

Bologna
Game Farm

Serre dei Giardini Margherita

15 ottobre 2025

Game
Design

Game Mechanics

Dalla teoria al caso pratico

Mattia Pastorino

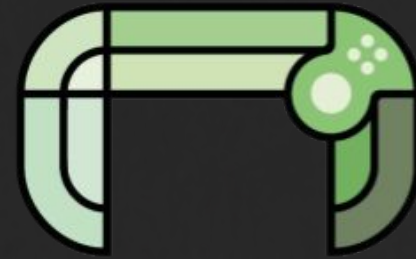


Ministero delle Imprese
e del Made in Italy





VOLCANITE
GAMES



Bologna
Game Farm

m.pastorino@volcanite.games

ABOUT ME

- ◆ Game designer & co-founder
- ◆ Strategy and Tactics games
- ◆ Mechanics oriented



VOLCANITE

GAMES



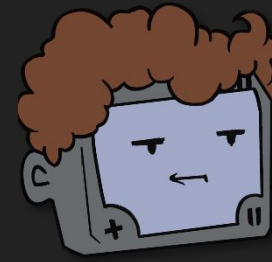
MATTIA PASTORINO
- DESIGN -



ALESSIO GALLO
- DESIGN -



ALESSIA GUMINA
- ART -

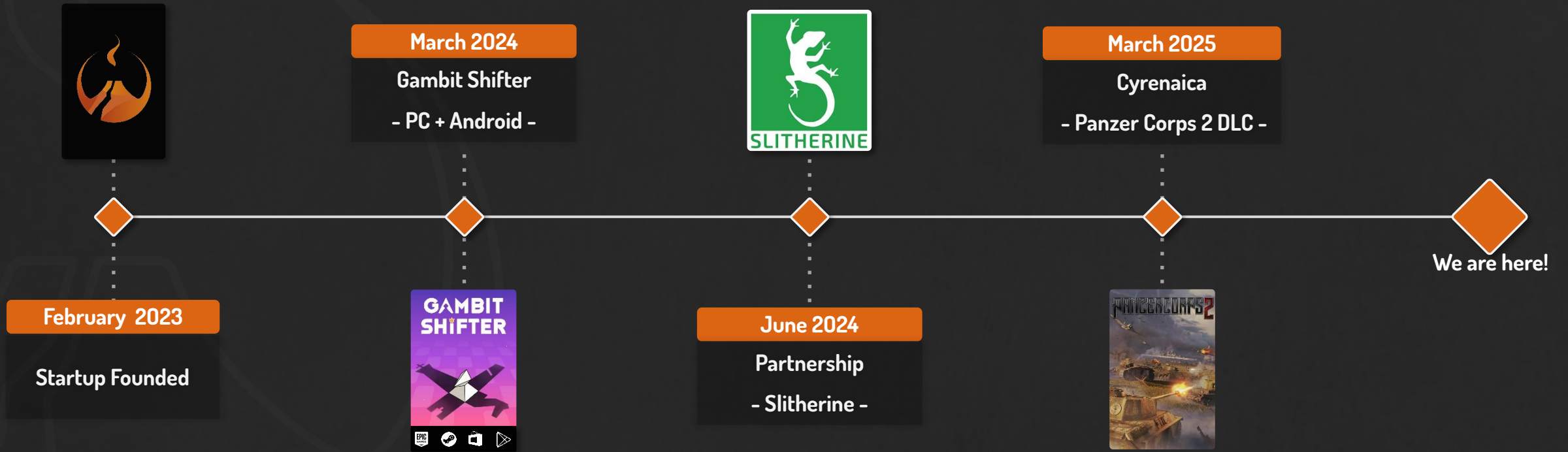


DAVIDE DI LORENZO
- PROGRAMMING -

Volcanite Games is a game studio based in **Turin, Italy**, founded in **2023**.
We're a **passionate team** with complementary skills, united by our love for **well-crafted design**.



OUR STORY SO FAR



OUR PILLARS

QUALITY OVER QUANTITY

Our focus is on **attention and care to detail**, refining the core experience.

We believe in *less is more* if the “less” is made with **high quality**.



MECHANICS-DRIVEN EXPERIMENTS

We strive to craft captivating experiences in which game **mechanics reign supreme**.

We aim to **blend them seamlessly** to deliver truly unique and original products.



FORM FOLLOWS FUNCTION

We use **visuals to enhance gameplay**, not gameplay to show off visuals.

All the elements blend form and function in a **sensible synergy**.



These are the pillars that build up our **development process** and **guide our decisions**.

We want to deliver the **best game experiences** possible, captivating players with **immersive and dynamic gameplay**.



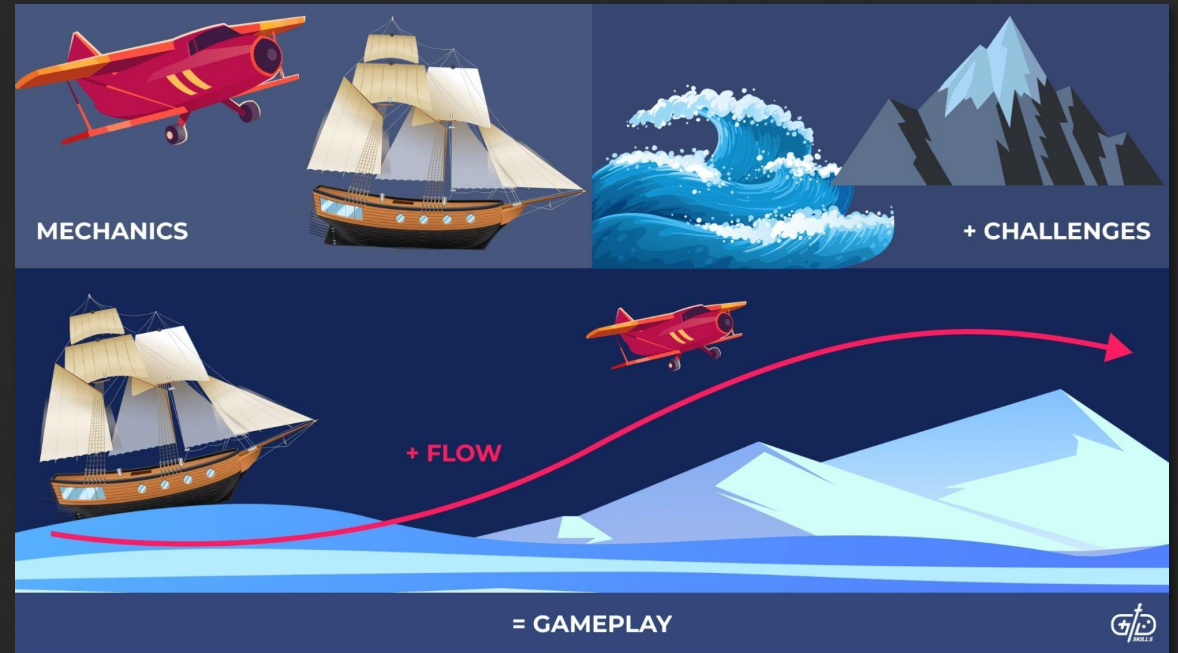
CONTENTS

- ◆ Why game mechanics
- ◆ MDA framework
- ◆ Game Pillars
- ◆ Case study: Gambit Shifter
- ◆ Takeaways e Q&A

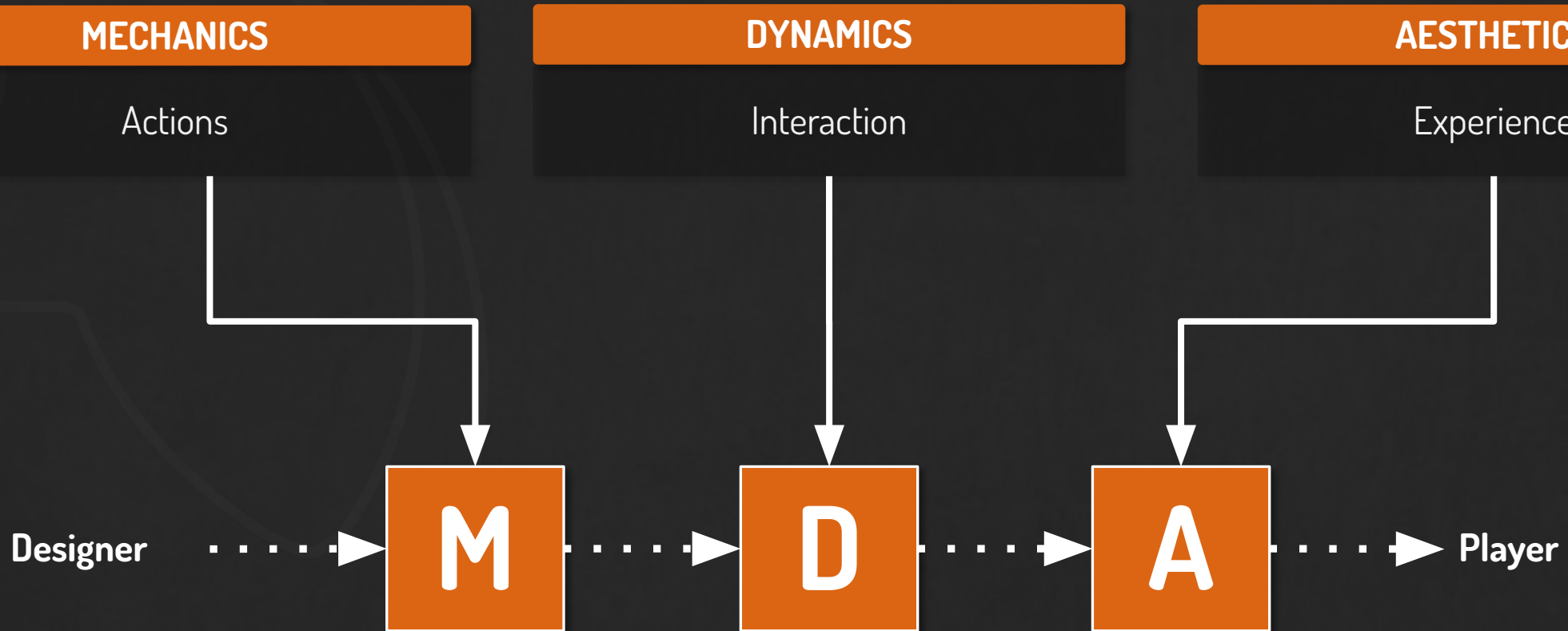


GAME MECHANICS

- ◆ Rules are the heart of a game
- ◆ Form follows function
- ◆ Mechanics keep you engaged



MDA FRAMEWORK



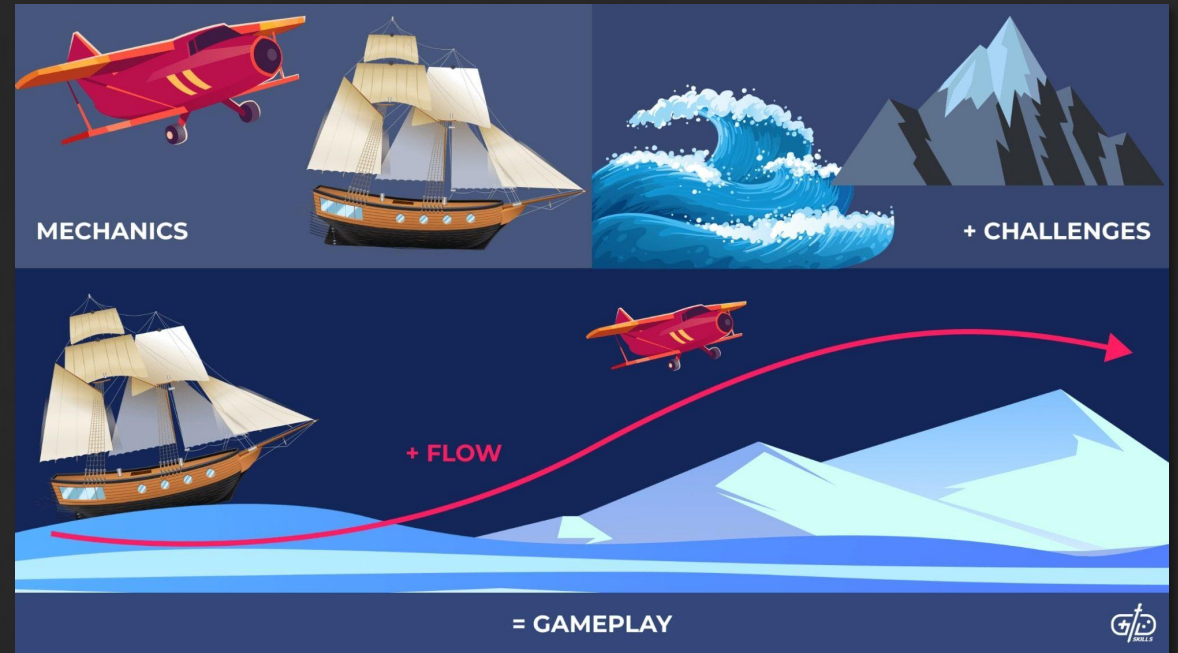
MECHANICS

- ◆ Game's Rules
- ◆ Actions
- ◆ Define limits and possibilities



DYNAMICS

- ◆ Mechanics and Dynamics
- ◆ Strategies and combinations
- ◆ Replayability



AESTHETICS

- ◆ Player experience
- ◆ Emotions
- ◆ Wide variety

SENSATION

Game as sense-pleasure

FELLOWSHIP

Game as social framework

FANTASY

Game as make-believe

DISCOVERY

Game as uncharted territory

NARRATIVE

Game as drama

EXPRESSION

Game as self-discovery

CHALLENGE

Game as obstacle course

SUBMISSION

Game as pastime



THE PROBLEM

DEVELOPER PERSPECTIVE



THE PROBLEM

PLAYER PERSPECTIVE



GAME PILLARS

- ◆ Design guiding principles
- ◆ Identity and consistency
- ◆ Few, clear, shared



PARADOX PILLARS

Paradox Game Pillars

WHAT MAKES A GAME A PARADOX GAME



Looks Good, Plays Perfect

Paradox games never sacrifice function to form, and always prioritize gameplay over everything else.



Gives Agency to the Player

Paradox games give players the tools to express their creativity, and make their gaming experience their own; from character customization to emergent storytelling, or extensive modding.



Challenges the Mind

Paradox games challenge the player's mind more than their reflexes. They reward curiosity, dedication and intelligence.



Offers an Endless Experience

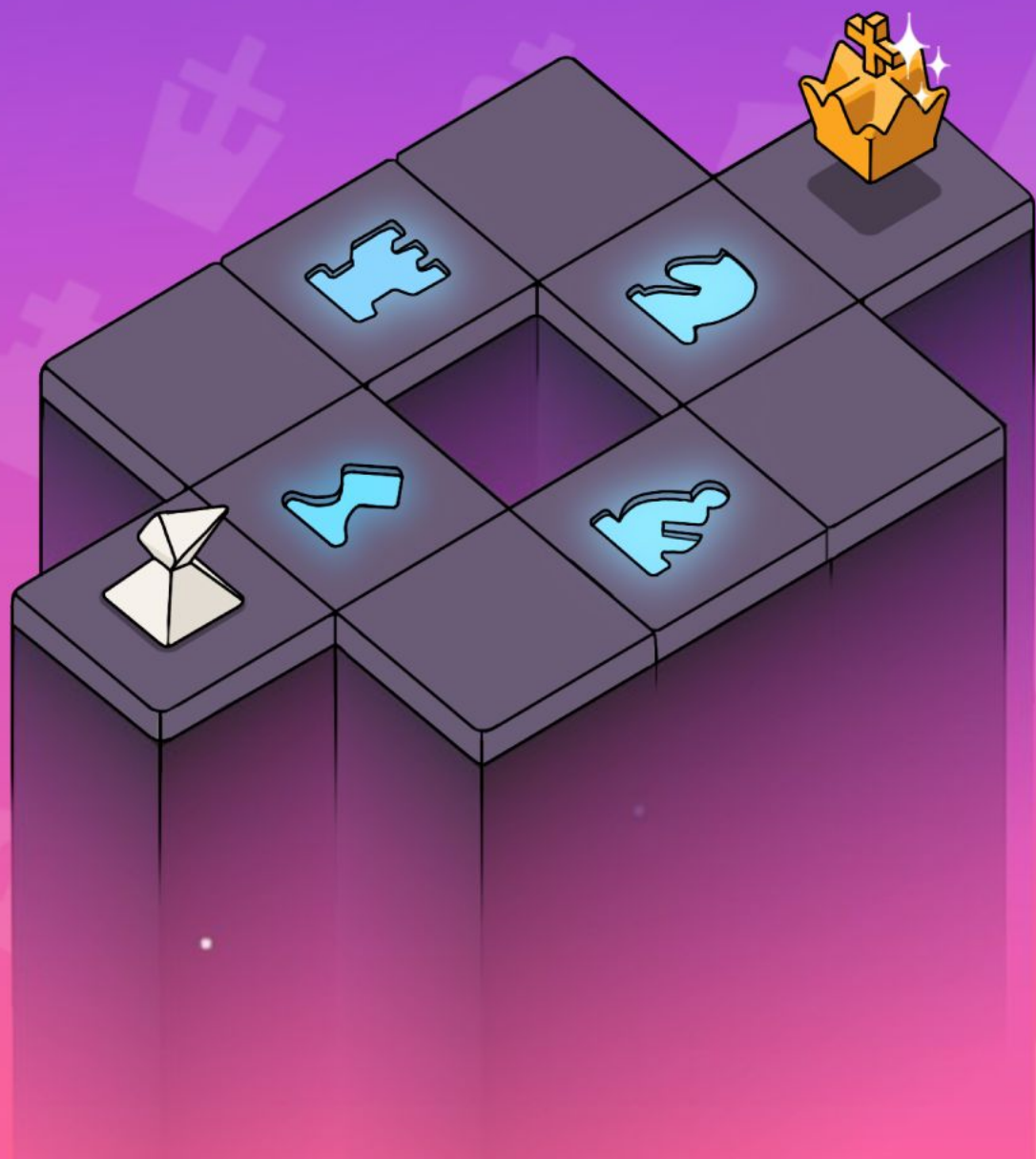
Whether through replayability, alternative playthroughs, or no end state at all, Paradox games provide content to play for a very long time



Invites a Deeper Dive

Paradox games provide incredible depth and endless engagement, but strive to onboard players in their worlds and gameplay systems in a smooth and forgiving way.





GAMBIT SHiFTER



Italian
Video Game
Awards

BEST ITALIAN DEBUT GAME
WINNER - 2025



GAMBIT SHIFTER

- ◆ Grid based puzzle game
- ◆ Shift form
- ◆ From prototype to release

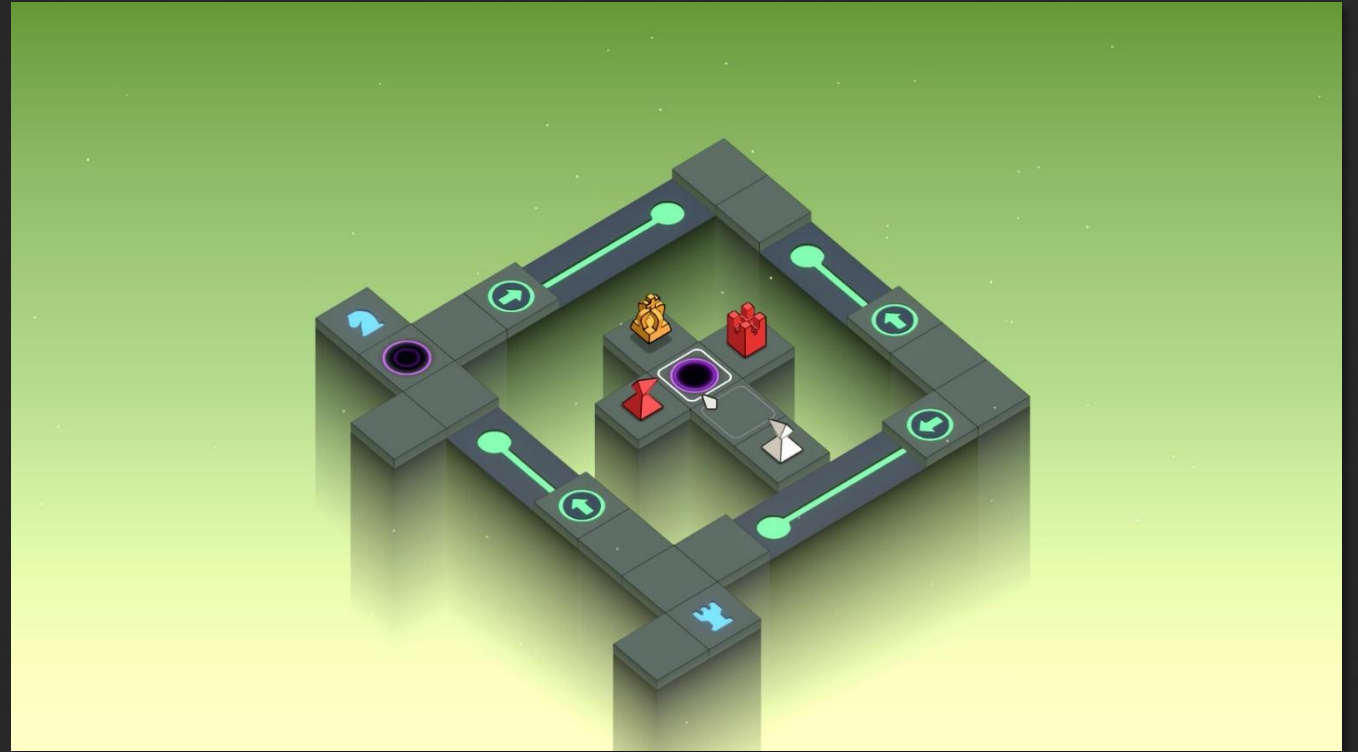


PILLARS

◆ Tight

◆ Chill

◆ Minimal



GAME DESIGN

- ◆ Base mechanic: shift form
- ◆ Special abilities and extra rules
- ◆ Staying true to pillars



MECHANICS

- ◆ Simple, easy to learn rules
- ◆ LOT of iterations
- ◆ Few mechanics, lot of dynamics



DYNAMICS

- ◆ Unexpected tester strategies
- ◆ Emergent combinations
- ◆ Variety without extra rules



AESTHETICS

- ◆ Mental challenge
- ◆ Cozy gameplay
- ◆ Chess experts and novices



TIPS

- ◆ Define pillars ASAP
- ◆ Test early and test often
- ◆ Few strong mechanics > many weak mechanics



METRICS

- ◆ In game metrics
- ◆ Events playtests
- ◆ Beta playtests



TAKEAWAYS

- ◆ Mechanics are core
- ◆ MDA connects rules and player experience
- ◆ Pillars are identity
- ◆ Testing and iteration are key



THANKS!



Gameplay isn't magic. It's craft.

Drop us a line and we'll build it together

m.pastorino@volcanite.games

www.volcanite.games

   @volcanite.games

