



# Building a Visual Threshold

**Stuart Macdonald**

Lead Artist   Playraven

# Building a visual threshold



Stuart Macdonald

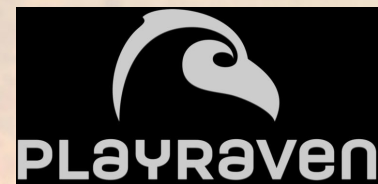


grand  
theft  
auto  
San Andreas











# the visual threshold



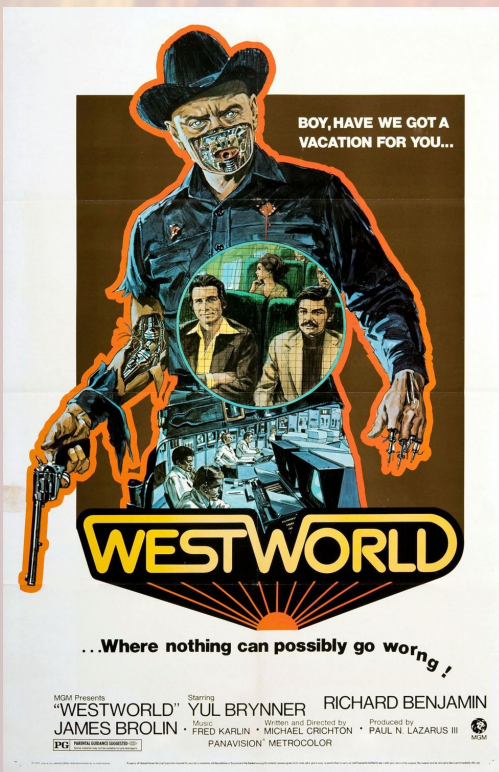







# Visual Stereotypes






Westworld

dir. Michael Crichton 1973



( yes it's subjective, but... )  
A Visual Stereotype is **not** a visual cliché



Does this **support** and **strengthen** the visual design of the (game)world?

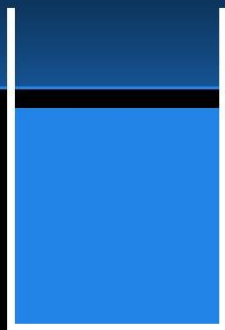




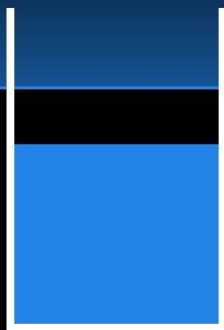
# EXPLODING BARRELS

They're everywhere, just waiting for you to shoot them.

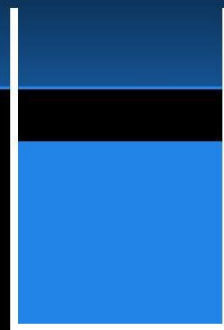
# Crossing the threshold



**SETTING**



**STORY**

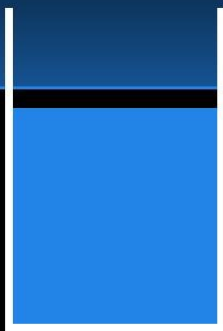


**CHARACTER**

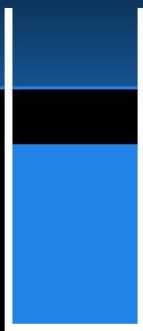


**GAMEPLAY**

# Gameplay often needs more time & energy



**SETTING**



**STORY**



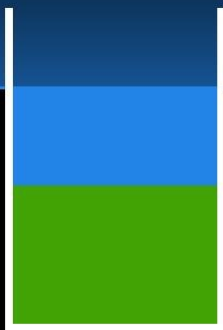
**CHARACTER**



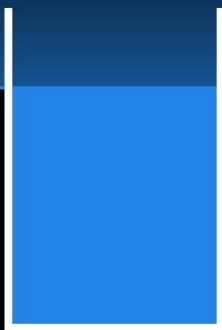
**GAMEPLAY**



# Visual Stereotype use can help



**SETTING**



**STORY**



**CHARACTER**

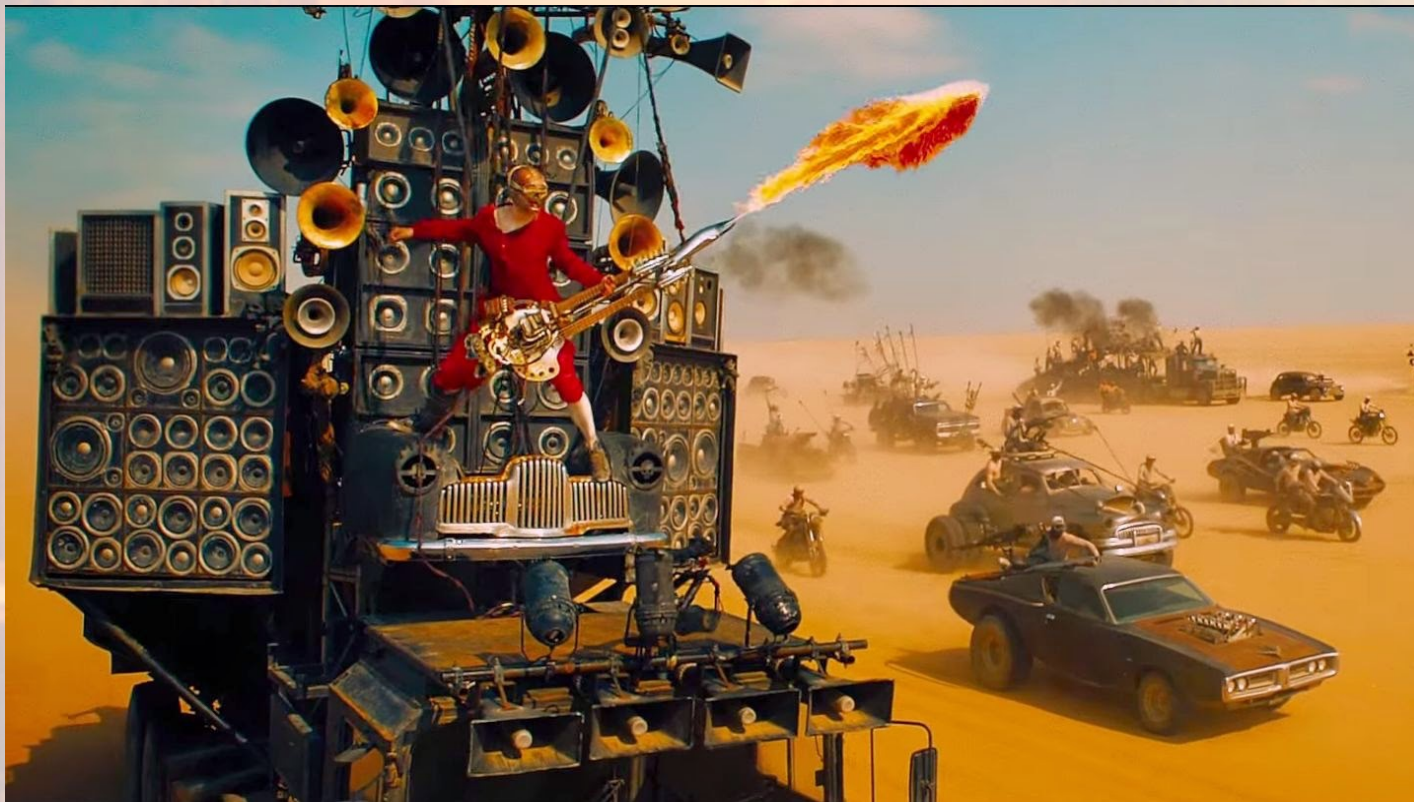


**GAMEPLAY**









Mad Max Fury Road

dir. George Miller 2015















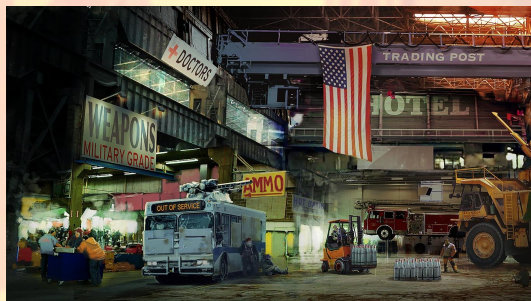


This is a horror

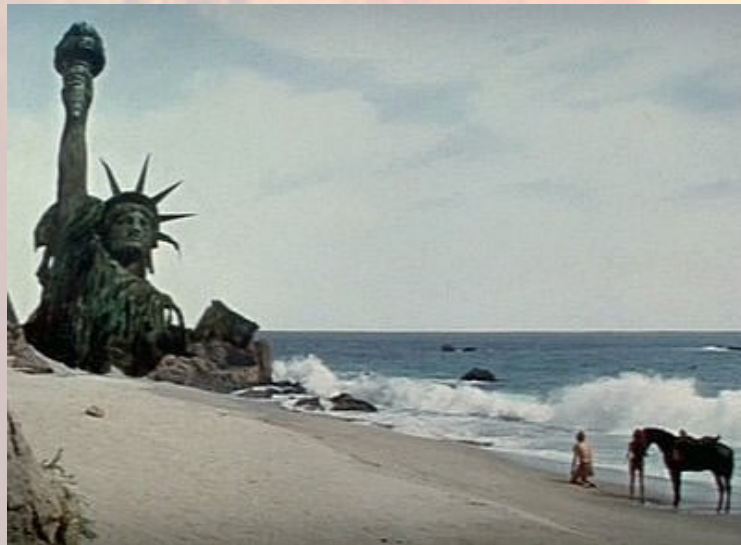


























What does **time** look like?















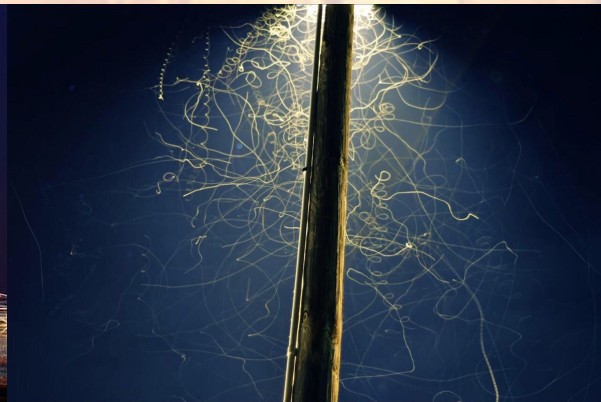






























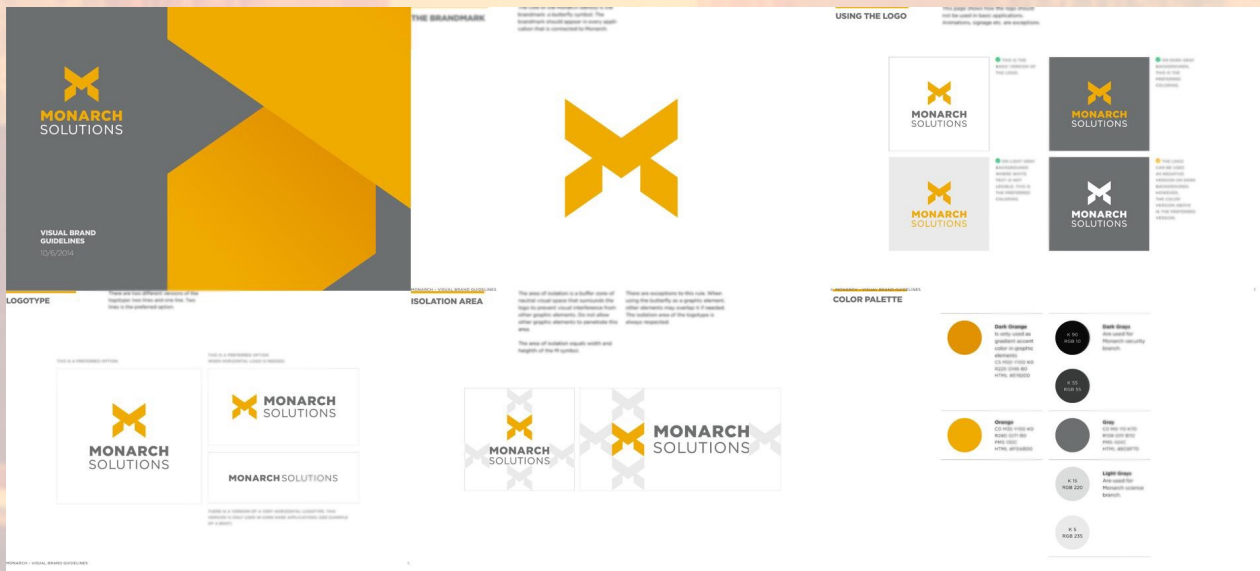
**creating an in-game brand**























# Visual Threshold

internally for pre-production





using Visual Metaphor to communicate concept















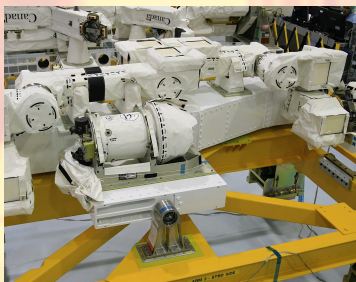
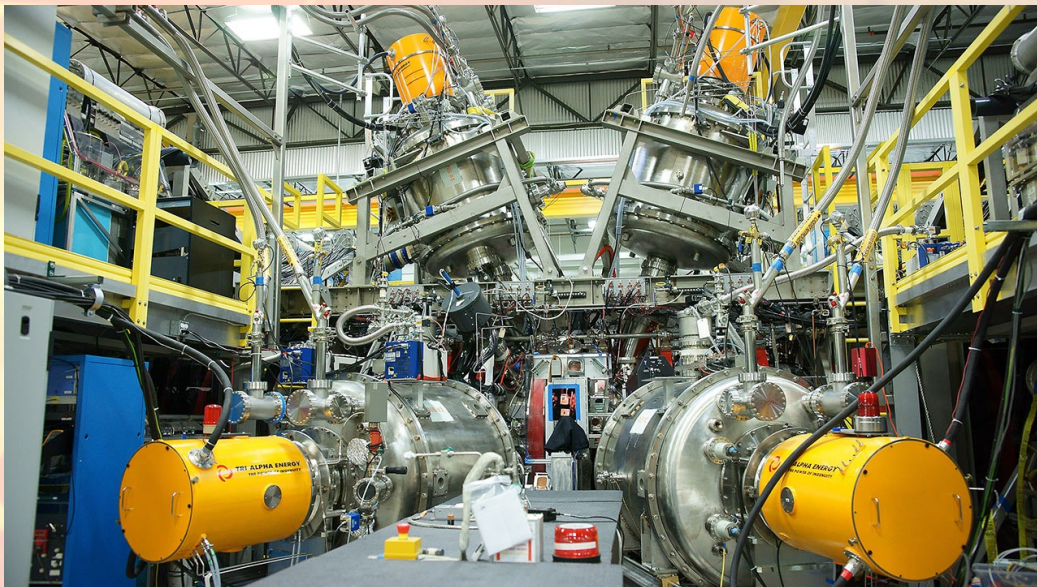




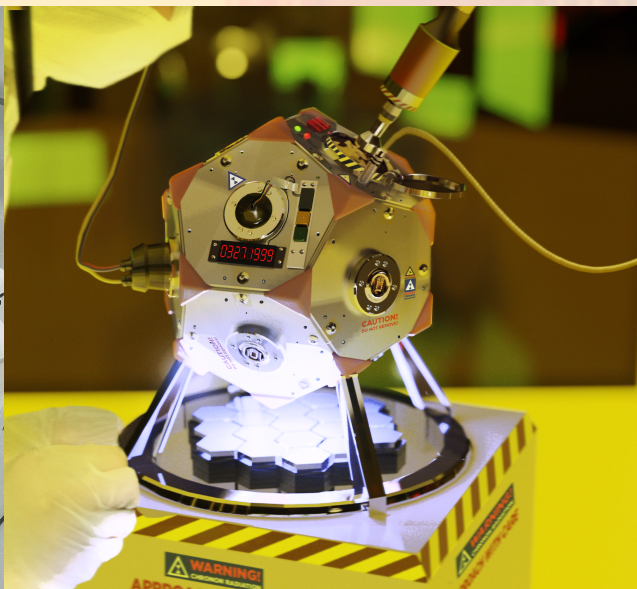
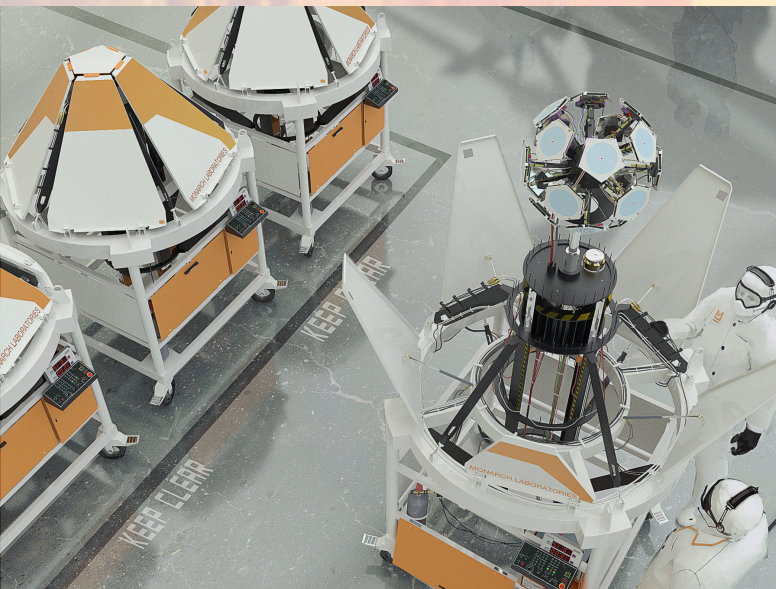








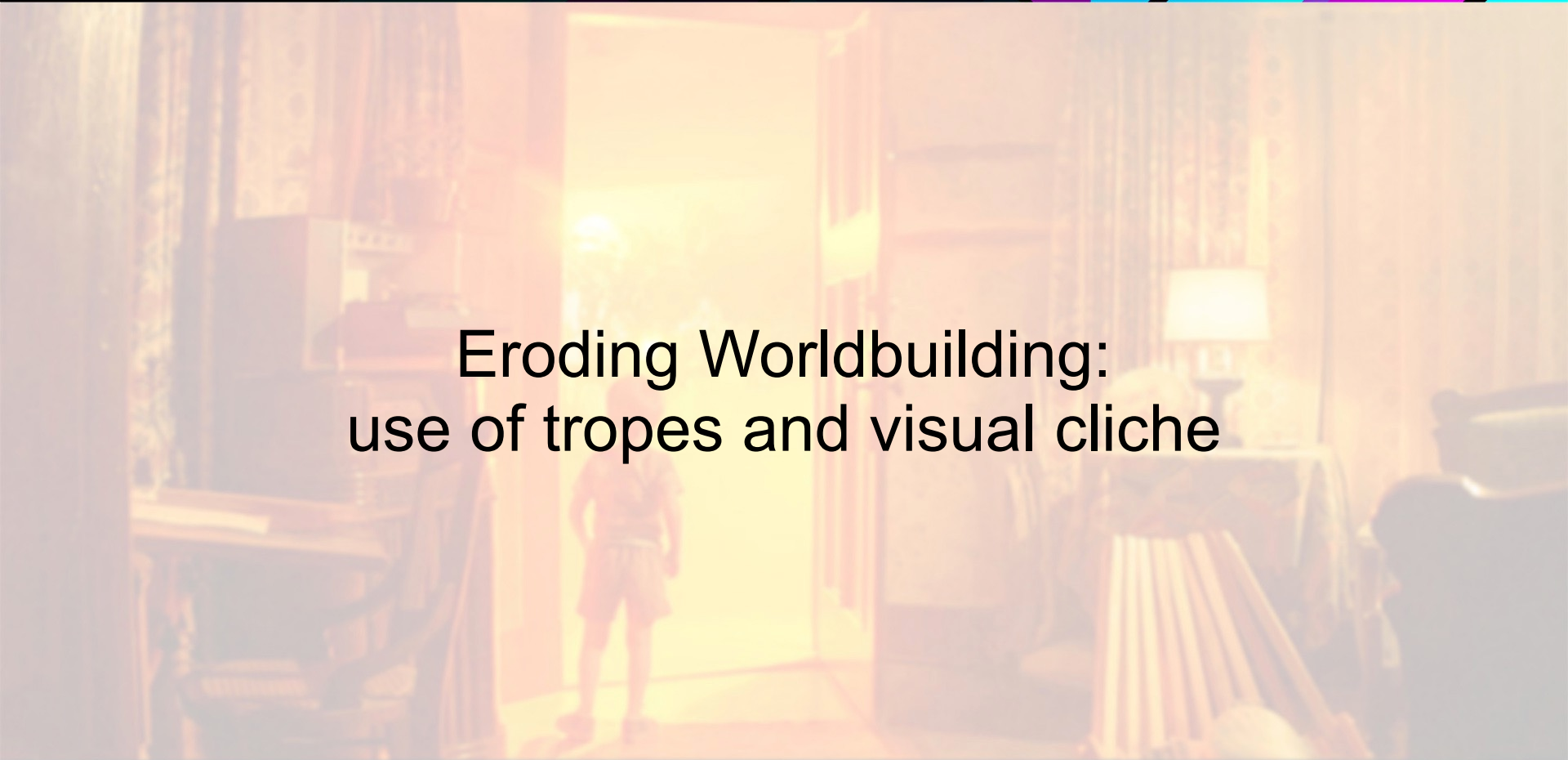









**the style guide**



# Eroding Worldbuilding: use of tropes and visual cliché





Don't **waste** your characters ( on cliché )  
( if you can... )



Predator

dir. John McTiernan 1987

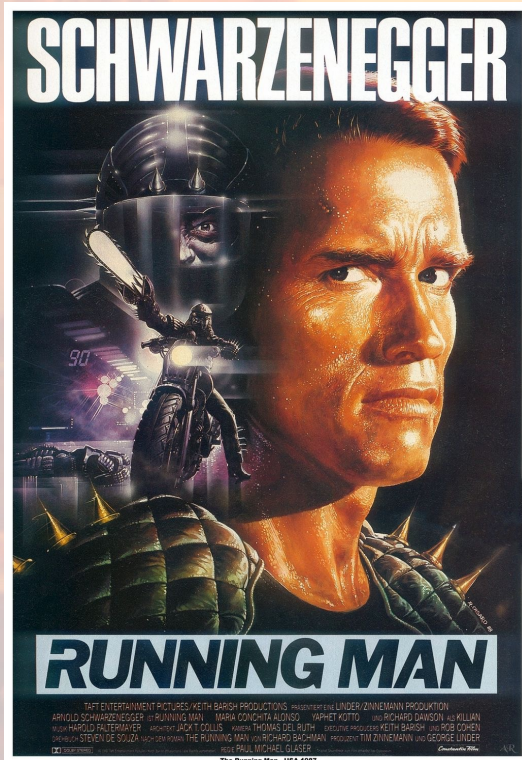






you're breaking the 4th wall





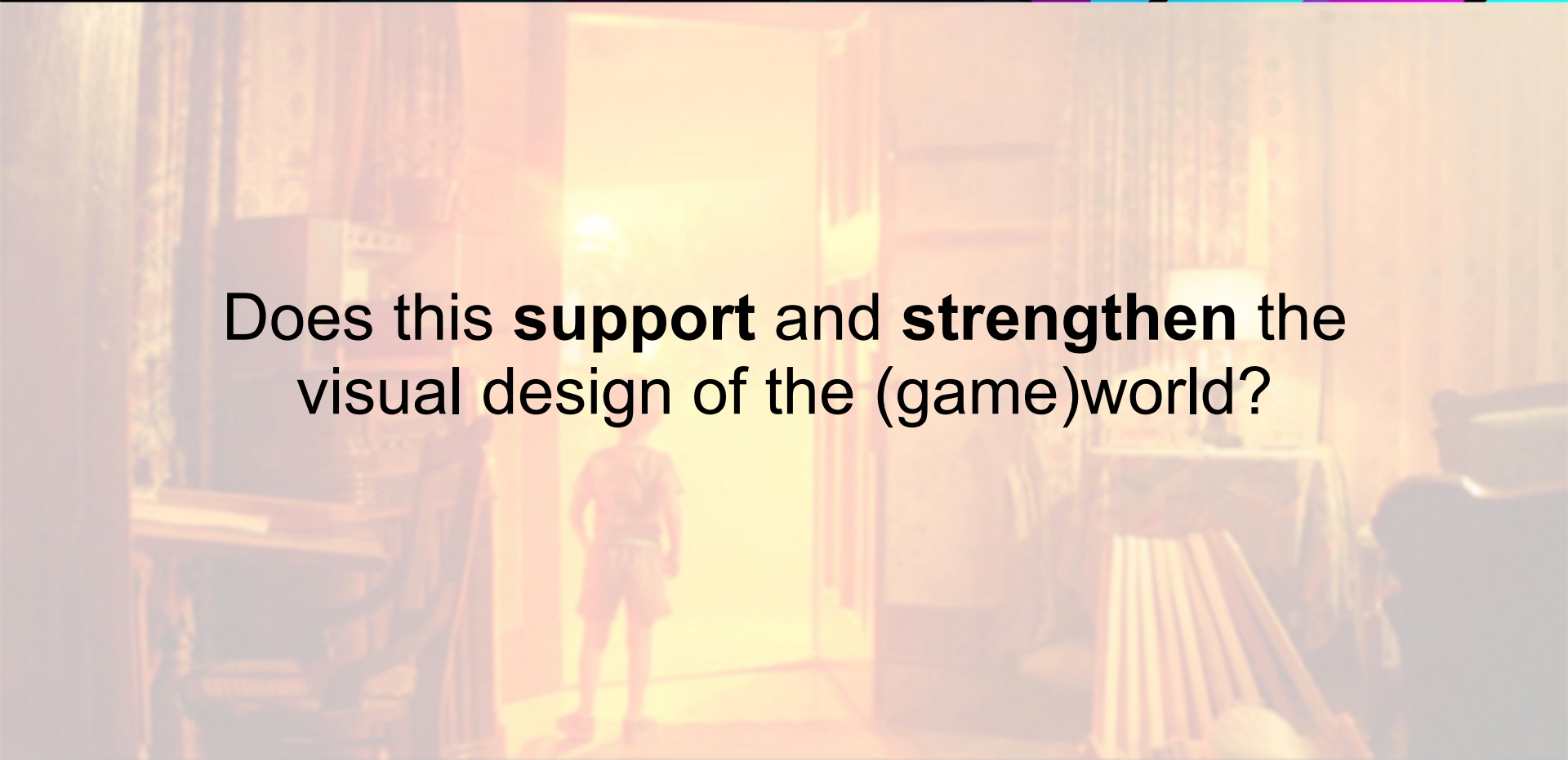


Team Fortress 2

Valve Corp. 2007







Does this **support** and **strengthen** the visual design of the (game)world?



What if the answer is **no**?



# The good examples



Bioshock

Irrational Games 2007





Bioshock

Irrational Games 2007



Dishonored

Arkane Studios 2012





Bioshock Infinite

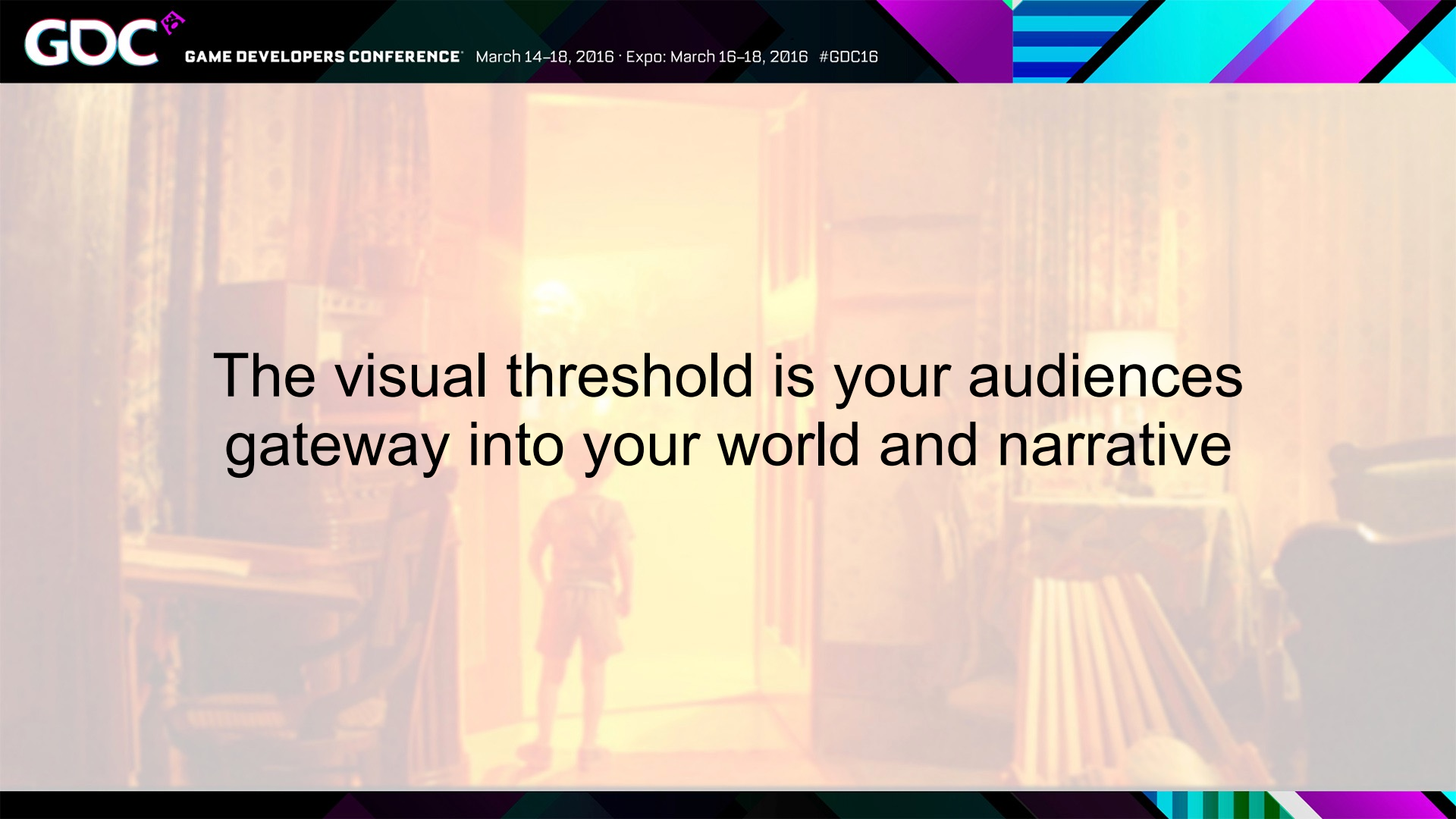
Irrational Games

2013


The background of the slide is a faded, warm-toned image of a child standing in a doorway, looking out into a bright, sunlit area. The child is seen from behind, wearing a light-colored shirt and shorts. The room on the left contains a desk with a computer monitor and keyboard, and a lamp on a side table on the right. The overall mood is nostalgic and hopeful.

# Summary



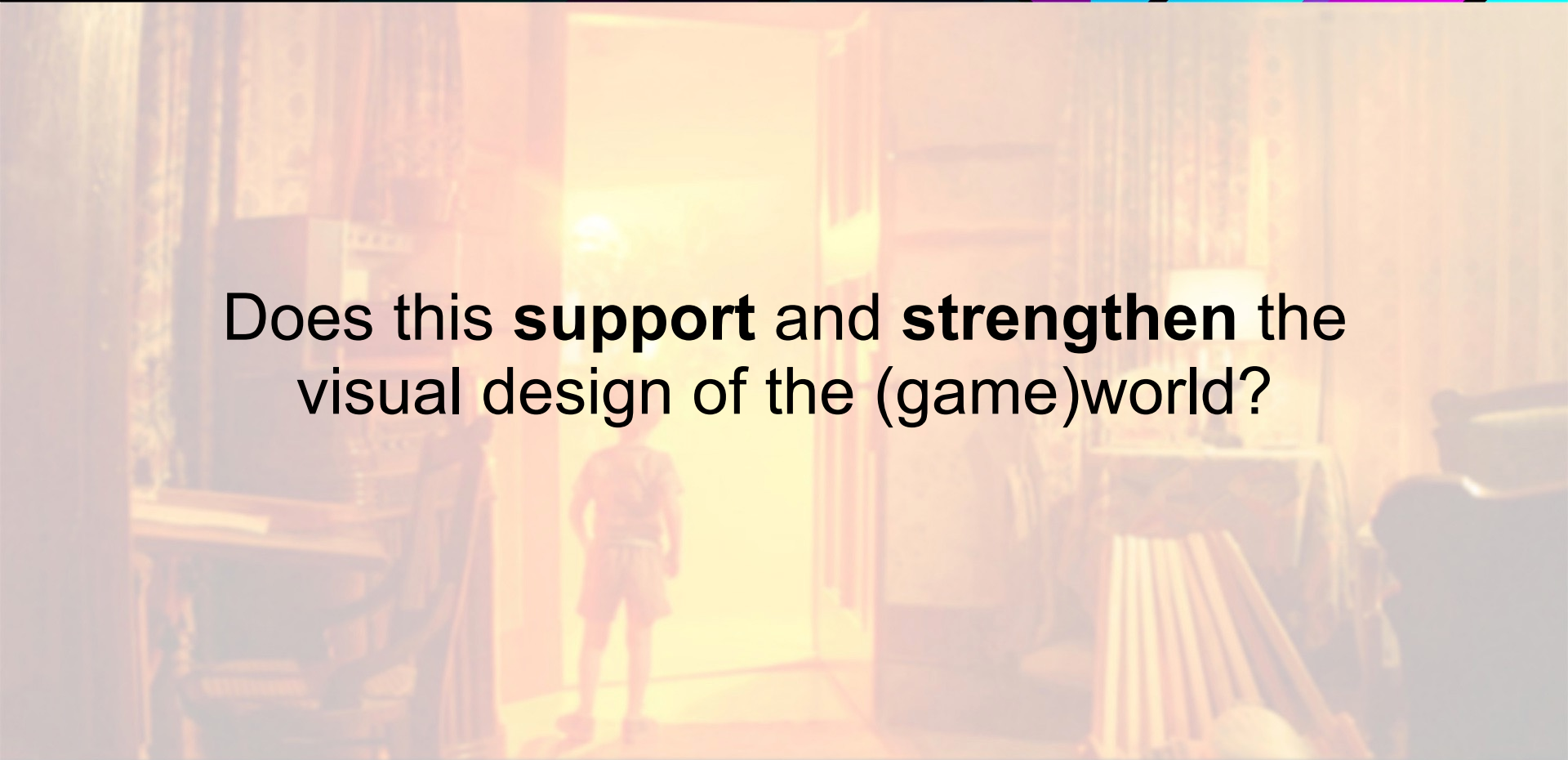
The background image is a faded, warm-toned photograph of a person standing in a doorway, looking out into a bright, sunlit area. The person is seen from behind, wearing a light-colored shirt and shorts. The room they are in appears to be a study or library, with bookshelves and a desk visible. The overall mood is one of transition and discovery.

The visual threshold is your audiences  
gateway into your world and narrative



Visual stereotypes support your more  
complex new elements and reduce  
exposition needs





Does this **support** and **strengthen** the visual design of the (game)world?

# Thank you!



[stuartmacart@gmail.com](mailto:stuartmacart@gmail.com)