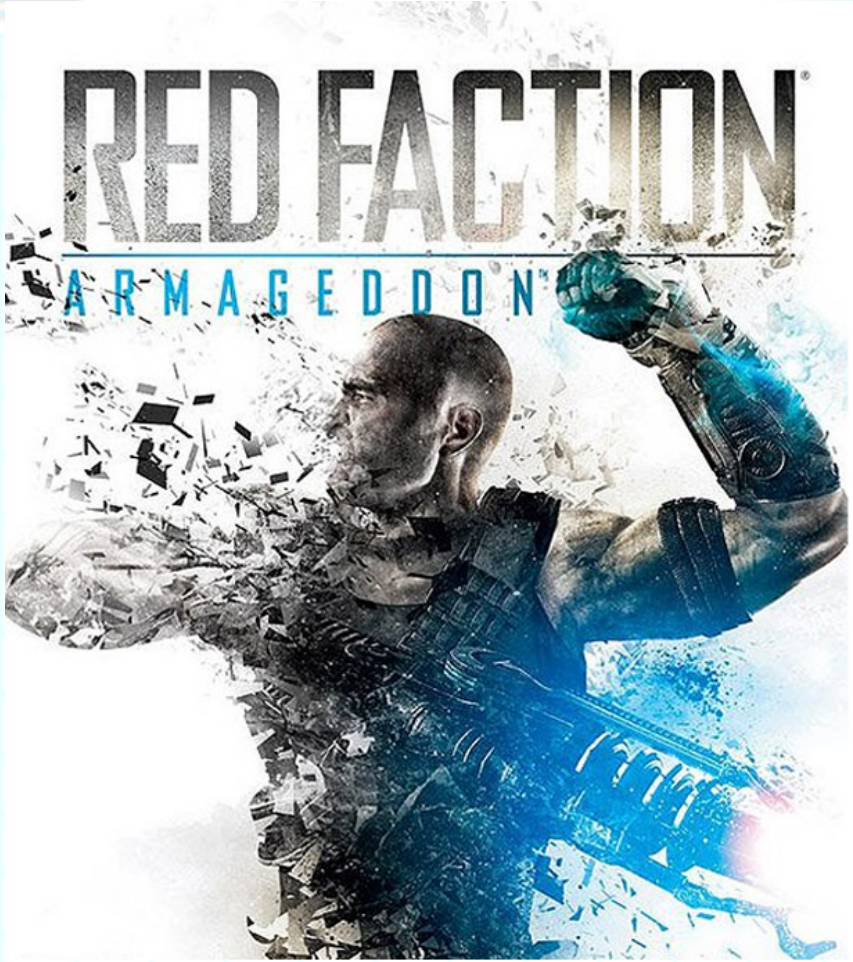
Communication and Iteration of Visual Effects in Red Faction: Armageddon

Dave Samuel
Senior Visual Effects Artist

volition inc

GAME DEVELOPERS CONFERENCE 2012
SAN FRANCISCO, CA
MARCH 5-9, 2012
EXPO DATES: MARCH 7-9



Real-time Destruction

Destructive
Vs.
Non-Destructive

Visual Effects are more than just pretty explosions

Visual Communication & Iteration

Visual Communication

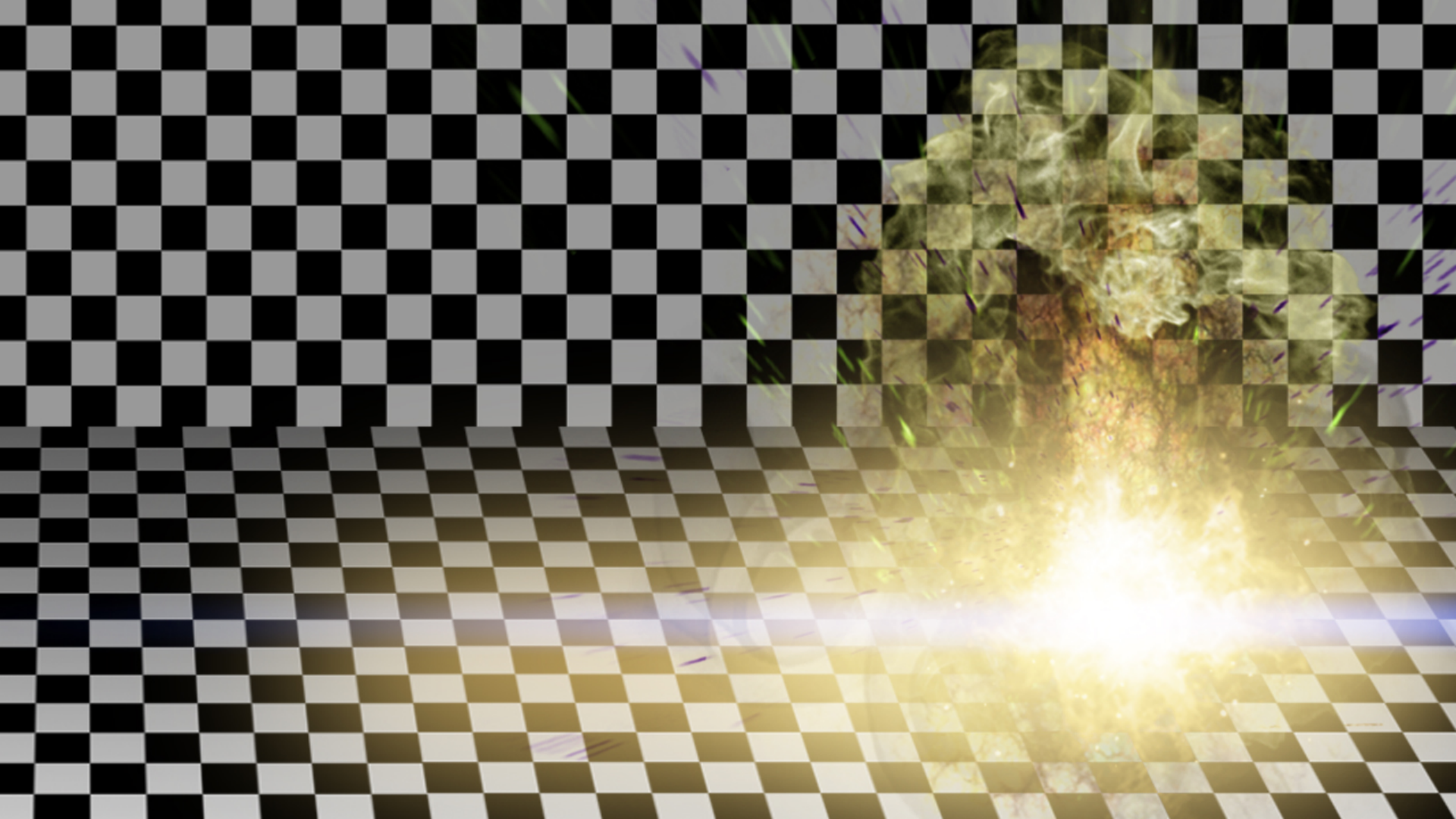
“What an effect is telling me”

I HIT SOMETHING!

They have different colors...
Maybe they do different things?

Context is
Everything

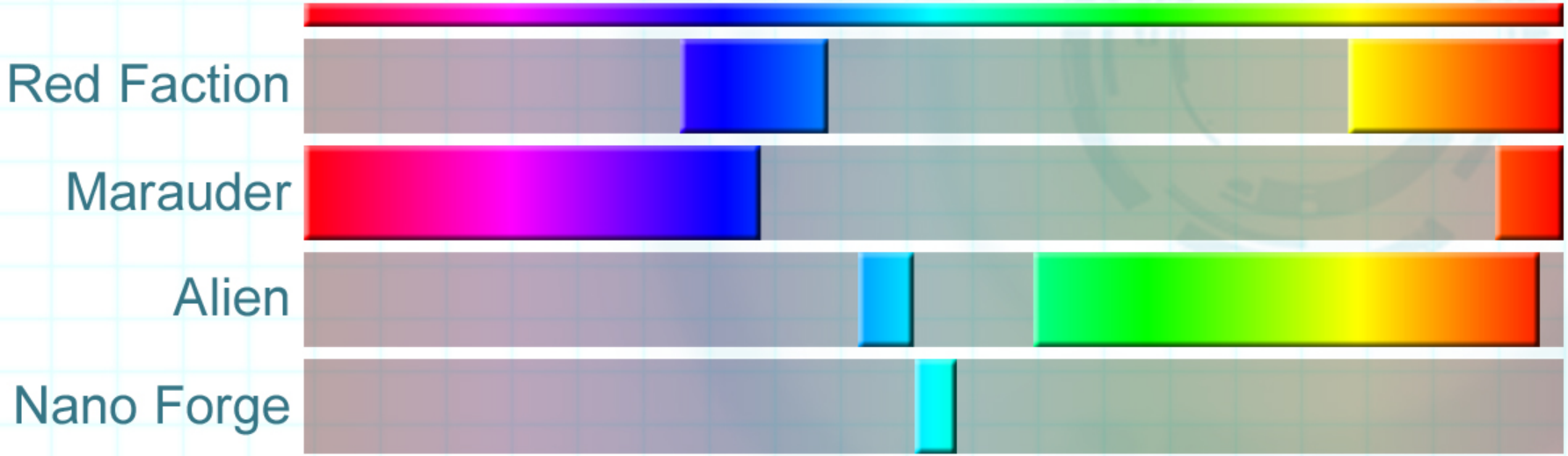
Feel the Weapon



VFX Over The Top
Slow
Fast
Pace of Game

Weapon VFX Communication

Color Spectrum: Factions and Tech



Color Spectrum: Red Faction

Color Spectrum: Marauder

Marauder

Color Spectrum: Alien

Weakspot Communication

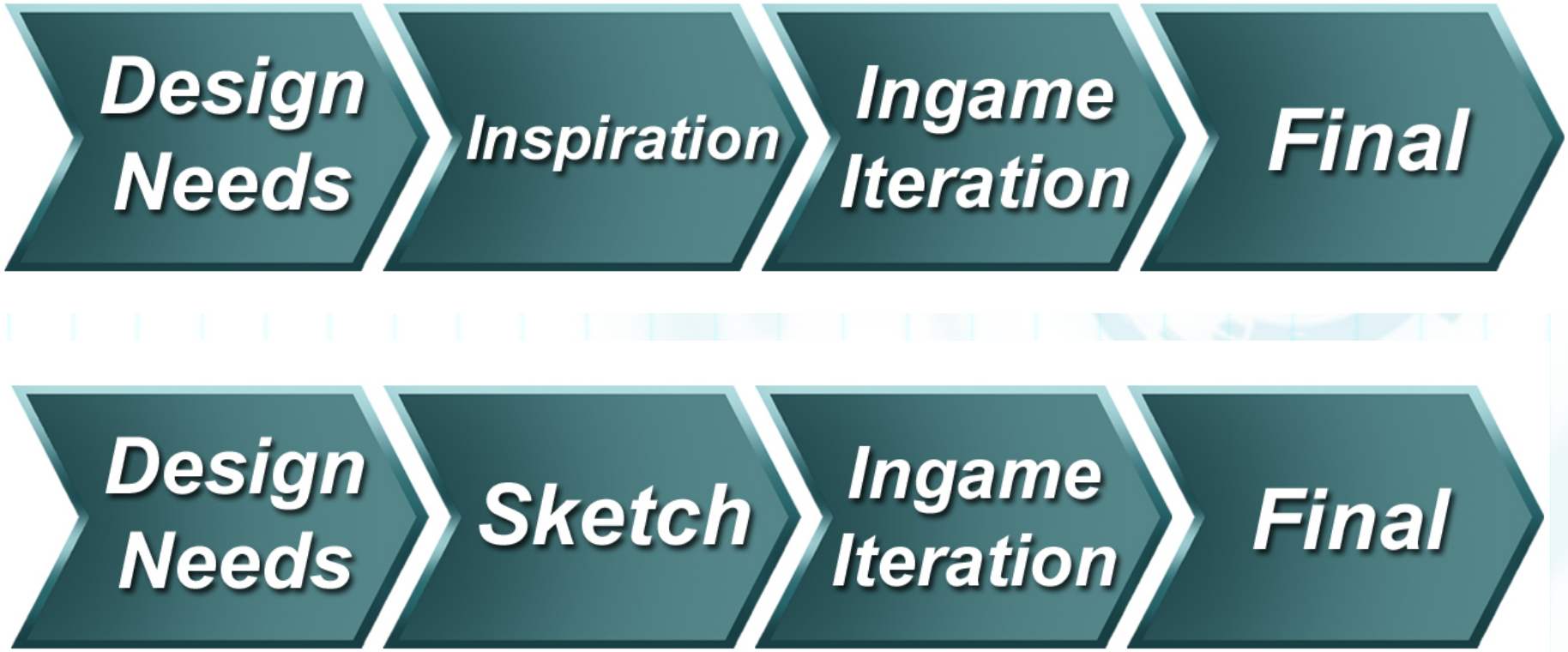
SHOOT THE
GLOWING GEM!

Explosive Barrel Communication & Iteration

Iteration

“The tweaks made to an effect until final”

Iteration Workflow


Design Needs
Inspiration
Ingame Iteration
Final
Design Needs
Sketch
Ingame Iteration
Final

Shoot it!
Get it! Get it!
Another one!
Look!
Explosive!

Design Needs
Sketch
Final

- Visible in both lit and dark

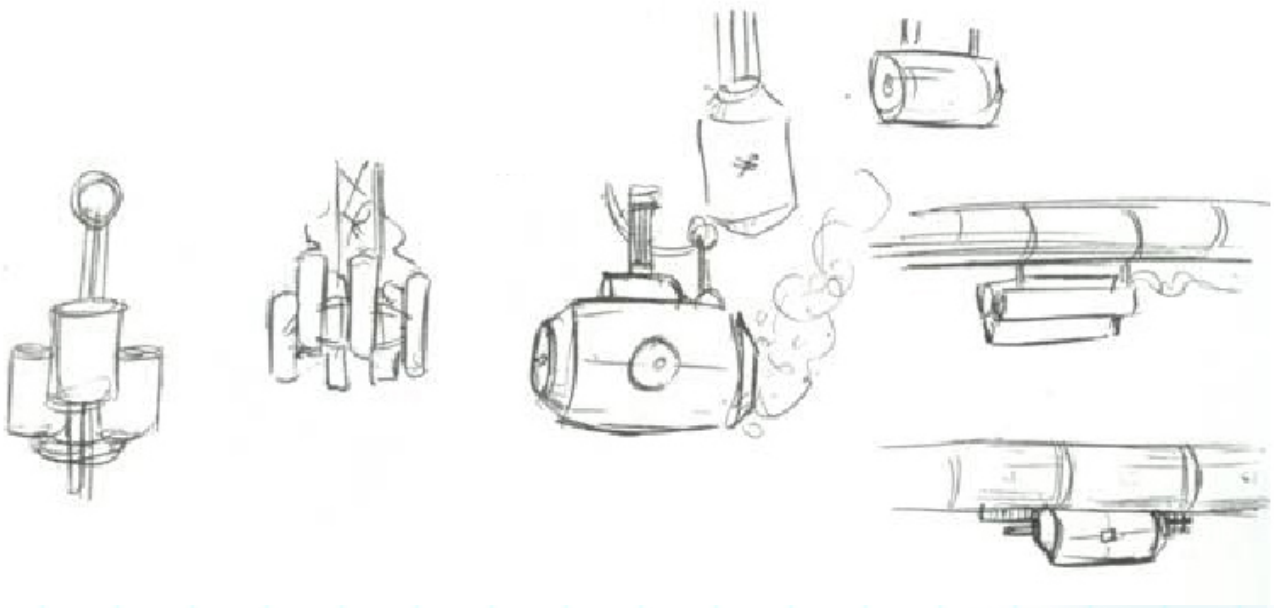
- Visible in both lit and dark
- Iconic Look

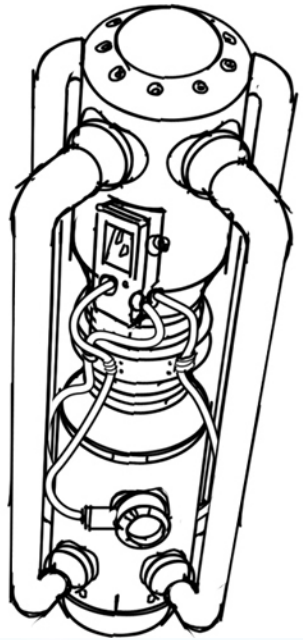
- Visible in both lit and dark
- Iconic Look
- Looks Unstable

Design Needs

Sketch

Final





Barrel VFX Ingame

Barrel VFX Gameplay

First Pass Effects
=
Not final

Plasma Rifle
Concept to Final

Design Needs → Sketch → Ingame Iteration → Final

- Futuristic Assault Rifle

Design Needs → Sketch → Ingame Iteration → Final

- Futuristic Assault Rifle
- Bread and Butter weapon

Design Needs → Sketch → Ingame Iteration → Final

- Futuristic Assault Rifle
- Bread and Butter weapon
- Unique feeling

Design Needs → Sketch → Ingame Iteration → Final

- Futuristic Assault Rifle
- Bread and Butter weapon
- Unique feeling
- Non Destructive

Design Needs | **Sketch** | Ingame Iteration | Final

Design Needs

Sketch

Ingame Iteration

Final

Design Needs | **Sketch** | Ingame Iteration | Final

Design Needs

Sketch

Ingame Iteration

Final

Design Needs → Sketch → Ingame Iteration → Final

Things will change...

What’s in a Name?

Phased Plasma

Phased Plasma Rifle

Phased Plasma Rifle

Non-Destructive

Phased Plasma Cannon

Phased Plasma Cannon

Destructive

Phased Plasma Thrower

Phased Plasma Thrower

Destructive

Phased Plasma Beam

Phased Plasma Beam

Destructive

Non-Destructive

Destructive

Destructive

Destructive

Weapon VFX Communication

Name? or Function?

Function

Inspiration:
Napalm Laser

GPS

Concept to Final

Design Needs → Inspiration → Ingame Iteration → Final

- Help Navigate the Player

Design Needs | Inspiration | Ingame Iteration | Final

- Help Navigate the Player
- Match the 2D HUD

- Help Navigate the Player
- Match the 2D HUD
- Exist in 3D Space, but not look 3D

Design Needs → **Inspiration** → Ingame Iteration → Final

Design Needs

Inspiration

Ingame Iteration

Final

Version 1

Design Needs → Inspiration → Ingame Iteration → Final

Version 2

Design Needs → Inspiration → Ingame Iteration → Final

Version 3

Design Needs | Inspiration | Ingame Iteration | Final

Version 4

Design Needs | Inspiration | Ingame Iteration | Final

Version 5

Design Needs | Inspiration | Ingame Iteration | Final

Version 6

Design Needs → Inspiration → Ingame Iteration → Final

Final Version

Visual Communication & Iteration

End

- Questions?

daves@volition-inc.com