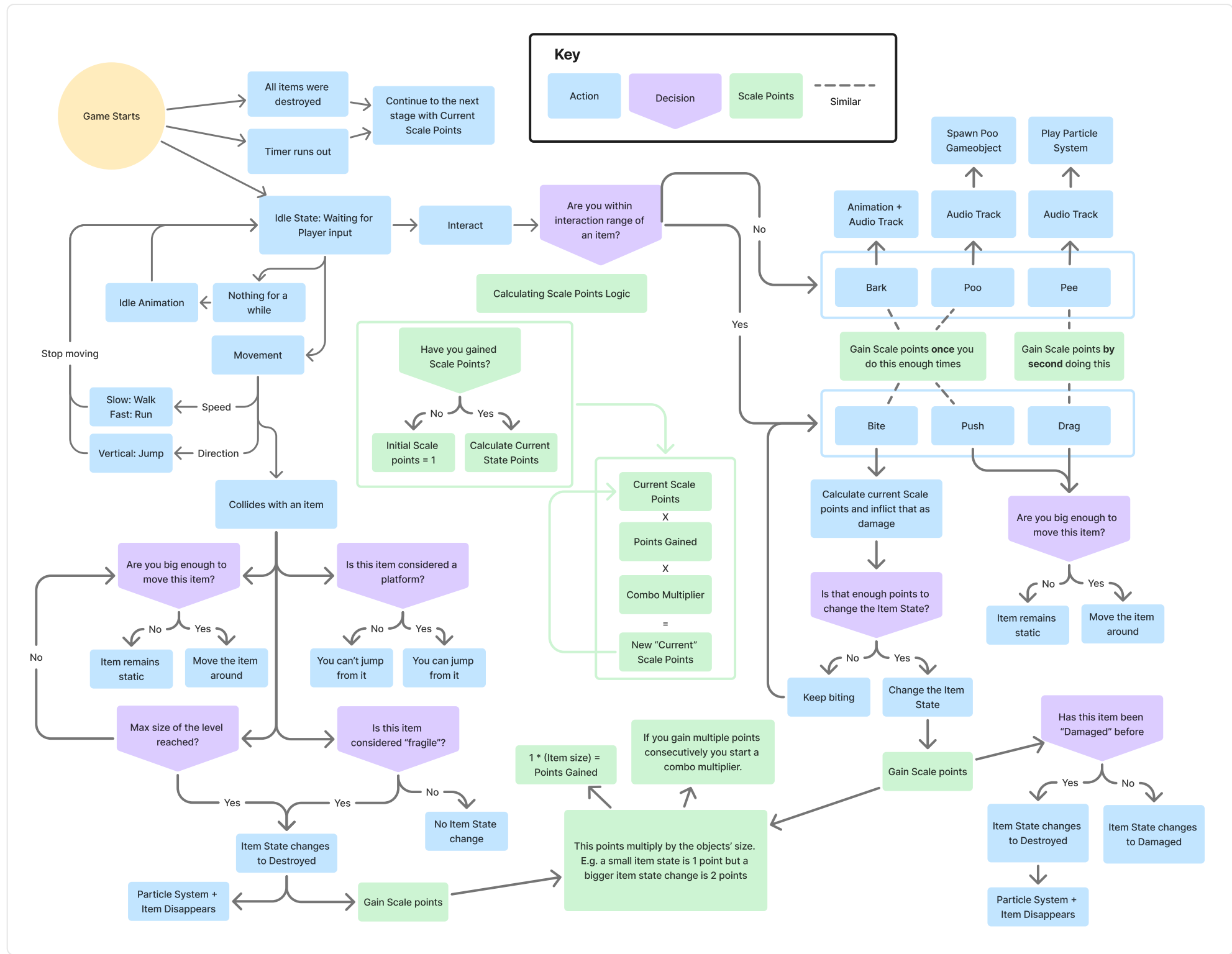
Pup Up! gameplay centers around player control and growth. The core mechanic lets the player grow bigger with every mess created. The more you interact, the more you expand, and with that growth your power, speed, and reach increases.

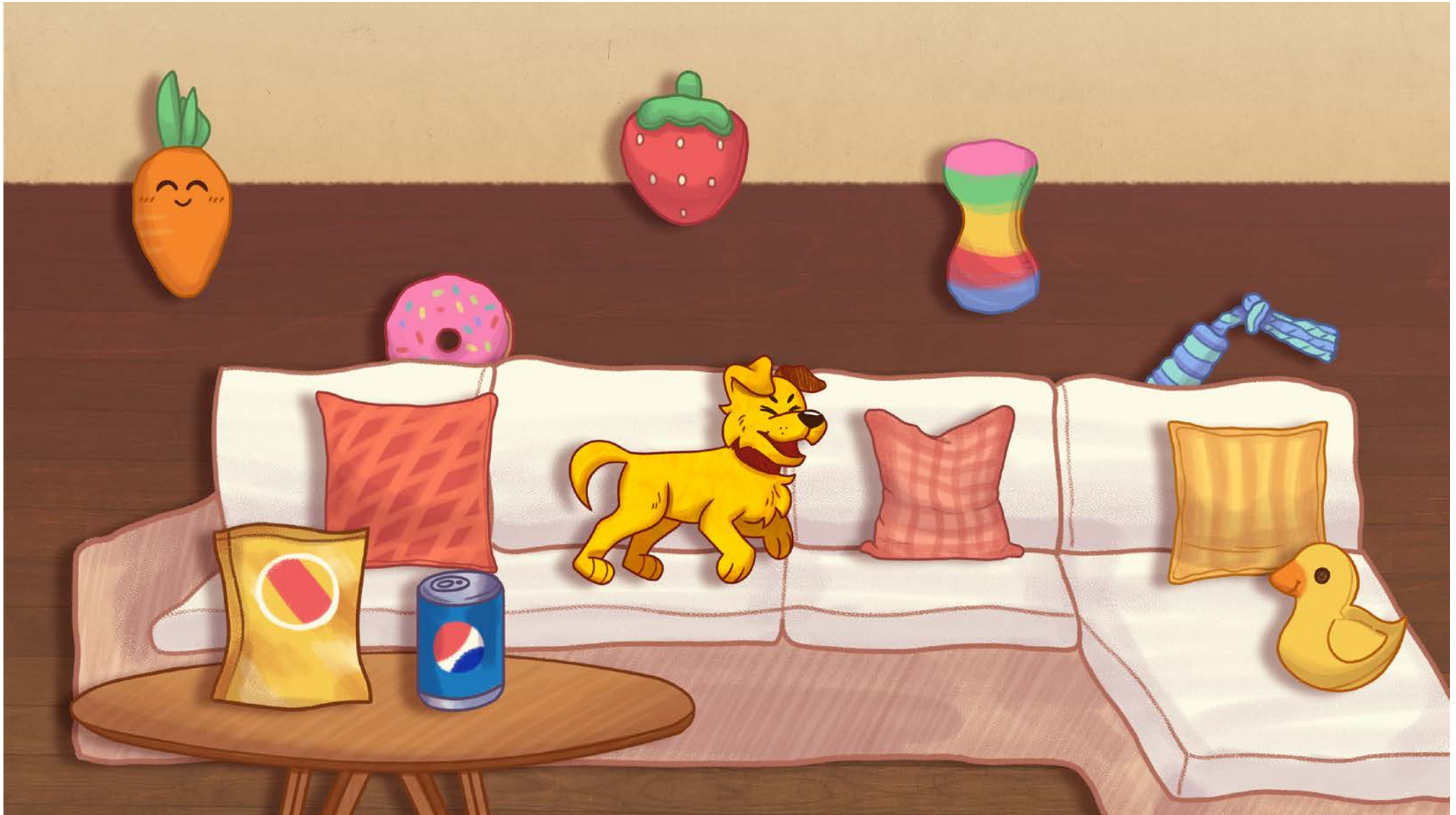
You play as a curious puppy free to explore and interact with everything around you. You can drag, push, bite, bark or eat items, each action earning "scale points." These accumulate to make you grow, allowing you to destroy or reach your next objective even faster, snowballing into a giant threat for your owners.

As you get bigger you unlock new platforms, areas and objects to play with. Some items require more size or strength to interact with, encouraging you to keep experimenting and chaining actions to trigger combo multipliers and faster growth.



Left: Sketches of a giant puppy wagging their tail
Right: Gameplay loop and logic flow chart





Final vision for the game - Jumping on the sofa

Prototype



Left: Giant Puppy reaching for the moon

Scan to watch the prototype gameplay!
https://youtu.be/xnQOraGE6AA?si=umxbBF7bS85oOs_j



ASSET LIST

Character Animations

Jump
Drag
Eat / Bite
or interact
Run
Walk
Bark
Pee
Poo

Idle ideas:
Strech
Scratch ear
Walk in circles
Sleep
Dig
Pant

Props Characteristics

Interactable: Can reach bitten or destroyed states if the player interacts enough times, can be dragged or pushed
Damaged: an item can have several bitten stages
Destroyed: Particle system or broken animation and disappears
Fragile: Breaks upon first impact with the floor, can't be dragged, can be pushed.
Walls or Boundaries: Destroys upon collision when the player has reached max scale for the level

Visual FX

Combo system counter
or pop up
Particle systems/FX:
Running
Pee
Destroying an object
Scale effect

Environments & Props ideas

House

Table
Couch
Cushions
Carpet
Human Food
Dog/Pets Food
Fridge
Toys
Food/Water bowl
Owners - Humans

Park

Other dogs and pets
More Humans
Pigeons
Trees
Flowers
Grass
Picnic Tables
Lake / Sand (terrain
based interactions)
Playground

City - CBD

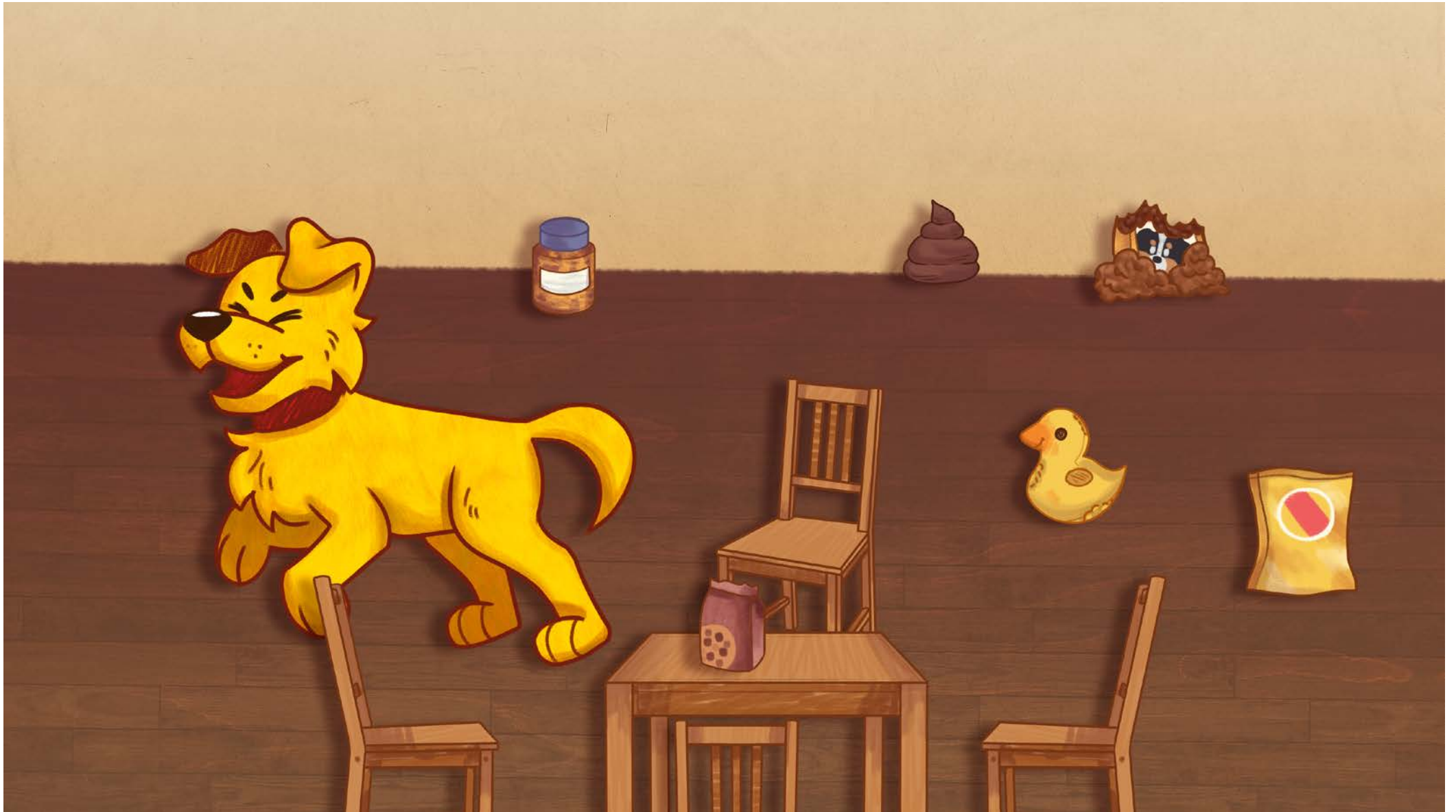
Buildings - Businesses and
Housing
Traffic - Transportation
A lot of humans
Bridges (these would
serve as a loading screen
to go to a different city)
Beach - Sports Stadium
Sunset/Sunrise/Moonlight

World / Countries

Tourist sites
Famous monuments
Cultures - Dia de los
Muertos, Parades,
Carnivals
Sky - Airplanes
Ocean - Submarines
Islands - Terrain or
platforms

Sound FX

Musical SoundTrack
(Background Music)
Diegetic Sound Effects: each
item should react with their
respective sound, reflecting
the material they are made of
and what state they are (e.g.
metal can falling for damaged
and metal being crushed for
destroyed)
Sound FXs for the actions of the
puppy: bark, pee, poo.
Ambient sounds: Outside in the
park, people talking, other animals



Final vision for the game - Running around the kitchen

CREDITS

Thank you to Jadd and my peers for brainstorming with me how to make a game about a giant messy dog.

And thank you for your reading this and your interest on my project. See you with a full version soon!

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- John Over (Director) (2000-2003) Clifford the Big Red Dog (TV Series) PBS Kids
- Chris Savino, Michael Rubiner (Creator) (2015-) The Loud House (TV Series) Nickelodeon
- Joe Brumm (Creator) (2018-) Bluey (TV Series) ABC Kids



