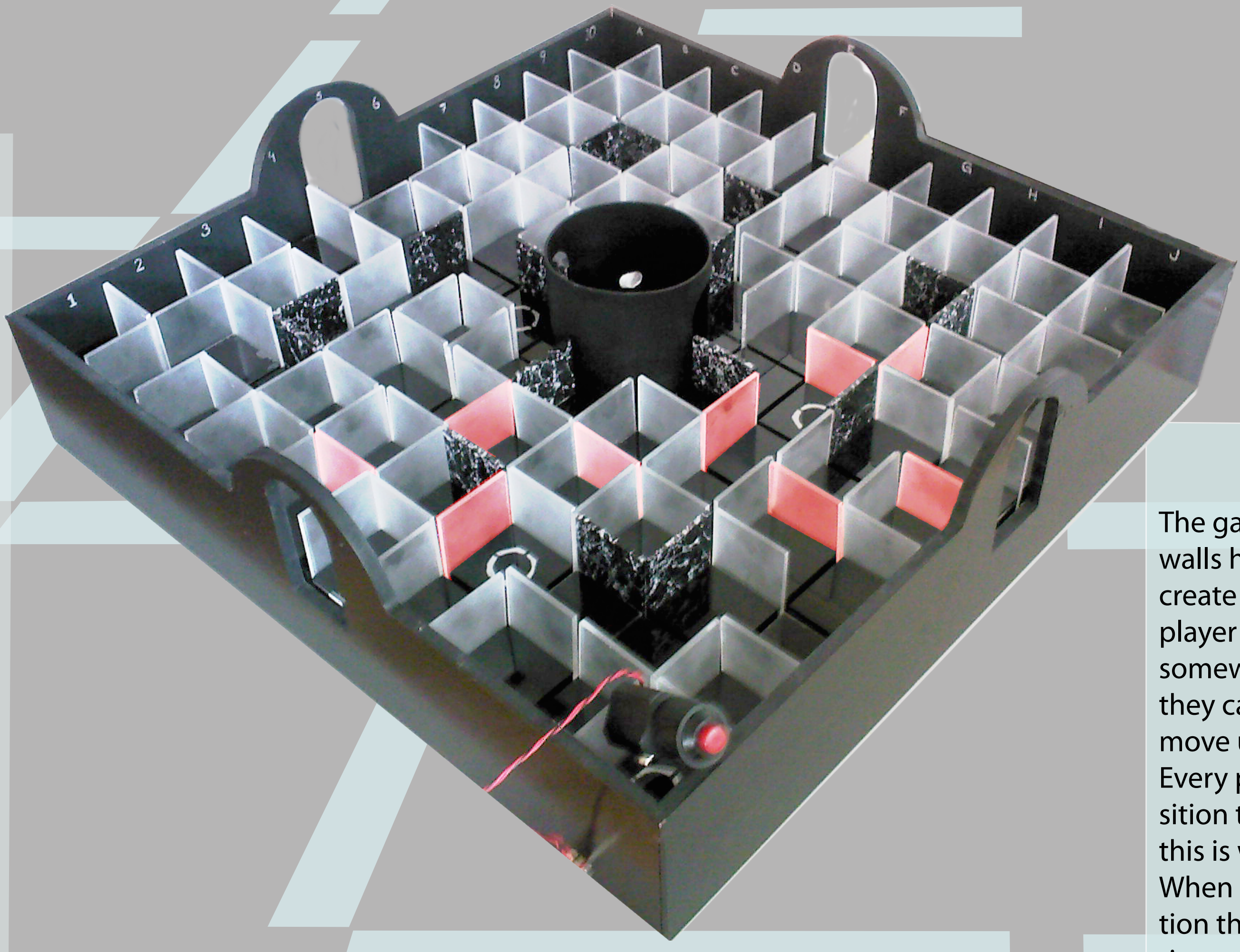
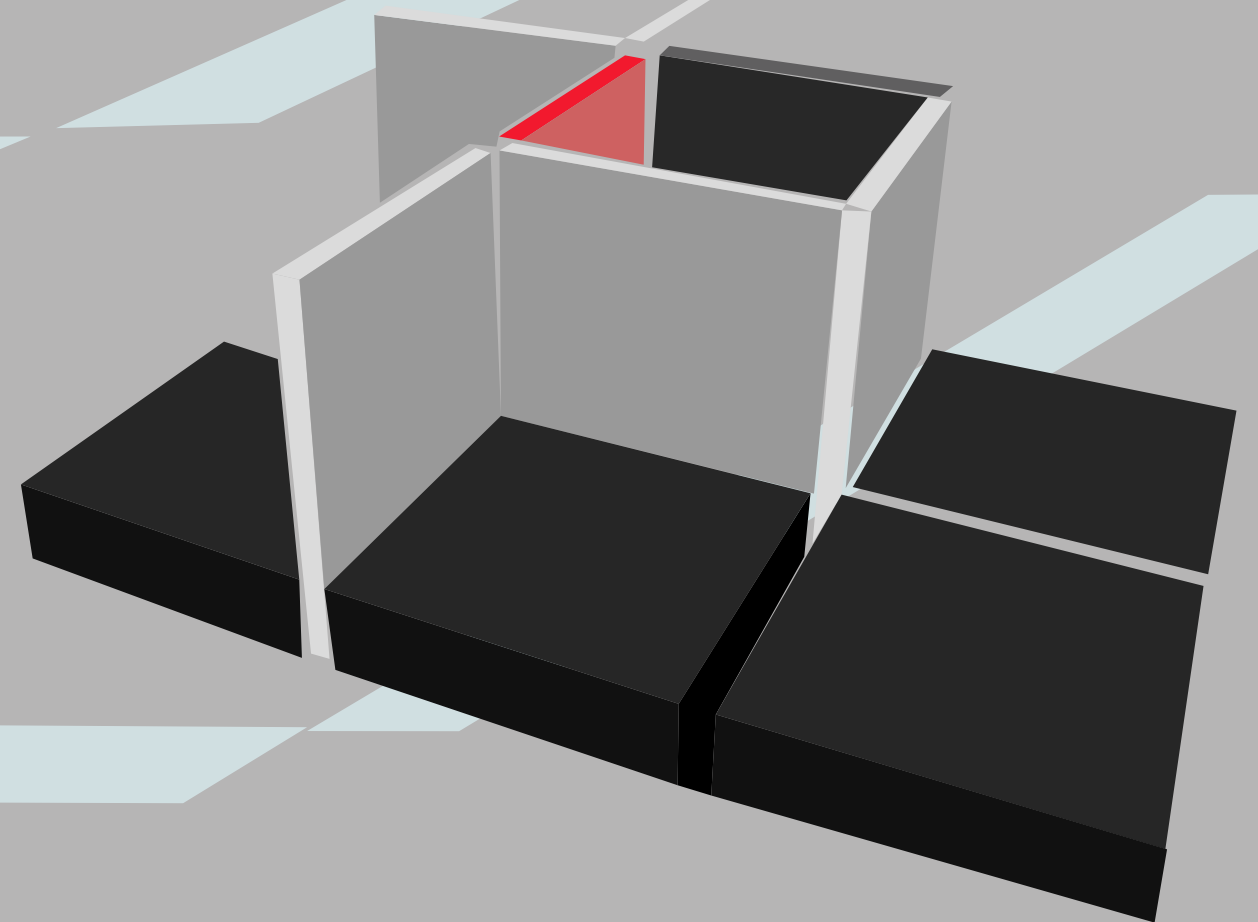
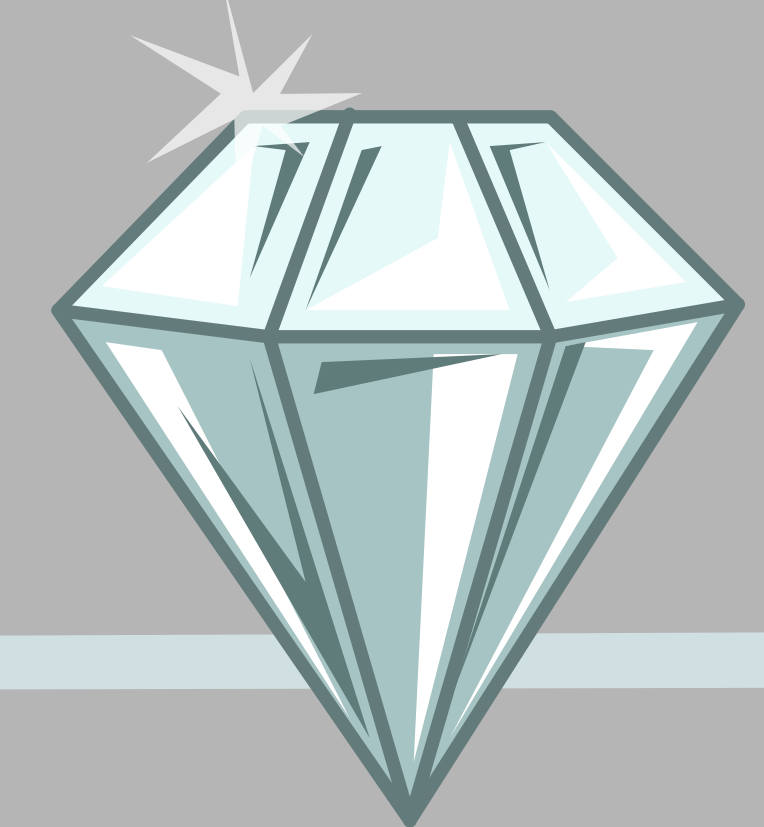
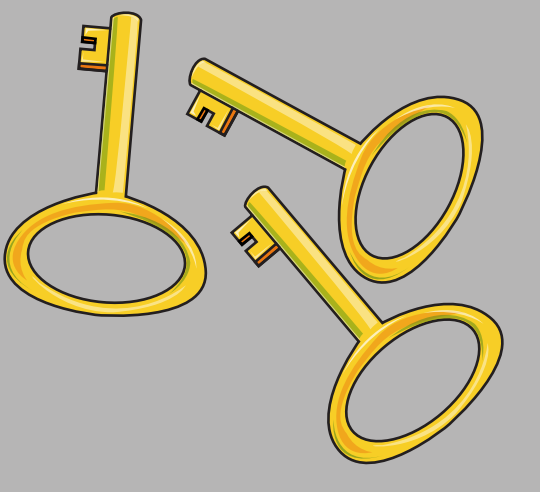


Noir

"Noir" is placed in the darkest night inside the labyrinth were three scientists and an investigator goes mad for power. They all want to control the world with the help of the crystal. So the chase begins...



Introduction

Make strategies and secret alliances. Collect three keys and gather the crystal for absolute power.

"Noir" is an interactive board game with digital attributes. Our group wanted to create a game with classic elements such as goal-oriented game play. The goal of the game is to find three keys, enter the treasure chamber, obtain the crystal and find a way out of the labyrinth. During the game randomly locked walls, fights and tricky questions will obstruct the player. We worked with two main questions in mind:

- How does a game convey the element of constant choice and change to the players?
- How will a player react when faced with constant obstacles from the game itself but also from other players?

Design process – inspirations and mock-up

We started by looking at different games that have affected us and from there we chose different parts that we would like to incorporate into a new game concept: a game where the player can affect the surface of the board to fit their own needs and preferably disrupt the other player's strategies. The first inspiration we got was from a game called "The Amazing Labyrinth", which almost every one of us remembered from our childhood. This game was based on strategies. The part that we felt was missing from this game was the three dimensional feeling as well as the tangible part. Our motivations for making the game board constantly change when the game is being played were that the game would avoid being monotonous and therefore create new experiences.

During our brainstorm we felt that something was missing. We then started to think about how we should make the players move around and what the player's goal should be. We continued playing different games to get more inspiration. One game that had some interesting details was "Dungeon quest". The main purpose of this game is to get to the treasure chamber and beware of the hidden traps around the game board. So we started to develop a game for four players that are going for the same goal on a game board that changes every time the player makes a move. To get one key you will have to get to a specific coordinate and answer a question. This part of the game we got some inspiration from the game TP (Trivial Pursuit). The questions have three alternatives like in TP.

When building the mock-up we decided to only make one. From this one we would have the chance to change different aspects of the game. When creating our mock-up we decided to use materials such as cardboard and paper. The only main concern with our cardboard prototype was the lack of enhancement of the walls which we instead used small pins with the colours red, green, yellow, blue and transparent. This made it a little difficult to see clearly which patterns were free and sometimes was a bit confusing if every colour meant something special.

"This is like a personal vendetta"

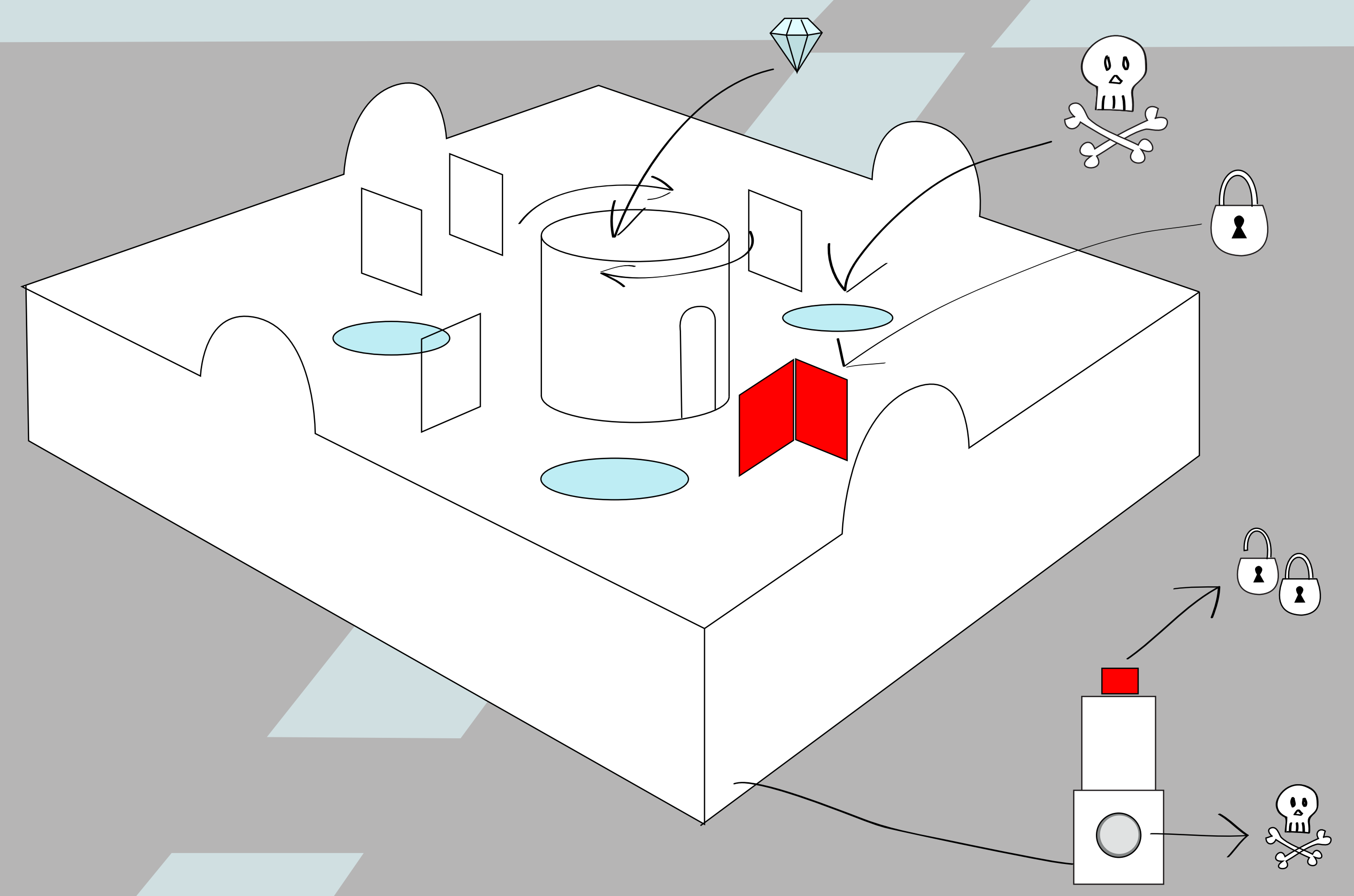
When play testing our game we discovered that although a majority of our test players enjoyed other forms of games or were not a fan of strategies they enjoyed the chasing part and the different twist and turns that our game board could offer. In our first tests we chose a group of people that knew each other. This made it easier for them to start chasing each other and battle for keys. There were no intimacies or apologies for the different actions they made. When we later on chose a group of strangers they were more concern on getting to their key position and collecting the diamond and therefore avoid battles. Although we had good reactions on the goal and different part of the game we were lacking on the digital feedback. Through all the tests it was us who predicted were the fixed walls would be and then we kept it like that during the whole game session. Since we were missing the digital part in the beginning we compromised by inserting bonus cards where the players had more freedom to battle with each other. Later on when everything was on its place we decided to keep the bonus cards because it revealed to be a very important part of the strategy and good way to interact with the digital part.

Game rules

The game begins when the detachable walls have been put up on the board to create a labyrinth. During a round a player has to lift one wall and place it somewhere else on the board before they can make their move. A piece can move until a wall block its route. Every player receives a card with a position that can be found on the board – this is where their key is hidden. When a player reaches their destination they will have to answer a question correctly to earn a key. During the game the players can challenge each other in order to steal keys and to use for their own purposes. There are Bonus-seals on the board and when a player reaches one of these they receive a Bonus-card. The cards can contain helpful or disruptive information. There are also traps on the game board that are triggered through the Bonus-cards. If a player is standing on a trap he or she will lose all their keys and be forced to start over.

Digital interaction

Our first ideas in how to implement the transmedia aspect in our assignment involved small LCD screens in front of each player where the questions for the keys, the keys coordinates and a digital game leader would appear. After our first game test on our paper mock-up we quickly realized that the LCD screens would feel too much like we were trying to push in extra materials that weren't needed and could be an interruption during the game. We collected all the responses that we had gotten from our game test and started discussing how to otherwise use transmedia. Instead of LCDs we made it our top priority to insure that the players could play the game over and over and still get the feeling that they game had more to give. One thing that we did to make the game feel new was to randomize blocked walls to keep people from always using the same strategy. This also incorporated the luck factor into game that strategy games normally lack. To give the players the ability to randomize the walls didn't just hinder "super" strategies but made it able to turn absolute loss into a possible victory. We also made digital traps as a new element in the game to raise the surprise factor and keep players on their toes while playing.



Conclusion

"Noir" became a game where the players invested time and interest because of the strategy element and possibility to obstruct other players. With the digital enhancements this could be experienced more visually. The constant change of the game board layout gives a variety of new ways of player experiences.

