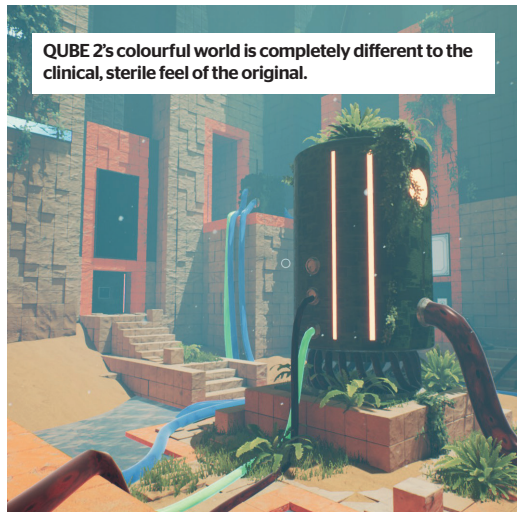
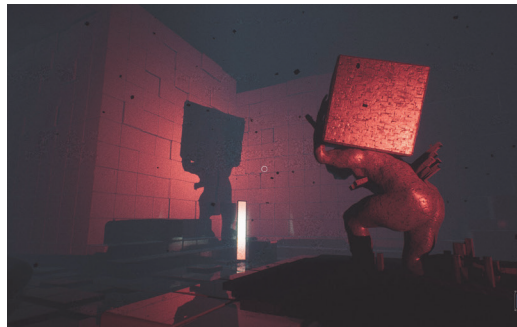


GM Review

The Final Verdict!



QUBE 2's colourful world is completely different to the clinical, sterile feel of the original.



Format PC (reviewed), XO, PS4 Publisher Trapped Nerve Games Developer Toxic Games ETA Out now Players 1

QUBE 2

It might look simple, but this puzzle game boxes clever

This sequel makes its predecessor feel like little more than a prototype. It looks better, sounds better, and it's far more imaginative. From a simple foundation of three coloured blocks it builds head-scratching puzzles that stump you for 20 minutes - and then make you feel like a genius when you stumble on the solution.

You play amnesiac architect Amelia Cross, who is stranded inside an alien structure. The only way to get out is, naturally, to solve puzzles using a magic sci-fi glove. In each level there are squares that you can paint with a wave of your hand. Blue will cause anything that hits it to bounce off, green will produce a cube that can move around the level, and orange creates a short column that can extend and retract, which is useful for pushing other objects around.

The game layers new mechanics on top of these blocks constantly. You'll soon

be controlling magnets, swivelling walls, flinging yourself over gaps, coating blocks in oil and skidding them across the floor, then setting metallic balls on fire so they can bash through walls.

Twinkle twinkle

The pacing is perfect: each new idea is introduced slowly and then tested to its limit, and the game will regularly recall mechanics from previous sections. Eventually you're juggling five or six different systems. Early on reaching a switch might be as easy as bouncing off a blue square and across a gap. But later, you might have to cover a green cube in oil, rebound it off a blue block into a magnet, jump on top of the block, and then reverse the magnet so it fires you out like a cannon ball.

The solutions are clean and elegant, and they're challenging enough to be satisfying, especially later on. We spent a good 25 minutes poking at one puzzle until we figured out what how to beat it (a combination of oil, fire, and a mini green fort), and came away with a huge smile.

It looks fantastic, too. The original was all white walls and claustrophobic rooms, but here you're moving through sci-fi ruins, polished laboratories and miniature gardens full of colour. Have your screenshot button ready.

Each chapter consists of a hub with multiple areas coming off it, and completing an individual area will feed power back to the centre. Beat all the rooms and you'll ascend to the next hub. It would've been nice if the game mixed up this structure occasionally, but it's a serviceable way to move you from puzzle to puzzle.

QUBE 2 tries to tie its challenges together with a story that, unfortunately, takes itself far too seriously. Its explanation for why exactly you're doing the puzzles is barely coherent, and Amelia regularly makes nonsensical leaps of reasoning to explain what's going on. We simply didn't care when the game asked us to make a moral decision at the end.

In most games that would be a big deal, but because the narrative takes up so little of your attention we're willing to forgive it here. We'll forget QUBE 2's story in a hurry, but the buzz we got from solving its tasks - and from surfing a green cube across a line of reversed magnets - will stay with us for the rest of the year. ■

GM LOVES...

- ✓ Puzzle solutions are imaginative and really test your noggin.
- ✓ A steady stream of new mechanics keeps things fresh.
- ✓ Visually the game world is varied and frequently beautiful.

GM HATES...

- ✗ The forgettable story does little but distract.

Better than...



QUBE
The original game was a smart idea packed into three hours, but this sequel blows it out of the water, and it's twice as long too.

Worse than...



Portal
Puzzle perfection. It's short, but it doesn't waste a single second, and it's hilarious to boot. Its sequel also takes things to new heights.

NEED TO KNOW

Your alien captors sure like switches, they're central to nearly every puzzle. In fact, testing each one in turn at the start is a good way to figure out what you're supposed to do.

GM JUDGEMENT

84%

The story isn't much, but despite a lot of block shifting, QUBE 2's puzzles never stop feeling fresh.
Samuel Horti



"WE SPENT 25 MINUTES POKING AT ONE PUZZLE UNTIL WE FIGURED OUT WHAT TO DO TO BEAT IT"

Why did the cube cross the road? To prove he wasn't a square.