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WELCOME

Chatting to the developers of *FAR: Changing Tides* got me thinking about smaller, self-contained games that deal in evocative atmosphere rather than explosive bombast. Relatively speaking, quieter, even meditative games are a new thing when compared to the medium's age: it's only in recent years that we've seen such poetic titles as thatgamecompany's *Flower* and *Journey*, or the gently exploratory *Gone Home*. (The minimalist point-and-click adventure *Myst*, from 1993, could, I guess, be considered a distant ancestor to these games.)

Maybe it's taken time for the industry to mature to the point where some developers are brave enough to branch out and experiment with different tones or forms of storytelling in their games. As *Changing Tides* programmer and sound designer Fabio Baumgartner told me this month, "Innovation is always expensive. Making a triple-A game just takes humongous amounts of money, right? And so understandably, triple-A studios are more afraid to take that money and invest into something that's so uncertain."

Fortunately, there's a growing number of indie devs who have the space to create more personal, thought-provoking works. The wider industry may favour vast experiences that can potentially keep us engrossed for years, but here's hoping there'll always be space for shorter games that provide a welcome, soul-nourishing contrast.

Enjoy the new issue!

Ryan Lambie
Editor