

# Unholy Roller Design Guidelines

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# Overview

These design guidelines help to standardize the appearance of the game, marketing, and promotional material. This is NOT a design document for the game as a whole; this is purely meant for any aspect of the game involving art and visual design. There may be references to game design elements but only as it relates to the art. This is also a living document, so guidelines may be added, changed, or updated throughout the game's development.

Keep in mind that these are guidelines as opposed to rules. Any in-game assets should follow these guidelines as closely as possible, but for marketing outside of the game, a rough approximation is fine. Some guidelines are more quantitative and require strong attention to detail, whereas others are more qualitative with loose descriptions. In the latter case, certain design decisions may be left to the artist's discretion.

## Design Philosophy

The design philosophy of Unholy Roller's aesthetic hinges upon our core design pillars. Some design pillars are specific to the visual design since they describe the game's appearance more so than its gameplay or level design. The visual design pillars can still relate to other aspects of the game, but may need tweaks or changes to fit into a different context.

### UHR Design Pillars

Arguably the most important design pillar as it relates to visual design is **snappy**. Players shouldn't feel like they're being held back or waiting on something to get the information they need. The game should prioritize quick interactions and incentivize faster gameplay. Since optimization is a core part of the game loop, players should feel like the game is intentionally facilitating that. For example, screen transitions and text animations (i.e. numbers counting up) should be kept to a minimum. Even if they may provide visual polish, they take time away from the player for the sake of looking fancy, which goes against this design pillar.

**Unrestricted** (or larger than life) is much broader than the first design pillar and has room for interpretation, but it's a good general direction for evaluating assets and visuals. Although Unholy Roller is related to bowling (see [Theming](#)), its identity goes far beyond that. The game doesn't abide by the limitations of reality, and its visual design should reflect that. For example, the headers on the in-game menus sprawl across the screen and don't align to a grid. This makes the menus appear uncontained and fully utilizes the space.

## Visual Design Pillars

**Consistency** is the overall theme of Unholy Roller's visual design. Art made by any team member should strive for the same level of polish across all mediums, and the guidelines are meant to be used as a reference to ensure that. Again, subtle differences aren't a huge deal, but always be thinking about consistency when making official art.

Another important aspect of our visual design is **feedback**. The game should react and respond to player input in ways that make the player feel like they have an impact on the game space. However, any feedback given to the player should have a significant reason for being there, whether to communicate useful information or for emphasis. Players (and viewers) should also be able to recognize what their gameplay performance is while playing. Good scores should be rewarded with dopamine-filled visuals, and low scores should not feel like a surprise.

## Theming

Unholy Roller is fundamentally a dungeon crawler; it's bowling-*inspired*, but it's not a bowling *simulator*. Many elements of the game are named after or themed around bowling, but bowling should not be a creative constraint for what is/isn't allowed to exist in the game's universe. Think about how sentient pins would inhabit a bowling lane if it acted as their natural world. For example, it doesn't make sense for bowling shoes to exist since pins don't have feet, even if bowling shoes are an iconic staple of the bowling experience. Bowling is still a substantial part of the game's identity, but it's a balancing act; dynamic shapes, anthropomorphism, and cartoon logic are equally as important.

Additionally, Unholy Roller is meant to feel like a modern game and should leverage the capabilities that modern technology can create. High resolution graphics and high fidelity audio are key to providing a high quality experience. Any old-school motifs should be kept to the aesthetic design and not as a means of creating the assets themselves.

That said, many people still associate our thick-lined artstyle and simple character designs with those of Flash games like *The Binding of Isaac*. Even if this connection isn't intentional, we can still leverage it while staying true to our design pillars. Flash games have a certain homemade and imperfect aesthetic that makes them more charming. That charm can be carried into Unholy Roller by association, but keep in mind that nostalgia is not something we as a team can control. In summary: the goal is not to replicate a Flash game aesthetic, but looking like a Flash game isn't inherently a bad thing.

## Art Style

One of the core principles of Unholy Roller's art style is emphasis through shape and contour. The game is very fast-paced, so information needs to be communicated quickly and effectively at a short glance. Distinct silhouettes are more important than intricate details, especially with character design. If a player can't tell two pins apart from their shape alone, they now have to process more information about the pins (i.e. colors, small details) to reach the same conclusion. In the context of branding, Unholy Roller's shape language provides strong visual appeal that's both recognizable and interesting.

Always strive to reduce visual clutter in both individual assets and overall design layouts. By "clutter," I'm referring to a lack of empty space, not necessarily dirtiness. The game doesn't have much grunge to it because of the solid colors, and sprites should generally feel polished for readability. Small details should only be necessary if they communicate extra information about the sprite that would be lost otherwise. For example, certain pin sprites have vertical lines between the eyebrows to give the appearance of squinting as opposed to just an angry face; the detail was added to correctly communicate the pin's emotion.



- Games shown:
- Bug Fables: The Everlasting Sapling
  - WarioWare: Get It Together!
  - Mr Driller Drill Land

This moodboard provides some examples of similar art styles to Unholy Roller. They all differ slightly, but each one has specific elements reminiscent of our style: smooth curves, sharp corners, clean lines, and strong shapes.

For in-game assets, always keep perspective in mind. Although the game's perspective isn't perfectly isometric, it should still retain the illusion of an isometric view. The camera angle is NOT directly top-down, nor is it perfectly horizontal. Some assets break this perspective out of necessity (e.g. Roller animation), and those that do should not draw attention to the fact that they do.

## Asset Production

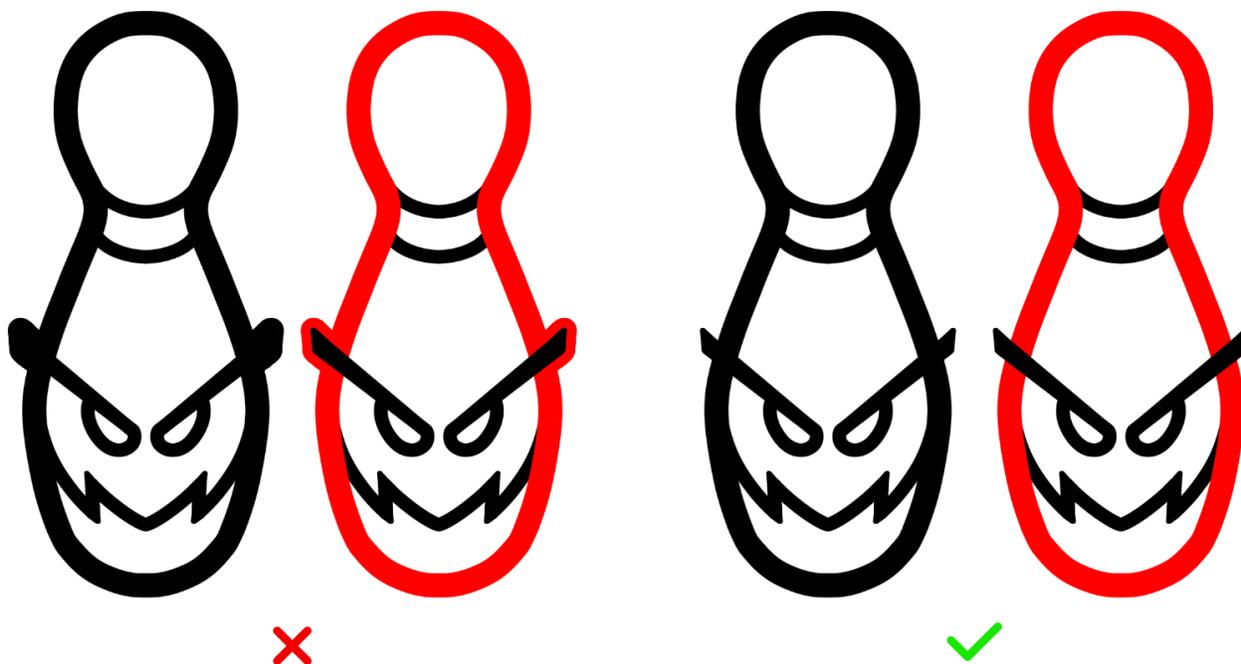
These guidelines cover the fundamentals of the game's overall art composition to ensure consistency. Although most of these guidelines are focused on in-game assets, the basic principles still apply to any official art.

### Outlining

Unholy Roller's line art style is sharp, exaggerated, and clean. Most lines have a uniform thickness unless manual edits are made for a stylistic effect.

Line Type	Brush Width
Outer border	84px
Standard lines	48px
Smaller details	20px

For art outside of the game, the pixel values may differ as long as the inner lines are roughly half of the outer lines. Outer lines should be applied to the border of the main object in a sprite. This is mostly up to the artist's discretion, but here's an example of how to apply this:



In this example, the eyebrows of the Puncher extend beyond the outer border. However, only the body of the pin is drawn with an outer border since it highlights the main silhouette of the sprite. Even though the eyebrows stick out, they don't get extra thickness because the eyebrows and pin body are two distinct objects.

## Coloring

Unholy Roller has vibrant, punchy colors that energize and excite the player. Most assets use hue shifting with highlights and shading to prevent objects from feeling flat or bland. Most highlights are shifted closer to yellow (i.e. in the direction of yellow on the hue slider) with decreased saturation, while shading is shifted closer to purple with increased saturation. However, be conservative with how much the colors are shifted away from the base color.

All art and assets should be cel shaded, typically with a singular base color and shade color. Gradients are reserved exclusively for visual effects like particles or trails and should be kept to a minimum. Highlights should only appear on objects with a shiny or glossy texture. Any blocks of color on an object should have an inner border around them unless they are a shade or highlight of another color. To put it another way, always draw a line between differing colors within the same object.

Be intentional about color choices. When designing a new asset, think about how its colors will look alongside other assets. If the colors of two unrelated assets layered on top of one another are too similar, consider changing the hue, saturation, or brightness to distinguish

them. If an asset belongs to a family of assets (e.g. pins and gloves), reuse colors to visually relate them.

## Exporting

Here is a list of steps to take when exporting most assets for Unholy Roller. These steps may change depending on the situation or the software, but the general process should remain the same:

### **1. Save a copy and rasterize**

Once an asset is complete, make a copy of the digital layers and rasterize them into one pixel layer. ALWAYS keep the original layers so the process is as nondestructive as possible. Take the rasterized layer and create a new file with matching dimensions as the asset. The shortcut “File > New from Clipboard” makes the process easier, but there’s more than one way to accomplish this. The goal is to reduce excess transparency when exporting.

### **2. Scale the document size down**

Since most of the assets are natively drawn at an absurdly large size, scaling them down will reduce their file size when implemented in Godot. Resize the file using “Document > Resize Document...” by a factor of 0.36 (multiply the width and height by 0.36) and round the dimensions to the nearest whole pixel. Note that this will scale down the contents of the file, not just resize the canvas. Bicubic resampling is recommended for a sharper line texture.

### **3. (Optional) Align it into a sprite sheet**

Sprite sheets are a useful way to export certain animations, but it depends on the implementation. Sometimes it might be easier to implement an animation as separate files instead of combined into one. If a sprite sheet is needed, either use an external program to generate it from the frames or create it manually by aligning the sprites in a new file.

### **4. Export using naming conventions**

Once the file is ready, export the whole document as a PNG with default settings (the resampling method shouldn’t matter here). The naming convention for Unholy Roller art files is [kebab-case](#) starting with the “uhr-” prefix. The name of the files themselves is not strict, although it could be helpful to use the name as a hierarchy to group related assets together. Make sure both the raw file and the exported file are in the same folder and push those changes to the art repo.

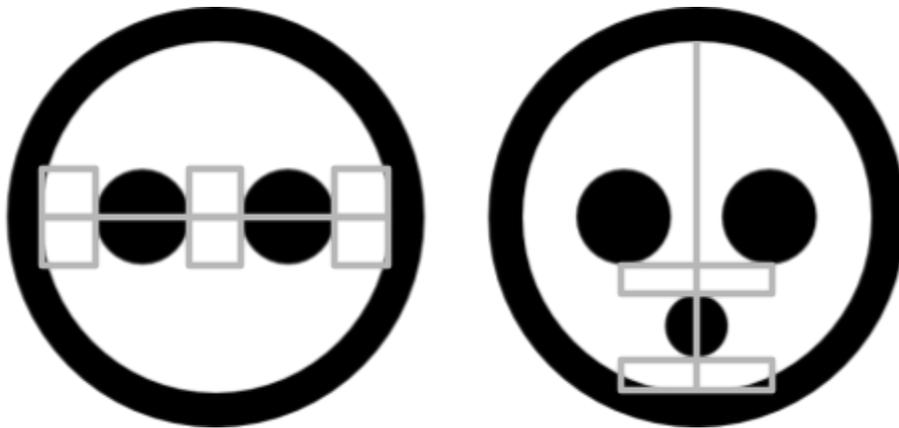
# The Roller

Since there is only one Roller present in the game, the construction and depiction guidelines below will only describe the player character, simply referred to as “The Roller”.

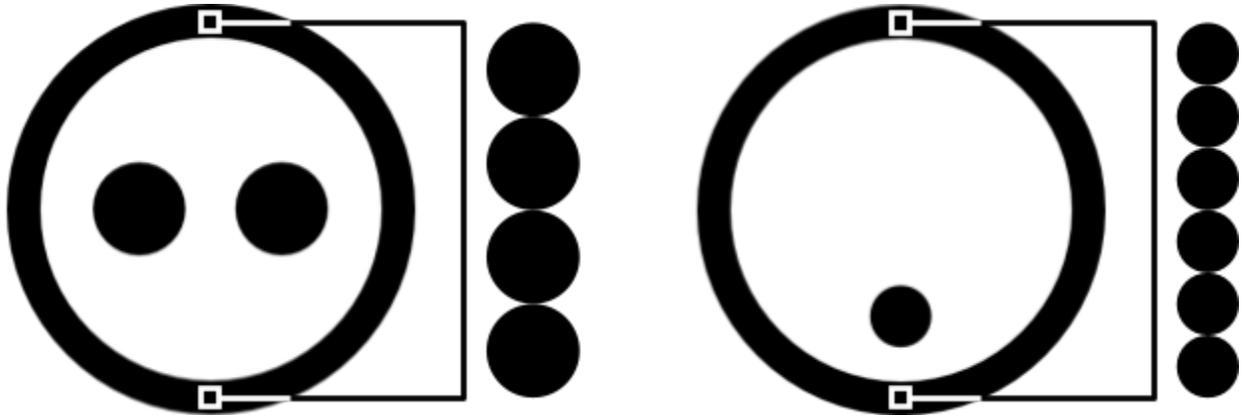
## Construction

The construction of the roller is much more precise than other assets simply because it only consists of a few geometric shapes. That level of simplicity means that careful attention is required to ensure the Roller always looks like the Roller.

### Face



The Roller’s face imitates the three holes of a standard bowling ball but with different proportions. The face is meant to look innocent and unassuming in contrast to how the Roller acts. The two holes at the top are larger than the hole on the bottom to look like cartoony eyes. The eyes are vertically centered, as well as evenly spaced between either side of the shell. The mouth is horizontally centered, as well as evenly spaced between the bottom of the eyes and the bottom of the shell.

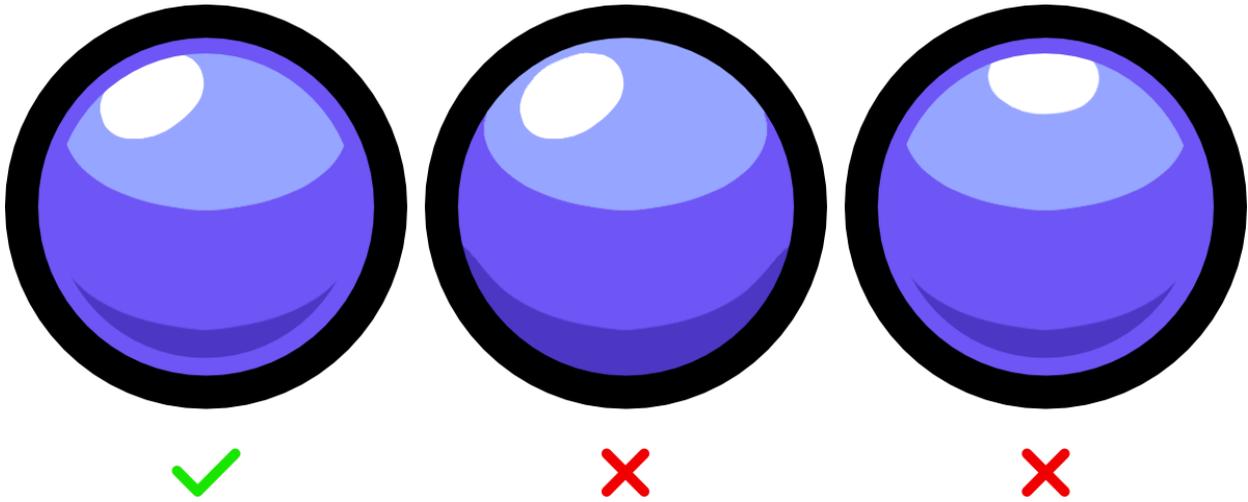


The eyes have a 4:1 eye-to-body ratio and the mouth has a 6:1 mouth-to-body ratio. However, the “body” in these ratios is drawn from the midpoint of the outline, NOT the inner or outer edge. This was partially a mistake, but the proportions look better this way so it’s staying the way it is.



The Roller’s face always animates forward, appearing over the top of the shell and rolling down to the bottom. The Roller rotates its body about the vertical axis to aim in the direction of motion. The face should NOT roll sideways or backwards visually; it should always turn its body to keep rolling forward. Note that the face should squish as it rolls closer to the edge of the ball instead of just sliding off.

## Shell



The outer shell of the Roller is a solid blueish-purple color with a glossy sheen. The shading and highlights should not touch the outline around the Roller to mimic the effect of bounce lighting. A round highlight comes from a light source in the top-left corner similar to the pins.



When the shell cracks, any large fragments should be shaded individually to emphasize the damage. As the shell becomes more cracked, there should be a large crack running downward from each eye as if the Roller has streams of tears. Even at its most cracked state, the shell should still have distinct chunks that reduce visual clutter (put another way: keep the number of cracks at a minimum).

## Depiction

The Roller is the player character of Unholy Roller and the main face for the game's brand. It isn't the "mascot" per se, since the pins also have large appeal and recognition, but it's still the game's namesake and should be fairly prominent in branding and promotional material. In the universe of the game, bowling balls are referred to as "Rollers."

Although the Roller is not alive, there is still something animating and controlling it. Do NOT depict anything coming out of or living inside the Roller; this should be left to the player's imagination.

## The Pins

The construction guidelines below cover basic design principles for pins as a whole; there may be individual pins that break these guidelines, and if so, it will be specifically mentioned in that pin's section. Also, the top part of the pin will be referred to as the "head" for the sake of clarity.

### Construction

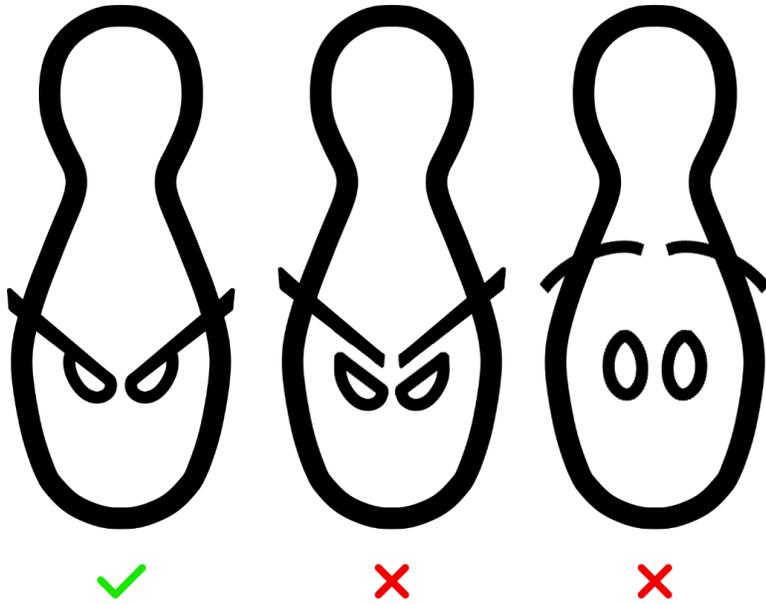
Each pin is designed with a distinct silhouette, although not necessarily unique. Some pins may share a similar silhouette or shape, but the actual proportions should be distinguishable at a glance (e.g. width/height difference).

### Body

Just like most other assets, pins always have a top-down isometric perspective. Pins typically have two highlights: one on top of the head and another down the side (often on the left edge above the eyes). Most pins have one colored stripe around their neck, even if a real-life pin may have two.

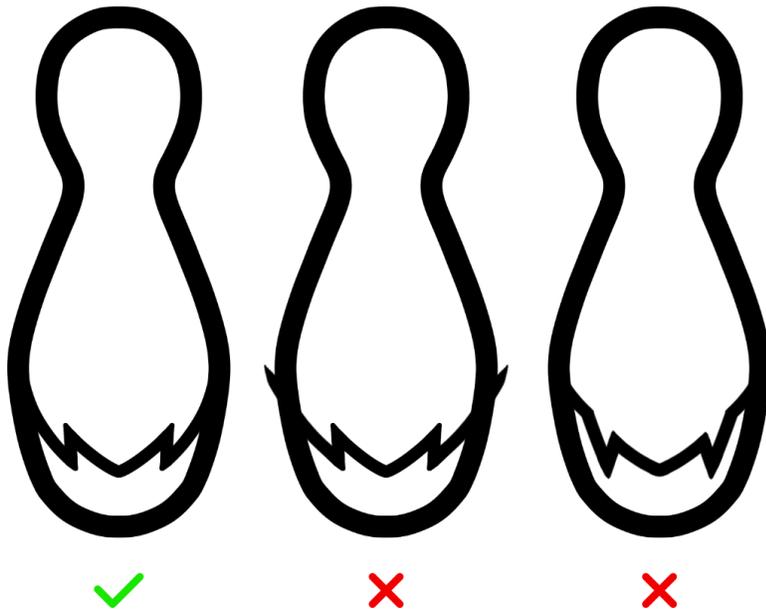
### Eyes

Pins have small, red, oval eyes close together about halfway down the body of the pin. Note that the eyes are still red regardless of the stripe's color. If the mouth opens, then the eyes should move upward in sync with the upper lip. The size of the eyes can grow or shrink depending on the facial expression, but they should be small and beady at rest.



The eyebrows are usually slanted inward at roughly a 45° angle. They connect directly to the eyes and are encouraged to extend past the body's outline. Just like the eyes, the angle may vary depending on the facial expression, but pins have a resting angry face. Eyebrows are only allowed to detach from the eyes when the eyeballs themselves are not visible (e.g. spiral eyes).

### Mouth



The mouth of the pin stretches across half of the pin's circumference in an exaggerated U shape. The ends of the mouth sit roughly in-line with the eyes. There are two notches on the

line of the mouth with one on either side. The resting face for the pins is a smile despite the angry eyes. The inside of the mouth shows a wooden cavity within the pin with no recognizable details as to what's inside. Pins do NOT have a tongue or teeth beyond the notches in the mouth.

## Gloves



Most pins have gloves that appear and disappear to allow them to attack the Roller in various ways. Even if a pin isn't depicted with gloves in the game, it can be assumed that they have gloves anyways. Unless stated otherwise, gloves always have four fingers: three main fingers and a thumb. The ends of the fingers should be mostly square with a slight rounding along the edge. Gloves are drawn as left-handed, but pins themselves do not have a dominant handedness. If the fingers bend inward, there should be visible indentations for the knuckles.

With the fingers fully extended, gloves are typically two-thirds the height of the pin they belong to, although they tend to fluctuate in size due to animation principles (i.e. squash and stretch, anticipation, follow-through). Gloves are meant to appear cartoonishly large and disproportionate to the pin's actual size for comedic effect.

Each glove has a colored cuff along the bottom with studs evenly spaced across them. The color of the cuff should be the same color as the pin's stripe or primary accent color. The inside/underside of the glove should NOT be shown in order to retain a suspension of disbelief. Do NOT draw pins with arms either.

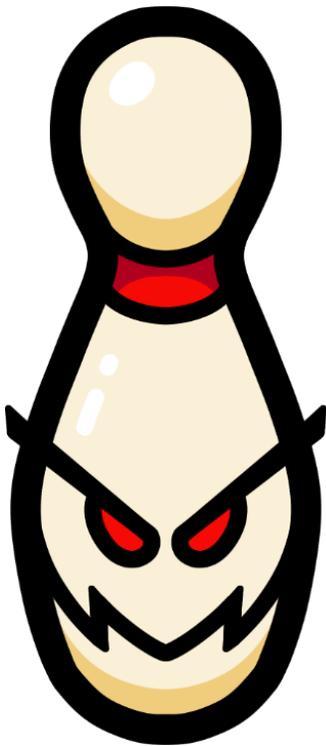
## Depiction

The main enemies of Unholy Roller are sentient, intelligent pins that will attack the Roller at all costs. They take the form of real-life pins with slight changes or variations that fit the overall fantasy theme. Pins have their own written language (usually depicted as English or unintelligible scribbles) but very few can actually talk; most of their communication occurs through noises, hand gestures, and facial expressions.

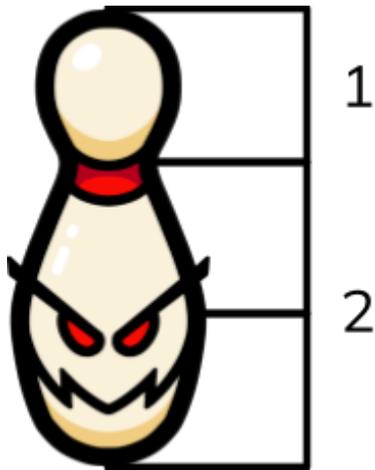
In general, pins do NOT have a gender and should be referred to using gender-neutral pronouns in any official communication. Pins should NOT appear cutesy or benevolent, especially not towards the Roller. Pins are named based on their ability like “Puncher” or “The Puncher,” but not “The Puncher pin,” similar to how Left 4 Dead 2 refers to [the Infected](#).

The Puncher should be the most prominently featured pin in marketing material due to its recognizable and iconic design. Other pins can still be used for marketing, but only alongside the Puncher. Although some pins are only ever depicted with certain hand shapes when attacking, other hand shapes are fine for marketing purposes.

## The Puncher

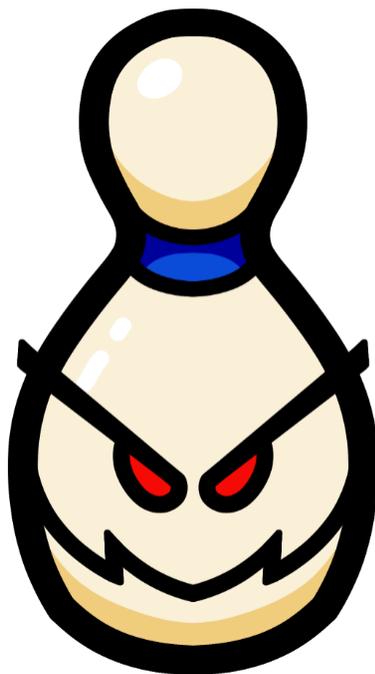


The Puncher is the “default” pin with a shape that more closely resembles a real-life tenpin. The design is intentionally basic to act as a Goomba equivalent for the pins.

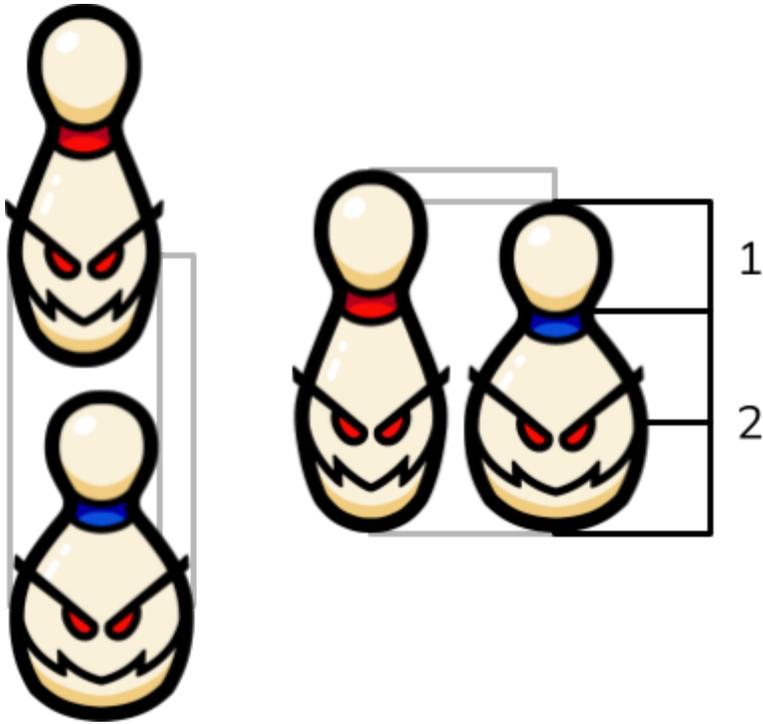


The Puncher has a 2:1 body-to-head height ratio. The head is much rounder than a typical tenpin, but this helps to exaggerate the shape for a more memorable silhouette.

## The Thrower

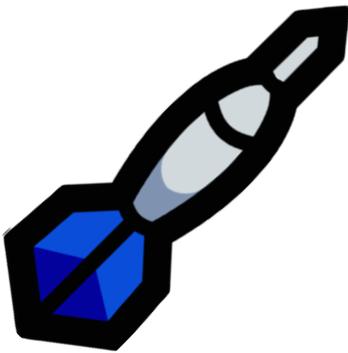


The Thrower is a direct variant of the Puncher that specializes in projectiles. It doesn't move around much, only enough to get within range of the Roller. The stripe around the neck of the pin is blue, although the eyes still remain red. One detail to keep in mind is that the Thrower squints while throwing its dart to concentrate on aiming.



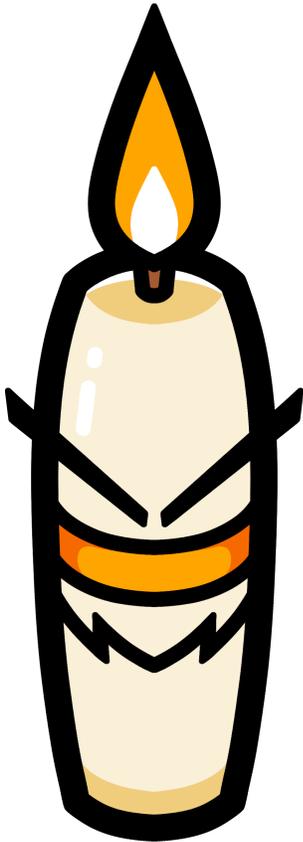
The Thrower is slightly wider and shorter than the Puncher, but it still retains the 2:1 body-to-head ratio. The body proportions are squattier than the Puncher with most of its body mass closer to the ground.

### Thrower Dart

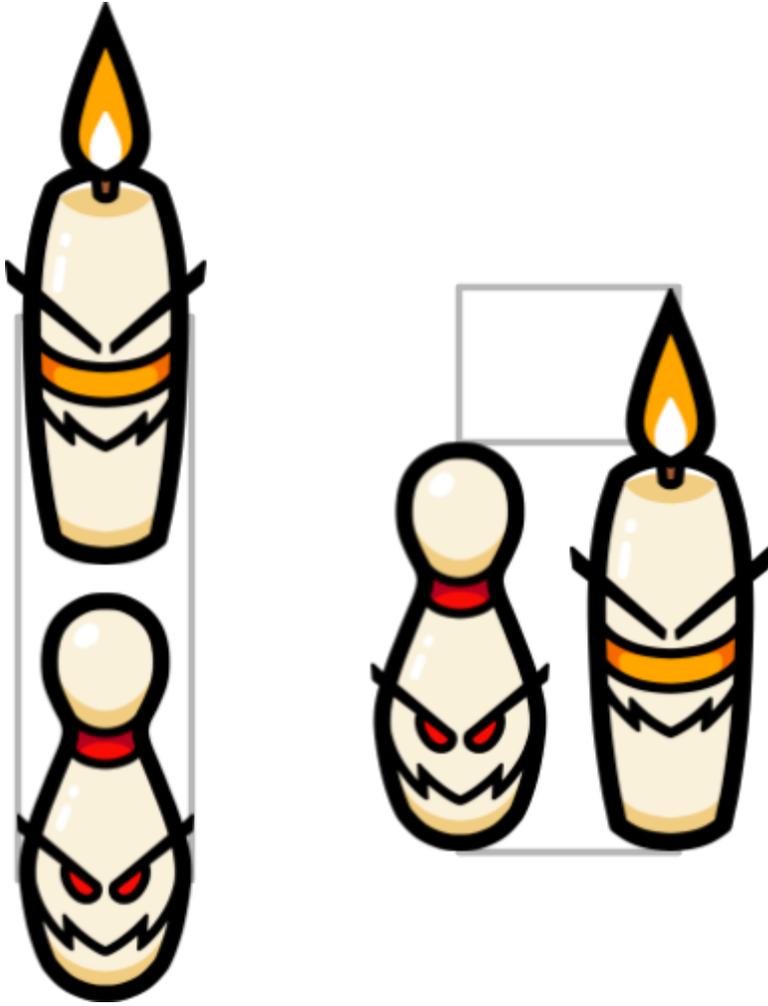


The Thrower's dart is a metallic dart with a blue hexagonal tail and a circular groove just below the tip. The dart itself is a bit wider than a typical dart purely for in-game readability. The tip of the dart physically extrudes from the body and not just be an extension of the outline.

## The Burner



The Burner is a reference to real-life candlepins that have a distinct shape from the typical tenpin. The body of the Burner is one cylindrical shape that slightly bends outward like a French rolling pin. The stripe is colored orange and wraps around the middle of the pin, covering its eyes; the Burner still has eyebrows, but they float above the stripe. The flame on top of the burner is lit via a wick coming out of the body and ALWAYS stays lit unless knocked out by the Roller or surrounded by fire in its attack stage.

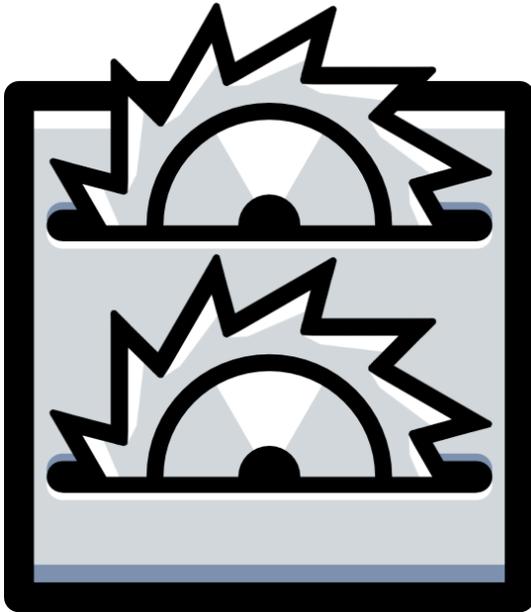


The Burner's width and height (ignoring the flame) are basically the same as the Puncher's, although technically the Burner is just slightly thinner and shorter. The dimensions of the flame aren't as exact, as long as it has a tall teardrop shape.

## Hazards

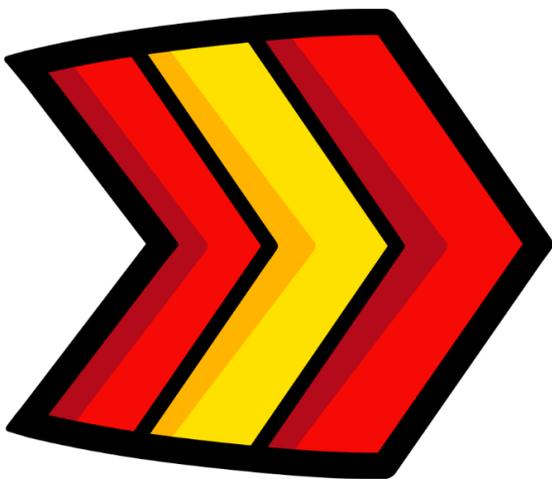
Hazards encompass all inanimate objects that have a gameplay effect on the Roller other than a solid collision. Similar to the Roller and pins, hazards have a prominent thick outline to distinguish them from the floor pattern or decals. Hazards are typically aligned to the floor's tile map on a square grid.

## Saws



The saws are the most common hazard that deals damage to the Roller. The “toaster” design of the saw plate occupies the entire square tile, making it easier to align multiple saws both vertically and horizontally. In its resting state, the sawblades aren’t visible and wait until the Roller gets within range to spring up. The teeth on the sawblades are right triangles with white highlights to give them a shiny, sharp look.

## Booster

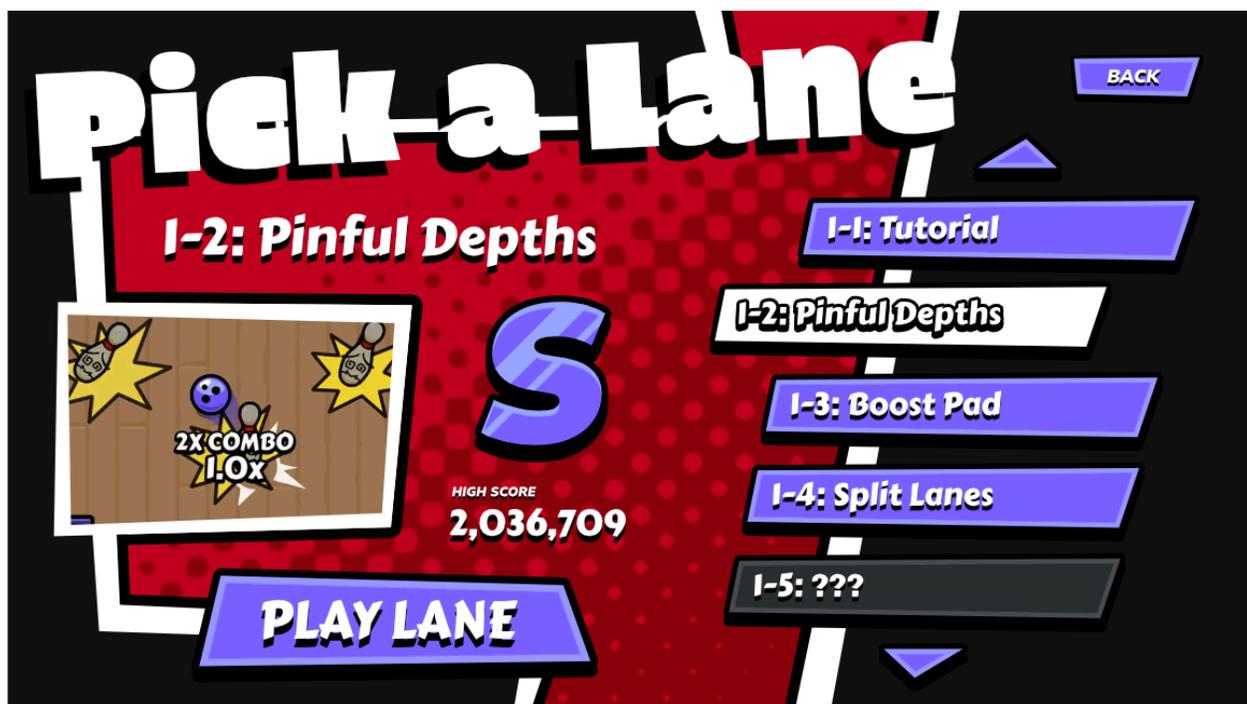


The booster is a stack of three chevron arrows alternating red and yellow. The colors flip back and forth to give the illusion of motion. The booster launches the Roller in the direction it's facing, then desaturates its colors to indicate a disabled state.

## UI Design

All parts of the game should invoke the same energy and spark as the gameplay, including UI assets. Our UI continues the clean look of the game assets with greater exaggeration and flare. They also heavily rely on layering to make each screen feel dynamic. This section describes the necessary components of various menus and graphics.

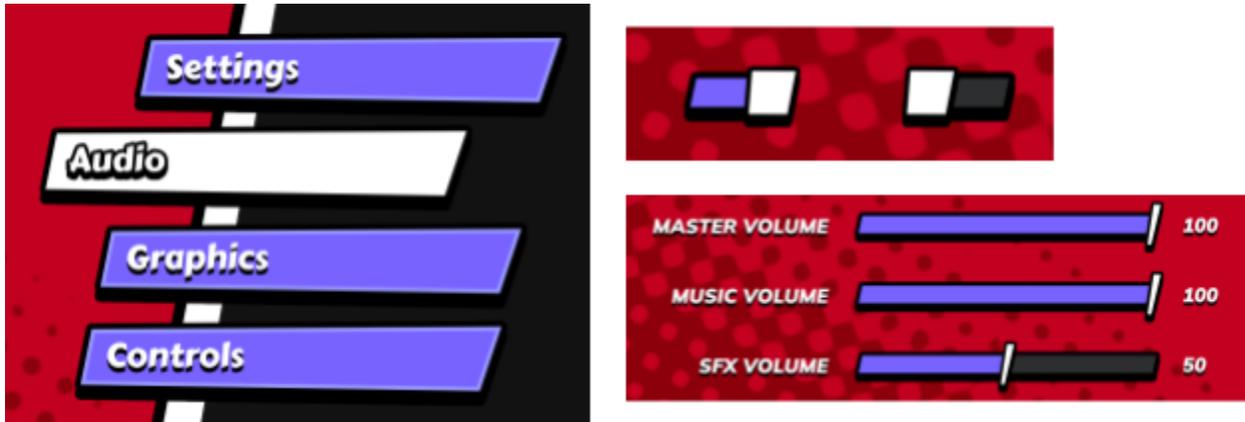
## Menus



Unholy Roller's menus have three distinct layers: the background, panels, and elements. The background is typically a scrolling halftone shader that fades between two shades of red. The goal of the background is to provide a pop of color behind the panels without being overwhelming or distracting from the menu content.

The panels consist of dark grey and white layered polygons with an extra black outline around them. The white polygons always fully contain the grey polygons and act as a dynamic border to them; the perceived width of this white border is allowed to vary significantly as the angles change. The panels usually sit directly under menu titles and

other UI elements as if to give them something to rest on. They also help frame the scene and add visual interest, although be careful not to clutter the screen with too many panels. Additionally, keep panels separate from one another and combine any smaller panels into one large panel.

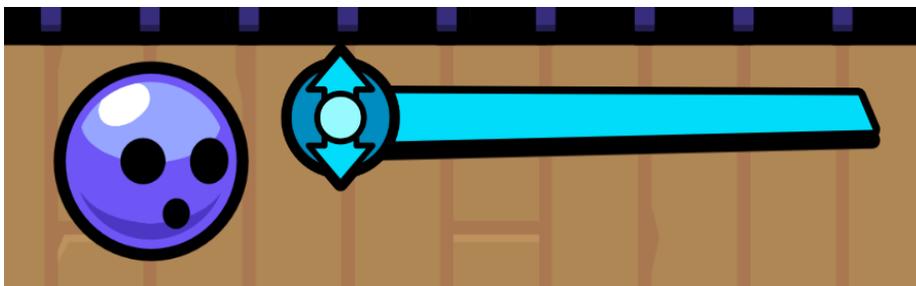


The elements fill the rest of the screen to convey necessary information or for UI purposes. Interactable elements (buttons, toggles, sliders, etc.) have a consistent motif of non-rectangular shapes that mimic the panels. They typically have a purple fill color with an additional inner border of light purple, but use dark grey instead when off or disabled. White accent pieces are used on toggles and slider handles for contrast.

The shape of buttons is used to show similarity and importance: buttons with similar shapes have similar functions, and buttons with more irregular angles have more visual impact. Size and scale also play a major role in shaping a visual hierarchy of actions for the player.

The recommended way to present a list of options to the player is with a button column on the right half of the screen. Several menus use this column either for menu navigation or selection choices. Since these button columns are consistently shown on the right half of the screen, avoid putting buttons of similar functions on different parts of the screen.

## HUD





Unlike the menus, the HUD doesn't use panels to avoid obstructing the player's view. The HUD elements are grouped together based on their function and pushed to the corners of the screen. The various meters follow a similar design style to the menu elements with slanted angles.

## Typography

This section covers everything related to text. To clarify some typography terminology: “typeface” is the general term for a font family (e.g. Arial, Helvetica), whereas “font” refers to a specific version of that typeface (e.g. Bold, Light, Black). These words are commonly used interchangeably, but these guidelines distinguish between them for clarity.

### Typefaces

The most common typeface in-game and on promotional material is [Carter One](#). This typeface strikes a balance between loose forms and sharp edges that fits the game's aesthetic fairly well. Text that uses Carter One includes subheadings, button titles, and number displays (e.g. total score, multiplier). Carter One is more of a display typeface than a body typeface, so avoid using it to write long paragraphs or small lettering.

The secondary typeface of Unholy Roller is [Mulish](#). It has a simple design with wide letters that are legible at smaller sizes compared to Carter One. Mulish Black Italic is used for text descriptions, typically written in all caps. Mulish Normal or Mulish Medium are the standard fonts for body text and paragraphs, most likely in advertising.

The main display typeface is [Erica One](#). Its big, bold letters give a cartoonish look that ties many of the game's visual elements together. Because of its blocky form, Erica One should only be used sparingly as the title for primary pages. This is also the same typeface used in the game's logo and our team logo.

## Formatting

To achieve our look and feel, Unholy Roller has a specific way of formatting text that balances legibility with character. Since text can be displayed at many different sizes, exact pixel values won't be very helpful, so most of these guidelines have to be eyeballed or approximated. The goal is to be consistent in our presentation of text while still remaining flexible in where we can display it.

Most in-game text should be solid white unless color is necessary for stylistic reasons (e.g. rank letters). All text should have a solid black drop shadow to help it contrast against any background. These are the core principles of how text is presented in-game and should also carry over into any promotional material.

**abc ABC I23** ✓

**abc ABC I23** ✗

**abc ABC I23** ✗

**abc ABC I23** ✗

**abc ABC I23** ✓

**abc ABC I23** ✗

**abc ABC I23** ✗

**abc ABC I23** ✗

Carter One can appear either with outlines or lineless. Lineless is the default text style for the majority of purposes. Outlines are helpful in situations where a background might be moving or too bright where white text is hard to read. The drop shadow must ALWAYS angle directly downward in both cases, and should only drop down far enough to make the text pop.



Mulish only appears as Black Italic in-game, so this is the only example shown. Outlines are typically not used with Mulish and should be generally avoided since text that uses Mulish won't need emphasis. Unlike Carter One, the drop shadow comes down much farther and shows a visual break between itself and the text. This cannot be avoided with Mulish since the text renders so small that slight drop shadows are unnoticeable. However, similar to Carter One, the drop shadow ALWAYS moves directly downward.

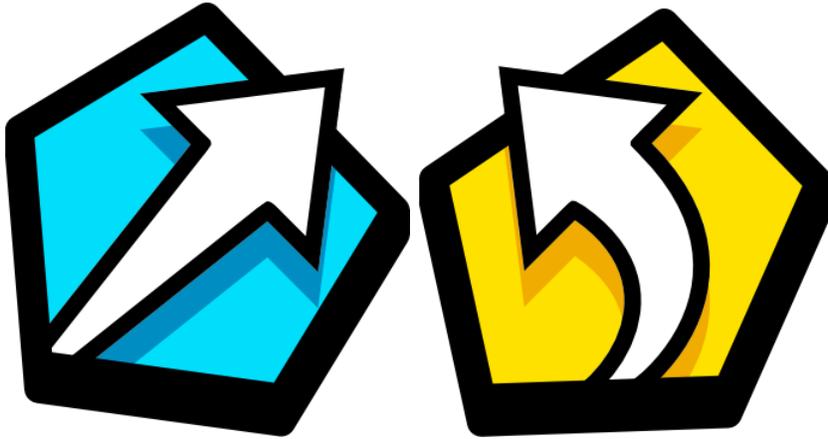


Erica One is exclusively for titles, and the text should appear to float above menus and graphics. The drop shadow is much longer than previous typefaces, and is the only one to have a 45° angle instead of directly downward. Erica One is typically tilted in menus and benefits from the angled drop shadow more so than other text.

## Iconography

Although there aren't many icons in Unholy Roller, they still serve a useful purpose in providing visual feedback. These guidelines dive more into graphic design principles that relate the various icons to each other.

## Launch Icons



Launch icons appear in the top-left corner of the in-game HUD alongside their own meter controlling the launch cooldown. These icons display the current trajectory of the Roller while launching, represented by an arrow. The arrow should extend out of the bounds of the base plate and shape itself in a way that easily communicates the trajectory at a glance. The base plate emulates the shape language, outlines, and drop shadows of the HUD elements (only the base plate gets the drop shadow, not the arrow). Each icon should be assigned a unique color to fill the base plate with an additional shadow extending down from the arrow.