

James Nicholson



Gameplay Designer
Narrative Designer
Level Designer

Contact

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Skills

Mission Design
Narrative Design
Gameplay Design
Level Design
Blocking Out
Set-Dressing
Agile with Scrum
Creative Writing

Software and Engines

Unreal Engine 4 (UE4)
Unity 2D and 3D
Twine
Final Draft
Narrative Spreadsheets
Creation Kit
Perforce
Hansoft
JIRA
Confluence
Adobe Photoshop
Adobe Illustrator
Google G Suite
Hack N Plan

Hobbies

Fiction Writing
Screenwriting
D&D
Mythology
Film
History
Tennis

Awards

Quarterfinalist - 2018
Screencraft Pilot Launch
TV Script Contest

Shipped Projects

Content Designer | *High On Life* | Unreal Engine 4 (PC/XB) Dec 2022

Squanch Games | 65 Developers | 1.3 Years

- Scripted first full bounty mission of the game (Vertical Slice to Street).
- Scripted primary narrative mission between Act 2 and 3 (First Playable to Street).
- Refined and iterated scripting for Narrative Side Content (Alpha to Street).
- Tested full game with different player styles (Gameplay Complete to Street).

Content Designer | *High On Knife DLC* | Unreal Engine 4 (PC/XB) Oct 2023

SMU Guildhall | 65 Developers | 8 Months

- Created initial scripting for first half of main DLC mission (Pre-Production to Alpha).
- Scripted Cheers parody side content (Pre-Production to Street).
- Refined and troubleshooted side content on the main planet (Alpha to Street).
- Tested full DLC with different player styles (First Playable to Street).
- Pitched gameplay and narrative moments in Confluence wiki.

Level Designer | *Trikaya* | Unreal Engine 4 (PC) Dec 2020

SMU Guildhall | 10 Developers | 6 Months

- Iterated on gameplay and puzzle designs during preproduction to decide which magic elements players could use and how they influence the world.
- Built 2 out of the 3 main levels of the game in Unreal 4.
- Created and molded desert surrounding the level with Unreal 4 landscape editor.

Game Design Projects

Thesis | *Gamifying the Truth Through Level Design* | Skyrim Mod May 2021

SMU Guildhall | Single Developer | 12 Months

- Conducted research into use of deception in environmental storytelling and dialogue.
- Built large Skyrim house interior, complex quest scripting for detective mystery.
- Wrote 600 lines of dialogue, created scripting for investigating and gathering clues.

Level Designer | *The Ones Who Fear The Gods* | Fallout 4 Mod May 2020

SMU Guildhall | Single Developer | 4 Months

- Created new enemy type (Psyker) and new weapon (neural grenade) using Papyrus scripting and Fallout 4 Creation Kit tools.
- Structured and wrote story outlines, then created branching quest with over 350 lines of dialogue and different endings depending on player choice.
- Built and decorated 1 interior cell and 1 exterior, integrated both into Fallout 4 world.

Education

SMU Guildhall | Plano, TX May 2021

Master of Interactive Technology in Digital Game Development: Level Design

The University of Texas at Austin — Austin, TX May 2016

Bachelor of Arts: Plan II Honors (Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences Major)

Certificates: Digital Arts & Media—Bridging Disciplines Program; Creative Writing

Work History

Puzzle Designer Apr 2024 – Present

Kintsugi Interactive — *Remote*

- Troubleshoot preexisting game mechanic problems and consolidated documentation.
- Worked in Unity, G Suite, and Hack N Plan to design and collab with teammates.
- Stepped up to write a new script for the demo when we lost the narrative designer.

Conference Associate Mar 2024

Game Developers Conference — *San Francisco, CA*

- Assisted guests and worked behind the scenes to make GDC 2024 awesome.

Associate Content Designer Oct 2021 – Sep 2023

Squanch Games — *Remote*

- Scripted quests and gameplay in assigned levels, acting as the ambassador for each level and the player's experience therein.
- Primarily worked in Unreal Blueprints, the world editor, and company-specific tools.
- Pitched gameplay and story moments, maintained documentation in company wiki.