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Film & Game Props

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What are Props?

Definition

Props are objects that characters interact with in a form of media. There are many kinds of props, and they are used in diverse ways and for different purposes. Props are usually designed and manufactured by the props division.

History

What the first Prop is ever to be used is unclear because it would be impossible to track back what the first prop used in an ancient Greek theatre was. In Film however the first prop was intentionally used in the short video "Accordion Player" where the prop is an accordion, this short video was released in 1888 and was made by Louis Aimé Augustin Le Prince.

Props in Videogames

In videogames props are made in 3d softwares like

Blender, Unreal engine, Unity, and Maya.

They are used to add realism and immersion to video games. These objects can be anything from furniture and decorations to weapons and tools. They are often found in the game world and can be interacted with by the player in several ways. For example, a prop might be a chair that the player can sit on, or a ladder that they can climb.

Props serve several essential functions in video games. Firstly, they help to create a believable and immersive game world. By filling the game with a variety of objects, the developers can make the game feel more realistic and believable. This can help to engage the player and make them feel like they are really exploring a pristine environment.

Secondly, props can be used to supply gameplay mechanics. For example, a prop might be a key that the player needs to unlock a door, or a tool that they can use to repair a broken object. This can add an element of puzzle-solving to the game and can make the gameplay more interesting and challenging.

Finally, props can also be used to add depth and detail to the game world. By including a wide variety of objects, the developers can create a rich and detailed environment that the player can explore. This can help to make the game world feel more alive and interesting and can make the game more enjoyable to play.

Overall, props are an essential part of video games. They help to create a believable and immersive game world, supply gameplay mechanics, and add depth and detail to the game. Without props, many video games would be dull and uninteresting.
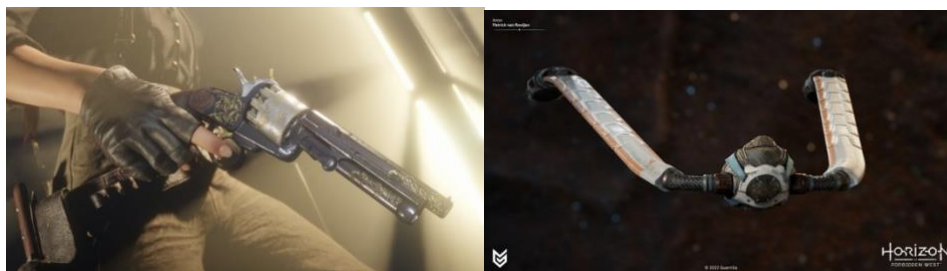
Props in Films and Shows

Props are objects used on film sets to add realism and authenticity to a movie. These objects can range from small items such as pens and cups, to larger items such as furniture and vehicles. Props are an important part of a movie's production, as they help to create a believable and immersive world for the audience. Props can be used in many ways on a film set. For example, actors may use props as part of their performance, such as by holding a prop to show a character's profession or using a prop to portray a character's emotions. Props can also be used to add realism to a scene, such as by adding background details or creating a sense of movement.

Props are typically sourced by the prop department, which is responsible for finding, making, and getting the objects needed for a movie. The prop department works closely with the production designer and other members of the crew to ensure that the props are proper for the movie's setting and story.

In addition to their practical uses, props can also be used to add artistic elements to a movie. For example, a prop might be chosen for its visual appeal or symbolic meaning, helping to create a mood or atmosphere in a scene. Props can also be used to add humor or intrigue to a movie, drawing the audience's attention and engaging their imagination.

Overall, props are an essential part of the movie-making process, adding realism, authenticity, and artistry to a film. Whether they are used for practical or artistic purposes, props help to create a rich and immersive experience for the audience.

How Props are made in cinema

The process of making props for a movie typically involves several steps, including conceptual design, fabrication, and finishing.

The first step in creating a prop is the conceptual design, where the prop is designed on paper or digitally, using sketches, drawings, or 3D modeling software. This step typically involves collaboration between the prop maker, the production designer, and other members of the crew to ensure that the prop will fit seamlessly into the movie's world and story.

Once the design is completed, the prop is fabricated, which involves creating the prop using a variety of materials and techniques. This can include sculpting, molding, casting, and painting, depending on the prop's size, shape, and complexity. The prop maker may also need to incorporate functional elements into the prop, such as mechanical components or electronic devices.

The last step in creating a prop is the finishing process, where the prop is carefully inspected, and any necessary adjustments are made. This can include adding final details, such as labels or decals, or applying a protective coating to preserve the prop's finish. The prop is then ready to be used on the film set.

Overall, the process of making props for a movie is a highly skilled and creative endeavor, involving collaboration, artistic talent, and technical ability. The result is a wide range of unique and authentic props that help to bring a movie's world and story to life.

Detailed process

Here is a more detailed look at the process:

1. Conceptualize and design the props: The first step in creating props is to have a clear idea of what they will be used for and how they will be used in the film. This may involve working with the film's director, production designer, or other members of the creative team to understand the specific needs and vision for the props.
2. Gather materials and tools: Once the props have been designed, the next step is to gather the materials and tools needed to create them. This may involve shopping for specific items such as wood, metal, foam, fabric, or other materials, as well as acquiring the tools needed to work with those materials, such as saws, drills, sanders, and sewing machines.
3. Construct the props: With the materials and tools on hand, it is time to begin constructing the props. This may involve cutting and shaping the materials, attaching pieces together using screws, nails, glue, or other fasteners, and applying finishes or detailing to give the props a realistic appearance.
4. Finish the props: After the props have been constructed, the next step is to give them a final finish. This may involve painting, staining, or otherwise coloring the props to match the desired look, as well as adding any final details or embellishments.
5. Test and refine the props: Before the props are ready for use on set, it is important to test them to ensure that they are functional and durable. This may involve rehearsing with the props or simply handling them to see how they hold up. If any issues are discovered, they should be addressed, and the props should be refined as needed.
6. Transport and store the props: When the props are complete and ready for use, they need to be transported to the set and stored in a safe and organized manner. This may involve packing the props carefully in boxes or cases and labeling them for easy identification.

Creating props for films is a complex and multifaceted process that requires a range of skills and techniques. From conceptualization and design to construction and finishing, the process demands attention to detail and a commitment to creating high-quality props that help bring the film to life.

How Props are made for Games

Making props for video games involves a combination of artistic skill and technical knowledge. The first step in creating a prop is to produce a concept or design. This can be done through sketches, 3D modeling, or other methods of visualizing the idea.

Once the concept is finalized, the next step is to create a high-resolution 3D model of the prop. This is typically done using specialized software such as Maya or Blender. The model is then textured, which involves adding colors, patterns, and other details to make it look realistic.

Once the 3D model is complete, it is then imported into the game engine, where it can be tested and refined. This may involve adjusting the model or its textures to ensure it looks and behaves correctly in the game.

Finally, the prop is implemented into the game, where it can be used by players and interacted with in many ways. This may involve programming specific behaviors or interactions for the prop, such as how it reacts when picked up or used by the player.

Overall, creating props for video games is a complex process that requires a combination of artistic talent and technical expertise. It involves producing a concept, creating a 3D model, texturing it, and implementing it into the game engine.
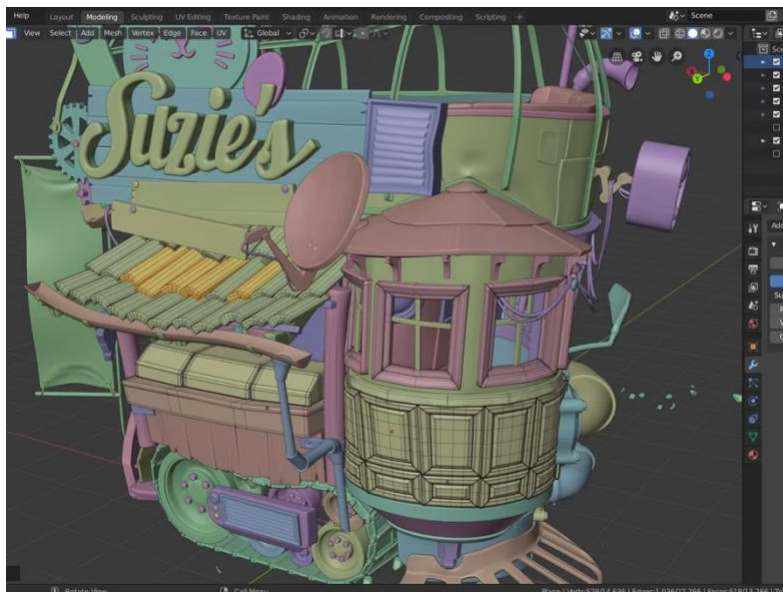
Detailed process

Here is a detailed process for making props for video games:

1. Conceptualize and design the props: The first step in creating props is to have a clear idea of what the props will be used for and how they will be used in the game. This may involve working closely with the game's designers, artists, or other members of the development team to understand the vision for the game and the specific needs for the props.
2. Model and texture the props: Once the props have been designed, the next step is to create 3D models of the props using modeling software such as Maya, 3ds Max, or Blender. This may involve creating a basic shape for the prop using polygons and then adding detail and texture to the surface of the model using techniques such as sculpting, mapping, and texturing.
3. Implement and test the props: With the 3D models of the props complete, the next step is to import them into the game engine and integrate them into the game world. This may involve setting up collision, physics, and other gameplay mechanics for the props, as well as testing them to ensure that they function correctly and fit in with the overall game design.
4. Refine and optimize the props: After the props have been implemented and tested, the next step is to refine and optimize them as needed. This may involve adjusting the models, textures, or gameplay mechanics of the props to improve their performance or appearance.
5. Quality assurance: Before the props are ready for release, it is important to conduct thorough quality assurance testing to ensure that they are functional and free of bugs or other issues. This may involve playing through the game with the props to see how they perform in different scenarios, as well as conducting automated testing to catch any issues that might not be immediately apparent.

Making my own Prop

What I am going to be recreating is the Leviathan axe from the PlayStation Santa Monica Game "God of War" and "God of War Ragnarök."

Background lore

The Leviathan Axe is a powerful weapon in the God of War video game series. The axe was created by the dwarven brothers Sindri and Brok, who were known for crafting weapons of legendary quality.

According to the lore of the game, the axe was originally owned by the wife of Kratos, Faye. The giants had imbued the axe with powerful frost magic, making it a fearsome weapon in battle.

However, the axe was later stolen by Odin, the All father of the Norse gods, who feared the power of the giants.

Years later, the axe was given to Kratos, the protagonist of the God of War series, by his wife Faye. Faye, who was a giant, had foreseen the events that would unfold and knew that Kratos would need the axe to complete his quest.

Kratos quickly discovered that the Leviathan Axe was a powerful weapon, capable of freezing enemies and dealing massive damage. As he journeyed through the realms of Norse mythology, Kratos learned to harness the power of the axe and unlock its full potential.

Over time, Kratos developed a deep attachment to the Leviathan Axe, and it became one of his signature weapons in the God of War series.

Here is an image showing what the axe looks like throughout its 4 distinct stages in the Game:

I am going to make a mixture of the 2nd and 3rd stage of the axe.
I will use the following materials:

-Wood
-Polyurethane
-Two component glue
-Acrylic Paint
-Spray Paint
-Cloth
-Wood glue
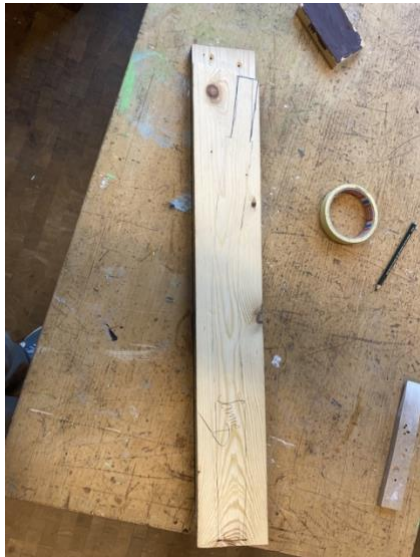
The first step was to cut out the handle.
I stuck two different pieces of wood together with wood glue to obtain one big piece.
I then cut the wood into the correct shape using an electric saw and grinded the corners so that they have an oval shape.

The second step was painting the wood.
I used acrylic paint to give it the appearance of mahogany wood which is an expensive reddish wood type. However, this is not the final time I painted the wood because I still blackwashed the whole axe in the end

I started making the blade while the wood was drying.

I cut the shape out of a big block of polyurethane which is a material used to make surfboards.

It is fully waterproof, light, and quite strong.

I used a bandsaw to give the shape the correct width then I used a smaller bandsaw to cut out the rough shape.

I drilled a hole into the mesh so that I could later make it bigger with sandpaper and a rasp.

That way I could stick in the grip of the axe.

Then I carved a hole into the top part of the handle to fit in two pieces I would create later.

Then I cut out the thinner shape of the blade.

I made the blade so thick in the first place to make the hole of the blade fit around the handle.

I proceeded to do this on both sides of the axe

I created these two parts to fit into the carved-out part of the handle.

I sharpened the edges of the blade with a cutter so that is had better control instead of using a file or a rasp.

I then carved into the Blade to give it a little more depth

I also carved in the Patterns which make the Blade look so much better.
I used a tool called a chisel to carve the patterns.

I then covered the whole blade with plaster to make the material stronger,
I also put plaster on the two side parts of the axe.

Then I made the bottom part of the handle,
I used the same materials as for the blade and redid the complete process.
So, I cut it into shapes, grinded it so it is round and then covered it with plaster.

Then I spray painted the bottom end.
I used the same dark metallic spray as I will use for the blade.

After I sprayed the first three layers, I then sprayed the highlights with Silver Spray to give the whole more color and to make it look like it has been Forged out of actual metal.

At the end of the process, I glued all the parts together with two component glue.
I also gave it a blackwash so that the whole thing looks more weathered out and to give it
more highlights.
To blackwash you just need to thin black paint with water and put it all over the prop,
Then rub it off with a cloth.
Like this only the small narrow parts of the axe stay dark and the rest only a small bit.
This makes it look dirtier and more convincing.

Conclusion

I enjoyed the process of making the prop.
It gave me more insight on how props are created and how hard it is to do so.
I want to thank some people for helping me create the prop.

- Robert Theisen to let me work in the Workshop and help me.
- Roland Backendorf for helping me and giving me advice.
- Lucas Birgi for supervision.
- Tiziano Martino to help me carry stuff.
- My sponsors gave me money and bought the materials.

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