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Wet

Publisher: TBA

A2M

PS3/360

US Release: 2009

UK Release: 2009

As one of the many Sierra titles believed not to have survived the merger between Vivendi Games and Activision, few could be blamed for not noticing Wet's loss when far more shouted-about titles – such as Brutal Legend and Ghostbusters – were cut loose.

But with Wet being developer A2M's grand coming out into the world of original IP after many years of largely producing forgettable (if well received by their target market) cartoon licences, the company wasn't so willing to give it up. The title is now set for a release 'sometime in 2009', despite no publisher as yet, and A2M was eager to show off its title at this year's Montreal International Game Summit, with new (or more apparent) Grindhouse-inspired styling.

Lara Croft always hid her psychopathic leanings under the veneer of an English rose, but Wet's 'problem-fixer' Rubi is the Kill Bill ideal taken to extremes: a one-woman Fox Force Five who performs her tasks with merciless glee. "She lives in a junkyard, she drinks beer," says David Lightbrown, senior artistic technical director.

"The environments are extremely destructible and she will destroy them. We want the player to leave them in a shambles, to show that Rubi has done her worst. She leaves a swathe of destruction everywhere she goes."

She does this in what A2M hopes to be an acrobatic shooter. "In games before, you could shoot or perform acrobatics. We're trying to merge the two," Lightbrown explains. "You can shoot from any position, while you're spinning on a pole, running up a wall, sliding, jumping off an enemy. We want to give the player the freedom to do that."

Though it might sound like territory that Devil May Cry has been king of for years, it's about rewarding acrobatics for their own sake while going about the business of killing rather than DMC's combo-based approach. It combines into a system that recalls Jet Set Radio, with the heavily arena-based level design developed to offer what A2M calls 'style paths' – ideal tracks through rooms and enemies that allow you to chain together kills and acrobatics for maximum excitement.

"We've tried to create a visual language to show the paths to the player without being too restrictive, and they do branch, so you can build your own individual combos," continues Lightbrown.

This freedom is enhanced by A2M's unusual decision to combine auto lock-on shooting with free-look shooting, with the left and right triggers controlling the respective arms. "With one arm Rubi automatically targets the biggest threat, and with the other you can free aim," Lightbrown explains. "When you start to play you might rely on the auto lock-on while performing acrobatic moves, but as you get more comfortable with it you can start to pick off enemies, performing headshots or disarming them; after all, ?Rubi has two arms, so she might as well use them."

Ultimately, of course, it's the controls on which Wet will live or die: though the game already features alluring acrobatics and heady visual carnage, controlling Rubi will need to make you feel as good as it looks.

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