Phil Fish

Philippe Poisson (born 1984) , better known as Phil Fish , is a French Canadian former indie video game designer best known for his work on the 2012 platform game Fez published by his company , Polytron Corporation . He was born and raised in Quebec , where his experiences with Nintendo games in his youth would later influence his game design . He studied game design at the Montreal National Animation and Design Centre , and worked at Ubisoft and Artificial Mind and Movement before starting Polytron in 2008 .

Fish was a founding member of Kokoromi , a collective that explores experimental gameplay ideas , and organized Montreal 's annual GAMMA games events . While Fez was in development , Fish worked on other unreleased games at Polytron including Super Hypercube and Power Pill .

Fez was released in April 2012 to widespread acclaim after a protracted five @-@ year development cycle . Its final phases of development were shown in the 2012 documentary Indie Game : The Movie , which brought Fish fame unusual for game developers . Following an online argument in July 2013 , Fish publicly announced his exit from game development , citing long @-@ term mistreatment by the industry .

Early life and career

Phil Fish was born Philippe Poisson in Montreal in 1984 . He was raised in Quebec , where his parents shared their interest in art and gaming with him . Fish 's father translated The Legend of Zelda into French so the two could play together . Fish credits these memories as formative , and later cited their influence on Fez . He graduated from the 2004 Design and Digital Art for Video Games program at the Montreal NAD (National Animation and Design Centre) .

Fish began his career at the video game publisher Ubisoft , where he worked on Open Season as a level designer . He was initially excited for the job but grew disenchanted with their large development teams and working conditions . Fish later described it as " the worst experience of [his] life " . He was later fired from the company .

On May 24 , 2006 , Fish won the Artificial Mind and Movement Award for Best Cut @-@ Scene at the annual NAD Center Awards of Excellence Gala . Later that year , Fish began work as a level designer at Artificial Mind and Movement , where he designed for film tie @-@ in games including The Golden Compass .

Fish is a founding member of Kokoromi , a group that designs and promotes experimental video games . His November 2006 Arcadia Festival event , GAMMA 01 Audio Feed , featured games that incorporated live sound . Fish planned a similar event , GAMMA 256 , for 2007 , and a third event , GAMMA 3D , for November 2008 in Montreal . Fish was invited to present a lecture on GAMMA 01 at the 2007 Game Developers Conference . He also wrote a review of the 1999 Legacy of Kain : Soul Reaver in the 2007 book Space Time Play : Synergies Between Computer Games , Architecture and Urbanism : the Next Level . Additionally , Fish has been characterized by Sean Hollister of The Verge as " notorious for voicing angry , controversial opinions about the state of video games " .

Polytron

Fish began to work with Toronto @-@ based indie developer Shawn McGrath on McGrath 's idea for a puzzle game that showed 2D views of a 3D space . Fish provided the project 's art until the partnership crumbled due to creative differences : Fish wanted their product to be more of a platform game . Fish continued to work on the game in his spare time , and incorporated the idea of voxels (3D pixels) , where a 2D pixel could be seen from four sides . The game would become Fez and the game 's design , lore , and art derived from this game mechanic . Fish searched for a programmer on DeviantArt and Renaud Bédard , the first person to apply , became the game 's programmer . Fez was first announced in July 2007 and was nominated for two awards at the 2008 Game Developers Conference Independent Games Festival . Fish 's employer , Artificial Mind and

Movement , would not let him take leave from work to attend , so Fish quit . He marked this January 2008 moment as " when I became indie " . The game received widespread attention upon its showing at the festival , leading Fish to open Polytron Corporation as a startup company with a government loan .

Polytron later ran out of money and was on the verge of folding when the company 's Québécois neighbor , developer @-@ producer Trapdoor , offered to help Polytron without transferring its intellectual property rights . According to Fish , the partnership saved Fez . The game was delayed several times over the next few years for which it received some notoriety .

In late 2009 , Polytron presented an iPhone game called Power Pill at Pecha Kucha Montreal . The game features a panacean pill that travels through human bodies as its playable protagonist , and it uses the iPhone 's multi @-@ touch screen . GameSetWatch 's Eric Caoili compared it to Soul Bubbles and Irritating Stick . The game was developed with Alec Holowka of Infinite Ammo , and a level editor was expected to be included . While working on Fez , Fish revived a game project called Super Hypercube , which was based on Wiimote motion capture input and stereoscopic navigation . Fish felt the game would work better with the new Kinect motion tracking . The adapted game was a finalist at Indiecade 2011 .

Fish and Fez were featured prominently in the 2012 documentary Indie Game : The Movie , through which Fish received celebrity unusual for game developers . The film chronicles the stories of several indie developers at various stages of their games ' development cycles , and Fish is shown preparing for Fez 's booth at PAX East in March 2011 . The film presents Fish amidst a legal dispute with a former business partner that jeopardizes the game 's release . The partner , believed to be Jason DeGroot , is portrayed negatively and does not participate onscreen . The film also tracks Fish 's personal and emotional investment in the game . Eurogamer wrote that the part where Fish resolves to kill himself if he does not release his game is " the film 's most startling moment " . Rock , Paper , Shotgun wrote that Fish is portrayed as melodramatic , theatrical , and neurotic , and that the film will exacerbate his outspoken public perception . Game Informer called Fish the film 's " most memorable developer " . The film 's end credits were later revised to reflect that Fish 's business partner was not asked for input .

Near the end of development , Fish felt " burnt out " and that his personal health had suffered . Fez was released on April 13 , 2012 and sold 200 @,@ 000 copies in its yearlong exclusivity to the Xbox Live Arcade platform . The video game review aggregator Metacritic described reviews for the 2012 Xbox 360 Fez as " generally favorable " and those for the 2013 PC version as " universal acclaim " . While in development , Fez had won the 2012 GDC Independent Games Festival 's Seamus McNally Grand Prize , the 2011 Indiecade Best in Show and Best Story / World Design , and the 2008 GDC Independent Games Festival 's Excellence in Visual Art . Eurogamer awarded Fez a perfect score and named the " perfect , wordless sci @-@ fi parable " their 2012 Game of the Year . Fish announced eventual ports for " ' pretty much ' every platform " but the Nintendo 3DS . It sold one million copies by the end of 2013 . The New York Times 's Chris Suellentrop called Fish " a Quentin Tarantino of 8 @-@ bit gaming " .

A Fez sequel was announced as " one more thing " at end of the Horizon indie game press conference during the June 2013 Electronic Entertainment Expo . A Twitter argument between Fish and GameTrailers journalist Marcus Beer a month later culminated in the project 's cancellation and Fish 's exit from the industry . In an episode of his show Invisible Walls , Beer had criticized Fish 's recent response to questions about Microsoft 's Xbox One self @-@ publishing policy change . On Twitter , Fish condemned the industry for its negativity before his final tweet announced the cancellation and his leave . The news came as a surprise to the rest of Polytron , which has not commented on upcoming projects other than ports since the sequel 's cancellation . Polygon listed Fish in their top 50 newsmakers of 2013 for the social power of his " caustic use of Twitter " .

= = = Polytron Partners = = =

In June 2014 , Fish announced Polytron Partners ? a new effort by Polytron to fund and support potential indie game efforts , like a publisher . For their first game , Polytron will work with Finji to

provide the daily operations capacity for an " interactive musical landscape anthology " game named Panoramical . Fish 's personal and company records were released publicly in August 2014 as part of a spate of hacks on video game developers . Fish responded by announcing that the company and Fez property were for sale .

= = Works = =

Fez (2012 , Polytron , as designer)
Super Hypercube (unreleased , as designer)
Power Pill (unreleased , as designer)
The Golden Compass (2007 , Artificial Mind and Movement , as asst. level designer)
Open Season (2006 , Ubisoft , as level designer)