

GRIS



Genre:	Platformer, Adventure
Publication date:	December 2018
Studio:	Nomada Studio
Analysis by:	Denise Meier, Léa Coquoz, Martin Hodler

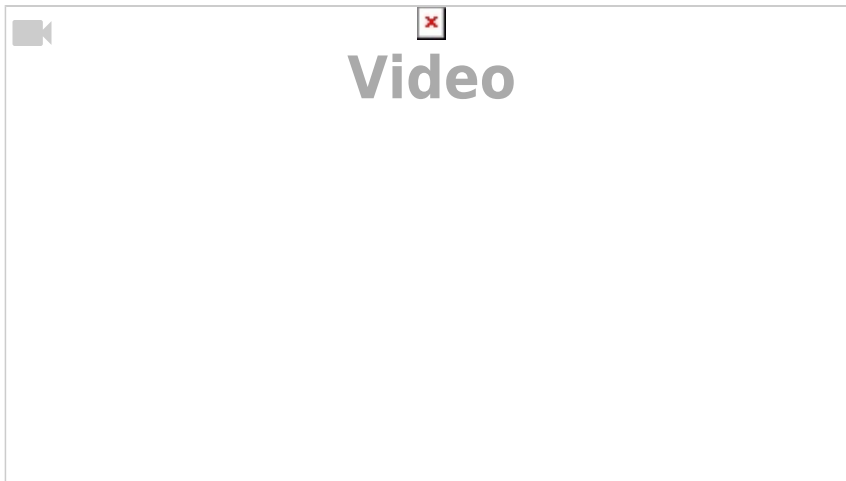
1. Game Description

„Gris“ is an atmospheric platform video game. You hop into the role of Gris, a young girl dealing with a very painful experience in her life: grief. You accompany Gris on her journey through that experience and witness how her view on the world changes gradually. One of the key elements of „Gris“ is its colors. We start in a greyscale world and slowly get the colors back, as well as the character capabilities.

Full walkthrough video (no commentary):

[GRIS walkthrough](#)

Trailer



2. Sound Description

The character goes through a variety of emotions and environments, which are both translated into sound. Sadness, anger, fear, joy, love. Each setting has its own soundtrack and soundscape. In addition to that, key melodies and sound effects indicate important steps in the character's journey or guide it in the game world.

2.1 Atmospheric Soundtrack

Music has a great value in „Gris“ and was developed hand-in-hand with the game, with the two thriving on each other. It emphasizes the emotions and different locations' atmosphere. The overall mood is dreamy, but stays dynamic as it adapts to the player's actions. As the player enters a puzzle area, the music switches from intense or emotional to more discreet to let the player concentrate. If it passes through a zone and passes again but with new elements, the music also changes. When we look at the waveform of the music, most of it is alternating melodies and silences, which makes it easy to loop a certain part until the player reaches a point where the music continues until the next loop seamlessly and so on. Everything can be adapted in order to have the perfect timing.



	Soundtracks	Soundscapes
Mainhub	meridian.mp3	
Grey	debris.mp3	soundscape_grey.mp3 soundscape_grey2.mp3
Desert	perseverance.mp3 windmill.mp3	soundscape_desert.mp3 soundscape_desertwind.mp3 soundscape_abyss.mp3
Forest	komorebi.mp3 environments.mp3	soundscapeforest.mp3
Water	ascension.mp3 descent.mp3	soundscape_water.mp3 soundscape_water.wav soundscape_water2.mp3
Sky	firmament.mp3	soundscape_sky.mp3

Silence has frequently, yet in a clever way, been used in „Gris“. After intense moments to allow the

player to cool down or before important moments to create anticipation and make the player more attentive. Because music and sound has so much importance during the game, silence also is powerful, contrasting with the bewitching music and immersive soundscapes.

2.2 Perception-based

A lot of the character's movements will produce a sound. They adapt to the material the character is on and to the architecture of the scene, whether it's a cave, an empty building, a forest or underwater.

Walkcycles		Physics	
Concrete	walkcycleconcrete.mp3	Underwater Distortion	waterdistortion.mp3
Metal	walkcyclemetal.mp3	Echo	echo.mp3
Ice	walkcycleice.mp3		
Star Bridge	walkcyclebridge.mp3		

In a more discreet manner, many ambient sounds will be triggered with the character's movements (and not its actions), adding to the immersion and density of the environment.

Ambient Sounds

Birds	birdflyaway.mp3
Mushrooms	mushroomssqueak.mp3
Bells	bellring.mp3
Water	splash.wav
Fan	fanopening.mp3

2.3 Related to (inter)action - sound?

Every action the player performs triggers a sound which adds fluidity and gives a sensation of good responsiveness from the controls.

Controls

Jump	grisjump.mp3
Land	fallland.mp3
Box	grisbox.wav
Stone Rustling	stonerustling.mp3
Slide	slidebranch.mp3
Fly	grisfly.wav
Swim	grisswim.wav
Sing	grissing.wav

2.4 Related to communication with player

Using no text in the game, „Gris“ relies a lot on visuals and sound to deliver messages to the player,

give it feedback or warnings.

Stars

On her journey, the character collects glowing orbs which we will call stars. They have their own distinct range of sounds which give the player feedback on some status.

Close to Star	starclose.mp3
Picked Up	starcollected.mp3
Stars Missing	starmissing.wav
Stars Filling In	startoskymainhub.mp3

Memento

Another element Gris can encounter is mementos, representing memories. They are collectable which activate as you pass in front of it.

Memento Activated	memento.mp3
-------------------	-----------------------------

Progress Milestones

As said previously, Gris is getting colors and abilities back on her way. As the small cutscene is played, a distinct melody is played.

New Colour	lift.mp3 opaque.mp3 symmetry.mp3 sparks.mp3
New Ability	newability.mp3

Black Creature

There is no real enemy in „Gris“ but we can identify a threatening figure, under the form of a shapeshifting black substance. It follows the character and appears from time to time, with a characteristic theme and orchestration.

Soundtrack	comparison.mp3
Soundtrack	karasu.mp3
Soundtrack	tobu.mp3
Soundtrack	unagi.mp3

It also has a strong identity in the sound fx used for it. Very low, deep growling and rumbling when it's moving and a chilling scream, broken voice coming from deep down. This figure has its own language and is then simple to apprehend for the player.

Scream	blackscreech.wav
Destruction	blackdestroy.mp3

Substance	blacksubstance.mp3
-----------	------------------------------------

Timing Mechanic

In two parts of the game, a mechanic consists of a repetitive, regular event the player has to deal with. Both are pre-announced to warn the player so it can have the correct timing. The change of gravity also is symbolised by a sound.

Sandstorm	orgueprevent.mp3
Freezing	icecrackling.mp3
Change of Gravity	upsidedown.mp3

2.5 Related to space

For every section of the game „Gris“ music is used which fits every surrounding of the game. Beside the beautiful soundtrack it uses sometimes a bit more sometimes a bit less environmental sounds like leaves, thunder, wind or little animals which you can hear in the woods. Even if the player doesn't travel the same location twice it has its own landmarks. Somebody who played the game can tell in which part of the game which ambient was played if they can listen to it.

2.6 Related to narration & dramaturgy

Like mentioned in section 2.1 *Atmospheric Soundtrack* „Gris“ uses silence and music to create tension or to relax the player. A player can tell just from the audio if something is going to happen or if he/she has time to overcome a puzzle.

Narration

Prologue	grispt1.mp3
Epilogue	grispt2.mp3

3. Personal Conclusion

Gris was built based on an artist's idea and his sketches. Everything was thought out together, at the same time, from the very beginning. Music, visuals and mechanics come together harmoniously and reach new heights of emotion and audio-visual beauty. It is a real experience to follow the evolution of this character through these painful stages. There's no great moment in the game where you can truly demonstrate all the epic skills you've gathered along the way, but the power of the narrative is enough to keep the player on the edge of his seat.

A small improvement they could have made: It would have been nice to add some sounds to the paper birds which enables you to jump high and fly. When you play with a controller you get a rumble if the character collides with them. A little chime could add a pleasant feedback to it if the player doesn't use a gamepad.

4. Comparison to LIMBO

„Limbo“ is a game whose soundtrack may be surprising at first glance but which, in relation to its subject matter and design, makes sense. The sound design has been done in a precise, and delicate way (although a few oversights have made it to the finale) and manages to keep the player's attention throughout the stages. Simple synth waves manage to establish an atmosphere with a distant and disturbing aspect. It is a game without colours and music as such, which nevertheless manages not to be bland, empty or incomplete. On top of that come the communication sounds which blend nicely with the already laid sound carpet.

„Gris“, on the other hand, did not hold back on the use of music. Music is an integral part of the story, reinforcing the emotions that emerge from it, accompanying the player through the landscapes while warning him of dangers. This incredibly refined work on the music did not prevent them from fine-tuning the sound effects and other environmental sounds. Each place has its own identity, creatures, climate, ... The illusion of density or on the contrary of great emptiness is translated in the sounds, their resonance and their volume.

These two games have put a lot of emphasis on the atmospheric and immersive side, and both have succeeded in doing so, although they have made radically different choices. Both abstain from any text or even words, which has led them to do a great deal of communication through sound. The elaborate music from „Gris“ allows more versatility, in line with the strong and contrasting emotional journey of its character. The more subtle soundtrack of „Limbo“ also suits its game as it remains in a more consistent world in terms of atmosphere or emotions. A great work also has been done by both in creating a bewitching environment with an illusion of depth and complexity.

From:

<https://wiki.zhdk.ch/gamesoundopedia/> - **game sound dokumentation**

Permanent link:

<https://wiki.zhdk.ch/gamesoundopedia/doku.php?id=gris&rev=1591346977>

Last update: **2020/06/05 10:49**

