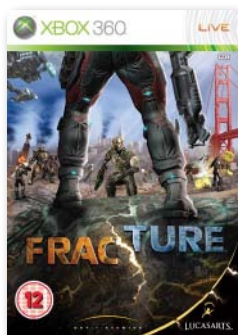


ANYTHING BUT GROUND-BREAKING

FRACTURE

"For a new IP I think that we've done a great job of evoking in people's minds that it's a game of [*Gears of War's*] calibre." It's quite unfortunate that LucasArts producer Shara Miller decided to draw attention to *Fracture* – a game that once graced the cover of even the most venerated magazines – by comparing it with both *Resistance* and *Gears of War*, games that even today still beat LucasArts' Christmas hope in every possible way. On the other hand her comment is a piece of clever spin; recalling certain recent classics of the action genre doesn't exactly involve a great leap of the critical imagination when your game does little but steal from them with barely a flicker of embarrassment.

The ability to change the surrounding terrain is *Fracture's* sole attempt at innovation, of putting some distance between itself and its greater rivals. Like, for example, the power to change time in *TimeShift*, it's a smart, headline-grabbing idea in principle that plays a rather less significant role in practice. Ostensibly designed to add a degree of strategy to firefights and a foundation for some (often obscure) puzzles, too often use of the Entrencher – the weapon that creates such havoc with the ground – is limited to certain areas, while the effects on the terrain are too neat to feel like anything more significant than a gimmick. Building mounds of dirt as defence works, but only because it's too often the default position given the regular absence of cover and any form of duck-and-shoot mechanic.



FORMAT REVIEWED

Xbox 360

OTHER FORMATS

PlayStation 3

PUBLISHER

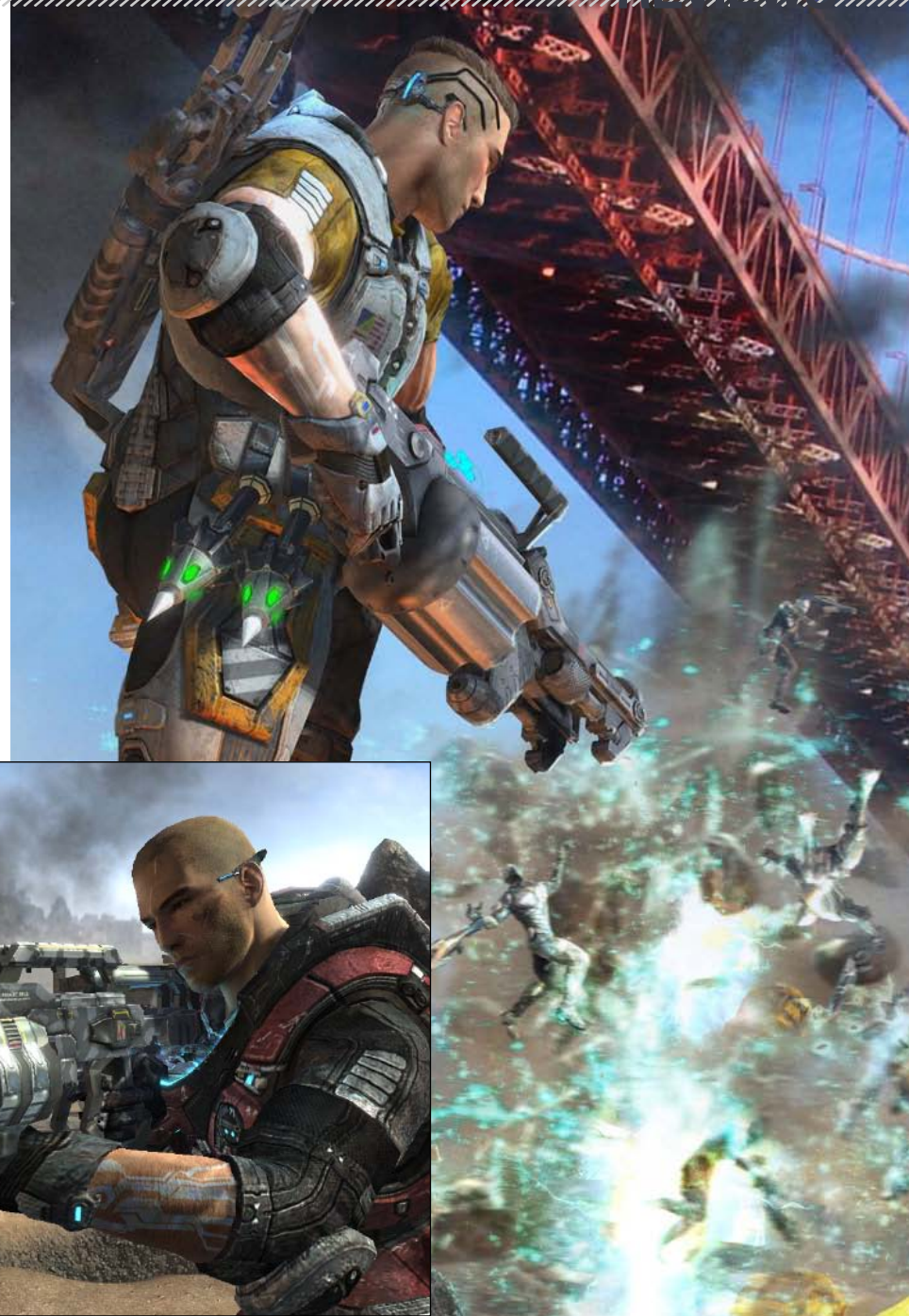
LucasArts

DEVELOPER

Day 1 Studios

REVIEWED BY

Zoheir Beig





It's the developer's way of forcing you to experience their fancy new technology, but the result is apathy-inducing at best.

In fact the one game this writer was reminded of repeatedly was not Epic's masterwork (far from it) but the grand folly even die-hard PS3 owners would soon rather forget: *Haze*. The similarities exist not just with inconsequential selling points (Nectar anyone?) but the tedium and technical laziness of the whole affair. Gunplay lacks any tension, a victim of odd balance and poor level design (even *Army of Two* was stronger in this department), while the art design is horribly bland, completely failing to evoke the supposed U.S. location (one hopes the forthcoming sequel to *Resistance* fares better in this respect). Even the cutscenes, an area we'd have expected a title with the Star Wars seal of approval to excel in, are poor and do little to illuminate or make interesting an already muddled narrative.

All that said, if you are a particularly undiscerning gamer with a sudden, inexplicable desire to wallow in the most average of this year's



titles then there could well be something here for you. The score is decent, the physics are impressive if not exactly revelatory, and the whole affair is certainly competent enough, if utterly uninvolving. Is that really good enough though? No, of course not. In its shameless appropriation of other games *Fracture* is similar to the likes of *Dark Sector* and *Dead Space*, fellow 2008 releases that exist within a set of rules and generic expectations that will be recognisable to any gamer.

However, unlike those examples, LucasArts has failed to release a game that can be enjoyed and respected on its own merits. The whole enterprise lacks any finesse or charm to transcend influence. The one attempt at uniqueness – the *Entrencher* – is a flop. And with, at the time of writing, just two weeks to go until Epic unleash their sequel to *Gears of War*, it's hard to see what reason *Fracture* has to exist.

VERDICT ★★☆☆☆