Artist Career Challenges & Goals

From a AAA team to a Start-Up

CECIL KIM

CHIEF CREATIVE OFFICER & CO-FOUNDER
SECTION STUDIOS

1. Career before Section
2. Background Story - how Section Started
3. Making games at Section

- Born in Seoul, Korea
- Studied at Art Center College of Design 96'
- Started as a Freelance Illustrator For VFX Studios
- First game Job at SquareUSA in 97'

Before Section

Square USA
Concept Artist

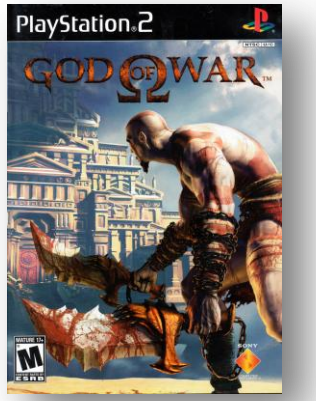
1997-2000

- Parasite EVE
- Final Fantasy IX

Sony Santa Monica
Visual Development Lead

2000-2011

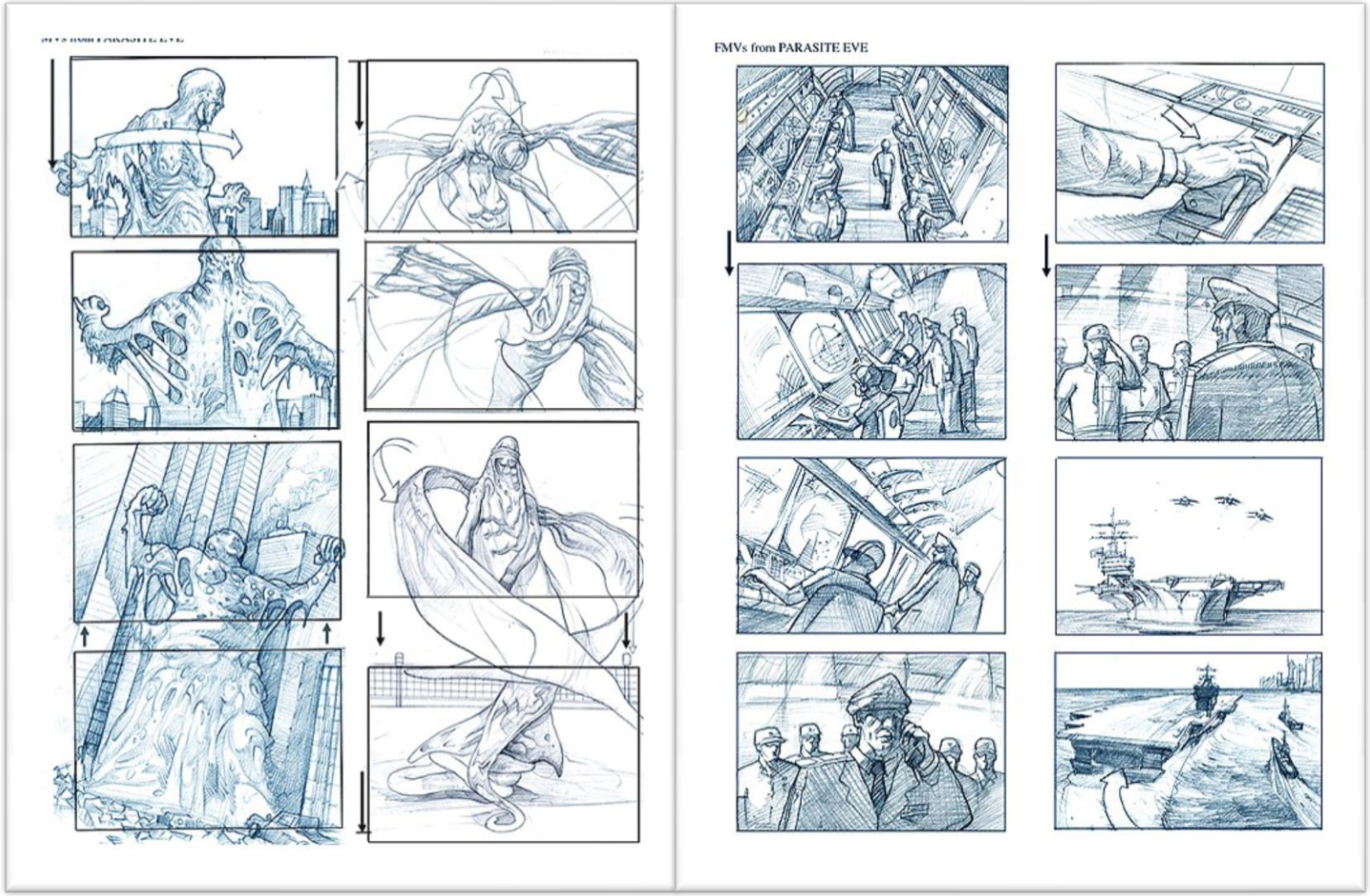
- God of War 1
- God of War 2
- God of War 3
- God of War Ascension



Playstation 1 – Parasite Eve

SQUARESOFT

- Storyboard & Level Concept
- Innovative Turn-based Combat
- Based on Popular SF Novel
- A Cinematic RPG
- 1st Game from Square US Studio



Playstation 1 – FINAL FANTASY IX

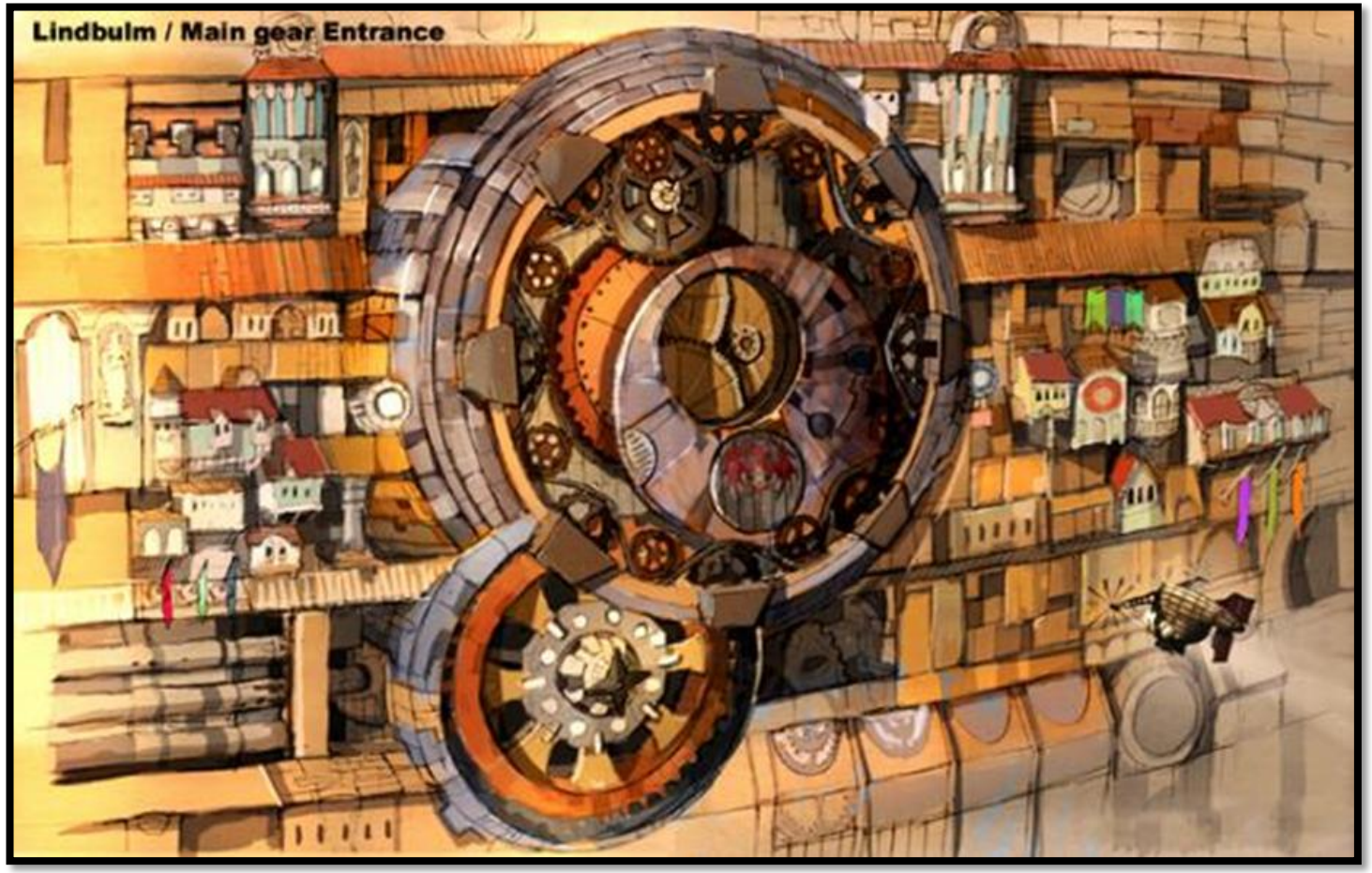
1997-2000

- Established Franchise since 1987
- Production in Honolulu Studio
- World Location Concept
- Gameplay Map Illustration

Playstation 1 – FINAL FANTASY IX

1997-2000

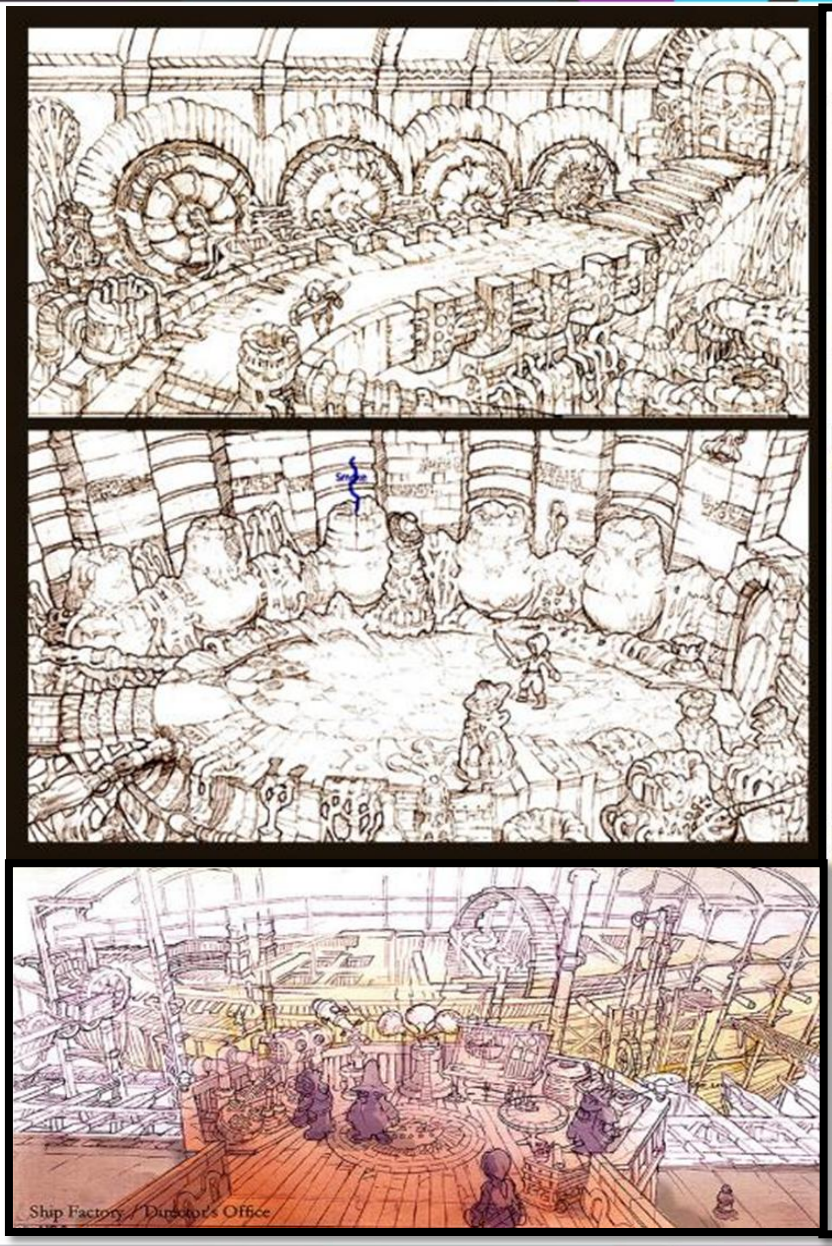
- Established Franchise since 1987
- Location Concept
- Gameplay Map

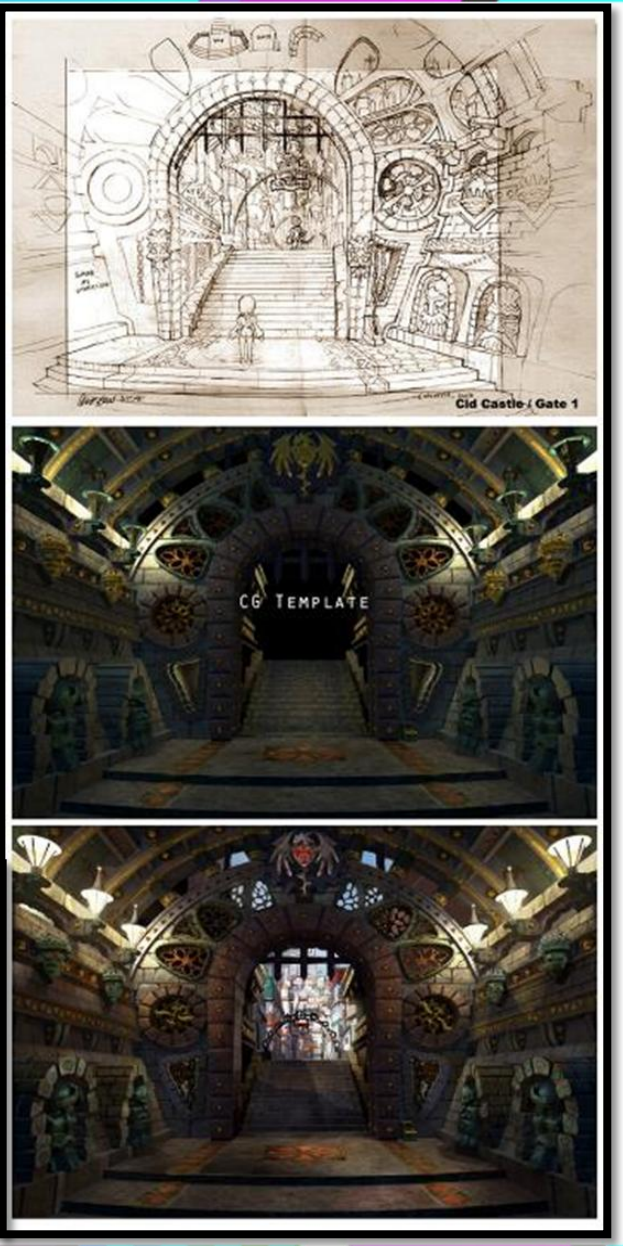


FINAL FANTASY IX

1997-2000

- Highly Detailed 3D Art
- Pre-rendered BG on Fixed Camera





FINAL FANTASY IX

1997-2000

- Highly Detailed 3D Art
- Pre-rendered BG on Fixed Camera
- 2D retouch / matte painting

Playstation 2 - GOD OF WAR 1

2002-2005

- Original IP
- Inspired by Games from Japan
- 3rd Person Camera Action Game

Playstation 2 - GOD OF WAR 1

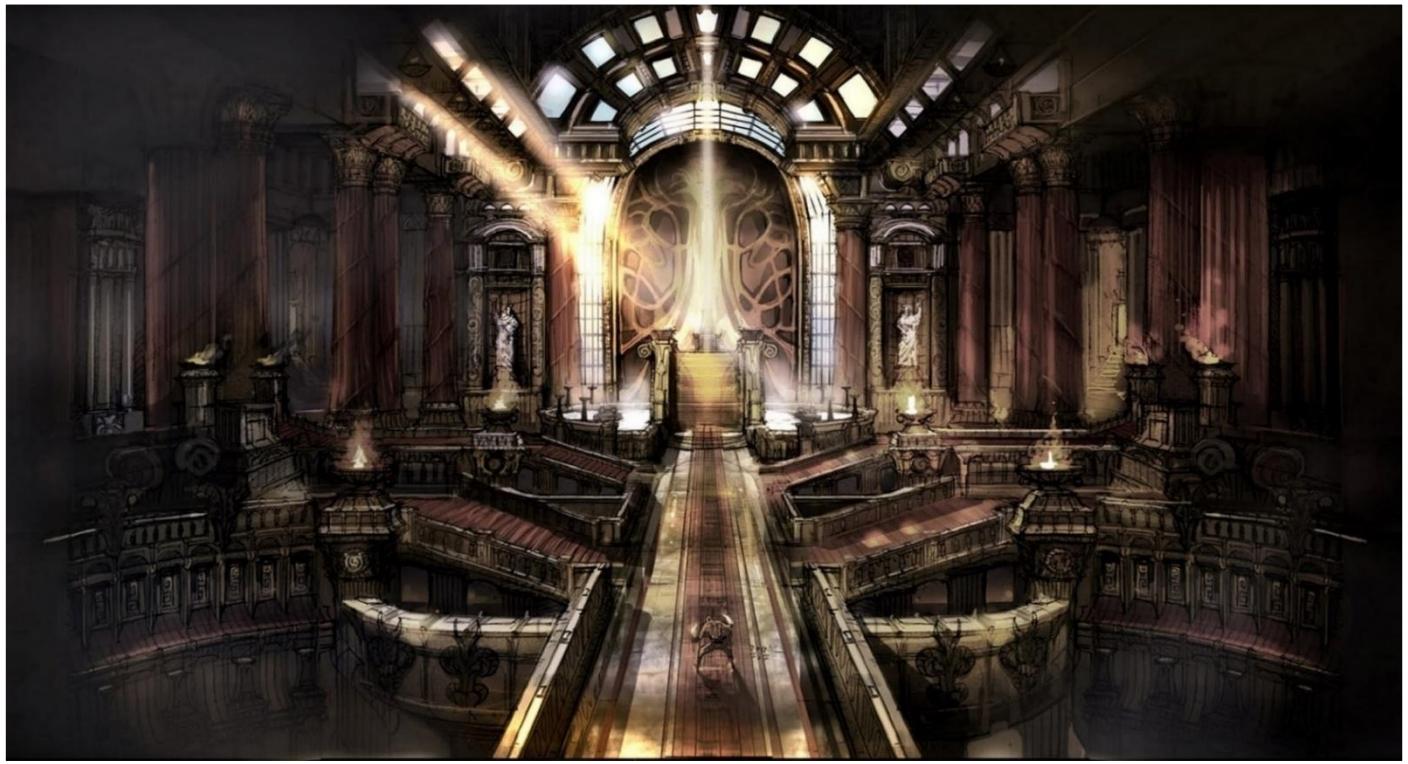
2002-2005

- Original IP
- Inspired by Games from Japan
- 3rd Person Camera Action Game
- Fantasy vs Greek Mythology
- Uncertainty

Playstation 2 - GOD OF WAR 2

2005-2007

- Awards & Team Recognition
- Mostly Original Team Members
- Audience/Fan = Game itself



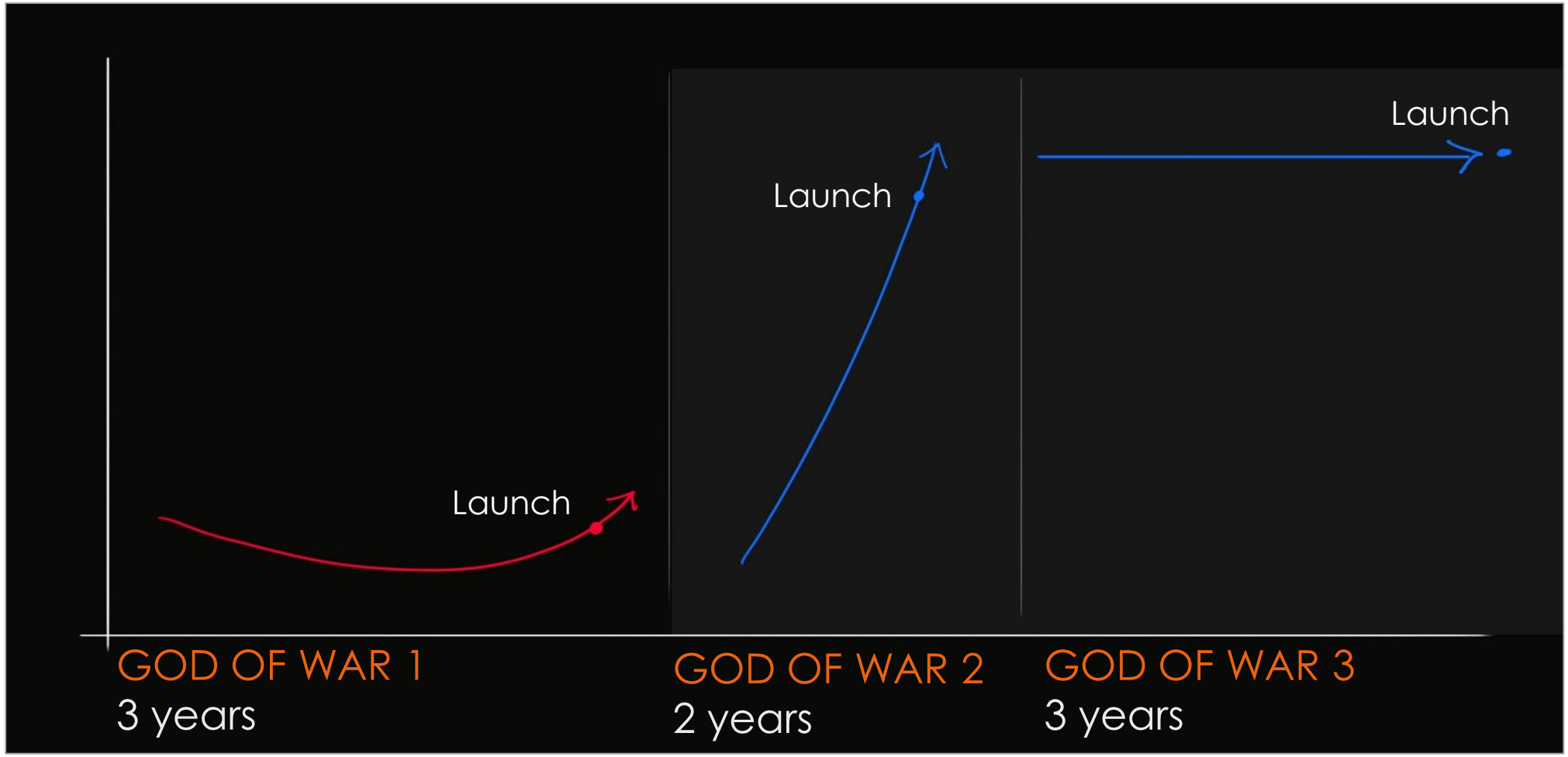
Playstation 2 - GOD OF WAR 3

2007-2010

- Highly Anticipated Game - End of Trilogy!
- Playstation 3 Graphic Power – Art Pipeline
- Big Team

GOW Team Motivation Level **(from my personal observation)**

Making a game is an emotional journey for artists.



Concept Artist's Role on AAA Production

1. Communicate the Vision & Inspire the team

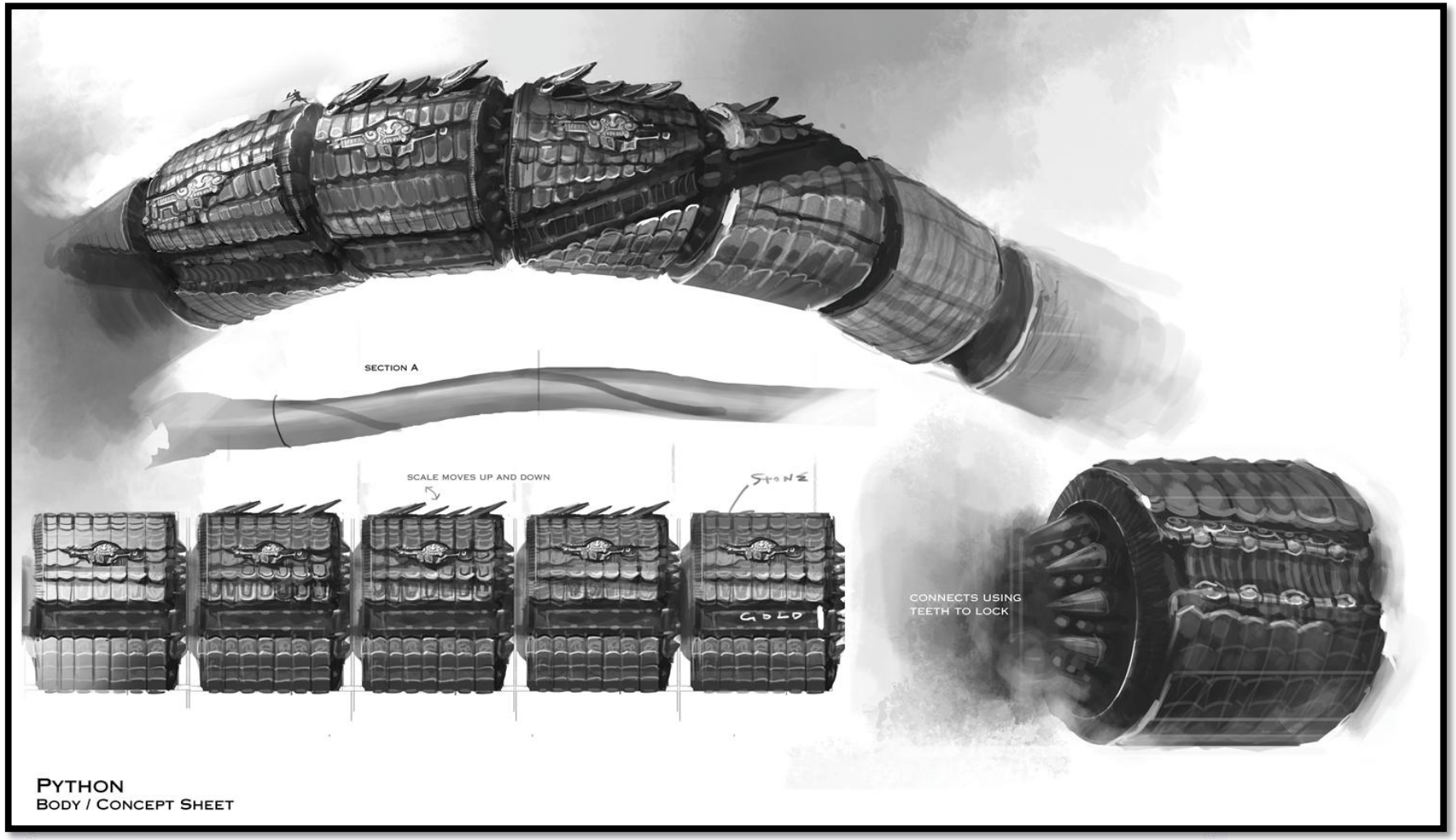
- Define Visual Identity
- Define World Tone & Mood
- Define Player Experience
- Inspire Team, Composer & Writer

DELPHI / LOOKING DOWN SUNDIAL

Concept Artist's Role on Production

2. Provide Concepts for Production

- Support 3D Production Schedule
- Explain how things are put together
- Consistency and Efficiency
- Storyboard, UI, FX



Concept Artist's Role on Production

3. Engage the audience with artwork

After 11 years at Sony…

- **Long Development Cycle got longer**
- **AAA Production stifled my creative flow**
- **Hit career ceiling** (at least it seems like it)
- **Mobile Platform & Indie Games – New Era**

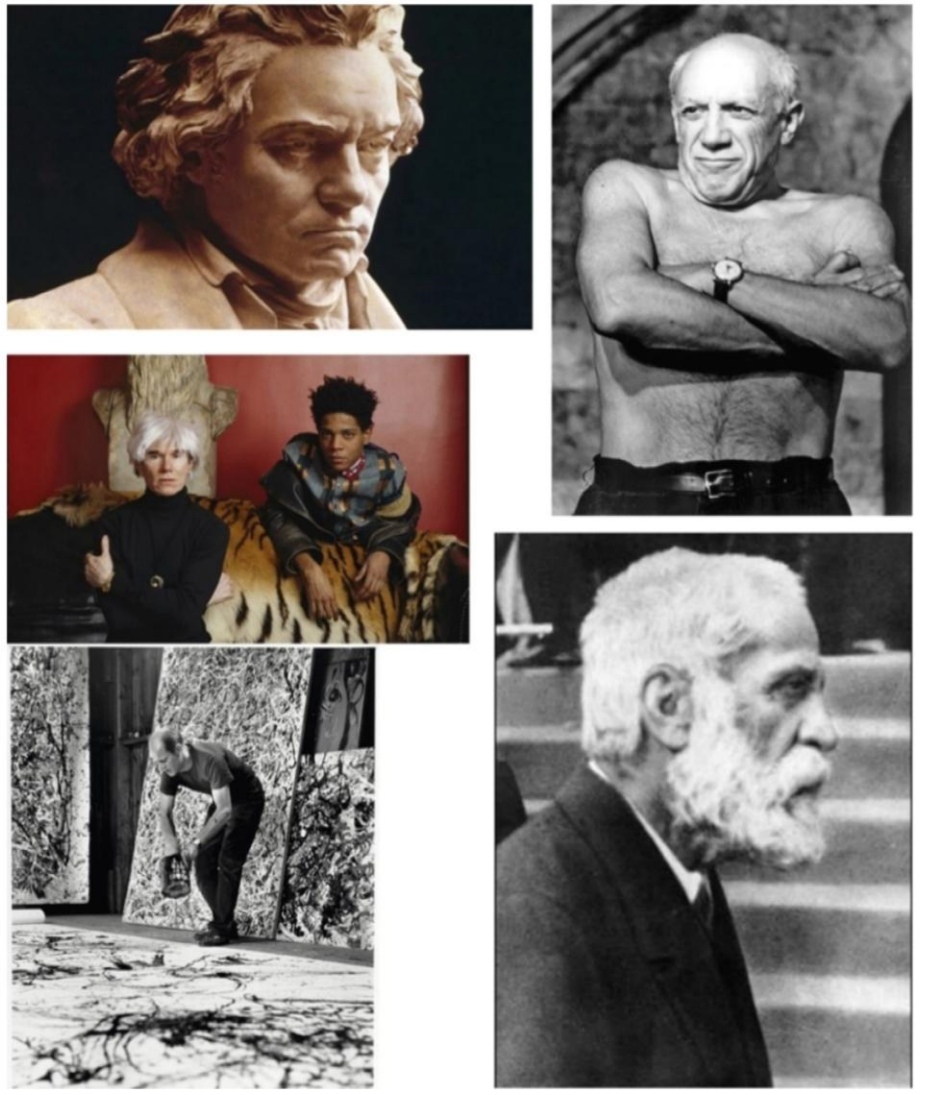
"Art is a celebration of life."

We-Artists are complicated individuals.

Artists need to be around artists.

Game is an art form.

What is next step for me as an artist?



Teaching Career

Drawing Intensive
Illustration Workshop
Vis-dev For Animation
Concept Art Workshop
Practicum for Concept Art
VisCom 6
Environment Design

Students work

Teaching Career

OTIS
Otis College of Art and Design

ArtCenter

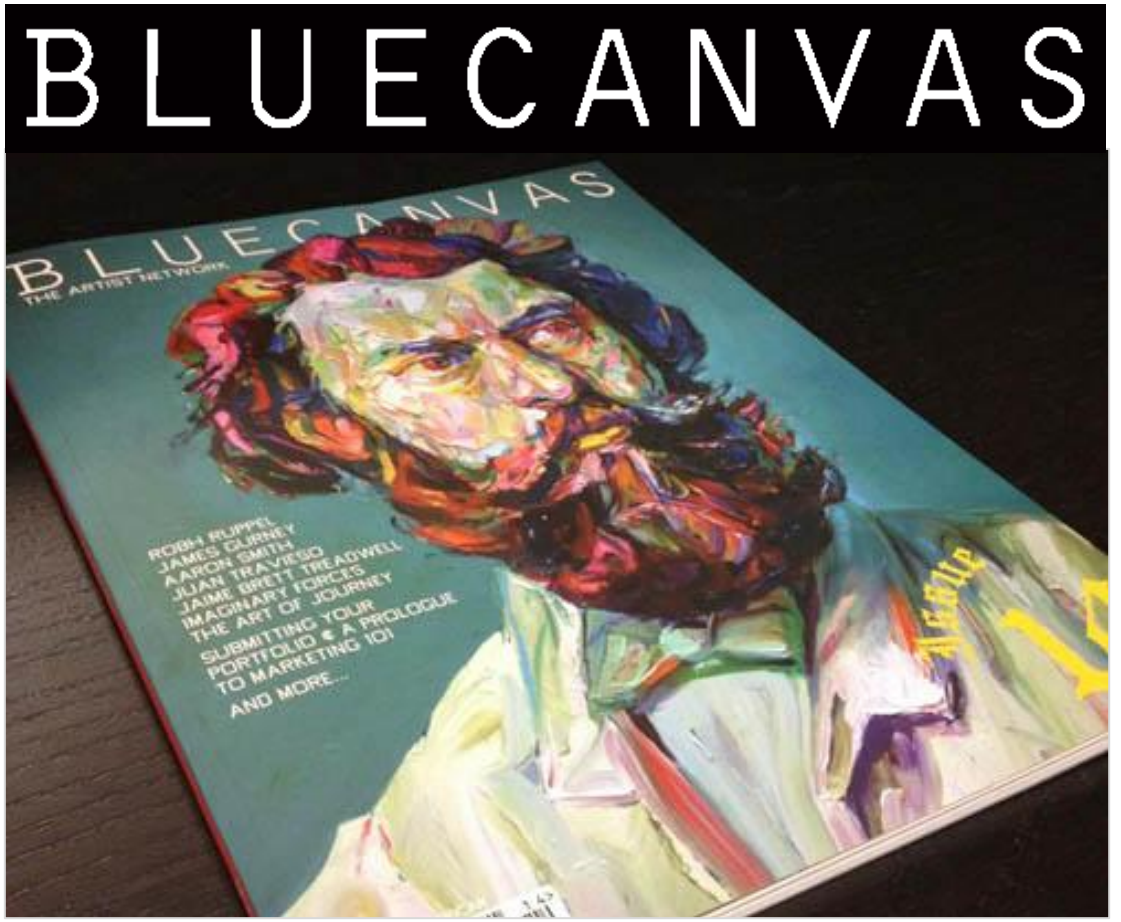
- Teaching helps fulfill my creative appetite
- Learning from students

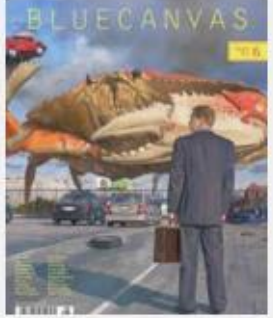
Network & Community

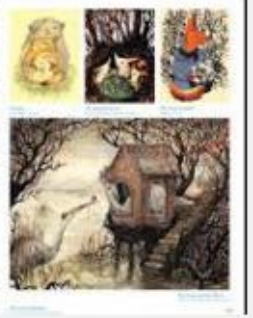
- Time ➡ Loyalty
- Passion ➡ Commitment
- Students ➡ Colleagues
- Colleagues ➡ Clients

"Inspiration is not Genre specific"

- Best Selling Art Magazine at Borders
- Online Artist Community Website
- Market Shift to E-Books
- Decline of Print Advertisement




BLUECANVAS



JOHN BELL

BLUECANVAS

BLUECANVAS
ONE

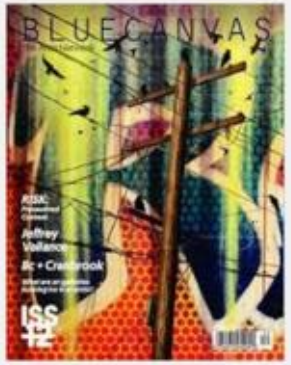
No 8

BLUECANVAS
X

BLUECANVAS

BLUECANVAS
No 5

BLUECANVAS CONTEST
GRAND PRIZE
$10,000
SCHOLARSHIP
2ND $6,000
3RD 10-WEEK


BLUECANVAS

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BLUECANVAS

BLUECANVAS

BLUECANVAS CONTEST
WIN CASH AND A
MASTER CLASS AT
1STPLACE:
2NDPLACE:
3RDPLACE:
JOURNEY

BLUECANVAS

Ló is lehet uszadékfából

BLUECANVAS

Bluecanvas ➡ Section

- Featured in BC magazine - met Justin Yun
- Equipped with Basic Infrastructure and Staff
- Justin was already doing Service Work

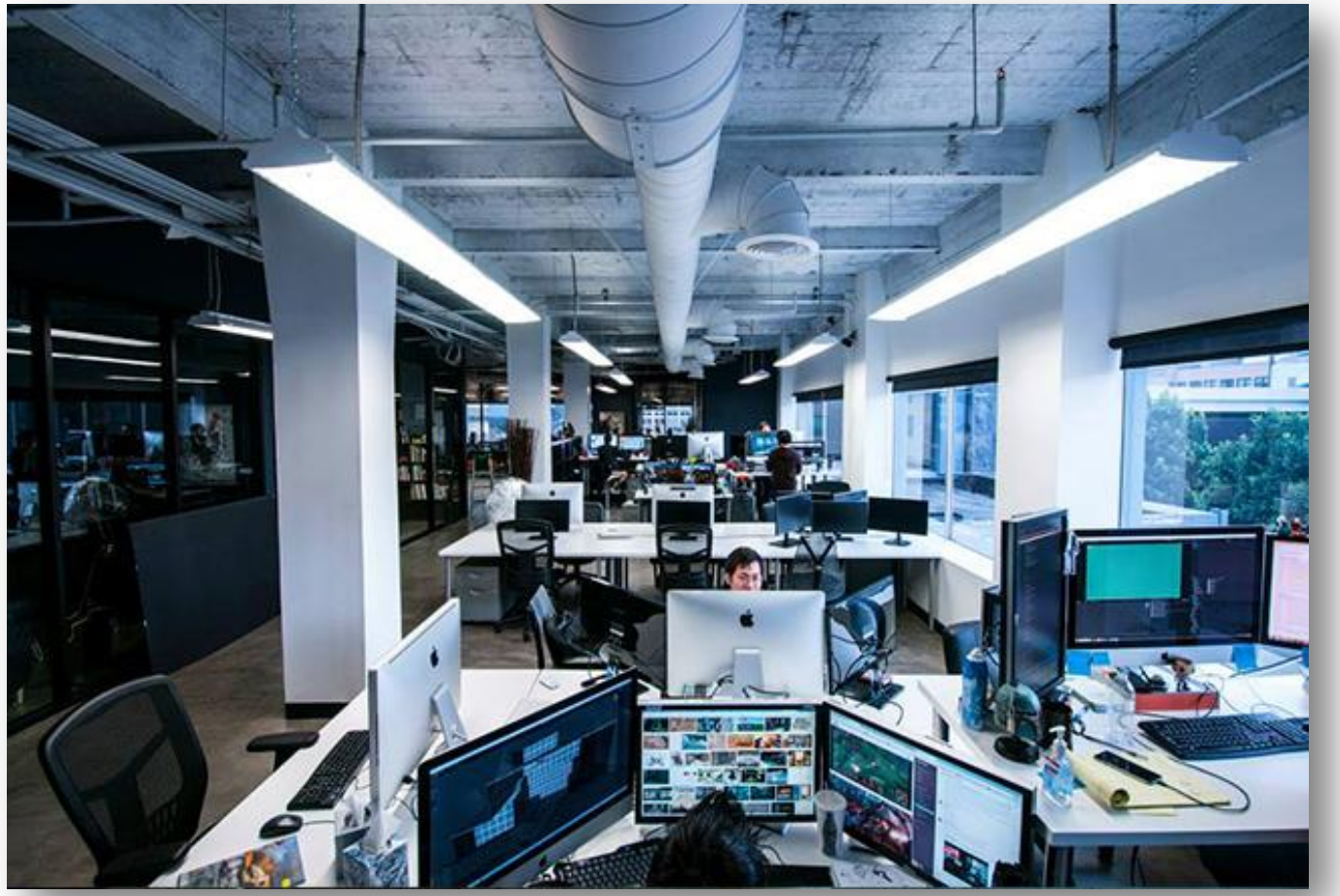
Starting own business means....PEOPLE

- Know who you are and know who you need.
- Partners & Mentors
- Focus on what you can do best first.
- Build bridges. Align yourself with right people.
- You need a solid foundation to scale the business.

SECTION

- Started as Art Services Studio
- + 3D Artists
- + Engineers
- Began Prototyping Ideas
- IOS, PC, Consoles

“A great team is better than a team of greats”



SECTION

Service Work

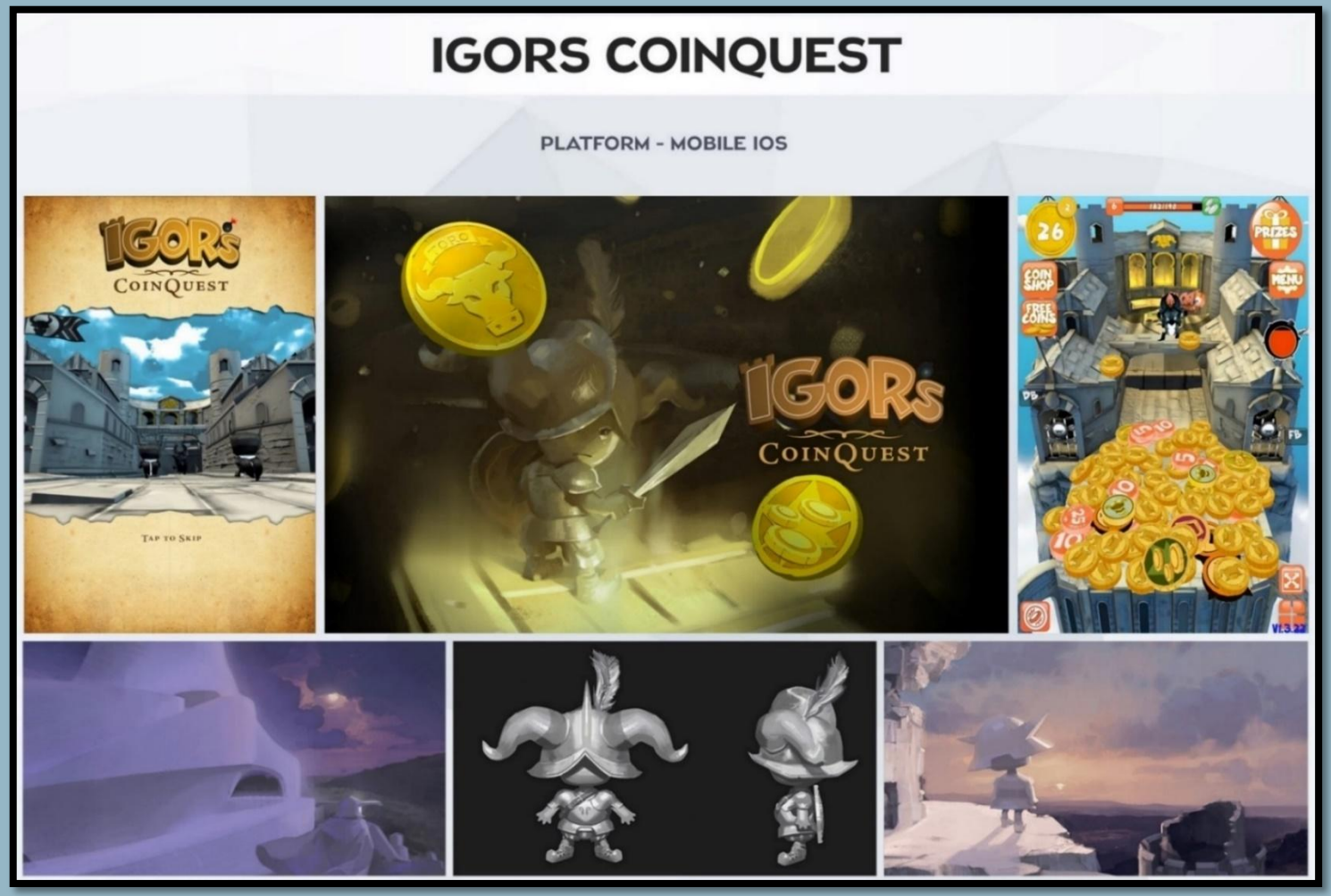
- Clients are our Inspiration
- Keep our lights on
- Strengthen our skills
- Able to learn from Client's Pipeline
- Become a multi-tasking Team

HOW TO MANAGE A TEAM WHILE EVERYONE IS WORKING ON MULTIPLE PROJECTS.

1. Need good producers
2. Sync up with the team daily
3. Explain what each project means to the company
4. Prioritize projects but every projects are important

Section Studios Games #1

IGOR'S COINQUEST



Section Studios Games #1

IGOR'S COINQUEST

- CASUAL COIN DOZER GAME
- 3 MONTHS PRODUCTION
- FIRST LAUNCH EXPERIENCE

THE TALE OF IGOR

GAMES UNDER IP

1. Igor's Coinquest
   Coin-Pusher Puzzle Game
   (Available in App Store)

2. Run Igor Run
   Endless Runner

3. Igor's Blade
   Hack and Slash Action RPG

4. Igor's Castle War
   Asynchronous Turn-based Strategy

Section Studios Games

Zombie Killer Squad 2014

Section Studios Games

Zombie Killer Squad 2014

- YOUTUBE INFLUENCER MARKETING
- #1 UK, #2 US APP STORE
- 3 MILLION DOWNLOADS

Collaboration

Cändescent GAMES

3BLACKDOT

fun-gi

WHITE ELK

1. Mutual Reliability – Tighten up Production responsibility
2. Shares resources - Compliment Each other
3. Increasing Partnership Network

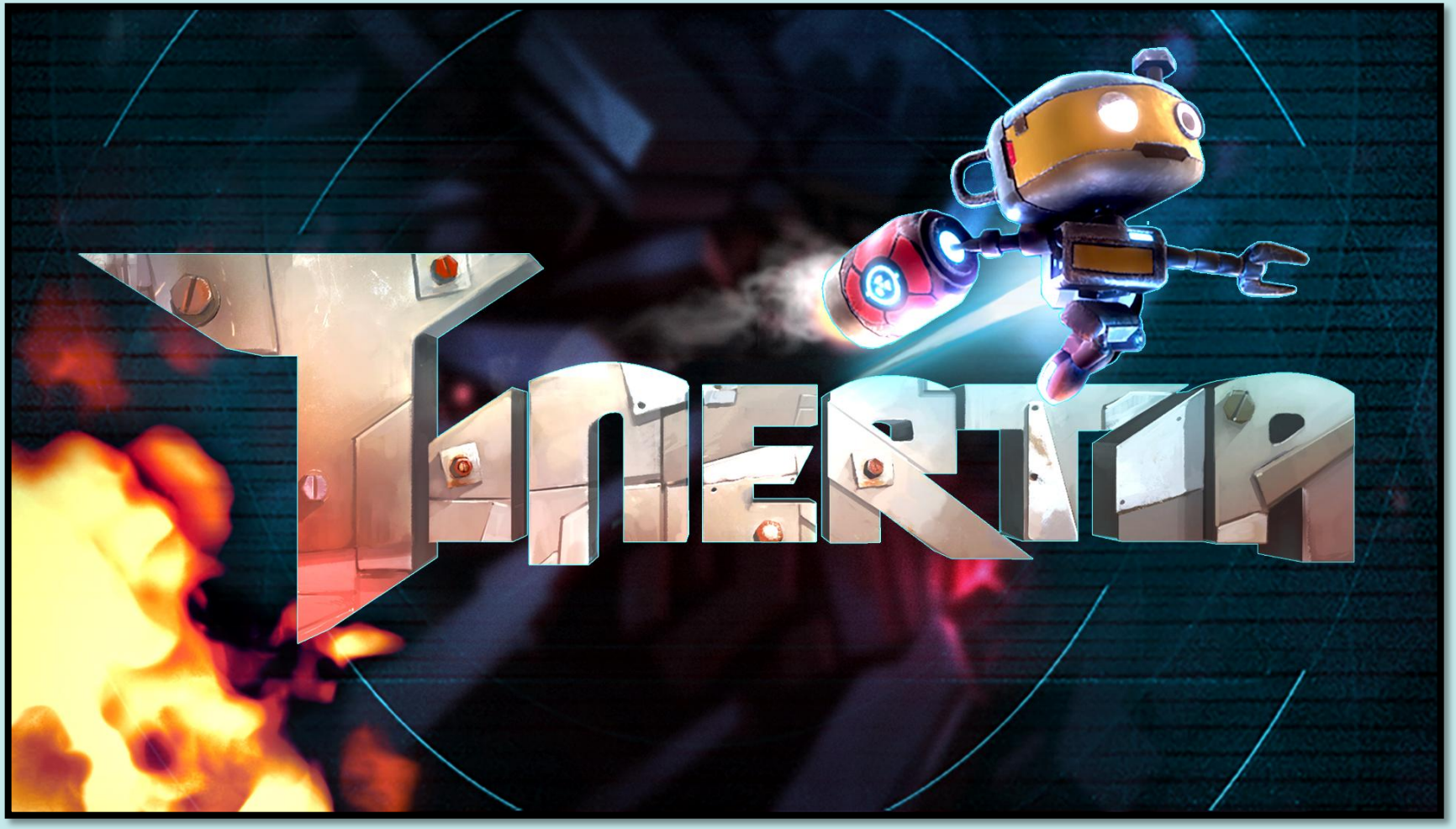
Section Studios Games

Tinertia 2014

Cändescent GAMES

STEAM

A PRECISION PLATFORMER



Section Studios Games

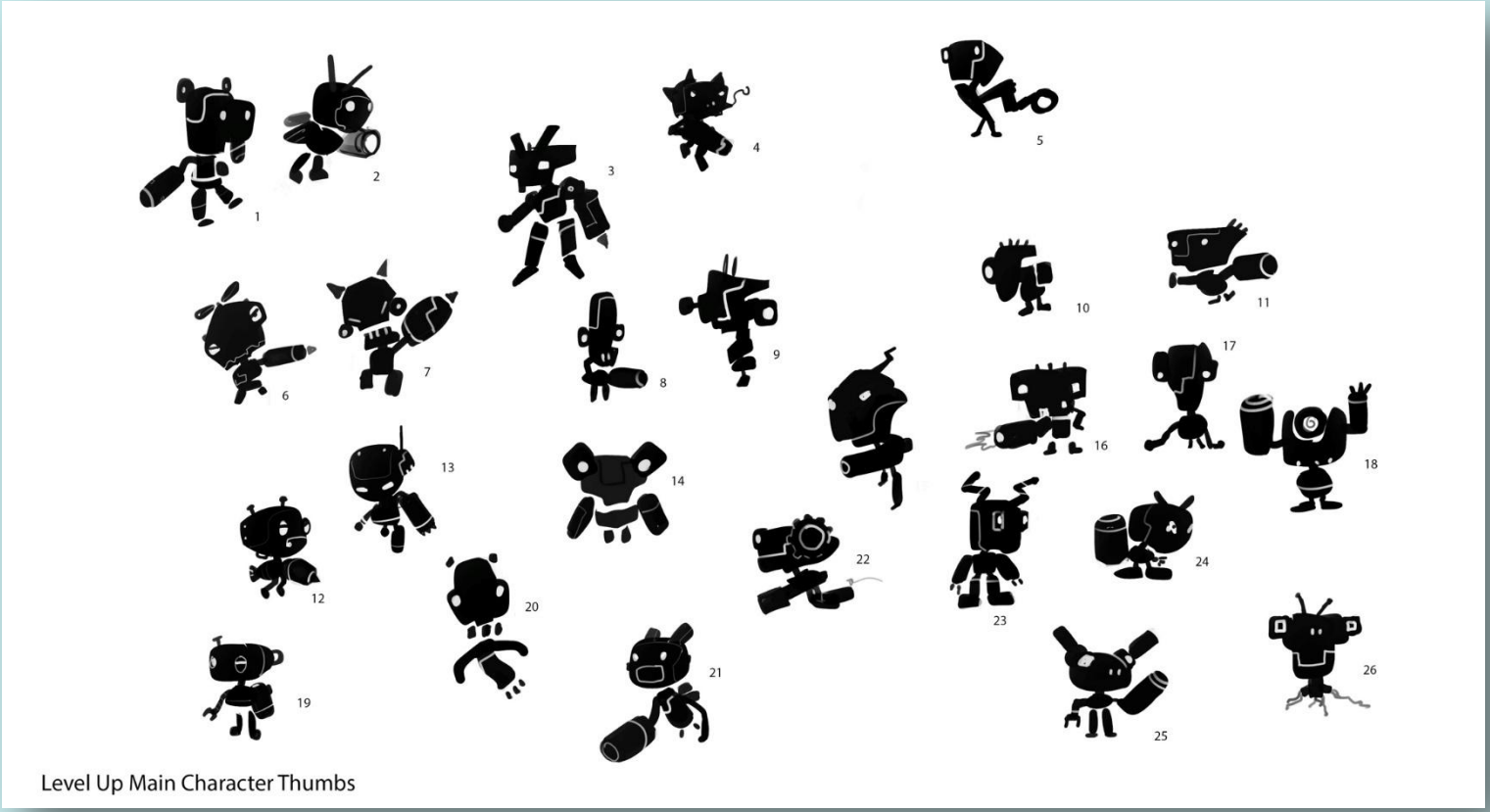
Tinertia 2014

AVAILABLE ON STEAM NOW

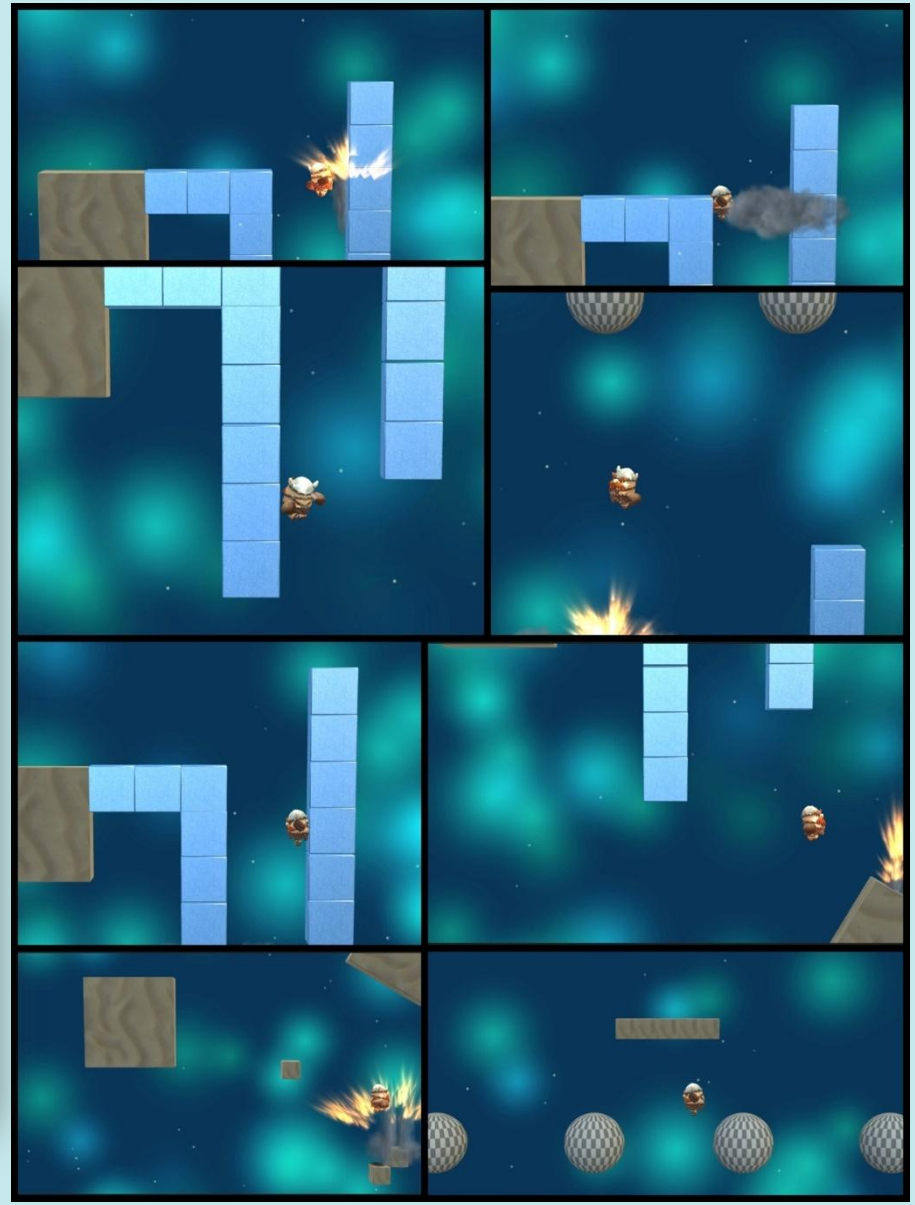
A PRECISION PLATFORMER

Section Studios Games

Tinertia 2014

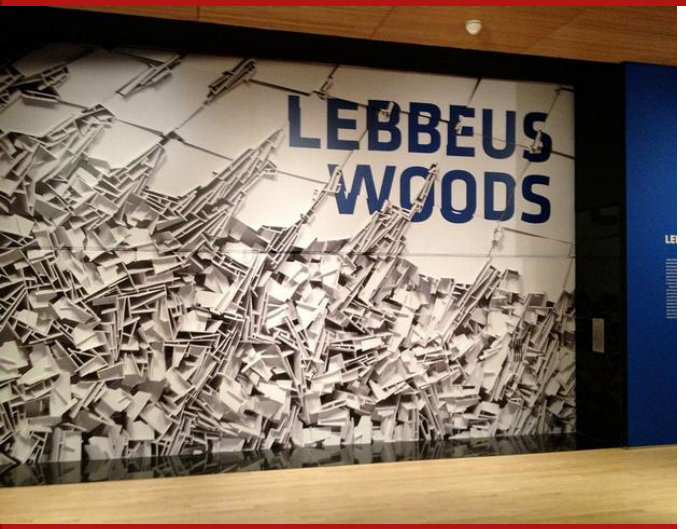


Level Up Main Character Thumbs



TECH DEMO SCREENSHOT

INSPIRATION – Lebbeus Woods



- Geometric Chaos
- Abstract Repetition

DYNAMIC LIGHTING, SPOT LIGHT, STUFF FALLING

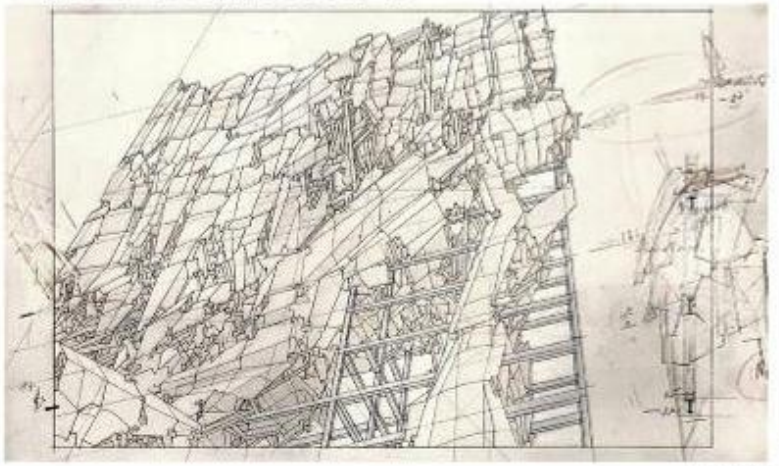
MIDDLE LAYER

ARCHITECTURE / HYBRID 50%

SPACE FILLER: PILE OF CHUNKS BG

RIPPED SKIN OF WALLS BG

EXPOSED STRUCTURES



30%

WATCHTOWERS

20%

SECTION

LEVEL CONCEPT ART

LEVEL CONCEPT ART

Screenshots

Section Studios Games

ECLIPSE

- FIRST PERSON SCI-FI EXPLORATION VR GAME
- COLLABORATION WITH WHITE ELK STUDIOS

Section Studios Games 2015

DEAD REALM

3BLACKDOT

FULL DEVELOPMENT

- AVAILABLE ON STEAM NOW
- 7 MONTHS PRODUCTION
- UP TO 8P MULTIPLAYER

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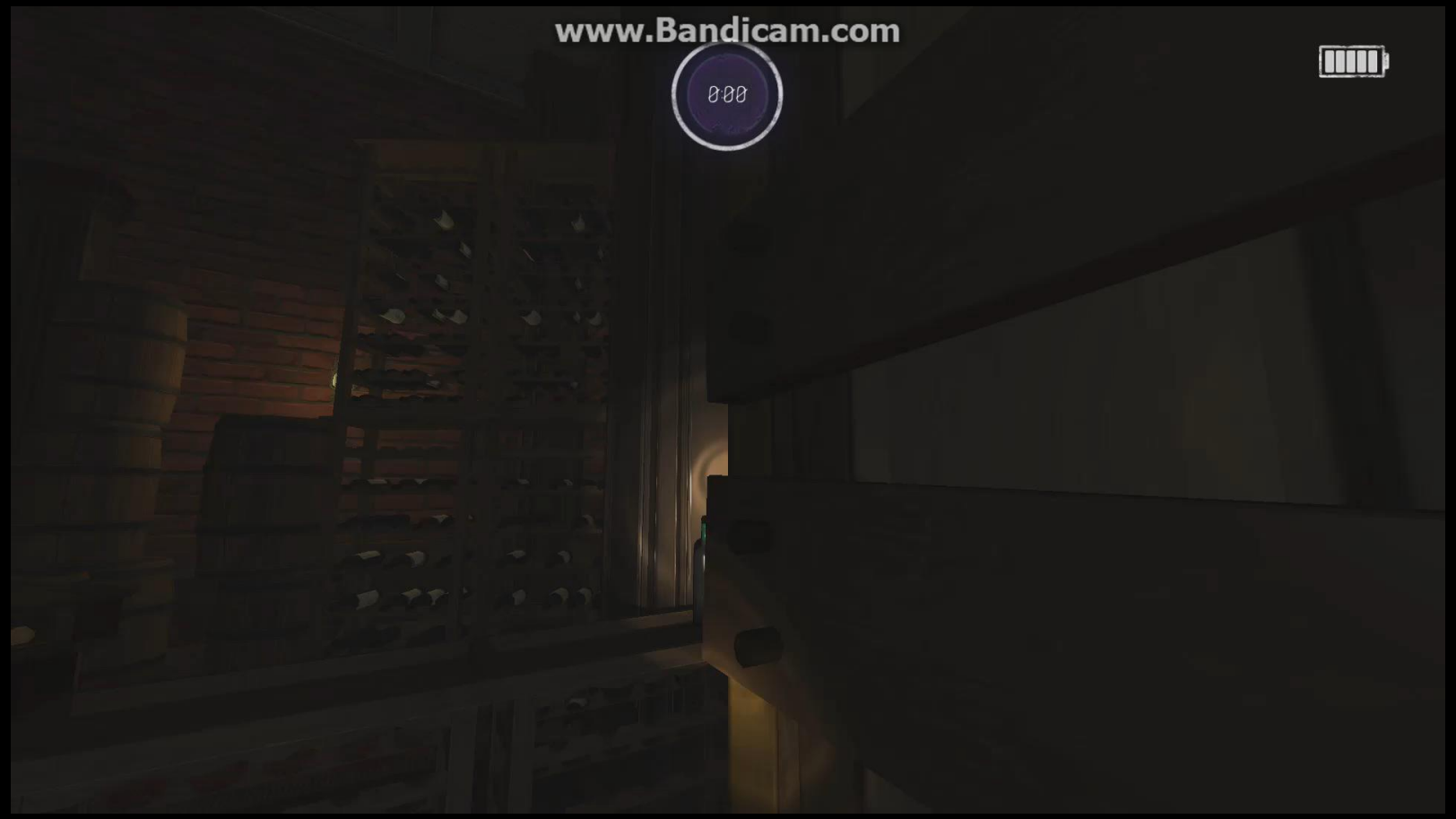

- MOBILE ACTION RPG
- 2016 Q4
- 25+ TEAM

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- 2016 Q4
- 25+ TEAM

Worldwide Opportunities

- Alignment of strategies of 2 different parties
- From 2 different parts of the world

4:33 CREATIVE LAB

Thank you

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