

Splattershmup: A Game of Art & Motion

Andrew Phelps, Rochester Institute of Technology
(Additional credits and documentation provided in-game or at [Splattershmup.rit.edu](http://splattershmup.rit.edu))

Short Game Description: *Splattershmup* is a game that explores the intersection of the classic shoot-em-up (or “shmup”) arcade game and gesturalized abstraction or “action painting” (a term coined by critic Harold Rosenberg in 1952 and often used to describe the work of American artist Jackson Pollock). It is intended to allow the player to reflect on their in-game actions and strategy through visual record, and to approach the creation of art as an arena of action. Art can thus be created, shared and discussed that comes “from inside the moment” of game-based decision.

Goals & Rationale

Splattershmup was built as an exploration of a popular criticism of gestural abstraction, namely that ‘anyone can throw paint at a canvas’ and that such designs are ‘random’. In fact, the elements of composition of such paintings are exceedingly thoughtful designs, with a great deal of planning and forethought as has been recently brought to light. Interviews with artists like Jackson Pollock highlight a notion of being ‘in the zone’ or ‘in the moment’ during the execution of the design, describing what is often termed ‘flow’ in a gameplay experience. *Splattershmup* attempts to marry these elements by creating a visual record of the **deliberate** actions of the players in response to environmental stimulus (i.e. the game world), with a controlled but playful simulation of painting media. The game highlights a sense of **purposeful design**, linking survival, pick-ups, and kills to the visual record, and thereby inspires players to reflect on works of gestural abstraction in a different way.

Website & Playable Demo

<http://splattershmup.rit.edu/>

Currently in open beta, available for play in Google Chrome, Windows and Mac desktop applications, and at the Microsoft Windows Store. Video is also available on the website.

Screenshots



Figure 1: In-game screenshot of *Splattershmup: A Game of Art & Motion* with green background, and player-selected palette.

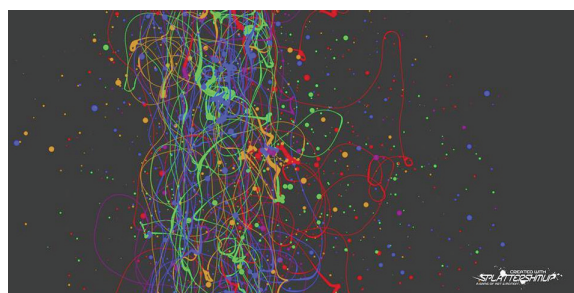


Figure 2: A painting generated through gameplay inside *Splattershmup*

Acknowledgements

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