

= Thatgamecompany =

Thatgamecompany , LLC ( stylized as thatgamecompany ) is an American independent video game development company co @-@ founded by University of Southern California students Jenova Chen and Kellee Santiago in 2006 . The company was a developer for Sony Computer Entertainment , contracted to create three downloadable games for the PlayStation 3 's PlayStation Network service , and has since secured independent funding . The first of their games is a remake of Chen 's award @-@ winning Flash title Flow , with enhanced visuals and sound , added multiplayer modes and compatibility with the PlayStation 3 's motion sensitive controller . The title was released on the PlayStation Store in 2007 . The company 's second PlayStation 3 game , Flower , was released on the PlayStation Store in 2009 , and their third game , Journey , was released in March 2012 on the PlayStation Store .

The company focuses on creating video games that provoke emotional responses from players . Its employees have stated that , while they are not opposed to making action @-@ oriented games , they believe that enough such titles are released by the established video game industry . When designing a game , Thatgamecompany employees start by mapping out what they want the player to feel , rather than by establishing game mechanics . Employees have stated that the company does not plan to produce large , blockbuster titles , due to their belief that the pressure for high sales would stifle innovation .

= = History = =

In late 2005 , Jenova Chen and Kellee Santiago began thinking about creating their own video game company . The two were in their final year as master 's students in the Interactive Media Program at the University of Southern California 's School of Cinematic Arts , and had just released a video game ? Cloud ? that they had developed with several other students . The group intended the project as an experiment , meant to reveal whether they could create a game that " expressed something different than video games had in the past " , and to determine the public 's level of interest in video games of that nature . Due to the game 's strongly positive reception , Chen and Santiago began to consider founding their own company , so that they could continue making games like Cloud ? in which the design is not based on gameplay mechanics , but on inspiring emotions in players ? after they left college .

At the time , digital distribution was gaining popularity . The two saw it as an opportunity to create games without the high financial risk of retail distribution , which they believed would require them to first accumulate funds by working for other video game companies . Thatgamecompany was founded on May 15 , 2006 , as Chen and Santiago finished their master 's degrees . The company soon signed a deal with Sony Computer Entertainment , which had been impressed by Chen 's Flash game Flow ? a component of his master 's thesis at USC . Thatgamecompany was contracted to produce three games for the upcoming PlayStation Network distribution system , and was given startup funding and a location at Sony 's offices in Los Angeles .

Initially , Thatgamecompany consisted of Chen , Santiago , Nick Clark , who had collaborated with Chen on Flow , and John Edwards . Santiago was the president of the company and the producer for its games , Clark was the designer , and Edwards was the lead engineer . Although Chen cofounded the company , he initially worked at Maxis on the game Spore . The company considered adapting Cloud as their first product for Sony , but instead decided on Flow , as it was " more fleshed @-@ out as a design " . They felt that it would be easier than Cloud to develop while they built the company ; no members of the team had experience with managing a business or with creating a commercial game . Several contract workers assisted Thatgamecompany with Flow 's development , including Austin Wintory , the game 's composer .

The company had believed that the PlayStation 3 version of Flow could be completed in four months , and that it would be ready for the November 2006 launch of the PlayStation Network . However , when it was released in February 2007 , it did not include " half of the original design " . According to Santiago , the Sony producer assigned to the team had anticipated that they would

underestimate the game 's development length , and was not surprised by the delay . The game was well received ; it became the most downloaded game on the PlayStation Network in 2007 , and was nominated for the Best Downloadable Game of the Year award at the 2008 Academy of Interactive Arts & Sciences Interactive Achievement Awards , and for the Best Innovation award at the 2007 British Academy of Film and Television Arts ( BAFTA ) awards . After its release , an expansion pack and a PlayStation Portable version of the game were created by SuperVillain Studios . Thatgamecompany was not involved in the development of either project beyond ensuring that they retained the same design and art direction as the original , as they were busy creating their next title , Flower .

Flower was Thatgamecompany 's " first game outside the safety net of academia " , according to Santiago . Six to nine people were involved at different stages of development . Chen returned to work full @-@ time at the company prior to the game 's development , and served as the creative director . The game 's music was composed by Vincent Diamante , who had worked with Chen and Santiago on Cloud . The game was developed for two years , but the team spent three @-@ fourths of that time in the prototyping stage . After they decided on the game 's elements , Flower was produced in only six months . Like Flow , the game was well received when it was released in February 2009 , selling in the top ten PlayStation Network titles of the year and garnering several awards . After the release of Flower , Thatgamecompany moved into their own building in Los Angeles .

The company 's latest project is Journey , which was released on March 13 , 2012 . It was the final game in Thatgamecompany 's three @-@ game contract with Sony , and was developed by a team of fourteen . This team did not include Santiago , who , in order to concentrate on her role as the company 's president , was replaced as a producer by Robin Hunicke . The game was in development for three years , despite having been expected to take one year , and the development team faced several problems in expanding the company from seven employees as they began the game to eighteen , and risked running out of money . Upon release , the game achieved both critical and commercial success . It became the fastest @-@ selling game to date on PlayStation Store in North America and Europe . After the game was released , as the company began work on another project , several employees left for other opportunities . Santiago left the company to pursue other ventures , designer Chris Bell left to form his own studio The Willderness , and Hunicke resigned to work at Tiny Speck . Chen attributes the exodus to the end of Thatgamecompany 's three @-@ game contract , and to the fact that the company had run out of money to pay employees , mandating an unpaid hiatus until the revenue from Journey came in .

Once the money from Journey began to arrive , Thatgamecompany brought back several of the employees affected by the cashflow problems , and some new developers . The company , with its contract with Sony complete , raised \$ 5 @. @ 5 million in venture capitalist funding , which they hope to use to develop future games for multiple platforms without influences by publishers . The team has been working since the release of Journey on a new , unannounced game , and as of June 2013 was made up of around 12 people , only half of whom worked on Journey . Thatgamecompany hopes to release the game on " as many platforms as possible " , and to include touch controls in an innovative way in the same way their previous games included tilting the controller . On May 27 , 2014 it was reported that the next game from Thatgamecompany had received \$ 7 million in funding from Capital Today and a team of other investors . While the unnamed game has been in development , Thatgamecompany has re @-@ released Flow and Flower onto both the PlayStation 4 and the PlayStation Vita , and an updated port of Journey for the PlayStation 4 .

= = Philosophy = =

When Thatgamecompany designs a game , they begin by deciding on the emotions and feelings they wish to invoke in the player . This differs from the approach of most developers , who build from game mechanics or genre features . According to Santiago , the company creates emotional responses to demonstrate the wide range of possible experiences in video games , which she

believes is larger than the few ? excitement and fear , for example ? that are typically presented . Chen has said that the company 's games are meant to evoke emotions more than a message ; he specifically changed the design of Flower when early testers felt that the game promoted green energy . Chen believes that he is " too young " to make a game with a strong message , and so designs the company 's products to avoid overt meanings . Santiago has said that Thatgamecompany 's goal is " to create games that push the boundaries of videogames as a communicative medium , and to create games that appeal to a wide variety of people " . She hopes to change the video game industry with this process , so that other companies approach video games as a " creative medium " instead of a mass product .

Thatgamecompany 's employees are not opposed to making action titles , and , as a break from their regular projects , have internally created " exciting " games that were well received by Sony . However , Chen believes that there is no reason for the company to commercially produce such games , as they would not be creating new ideas that justified the cost of remaining an independent studio , as opposed to working for existing game developers . Similarly , Chen does not intend for Thatgamecompany to make " big budget blockbuster games " , as he believes that the financial pressure would stifle innovation .

= = Games = =

In Flow , the player navigates a series of two @-@ dimensional planes with an aquatic microorganism that evolves by consuming other microorganisms . The game 's design is based on Chen 's research into dynamic difficulty adjustment at the University of Southern California , and on psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi 's theoretical concept of mental immersion or flow . It was released for the PlayStation 3 on February 22 , 2007 .

Flower was intended as a spiritual successor to Flow . Using the PlayStation 3 's motion sensitive controller , the player controls wind that blows a flower petal through the air . Flying close to flowers results in the player 's petal being followed by other flower petals . Approaching flowers may also have side @-@ effects on the game world , such as bringing vibrant color to previously dead fields or activating stationary windmills . The game features no text or dialogue , forming a narrative arc primarily through visual representation and emotional cues . It was released for the PlayStation 3 on February 12 , 2009 .

Journey is Thatgamecompany 's latest game . The player controls a robed figure who wakes up in a desert , with a large mountain in the distance as their destination . While traveling , the player can encounter other players over the Internet , one at a time . Players cannot communicate verbally , but may help each other or not as they wish . The game was released for the PlayStation 3 on March 13 , 2012 . Austin Wintory was nominated for a Grammy Award in 2013 for Best Score Soundtrack for Journey , the first such nomination for a full video game score , but lost to Trent Reznor and Atticus Ross for The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo .