

AGI Studio 1 _wk12_ related work_Clam Man & The Maker's Eden
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Clam Man

<https://marafrass.itch.io/clam-man>

Clam Man is an indie point'n'click adventure game with old school picture-book style by Marafrass. The 2D game was released on itcho in 2019. The game runs on Windows, macOS and Linux.

Clam Man is a story driven game filled with absurd jokes that are related to office or daily life. All the backgrounds and characters are hand drawn illustrations. It is like reading an interactive picture book when playing the game (with lots of interesting underwater creatures and their strange jokes).

The story follows the Clam Man, who gets fired by the mayonnaise manufacturer, stepping into his new adventure, set in the underwater world, Snacky Bay. The game doesn't have much puzzles like the common point'n'click games. The developers create a relaxing and funny gaming-reading experience with the jazz style theme song.

The Clam Man moves right or left on a horizontal (ground) platform most of the time. There are different numbers of options in conversations for the player to choose from. There are also a few narrators throughout the game. The indications for interactive props are labeled with the name of the objects. The characters that are available for interactions are also labeled with their names.

I like the old school picture style a lot. The text in the game also use a hand written font to enhance the old school picture book style. The varieties of the characters are also a big add for bringing the underwater world alive (even though the town looks no different from a human town most of the time).

However I'm not sure if labeling the interactive props with the item names is the best choice. The texts on the labels are relatively small compared with other content text on the game stage, which might easily get ignored. The game menu button style is the same as the rest parts of the game, which makes it blend in with the backgrounds sometimes.

While the player is reading the story / game from a third person view most of the time, there are scenes where Clam Man is interacting with props using first person view. This classic cinematic technique is often used in role-playing games to create the sense of being in character. The same technique is also used in Night in the Woods.

The various options for the conversations are a great collection which makes up the most enjoyable parts of this game.

The Maker's Eden

<https://screwylightbulb.itch.io/the-makers-eden>

The Maker's Eden is another point'n'click adventure game I looked at this week. Both game, The Clam Man and The Maker's Eden, got some detective novel elements in the narrative. The "solving mystery" vibe is something I would like to build for my game. (The game starts with a girl missing after all and the ending goal is to discover why and how she's missing.)

On itchio game site, The Maker's Eden by Screwy Lightbulb is listed as a visual novel. The environment and character styles got an early 20th century vibe plus androids and flying cars. It reminds me of the world in Blade Runner. The player plays as the protagonist from a first-person angle. The motion comic "cutscenes", pop up when the player interacts with people or props, remind me a lot of DC or Marvel comic books. There are three acts in the game. The first two acts have been released. It seems like the game is still under development. I watched a few game plays on youtube. After a few clips, where a lot of point'n'click happened, I am still not sure what the protagonist is trying to look for. I assume it's the genre where the game is focusing on "experience and game world and character", like Night in the Wood.

The first thing that attracts me about this game is the motion comic style they use for interaction scenes. I think it is an interesting technique for presenting the interactions. When interaction happens, the pop up classic comic frames and speech bubbles take over the center of the scene, which makes the scene sort of blur out in the background. This way the player can entirely focus on the interaction without other distractions on the scene. The contrast between this focus framing technique and the rest of the game is not that clear in The Maker's Eden, because the player starts out with first-person angle. This framing would work better in The Clam Man and Night in the Wood, where the player plays from a third-person perspective most of the game. This way, the player will switch from third-person angle to first-person interacting with both NPCs and props. For my project, I am setting the game up as the third-person angle. I would like to try to implant this technique for interaction with NPCs. I think it would enhance the "being-in-story" sense for the player when having more first-angle opportunities.