

The Art of

SPIRIT WOLF



By The Anti-Caking Agents

Introduction

Anti-Caking Agents' newest game production is called Spirit Wolf and takes place in the realms of Norse Mythology. The story begins in Asgard, the realm of the gods, where Bragi, son of Odin, resented his family and attempted to poison them using a virulent toxin hidden inside golden apples. This action sent Odin and his two sons Thor and Baldur into a coma. Unfortunately for Bragi his brother Loki escaped and now seeks the cure to heal his father and brothers.

Norns, the weaver of fate, tells Loki that he must call upon the help of a great warrior, the son of Gíralgörrtindabaldur, to go forth and seize a variety of magical potions and implements that would combine to form a cure for the poisoned gods. However, it transpires that Loki selects the wrong Viking for the quest. A unique characteristic of this game is demonstrated by the main protagonist, Fyedör Kypchut, who unlike most other game protagonists, is not happy to be sent on this quest and he has to be threatened by the god Loki before he will undertake the quest.

Fyedör is assisted by the once great mortal warrior Brandur Ulfear. Although Brandur led and fought in many glorious battles through his lifetime, he was unfortunate enough not to have been killed by the sword. Instead he died from food poisoning. Because his death was not an honourable death, Brandur was not granted access to Valhalla and was sent instead to Hel. Loki sends Brandur to assist Fyedör. Striking a deal with Hel and the goddess Freya, it's agreed that if Brandur aids Fyedör then Freya will grant him passage to Valhalla, the hall of heroes. However, as his body must remain in the underworld, Brandur's soul is forged into the form of a spirit animal, and is bonded to Fyedör.

Loki provides to Fyedör a magic amulet, from which he can call forth three enchanted weapons.

Art Style

The original plan for the game's art style was to produce a cartoony, hand painted style. The art style being influenced by other successful games such as the popular MMORPG World of Warcraft, and also by Torchlight, an RPG game released on PC and on Xbox 360 Live Arcade. Like these games Spirit Wolf would use stylised character designs, a saturated colour pallet and a hand painted texture style, all of which contributed to the success of the named past titles.

However to make best use of the skill-set available within the team it was necessary to make some adjustments.

It was important to achieve an overall feel and cartoony style for the game without outstripping the team's capabilities. So a few alternative styles were proposed and discussed by the team with the overall consensus that a tapestry effect would best reconcile the game's design with the skill-set of the team. The textures for the game would be made to look like they were from a Nordic tapestry, but would be subtle enough to give the game depth.

The tapestry style would fundamentally be made using hand painted textures and vibrant colours, but any textures that were of poor quality, or which only partially met the required standard, could be covered up using an opaque fabric material overlay that was intended to help blend everything together.



bayeux tapestry

Michael Bills

At the start the anti-caking agents were having difficulties processing in keeping concept art and choosing a style to work towards. Eventually the work of Michael Bills, a freelance artist who lived in the United States was chosen as a base style. His art work is simple in design but would also translate well when producing 3D models.



©MICHAEL BILLS

Characters



Fyedör Kypchut

The design for Fyedör was heavily influenced by his personality. Fyedör is 20 years old and is considered by Vikings to be weak. He is very unenthusiastic and has no real interest in anything. Notwithstanding his status as the Leading Man/Hero. It was important to ensure that the design of his character clearly demonstrated these elements.

The final design for Fyedör was inspired by the art of Michael Bills





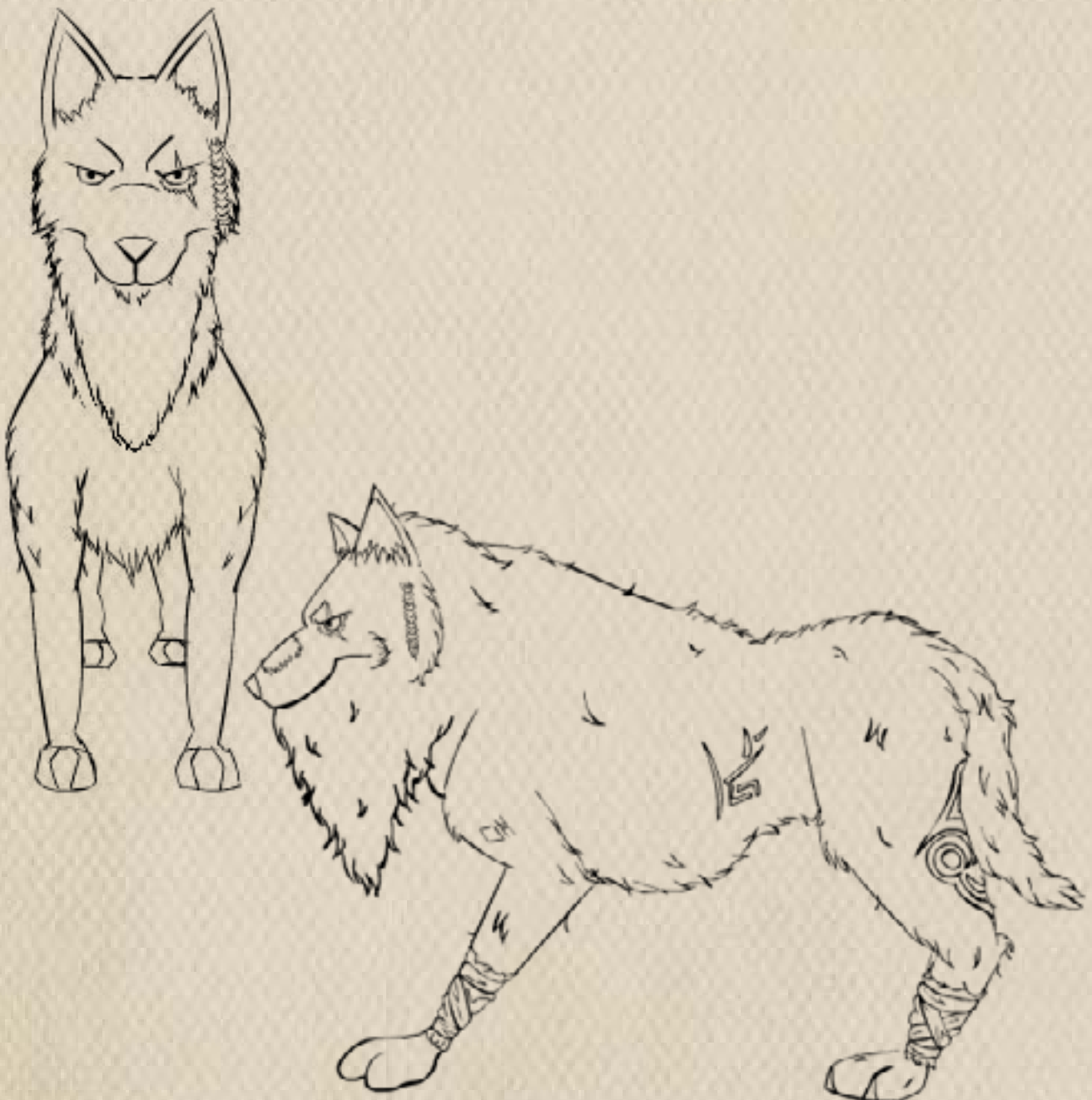
Fyedör final concept art



BRANDUR ULFEAR

Brandur is a Viking warrior who was required by Loki to help Fyedör on his quest to retrieve the artefact. That the Gods. However Brandur is not happy about having to work with anyone, so is especially exasperated to be allied with the unenthusiastic and weakest of Vikings, Fyedör Kypchut. In addition he is forced to take the appearance of a wolf and can only assist from the spirit world.

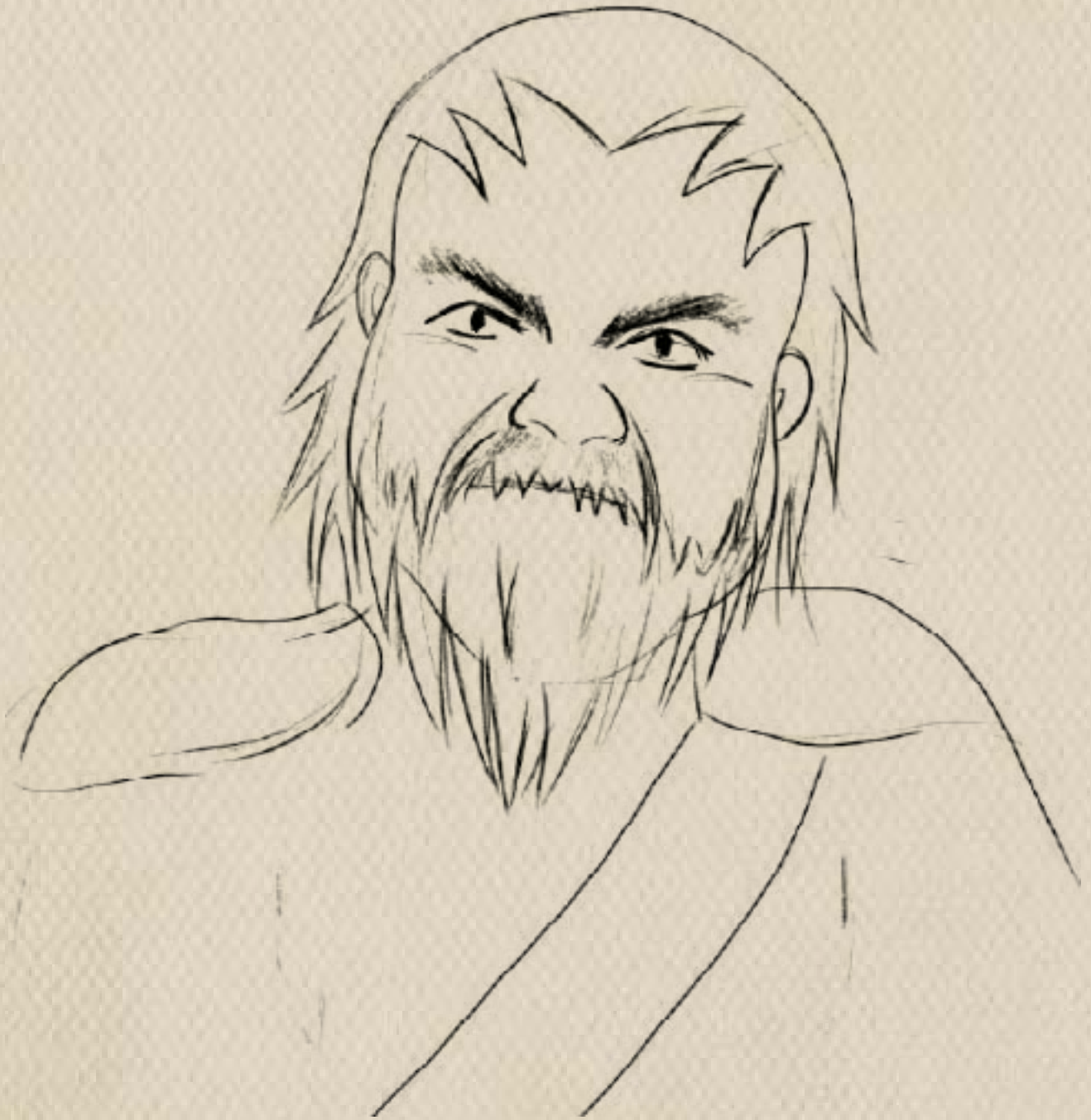
Existing in the spirit world Brandur is unable to slay the foes of the Allies with his own hands. He deeply resents this, and often voices his profound discontent with Fyedör's general incompetence. Nonetheless, resigned to his duty, he recognises that the task must be completed – he just sees no reason to make the experience pleasant for his lacklustre sidekick.





Loki god of mischief

Loki was born to giants and adopted by the god Odin. He is praised and welcomed more than Bragi who shares Odin's blood. This causes Bragi to become enraged and poison Odin and his other sons. Luckily, Loki escaped and was able to put in hand a quest to find a cure that would revive his father and brother.



Bragi god of poetry

In the tale Bragi has poisoned his father and brothers as poetic justice for the way he gets treated. However because Loki escaped, Bragi now has the task of trying to destroying Loki's minion Fyedör, before he finds the cure to the toxin.

Bragi is the main villain for the game and will be Fyedör's final foe in the adventure.



Draugr

The Corporeal Undead

Reanimated, soulless corpses, black as death or with the pallor of the deceased and in possession of superhuman strength. These monsters can sometimes be immune to normal weapons and are often found guarding the wealth of their living counterpart. The Draugr rarely leave their tombs, but should they do so, it is only in the dead of night.



Huldrufolk

Huldrufolk, the Woodland Spirits

They have the fronts of men, but the backs of hollowed-out trees.

Generally shy away from mankind.

Maybe a rock form of these could be the basis for the wall monsters?

Appear as children from the front.

Sometimes have half-human, animal features.



Svartálf

The Dark Ones

Dark elves, dwarves and trolls are usually the same.

Avoid light – turn to stone in daylight.

Human-like, ugly and misshapen.

Shorter than average humans.

Greedy.

Some can become invisible.

Responsible for bad dreams.

Live in the dark in woodland, or near wells and streams.

Have weapons that can cause paralysis.

Use magic.



Jotun

The Giants

Not like traditional giants – some are even human-sized.
Have specific types, e.g. frost and storm giants.
Could also feasibly be tied /associated with the wall monsters.



Nykr

The Water Spirits (Neeck-Ore)

Usually associated with rivers.

Responsible for drowning and floods.

Malevolent beasts – they prey on human flesh.

Sometimes received sacrifices to prevent floods.



Dire Wolves

The Feral Hunters

Slightly larger than grey wolves; heavier and stockier.

Heads were much more massive and wide than those of grey wolves.



Berg-Risir

The Mountain Spirits

Usually friendly to humans, but like to throw boulders at each other.

Possess low intelligence.

Giants, but not much bigger than humans.



Serpents

Nature's Assassins

Giant, highly poisonous.



Skeletron

Large skeletal enemy that attacks with its own bones
Is very resilient.



Einbound

The Warrior Spirits

Viking sirens.

These former Warriors died bravely in battle, and are now dedicated to the will of the Gods. They are bound by Bragi into the lifeless bodies of maidens – which causes the women to grow beards.

They constantly attempt to break free of their bodily prisons by wildly attacking anything nearby – can only be destroyed by enchanted weapons.

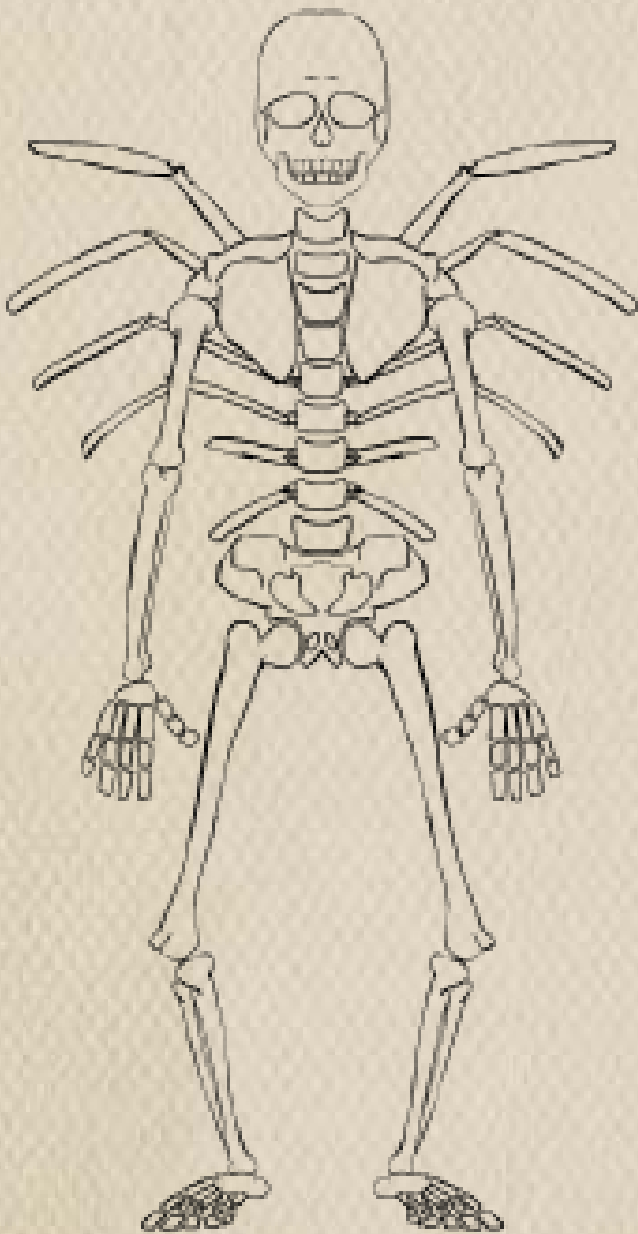
They emit long, roaring battle-cries overlaid with female screams – these enchant and mesmerise all those nearby.

Killing the body and releasing it to Valhalla is a kindness.

Blood Eagles

The Tortured Remains

These are the skeletons of those who have undergone the 'Blood Eagle' torture. Their rib-cage is broken open and resembles bloody wings. The wings still bleed. The lifeless bones are enchanted to serve their master. They fight using anything from scrap materials to basic weapons.



Fire Demons

The Flame Spirits

Giants of fire and flame.

Thrive in super-heated environments, like volcanoes.



Rejected

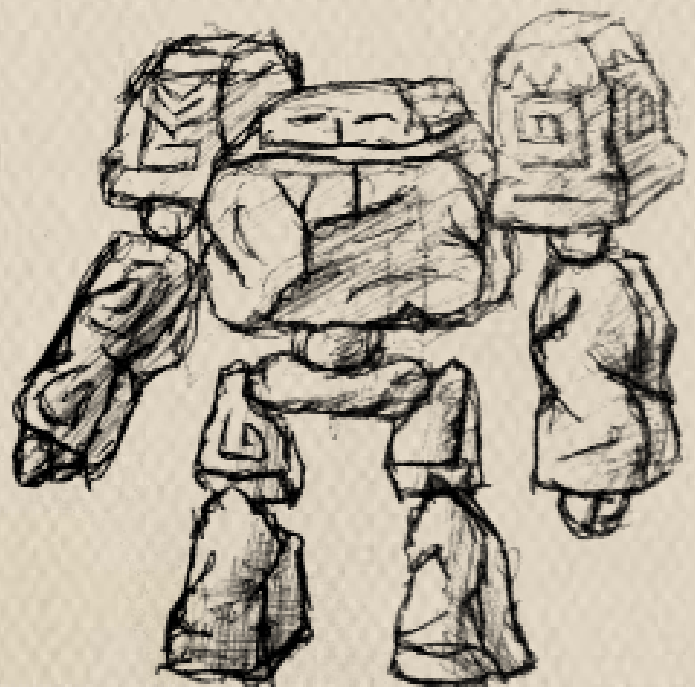
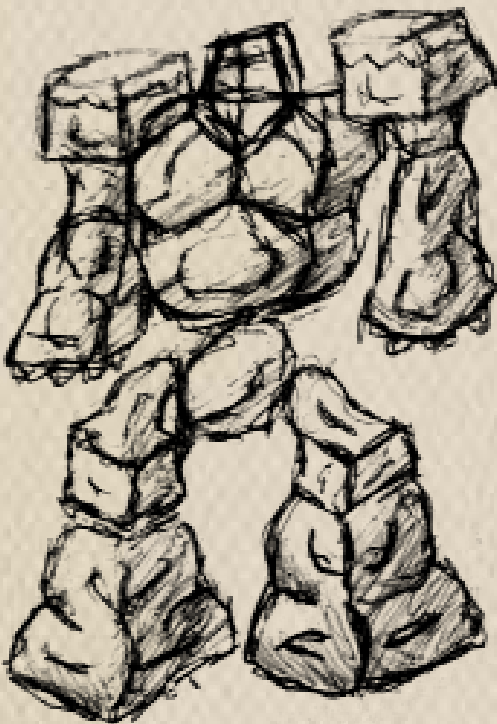
Rejected/Re-Categorised Monsters

Trolls – Svartálf

Bats – Because they're bats

Bears – Nothing too interesting

Golems – Subset of the spirit types





The 9 Worlds

In Norse mythology there exist 9 worlds which are joined together by the tree of life. They were formed in the gap between fire and ice. In keeping with the style and theme of the game, the journey of Sprit Wolf takes place travelling through these worlds, travelling from South to North, looking for the artefacts to revive Odin and his sons.

Muspellsheimr

World of Fire



This concept art for the world of fire was influenced by the popular american event, burning man

Alpheimr

Land of Light



Vanaheimr

World of Water



Inspiration for the concept for the word of water ,was taken from the Scottish lake loch ness

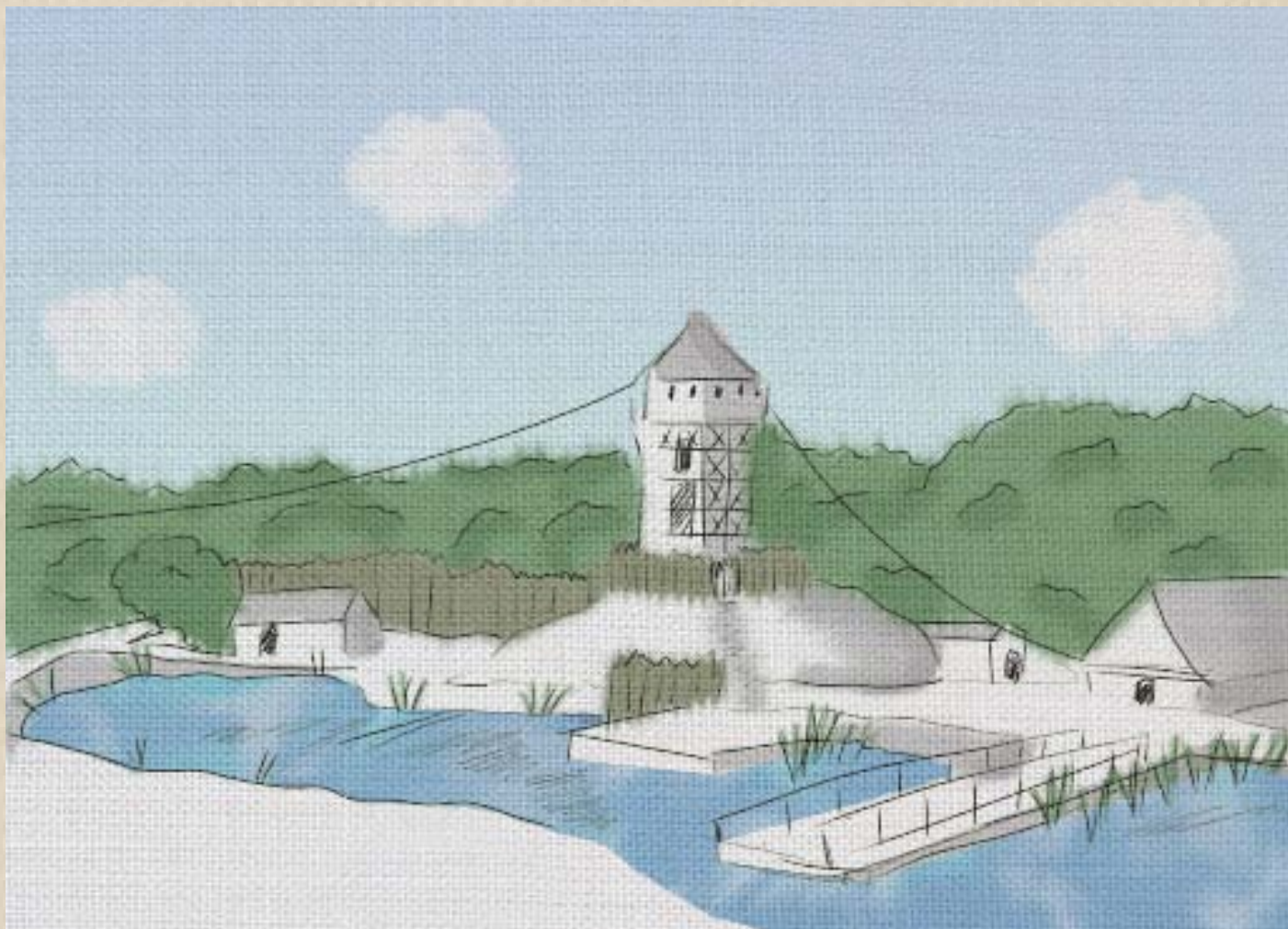
Gooheimr/Asgard

World of Gods



ManheimR

World of man



Jatunheimr

World of giants



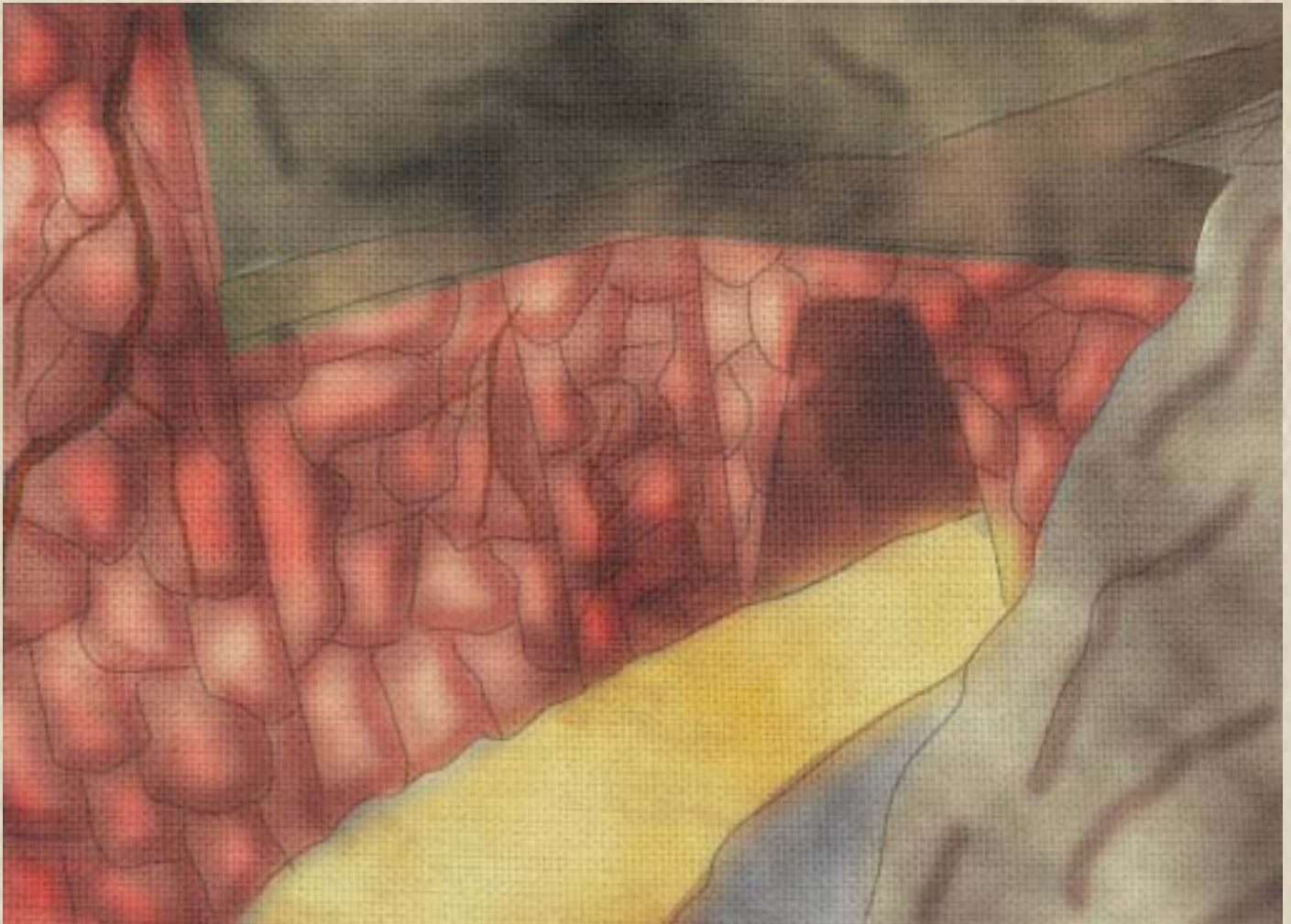
Svartálfheimr

World of darkness



Helheimr

World of Hel, Realm of the dead



Niflheimr

World of Ice and mist



Weapons

The player starts the game with three enchanted weapons, an Axe, a Sword and a Hammer. The player has the option to upgrade these weapons as they gain runes by fighting enemies. These runes can be placed on the weapons in the menu screen, to enhance the weapon's status and in turn the weapons shape.

Sword

The advantages to using the sword is that you can also wheeled a shield increasing the player's deference.



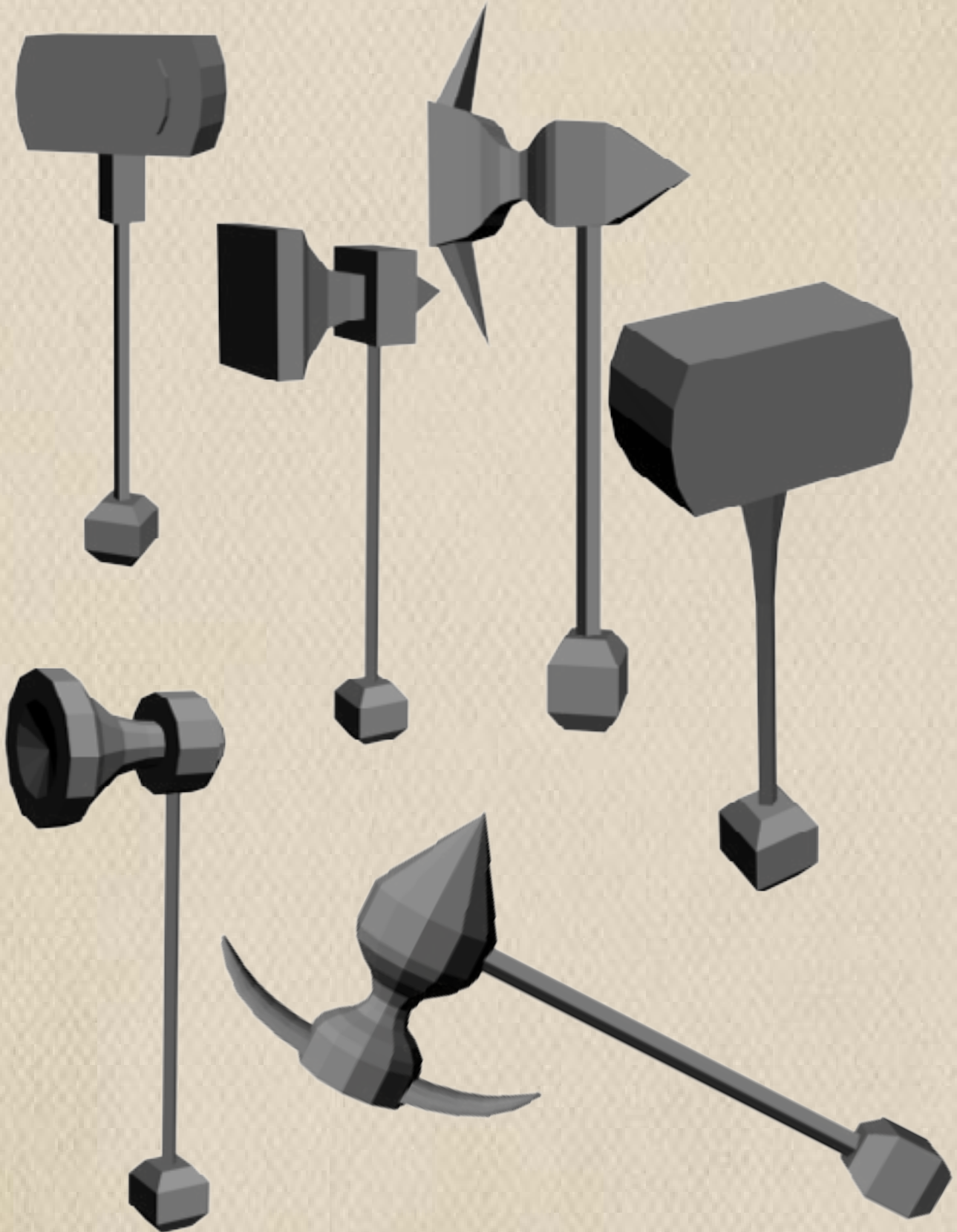
Axe

Compared to the sword the axes has a stronger attack state



Hammer

Using the hammer dramatically increases the players strength but is a lot slower than the other two weapons due to Fyedör physical strength and the weight of the hammer



User Interface

The user interface has been designed to be accessible for the target audience, 14 -21 year olds. The player starts are displayed on an amulet, representing the one that Loki gave to Fyedör at the start of the adventure. The on screen UI is made to take up a minimal amount of space on screen whilst still be in keeping with the games themes.



Original
Segments are marked by
the loops in the pattern.



Segmented 1
Quarter-bars are split by
arrows and lines.



Segmented 2
Quarter-bars are split by
arrows.



Original Dark
As above, but the empty
bar is dark.



Segmented 3
Quarter-bars are split by
arrows, lines and stitches.



Segmented 4
Quarter-bars are split by
arrows, lines, stitches and
pattern loops.

Inventory

The game's inventory is used by the player to attach the runes the player has collected to the weapons. It has been made with simplicity and practicality in mind. It is easy to navigate and keeps the player engaged in the game, as the final design has been made with a transparent overlay so the player can still see where they are and what they were doing in the level before going to the inventory screen.



Menus

There were a lot of ideas of how the menus should look. The initial idea was to have art of the game world. This was later replaced to have an image of the game demo. As the game and art style developed it was decided that making the menu look like a tapestry that lets the player know what the art direction for the game is and where the inspiring came from.



Conclusion

Spirit Wolf has been designed with the team in mind. It allows people of different skill sets to work on it, in order to achieve the best they can and the best from the game.

This meant looking at what everyone in the team was capable of and adjusting what the overall outcome of the game would be.

From the beginning of the academic year, Spirit Wolf was always designed to be a games demo, and although this has been what has been produced by the Anti-Cakeing Agent, the scope for a much larger and completed game has been explored and developed.



References

Agents, T. A.-C. (2012). Spirit Wolf Games Design Document.

Bills, M. (2008, May 17). Retrieved October 2011, from <http://michaelbills.blogspot.co.uk/>

Busack, R. v. (2010). The Art of Megamind. Insight Editions.