



For original slides (with notes) see tinyurl.com/dok-gdc17

The Great Divide

Unique Visuals and Deterministic Gameplay
in *Homeworld: Deserts of Kharak*



Yossarian King

CTO, Blackbird Interactive





"How To Make a Multiplayer RTS Game With Unity and C#"





video





The Great Divide - Simulation vs. Presentation

Unique Visuals - Terrain & Aesthetic Physics

Deterministic Gameplay - Architecture, no `float`

Performance - LOD, C#





"The Great Divide"





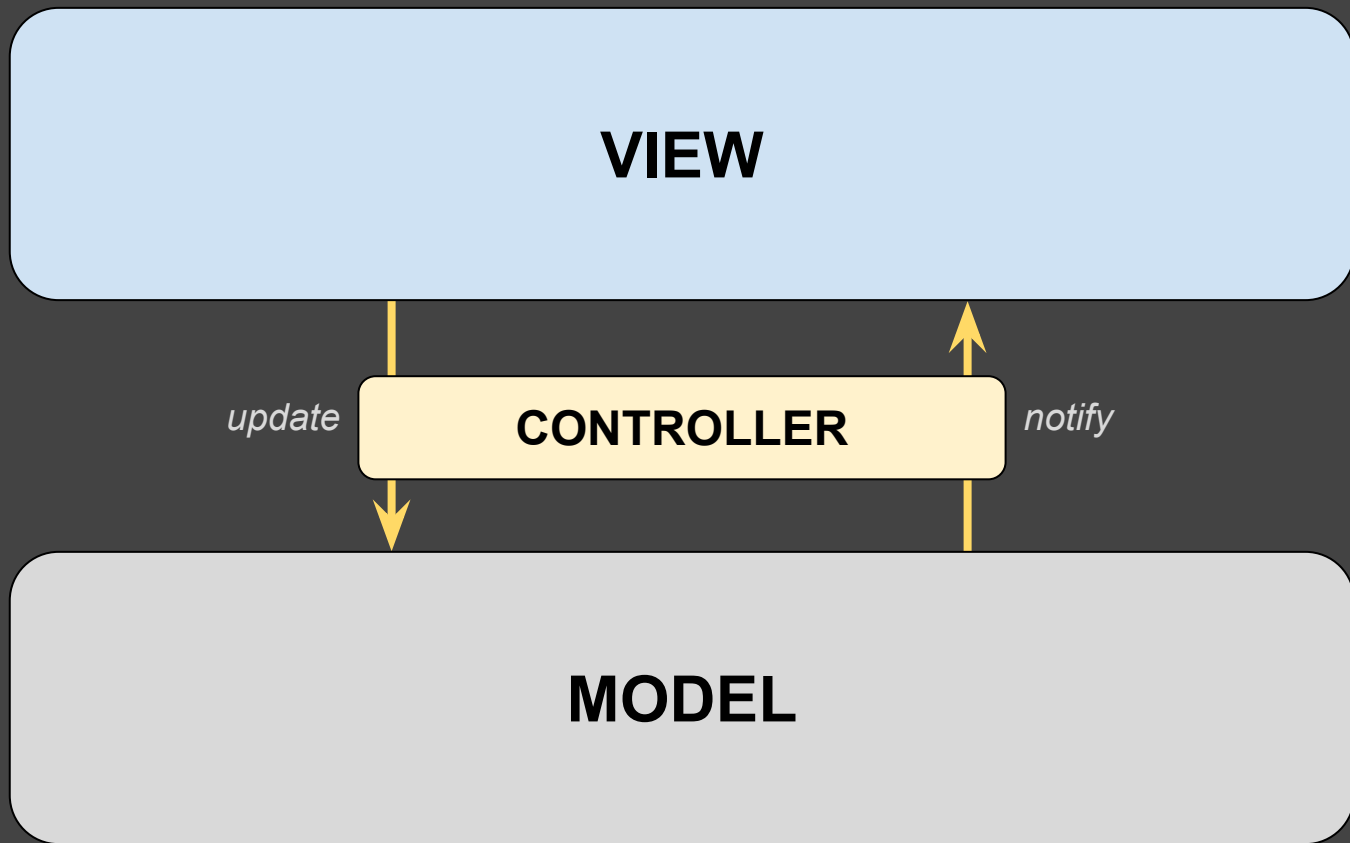
Simulation vs. Presentation

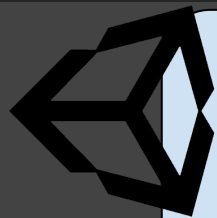
Gameplay vs. Graphics

Core game logic & systems (in pure C#)

Rich audiovisual presentation (in Unity)







PRESENTATION



commands

CONTROLLER

state, events



SIMULATION





Unique Visuals - Terrain





Terrain elements and layers

Deferred decal system

Authoring process

Terrain (barely) in the sim







< Persp

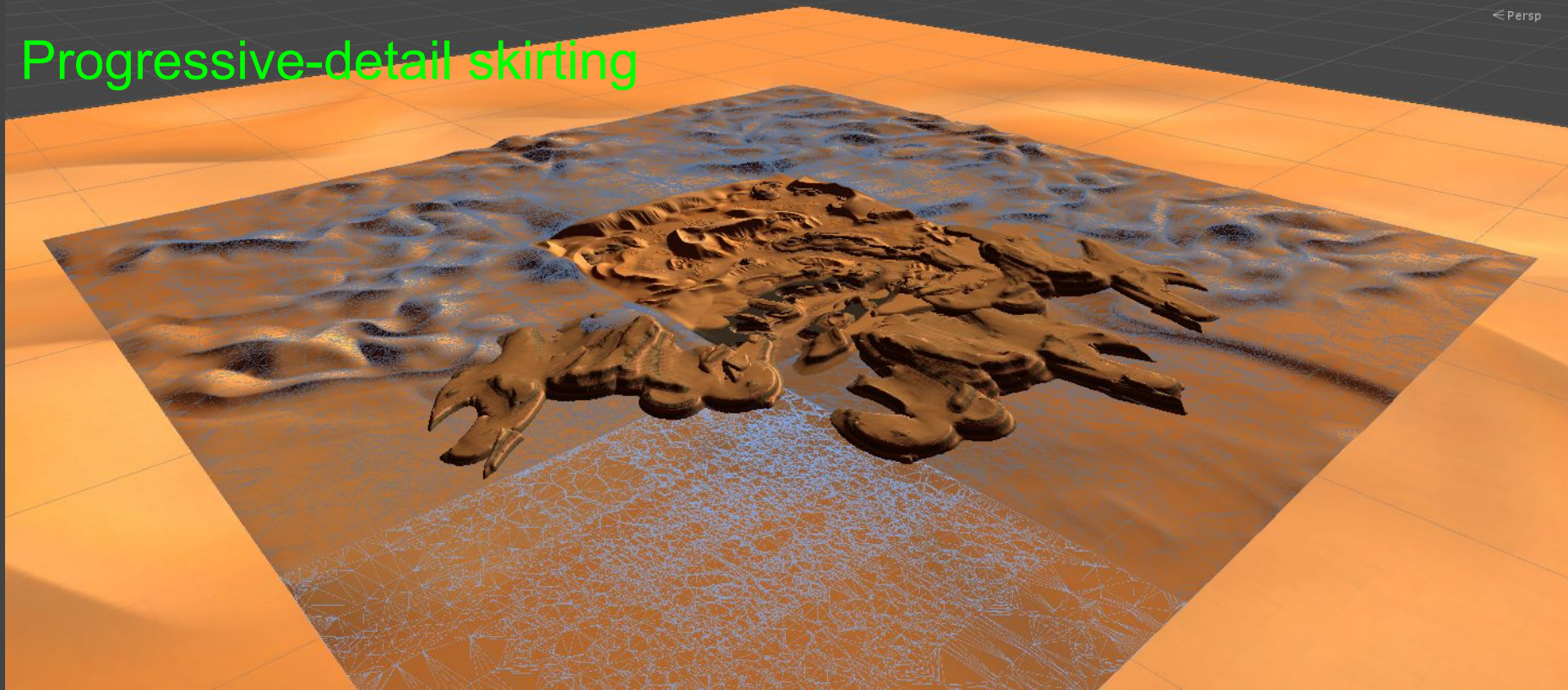
Distance plane





< Persp

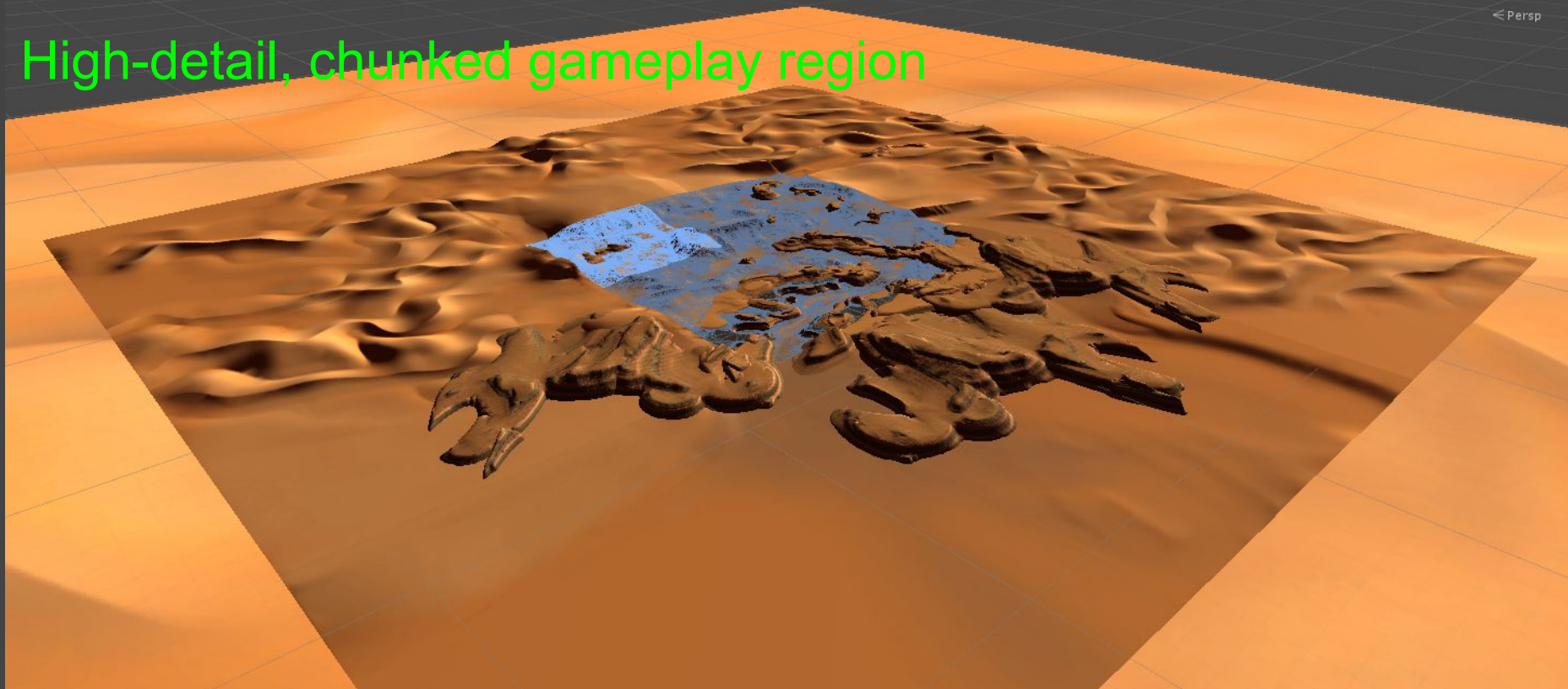
Progressive-detail skirting





< Persp

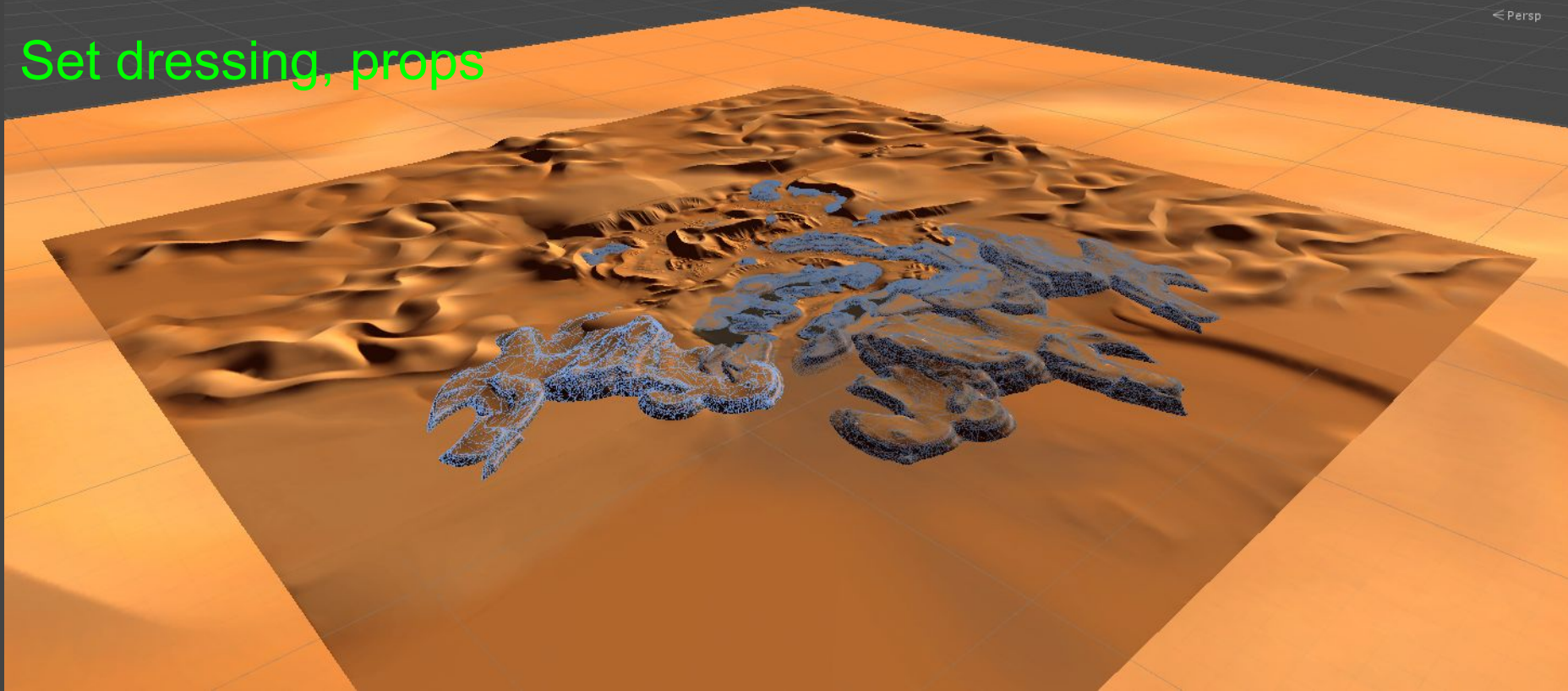
High-detail, chunked gameplay region





< Persp

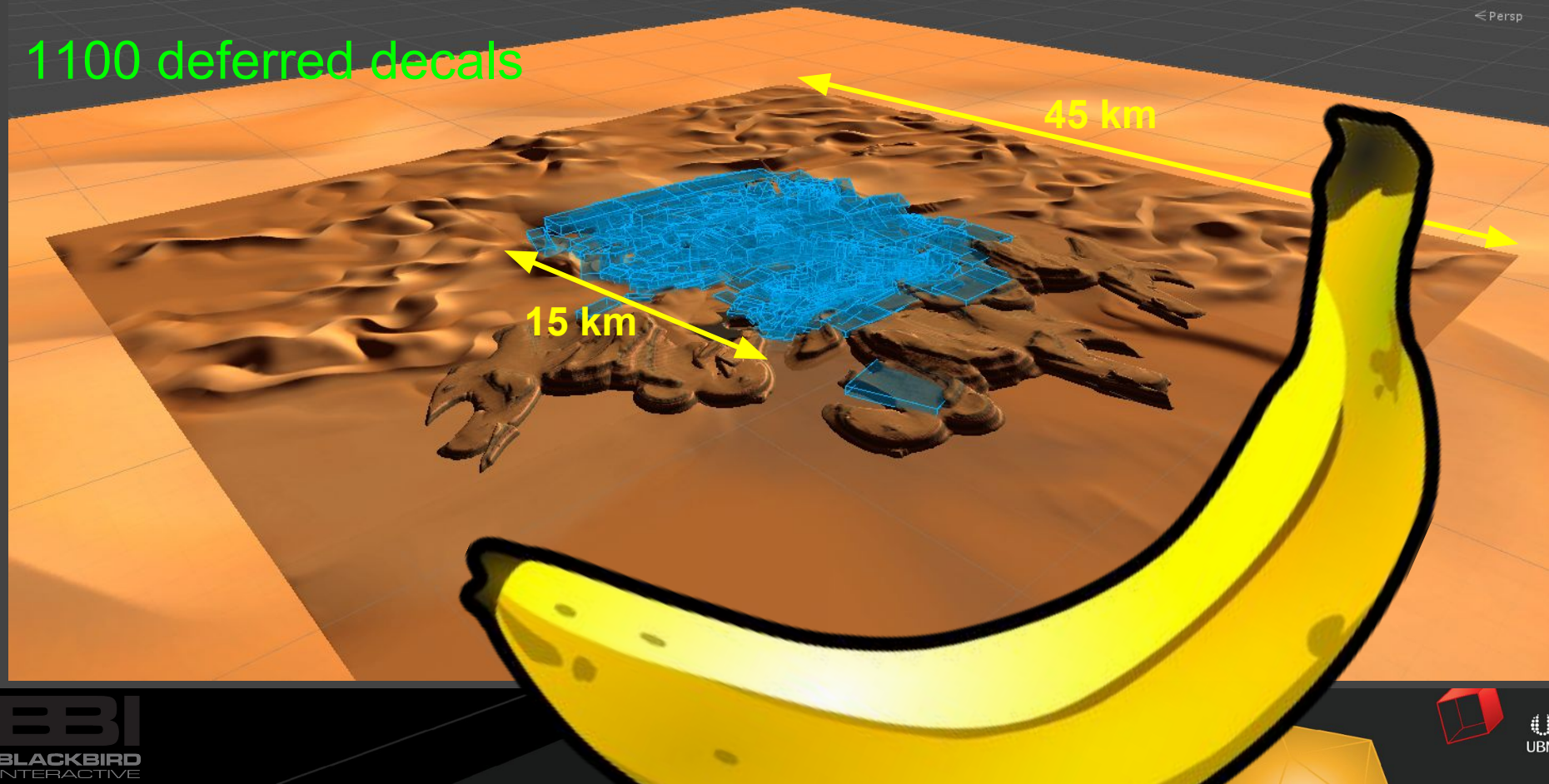
Set dressing, props





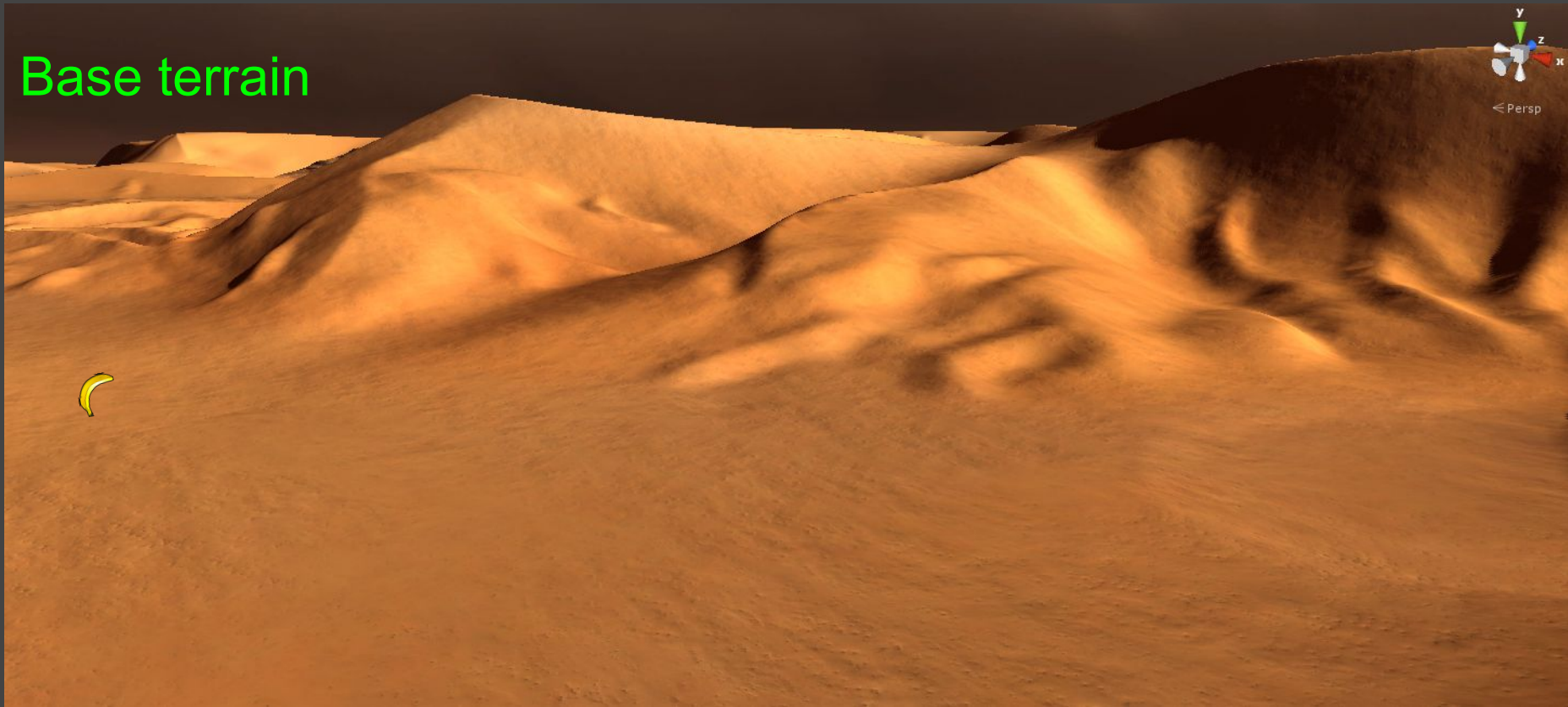
< Persp

1100 deferred decals



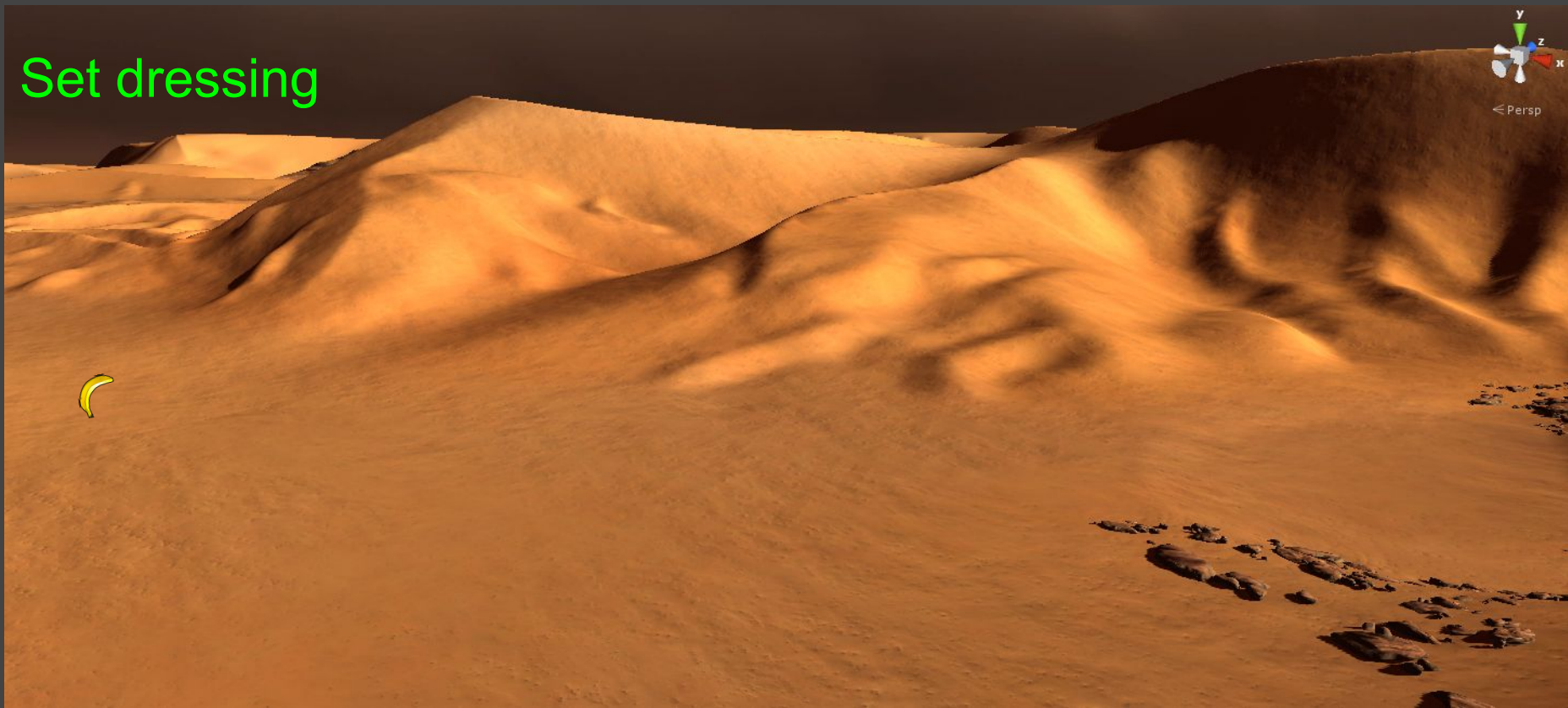


Base terrain



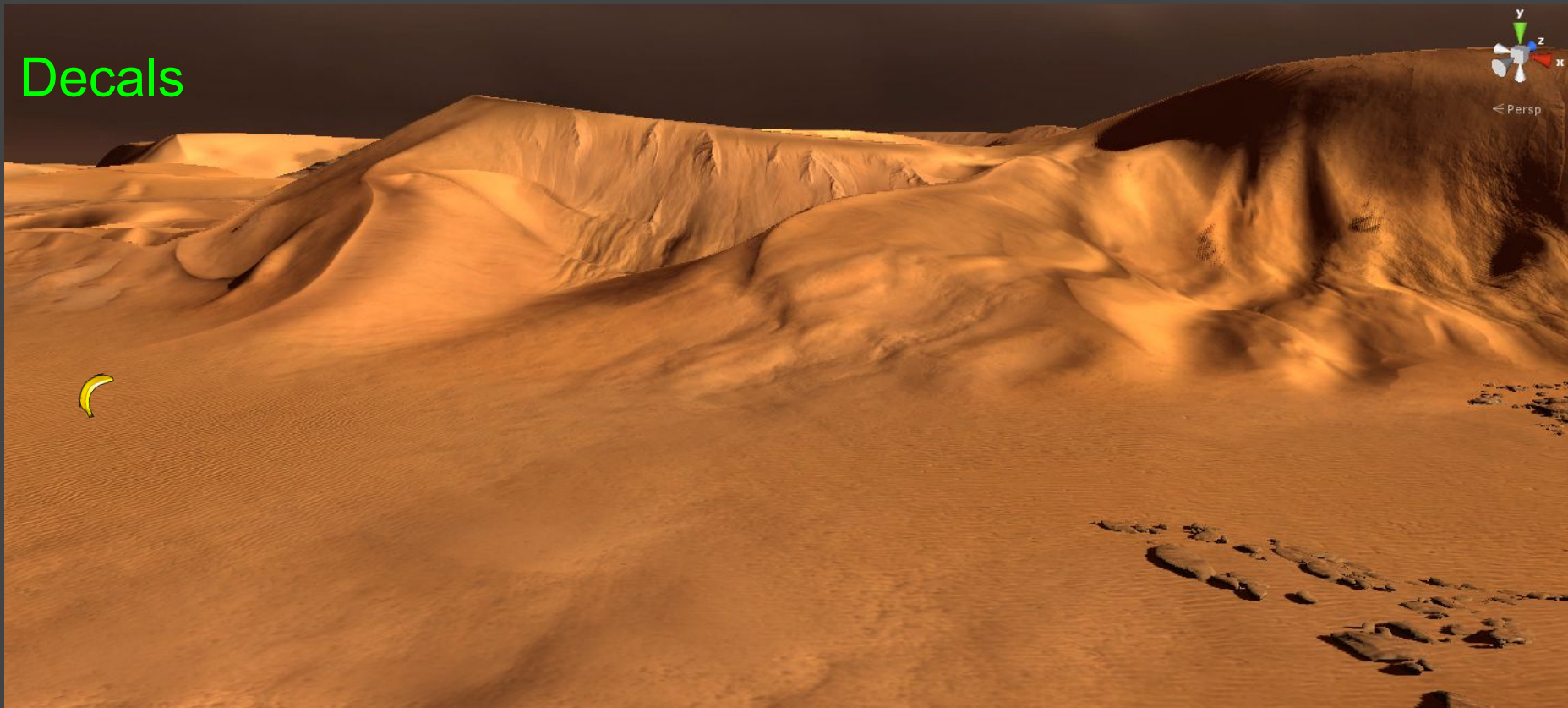


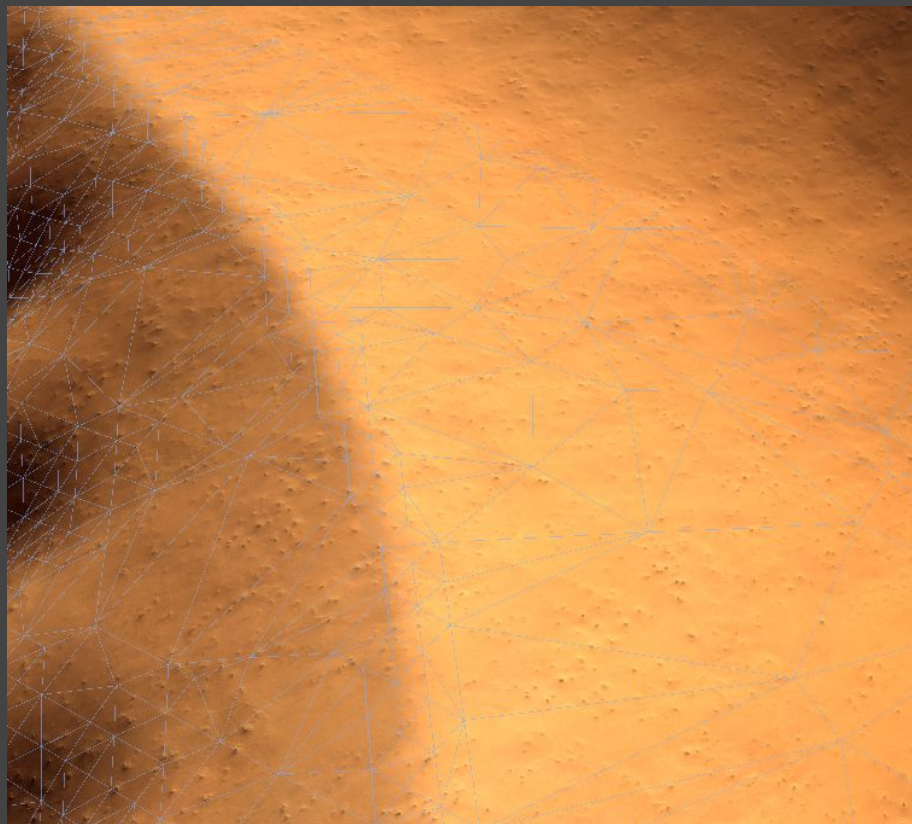
Set dressing





Decals





Terrain-chunk.ed
Shader: HWSB/Terrain/MixMap_Terrain_ColourMap

Control (RGBA)

Tiling X 1 Y 1
Offset X 0 Y 0

Control 2 (RGBA)

Tiling X 1 Y 1
Offset X 0 Y 0

Base Colour Map (RGB)

Tiling X 1 Y 1
Offset X 0 Y 0

Colour Map Blending, X=Fade in start, Y=Fade in length, Z=Fade in width
X 5000 Y 2000 Z 1 W 0

World Normal Map

Tiling X 1 Y 1
Offset X 0 Y 0

World Normal Map Blending X=Fade in start, Y=Fade in length, Z=Fade in width
X 5000 Y 2000 Z 5 W 0

Shininess (Specular S) 0.106
Specular Color

Tex 1 (RGB) Specular(A)

Tiling X 50 Y 50
Offset X 0 Y 0

Tex 1 Bump (RG)=Bump B=Mix

Tiling X 50 Y 50
Offset X 0 Y 0

Tex 1 Avg Colour

Tex 2 (RGB) Specular(A)

Tiling X 27.27273 Y 27.27273
Offset X 0 Y 0

Tex 2 Bump (RG)=Bump B=Mix

Tiling X 27.27273 Y 27.27273
Offset X 0 Y 0

Tex 2 Avg Colour

Tex 3 (RGB) Specular(A)

Tiling X 25 Y 25
Offset X 0 Y 0

Tex 3 Bump (RG)=Bump B=Mix

Tiling X 25 Y 25
Offset X 0 Y 0

Tex 3 Avg Colour

Tex 4 (RGB) Specular(A)

Tiling X 75 Y 75
Offset X 0 Y 0

Tex 4 Bump (RG)=Bump B=Mix

Tiling X 75 Y 75
Offset X 0 Y 0

Tex 4 Avg Colour

Tex 5 (RGB) Specular(A)

Tiling X 100 Y 100
Offset X 0 Y 0

Tex 5 Bump (RG)=Bump B=Mix

Tiling X 100 Y 100
Offset X 0 Y 0

Tex 5 Avg Colour

Tex 6 (RGB) Specular(A). **Uses Tex 5 Bump**

Tiling X 0 Y 0
Offset X 0 Y 0

Tex 6 Avg Colour

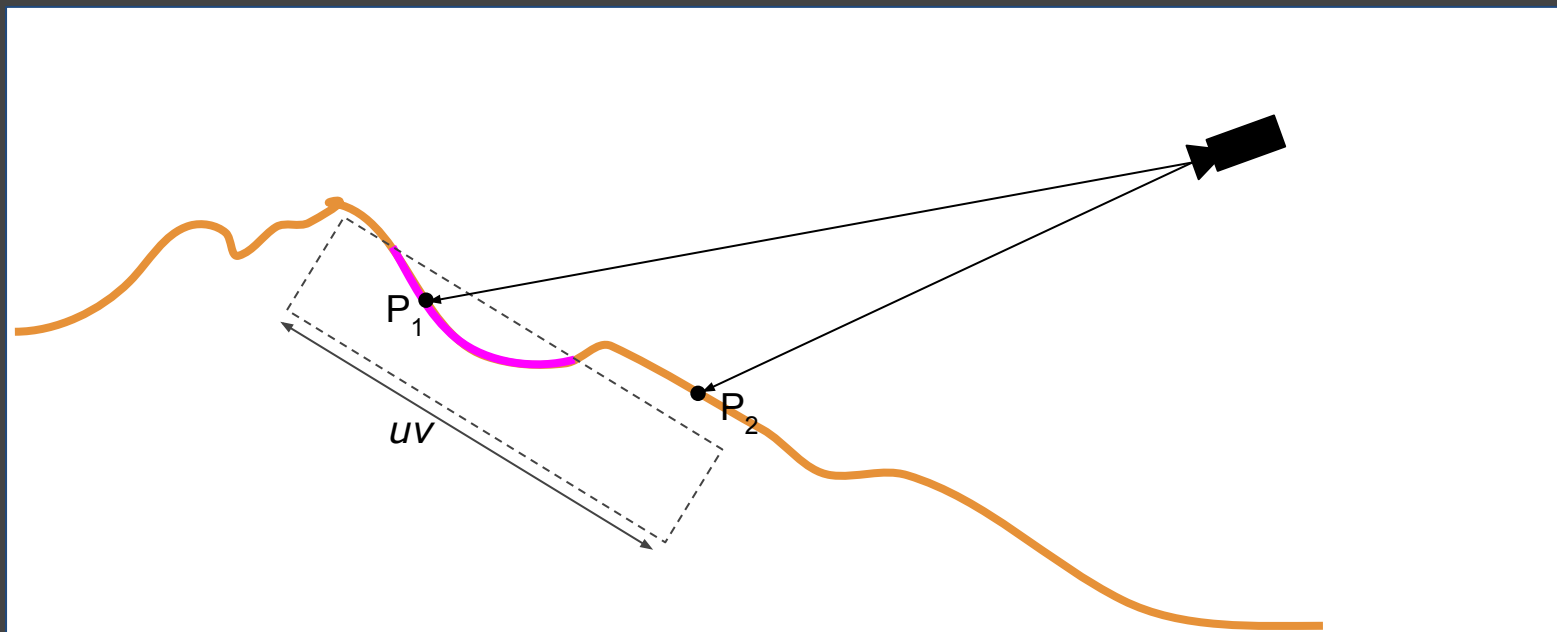
DEBUG Render Mode OUTPUT_DIFFUSE





deferred decals





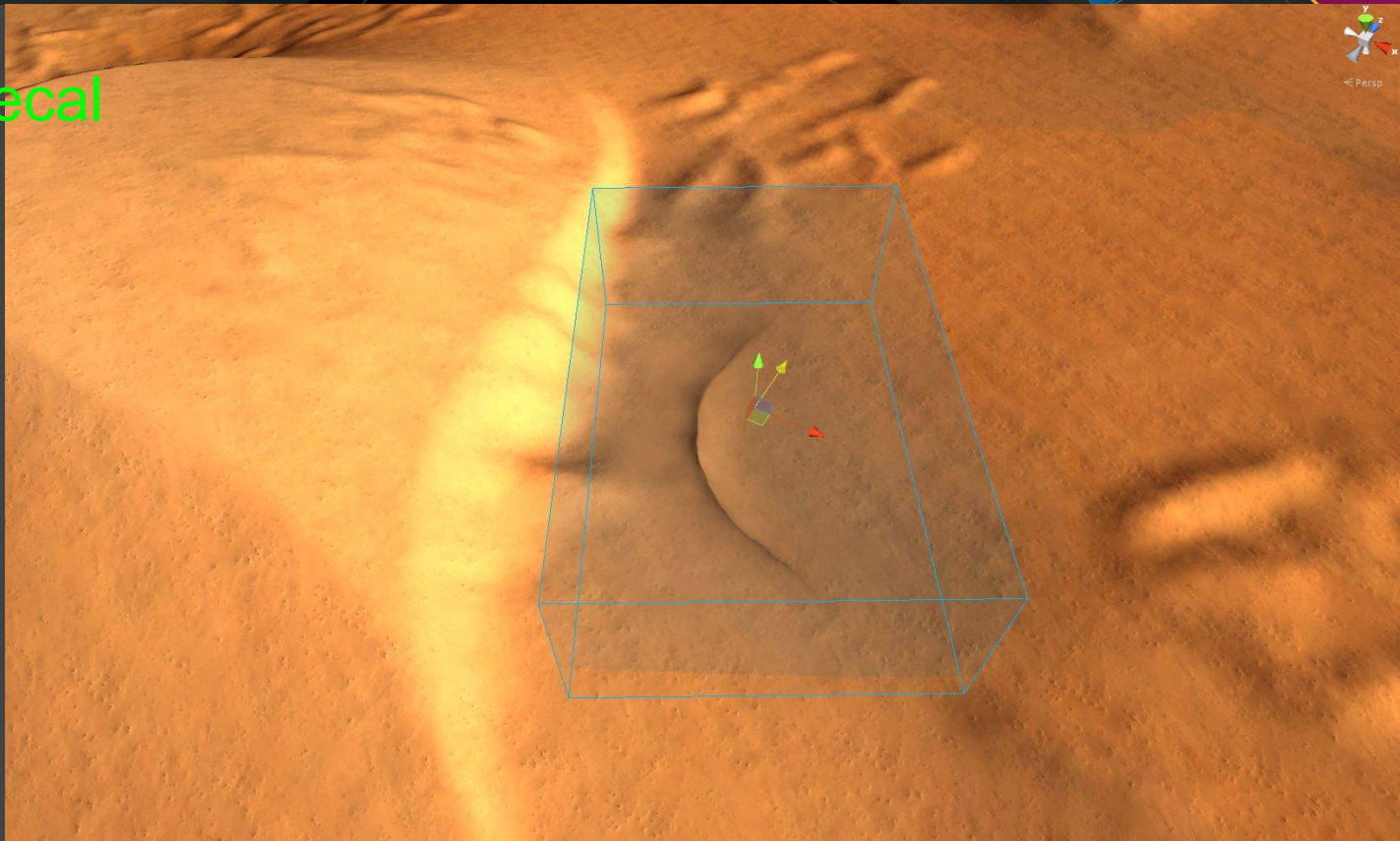


Base terrain





New decal



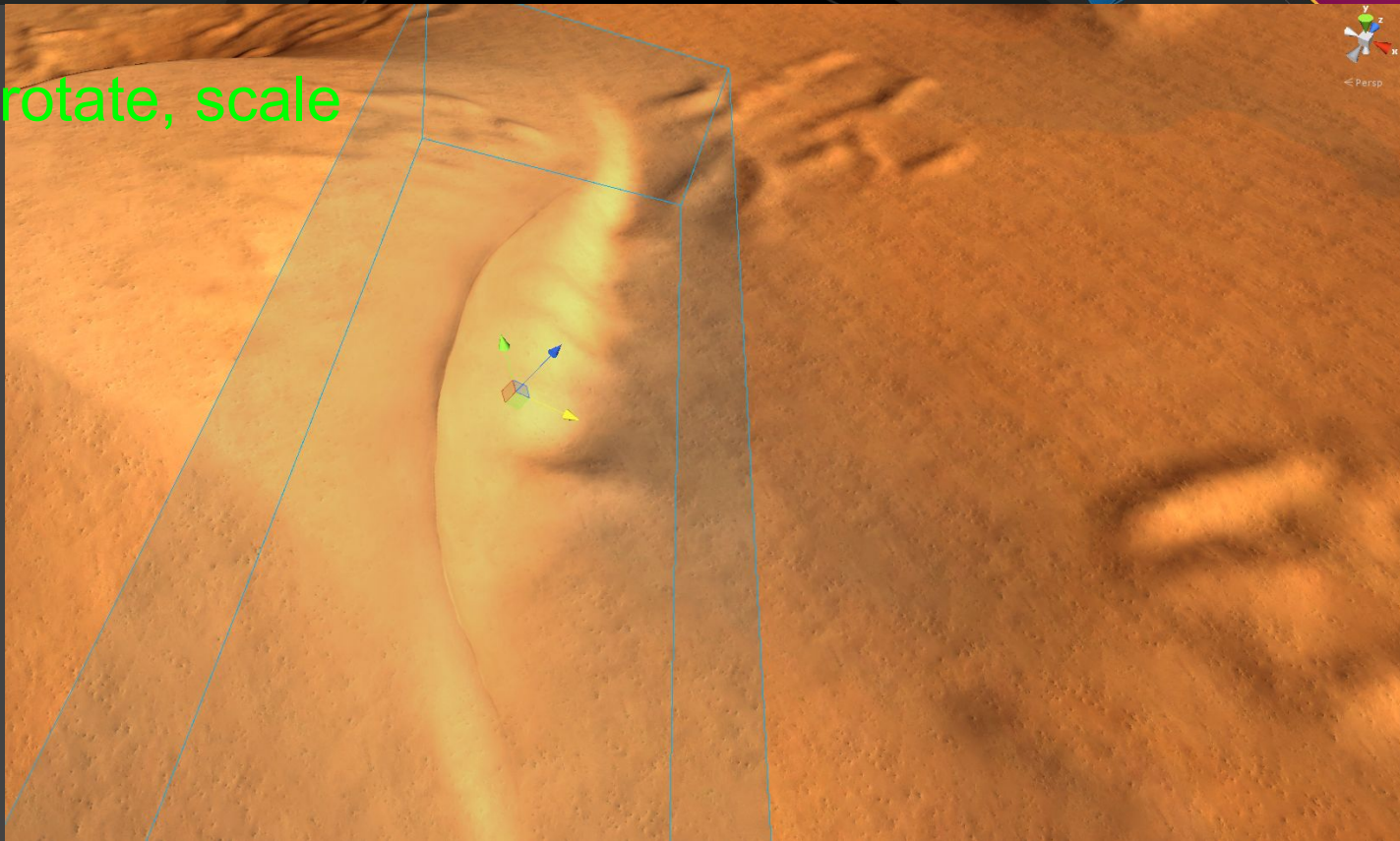


Move, rotate, scale



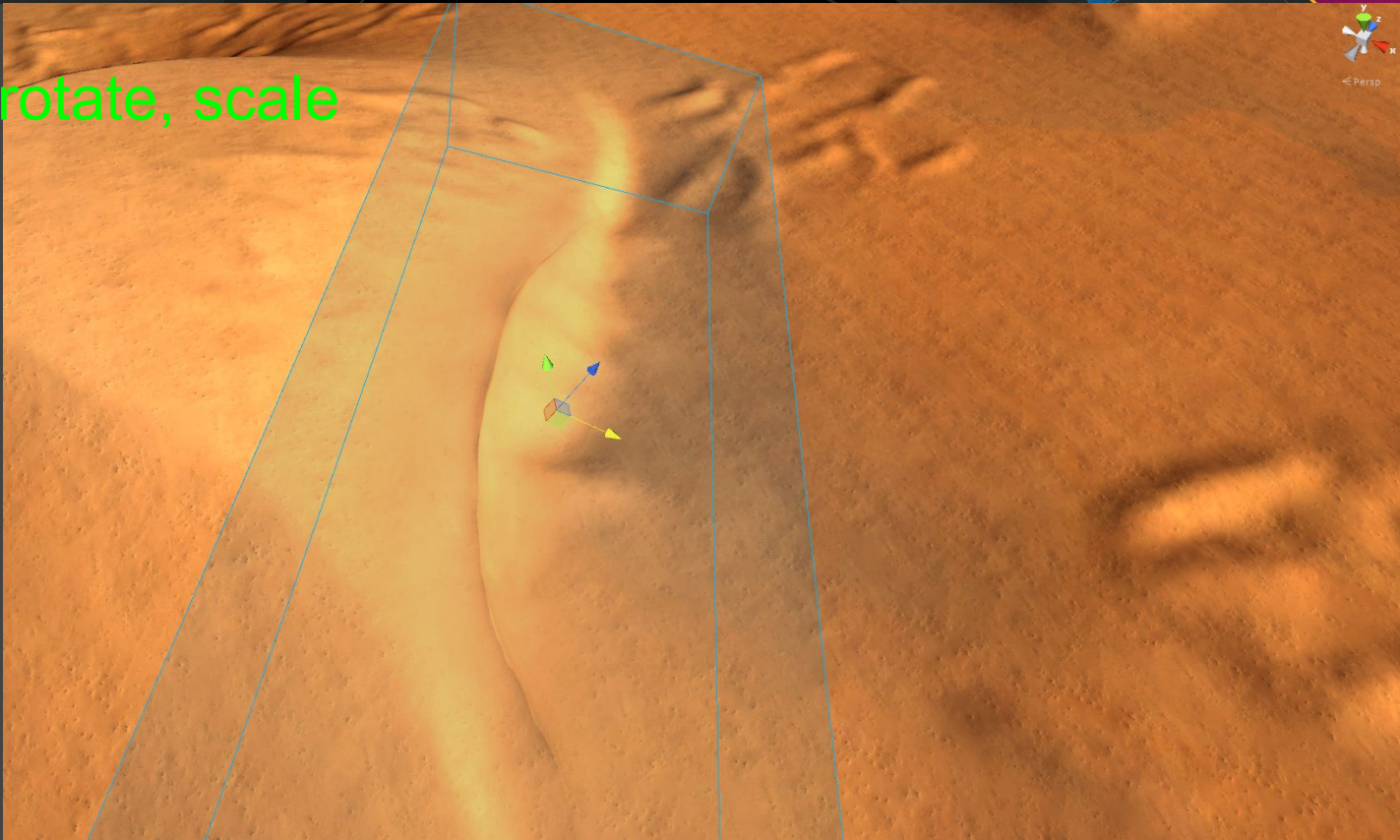


Move, rotate, scale



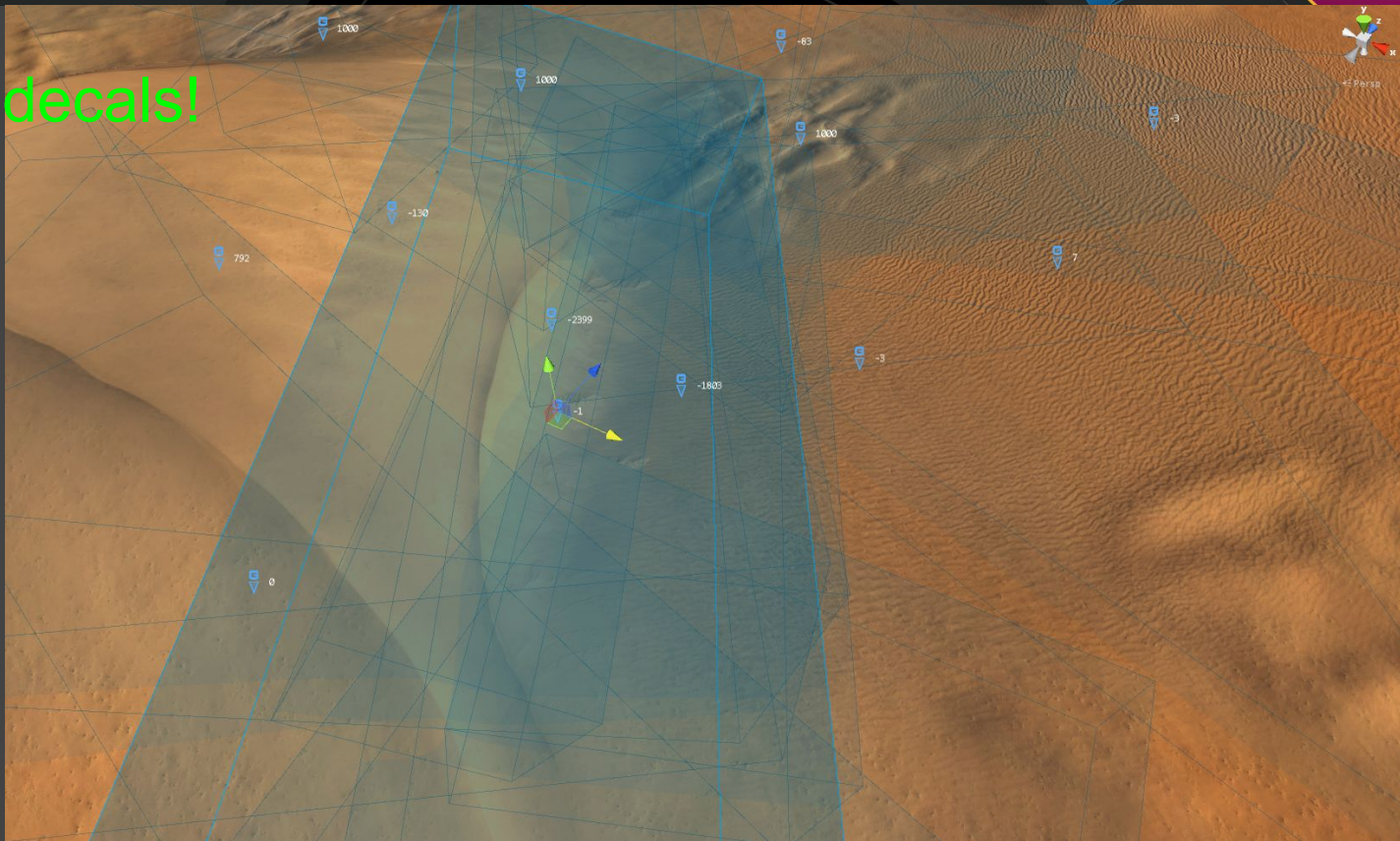


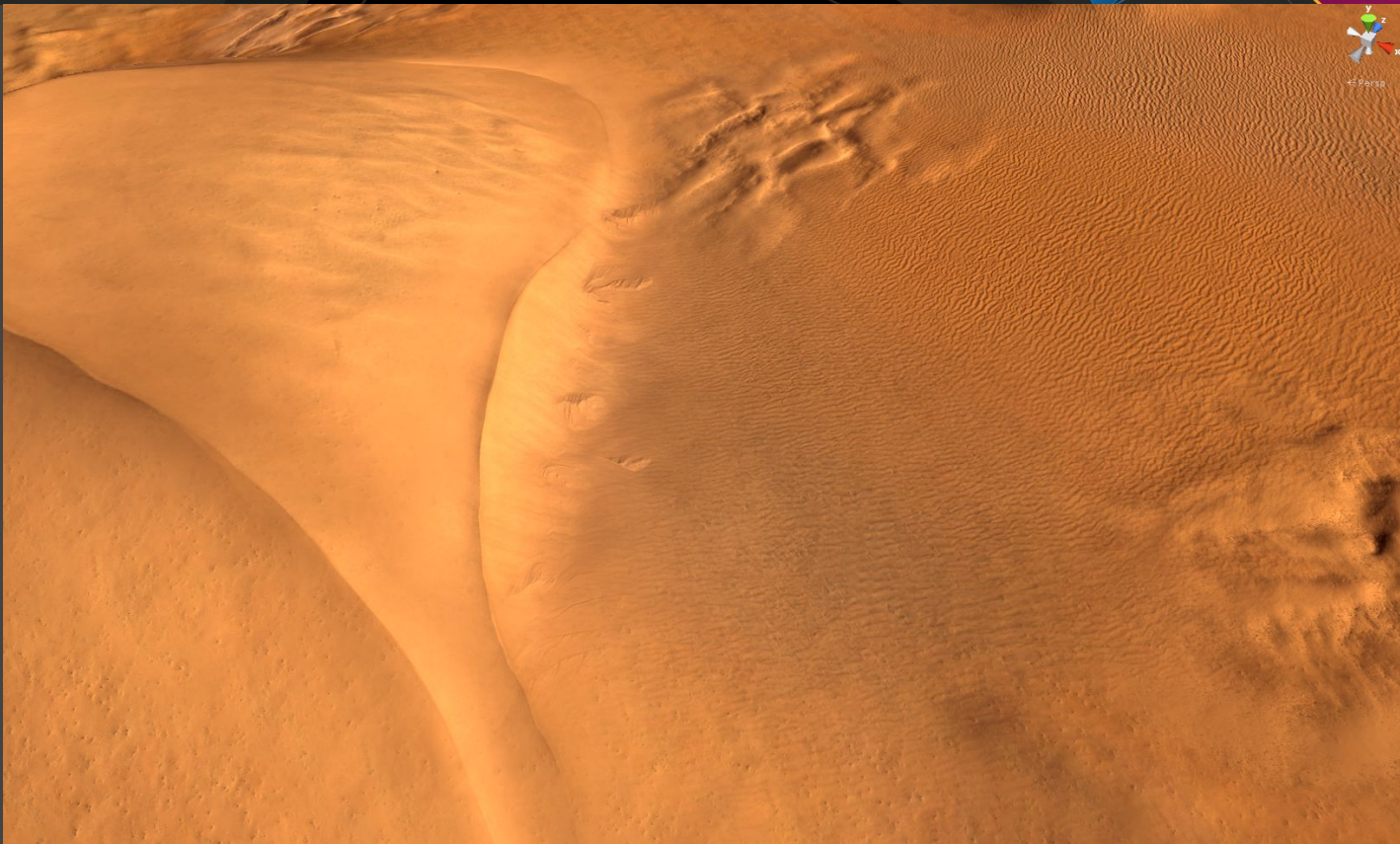
Move, rotate, scale





All the decals!

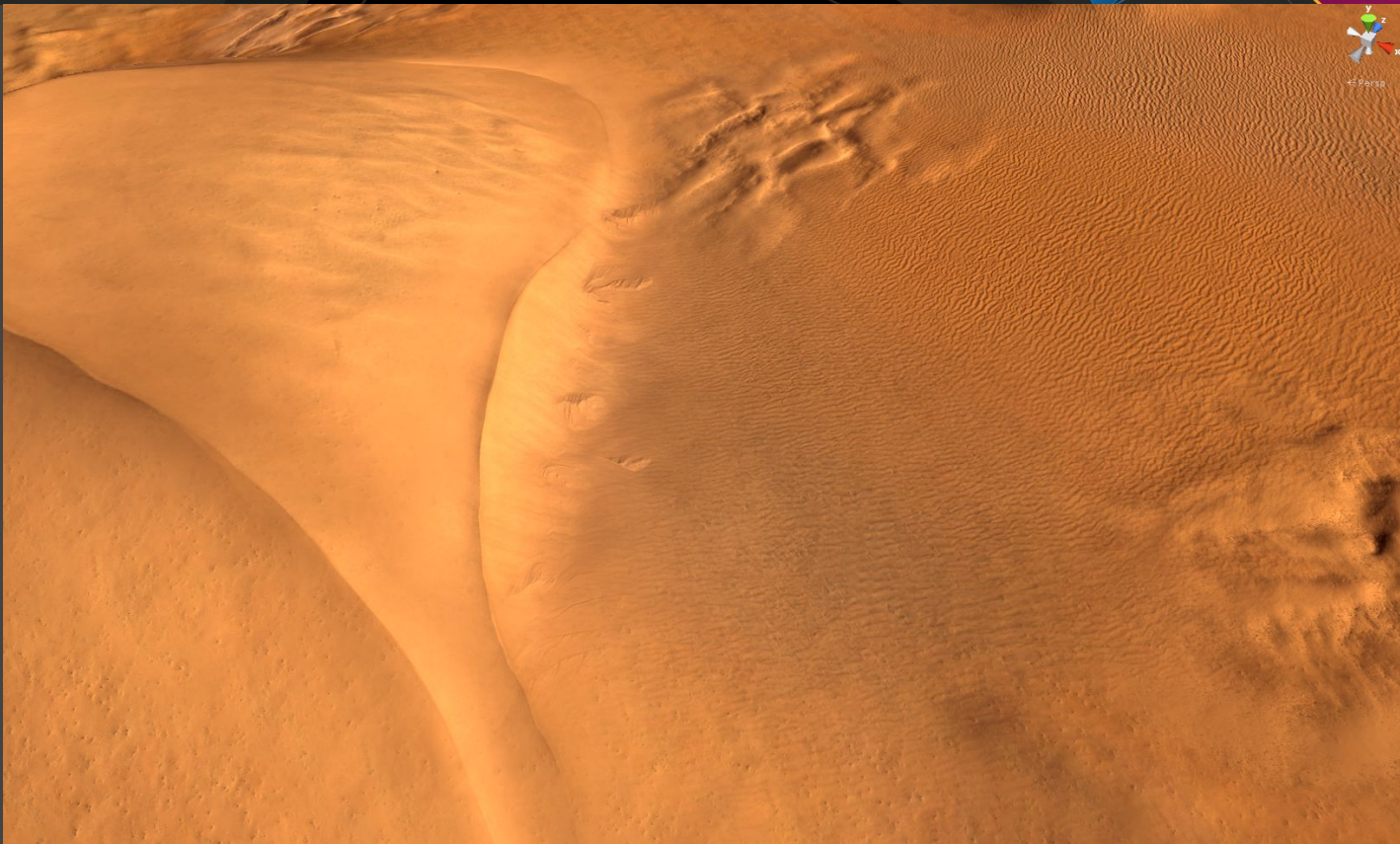






< Persp





decals



dynamic decals





Unity settings

Unity Preferences

Colors

Keys

GI Cache

2D

Cache Server

Chromatica

Decals

Decals

Selected Outline

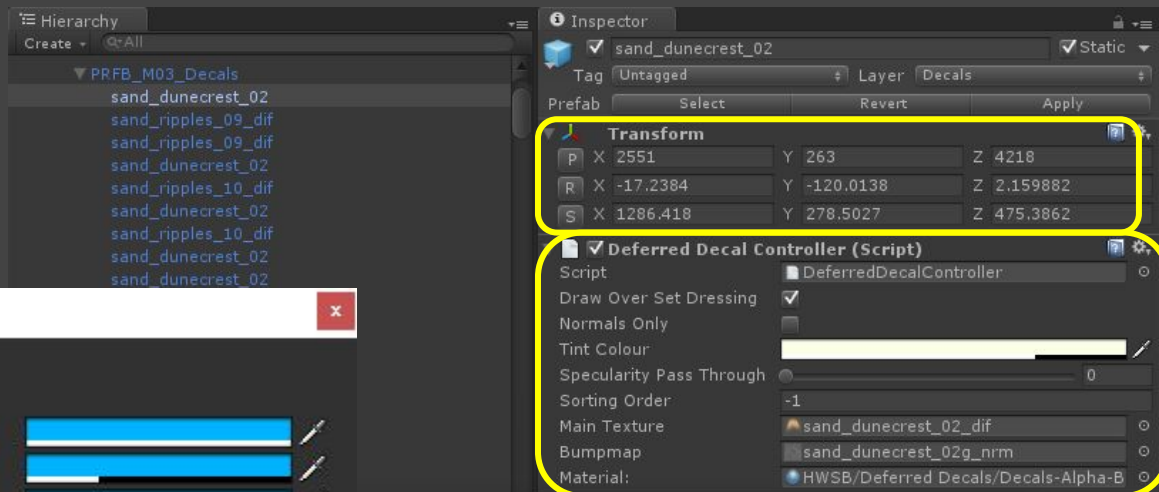
Selected Fill

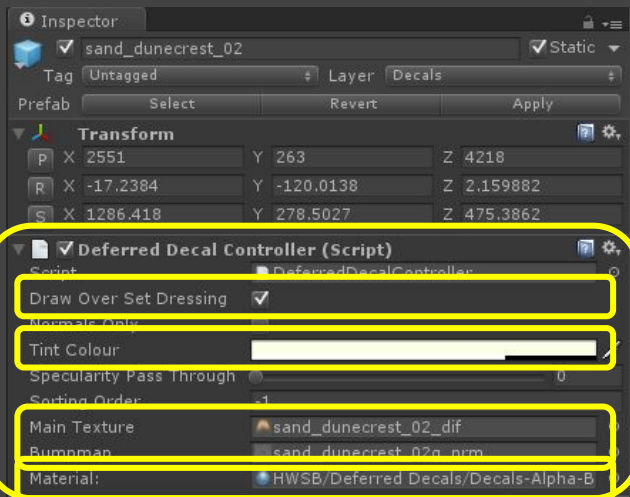
Unselected Outline

Unselected Fill

Show Icon

Bounding Spheres





```

Shader "HWSB/Deferred Decals/Decals-Alpha-BumpedDiffuse" {
    Properties {
        Color ("Main Color (RGB)", Color) = (1,1,1,1)
        _MainTex ("Diffuse", 2D) = "white" {}
        _BumpMap ("Normals", 2D) = "bump" {}
        SpecularityPassthrough("Spec Passthrough", RANGE(0,1)) = 0
        _Transparency ("Transparency", RANGE(0,1)) = 1
    }
    SubShader {
        Pass {
            Stencil {
                Ref 2
                Readmask 2
                Writemask 0
                Comp NotEqual
                Pass keep
            }
            Tags { "LightingMode"="Deferred" }
            ZWrite Off
            ZTest CEqual
            Cull Front
            Blend SrcAlpha OneMinusSrcAlpha
            #include "Include/DiffNrm.cginc"
        }
        Fallback Off
    }
}

```

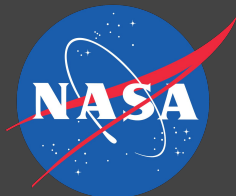




Screen Space Decals in Warhammer 40,000: Space Marine,
Pope Kim, Relic Entertainment, SIGGRAPH 2012, Los Angeles

Extending Unity 5 Rendering Pipeline: Command Buffers, Aras
Pranckevičius, Unity Technologies, blog post, February 6, 2015





During its examination of Mars, the Viking 1 spacecraft returned images of Valles Marineris, a huge canyon system 5,000 km, or about 3,106 miles, long, whose connected chasma or valleys may have formed from a combination of erosional collapse and structural activity.







blackbirdinteractive.com/news/project-eagle



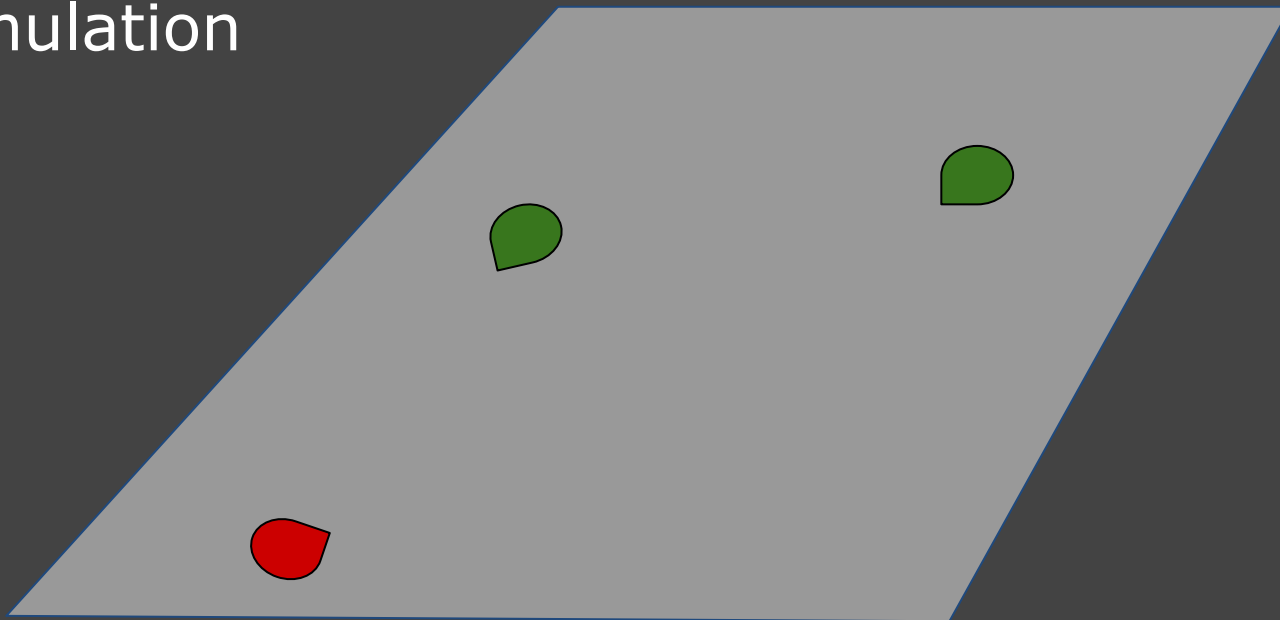


Simulated Terrain?



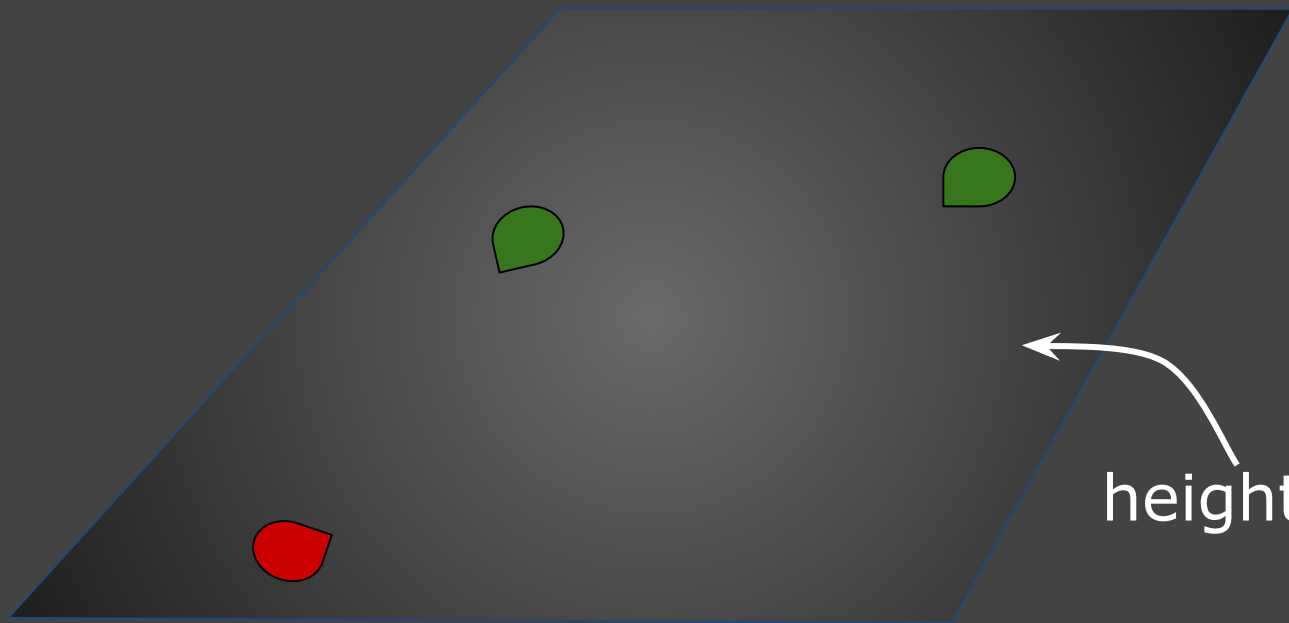


2D Simulation



... this is Homeworld. ~~after~~ ^{after} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~story~~ ^{story}



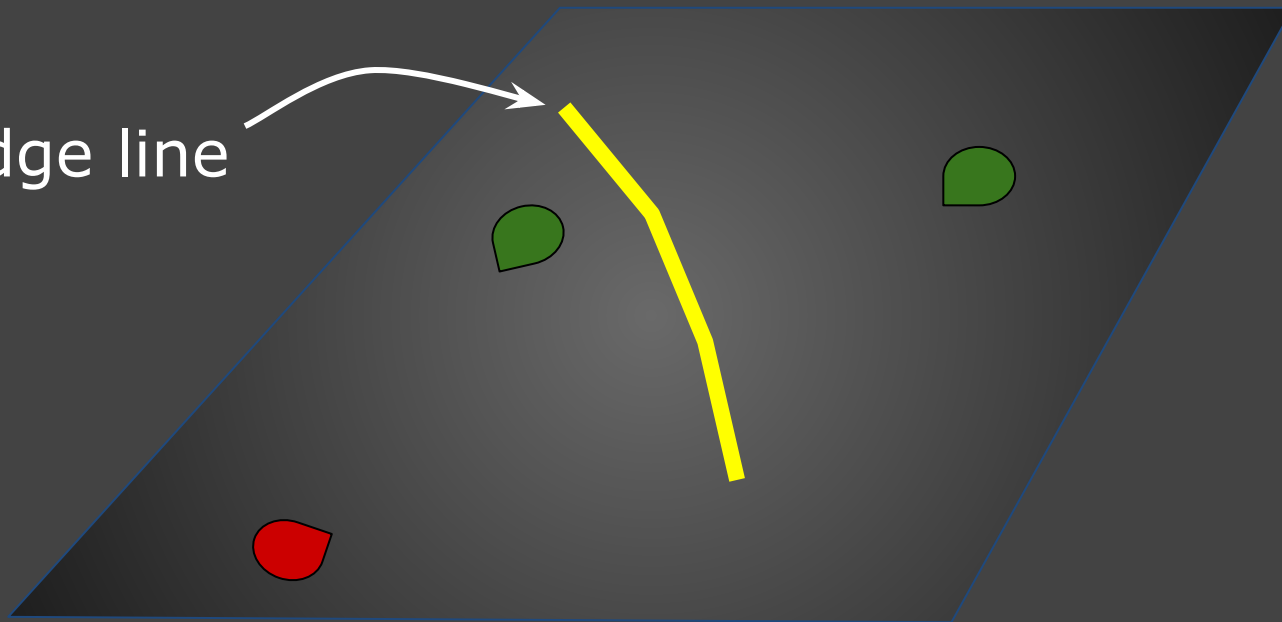


height map



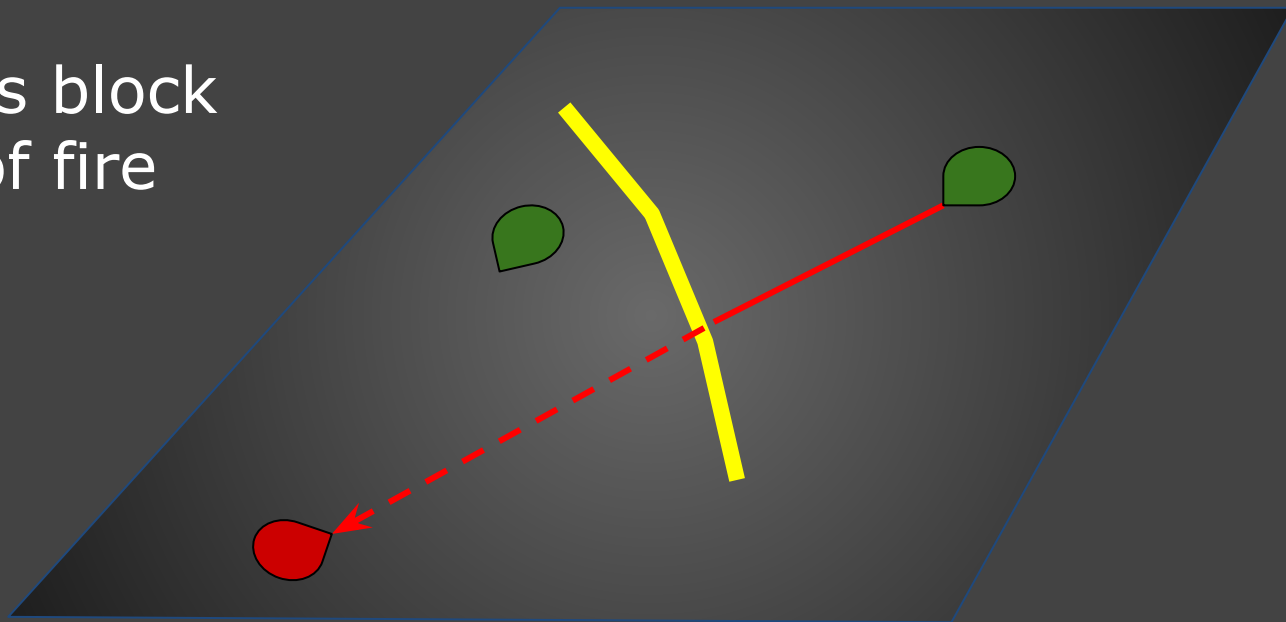


ridge line



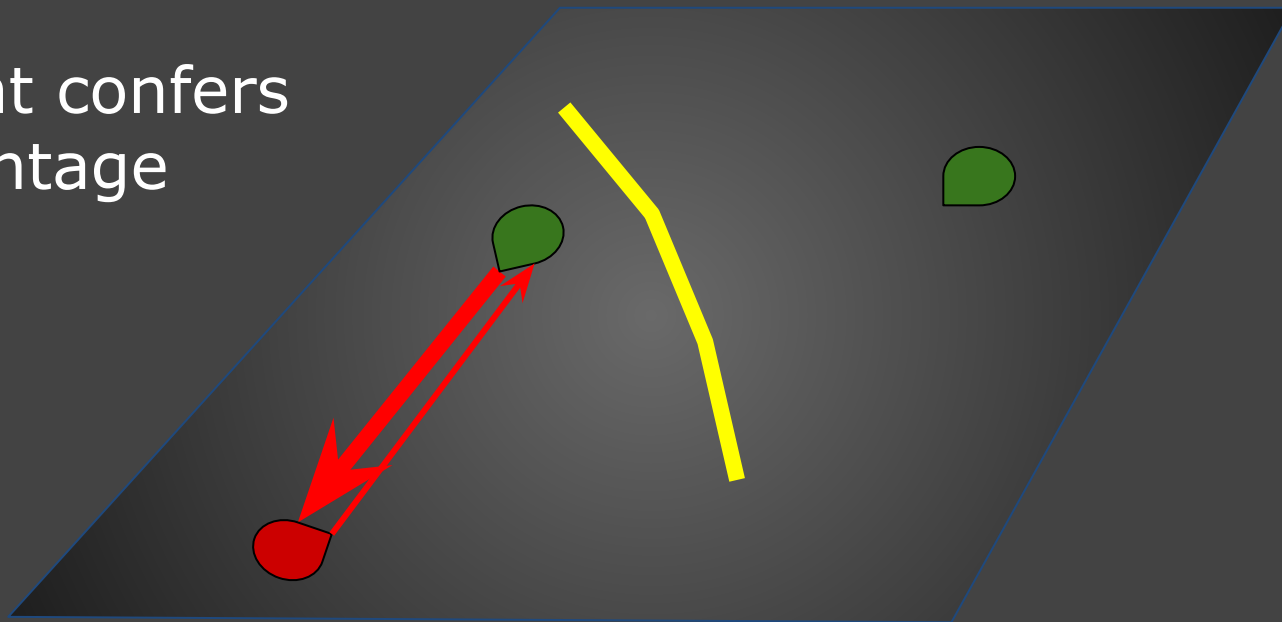


ridges block
line of fire



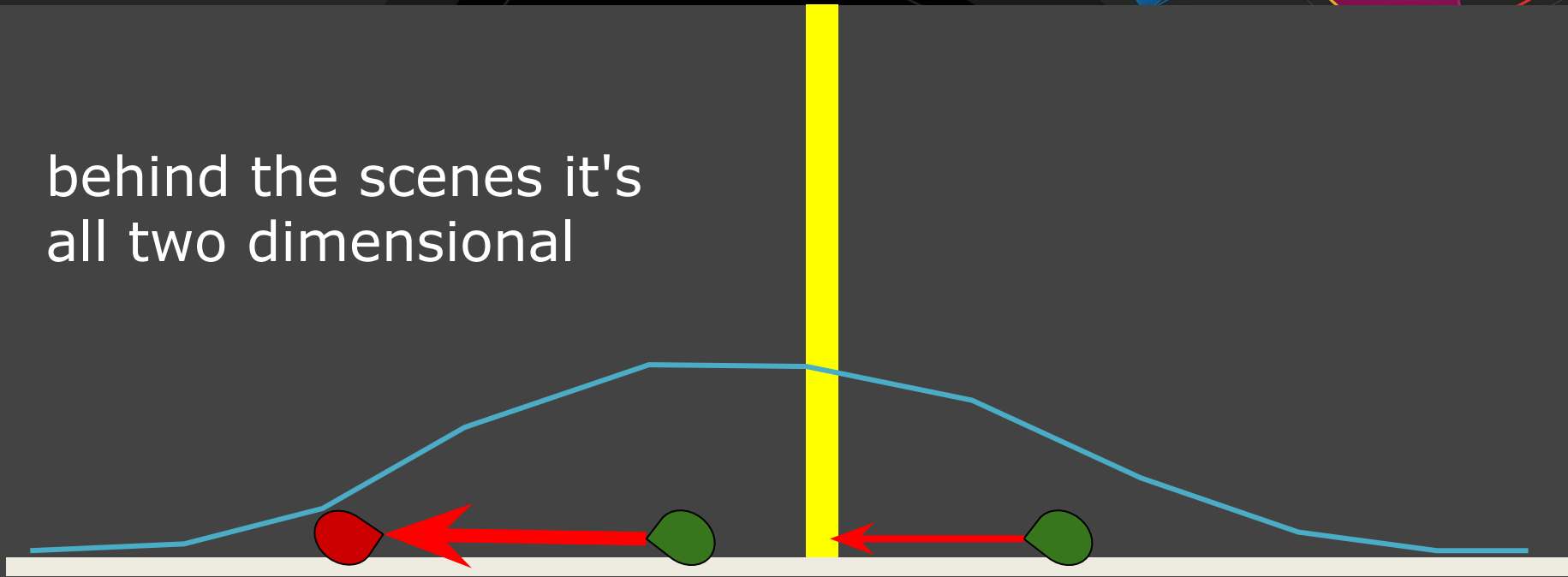


height confers
advantage





behind the scenes it's
all two dimensional





Unique Visuals - Aesthetic Physics





vehicle fantasy

2D sim vs. 3D presentation

deterministic vehicle model

suspension, jumps, etc.

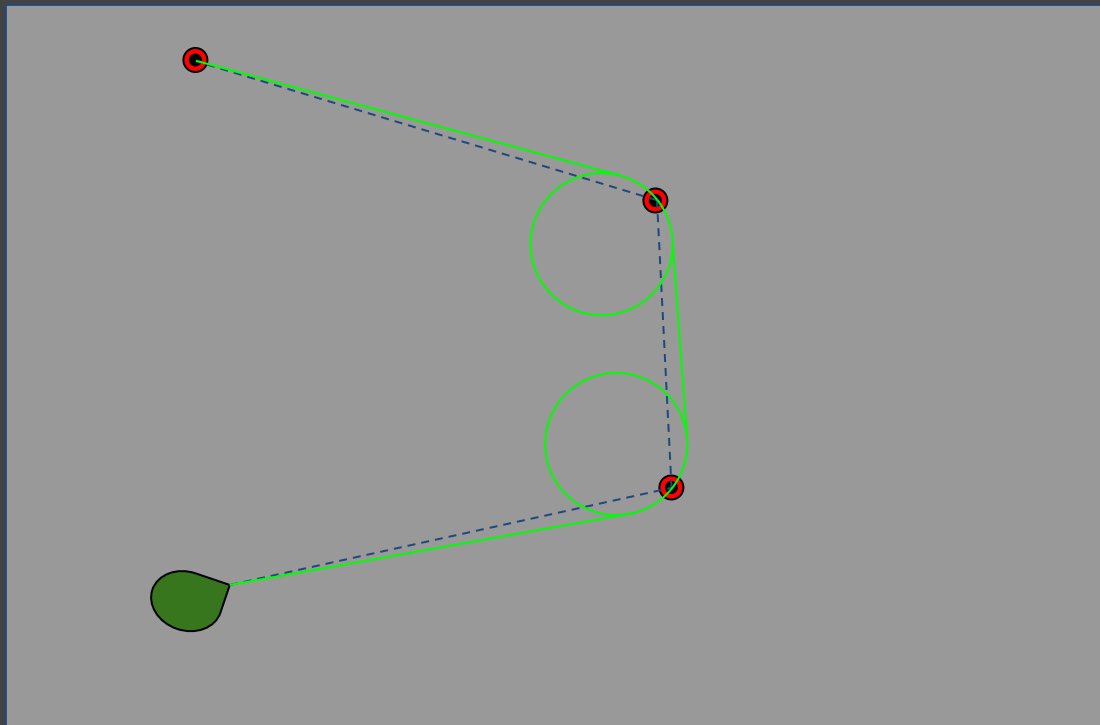
implementation, rigging, interpolation







2D Movement



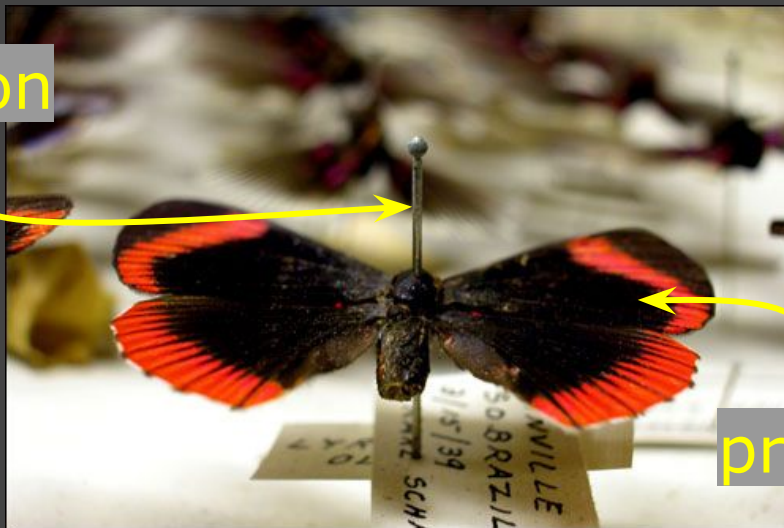


but, but ...





simulation



presentation





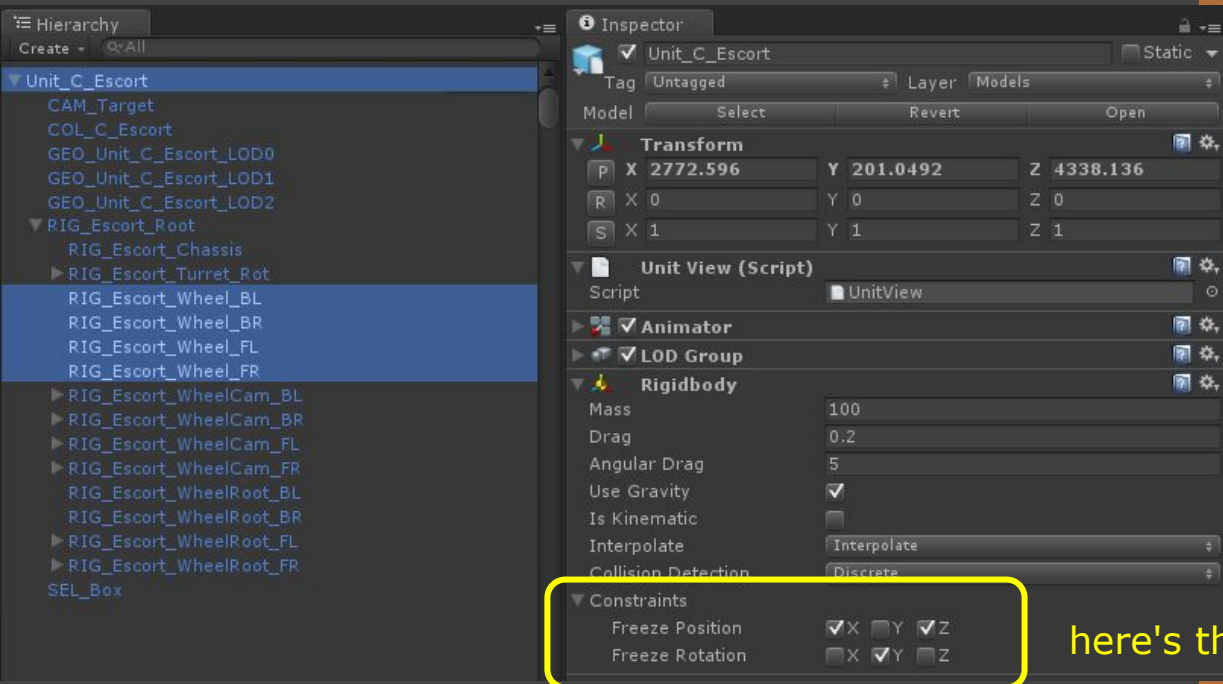
simulation



presentation

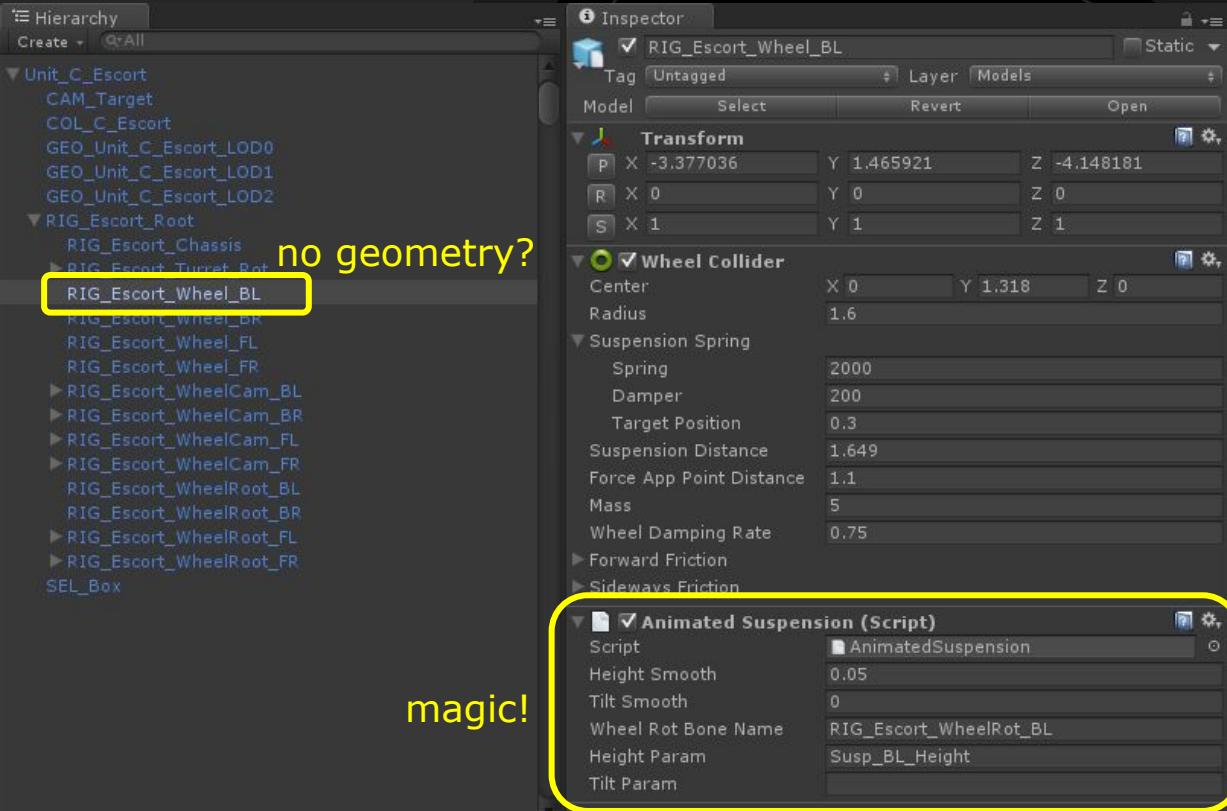


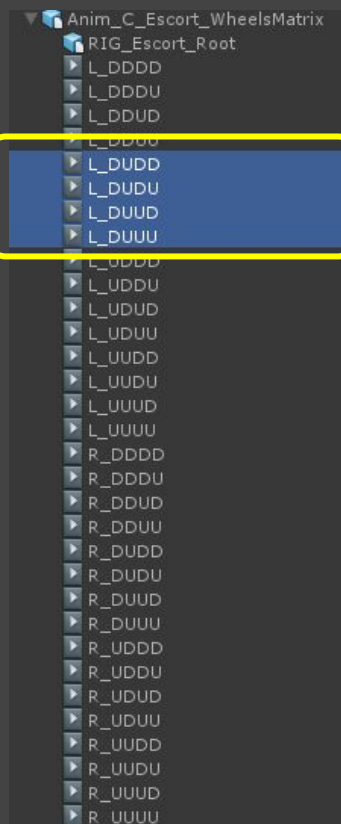
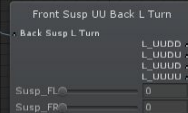
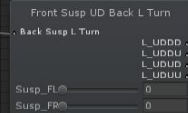
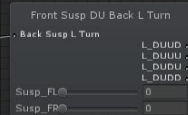
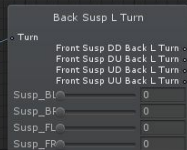


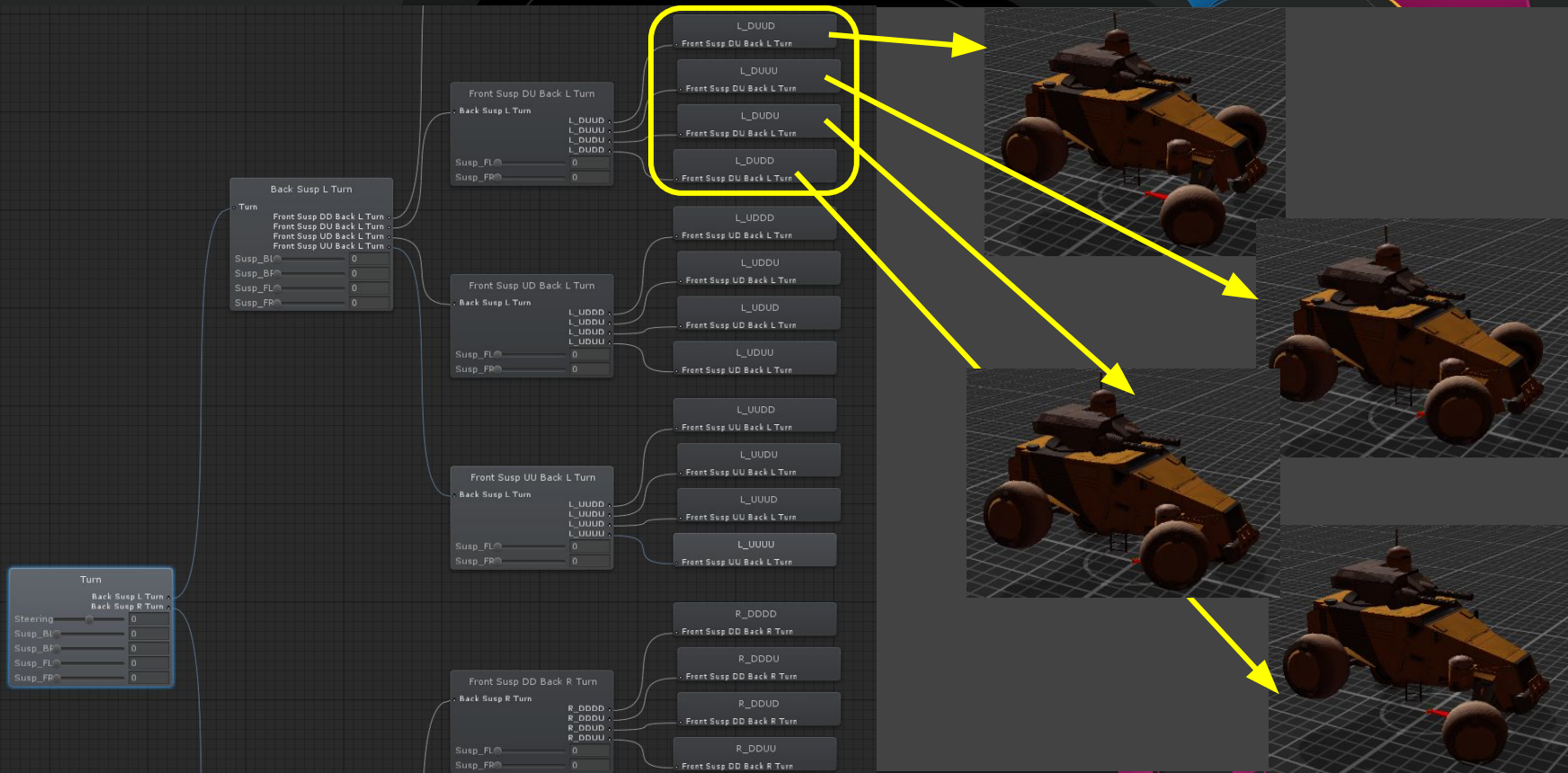


here's the pin!











and also ...





not to mention ...





Sastrei, "Retreat! Re-DERP! Re-HERP!", [imgur](#)



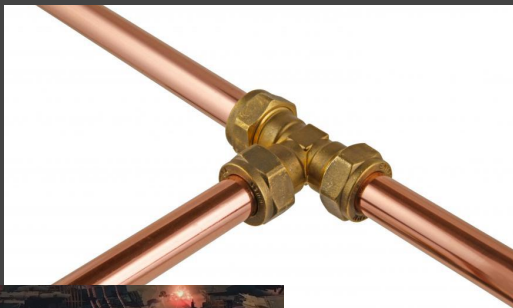


Deterministic Gameplay - Why?





because
multiplayer





BANDWIDTH IS ...

position, speed, health, power ...

turret orientations, ammo, projectiles ...

active abilities, cooldowns ...

goals, targets, ...

buffs*

... x 800 units



*attribute modifiers





BANDWIDTH IS ...





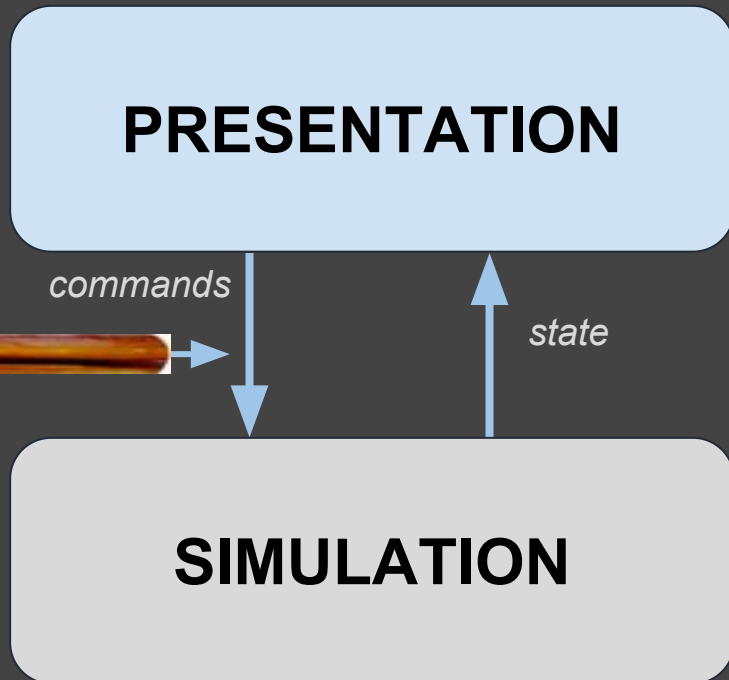
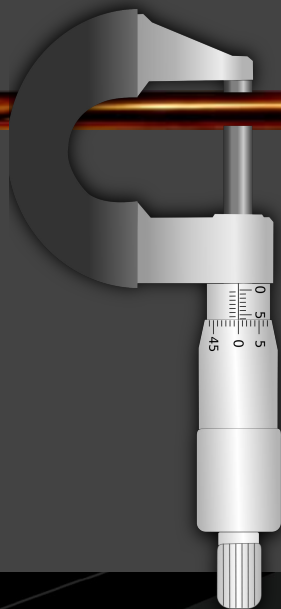
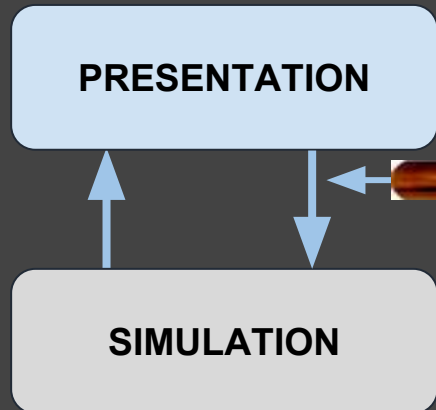
Determinism = repeatability

Given the same inputs, program should pass through the same sequence of states and produce the same outputs.

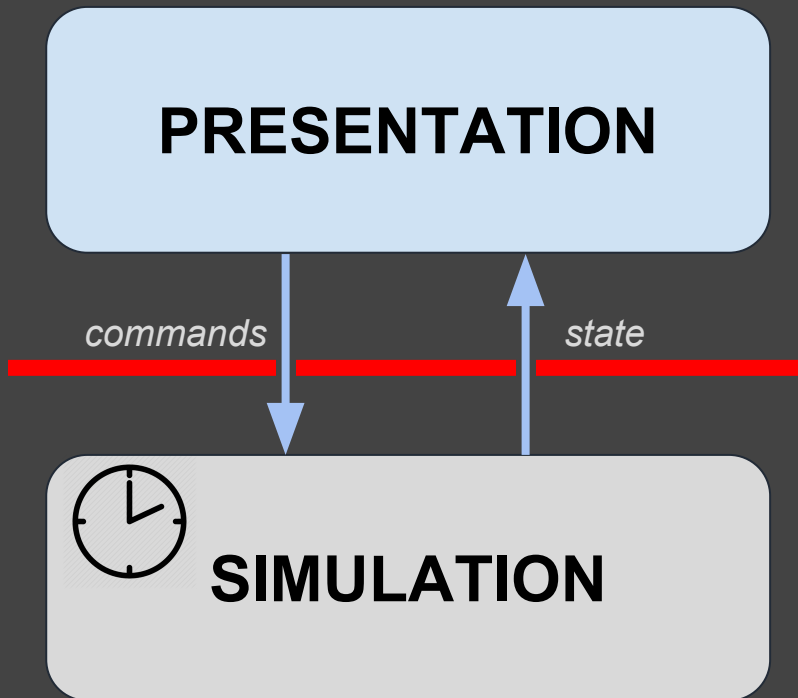




Deterministic simulation + shared
commands = synchronized multiplayer







Determinism means ...

- no state-changing API
- fixed update rate
- no 'float'
- no physics
- no Unity



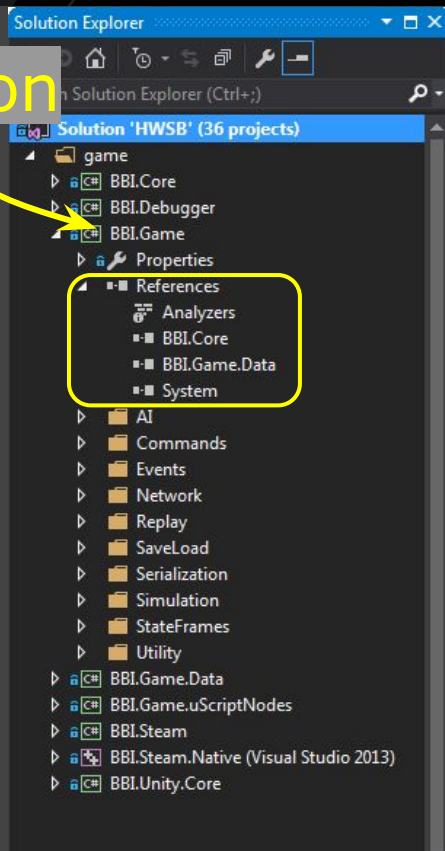


Deterministic Gameplay - Architecture

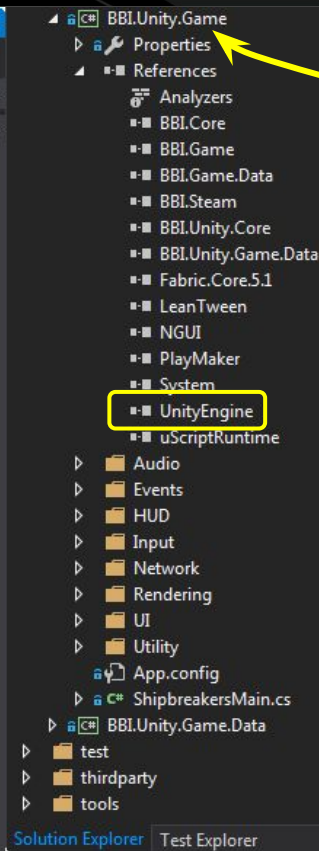


simulation

separate assemblies
clear dependencies
internal scope



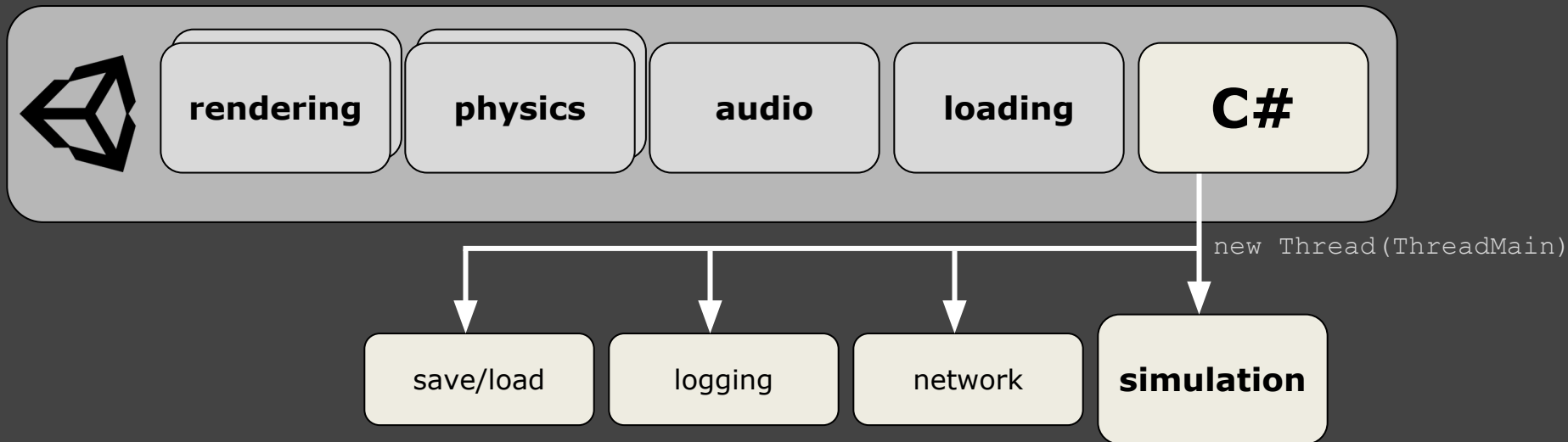
presentation

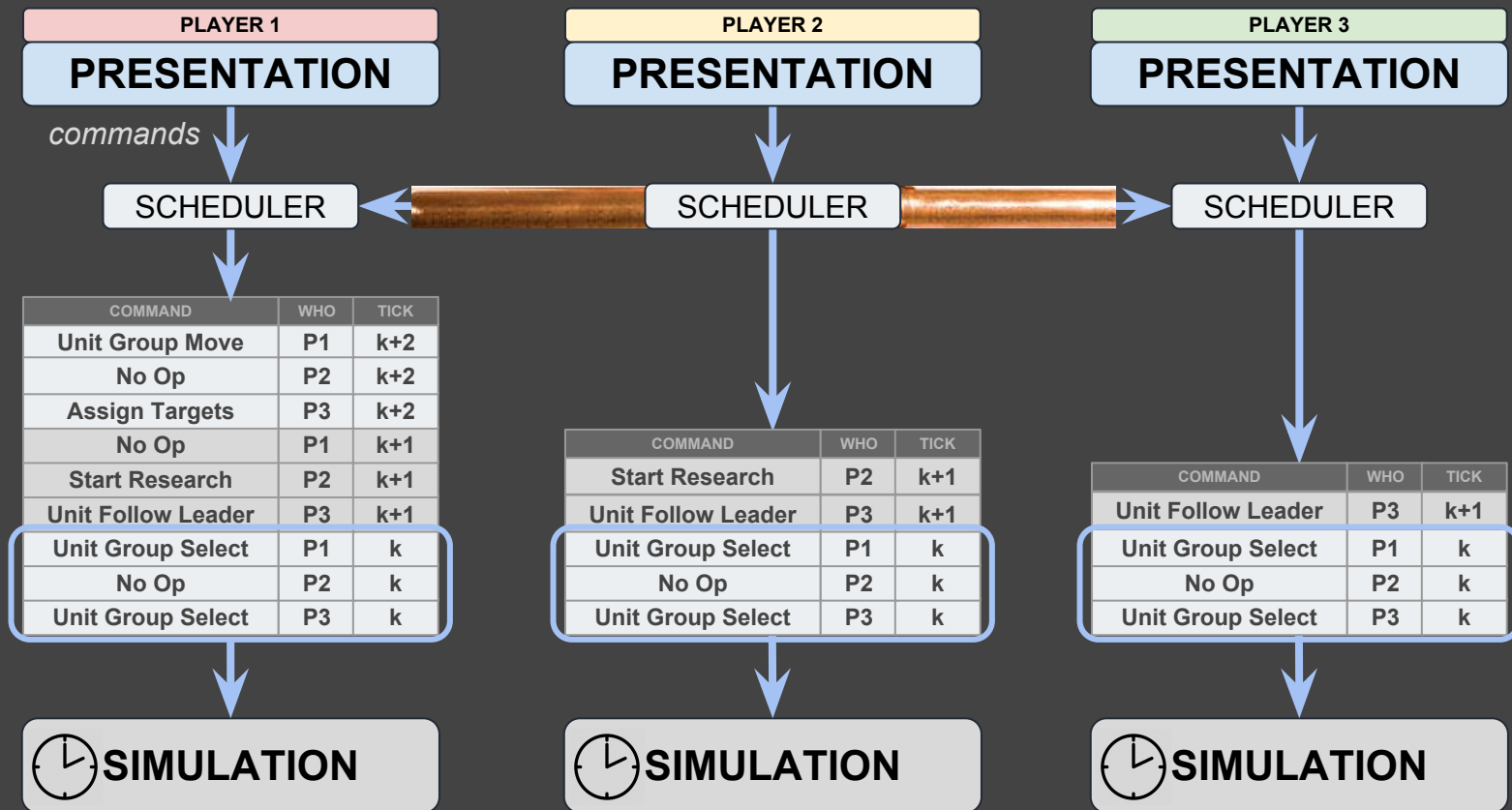


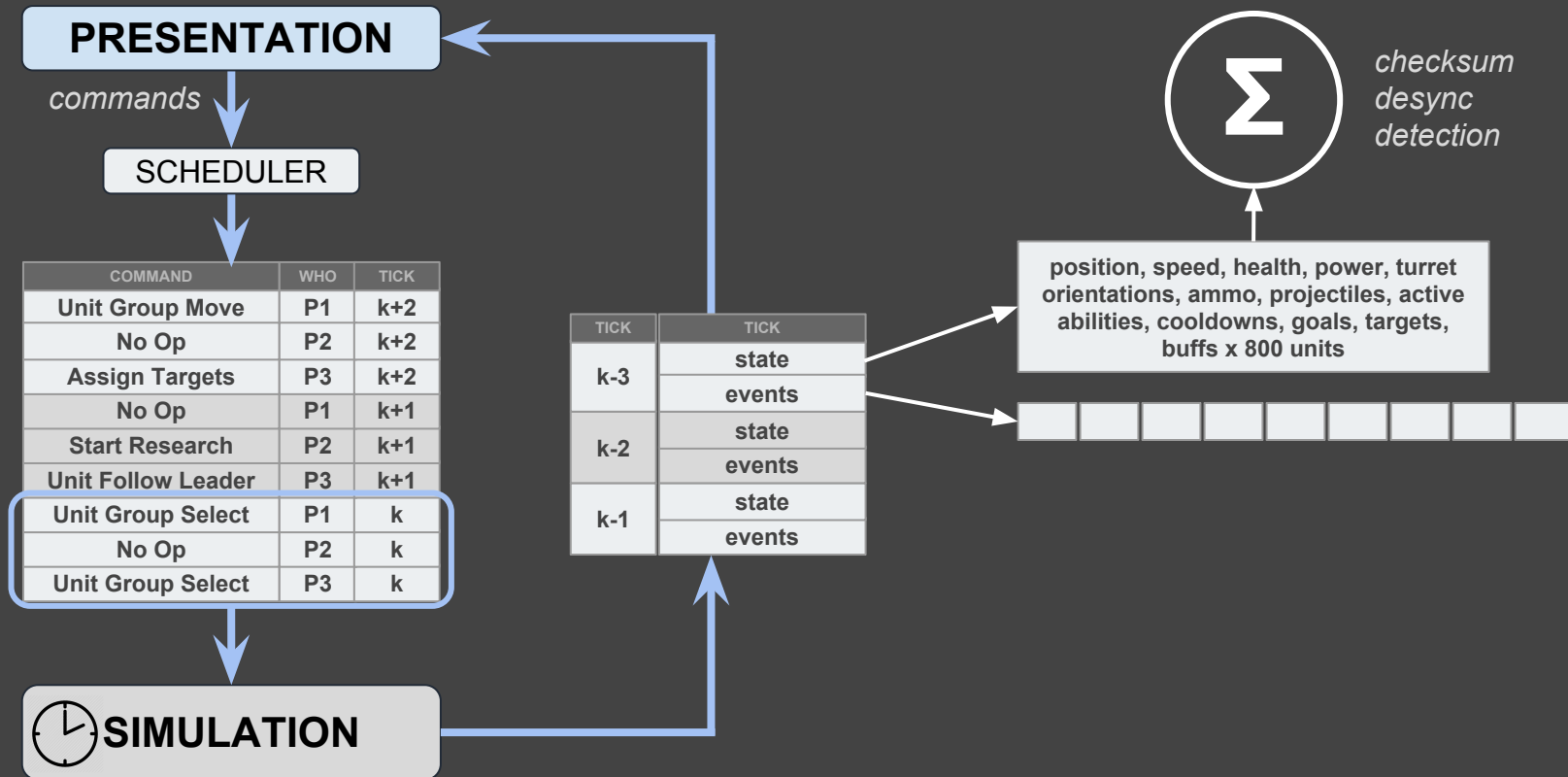
"Dig a pit of success."
Tim Ford



multi-threading









1500 Archers on a 28.8: Network Programming in Age of Empires and Beyond, Mark Terrano, Paul Bettner, Ensemble Studios, [Gamasutra](#), March 22, 2001





Deterministic Gameplay - ~~float~~





Deemed necessary

Fixed point math library

No Unity dependencies

No third party float





```
Fixed64 x = 42;  
Fixed64 y = 99;  
Fixed64 a = x + y;
```





```
[StructLayout(LayoutKind.Explicit)]
```

```
public struct Fixed64
```

```
{
```

```
    [FieldOffset(0)]private long mRawValue;
```

```
    [FieldOffset(0)]private uint mRawLower;
```

```
    [FieldOffset(4)]private int mRawUpper;
```

```
    public static Fixed64 operator +(Fixed64 x, Fixed64 y)
```

```
    {
```

```
        long x1 = x.mRawValue;
```

```
        long y1 = y.mRawValue;
```

```
        long sum = x1 + y1;
```

```
        // Overflow?
```

```
        if (((~(x1 ^ y1) & (x1 ^ sum)) & kMinRawValue) != 0)
```

```
        {
```

```
            return (x1 > 0 ? PositiveInfinity : NegativeInfinity);
```

```
        }
```

```
        return new Fixed64(sum);
```

```
    }
```

```
    public static implicit operator Fixed64(int value)
```

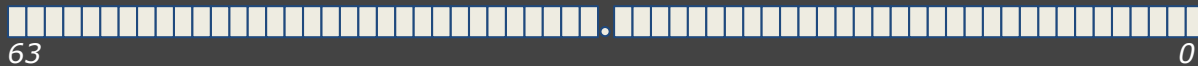
```
    {
```

```
        return new Fixed64((long)value << 32);
```

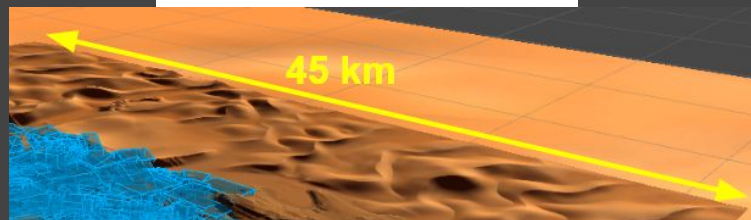
```
    }
```

```
    ... // lots more!
```

```
}
```



$$\sqrt{2^{31}} = 46,340.95$$





did it work?

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS

Windows

Mac OS X

MINIMUM:

OS: Windows 7/8/10 **32**

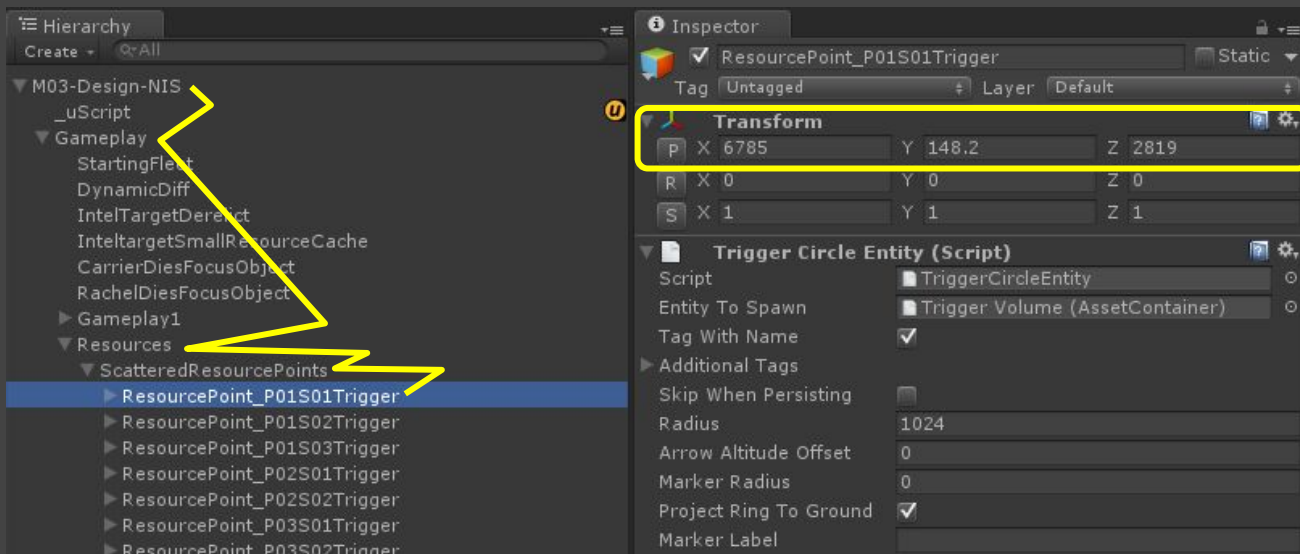
RECOMMENDED:

OS: Windows 7/8/10 **(64-bit)**





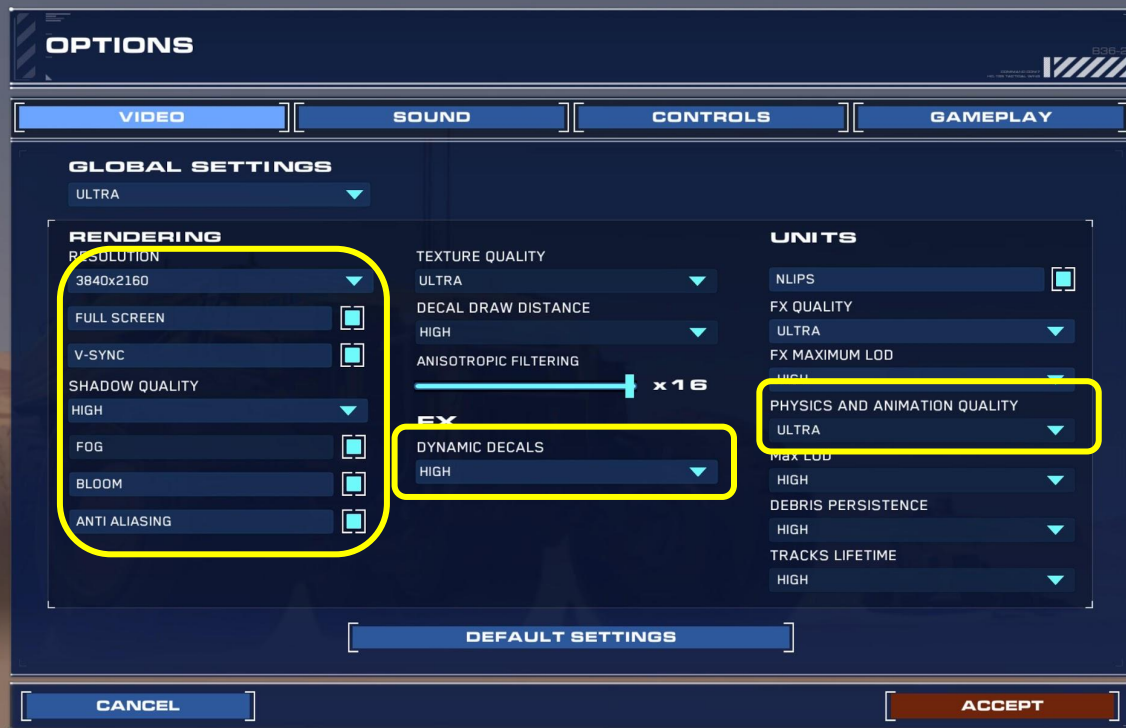
was it necessary?





Performance - Level of Detail







Performance* - C#

**by which I mean Memory*





C# uses managed memory

new but no delete

"Hey, don't worry about it, it'll be fine!"



.NET garbage collection





Garbage collection in Unity's Mono



Branch: unity-5.5 ▼

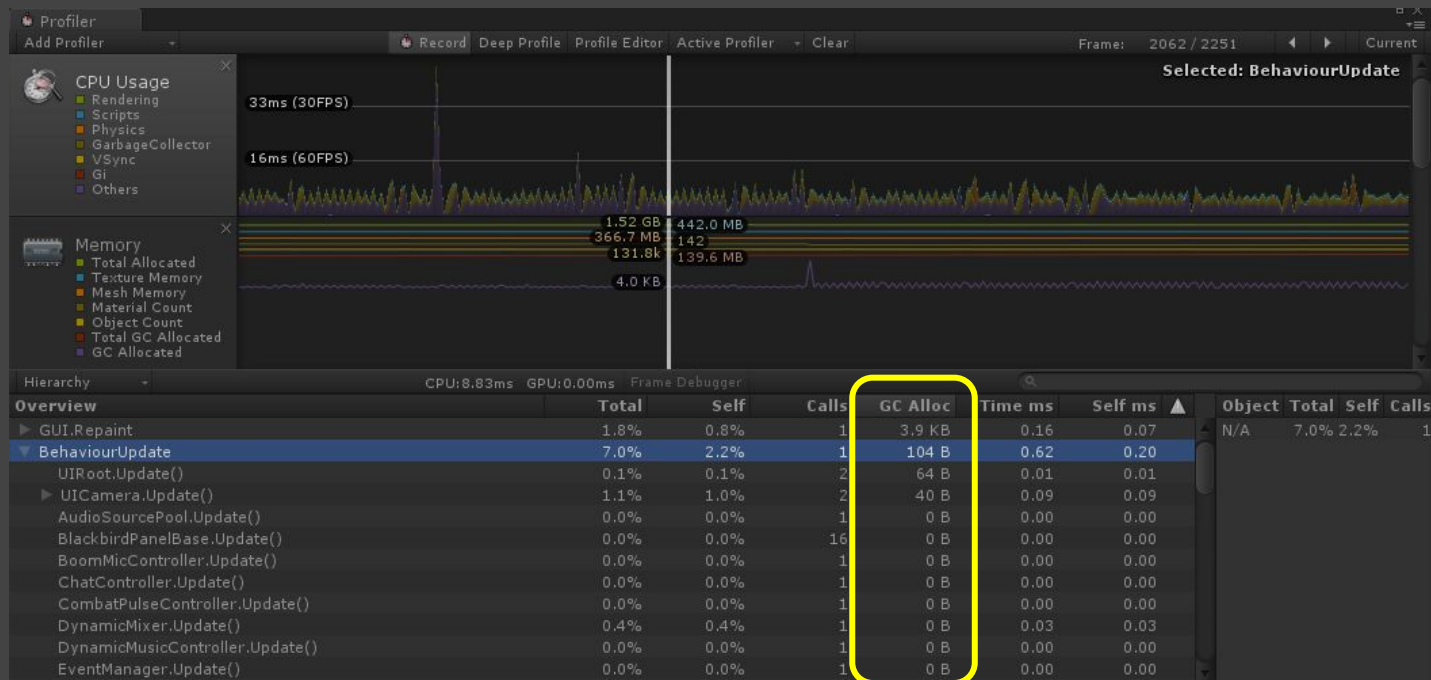
New pull request

This branch is 2686 commits ahead, 30177 commits behind mono:master.











Collection capacity

```
List<Thing> things = new List<Thing>();  
things.Add(thing1);  
things.Add(thing2);  
...
```

```
things.Add(thing17);
```

Allocate doubled array and copy!





Collection capacity

```
List<Thing> things = new List<Thing>(17);  
things.Add(thing1);  
things.Add(thing2);  
...  
things.Add(thing17);
```

No allocation.

Consider writing your own collection classes.
e.g. Fixed capacity list wrapping an array.





Temporary lists

```
public void DoThings()  
{  
    List<Thing> things = new List<Thing>(kMaxThings);  
    things.Add(...);  
    DoAllTheThings(things);  
}
```





Temporary lists

```
private static List<Thing> sThings = new List<Thing>(kMaxCapacity);
```

one-time allocation

```
public void DoThings()  
{  
    sThings.Add(...);  
    DoAllTheThings(sThings);  
    sThings.Clear*();  
}
```

*Not sure if Clear resets capacity? Check the [reference source](#)





Object pools

- Especially for Unity prefab instances, due to instantiation costs.
- Great for other objects too.
- Be sure to "clean up" objects when putting them back in the pool.





```
public class ObjectPool<T> where T : new()
{
    private List<T> mReservedObjects = null;
    private List<T> mAvailableObjects = null;

    public ObjectPool(int capacity)
    {
        mReservedObjects = new List<T>(capacity);
        mAvailableObjects = new List<T>(capacity);

        for (int i = 0; i < capacity; ++i)
        {
            mAvailableObjects.Add(new T());
        }
    }

    public T Reserve()
    {
        ...
    }

    public void Release(T obj)
    {
        ...
    }
}
```





strings, boxing, params

```
int x = 42;
```

```
string s = string.Format("x={0}", x);
```

 how many allocations?

1. box x
2. temporary array of parameters
3. x.ToString()
4. new string s

C#	C++	F#	VB
----	-----	----	----

```
public static string Format(  
    string format,  
    params object[] args  
)
```





strings, boxing, params

```
int x = 42;  
string s = string.Concat("x=", x.ToString());
```

C#	C++	F#	VB
<pre>public static string Concat(string str0, string str1)</pre>			

1. ~~box x~~
2. ~~temporary array of parameters~~
3. ~~x.ToString()~~
4. new string s





Avoid boxing

```
struct StructThing
{
    int Size;
    string Name;
}
```

```
StructThing thing = new StructThing();
DoTheThing(thing);
```

boxing!

```
void DoTheThing(object thing)
{
    ...
}
```





Avoid boxing

```
struct StructThing : IThing
{
    int Size { get; private set; }
    string Name { get; private set; }
}
```

```
interface IThing
{
    int Size { get; }
    string Name { get; }
}
```

```
StructThing thing = new StructThing();
DoTheThing(thing);
```

boxing!

```
void DoTheThing (IThing thing)
{
    ...
}
```





Avoid boxing

```
struct StructThing : IThing
{
    int Size { get; private set; }
    string Name { get; private set; }
}
```

```
interface IThing
{
    int Size { get; }
    string Name { get; }
}
```

```
StructThing thing = new StructThing();
DoTheThing(thing);
```

no boxing!

```
void DoTheThing<T>(T thing)
    where T:IThing
{
    ...
}
```





Avoid boxing enumerators

```
MyCollection<Thing> things;
```

```
...
```

```
foreach (Thing t in things)
```

```
{    how many allocations?
```

```
...
```

```
}
```

```
class MyCollection<T> : IEnumerable<T>
```

```
{
```

```
...
```

```
}
```





Avoid boxing enumerators

```
MyCollection<Thing> things;  
...  
foreach (Thing t in things)  
{  
    how many allocations?  
    ...  
}
```

```
class MyCollection<T> : IEnumerable<T>  
{  
    IEnumerator<T> GetEnumerator()  
    {  
        return new MyEnumerator();  
    }  
}
```

```
private class MyEnumerator:IEnumerator<T>  
{  
    ...  
}
```





Avoid boxing enumerators

```
MyCollection<Thing> things;
```

```
...
```

```
foreach (Thing t in things)
```

```
{  
    how many allocations?  
    ...  
}
```

```
class MyCollection<T> : IEnumerable<T>
```

```
{  
    boxing!
```

```
    IEnumerator<T> GetEnumerator()  
    {
```

```
        return new MyEnumerator();  
    }
```

```
private struct MyEnumerator : IEnumerator<T>
```

```
{
```

```
    ...  
}
```

```
}
```





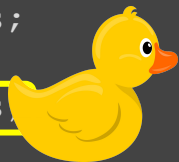
Avoid boxing enumerators

```
MyCollection<Thing> things;
```

```
...
```

```
foreach (Thing t in things)
```

```
{  
    how many allocations?  
    ...  
}
```



```
class MyCollection<T> : IEnumerable<T>
```

```
{
```

```
    MyEnumerator GetEnumerator()
```

```
{
```

```
    return new MyEnumerator();  
}
```

```
public struct MyEnumerator : IEnumerator<T>
```

```
{
```

```
    ...  
}
```

```
}
```





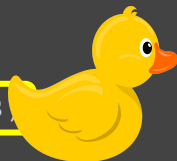
Avoid boxing enumerators

```
IEnumerable<Thing> things;
```

```
...
```

```
foreach (Thing t in things)
```

```
{  
    how many allocations?  
    ...  
}
```



```
class MyCollection<T> : IEnumerable<T>
```

```
{
```

```
    MyEnumerator GetEnumerator()
```

```
{
```

```
    return new MyEnumerator();  
}
```

```
public struct MyEnumerator : IEnumerator<T>
```

```
{
```

```
    ...  
}
```

```
}
```





Entity-Component System

```
entitySystem.Query()  
    .Has (Component.Position)  
    .Has (Component.Mover)  
    .HasNot (Component.Immobile)  
    .HasNot (Component.Death)  
  
    .Do (MovementProcessor.Process);
```

```
static class MovementProcessor  
{  
    static void Process(Entity e)  
    {  
        Mover mover =  
            e.GetComponent (Component.Mover);  
        ProcessMover (mover);  
    }  
    ...  
}
```





```
struct Entity { int ID; }
```

```
class EntitySystem
```

```
{
```

```
    StructCollection<EntityInfo> mEntities = new ...(kMaxEntities);
```

```
    EntityQuery Query() { ... }
```

```
}
```

```
struct EntityQuery : IEnumerable<Entity>
```

```
{
```

```
    public Enumerator GetEnumerator() { ... }
```

```
}
```

```
struct Enumerator : IEnumerator<Entity> { ... }
```



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EBI
BLACKBIRD
INTERACTIVE



Summary





Unity games can look as unique as we are capable of making them.

Deterministic simulation is still the state of the art for RTS multiplayer.

C# is ready for AAA game development.





Many thanks!

- Everyone at Blackbird
- Gearbox Software
- The giants on whose shoulders we stand
- You for watching!







Magpie842, "Deserts of Kharak - Artifact Cup #5 Grand finals", [YouTube](#)



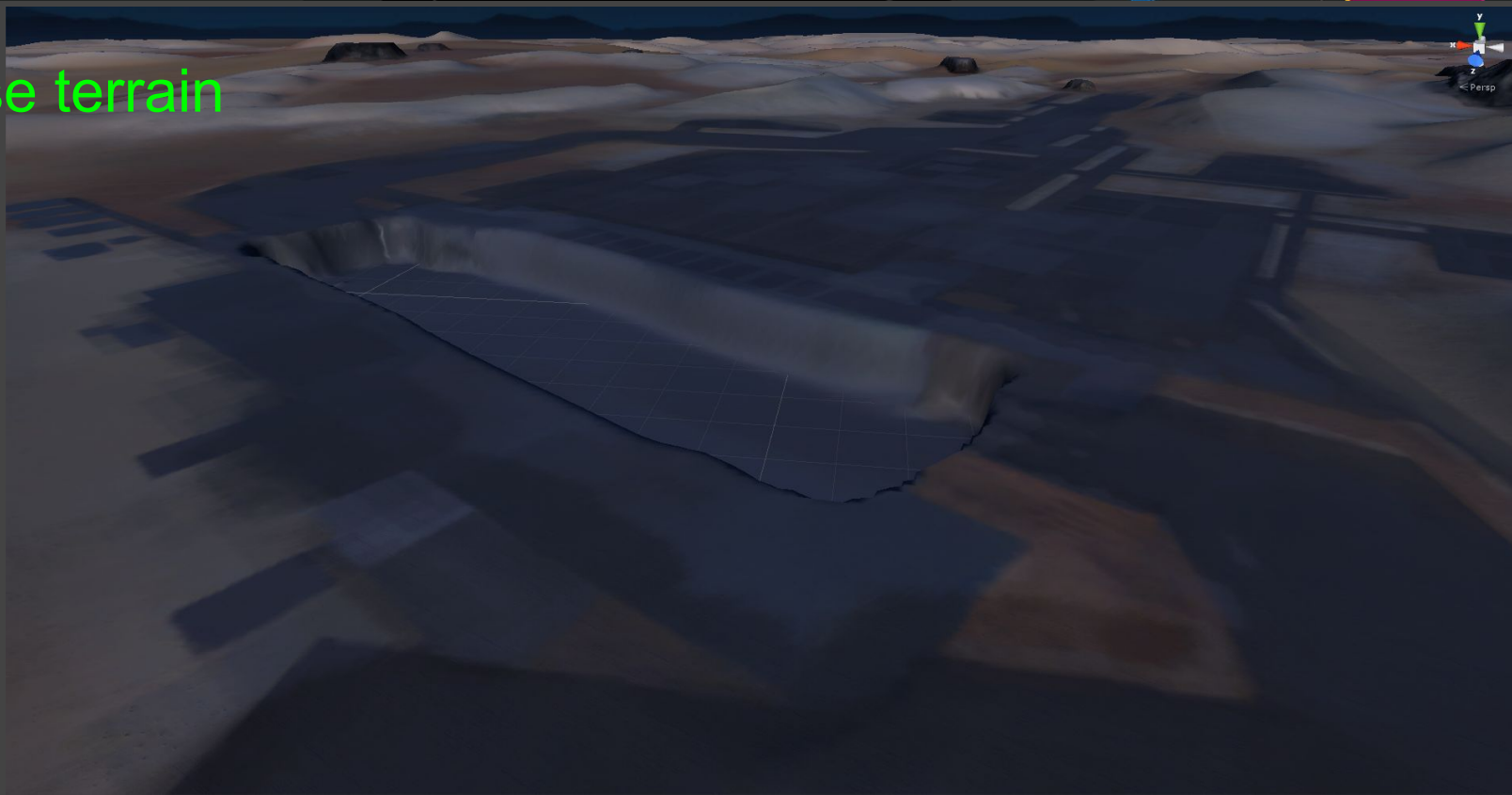


night-time example





base terrain





set dressing





lighting





decals



