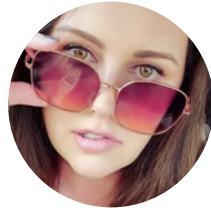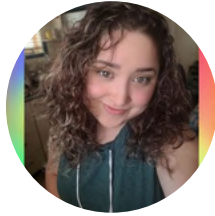COVER BY CYBERTRIBAL86

MEET THE TEAM

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OUR PAGE IS YOUR STAGE

We dedicate our pages to the Virtual Photography community.

We love the art form of Virtual Photography and believe inside you'll find the very best this community has to offer.

If you love one of the featured artists within the mag simply click their work and it will take you directly to their Twitter profile so you can show them some support.

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Tag us or use #ThePhotoMode

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THE ONES WHO CAME BEFORE

VIRTUAL PHOTOGRAPHY COMMUNITY

The Ones Who Came Before VP Community is hosted by Aaron Young from The AC Partnership Program. Every week Aaron and his team, Turid, Renzo and Jack pick their favourite Assassin's Creed shots and showcases them on The Ones Who Came Before website as an article. The idea is to promote virtual photography and talented content creators within the community.

Aaron is a keen virtual photographer and loves to post his journey through Assassin's Creed on Twitter. Keep an eye on the site as more weekly articles are added. You can participate either through tagging your shots to #ACFirstCivVP or by joining the Community.

This issue will be sharing Aarons top picks from the previous months. Be sure to join the community HERE, and to read all previous articles visit theoneswhocamebefore.com.

"ODIN SMILES ON US TODAY"

Although Assassin's Creed Valhalla doesn't have the vibrant scenery of Origins and Odyssey it does have the best moody environments. These are hauntingly showcased in the cursed areas within the game. Majdulf has encapsulated the troubled lands of England with his excellent composition of a Raven atop a shrine. Using just the red and blacks elevates this capture to a new level and makes it stand out from the rest. I love the symbolism of Odin through the Raven and the Paganism that still lives within the Saxon kingdoms.

MAJDULF47   ASSASSINS CREED VALHALLA

I came up with the picture itself because I love silhouettes. I happened to find this cave in Assassin's Creed Origins and placed my camel in such a way. I then adjusted the photo mode settings so that this silhouette effect with the great colours was created. I thought the idea of a slight reflection in the water was very nice. My pictures are usually created spontaneously in the game, and that's also the most fun. I hope that I can soon inspire this community with my VP from Assassin's Creed Mirage.
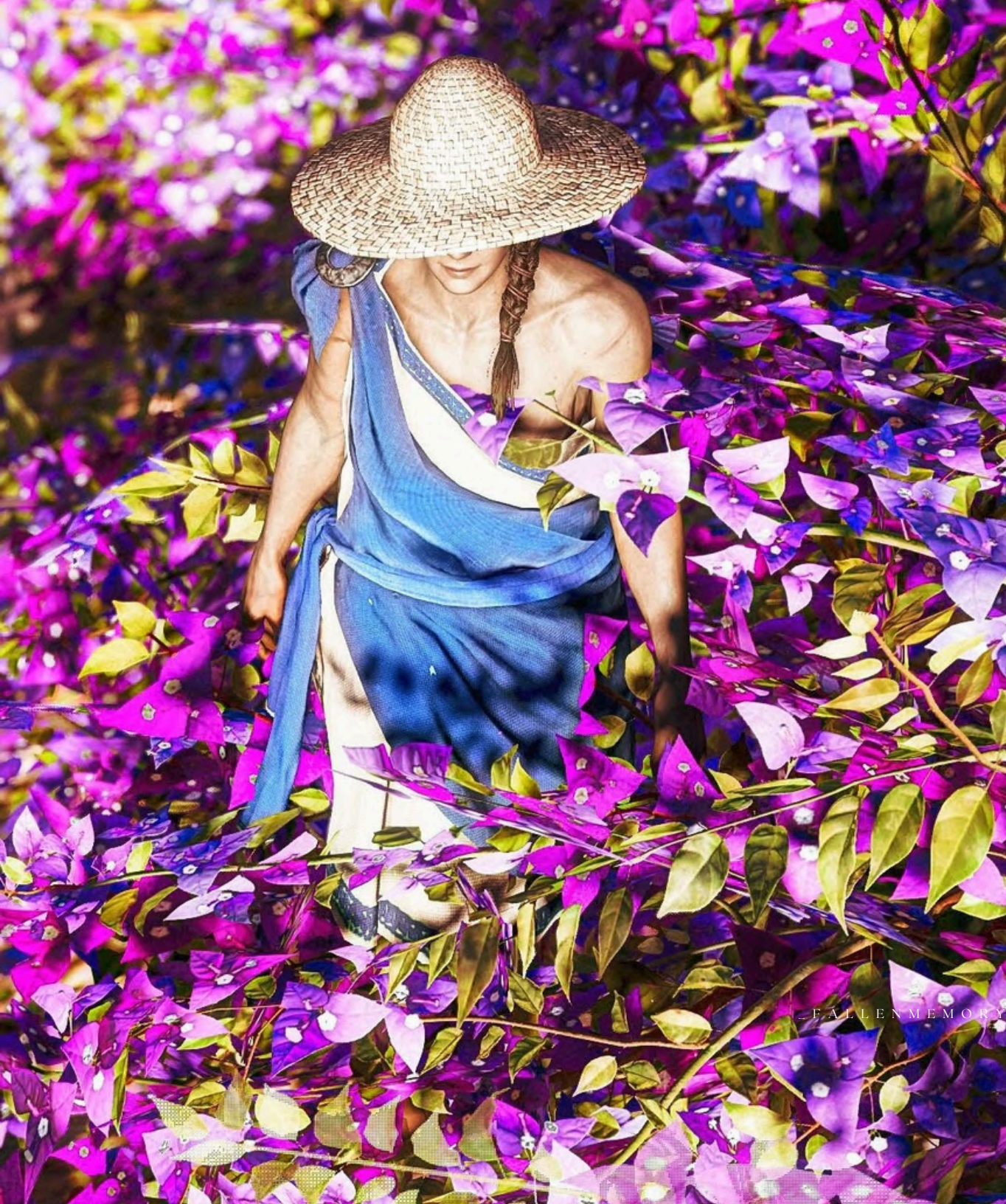
SASKIAEMMISCHVP ASSASSINS CREED MIRAGE

"IT IS NOT PEACE THAT I SEEK. IT IS NOT FOR MY SOUL THAT I WALK THIS PATH."

2017 seems a long time ago now but viewing virtual photography from Assassin's Creed Origins is still an absolute delight. The colour palette and the character designs are so good. @Tigas_VP is one of my favourite Origins photographers. This capture is part of an impressive set that harks back to the wonders of ancient Egypt. The depth of field is impressive as it splits the shot into two, combining the sandy mountain with the calming blue sky. You can't ignore how good the camel looks with its head almost posing for the camera. I am loving how Bayek's outfit blends with the colour tones of this striking capture.

ASSASSINS CREED ORIGINS TIGAS_VP

"TELL YOUR BOSS HE CAN STICK IT".

Assassin's Creed Odyssey is probably one of the most colourful in the series and despite the dark undertones of the story it often feels like a happy place. The decision to bring vibrance and humour to the story was brave, especially after the seriousness of Origins. This capture shows the more relaxed side of Kassandra, chilling out on the Greek islands. She is a ferocious warrior but has a heart of gold that has been captured beautifully here. I love how she has been framed by the vibrant flowers, and the choice of outfit makes it seem like Kassandra is on holiday. A truly excellent capture for this week's theme.

FALLENMEMORY ASSASSINS CREED ODYSSEY

I took this shot in Assassin's Creed Origins by using a trainer to change the time of day, this allowed me to get the sun into an interesting position. I then used camera tools to get this extreme angle where it looks like the sun is rolling down the slope. I waited for Bayek to call Senu and that's how I took the shot. In Lightroom I changed the colour from orange to purple just because I like exotic colours, and I already had a lot of sunset/amber shots. Regards,

THE
ONES
WHO
CAME
BEFORE

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FEATURES

FEAST YOUR EYES

WAVERC_

This place reminded me of a similar location from the Silent Hill series, which I love. I love the contrast between an amusement park and a nightmare. In this shot, I wanted to capture that feeling.

CYBERPUNK2077 JACOBEE__

Hello everyone, my name is Jakub, also known as JacoBee. I'm 31 years old and from the Czech Republic.

I've always loved taking and editing pictures, whether in real life or in video games. My interest in virtual photography really took off after my son was born (shout out to Oliver and my wife Katie). Any parent can confirm that you can't play like you used to, but you don't want to either because spending time with your child becomes so important. So when I had time to play, it was mostly in shorter sessions, and instead of doing missions and stuff, I found myself exploring and taking pictures.

During that time, I focused more on games I was already familiar with, mainly AC Odyssey and Cyberpunk 2077. Even though I knew these games inside out, I began to explore them through the "camera lens," which made the games feel new and exciting again.

The story behind this picture is one of improvisation. I loved the colours from the first glance. I wanted to play with focus, but unfortunately, the photo mode on PS5 is limited, and I couldn't do what I originally intended, so I improvised. The two NPCs you see are one person helping another who is heavily intoxicated. So I thought, "Let's use that. What if I blur it all to give it that blurry night party vibe?" I played with the framing and basically changed the whole idea into a different photo. But that's what makes VP, and photography in general, so cool!

My name is Hajer and I have been doing virtual photography since 2017 and started posting my photos in 2022. I love being a part of this community because I have met so many kind and talented people.

Virtual photography is more than just a hobby for me. When I'm doing virtual photography I get really immersed and focused on what I'm doing and as someone with OCD, it has helped me a lot to ignore my obsessive thoughts.

UYSCUTI10 RED DEAD REDEMPTION 2

"If you're gonna ride like lightening, you're gonna crash like thunder."

I'm not sure where or who originated the quote but I heard it in a movie and I think it fits Sadie's story very well.

I almost didn't take any VP during the scene this shot was taken lol I was so enthralled by what was happening. But, then the shot practically presented itself when Sadie looked over at Arthur, blood was splattered on her face, it felt wrong not to capture that moment. I feel like Sadie is always chasing a storm, or has a storm within herself waiting to be released and I wanted to capture that feeling when creating this shot.

I came up with this picture because I am a big fan of the animal world / underwater world.

I discovered this game and won it over, and it was even better that this game has a photo mode. There are so many great subjects to photograph, but I was most drawn to the whales.

When the whale swam past me and started to turn on its own axis, I had to take the chance and take this shot. After changing perspectives several times, it was clear to me that the large tail fin had to be in focus. After several back and forth tests in photo mode with filters, colors, contrasts, and lights, this picture was created.

I also find the minimalist aspect of the picture very beautiful. I think this picture represents the beauty of nature and the ocean.

My favorite quote on the subject of animals is always "Animals are better people."

As for a statement, here's something: The way I take VP, I rarely start with already having an idea of what I want to shoot. Usually I just go along with whatever happens in the game, and try to capture a cool visual (usually my main goal), and sometimes maybe even something with a deeper meaning/narrative. In this shots case, I entered this big, open, dark space and knew I had to take something.

The pillar bridge mostly blending with the background apart from its outlines, which here look slightly like a bridge made from light, helped even more to keep the shot focused and (hopefully!) not distracting the viewer away from Jesse, which I was really happy with.
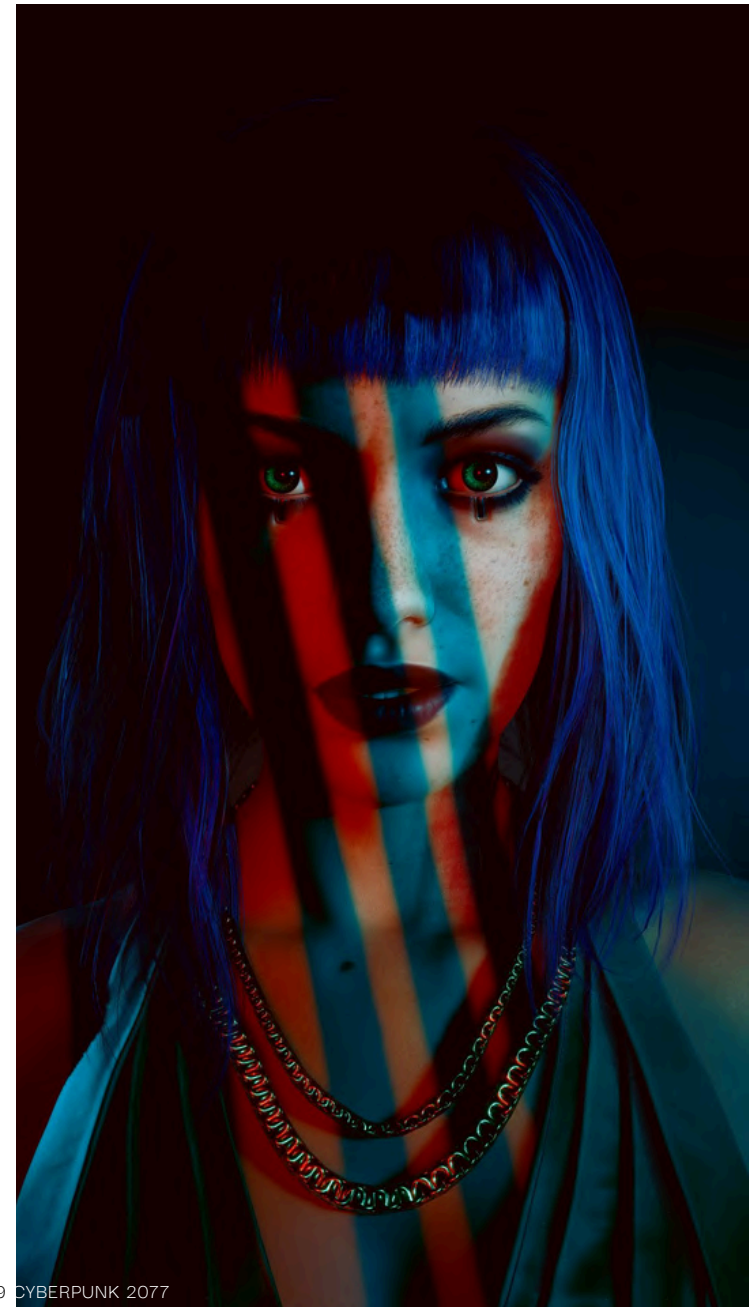
Plus the cool thing is that this could be interpreted (at least in my mind!) as Jesse facing the unknown, hidden in the shadows, as it often was the case in Oldest House or, given that she's looking to the left, coming up against the darkness of her past. Minimalism isn't generally a style I do a lot of, so it was nice to capture something like this.

Hello, I'm Kel or Kulma not my real names but you can call me Michael, I'm a virtual photographer, mostly focus on portraits in Cyberpunk 2077. I started doing virtual photography because I never had the chance to become a photographer in real life. I know nothing about photography when I started my virtual photography journey back in late march 2024 so everything is self-taught and mostly inspired by an iconic photographer named Yousuf Karsh.

Anyway, when I started shooting this portrait, I wanted to try something new, something that I never seen before in the community. I started using multiple light sources with different colours that mix together, 3 of them to be specific like the one in the portrait, 2 on the sides which are red coloured lighting and 1 raised facing down in front of her which is blue coloured.

As for the lines, I used steel bars that you can spawn in the game using a mod and its the same with the background, its a wall with different colour options that i scaled up to make it big.

And yes I don't post-edit my shots because I can do all the things I need in-game, that includes the settings of each lighting/s and setting everything up. And lastly, I would like to thank TPM for the feature, its an honour."

KULMA69 CYBERPUNK 2077

Ellie is my favourite video game character, so I love to take portraits of her. I find I take a lot of shots in TLOU2 and I wanted to get some of a younger Ellie. As always I love playing around with lighting, and in this particular shot I love the way the light hits her eye.

Flintlock was my surprise game this year. I saw shots from other Virtual Photographers during the demo phase and had to try it! I really like the overall look of the world and characters, the in-game photo mode is intuitive to use and has some nice features.

The portrait of this NPC was a lucky accident while trying to get an action shot of the main character. When I moved the camera, I spotted her in a corner and zoomed in because I liked her blue hood. Coming closer revealed her beautiful face paint and I just had to take a shot. I am happy with the portrait.

TURIDTORKIL FLINTLOCK SIEGE OF DAWN

Hello, my names TNovixVP but usually go by TNX, I'm 26 and been doing virtual photography for a few years now. Doing VP is really an escape for me, playing games and visiting another world is one thing but when I can shift that world by changing a simple pose, a little depth of field, maybe the filter and film grain then I truly feel at home. I always look to others for inspiration and hope my shots can be used as inspiration themselves.

This shot in particular was me exploring a planet on Star Wars Jedi: Survivor, I was fighting a few enemies while one stunned me with a grenade, I quickly assumed I could use the effect it gave the screen to benefit the background and put more focus on the specific character I was capturing. So I hopped into photo mode and with a few movements of the camera and a small filter change, a bit of the characters helmet was more in depth and everything else was a blurry haze, with both weapons held perfectly side by side. A truly 'capture it or you'll miss it' type of shot.

JEDI SURVIVOR TNOVIXVP

Hi, I'm Pip!

The first time I took this shot I had the camera on the inside of the bus, but I thought the reflections in the windows were too distracting. Usually when I have an idea but can't get it to work I'll put it away and come back to it later.

A few weeks went by and I started to look at street photography to get some inspiration. I noticed photographers using window reflections to create abstract images, or just to make their compositions more interesting.

With a new perspective I went looking for some spots to try it out. I remembered the shot I tried to take on the bus. I went back, set up the shot, but this time I took the camera to the outside of the bus, and took the shot through the window looking in. This way the reflections worked more in my favour rather than against me. I was happy with it and I hope people like it!

THWIPPIP SPIDER-MAN 2

My name is Adam and I am a 34 year old virtual photographer. It has been several years since I started this wonderful hobby, to which I owe so much and which has made my life complete in many ways. My works are characterized by strong and lively colours and I like to capture small details that may escape the attention of others. My favourite subjects are nature, flora and fauna, close-up and sometimes minimalism.

Virtual photography is a special thing and has a special place in my heart. An art form that will play an important role in the lives of more and more people in the future, as I'm sure many people like me have found happiness when they decided to take up this hobby. There are a lot of exceptional games on the market and fortunately more and more of them include photo mode, not to mention that I have never met so many talented artists who make up the photography community in my life. Every day I see inspiring works, which help my own personal development too. Taking photos and editing them. We are talking about a constantly repeating, perhaps monotonous thing, but it fills me with excitement and life every single time.

I took this photo from NFS Unbound. If we are talking about photography, I have always considered racing games to be one of the most difficult categories. When we play such a game, we mostly take photos of different beautiful cars, but details are everywhere, including the environment. I was just parking in a marina when I noticed a building with this winding staircase. I remember being completely enchanted by its simplicity and trying to capture it as aesthetically pleasing as possible. Honestly, this photo made me fall in love with racing games, so I'm sure I'll be looking for these special places between two races.

Favourite quote: "Trust yourself! You know more than you think!"

The idea was to capture the intricate little details that CDPR managed to put. I wanted this image to be a display of all the scars, rips, shreds and the basic masculinity of Geralt's body.

Reach out & be that strong hand of Light, in the darkness! Because sometimes, reaching out & taking someone's hand is the beginning of a brand-new journey. Stretching out your hand reaching for the farthest stars in the sky. Never be afraid to put yourself out there, win or lose It's all about your warrior spirit deep within you. To challenge yourself to be open to all the possibilities of your highest potential. So, take the challenge of your life & reach out to your goals. There are no limits to what you can achieve in life. To be a strong inspiring hand in the dark, reaching out to the beyond. & in the silents of the dark, when you thought you were down & out. You will come back stronger to Rise Up Higher. To touch the sky & even if it burns your fingers, you're only going to survive it all. So, Reach Out, be a hand of Hope, Loving & kindness. Be the Light & glow! Don't let anything try to stop you. Because you're in CONTROL! & You hold the power in your hand. Whether it feels sane, or just the right kind of insane. Tack Control & Never stop taking risks for your dreams. Just keep Reaching Out because you're a Light in the dark.

Carmo- Fernandes/ Raider Warrior

I'm Fábio and I'm administrator of FORZATOGRAPHY
CENTRAL and FORZA PORTUGAL My gaming thing is "go with
flow" no targets, just play and enjoy…. VP for me started with
curiosity/necessity. I always liked photography but never tried
my self, during my paternity license I needed help my FORZA
PORTUGAL community members and voila the adventure
started.

That shot specifically I used green mustang as BULLIT tribute
and the environment I always loved wet tarmac with some
reflexes, mixed with final day colours was perfect match….

For final touches I used just little bit of lightroom. Music I listen
everything since opera, electronic, metal, hip-hop, etc because
I believe we can find 1 music from any style depending the
moment we are living or our state of mind….

CCOCAS2 FORZA 5

GHOST OF TSUSHIMA
CAPTUREKNIGHT

Hi! About a year ago I started doing Virtual photography, at first I just sent my friends the pictures I took, what outfit I was wearing in Red dead redemption or just where I was holding in the game. There was nothing special about these pictures and I started to take photo mode in games more seriously, I sent pictures to friends who liked them, so I thought it might be worth sharing them with others.

I started uploading pictures to X, that's how I found this great community, where you don't see the bad side of the internet, you share the pictures you take with cool people. So far I have only talked to helpful friendly people within the community. Since I've been doing this as a hobby I enjoy it as much as I enjoy playing. Since I didn't study photography in school, this community is the biggest help for me to grow and I am very grateful to all those who motivate me to do this activity, even if it is just with a post every day. Every week I have the motivation to create something that no one else has created. I love film, cinematography is one of the most important parts of film for me. I try to recreate in my pictures the colours of the films I have seen or felt while watching them, and in some cases I may succeed.

When a game really hits me I can take really good pictures, in this case it was Ghost of Tsushima. This game was an emotional rollercoaster for me, I loved every minute of it. Because I loved this game so much, I started reading haiku outside of the game and also delved into the work of Miyamoto Musashi. I tried to put the thoughts and feelings I got from it into my pictures. Usually I use photo mode without changing the weather, time of day etc. I want to give back to those who see the picture what I felt or saw at that moment. In this case, the setting sun shows the silhouette of Jin.

I tried to use this image to represent the loneliness I felt while playing, as well as what Jin must have felt in that moment. "Think lightly of yourself and deeply of the world." -Miyamoto Musashi

Of all the games I've photographed thus far, the Ghost of Tsushima photo mode remains my favourite. In this photo, I wanted to frame Jin with trees, and the misty weather worked out better than I had hoped. The more I explored this world, the more I realized there are numerous minor locations that encapsulate the game's stunning artistic quality.

EAGLETWB2 BGHOST OF TSUSHIMA

THE CALLISTO PROTOCOL MARAKNIGHTVP

Greetings friends and VP's alike! Where to begin?.... VP has opened my eyes and deepened my appreciation for gaming these last few years, and what began as a simple hobby has shifted to a great passion. The immersion and control it provides has given me a greater appreciation for the incredible work and passion that game developers put into the titles we love to capture!

This shot from the Callisto Protocol is no exception. Being a huge fan of the horror genre, this game was everything I could ask for. Sci-fi, body horror and paranoia! Lighting, facial animations and textures here are top notch, all thanks to the power of Unreal Engine, making every shot exciting to dive into. The majority of this game is spent alone wandering the eerie hallways and tunnels of Black Iron Prison, which is now crawling with infected inmates and nightmarish creatures, and it's here where I begin my captures. The look of tension and paranoia on Jacob, the game's protagonist, adds some great shot opportunities that really sells the vibe and atmosphere within the game, and it keeps me coming back time and time again.

VP's and horror fans alike, I implore you all to give this title a go and behold the excellent work that Striking Distance studios achieved here!

ALAN WAKE 2
PHOTO MODE
EXPLAINED

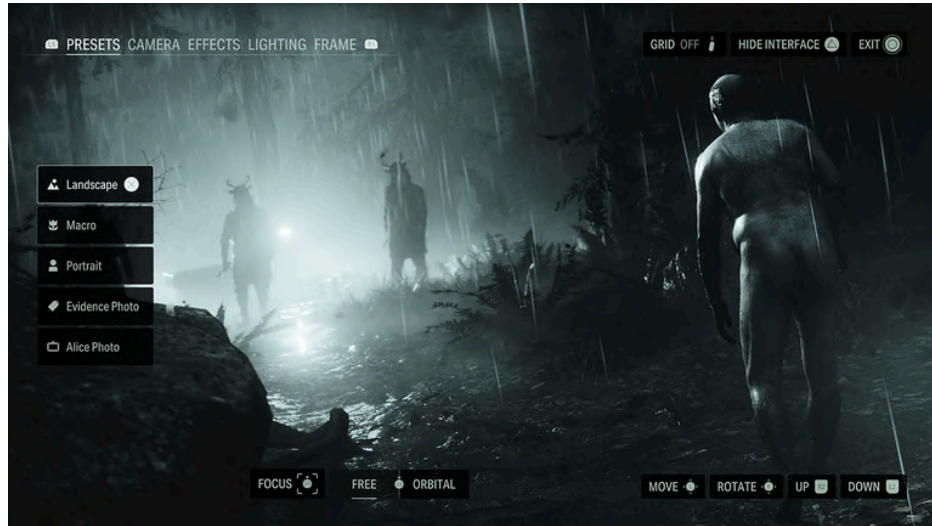This article is also available on TheFourthFocus Blog and YouTube Channel

Alan Wake 2 is one of those games that deserved to have a photo mode right from the start. The atmospheric horror has an outstanding visual style to match its unique storytelling, but Remedy made us wait, even despite the enduring popularity of Control with in-game photographers.

The new photo mode was worth waiting for though and Alan Wake 2 benefits from a much more comprehensive photographic setup than the one we saw in Control. As always, understanding how it all works is the first step, so here is the Alan Wake 2 photo mode explained from my perspective as a photographer to make it easier for you to capture great shots.

Presets

After finding your way into the photo mode via the pause menu – there is no shortcut button sadly – the first thing you'll actually find is a list of 5 preset modes. These change several other settings in the photo mode to set up the camera for a specific type of shot.

Landscape: Equips a 16 mm lens for a wide-angle field of view, along with an aperture f-stop value of f/11 and focus distance of 50 m for a deep depth of field. As the name suggests, this preset is ideal for shots of the environment with a lot of the scene kept in sharp focus.

Portrait: This preset recreates a setup typically used by real world portrait photographers. An 85 mm lens offers you a much narrower field of view to help isolate the subject, and a wide-open aperture f-stop of f/1.0 gives a very shallow depth of field with a soft, blurry background. The focus is set to 3.0 m which is a bit too far for my preferred framing at 85 mm, but that can obviously be tweaked with the manual settings.

Macro: Increases the lens focal length to 100 mm while setting the aperture to f/0.4 and focus distance to 1.0 m for close-up shots with an ultra-shallow depth of field. This preset will probably just give you an entirely blurry image at first, but you just need to move the camera closer to the subject to find the focus.

Evidence Photo: This uses a fairly "normal" camera lens setup at a focal length of 50 mm and f/8.0 aperture but combines it with the Polaroid frame to give the look of an instant camera photograph. The camera flash is also activated to give bright illumination of nearby subjects, or indeed victims!

Alice Photo: The final preset relates to the game's story by using the Alice Photo frame and Dark Presence filter to recreate the inverted B&W style of Alice Wakes photographs of The Dark Place.

Camera

Remedy have included two separate camera movement modes with the first being a completely free camera that is moved forwards, backwards, left, and right using the LS and turned through full 360° pan & tilt with the RS. The L2 / R2 triggers move it vertically up & down, while a full range of roll is available on the Camera tab of the UI.

A click on L3 toggles the camera into orbit mode which will always aim towards the playable character as it orbits around them with the RS. Though the camera position can be offset slightly with the LS, this is naturally a more restricted mode but can be a handy way to explore different portrait angles.

Lens: This is the camera's zoom and changes the visible field of view. A shorter lens length provides a wide angle that will take in more of the surroundings but also cause greater perspective distortion. A long lens zooms in, narrowing the field of view and compressing the perceived distance between the foreground and background and isolating the subject.

F-Stop: Controls the depth of field, i.e. how much of the scene appears in acceptable focus and is given in aperture f-numbers. These behave just as they do on a real camera lens with smaller f-numbers like f/1.0 simulating a wide aperture with a shallow depth of field and stronger bokeh blur, while a larger f-stop like f/14 simulates a small aperture with a much deeper depth of field that keeps more in focus.

Focus Distance: Focus itself is set with a distance value that moves the point of sharpest focus closer to or further from the camera. It's worth noting that the depth of field at any fixed f-stop value is most shallow when focusing on closer objects and much deeper when focusing further away.

Auto Focus: Auto focus is also available by clicking R3. This will try to snap the focus onto a central subject and can be useful to get an approximate focus as you move the camera around. In my experience though, it is not very reliable, and you will get better results by focusing the camera manually.

Exposure: Affects the brightness of the image using a scale from -3.0 to +3.0 with negative values making it darker and positive values making it lighter. Pay particular attention to the way that this setting has a strong effect on the highlights and creates a broad bloom that spreads outwards around bright light sources.

Effects

Filter: A lengthy list of post-process effects is headed-up by 6 colour filters that mainly offer subtle changes that shift the atmosphere of an area rather than dramatically altering the colour. The one exception is the Dark Presence filter which applies an inverted B&W style.

Contrast: Adjusts the difference between dark shadows and bright highlights. Low contrast values flatten the luminosity of the image and shifts everything towards a neutral grey while higher values produce an image with stronger blacks and brighter whites.

Brightness: This gives another way to change how bright the image is and behaves in a different way to the camera exposure. Whereas Exposure has a greater influence on the highlights, Brightness affects the whole image equally by shifting shadows, midtones, and highlights together. A low Exposure with high Brightness can lighten a shot without blowing out light sources or causing too much bloom.

Saturation: Changes the strength and intensity of the on-screen colours. Increasing this will make colours stronger and more vivid, decreasing it will make colours more muted, and a value of 0 will result in a pure B&W shot.

Lens Distortion: Applies a stretch / pinch effect to the image to give an exaggerated sense of an imperfect optical lens and causing straight edges to appear curved. Unlike other settings here, 50 is the neutral value where no distortion is applied and moving it either up or down will add an increasing amount of barrel or pincushion distortion to the image.

Vignette: Applies a darkening effect around the outer edges of the frame, becoming more opaque and closer to the centre as the value increases. This can be used to replicate the light drop-off that occurs in some camera lenses, or as a more deliberate artistic style that directs attention towards a central subject.

Film Grain: Adds a grainy texture to the image to simulate the look of photographic film. Use low values for a cleaner shot, or higher values to increase the amount of visible grain. It's usually best not to overuse grain, although the right amount can make low-light shots appear much more natural and authentic.

Radial Blur: This is another effect that is applied to the outer edges of the image with a motion-like blur spreading outwards from the middle. This unusual effect can give the impression of forward motion or may just be used to draw the attention to the centre. As usual, a higher number here results in a stronger effect.

Fogginess: Perhaps the most interesting effect in this photo mode, Fogginess adds an increasing amount of fog to the environment. Distant at first, the fog gets gradually closer to the camera as the value is increased until it smothers the scene with claustrophobic foreboding. It's perfect to emphasise a horror vibe and works beautifully with light sources to give volumetric lighting effects.

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That's all for this excerpt but you can find out more about the remaining features of the Alan Wake 2 photo mode – including everything you need to know about the three separate custom lights – in the full article. Check it out now on TheFourthFocus Blog and YouTube Channel.

ALAN
WAKE II

We talk with Kyle Rowley, Game Director
and Rio Kroll, UI/UX Designer from Remedy
Entertainment about Alan Wake II and its photo mode.

What led to the decision to feature a dual protagonist story in Alan Wake 2?

Kyle Rowley - After 13 years from the release of the original Alan Wake, we knew that we wanted to have a new character for the sequel, a new perspective into the world of Alan Wake, someone who hasn't experienced the events of the first game. Saga acts as a point of view character for players who either don't remember what happened prior, or for new players to the franchise. It was important for us to get this perspective.

How did you achieve such an intense atmosphere in Alan Wake 2? It's rare for a game to maintain a sense of unease throughout its entire gameplay. Even in moments where nothing overtly sinister is happening, you've created a lingering sense of fear that feels ever-present.

Kyle Rowley- I think it's a combination of the audio-visual work that our amazing team have done and the narrative setup that we establish very early on in the experience. From the very start of the game, we wanted to invoke a sense of dread in the player. Even in the moments where you could consider the game less scary, we didn't want anything to seem totally normal. Characters would act slightly oddly, or the world would feel slightly out of place – even though it is quite subtle, over time it can leave a lasting impression on how players perceived the world. This is then heightened in the key moments where we knew we wanted to properly scare the player.

(captures by Official Cabbac, Playpausephoto, Aquelyrass)

(Capture by ginapeloux)

Did you draw inspiration from other media, such as TV shows or films, to create the atmosphere in the game?

Kyle Rowley - Yes! Lots! True Detective, especially season 1, was a key inspiration for Saga's story, with a focus on the beginning. Hannibal the TV show, Se7en, Hereditary, The Witch were all used for reference in different forms of Saga's story. Taxi Driver was a key inspiration for our Nightmare New York, along with Inception and Memento for its narrative structures and dreamlike nature. So many!

In Quantum Break, we see Alan Wake in the "Return" trailer. Was it always the plan to bring Alan back? It's impressive to think that this was considered back in 2016, showing just how much thought goes into the universe you've created.

Kyle Rowley - We wanted to bring Alan back as soon as we finished the first game, ha! For various reasons it just never worked out, but after the success of Control we were determined to figure out a way to continue his journey. The Return trailer in Quantum Break was a way to remind ourselves and our players that we haven't forgotten about him. We still had plans! Luckily, we got to execute on those ideas eventually.

Sam is an incredible writer. How do you go about transforming his and the team's words and ideas into an actual game? Can you run us through some of the creative process?

Kyle Rowley - It can be challenging, but at the same time, extremely rewarding because the stories Sam and the team write are so unique. Generally, we will be working together to define what kind of game we want to make before we start working properly on the story. Knowing the game will be a survival horror and that we will have dual protagonists where the player can switch between the two whenever they want, massively affects the story, so we need to lock down these kinds of key elements before we start.

Once the concept is in place, we receive a treatment from narrative for the story. Very high level, the key beats of the story, character arcs etc. This gets analyzed by the leads and the rest of the team and we will iterate on that. During this time, we will also be working on gameplay prototypes, establishing metrics for character movement and combat etc.

When we are happy with the treatment, we will start breaking it down into locations, missions and mapping the story out across the game. We will try and estimate and scope of work to see if we can make the story we want to tell, or if we need to change the story to match the budget etc. Ideally all this work happens early on, but making games is hard, so sometimes we end up making changes to the story quite deep into the development process due to scope or budget constraints!.....

......As this work is on-going narrative start working on a story outline, which is more detailed than the treatment and will be broken up into different missions. From here we create a proper mission flow, add gameplay elements, lock locations we want to use etc. The difficulty for Alan Wake 2 was that a lot of our story was being told in ambitious experimental gameplay systems like the case board and we didn't lock how that worked till quite late into development, so getting final screenplays was difficult for the writing team.

Our screenplays are quite detailed so a lot of what you see on the screen comes from them. We work with art, audio and other departments to visualize what those words look like in the context of a game and the world of Alan Wake. It's a fun, complex, collaborative but quite stressful process and I wouldn't have it any other way!

The photo mode in Alan Wake 2 is a significant improvement over your previous game, Control. Was this something you aimed to achieve from day one, or did it develop over time?

Riho Kroll - Yes, that was the goal from day one. We wanted to do a lot more with the photo mode this time around and bring in more of the themes from the game itself.

Did you take inspiration from other photo modes out there in the industry?

Riho Kroll - Absolutely. There's some amazing photo modes out there. Spiderman, Ghost of Tsushima, Cyberpunk, to name a few.

At Remedy, you are incredibly supportive and interactive with the virtual photography community. How do you view virtual photography as a company? Is it just another hobby within the gaming space, or do you see it as a more valuable tool?

Riho Kroll - Well firstly, we love to see people sharing photos from our games. It has been great to see so many awesome photos being shared by people online. Aside from that, we have also worked closely with virtual photographers in the past to help out with the content of the game itself. Helping with marketing screenshots for example, and even screenshots used in the game itself. All of the save slot screenshots shown in the save/load menus are done by Duncan Harris.

Also, the publisher 505 Games has been incredibly supportive with Control, as they have been handling the community side of things for that game.

What exactly goes into designing and creating a photo mode? Is it something you can just add into the game or are there different processes involved?

Riho Kroll - There's quite a lot that goes into it. A lot of research about what the expectations are from players, a lot of technical analysis about what we can do from the engine and implementation perspective, bunch of design and technical implementation. There's a significant amount of effort that goes into building the photo mode.
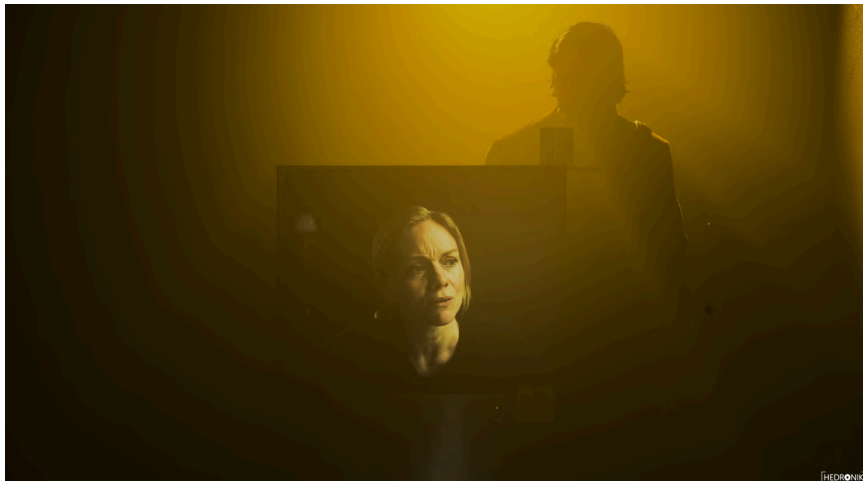
(capture by cybertribal)

TANFOI

ITSGUMAO

HEDRONIK

YABOISPARKLE

ALEXKoNSTANTIN

VP_S_H16

WAKESSTUDY

WINGSFORSMILES

AMAZINGDRLAMA

RIAINWONDERLAND

ZEPHYRONE01

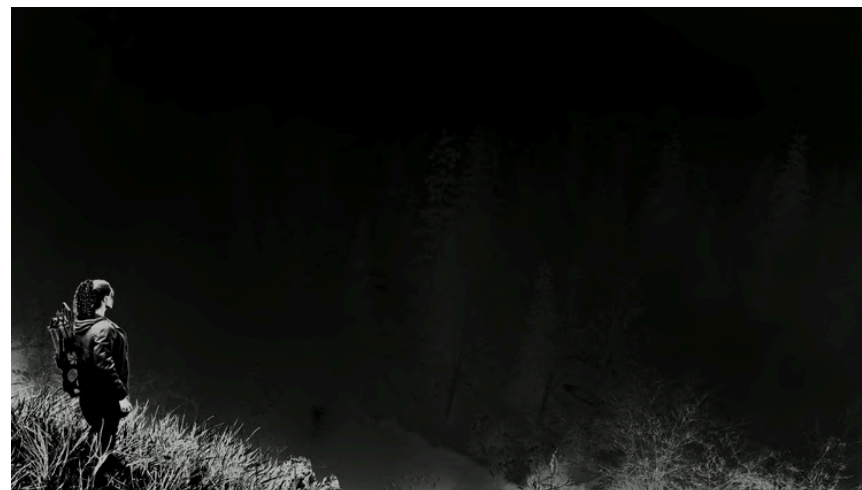**LENSESANDPIXELS**

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FALLOUT76

We speak with Jon Rush, Creative Director and
Stephanie Cates, Lead Monetization Programmer from
Bethesda about the wasteland of Fallout 76.

Did you take inspiration from other photo modes out there in the industry?

Stephanie Cates: Of course! Other games have implemented brilliant photo modes. We added a Fallout touch to ours and expanded it to highlight and showcase a player's Camp in addition to the player. Camps are as much of a creative expression as the player character itself. Tethering photo mode to Camps really expanded the sharable content players can create!

Jon Rush:·We have certainly noted what other games have done with their photo mode features, but the majority of the inspiration came from our players and how they would want to use this fun tool.

In what ways does the photo mode enhance the overall player experience in Fallout 76?

Stephanie Cates: We love the Fallout 76 community, and we want to see their creativity as much as they want to show it off! Photo mode allows players to bring their experience out of the game itself and to share it with friends and on social media. We also use player photos as loading screens in game, and it's a really neat scrapbook to bring back good memories and remind players of great achievements! We also have our new Best Builds feature that utilizes photo mode in order to showcase creative camp photos to other players in the game itself and not just on social media!

Jon Rush: Our players love to build! Having a robust photo mode feature gives them the means to show off those cool camps.

Captures by Lapomme Nutmegs)

You've recently improved the photo mode, could you run us through what you've introduced?

Stephanie Cates: Photo mode is a great outlet to share creativity, and we recognized that players express this creativity in their Camp builds as much as on their character itself. We untethered the photo mode camera from the player and bound it by a Camp area so players can share their incredible camp builds with others. Our photo mode menu offers some neat features to enhance sharable media of the camp, but also offers the ability to hide the UI which is great for video capture! We've been able to see some amazing camps using photo mode.

Jon Rush: I love being able to hide UI while in photo mode. We use this often for some of our marketing materials.

There must be extra challenges when implementing a photo mode to an online game than a single player game. What technical or creative challenges were encountered during the development of the photo mode?

Stephanie Cates: The main consideration is that online games never pause. Just like a true unpredictable wasteland, players can't guarantee the action will stop around them; it's a risk pulling out a camera in the middle of combat! We also strive to maintain a fair player experience. Giving players extra tools to change their point of view can push that boundary and can also change the player's experience.

Jon Rush: One consideration we had to take was ensuring that players couldn't use a free cam mode to the detriment of the play experience, such as peeking around far away corners, or using a free cam to spy on unwary players.

How has the player community reacted to being able to take photos in Fallout 76?

Our players love being able to show off what they build, whether that's in their camps, or camp shelters! Using the various photo frames and filters provided, social media is full of creative snapshots from our players.

(capture by nukamegs)

Are there any standout or particularly memorable photos submitted by players that may have caught your eye?

Stephanie Cates: I love seeing player Camps captured in photo mode. We have contests and social media showcases of player Camps, and there are so many outstanding ones! We love when our community shares their photos with us, and we share standouts amongst the devs too. We are often amazed by what our players are able to achieve creatively.

Jon Rush: I love the photos that make small objects look big. For example, one of our players recreated a giant creature (character in a mascot costume) terrorizing an entire city of miniatures, but the camera angle and framing made it look very believable.

(capture by LaPombe)

With new updates and more coming to Fallout 76, what areas would you love to see more photos of in-game?

Stephanie Cates: We're really excited to see more Camp photos with the Best Builds feature. We also have some other features in the works that will be fantastic photo mode subjects!

Jon Rush: I'm going to be on the lookout for some exciting shots from The Gleaming Depths, coming out this holiday season!

Thank you both for joining us for this issue!

We asked our featured wastelanders a few questions about their experiences with Fallout 76.

What is your favorite feature of Fallout 76's photo mode?

LeftKee - I like the ability to blur the background and change the colour of the filters.

NukaMegs - My favourite feature in the Fallout 76 photomode is definitely the filters and saturation. They allow you to really take beautiful photos and add tons of colour which is what I am obsessed with!

LaPombe - its tie between poses and depth of field. I had never seen anything like it before! Blew my mind I could blur out a background for better visuals. And posing was so cool. I had to have all of them.

Jessica-Star - There's a lot to love about FO76 photomode. I'd say three things that stand out personally are sliders that allow you to use extreme values, being a 'live' photomode that doesn't pause the world, and the fact that in conjunction with game building mechanics you can build your sets, subjects, place actual lights and have full creative control.

It's that last one that's my real favourite—yes it combines photomode and build mechanics but in photography of all kinds you often pose and set the scene. Sure other photomodes may let you add a light source or two, but in 76 you can add several, control the colours, and even put practical lights in the shot. As an example of all three together I've built stage sets to record live talk shows via photomode or built a backlit green screen and recorded actors against it with controlled contrast and saturation. I've gone through many photomode phases over the last six years. It's versatile for photo and video and that makes it really special.

What's your favourite part of the map?

NukaMegs - I have two favourite parts of the map! I love the forest, so many beautiful trees which gives so much life to photos and the world. I also am obsessed with the Sundew Grove! The trees give off this beautiful, colourful bokeh effect and I am all about taking pictures there!

LaPombe - Favourite part of the map- Flatwoods. Such a cool place. The first time i went there it was so sad. All of the responder stories and everything that happened to them. It made me want to play a responder as well. They are my favourite faction. For photography though. Ash heap and toxic valley reign supreme. The lighting is always dynamic which makes for some very fun shots!

(captures by Jessica-star)

What's your favourite memory from playing Fallout 76?

NukaMegs - My favourite memory playing 76 is walking around, taking photos, and exploring the world while listening to that wonderful pip boy music. Bethesda created such a great atmosphere and it is really fun and inspirational as you build or take pictures!

LaPombe - I do want to say that the best thing about fallout 76 is the community. I have made so many friends and met such interesting and wonderful people. Truly changed my life for the better. I love them so very much.

LeftKee - I really enjoy when I am touring different people's camps! I love seeing creative things.

Jessica-Star - One of the things that brought this ragtag community of solo Fallout players together into one of the best online communities in gaming are the troubles at launch that first year. It may sound counterintuitive, but those of us who loved the game and stuck with it gained a lot of comradery and felt like we were in it together–us against the world! We had made Appalachia our own and built such a community, creating activities to fill the time just living in game.

There was a night, shortly after Wastelanders mid 2020, that friends wanted to put on a fireworks show using special grenades and in game explosives as we didn't officially have any fireworks in game. So we were streaming it, set up firepits on a roof near the edge of town and 15 or so of us watched the display by firelight for a good ten minutes. I was there, surrounded by friends in this world we created sharing this special moment and I just bawled. On stream but not on camera so no one knew with the music and booms of fireworks: but it was pure catharsis and release of all the hard things the world was going through, I had personally been going through, and the joy of creating something so special in this world we shared. So yes, that's a favourite memory among many beautiful, fun, and funny memories through the years.
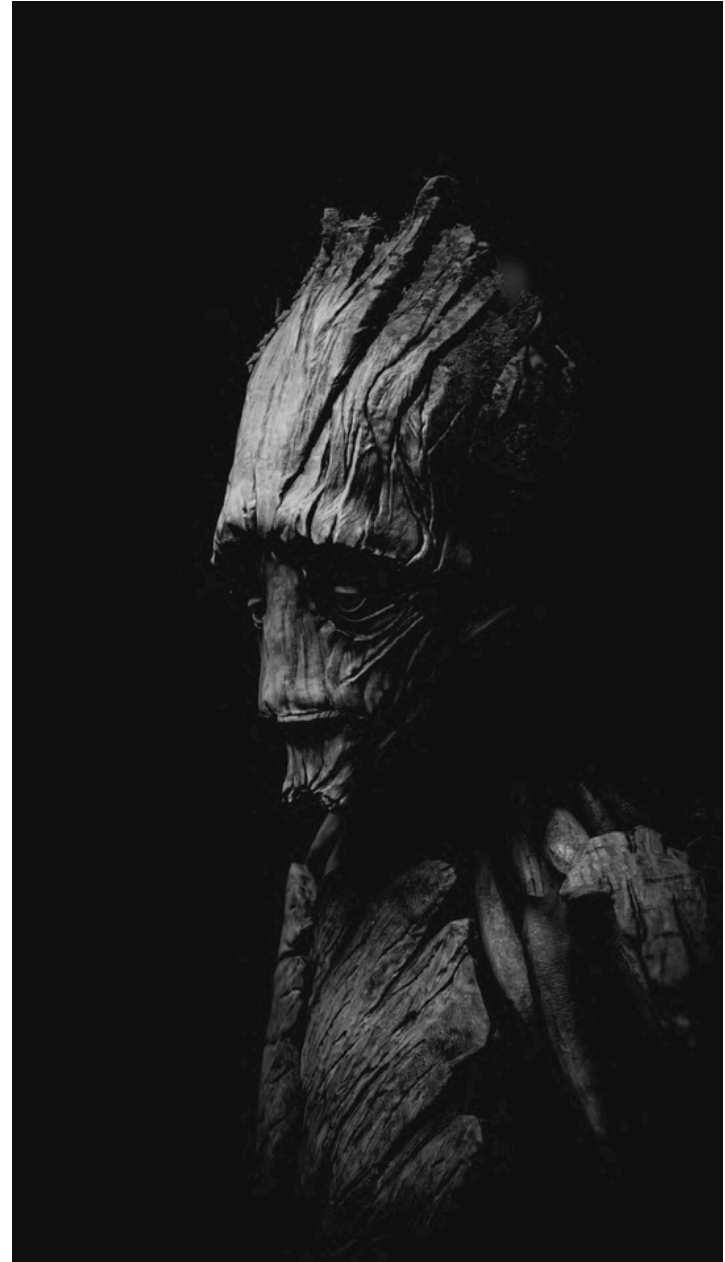
TPM Black and White Portraits

Community Theme June, 2024

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LENSESANDPIXELS

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SECONDCAPTURE

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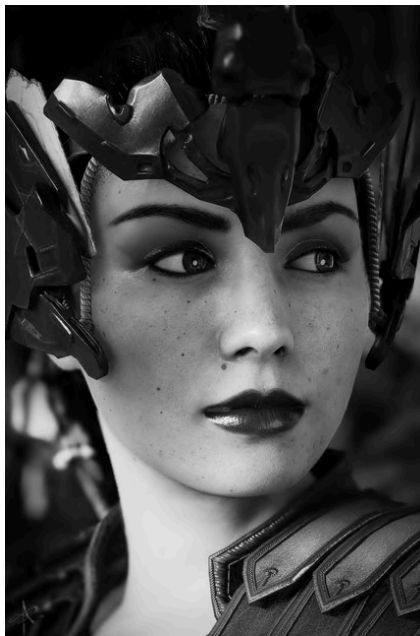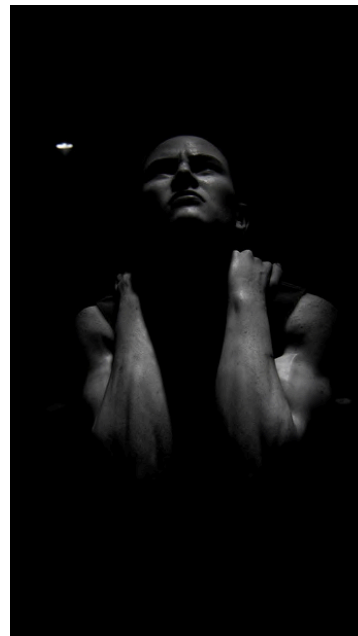PHOTOMODEOFTSU

CLL3AR

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FUMMMBLEZ

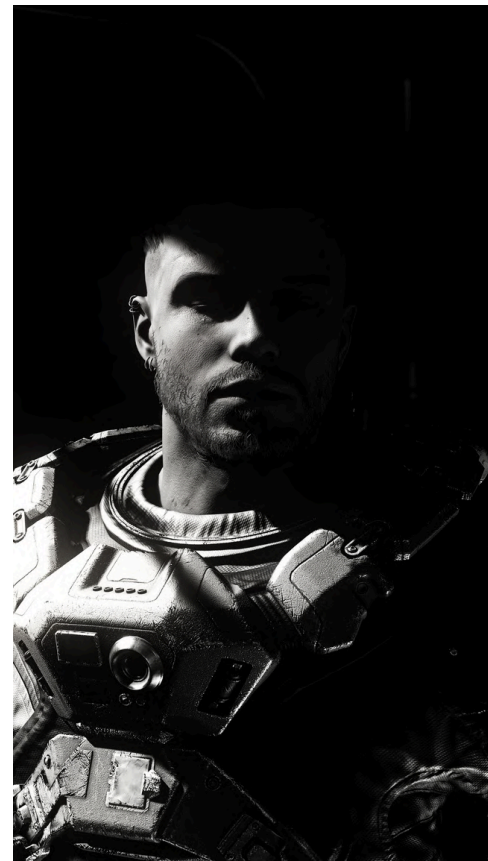**SNEAKYMIKEVP**

SCOTTOKA1

KESSELRUNNER

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FISHERMANRCT

TAKASANGAMES

INTERNAL_SOLACE

MEGPIX_MEMORIES

JOHNNYXBAGELS

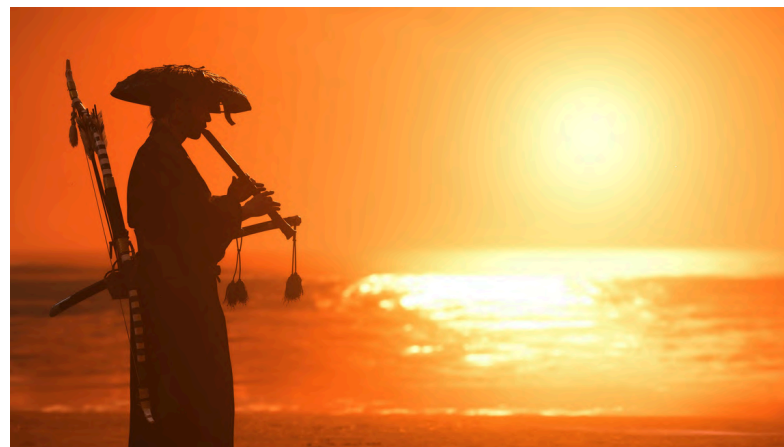SILVARAVP

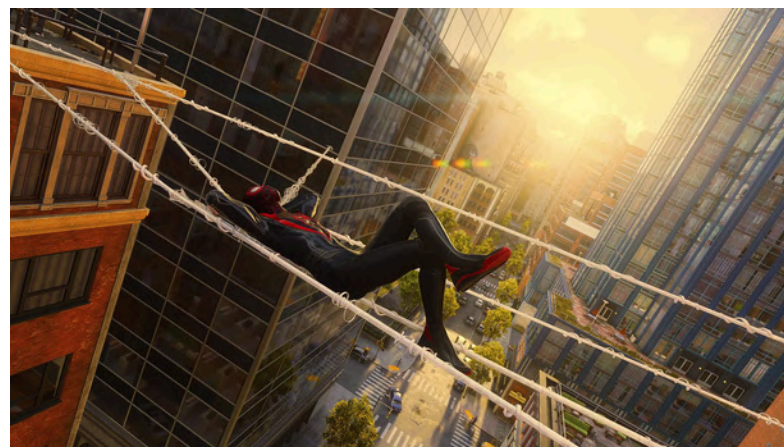# TPM Summer Vibes

Community Theme July, 2024

VP_ADVENTURER

LEGACYOFADAM

THREESTRIK3S

TIGAS_VP

DRAGONBALLEVOVP

DEN_G

TURIDTORKIL

CLL3AR

JACOBEE___

9B75

SURJIV22

MARUSION_JP

RWRLOADED

DAZRAGAL

NUNSIRIJUICE

STEFANIEMCMAKEN

SASKIAEMMISCHVP

TPM Masks

Community Theme August, 2024

CLL3AR

JONTYVP

VIRTUAL_KODA

REVENDIONLY

Assassin's Creed Valhalla
@Horace0816

HORACE0816

SPIDEYTWOSHOES

JENNIANDGAMING

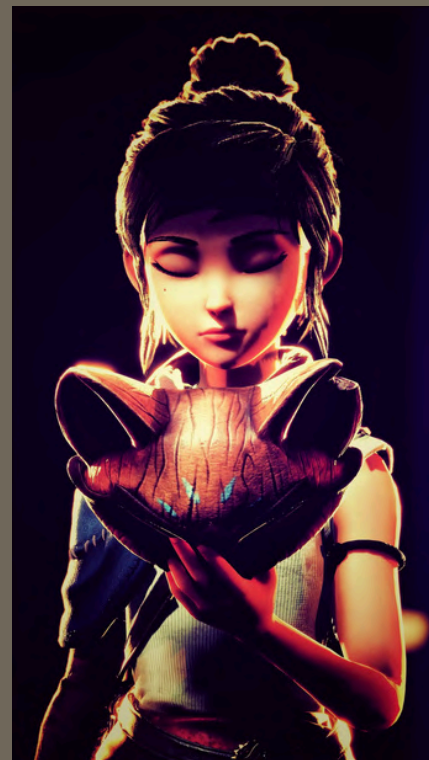DEXM_DS

AILEENYIMENGLI

HOWIEVP

COUCH_GAMER2K23

SURJIV22

WONDERNOOB_VP

SHIFTZEROV36

R0GUES_FR0NTIER

KRIEG_VP

KULMA69

BETWEENDPIXELS

JACOBEE___

FISHERMANRCT

LYSSHOOTS

GRINDERA666

PHOTOMODE.FTSU

FRAMECAPTUREVP

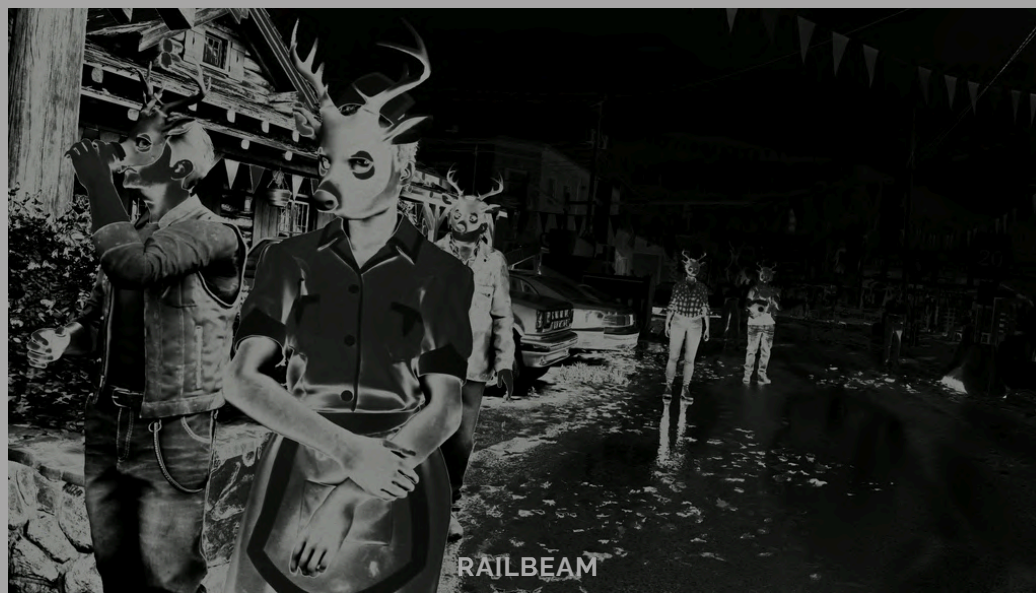LE_MATYVP

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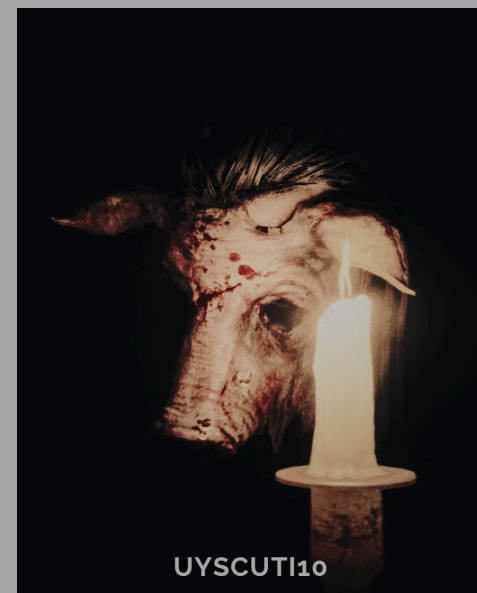

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