



GAMEPLAY IN 'KITE'

says. "And I love video games, likely more than what's healthy."

In the three and a half years since, Treneman has been tweaking, adding to and perfecting the game.

The influence for "Kite" comes from old-school games including "Zombies ate my Neighbors" and "Robotron: 2084," as well as newer, modern games such as "World of Warcraft" — and that's clear in the game's arcade-like visuals and smooth mechanics.

"It's easy to jump into, but has thought-provoking content and detailed mechanics," Treneman says. "Even if you've never played a video game before, you can navigate it easily."

The name comes from the act of "kiting," a gaming term that refers to the ability to move independently while doing something else, such as shooting. "You can be chasing or be the one being chased — either way it is more exhilarating to be able to shoot while navigating and running around," Treneman explains.

The attention to detail in "Kite" doesn't go unnoticed. The "weird, utopian futuristic" look is made complete with old-school pixel art and bright magenta, cyan and green that color the scenes while you run through the government-protected research complex.

"The endeavor of science is important. Science doesn't have to be evil," Treneman says. "Learning and research



JAMES TRENEMAN

are really present in the game. My vision is to show a possible future that's positive instead of dystopian."

Learning happens constantly. Within each level, the player takes the main character — a non-sexualized female protagonist — through different objectives, and learns new mechanics or features. Treneman created the protagonist as a non-sexualized woman to stand against the sexism he commonly sees in games — to show that a woman leader can be powerful, even in a full metallic outfit. "The skills learned in each level are important," Treneman says. "Not grasping certain skills can bite you in the butt later."

After completion, players are ranked, and further features are unlocked based on performance. Currently available as an "Early Access" game on Steam, "Kite" features 12 levels. When it's finished, Treneman plans to have at least 15.

"The hope is that people can get through all 15 levels after just a few plays, and will go back and play each level again, getting better and figuring out new things each time through," he says.

Treneman plans to release the official, finalized game at Indie Game Con, a subset within Eugene Comic Con (aka EUCON), at the Lane County Events Center Nov. 11-12. From there, he will not only work on his many new gaming projects — they will all have the same "nostalgic, pixel style" — but will continue to improve "Kite" indefinitely. ■



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