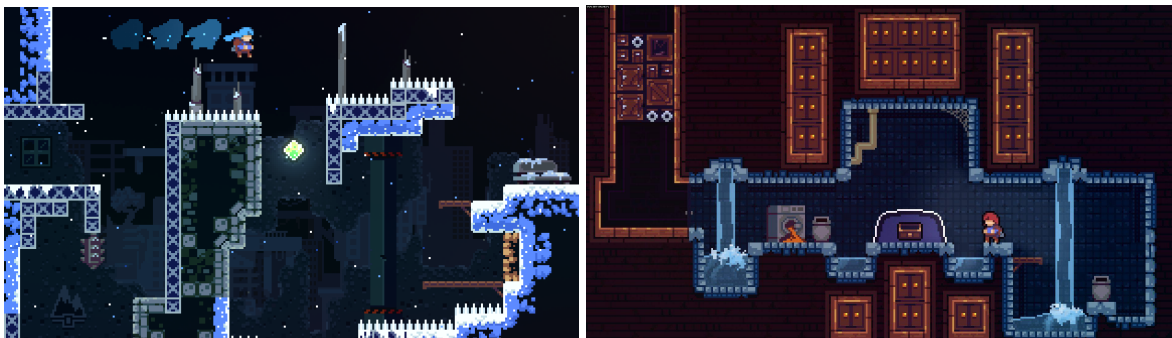


Game design observation:



Celeste is 2D platformer, which revolves about the main character - Madelaine's - climbing upon the Celeste mountain.



There are two observations on which I would like to focus - movement and gameplay narrative symbiosis.

Movement

I think Celeste has the best movement in a game that I ever played. The movement is easy to understand, yet difficult to master. I could even describe it so my grandparents will understand it - you use arrows for directional move, "Z" for climbing, "X" for dashing and "C" for jumping. Yet there are many combinations of these moves with the environment and each other, so even though they are explained in the first minutes of the gameplay, there is something to discover.

As platformers do, the game mainly tests your movement skills. So it focused on making them as fluid, responsive and fun to play with as possible.

I heard that a home movement system should be fun to play with even in an empty level. This is definitely true to Celeste

You can also feel yourself improving from level to level, even though Madeleine doesn't grand any new skills. This is because the progression is in your skill alone. Which leads me into...

Gameplay-narrative symbiosis

Celeste is about climbing a mountain. The mountain works as a metaphor for some problem haunting the player, which seems unapproachable.

Yet Madeleine is determined to climb this mountain. Screen by screen and level by level you get higher and closer fulfilling this goal. In this way the game's narrative connects to the gameplay and the player - we also feel closer to our goal and we feel our skill improving. With determination, time and trial we get closer to approaching the unapproachable goal.

You don't climb mountains to increase your skill. Yet just by being hard-driven and trying you are improving. And the realization of your improvement is really satisfying.

Not to mention you die constantly in Celeste. This shows you that failure is a necessary step to learning and eventually succeeding.

This game made me feel determined and motivated. Even though describing this "power of determination" made me feel cringy, I stand by it.