

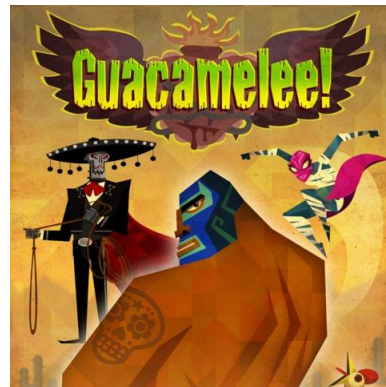
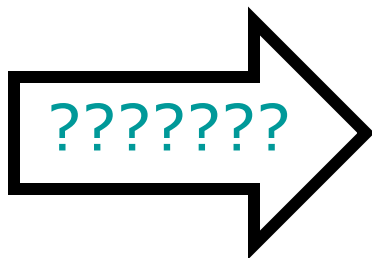
Learning From Our Mistakes: A Post-Mortem of Guacamelee!

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Goal of the Talk

- Explain how and why we changed (or didn't change) our approach between titles



Guacamelee Launch Trailer

Talk Structure

1	Concept
2	Development
3	Marketing
4	Conclusions

Talk Structure

1	Concept
2	Development
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1. Concept

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|---|--------------------|
| 1 | Background |
| 2 | Choosing a Concept |
| 3 | Defining the Game |
| 4 | Finding the Fun |

1.1 Background

- DrinkBox was founded in 2008
- We worked on contracts while making our first game
- Started conceiving Guacamelee! near the end of our first title
 - Tales From Space: About a Blob (2011) [PS3]



About a Blob Launch Trailer

1.2 Choosing a Concept



- The Problem
 - Visual style and gameplay of About a Blob didn't excite hardcore players
- The Change
 - All concepts had to pass a download-only console audience "test"

Guacamelee!

Genre: Beat 'em Up

Platform: PSN/XBLA

Market: T for TEEN (+13)/ or +10?

STORY:

"La Calaca" is back and this time he's kidnapping innocent souls to rebuild his un-dead army and to awaken the super evil *Kukulcantalcoatlilopochtlitangaricutirimicuar*. Only the reincarnation of *La Catrina* can awaken him, and la Calaca has found it: El Presidente's daughter, the most beautiful girl in the world who he promptly kidnaps to sacrifice...

Who will save the souls and stop the evil Calaca from unleashing the *Kukulcantalcoatlilopochtlitangaricutirimicuar*?
Recover your honor, get the girl. Be awesome.

A FEW THINGS ABOUT LUCHADORES:

Luchadores are looked up to as protectors against the forces of evil. The worst that can happen to a luchador is to reveal their own identity. In the game, they "die" when their mask is removed. (but maybe they have masks underneath masks!) Wrestling moves are their regular attacks, but combos or special items can unlock super human crazy power attacks, like astro-tiger lick, or punch-drunk-punch!

GAMEPLAY:

A classic 2-D Side-scrolling Beat 'em Up, with over the top cut scenes! All the drama and all the fighting!

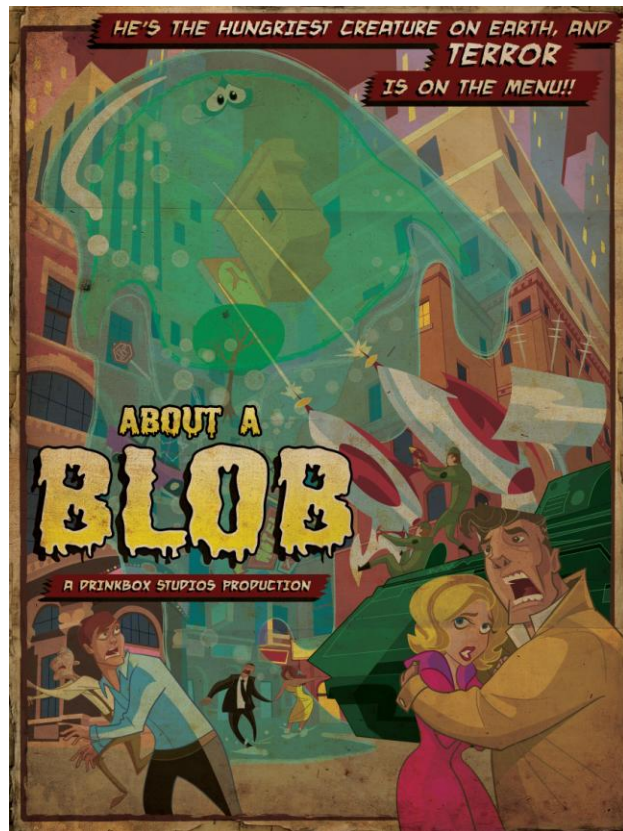
You have a bunch of characters to choose, each with their own attacks and strategic moves and cool backstories. Multiplayer option. Arena option and a lot of mini-games within the game.

With stylish visuals and awesome synthesizer mariachi soundtrack!!!!



1.3 Defining the Game

- The Problem
 - Unclear vision for About a Blob (game and universe)
- The Change
 - We refused to enter production until we understood the game





GUACAMELEE!

The CHARACTER

A down on his luck Mexican wrestler who stumbles upon the mask of an ancient and powerful Luchador, which grants its wearer incredible physical powers

The STORY

After unwittingly opening a portal to the Land of the Dead, the small Mexican town you call home has been overrun by its denizens. As a Luchador, you respond in the only way you know how... WITH YOUR MUSCLES!

The UNIVERSE

After battling enemies in your home town, fight the evil at its source by travelling to different dimensions including the Land of the Dead, and the World of the Alebrijes. Solve puzzles by jumping back and forth between dimensions, making changes in one to affect the others

The INNOVATION

- Fast paced platforming and Mexican wrestling inspired combat
- Unique and visually striking art style
- Humorous and bizarre characters, enemies, and environments
- Customize your character's appearance and abilities
- Play alone or with friends to restore peace to your home

Developer: DrinkBox Studios
Platform: Xbox, PS3
Genre: Platforming Adventure
Target Audience: Gamers Everywhere

drinkbox
STUDIOS

Everyone Dreams of Becoming a Luchador...

Sadly, both you and your dream got knocked out in that fight back in 3rd grade when the whole town saw your embarrassing performance.

You only fought to impress El Presidente's daughter, the most beautiful girl in the world. But that was when you were a kid... these days you have a job in the agave fields (the crappiest job of all) while everyone else has followed their dreams of becoming a luchador.

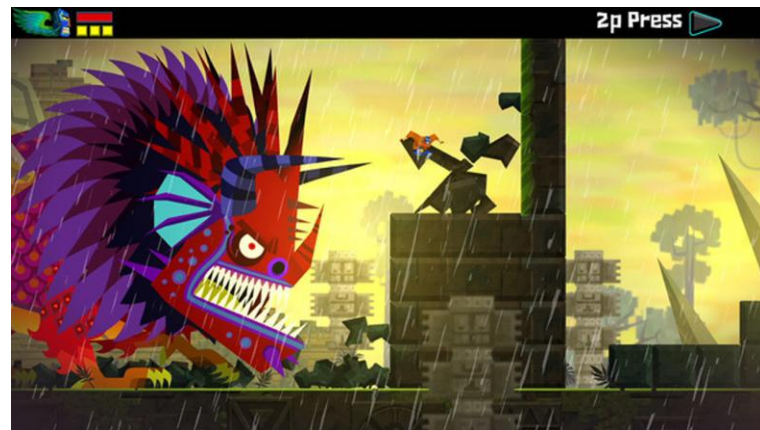
Now the mighty Carlos Calaca is back (he's an evil skeleton) and he's killing people to steal their souls for his un-dead army. He has kidnapped El Presidente's daughter, who he believes is the reincarnation of "La Catrina". With her sacrifice Calaca will awaken an ancient God of unspeakable horror.



A Few Things About Luchadores:

- Luchadores are protectors against the forces of evil.
- The worst thing that can happen to a luchador is for their mask to be removed and their identity revealed.
- In the town of Pueblucho (where our story takes place) nearly everyone has accomplished their dream of becoming a luchador. Only the youngest, the weakest, and YOU have not yet reached this goal.





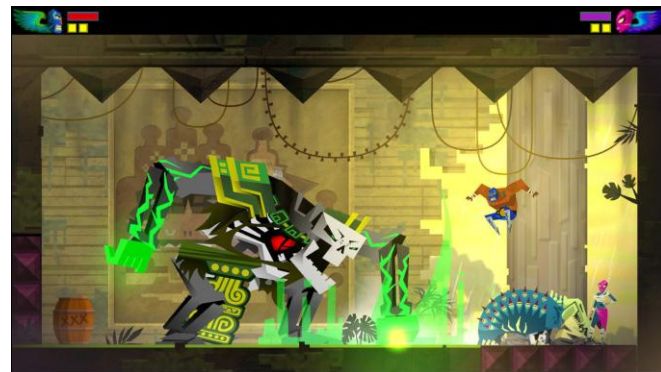
1.4 Finding the Fun

- The Problem

- Finding the fun in the gameplay of About a Blob took the whole project

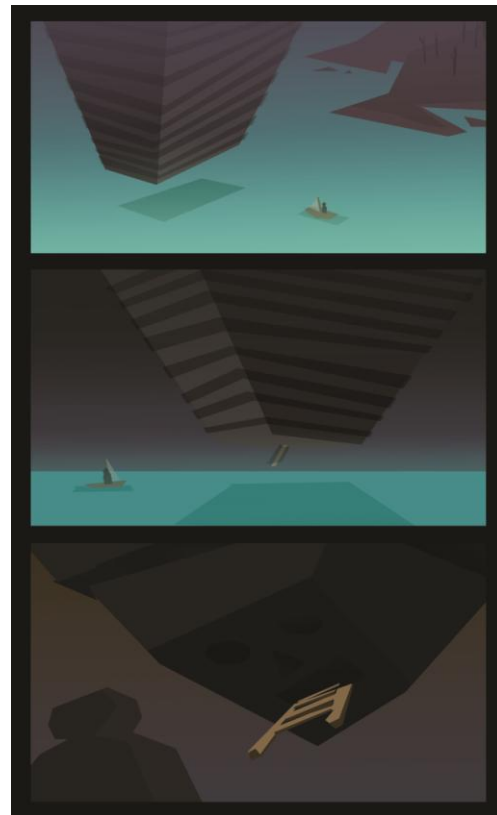
- The Change

- Pursued more defined and better understood gameplay from the start, and then riffed on elements



Concept Summary

- More careful about the game genre and art style being appropriate
- Focused on defining the vision
- Approached the game design more conservatively



1

Concept

2

Development

3

Marketing

4

Conclusions

2. Development

1	Pre-production
2	Deadlines
3	Personality and Charm
4	Toolset and Process
5	Target Platform

2.1 Pre-production



- The Problem
 - During About a Blob we couldn't agree on what game we were making
- The Change
 - Small, dedicated pre-production team with clear goals and roles

2.2 Deadlines

- The Problem
 - Will it ever be ready?
- The Change
 - Constant external deadlines
 - Deadlines: incremental but with polish



Guacamelee Concept Video

Combat Demo Video

2.3 Personality and Charm

- The Problem
 - About a Blob didn't stand out enough
- The Change
 - Say “yes” to more ideas and let more of the team's personality define the game





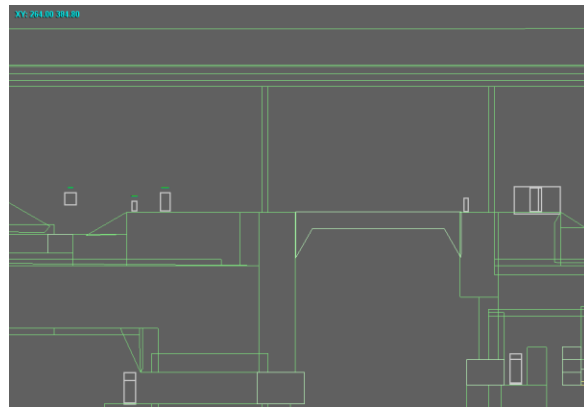
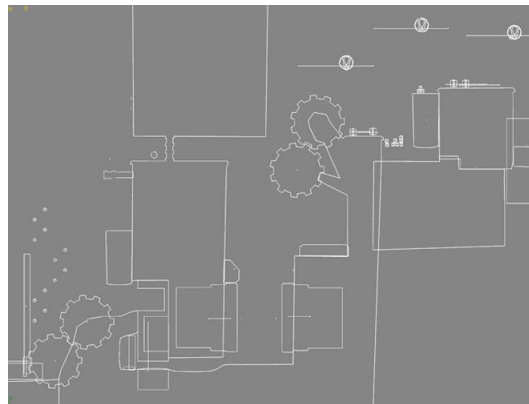
2.4 Toolset

- The Problem
 - Development needed to go faster
- The Context
 - Proprietary engine
- The Changes
 - Numerous, but incremental



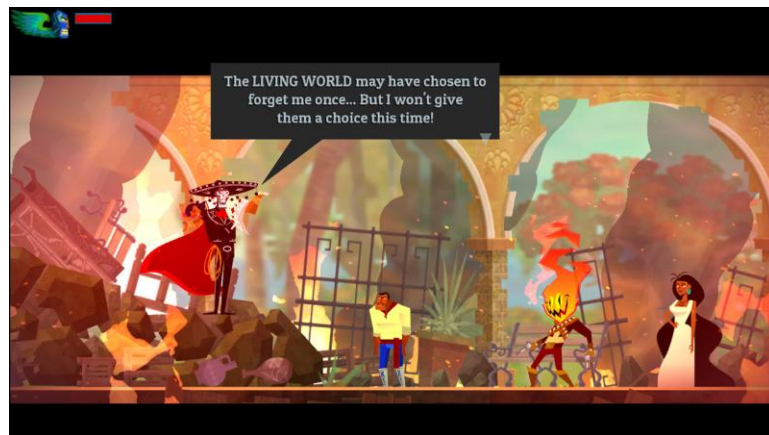
2.4 Toolset (2)

- The Problem
 - Time to Design Levels too slow
- The Change
 - Switch from curvy to rectilinear



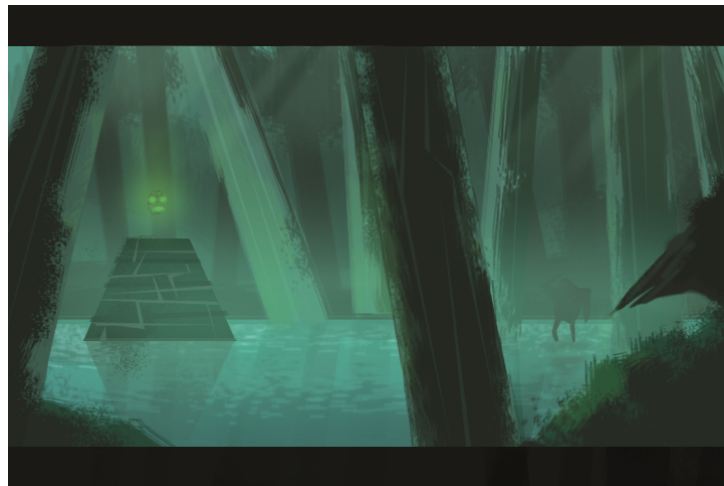
2.4 Toolset (3)

- The Problem
 - Weak visual effects
- The Change
 - Changed the ownership
 - Created a programmer-driven, artist tunable system



2.5 Target Platform

- The Problem
 - Where to release the game?
- The Change
 - Hmmm... No change
 - PSN, self-published, PubFund
 - Why?



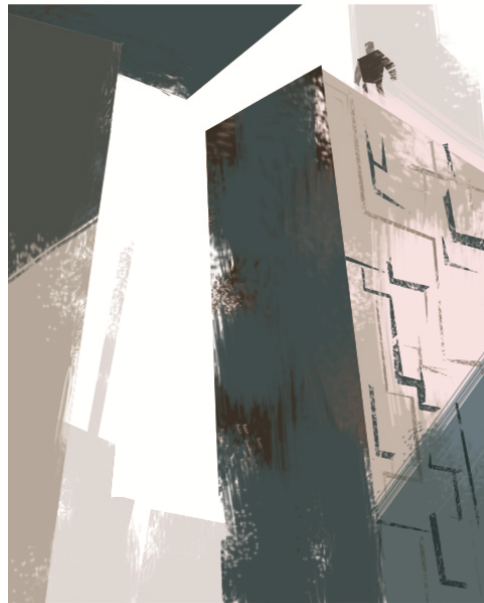
2.5 Target Platform (2)

- Our Situation
 - Relatively financially independent
 - We talk to publishers about each project
 - Trust very important
- A Balance of Factors
 - Self-publishing is easy
 - Substantial user-base
 - Good working relationship with Sony
 - Pub-Fund



Development Summary

- Used a small dedicated team to flesh out mechanics
- External showings drove milestones
- Actively tried to put more of the team's personality into the game
- Kept same game engine, but tried to simplify processes and improve ownership
- Released on PSN again... but only after a thorough rethinking



1

Concept

2

Development

3

Marketing

4

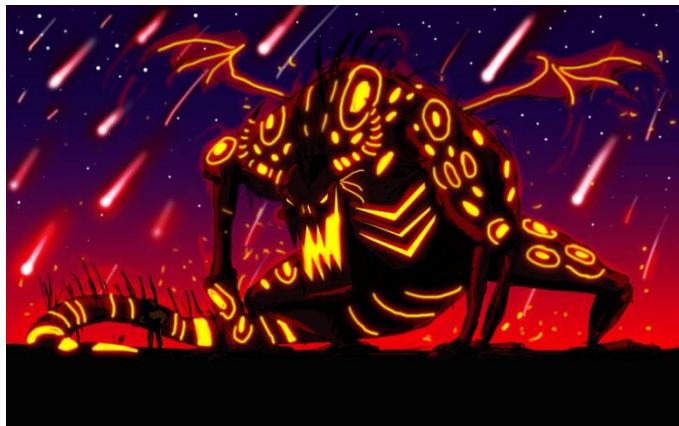
Conclusions

3. Marketing

1	Game Reveal
2	PR Firm
3	Launch

3.1 Game Reveal

- The Problem
 - People just didn't know about About a Blob
- The Change
 - Stop being so precious with the game
 - Show early, show often



Original Announcement Trailer

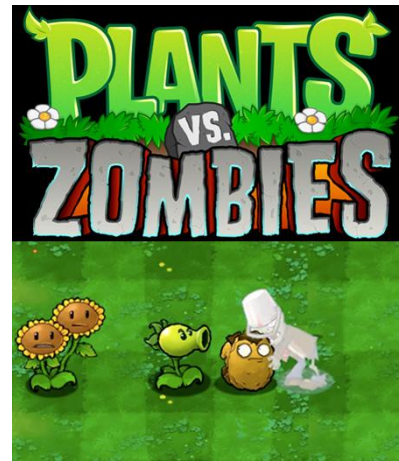
3.2 PR Firm



- The Problem
 - Quality of media coverage for About a Blob was poor
 - Couldn't get coverage when we wanted it
- The Change
 - Accepted that we needed help
 - Hired a PR firm

3.3 Launch

- The Problem
 - About a Blob launch went poorly
- The Change
 - Planning and Resources
 - Took it much more seriously
 - Many differences...



3.3 Launch (2)

- Key Changes
 - Proper advance Press Tour
 - Preview builds
 - Reviews
 - PR Firm support
 - Store placement
 - Store timing



Marketing Summary

- Showed early and often
- Hired a PR firm
- Treated launch very seriously



1

Concept

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Development

3

Marketing

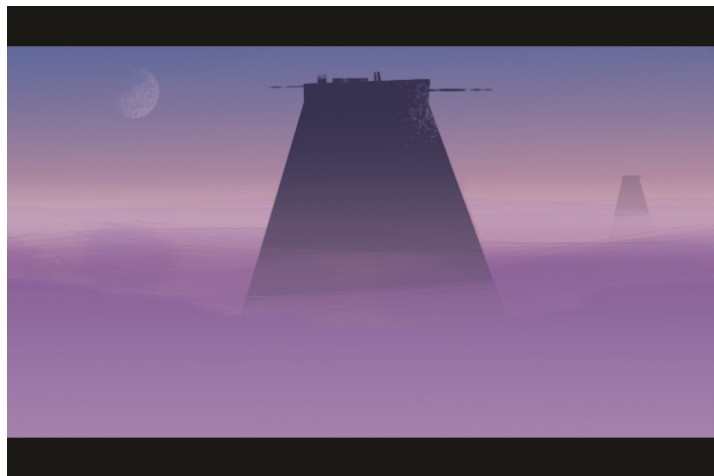
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Conclusions

4. Conclusions

1	Results
2	Themes
3	Questions?

4.1 Results



- Game was a success
- Well received
 - 84% PS3, 87% PSVita, 88% PC
- We continue to release
 - Coming soon to PS4, XB1, X360, WiiU

4.2 Themes



- Concept: The right vision let the game come together
- Development: Making things simpler and more focused
- Marketing: Always on

4.3 Questions?

