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MA Project Proposal

"An investigation into the role & skills of artists in the video game industry"

A game artist is a practitioner who works alongside art directors and project managers to develop art assets for concepts and ideas that do not yet physically exist. It is a form of "illustration" that differers from other forms greatly, as it requires a higher level of finish and development than the fast turn around of editorial or most book illustration and is commonly heavily digital. Sometimes, in the case of a 3D artist, common practices such as drawing are hardly involved, as it is a process akin to sculpture.

Researching into this field of study is important to me, as I wish to gain a greater understanding of how the artists work, and the kind of work they produce. I also wish to learn about how they function as part of a team unit. Ultimately I wish to understand what a career as game artist is, and importantly, what it demands.

Once have obtained the result of this research, I will be able to tailor a program of work suitable to produce a portfolio of my best work, whilst also keeping it relevant to the appropriate industry & employers.

The audience for my work will primarily be future employers. However, I also wish to expose my work to other graduate peers from other parts of the country in the hope of getting involved in game development projects which will boost my employability. Due to being a mainly digital artist, I will not require too many physical resources, however, it will be important to have support for custom brushes and graphics tablets on any University Mac's I need to use, as well as specialist software such as zbrush and 3D Studio Max. Otherwise I will have to work constantly outside of the university.

Video Game art production became an interest of mine over the course of my BA hons degree in Graphic Design which I recently completed. Whilst not entirely relevant to the discipline of graphic design, it became an interest of mine over the course of a 6 week project where I produced concept art (often used in the games industry) for a client on a weekly basis. These experiences, married to my life long passion for video games, have got me to the point I am currently at.

As a proposal of my project, I intend to engage in the following methods of research gathering and practice;

Research;

Attending key UK games industry events, including;

Gamesindustry.biz Career fair,   London, Tuesday 28th October.

This event offers the opportunity to engage personally with professional members of the games industry, and is focused distinctly on employment. There is also opportunity to engage in portfolio workshops at the event.

GameCity Three,   Nottingham, Thursday 30th October - Sunday 1st November.

GameCity focuses more on the culture surrounding video games, whilst also providing insight into games production. This event offers the possibility of contact with members of the industry.

At these events I intend to open dialogues with industry professionals and current practitioners that I can utilise later in my studies and my career.

I also intend to join numerous online societies for digital art production such as *CG society* and *Mod DB,* where I can engage in ongoing dialogue online.

Possible practice outcomes;

By engaging with other creatives, I intend to get involved, as closely as possible, with a project close to the methods of industry practice. The primary way to do this, is to be involved with a game "modification" team. Failing this, I will engage in a self briefed project based on the advice I receive from people within the industry. This will involve me creating artwork on a regular basis, as I develop and produce characters and environments. This offers me the opportunity to become involved with people from many other disciplines.

This will result in the production of a number of art assets appropriate of video game design, which could range from 2D concept work right through to 3D modelling and animation.