Avalanche Studios

Avalanche Studios is a video game developer based in Stockholm , Sweden . It was founded in March 2003 by Christofer Sundberg and Linus Blomberg . Avalanche Studios focuses on developing open world projects and bases them on the Avalanche Engine . Formed after the collapse of Rock Solid Games , the studio has expanded from six members to 250 staff members .

As well as their main studio in Stockholm , they have two further studios : a studio in New York City , that worked on Just Cause 3 ; and a subsidiary studio in Stockholm named Expansive Worlds , that worked on theHunter .

Since the company 's establishment , it has worked on multiple projects , including the Just Cause series of open world action @-@ adventure games published by Eidos Interactive and Square Enix , and Mad Max . They have also developed some relatively less popular games including the free @-@ to @-@ play theHunter , top @-@ down shooter Renegade Ops and Rumble City , their first mobile game . The company aims to begin self @-@ publishing new original intellectual properties in the future .

History

Prior to founding

Avalanche Studios was founded by Christofer Sundberg and Linus Blomberg in 2003 . Prior to the establishment of the studio , Sundberg had worked in video game publishing as well as FIFA Soccer for Electronic Arts . Both of them joined Paradox Interactive , a video game publisher that had published games such as Europa Universalis . Eventually , Sundberg and Blomberg left and founded their own company called Rock Solid Studios during the second quarter of 2001 . The company partnered with Conspiracy Entertainment to develop a video game adaptation of Tremors , a movie series from Universal Pictures . Titled Tremors : The Game , it was set to be released for personal computers , PlayStation 2 , Xbox and Nintendo GameCube in 2003 . During that period , another Stockholm @-@ based video game development studio , Starbreeze Studios , announced that they would acquire Rock Solid . The agreement between the two companies was ultimately broken by Starbreeze , and the acquisition was stopped . In addition , Universal decided to cancel Tremors : The Game , which led Rock Solid to declare bankruptcy . With the failure and collapse of Rock Solid , Sundberg and Blomberg became unemployed and in debt . They eventually decided to start over in 2003 , establishing Avalanche Studios with six other employees . Reflecting on the founding in 2015 , Sundberg stated that the studio was born in " pure chaos " , and attributed their failure with Rock Solid to trusting " the wrong people " .

2003 @-@ 2010

When naming the company , Sundberg , Blomberg and the other employees brought up a list of military code words used during World War II . They ultimately decided upon " Avalanche " as the company 's name . The company worked on a prototype project called Rico : Terror in the Tropics in 2003 . The project , designed by Sundberg himself , would eventually become Avalanche 's first title , Just Cause . He pitched the game 's concept to publisher Eidos Interactive , which was accepted . According to Sundberg , he wanted to develop a game " where you could skydive onto the roof of a car and keep on going " . The game was released in 2006 for Microsoft Windows , PlayStation 2 and Xbox 360 . Sundberg considered Just Cause to be the ' DNA ' and ' center point of the studio ' , since it was the first game they developed .

Following Just Cause , Avalanche began to provide technical assistance to theHunter . Originally developed and published by Emote Games , the franchise was acquired by Avalanche on 18 February 2010 . As theHunter is an online @-@ activated games , Avalanche established a subsidiary studio called Expansive Worlds on 24 March 2010 to provide support to the continuous

development of theHunter . The new studio will also work on new online games .

Also in development during Avalanche 's work on theHunter was AionGuard and Just Cause 2 . AionGuard is a fantasy video game that was ultimately put on hold . Just Cause 2 was announced in January 2008 . Powered by the Avalanche Engine 2 @.@ 0 , Avalanche Studios ' in @-@ house engine , the game included several new and improved features . Originally set to be released in 2008 , the game subsequently missed its target release window . In 2008 , the studio suffered from layoffs ; Avalanche dismissed 77 staff members after the company lost approximately US $ 35 million due to the loss of two contracted projects . One of them was later leaked as Arcadia , a game that was once was to be published by THQ . After the incident , Sundberg claimed that the company would remain as a small studio in the future . Just Cause 2 was not released in 2009 , which was regarded as " a bad year for most companies including ourselves " by Sundberg . In May 2009 , 20 more employees were laid @-@ off . Despite Avalanche 's layoffs , development of Just Cause 2 was completed , and the game was launched in March 2010 for Microsoft Windows , PlayStation 3 and Xbox 360 .

= = = 2011 = = =

Upon the completion of Just Cause 2 , Avalanche teased a new project . A new downloadable title , called Renegade Ops , was announced on 30 March 2011 . The team was approached by Sega to develop a new downloadable intellectual property using the Avalanche Engine . Compared to their past titles , the game 's production and development periods were much shorter . Renegade Ops was released on 14 October 2011 .
On 15 June 2011 , Avalanche announced that the company would establish a new division in New York City . The studio was officially opened on 17 November 2011 , and the first title set to be developed by the New York division was revealed . Codenamed Project Mamba , the title was a AAA video game set to be released for " next @-@ gen " consoles and PC in 2014 . The new studio is located in SoHo , Manhattan , and is led by David Grijns , who was a former employee of Activision and Atari , SA . According to Grijns , Avalanche Studios chose New York City as their location due to less competition . They also aimed to change the " inhospitable " environment of the game industry there .

= = = 2012 @-@ 15 = = =

In 2012 , Avalanche began the development of Mad Max . Prior to the game 's development , Avalanche had pitched several projects that were set in a post @-@ apocalyptic environment to different publishers . While the original projects never came to fruition , an opportunity was presented to Avalanche Studios by Warner Bros. Interactive Entertainment to develop a video game set within the Mad Max universe . Film director and creator of the Mad Max franchise , George Miller , was consulted during the game 's pre @-@ production period . Cory Barlog , the creator of God of War II , joined the studio in 2010 and left in 2012 . Prior to his arrival , he had already been working on a Mad Max game with Miller , leading to a confusing relationship between the two projects . In August 2014 , Avalanche Studios announced that they were developing several new projects , calling 2015 " the biggest year since the inception of Avalanche Studios more than a decade ago " . In addition , the company announced that the Stockholm @-@ based studio would be moved to a larger building for further expansion in the third quarter of 2015 . Mad Max was originally set to be released in 2014 , but was delayed to September 2015 .
While Mad Max was being developed by Avalanche 's studio in Stockholm , the New York division was working on Just Cause 3 . The development of Just Cause 3 also began in early 2012 . While the previous Just Cause games were developed by the Swedish studio , the development of Just Cause 3 was transferred to the New York studio to give the title a fresh start . The game will be the first title to be published by Square Enix after their acquisition of Eidos Interactive . Avalanche Studios sent a team to visit a jungle in Costa Rica to inspect the local landscapes and environments to help them create the game worlds for both Mad Max and Just Cause 3 .

In addition to Mad Max and Just Cause 3 , " a standalone expansion of theHunter featuring dinosaurs , titled theHunter : Primal , was released on Steam 's early access on 15 December 2014 . The full game was launched on 31 March 2015 . The company also released their first mobile title called Rumble City . It is a turn @-@ based strategy games and was released on 7 July 2015 .

In October 2015 , the company announced that both the New York office and the Stockholm office suffered minor lay @-@ offs as the studio was undergoing major transition between projects and that it was unable to maintain multiple large teams during this period . In June 2016 , the Sweden office announced that they had hired Cameron Foote , the lead designer of Just Cause 2 's multiplayer mod , to work on both Avalanche 's " present and future projects " .

Future

In a video interview with Game Informer , Sundberg revealed that the company will focus on developing new original intellectual property in the future and , despite continuing to work with other larger publishers , the company 's focus will be shifted to self @-@ publishing .

Games

Games developed

Just Cause series

Just Cause is a series of open world action @-@ adventure games starring Rico Rodriguez as the protagonist , an operative from " The Agency " , a military organization in Just Cause and Just Cause 2 . The series is known for allowing players to create chaos and providing players freedom in exploring the game 's world . Gameplay revolves around gunplay and the use of the grappling hook and parachute . While the original Just Cause was not particularly well received by critics , its sequel , Just Cause 2 , received critical acclaim . The PC version of the game received an 84 out of 100 from Metacritic , a review aggregator . Some reviewers also regarded the game as " one of the most entertaining sandbox shooters ever created " . Upon release , Just Cause 2 was proven to be more popular than its predecessors ; over 2 million players played the game 's demo , and over 6 million players purchased the final game . As the game did not ship with any multiplayer feature , a multiplayer PC mod , which can accommodate more than one thousands players in a single map , was created by a modder . Avalanche Studios supported the mod , made the mod official on 16 December 2013 , and released the mod on Steam as free downloadable content for players who had purchased the game . Just Cause 3 , the latest title in the series , was released for Microsoft Windows , PlayStation 4 and Xbox One on December 1 , 2015 . Sundberg considered the collaboration with Square Enix as " a long @-@ term partnership " . During Square Enix 's E3 2015 press conference , Square Enix of America CEO , Phil Rogers , stated that he considered Just Cause a major franchise that can stand " side by side " with other iconic Square Enix franchises .

Mad Max

Mad Max was the first AAA title developed by Avalanche Studios outside of the Just Cause series . It was also the company 's first licensed video game . The game follows the series ' titular character as he ventures into a wasteland to search for his lost car , the Interceptor . The title was initially slated for a 2012 reveal , but was later announced at Electronic Entertainment Expo 2013 . Originally set to be released for Microsoft Windows , PlayStation 3 , PlayStation 4 , Xbox 360 and Xbox One , the PlayStation 3 and Xbox 360 versions of the game were cancelled due to hardware restrictions . A Linux port was also announced .

= = = Other projects = = =

The team also worked on theHunter , a free @-@ to @-@ play hunting video game . The game is a commercial success for Avalanche , with Sundberg claiming that the title " contribute [s] quite a lot to [Avalanche 's] financial success " . Avalanche considered theHunter to be an experiment for them to see whether the free @-@ to @-@ play business model suited the company or not . Renegade Ops is another original title from Avalanche . It is a top down shooter which had drawn inspirations from 1986 's Jackal , 1992 's Desert Strike : Return to the Gulf and 1993 's Cannon Fodder . The team aimed to " recreate classics " with Renegade Ops , similar to 2010 's Shadow Complex . The game received generally positive reviews upon release . Avalanche Studios ' first mobile game , titled Rumble City , is a strategy board game which takes inspiration from the American bike culture during the 1960s . It was released in July 2015 for iOS and Android devices . Avalanche Studios is set to be collaborating with Square Enix on the development of the airship segment of Final Fantasy XV .

The studio also worked on several cancelled projects . In 2009 , Avalanche announced AionGuard , a God of War @-@ style open world fantasy game which features World War I fighters , samurais and knights for the PlayStation 3 and Xbox 360 . Influences for the game were drawn from Star Wars and works from Frank Herbert and Michael Moorcock . However , the project was eventually put on hold indefinitely in 2010 . In 2012 , the company announced a non @-@ Superman comic book game , which was eventually cancelled in 2014 . The studio almost collaborated with LucasArts to develop an open world video game based on the Star Wars universe . A steampunk @-@ themed game was also reported to be in development , but was later put on hold .

= = Philosophy = =

Starting from Avalanche Studios ' inception , the company 's primary focus is to create open world sandbox games , citing Elite as their inspiration . According to Blomberg , the studio has always been interested in creating open world games , and they aimed to be " the best " in developing them . The company seeks to remain flexible to market changes and tries not to limit themselves to one business model . Avalanche also focuses on developing games with long gameplay length and high replay value . Sundberg considers Avalanche Studios to be an independent company , and often keeps the rights to their intellectual properties . Sundberg also stated that video game developers should not put too much weight in income ; as a result , the company seldom develops " forced " multiplayer modes , as they believe that approach " makes absolutely no sense " and does not add any value to the game . When seeking future projects , the studio chooses projects that they are passionate about and allow creative freedom . They only make games that " [they] love to play " or games that " can bring a smile to people 's faces " .

Sundberg described the company as " family @-@ driven " . Sundberg and Blomberg do not have their own offices in the studio , as they want to maintain a close relationship with their staff members . The two also seek to be closely involved with all their ongoing projects .