

Morgan Ogburn

Art Director / Concept Artist / UX / Design Research / Prototyping

Portfolio: www.morganogburn.com

SUMMARY:

User Experience and Visual Design Skills

- UX / Using emergent systems to drive user engagement
- Visual design and interaction patterns
- User scenario ideation and prototyping
- Information hierarchy / user emotional motivation
- Traditional UI theory and application
- Game design theory and application: narrative, system, free-to-play.

Games & Film Skills

- Art direction, art outsource management, and project management
- Stylistic expert in a wide range of game genres and types, from FPS to casual.
- Prototyping and world building. Single and multiplayer level design, white boxing, play testing, scene propagation
- Technical expert in art pipeline design and optimization
- Conceptual design, storyboarding and illustration specializing in environmental and creature design.
- Lighting for games, film and cinematics with a focus mood, story and color beats
- Compositing and digital matte painting
- Hard surface modeling of environments and objects
- Digital sculpting of characters and creatures
- Texturing for film and game assets, including physically based materials
- Content design and story development including story and script breakdown
- Team management, training, and motivation. Interdepartmental / cross-discipline communication
- Avid self-educator and autodidact: stays knowledgeable of current and upcoming tools and techniques. Ongoing interest and exploration of proceduralism for games and film. Special interest in real-time dynamic global illumination.

Professional Experience

Sr. Concept Artist / UX Design Researcher, Microsoft

May 2016 – Present, Redmond, WA

- Part of multi-discipline internal creative team innovating and designing novel user experiences for desktop, VR and HoloLens.
- Create designs, illustrations, storyboards, 3D prototypes and wireframes ideating UX based in emergent-system game theory, using intrinsic motivators such as curiosity, delight, and meaning to drive user engagement and enhance human effectiveness in complex immersive environments. Part of my work is to articulate defensible rationale for this approach for development teams
- Articulated a strategic UX initiative informed by game system design, Semiotics, and cross-cultural studies arguing for personal meaning, multiple points of user entry, flexible and delightful UI, optimization for multiple pathways of cognitive processing.
- Applying emergent UX design principles to create visualizations and UX strategy using a rule based system to reduce user cognitive load, drive engagement, and enhance a sense of personal meaning.
- Designed core UX strategy of a new consumer-facing application. Successfully argued for the approach with articulated strategy visualized by illustrations, wireframes, and distributed HUD interaction patterns. Created a range of visualizations ranged from abstract and data-driven to playful and emotional. Contributed to user research planning. The Project Managers were able to successfully use artifacts to receive product approval.
- Shader look development aligning the Microsoft design language, Neon, to 3D space
- Demonstrated the value of procedural art tools to an internal team by creating a 3D, immersive, procedural visualization and designed an AR experience centered on a volumetric canvas.
- Navigation and interaction patterns in HoloLens. Design and modeling of assets, scripting interaction using visual coding tools
- Contributed to and created visual color indexes for navigating virtual terrain.
- Logo design, keyword analysis and visual design.

Art Director, Gameloft

October 2014 – September 2015, Seattle, WA

- Hired as third employee for the new Seattle studio. Participated interviewing the other directors and team.
- Created concept art, one sheets, layouts for Gameloft's intensive internal pitch process leading to a successful game green light in three months. Helped create overall pitch strategy.
- Worked with the other directors on game design and implementation for the free-to play mobile games market
- Built the art department for Gameloft's new Seattle studio through recruiting and community outreach. Created concept art and modeling art tests for artist candidates.
- Established relationships and maintained communication with New York and Paris art directors.
- Mentored and trained junior artists.
- Used a holistic and supportive management style focused on continuous, incremental improvement in key success and effectiveness indicators to help artists meet their full potential.

- Established art pipeline and infrastructure.
- Created artistic vision and defensible rationale for the artistic strategy.
- Light, rendered, animated and composited art assets for final production.
- Concepted UI, establishing look and feel, and rationale.
- Developed and created particle and special VFX, smoke, fire, muzzle flash, tank treads, wind for trees, etc.

Art Director / Outsource Art Director / Lead Artist, 3G Studios

July 2013 – August 2014, Reno, NV

Original IP (PC / Steam), Diamonds and Doubloons (IGT), Kash Kart (IGT), Fish Fortune (IGT)

Managed the internal and external teams for mobile and casual games developer.

- Used principles of Agile Development to foster a communicative and collaborative workplace.
- Learned how games employing social casino user experience models optimize user engagement and retention.
- Outsourcing Art Direction and management: Improved quality, brought in on time and on budget all art created by external teams.
- Created briefs with concept art and written descriptions providing clear written and visual benchmarks.
- Polish and Finishing: created paint-over of existing levels for internal team, enhancing level composition, color and light balance.
- Prototyping: Whiteboxed game levels and exported to engine for playtesting and refinement.
- Tools research and deployment: Researched and implanted needed tools for Unity. Worked with engineering to test tools. These include: a spline animation system with SDK, node-based material editor, wind deformation shader for foliage, vertex-paint plugin to blend maps on imported terrain, water-shader system, Allegorithmic Substance Designer, and more.
- Unity Optimization: Lead small forensics team to benchmark variables resulting in 30 FPS on mobile hardware, improved art assets, lighting, and improved look and feel to game.
- Introduced new art tools to team. Created pipeline with combo of tools allowing quicker turnaround of environmental art assets.
- Polish and Finishing: created paint-over of existing levels for internal team, enhancing level composition, color and light balance.
- Created pitch-art illustrations for proposals of new games to be used by sales team.
- Production: As lead artist modeled, UV, and textured game assets, developed shaders.
- Created a VFX rendering and compositing pipeline built around V-Ray and NUKE.

Art Manager & Lighting and Look Development Artist, HitPoint Studios

January – March 2013, Amherst, MA

- Managed art pipeline on *Disney Fairies* mobile game including look development, art tools and art pipeline.
- Managed relationship with external development studio, overseeing additional lighting, shaders, animation and look development.
- Responsible for lighting, look development and art pipeline. Fixed memory leaks in renderer allowing completion of images
- Reorganized existing pipeline and created new lighting, rendering and compositing pipeline using mental ray and NUKE.
- Created shaders for a variety of different materials and surface types from metallic to translucent leaf and vegetation shader.
- Demonstrated a proper pipeline gives a rendered image achieving 80% of final look. Previously studio only got 20% of final look.
- Created lighting and color beats for 3d scenes; lighted and rendered scenes for game.
- Assisted 3d modelers with improved tools for modeling, scene layout and propagation.
- Taught principles of lighting in a physically accurate, linear colorspace in mental ray to artists for future projects.

Art Director, CREAT Studios

July – December 2013, Canton, MA

Labyrinth Legends (Sony, PS3) Germinator (Sony, PS3), two unreleased games (Sony, PS3 and VITA)

- Hired to develop original IP for the casual games market for PlayStation PSN, PlayStation VITA and mobile markets.
- Explored Free-to-Play game design models to explore user engagement and retention.
- Turned around project in crisis by implementing Agile production methodology, improving internal process and culture of art team.
- Drove a collaborative, cross-discipline internal studio culture that increased productivity and enhanced creativity.
- Mentored artist and introduced new tools and processes.
- Used production-proven creative thinking techniques to develop product features and original concepts.
- Worked closely with the design department to envision game play scenarios and features for console and mobile games.
- Channeled this activity into action items art teams and production schedule.
- Developed new characters, UI design, environmental designs for two games.
- Designed and produced logo for internal publishing division.
- Work closely with programming department to optimize art assets, test and develop tools, and maximize available game memory.
- Was responsible for researching game engines meeting the specific publishing requirements of the studio.
- Was part of the team responsible for interviewing potential new hires.

Game Content Designer & Art Production Consultant, Digital Armada

February – April 2012, Boston, MA

- Contract for unannounced simulation for the U.S. Military
- Created game design documentation and project structure for art and animation production.
- Researched competitive products, acquired and tested similar, existing marketplace products and wrote marketplace analysis.
- Researched and reviewed military footage, medical texts on triage, nursing, anatomy as a basis for scenarios.
- Detailed an initial scenario with setting descriptions, objectives, interaction, obstacles, NPCs, and meta-information overlay.
- Created structure for player database backend required for storing and retrieving test results.
- Detailed animation tree for character actions.

- Provided detailed bibliography listing of all sources, references, including recommendations for specific review of real- life technical information and scenarios for game.

Concept Artist & 3D Artist, 3G Studios

November – December 2011, Boston, MA

- Contract artist for all concept and art production on *Skate or Die 2* for iPhone
- Created all concept art, modeled all environmental art and props.
- Negotiated initial contact and created Art Asset List & Production Schedule.
- Collaborated on Look Development and shaders for the game and provided multiple design options.
- Maintained prompt and professional communications throughout the span of the contract.

Production Designer & Art Director, UTV Ignition Entertainment

January – July 2011, Austin, TX

Unreleased \$10 mil multiplayer FPS (UTV: Xbox 360, PS3, and PC)

Worked in 4 areas: Visual Development, Art Direction, Lighting & Outsource Art Direction, as follows:

- Primary responsibilities required establishing the look and feel of the game world. Duties included concept paintings for environmental, vehicle and creature design initiatives. Created original concept paintings, mood painting, game level whitebox paintovers, color and lighting beats for numerous game levels.
- Provided art direction for local and remote art teams through verbal direction, painted and drawn sketches and filtered reference materials. Wrote detailed art direction briefs covering multiple aspects of the game world.
- Created game level lighting using Unreal's Lightmass enhanced by hand-placed detail lighting to improve the engine's global illumination lighting calculations.
- Created detailed materials and documentation for art outsourcers including descriptive briefs, concept sketches providing visual direction specifics as well, when needed, custom 3d base models to guide the outsourced modeling efforts. Provided frequent feedback and direction through forums and email to outsourcing teams.
- Was part of the team individually responsible for interviewing potential new hires.
- Worked in collaboration with Lead Artist and Creative Director to establish overall game visual design continuity.
- Game was a month ahead of schedule and \$2 million under budget when Ignition closed all three global studios.

Level Artist & Lighting Artist, Critical Mass Interactive

2010, Austin, TX

TRON: Evolution (Disney Interactive: Xbox 360, PS3, PC)

- Level artist working in Unreal Ed scene propagation and layout of art assets and FX to create multiplayer experience.
- Lighting artist on TRON using Beast for Unreal. Created mood with lighting and post based on concept art for the game.
- Art asset creation including matte painting for in-game sprites and modeling original art assets including material creation using Unreal's Material Editor, cleanup-and optimization of art assets.

Senior 3D Artist & Project Manager, Radioactive Labs

2010, Austin, TX

- Hired by Austin studio Radioactive Labs as mental ray expert for lighting and looks (mental ray surface and light shaders).
- Taught classes covering lighting techniques and principals in mental ray, including cinematic approaches to lighting and color theory for storytelling.
- Other tasks included artist management, client interaction, concept design, modeling, and matte painting.
- Modeled and textured characters for unannounced PS3 game title.
- Created realistic characters with normal maps using ZBrush, TopoGun, 3D Coat and Photoshop.
- Responsible for the texturing models (characters, clothing and items).

VFX Art Director / Look Development Supervisor, Studio Nouveau

2004 – 2010, Los Angeles, CA

- Hired as concept artist developing creatures, environments for VFX film for Magnolia Pictures. Promoted to Art Director.
- *Resident Evil 5* (Capcom: Xbox 360, PS3, PC): Game cinematics - Layout, pre-layout and lighting (Capcom engine).
- Concept design, story breakdown for science fiction film clients including VFX design, creature and environmental design.
- Rendering and shader pipeline dev using Houdini's Mantra.
- Modeled characters, creatures, and hard surface objects for film and game clients.
- Modeled for animation: character and creature morph targets for use in proprietary facial animation pipeline.
- Used and contributed to development of proprietary facial animation software, which was originally developed for and used on James Cameron's movie *Avatar*.
- Lighting and shaders in mental ray, Mantra software renders Unity and Capcom game engines.
- Was responsible for scheduling, budgeting and managing art team.

Creative Director/Co-Founder, ThemePark Studios

2001 – present, Austin, TX

- Provided creative consultation, commercial, graphic and web design and Flash animation services to corporate and entertainment clients.
- Creative duties included project conceptualization, execution, and management including initial comps, 3D model creation, and client review and retargeting, completion of final product.
- Management duties included client relations, project management of remote server-side programming teams: handle all sub-contractors and vendors; develop and secure out-source bids.

Senior Artist, Warthog Texas

2002 – 2003, Austin, TX

Lord of the Rings: Shadows of Mordor (PC- Unreleased):

- Art asset production of modeling, texturing of 3d models and creation of CgFX shaders and export of geometry to game engine.
- Responsible for creation and testing of next-gen production pipeline, plus implementation of normal maps and CgFX shaders.
- Introduced software incorporated into the pipeline for normal map generation – including ZBrush 1.3, Kaldera beta and Microwave.

Art Director / Lead Artist, Black Box Studios

1999 – 2000, Austin, TX

- Created matte paintings for animation.
- Produced storyboards and commercial animation for various client projects, including GSD&M's Idea City.
- Created NURBS models of characters for 3d cartoon series.
- Worked with film director Drew Grinestaff, creating and directing CGI for feature film
- Incorporated Renderman Artist Tools into Maya character pipeline for various client projects.

Lead 3D Artist, SpiritWalk Visonering Inc.

1997-1999, Austin, TX

- Responsible for concept design, modeling, cinematic lighting and ensuring appropriate look for all animation projects.
- Provided tools instruction for artists working on feature length CGI films and TV broadcast projects.
- Worked closely with Studio Manager on film and TV projects.

Freelance Artist - Digital

1996-1999, Austin, TX

- Worked on short term contracts for various clients, including illustration, concept art, and graphic design.
- Mastered the tools of digital content creation including development of 3D portfolio.

Concept Artist, Titanic Entertainment (Activision)

1996-1997, Austin, TX

- Filled role as conceptual artist handling all pre-visualization of the game world.
- Was responsible for the concept designs of the various creatures, civilizations, and game units, including weapons and items; contributed writing for game backstory and world design.
- Developed the look and feel of the game world Nimbus for the game *NetStorm*; published by Activision.

Concept Artist & 3D Artist, Origin Systems (Electronic Arts)

1994-1995, Austin, TX

- Hired as a conceptual artist for the design for the 3d game *Bounty Hunter*, part of the *BioForge* Universe
- Responsible for pre-viz of the various environments and NPC's including their cultures, costumes, and technology.
- Used 3DStudio R3 and other tools as a 3D production artist on *Ultima IX*, including 3d and 2d sprite digital art.

Freelance & Comic Artist

1989-1993, Austin, TX

- Illustrated printed covers and stories for published comics and graphics novels
- Learned the principles of visual storytelling, layout, and the visual interpretation of verbal and written content.
- Worked with known writers such as Lewis Shiner, Franz Heinkle and Nancy Collins on comics adaptations of their work
- Nominated for an Eisner Award as part of the book *Weird Business*.

Tools:

- **Game Editors** Unreal Engine 4, Unity 3D, CryEngine V (art and lighting), Capcom's MT Framework (lighting)
- **Lighting / Shading / Rendering** Arnold, mental ray, V-Ray, Mantra, Unreal 4
- **Modeling** Modo, 3dsmax, Maya, Z-Brush, Mudbox
- **Painting & Texturing** Photoshop, Painter, Illustrator, Z-Brush, 3D-Coat, Allegorithmic Substance Designer
- **UV Creation** Modo, Headus UV Layout
- **Retopology** 3d-Coat, TopoGun
- **Animation** Object and camera animation in 3dsMax, Maya. General knowledge of rigging principals and practices.
- **Compositing** Nuke, After Effects (some)

Education and Training:

- University of Texas at Austin, 1990-1993, Fine Arts Major
- Austin Community College, 1988, Computer graphics

Industry Leadership:

- Vice-chair, Austin ACM SIGGRAPH (200 members)
- Event Co-chair, *VFX Masters Series* (Speakers: Sony Pictures Imageworks, Digital Domain, NVIDIA, Troublemaker Studios)

Contact: Cell: 310-948-0812**Email:** Morgan (at) MorganOgburn.com**Portfolio:** www.morganogburn.com