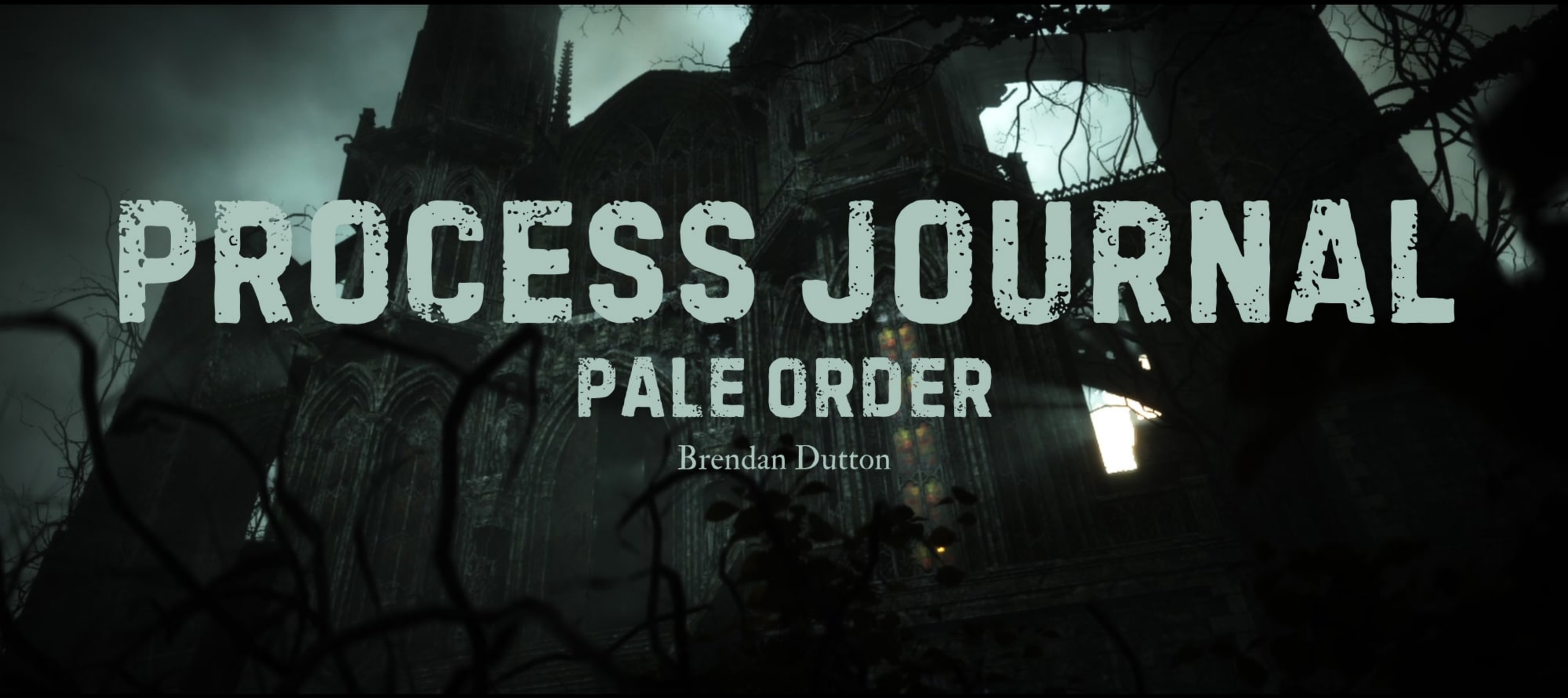

PROCESS JOURNAL
PALE ORDER
Brendan Dutton

CONCEPT & INSPIRATION

The goal of this project was to create a dark and immersive horror environment inspired by found-footage films and Seth's concept world 'Pale Order'. I wanted the church environment to feel abandoned, isolated, and unsettling. The use of fog, darkness, and towering architecture helped create a sense of scale and tension throughout the animation's.

The found-footage perspective was important because it makes the viewer feel physically present inside the environment rather than simply watching a cinematic scene. I like the idea of found footage to show a world because it makes the viewer think of their own ideas on how this footage was acquired.

Found Footage Inspiration (Kane Parsons)



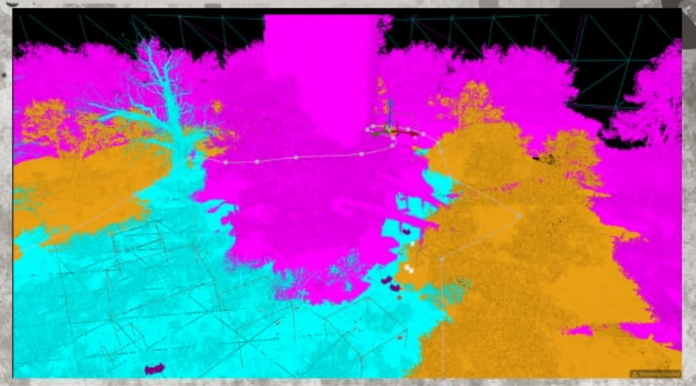


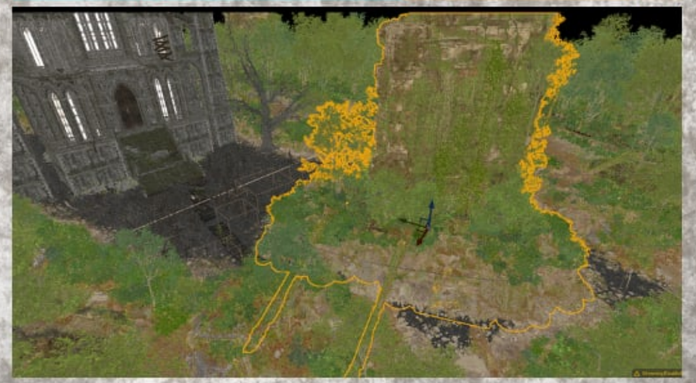
Environment Creation in Unreal Engine

The environment was created in Unreal Engine using a procedurally generated landscape tool. This allowed me to quickly generate terrain and then sculpt it further to match the atmosphere I wanted. I shaped the landscape to guide the viewer's attention toward the church while also creating a dark and uneven environment around it.

The church itself was built using modular assets that I sourced online. I assembled the individual pieces together to create a unique ruined church structure. This process allowed me to customise the scale, layout, and damaged appearance of the building to give it that aged look I wanted.

Splines used to create landscape





The world I made



The church





LIGHTING, POST-PROCESSING & CINEMATICS

Before post-processing effects:



After post-processing effects:



Lighting and post-processing played a major role in building the atmosphere of the cinematics. I created separate post-process setups for the interior and exterior environments to control colour, contrast, and mood differently depending on the location.

The exterior environment uses dark shadows and volumetric light shafts to create a gloomy and dramatic appearance around the church. Inside the church, I focused on stronger contrast and supernatural lighting effects, including the purple fire surrounding the staff prop.

Camera framing was also carefully considered to make the church appear large and intimidating, especially in the low-angle render shot.

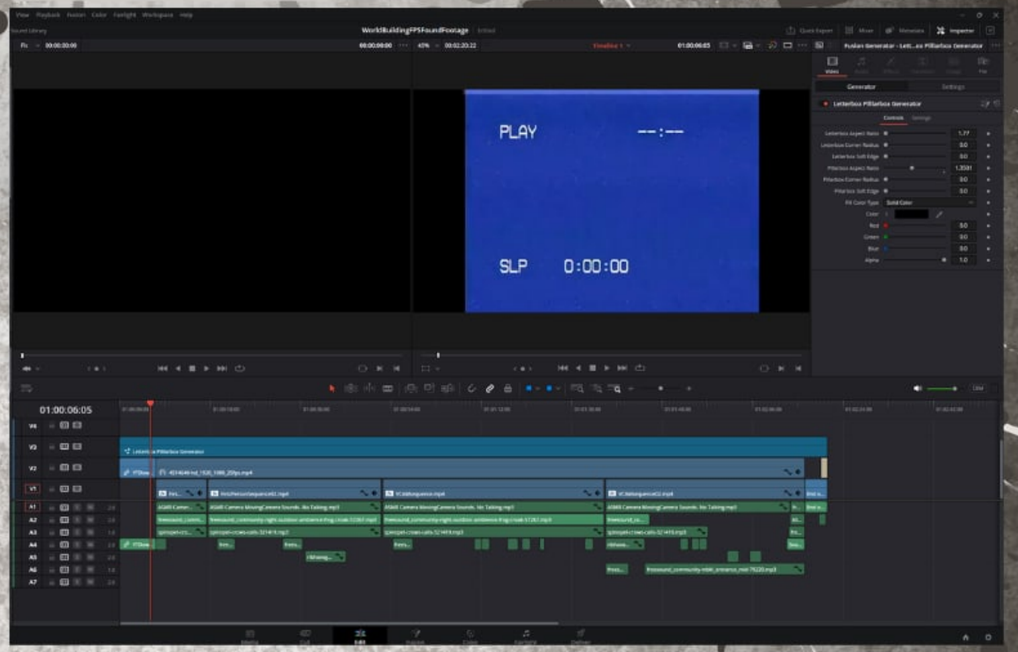
FOUND FOOTAGE SEQUENCE & SOUND DESIGN

The main animation sequence was designed to replicate the look and feel of old found-footage recordings. To achieve realistic handheld movement, I used a camera motion tool that transferred natural real-world movement onto the Unreal Engine camera.

I added a VHS-style filter during editing in DaVinci Resolve to make the footage appear like an old recording. The sound design was extremely important for immersion, so I layered multiple audio effects including footsteps, breathing, ambient environmental sounds, and camera handling noises. These details helped make the viewer feel as though they were physically exploring the environment themselves.

The sequence builds tension slowly before ending with a sudden reveal of the large eye creature coming towards the camera as a final jumpscare moment.

Sound and effects design



Tool used for camera motion (Unreal VCAM)



FINAL OUTCOME & REFLECTION













Found Footage Video

Outside Sequence Video

Internal Sequence Shot

This project helped me improve my understanding of cinematic environment design, lighting, sound design, and visual storytelling in Unreal Engine. I learned how important atmosphere and audio are when creating horror experiences, especially in found-footage style media. I thourghly enjoyed playing around with new and interesting techniques I have never used before.

One of the strongest parts of the final outcome was the overall immersion created through the combination of environmental detail, handheld camera movement, and layered sound design. If I were to continue developing the project further, I would add more found footage videos instead of the cinematic shots I used to increase realism even more.