

What would it feel like to live inside a watercolor painting? Would it be messy? The paint constantly in motion, mixing and blending with each other right up to the moment it dries? Then what it would feel like to live inside a black and white inked comic book page? Would it be the opposite of the watercolor world. Rigid and unyielding, the black and white standing defiantly against each other on the page.

It is a concept that I did not give much thought before. My interest in video game art began in fifth grade after receiving the game '*Okami*' as a present that Christmas. It was not the first game I had ever played and yet it was the one from my childhood that had the greatest impact on guiding me to the path to pursuing video game art design as a career. It demonstrated how much the visual language of a game communicated the experience to the player through its emulation of traditional Japanese ink prints.

Throughout my educational career, from my AP Art History class in high school to my undergraduate degree, I have been motivated to learn all forms of art in order to create innovative visual styles.

Because of my undergraduate degree at the University of Colorado Colorado Springs (UCCS), I am familiar with working in an academic environment that simulates an indie game company similar to the master's program offered at the University of Southern Wales. For three semesters, I worked in a team of approximately fifteen people to conceptualize, design and release a commercial game known as *Penguin Noir*, a comedic pinball-inspired platformer. Through this class, I was able to learn hands-on the different stages of video game production and how to work and collaborate in a large team.

The experience was challenging but rewarding. Prior to this class, I had never worked in a team of that size. It forced me out of my comfort zone to work and improve my communication skills as well as my confidence. Not only did this class push me out of my comfort zone in terms of teamwork and communication, but also in my art.

What I found most rewarding from this experience was the opportunity to work with various types of art that I had never done before such as backgrounds, user interface (UI) and tile sets. For this game, the art was inspired by early 1940 comic books such as *Dick Tracy*. It was a unique challenge in learning how to implement this style into game-specific art such as the UI. Although, I had never done UI art prior, I learned through this experience that it was a kind of art that I enjoyed doing because of the challenge of learning how to tie both theme and visual information together in an appealing way.

Throughout my undergraduate experience, I took the opportunity to enroll in several film history courses. Although these classes were not required for my degree program, they have proven to be a beneficial resource that has influenced how I begin to develop inspiration and visual style in game design. From these classes, I developed a deeper understanding of films genres and film techniques such as Dolly zooms and the Rembrandt Effect. What I learned throughout these courses influenced my senior Capstone project.

My senior project for my undergraduate degree was a point-and-click supernatural murder mystery game that was heavily influenced by my appreciation for silent and early sound films.

What I sought to achieve with this project was to emulate the visual style of 1930's films to make the player feel like they were in a film from this era through grayscale art. I incorporated

my interest in both film and film history into the game's design through the utilization of public domain films. These films were used to provide the player with the clues they needed in order to solve the mystery and find the culprit. Although, this project is finished, the process of making a multimedia game has sparked my interest in continuing to develop that idea for future projects.

The projects that I completed during my undergraduate experience helped to further develop my artistic journey but as with any art form, there is plenty more to learn. Continuing my learning on how to better develop an innovative visual style that not only looks unique but serves to emphasize the game's mechanics is the primary reason why I am applying for the Games Enterprise Master Program at the University of Southern Wales.