Tom Velebny

Technical Artist

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I'm a Technical Artist with almost two decades of experience in the games industry, the majority of which has been spent in Lead or Senior Artist roles. Beginning of 2022 I made the shift to full time Tech Art.

I've always enjoyed finding solutions to complex technical challenges and automating the tedious parts of the process. Discovering Houdini has been a revelation that combines all of the above and allows me to create sophisticated tools to empower artists.

I have also hired, managed and mentored a team of artists and outsourced art production, but what motivates me most is learning new techniques, workflows and tools as I am 100% self-taught, an expert-on-demand, if you will.

Skills

- Tool creation in Houdini, Unreal and Python
- Scripting, automation, art pipelines
- Prototyping, research, wearing multiple hats
- Virtual reality, UI/UX, photogrammetry, optimization

Software Proficiency

- VEX, Python, UE Blueprints, MaxScript, JavaScript
- Unreal 4 & 5, Unity, Real Virtuality, RenderDoc
- Houdini, Houdini Engine, Maya, 3D Studio Max, ZBrush
- Substance Painter, Substance Designer, Photoshop

Professional experience

As I have recently switched roles from Art to Tech Art I would like to highlight the ways in which I have been functioning as a Tech Artist throughout my career. You'll find the relevant tasks under each role *highlighted like this*.

Yaak Technologies (2024 - Present)

Working as a Senior Technical Artist on the simulations team, building procedural world creation pipelines in Houdini and Unreal 5, tailored for an immersive VR experience.

Smilegate Barcelona (2022 - 2024)

Worked as a Tech Artist, creating tools in Houdini and Unreal 5, while also researching and prototyping new technologies required for an unannounced AAA open world game.

Bohemia Interactive Simulations (2021 - 2022)

Worked as a Lead Environment Artist, engaged in populating the world for the whole-earth simulator VBS Blue used by all major armies around the globe.

Force Field Entertainment (2019 - 2021)

Worked as a Senior Artist on National Geographic Explore VR (2019) for Oculus Quest, a game that lets you experience the highly detailed environments of Antarctica and Machu Picchu in VR.

- Responsible for the majority of the Hand UI and Camera UI:
  - Layout, styling, iconography
  - *VR interactions through Blueprints*
- Helped brainstorm various UX systems and gameplay mechanics
- *Profiled and optimized performance using RenderDoc and a custom HLOD tool*
- Created new models based on existing photogrammetry assets
- Acted as an interim lead on multiple occasions

Further responsibilities included working on internal projects and demos for publishers, using Unreal Engine for the Oculus Quest 1 and 2. My role had a wide range from complex asset creation to UI/UX or *shader work.*

Since 2020 I have been advocating for, and using, Houdini and Houdini Engine in Virtual Reality pipelines on tasks such as procedural modelling, terrain creation and asset optimization.

Sony Interactive Entertainment Europe (2016 - 2019)

Worked as a Senior Artist on an unannounced title for Playstation VR at Sony, Manchester, UK.

- Visual design, prototyping, modelling and texturing of enemy vehicles and hero assets
- *Created tools for converting Unreal landscapes into multiple meshes, optimizing and merging them with custom road networks using procedural modelling in Houdini*
- Iterated on various UI systems including HUD, minimap and inventory

Bohemia Interactive (2015)

Worked externally as a Senior Artist contractor on a civilian vehicle model for the ArmA III Apex expansion, from scratch to finish, with a great degree of autonomy.

Bohemia Interactive Simulations (2007 - 2015)

Produced and managed production of artwork for multiple releases of the serious game Virtual Battlespace (VBS) used as training software by all major armies around the world including the US Army, US Marine Corps, UK MoD and others. *Acted as a Tech Artist, creating tools, scripts and pipelines for the art team.* Helped the company grow from 10 to 250 employees in 6 offices worldwide.

Lead Artist (2010 - 2015), Senior Artist (2009), Artist (2007 - 2008)

- Created models, textures, materials and set standards to be followed by other artists
- Reviewed and approved all artwork from internal and outsourced artists
- *Checked all artwork to be technically optimized for performance according to strict specs*
- *Wrote scripts for model error checking and automation of the most-performed tasks*
- Taught and documented the specifics of VBS artwork creation
- Proposed solutions and provided time estimates for customer contracts
- Cooperated with other department leads to meet goals and deadlines

- Managed a team of artists and project schedules
- Managed outsourcing companies including contracts and deliveries
- Interviewed and hired new artists
- *Tested and improved proprietary tools used by artists*
- *Maintained content library of more than 5000 models*

Bohemia Interactive (2005 - 2006)

Worked as an artist on the sequel to the award-winning game Operation Flashpoint . Created city environments from start to finish, utilizing and refining the proprietary system of destructible buildings. Modelled and textured objects ranging from props to entire houses, *wrote scripts for 3DSMax.* Took photos of real life environments later used as references and texture source material.

Various Companies (1998 - 2005)

Worked as a graphic designer for various companies in different roles. Created online advertising campaigns. Designed and *coded webpages, flash interactive animations* and ad banners. Defined and maintained the look of an online news portal. Worked as a compositor on an animated cartoon movie. Played, reviewed and wrote about computer games for a print magazine.

Games Credited

- National Geographic Explore VR (2019)
- ArmA III Apex (2016)
- VBS3 (2015)
- ArmA III (2013)
- VBS2 v2.00 (2012)
- Take On Helicopters (2011)
- ArmA II: Operation Arrowhead (2010)
- Virtual Battlespace 2 (2007)
- Operation Flashpoint 2 (not published)